



SONIC
POSSIBLE
WORLDS

Hearing the Continuum of Sound **SALOMÉ VOEGELIN**



B L O O M S B U R Y

Sonic Possible Worlds

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SALOMÉ VOEGELIN

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Introduction

My room

has sound behind its walls, under its floorboards and on top of its ceiling. They make it shrink and expand, move and be still. What is in the room is visible, present, objectively here. The sound is invisible, not here, but present all the same. It is generated in my subjective hearing of it: rushing into the objective and changing what I see. The walls are less stable in sound, wobbly even, permeable, letting things in and out; testing notions of intimacy, neighbourliness and safety. The visual room is the set on which sound plays invisible narratives: some sinister, some cheerful, some unnoticed. Unseen protagonists, who might really be there or just invented by me, play out fantastic scenarios that might be real, involving alien space ships, cats, dogs and microwaves.—Anything can happen.¹

SOUNDWORDS.TUMBLR.COM January 28, 2011, 9:00 p.m.²

My textual phonography³ produces not a recording of the heard but of listening, which produces another sound in the imagination of the reader that is not the sound I heard but the sound generated in her action of perception of reading about sound. The recording in words of what I heard does not invite the recognition of an object or a subject, but triggers a generative interpretation: the production in the reader's auditory imagination of what it might have been that I heard, and what he might remember to have heard, or might go on to hear as a possibility of my words and her present auditory environment.

This phonographic writing notates not a solipsistic listening however. Listening is never separate from the social relationships that build the fleeting circumstance of hearing. Rather, listening inhabits that circumstance, and thus *My room* transcribes not the heard in isolation but composes its sociality: the hearing of myself in the social context of a room, my soundscape, a position and its consequence, which these words are trying to reflect on and share.

My writing might not achieve this sociality but the impetus of its practice lays in that aim: its motivation comes from the desire to share the heard without reducing it to the description of its source or the structure of a pre-given register. Instead, I use words to grant you access to sound's present unfolding, for you not to hear the same, but to hear its possibilities.

Writing about the possibility of sound is a constant effort to access the fleeting and ephemeral, that which is barely there and yet influences all there is. Sound is the invisible layer of the world that shows its relationships, actions, and dynamics. To write about it is to write about the formless, the predicative, that which invisibly does what we think we see but which struggles to find a place in articulation while what we think we see slides effortlessly into language in the certain shape of the noun. Sound's grammatical position as the attribute, the adjective and adverb, keeps it on the surface and holds it in a visual paradigm, when in reality its materiality is much more subterranean and mobile.

Sound is the thing thinging, a contingent materiality that is not captured as noun but runs as verb.⁴ It is the predicate that does what the world is and yet what the world is, as presumed actuality, is established in its description as nouns, as objects and as subjects, whose sound remains an attribute.⁵

Listening to sound not as the attribute of the visible but as the action of its production descends deep into the core of the visual world, reaching beyond its certain shape into a formless form that is neither object nor subject but the action of their materiality formlessly forming as liquid stickiness that grasps me too but leaves no trace.⁶ The sonic trace is mute. Sound generates the present from the memory of the past and through the anticipation of the future, but it is always now. To grasp this fleeting now in words and make it be significant, as this book aims to do, I need to find words that do not precede nor trace its passing, nor generate it presently; and I have to prompt the reader to listen to the now of my writing with the same generative curiosity and unprejudiced desire.

My desire to write about sound and for it to be read in a way that triggers listening comes from the conviction that in its invisible mobility, in its sticky and grasping liquidity there is something that augments, expands, and critically evaluates how we see the world and how we arrange ourselves to live in it. This belief is what motivates my aim to make the invisible materiality of sound and our own sonic subjectivities accessible, audible, and thinkable through words—to practice a writing that comes from listening and works toward a sonic sensibility that renews and pluralizes philosophy and epistemology. Such writing has not only an aesthetic but also a social and political significance in that it has an impact on ideas about what the world and what the subject is presumed to be and what else they could be.⁷ Listening offers another point of view, an alternative perspective on how things are, producing new ideas on how

they could be and how we could live in a sonic possible world, and how we could include sound's invisible formlessness in a current realization and valuation of what we understand to be the actual world.

Listening we will not automatically get to a better world, or a better philosophy. Sound does not hold a superior ethical position or reveal a promised land. But it will show us the world in its invisibility: in the unseen movements beneath its visual organization that allow us to see its mechanism, its dynamic and structure, and the investment of its agency, which might well be dark and forbidding. A sonic sensibility reveals the invisible mobility below the surface of a visual world and challenges its certain position, not to show a better place but to reveal what this world is made of, to question its singular actuality and to hear other possibilities that are probable too, but which, for reasons of ideology, power and coincidence do not take equal part in the production of knowledge, reality, value, and truth.

The listened to world is my actual world generated from what it is possible to hear and even some possible impossible things that I think I have heard but cannot be sure of, or that I might not hear but which nevertheless sound and thicken my perception. The world heard, its sonic space and time, forms not the solid infrastructure that exists with or without my presence. It is not a pre-formed container but is built continually as the fleeting timespace place of my present listening.⁸ It does not provide recognition but invites curiosity and even doubt, in the place perceived and in myself. Listening generates place, the field of listening, continually from my hearing of myself within the dynamic relationship of all that sounds: the temporary connections to other listeners, things and places, as the contingent life-world of my listening intersubjectivity that hears the actual, the possible, and even the impossible participating in the ephemerality of the unseen.

This book deliberates actuality, possibility, and the possible impossible, in the soundscape as well as in relation to sound art and music. It proposes some strategies of how listening reinvigorates ideas about reality, actuality, possibility, and truth, and how it can explore the soundscape, the sound artwork, and musical pieces as sonic timespace places, as sonic environments, which we inhabit as phenomenological subjects, listening intersubjectively and reciprocally: generating ourselves and the world we hear through our being in the world.

In many ways this writing is a continuation of the project initiated in *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*, which was published by Continuum in 2010. It shares my previous book's focus on listening as a generative and participatory practice that does not begin from a certain context and a priori knowledge about the work or the world, but suspends as much as possible ideas of genre, context, theory, and purpose, to instead listen to the place sound builds in passing. This

text continues the aim of the last: to be about sound, about the world sound makes, its aesthetic, social and political realities that are hidden by the persuasiveness of a visual point of view. It aims to hear not the structure, meaning, and actuality of the soundscape or the work, but its possibilities and even its impossibilities, that which the work and the world is if we listen to its sonic materiality building the place of our contingent engagement, and that which it builds also but we cannot yet hear. In this sense this book starts where *Listening to Noise and Silence* broke off: explicitly and directly searching for the possible, the alternative view that the last book came across tentatively in its last chapter, where via Andrei Tarkovsky's refrain it reached a sonic world below the surface of the visible: "The sonic refrain opens the film to the possible worlds at the blind depth of its images."⁹

Tarkovsky's refrain is not a repetition but an ever-renewed action of the body upon the material; it is the sensory-motor action through which the phenomenological subject faces and generates the world and himself being in this world. "It produces ever new layers, burying deeper and deeper into what we conventionally perceive as the real world to create it in its possibilities rather than recognize its perceived actuality."¹⁰ This book starts with the possibilities a continual action of perception produces: possibilities for the subject and the material, the work and the world, and their relationship. It is about gaining access to this blind depth, to delve into it and rethink the work and the world from there. It works with the sonic sensibility established in the last book to explore and find an articulation for the new relationships, references, notions of truth, and reality that can be found at the depth of this sea of sound, and aims to discuss the consequences of this sonic possible world for our notion of actuality, possibility, impossibility, knowledge, and value.

Like my earlier publication, this writing too takes its form from Theodor Adorno's idea of the essay as a formless form of text that makes no claim of being anything other than an experiment, a suggestion, a provocation maybe, and relies on the fact that as an essay it has no obligation to be all inclusive, "it does not begin with Adam and Eve but with what it wants to discuss," and it does not have to come to firm conclusions either.¹¹ Instead, the essay can build a text from ephemeral thoughts that pass the object of exploration as thing and return the favor by granting it lightness and autonomy. It is an open-ended enquiry whose provenance is not established but whose future demonstrates the plurality of origins of thought that make neither an epistemology nor an ontology but encourage a desire to know the thing in knowing, in continually and presently moving toward it. It produces writing as experimentations, which at times might seem rather impossible but thinkable nevertheless, and which in their imagination can influence how we understand sound to affect the way we perceive the work and the world and how we live in them both in perception.

This is a project about sound, about a sonic aesthetics, listening and a sonic sensibility, but it is also a philosophical project, whose insights contribute not only to the discourse of sound art but also to philosophy in that it expands and augments the philosophical enquiry through the mobility of sound. It is a philosophy not about objects and ideas but about the transient ephemerality of sonic materiality and subjectivity. It aims to create a philosophical experience that might not convince in terms of philosophical orthodoxies and histories but through the reader as listener's own present experience, her simultaneity with the heard, from where he struggles between language and listening, producing a philosophical place made of sounds and words.

It produces writing, reflection, and criticism that comes from my simultaneity with the work and the world in listening. Its experimentation is based on listening and writing about the sound thus heard and it comes to theoretical propositions from within the work, from within the environment the work produces, rather than from ideas that precede its experience. Theory always lags, but that is only a problem when we expect it to lead. It is the work, the material, and my listening engagement that lead language into a struggle with what it has to describe, and in this effort it evaluates the heard as well as its own articulation. It is through the discussion of works and the acoustic environment that I meet philosophy and theory, whose words I use to make my experience shareable, acknowledging right from the start that we might well misunderstand each other and that it is only through the effort and desire to be understood and to understand that temporarily with a lot of good will and timing in moments of coincidence, shared understandings will be found, while the rest remains experience.¹²

This writing promotes the sonic sensibility articulated in my last book to infiltrate and illuminate the thick surface of the visible. However, this is not an essentialist stance; the text does not negate nor berate visuality, vision, or a visual literacy. Rather, listening is practiced as an actual and a conceptual pursuit that augments the way we see the world.¹³ The critique of the visual is not a critique of its object but of its practice, the way we look rather than what we see. There is the option of listening to the visual, listening to the thick layers that mobilize our view if we take care to confront it with a sonic sensibility. What is sought is not a blind understanding, a shutting down of what vision brings to seeing; rather, the aim is a sonico-visual understanding of the world that knows its surface but also appreciates the hidden mobility beneath.

The ideas and aims of this book are developed over five chapters. The first two chapters propose and try the logic of *Sonic Possible Worlds* as a tool to access and inhabit the acoustic environment and the sound artwork, respectively. The following three apply and develop this idea and method, and pursue the notion of a *Continuum of Sound* through a sonic materialism into music and finally into the inaudible.

The landscape as sonic possible world listens to the landscape's singular vista and hears the dense multiplicity of its mobile production in sound. This first chapter introduces the methodology and aims of the book through a focus on listening to the soundscape—the everyday acoustic environment, field recording, phonographic works, as well as soundscape compositions and installations—and debates possible world theory as a strategy to access and compare sound as acoustic environments, as sonic worlds, while inhabiting them in phenomenological reciprocity. This engagement allows us to challenge the singularity of the world's actuality and articulate an alternative sense of how things could be, augmenting a visual actuality through invisible possibilities.

This chapter introduces key theoretical ideas and makes some initial propositions on how we can challenge and add to the actual with slices of the possible, and how in turn these possibilities open listening to the invisible mobility of the world and enable us to debate the aesthetic, social, and political consequences of inhabiting alternative worlds in sound.

The second chapter moves the “phenomenological possibilism” articulated in relation to the landscape *Into the world of the work* and extends the metaphor of the environment to the artwork, to reach *The possibility of sound art*: accessing the work as a possible world and inviting the listener to inhabit it as a sonic environment, as a sonic possible life-world. In this way, this chapter employs the plurality of sonic possibility and the concomitant phenomenological engagement established in the first chapter to develop and challenge sound art theory and criticism from within, from an invested engagement within the heard, and proposes new ways to listen and hear the work in relation to the world of art discourse and the everyday.

The third chapter tries to grasp the mobile invisibility accessed in the first chapter and theorized in the second by delving into the depth of the work to pursue the notion of a *Sonic materialism* and hear *The sound of stones*. It moves from the world of the work into its materiality, into the complexity of its possibilities, to consider its experience and how it guides us into meaning, truth, reality, and language. This chapter moves across sonic bridges, voices, and chapels on the way to establishing the idea of an “aesthetic possibilism” to make a contribution, from the invisible materiality of sound, to the development of a contemporary materialism.

Re-emerging from within the unseen depth of sonic materiality, the fourth chapter invites the reader to listen for the possibility of sound in the musical work, to inhabit it as a musical world. The listener is encouraged to abandon the boundaries between sound art and music, to disregard the restrictions of the disciplines, their differing context of performance and exhibition and their separate critical languages, to access them comparatively, in the environment they build within a universe of sonic

worlds: *Hearing the continuum of sound*. This continuum offers not an unproblematic, linear, or homogeneous history, however, but pursues a folding, unfolding, and refolding of each practice from the possibility of sound, to inhabit musical possibilities rather than to theorize musical actualities.

Finally, *Listening to the inaudible* to hear *The sound of unicorns* does not conclude or finalize the idea a phenomenological possibilism introduced via sound, but extends its possibility beyond the threshold of the audible into the possible impossible, the inaudible, that which sounds but remains unheard because we cannot or do not want to access it. This inaudibility makes us aware of the social, political, cultural, ideological, and aesthetic prejudices through which we discriminate what we hear from what we listen to, and what we listen to from what else there is to hear. It lets us reflect on the rationale of this inequity and hints at everything else there might be to listen out for still.

This book is written in my actual possible world, the world that I inhabit and which therefore is real for me: my contingent position from where I participate in the reality of a presumed actual world, trying to bring my possibility to a shared conception, and hoping to make it count. The shared particularity of our present time and space that hovers in the background of this writing is the current political, economical, and intellectual crises of value and validity, which is pressing hard on notions of reality, truth, and power. In this context, the question of who holds authority and influence over the actuality of the actual world engages listening and a sonic sensibility on a socio-political frontline: they are employed to discover the rationale and the objectives of a current actuality, their investments and ideologies and are asked to illuminate alternative possibilities below reality's visible surface in the dark depth of sound.

CHAPTER ONE

The landscape as sonic possible world

Fallen leaves

sound the rhythm of my walking as a recurrent surf. Each movement blends into the other. No single footsteps, just waves. I adjust my gait to its sound and deliberately exaggerate the stretched-out continuity. Searching for more pools of leaves I avoid naked pavements exposing my tread, preferring instead to stay in the shadow of my sound. It is a sound of memory and perennial joy at the weather turning cold. It sounds the idea of autumn as an “iconographic” sound: a sonic emblem that sounds its emblematicness through my participation and thus is clearly not an icon at all; eschewing the concept of distance and idolatry. Instead the sonic emblem is subjective and reciprocal. I activate it and hear it sounding us together, as a socio-symbolic relationship that creates the time and place we are in not as an ideal but as a moment of coincidence, until the pavement turns grey and empty and on my footsteps pound the monotone of swept streets.

SOUNDWORDS.TUMBLR.COM October 08, 2011, 11:34 p.m.

We are in the acoustic environment and it is around us all the time, unavoidably and inexhaustibly here it is and here we are, as in a virtual embrace. Sound forms an extensive and mobile vicinity, fleeting and grasping all at once. We are in sound and simultaneously sound ourselves: we are in the acoustic environment through our listening to it that which we hear. In this way we complete each other as reciprocal hearer and heard. The acoustic environment is the world in sound and makes a sonic world. This world formlessly does what we think we see as a certain form.¹ It is

built continually from sonic relationships of things and subjects thinging a contingent place. It is a timespace place in which we too are temporospatial things thinging intersubjectively with what we hear. We are in its midst, not necessarily at its center, but nevertheless embedded in its ephemeral materiality that shows us our own transitory self. Listening we are continually made aware of this fleeting subjectivity, and we are reminded also that the world is not only in front of us, the aim of our action, but that we inhabit it as a 360° environment, which sounds the result and consequence of our actions too. In this sense, listening affords us a different sense of the world and of ourselves living in this world; it affords a different relationship to time and space, objects and subjects and the way we live among them. It is this alternative sonic sense of the world and of ourselves in the world, and its consequence for the conception of reality, actuality, possibility, truth, and knowledge that I want to begin exploring in this first chapter by focusing on the landscape.

The landscape as sonic possible world explores the landscape through its sound, to hear it as an environment, a timespace place that does not present us with a vista but grants us access to the mobility of its own production. In this chapter I consider the everyday soundscape, soundscape compositions, phonographic recordings, fieldwork, and site-specific installations to explore the world sound makes when we respond to its formless and transitory demand. The suggestion is that the soundscape offers an alternative perspective on the landscape, producing new ideas on how it could be and how we could live in it as in a sonic world, and how therefore we could validate the reality of sound's invisible formlessness in relation to the visible and formed actuality of the world. Listening allows us to focus on the invisible dynamics that are hidden beneath a visual perception and its linguistic organization. It gives us access to what is there if we look past the object into the complex plurality of its production; and it shows us the world through relationships and processes, reminding us of the ideological and aesthetic conditioning that determines any sensory engagement.

I agree with Tim Ingold's assertion in his text *Against Soundscape* from 2007 that the acoustic environment is not really a soundscape in the etymological sense of the word: it is not a scape, a scenery, a place to look at from afar. I also concede that it is not a slice of the landscape that we can easily separate from its terrain, but that instead it "commingles" with all there is, producing my environment continually and contingently.² But this is where our agreement ends. To Ingold sound is not a thing thinging but a medium, a vehicle that transports something else, like wind transports leaves. It is, according to him, in the sky, "flying a kite,"³ among the clouds, that the true nature of sound lays, and unsurprisingly it is via musicology that he finds this lofty explanation. His auditory space sounds as music, in the sense of the spiritual and the beautiful sounds of the musical oeuvre: the Aeolian harp that sounds not in relation to the world but as an

objective ideality removed from the vulgar humanity living down below. Celestial, it invites abandonment: “launching the body into sound,” rather than listening to understand the mundanity of the world and the earthly body inhabiting that world.⁴

Ingold’s meteorological identification of sound as wind and weather avoids the surface of the scape, the visual paradigm that holds sound in place, but it also avoids the relevance of the heard. While I agree that sound stays not in place, it is also not up in the air, but down below, underneath the visual surface, mobilizing what we see, invisibly and without light, unfolding the complex and fluid fragmentedness of what seems unified and scaped above.

Implicit, it seems, in his desire for a paradigm of sound as wind, moving all there is rather than being anything in itself, is a critique of art discourse that focuses on the object rather than on the process of perception. Ingold suggests that the landscape is only visible once we have rendered it visual by techniques such as painting or photography, which allow for a viewing apart from other sensory dimensions, and that similarly the landscape can only be audible when played back within an environment that deprives us of other stimuli, such as a darkened room. Without such “allegorical eyes” and ears, “the world we perceive is the same world, whatever path we take, and each of us perceives it as an undivided centre of activity and awareness.”⁵ This statement ignores the agency of the material and of the subject, and pays no attention to the cultural prejudices and hierarchies with which we approach and interpret the world. Not all senses participate equally in the production of what the world *is*: how its pragmatic actuality, the notion of the real we live by, is constructed, sold, and bought. Thus, while of course the soundscape has a vista, a smell, and even a touch, if we approach it via a sonic sensibility, we come to another path and find another “centre of activity and awareness” that reflects back to us the world shaped and filtered through listening and, in this process, illuminates the cultural ideologies that limit this sense and favor others.

It is the complex relationship of listening and reflection, recording and playback, not through an allegorical ear but as a simultaneous production, that makes apparent the ideological and cultural objectives which influence perception, and that renders the study of the soundscape vis-à-vis the landscape relevant: to explore one slice of the landscape, not in a darkened room, but in the complexity of its circumstance, to illuminate its reality and how it participates in the construction of an accepted actuality, which in truth is only one slice of the landscape too, but which by accident, ignorance, or ideology we take for the whole.

My disagreement with Ingold makes apparent why it is important to listen to the soundscape not as a medium but as a material reality, to hear below the surface of the visible other possibilities of what could be actual; and why we should focus on the acoustic environment and study its sounds, not to transport us elsewhere, but to understand what the here and

now is about and how it is constructed. This exploration follows Maurice Merleau-Ponty's search for a primacy of perception, his attempt to capture the things before their distortion by rationality and knowledge, and it also involves a criticism of art discourse that focuses on the artwork, the visual work, and the musical piece separate from its processes of production and perception, but it does so not up in the air, apart from the political, social, and cultural environment of its production, but in the midst of it.

Listening as an innovative and generative practice, as a strategy of engagement that we employ deliberately to explore a different landscape other than the one framed by vision, and it is cultural vision that I refer to here, grants us access to another view on the world and on the subjects living in that world. It shows us the possibilities of sound, that which could be, or that which is, if only we listened. This chapter wants to initiate such a listening to the possibility of sound and begins its exploration with the soundscape as the sonic sphere that holds the most immediate relationship to notions of actuality, reality, truth, and possibility. It explores the world from the sound it makes and tries to talk about the consequences of this audition.

Such an exploration demands thoughtfulness about the language used to talk about this sonic world hidden in the depth of a visible actuality, to avoid holding it in a visual paradigm or forcing it in opposition to it, and it requires that we take care of the sensorial particularity of its material and our engagement with it. To achieve this we cannot afford a rigidity about what words mean etymologically but need to focus on what they come to mean contingently, and what they effect and create the meaning of by their own agency even. Listening needs a language that produces words, the material of articulation, to grasp the material of sound and build itself through the heard anew all the time. It needs a language that is aware of the philosophical traditions that it carries and which brought it forth, and which it still expresses deliberately and inadvertently through the structure and hierarchy of its words. This needs to be a language that is ready to subvert these traditions, neglecting good grammar and correct expression to find words that generate sound rather than stifle it.

Listening to the possibility of the landscape

Listening illuminates the undulating pool of sound that moves and shapes the landscape, to hear at its depth an alternative view of all it is and all it could be, forcing new consequences onto our living in the world. Writing about these illuminations aims to produce new insights about the part sound plays in the construction of the reality of the world, and how listening we take part in the actualization of the world as real. This effort does not contradict other soundscape studies and practices but hopes to

contribute to their project: to complement their listening practices and add to their theoretical reflections. Unlike other soundscape studies or acoustic ecology projects, I am not focusing on a particular area, a particular terrain of economic, social, or political significance as does, for example, Peter Cusack in his exploration of dangerous places;⁶ I am not concerned with the collecting and studying of a species through its sounds as was the task of the naturalists Ludwig Koch and Albert Brand in the early part of the twentieth century; I am not tracking Barry Truax's taxonomy of sound and do not aim to come to understand a culture or a society by its sound in an anthropological or ethnographic sense as, for example, Steven Feld and Veit Erlman are pursuing it; I am not engaged in the conservation of sounds and the soundscape as is the aim of many conservation groups and sound archivists worldwide; I do not focus on the idea of noise pollution, on good and bad sounds, nor do I directly propose a listening education as most seminally R. Murray Schafer put forward at the inauguration of the World Soundscape Project in the 1960s. Yet my own work is closely linked to and significantly preceded by these and other approaches to soundscape research and practice. It tries to access in words some of the sonic realities Hildegard Westerkamp is teasing out of the landscape in her soundscape compositions, most notably in *Kits Beach* (1989), and it attempts to reveal the possibilities of sound that Francisco López seduces his blindfolded listeners into. It also acknowledges a recent feminist and ethnic attention in soundscape study and composition that focuses on the acoustic place of women, non-western identities, subjectivities, and migration, and tries to make a space in language for the articulation of these sonic worlds so we might inhabit them as well. In this way, my writing follows the yarn of Felicity Ford who knits another soundscape from women's voices and domestic sounds; it connects with the telematics of Ximena Alarcón's migratory communities and tunes in to Claudia Wegener's continental drift radio, in order to contribute strategies of listening and reflection that make alternative possibilities of subjectivity, identity, and place audible in the landscape.

Working from this background and contributing to these various undertakings, *the landscape as sonic possible world* writes an invitation to listen not to confirm and preserve actuality but to explore possibilities. The field of this listening is wherever the reader is, who hears the social, political, and economic significance of her sonic world rather than mine: not to read and decode the sonic environment but to experience in its complex mobility the plurality of the world. It is not a *Tuning of the World*⁷ but a tuning into the world in order to see all it could be: to consider the frame of a current actuality and to implode it through the plurality of a sonic sensibility. It takes the sonic slice of the landscape to focus on what it reveals not about itself only but about the commingling of the world.

The aim is not to listen to understand, judge, categorize, or preserve the soundscape, but to illuminate and generate the plural possibilities of

the landscape as an environment that involves everything that it is and everything that it could be. In that sense, this writing is a soundscape composition: it works from listening to the soundscape, phonographic recordings, fieldwork, composition, and installation work, not to theorize the heard but to generate its possibilities. This composition is however not a musical work; rather, it is a composing, a making, building and tearing apart, of words about sounds that does not produce the world as a “macrocosmic musical composition” but that sounds the world from the ground up, as fragments, as possibilities, and even as impossibilities.⁸ This marks a significant shift from Schafer’s 1960s view that “today all sounds belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying within the comprehensive definition of music. Behold the new orchestra: the sonic universe.”⁹ The sonic possible world I articulate in this writing relates not to the possibilities of music but the possibilities of sound, and the continuum I hear is complex and disjointed; it comes from the undergrowth of the world, not from its harmonic exaltations; it is not about the framing of beauty but about the frames of the real. The universe I want to draw on is not centered around and constructed from one world only, but is constituted of a plurality of actual, possible, and impossible sonic worlds that we can all inhabit in listening and through whose plurality music loses its hegemony and discipline and the landscape gains its dimensions.

On a recent visit to the London College of Communication, phonographer and sound recordist Chris Watson explained how a tape recorder, received as a child, had opened him to the possibility of a sonic world:

My parents gifted me a small portable reel to reel tape recorder when I was in my early teens.

We had a large kitchen window, which overlooked our back garden, within which was a bird feeding table.

I used to watch the birds feeding and the image always appeared framed by the window, like a film, but silent.

Realizing my recorder was portable I took it outside, frightened all the birds away, and fixed the small microphone on the feeding table and hung the recorder underneath. Back in the kitchen I could again watch as the birds returned to feed whilst the spools of my recorder revolved—it was an incredibly exciting experience!

When the twelve minute tape ran off the spool I went out and retrieved my recorder and played the recording back in the kitchen.

At that point I felt I was introduced and immersed in a new and secret world, a place I may be able to observe but never experience directly as my presence would preclude the behaviour and sounds I was listening to. A time-shifted space that exists only in sound and imagination.¹⁰

The possible time and space of sound: Palm houses and ghost trains

Whispering in the Leaves (2010)

Inside the palmhouse we are dwarfed by the soaring of the palms and fascinated by the luxurious growth of many other tropical species – balsa, breadfruit, bananas and bamboo. One Malaysian Bamboo grows to the roof in a single season. In this building we feel the extent of the British maritime and colonial penetration of the entire world.¹¹

The Palm House in Kew Gardens near Richmond in London is a great impressive visual structure whose Victorian design, height, and magnificence immediately brings to mind the notion of empire: of Great Britain as a country expanded geographically beyond its own shores, to confidently be everywhere Great British—not necessarily in a warring manner, as other colonialists, but in an intellectual, well designed sort of way of self-evident excellence that begs no questions, and whose munificence in taking itself abroad is understood even if not necessarily experienced in the same way by the colonized.

It is also a symbol of gathering, of collecting; of taking from there to bring here, to learn and to have. Artifacts, treasures, wildlife, and plants, often dead: butterflies pinned with delicate needles to wooden panes carefully labeled, archived, and organized in glass cabinets. But sometimes the specimen are still alive as is the case with the plants inside the Palm House: they live and grow and are cared for, but their animal inhabitants were left behind, and so the trees are still, no whispering in their leaves now. On an ordinary day, all I hear are the hushed almost reverential voices and careful steps of the visitors and the quiet trickling of water here and there. Even when the boisterous sounds of a school class threaten the peace, it is not long until they are reminded by their teacher that this is not a real forest and thus to quieten down.

There is an inviolability in this absence of sound—not unlike stepping into a museum: a stillness expecting the reward of knowledge and scholarship. It is a humanist silence, framed, deliberate, and careful: willing to look but not wanting to be heard as if the sounds would destroy the seen. It is an imposition of the mind onto the natural world without letting the body reciprocate in its own nature. This seeing is not a movement toward the experience of the Palm House as a visceral expanse but is seeing as the gathering of knowledge about all that has been gathered. Meticulously positioned black labels engraved with English and Latin names make the visitor aware that this is not an environment to experience but a collection to study, an educational endeavor rather than a playful inhabiting.

Chris Watson changes all that, and on my next visit in the summer of 2010 I encounter not a quiet collection of trees but an inhabited forest that calls out to me and makes me tread a little louder. *Whispering in the Leaves* is a surround sound composition that populates the Palm House with sounds from the rainforest, which moves its branches and emboldens my own articulation.

Twenty speakers diffuse Watson's composition and generate all sorts of creatures. For most of them, I have no name, no image, just a sense of vitality that is generated from the vitality of the sonic material. It does not so much represent the real animals as create them from the possibility of their sound and my knowledge and ideas about what they could be, into all they are. I am sure an ornithologist or zoologist gets a sense of recognition; they know what it is we hear, as do those who have been on location and who might even travel there again in their auditory minds. I remain here, where I construct the timespace of my experience from the trees, the earth, the smell of the plants, and the trickling of the water that mingles with the recordings of the real Amazonian rain forest into the possibility of a forest in the Palm House. I am not looking now but feeling the place, stepping into it. I ignore the Latin labels, any attempt at a learned engagement, and instead feel the place and reciprocate its expanse.

The piece consists of two parts, *Dawn* and *Dusk*, each played at the requisite hours. Dawn brings the increasing intensity of animals waking. It opens the space in the time of an unfurling morning. Some sounds recall familiar bodies and imaginable beasts: humming bees and chirping birds; others groan and moan unknown shapes, barking and shrieking souls that fill the trees and move the leaves. Low voices move through the undergrowth and faster pitches jump through the treetops. The Palm House attains a rhythm; ever more confident and expansive it breathes through the trees making them into a wood. Inhabitants merge the disparate plants, diffusing their image by giving them the intensity of sound and the extensity of life.

At dusk the space unfolds a more mellow time. The intensity of earlier is replaced by a narrower rhythm that holds even less known creatures' whistling, baying, weeping, and rolling, lower down, beneath the leaves. Invisible, they become what I think them to be. The whisper is hushed, gurgling, murmuring, and then the thunder starts, and the big drops heard all along become the rain that now hits the roof of the glasshouse and penetrates within.

Both compositions unfold the complexity of the place in the time of its space; they create and narrate the trees as forest, as habitat, as expanse that needs no names but unfolds vis-à-vis the body, not into knowledge but into experience and subsequently into knowing—knowing the trees from the woods they are in rather than from the name they hold individually. It is a timespace place that is not here in Kew and not there in the Rainforest

either but that sounds another place, the place somewhere between my listening, my expectation of Watson's work, and my imagination of the soundscape of the Amazon.

His compositions do not press on the trees; there is nothing oppressive about this soundtrack; it is literally a whispering in the leaves that expands the branches toward each other and toward the listener in a hazy halation. The sound opens up the narrow corridors of vision and invites us to experience the whole through invisible relationships of what is visible and audible. It binds together all that is here and makes it sensible, as in available to the senses, in its complex and lively togetherness rather than as separate mute objects ready for intellectual contemplation.

Watson's soundscape composition brings mobility to the trees and soon I think I can see them move. I am not fooled though, I know the animals do not really hide in the leaves, and the leaves are not really flapping in the storm that is clearly brewing at dusk. The work produces not a falsity however, but an augmentation, an expansion, and extension of reality that is not unreal but more dense, more intense more complex in terms of the material, the plants, paths, and people seen and the world heard. It creates a reality that questions the mute actuality I had taken for granted on all my previous visits and introduces a lived reality that includes possibilities and contingencies and possibly even contradictions and impossibilities.

Watson's work does not produce an untruth but generates a real possibility that has an impact on what I see and holds a consequence for how I experience and thus how I know. The composition does not animate but immerses itself into the trees, the earth, the water, and the spaces between, to expand and mobilize them from the gap between visible objects as invisible relationships filled with the dense vitality of sound.

This sound does not envelop the seen but reciprocates it, brings it into vibration: waking it from a deep slumber into which it fell in Victorian times a good 100 years ago. It generates a reality that brings with it the consciousness of another place and another time, that of the colonial project and its native land. It is "a time-shifted space that exists only in sound and imagination" but from within which we can reconsider our time and our space, and how we construct and relate to its reality.¹²

The Palm House without Watson's soundscape composition is the actual visual space as a colonial place, which is one slice of the landscape only as it had its inhabitants removed and its context transported to become a particular collectable. Its actuality is based on separation: separation from the possibilities of nameless creatures, invisible movements, and formless shapes that roam its expanse infinitively there. The visual actuality allows us to take one slice, to take one portion of the landscape, and reframe it in glass. The sound implodes this frame and hints at the plurality of frames that we inhabit contingently and simultaneously: Kew Gardens,

the colonial, the historical, the contemporary, the personal, knowledge, knowing, experience, and contradiction.

The Palm House is one visual slice of the landscape imported, transported, and taken away to become something else: a collection of objects with names that reveal not the real rainforest but the reality of its appropriation. The sound renders this process audible: it makes apparent that actualities are constructed and invites us in to inhabit its environment, to notice below the visual form the mobile gap between realities.

The sonic world that Watson creates is not the Central and South American Rainforest and it is not Kew Gardens either. Instead, it is a possible world that opens the idea of space and time to produce places whose actuality wanders and changes, and that depends on the listener, as inhabitant, to make them real.

Whispering in the Leaves changes how I move and whisper myself: how I take part in the soundscape of the Palm House and how I understand my own sonic self. Watson's soundscape composition realizes the Palm House not as a museum, a collection, and an archive, but as an environment, whose real benefit lies in its experience rather than its Latin names. It brings knowledge away from names and disciplines into experience, and forces the study of the particular into the study of its relationship with the world. Listening I think of the visual materiality through an ephemeral invisibility: the whispering leaves, picking up scent and touch in the mist between them to generate a world that shows me trembling and uncertain its plural possibilities.

When almost a year later I enter the Palm House another time I hear some birds, they were so loud and clear; these must have been recordings and I desperately crane my neck to see loudspeakers when in reality those were real birds that entered through an open door.

I have a different awareness of this Palm House now. I cannot ever enter it as a glass cabinet of colonial exploration and collection again but will always see the woods between the trees, the movement, the whispers . . . It is not a display but an environment, a sonic place, which I have seen other layers of, other slices, whose reality remains there in their possibility influencing its present actuality for me.

El Tren Fantasma (2011) (*inspired by Pierre Schaeffer*)

Watson's ghost train develops the spatial possibilities of the Palm House in the invisible possibility of time. *El Tren Fantasma* produces a sonic environment built from time: from the plurality of time of now and then, and all the times in-between. The work rebuilds from the ephemeral materiality of sound a railway line that used to run between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Mexico. The album consists of ten separate tracks and is composed from recordings made when the artist was working for

the BBC on a documentary about the Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico. Apparently, he was the very last passenger on a journey between Los Mochis and Veracruz that since 1999 can no longer be made. However, his album recreates not the journey but stages its own disappearance, which invites a multiplicity of appearances to be generated in listening.

The ghost train is produced in the imagination of its absence and creates an abundance of presence. The album sounds spacious nothingness framed and enabled by the sounds of a train that is still recognizable but whose reference vanishes into the rhythms of its materiality and the processes of its production. The contact between wheels and track, their propelling relationship, which normally sounds the function of the machine, is edited and manipulated to lose the track and its purpose, to become the sound of an ephemeral motion coming closer, passing by, and vanishing.

Watson's composition does not expand in space but moves in time to create a place that merges the past with its imagination to create a now that is plural and mobile. Expanses of nothing are punctuated and defined by the materiality of a train that has lost its certain shape and elongates itself into my imagination. In this way, the composition as document creates its own reality from the possibilities of its interpretations.

Between the soundtrack and its foldout cover, which shows a dotted line on a crumbled map tracing where the train once went, the album narrates a story. Joining the dots it tells of a time that built the land and now builds a track that infinitively goes nowhere, on and on, with no destiny and without end, creating this and other auditions. It is a train defined by the absence of connections, of a place to come from and a place to go to. It is groundless and purposeless; it tracks no land and has no direction, but goes on and on forever more.

The time is possible rather than actual but nevertheless real. It is created from the rhythm of the train, between the swaying, clacking, whistling and clattering mobility, and the gripping, holding and pushing immobility that leave us in stillness in the middle of a field, flies buzzing around an invisible cow pad, all the while knowing what brought us here but not where we are. The composition traces and represents but also mimics its abandoned source, to sound in manipulated rhythms a nonexistent train that announces itself through a hollow call diffused into the imaginary landscape it does not pass through anymore. The material of sound, its ephemeral temporality, is all that is left, and is what rebuilds in time the imagination of what was but very differently: a land passing rather than passing through.

There are objects I hear and know like the cockerel crying or the barking dog, and things that remain formless without a shape and a name, generated in my innovative listening that strives to follow his journey but ends up hearing my own, built from things I have heard, things I can imagine, and things I might come to hear mingling on the spot where the flies buzz.

The sounds create mobility, and stillness stretching the landscape into the familiar estranged, removed from its purpose and emptied of its human cargo, denied a provenance or destination. What remains are sonic textures that expose the land as fragile and tenuous moments connected by the pull of the engine vanishing into its journey.

It is Pierre Schaeffer's train, Andrei Tarkovsky's train: trains stalking a terrain defined by the absence of use, drawn together and realized by its sound. They sound different points that make a journey and build a space in time that I hear in passing and that the sound passes without making connections. So it is not the geographical locations between Los Mochis and Veracruz but those produced by our journey: mine through the work and his through the territory that the sound creates and erases. Watson's ghost train also brings forth my past train journeys, up the Gotthard, out to Wales, down on the sleeper to Sicily and with the Wiener Walzer across to Budapest and back many summers ago. He brings with him the historical narrative of the train, the restaging of that journey, facts and made up bits, research, and anecdote; I bring another time that is still here in my experience of the present.

It is not a ghost train in the sense of being supernatural or frightening, but in the sense of being formless, suggestive of forms of connections and purposes, rather than making them. Bound by tracks the journey takes the ground, builds the ground, and uses the ground in its own groundlessness to hover and sway as a sound diffusing a landscape it no longer inhabits.

Do I trust Watson to have recorded it all there, and do I care about such authenticity, what would it give me, whose reality? The reality of the map, a dotted line drawn faintly with a pencil on parched and crumbled paper, the reality of the mythology of the train, its political history or social consequence, the reality of the object of the train, of the track: deliberate falsities, inventions, fictions, parallel stories, overtaking trains, broken down trains . . . metal bending to tell a story that moves on and on?

Watson dedicates the CD to Pierre Schaeffer, and like Schaeffer's seminal work *étude aux chemins de fer* (1948), Watson's interest seems less in recognition but in the process of perception, in what the listener does with the sounds he is given rather than what she knows about them—the journey he constructs, the time it opens for her, the possible time that runs parallel and challenges the actual time with bubbles of nonchronology, curious distortions, passing, and wandering. The ghost train expands and extends time as much as the Palm House expands and extends space. Into the certainty of seconds or minutes sneaks an expansive invisibility that implodes the size of time and where it is going, changing directions, and adding pauses that skip the chronological progression. The sound produces time as a materiality whose density and motion Watson's composition plays with to build a track that goes not in time but builds it. Layers of memory,

past and present mingle to produce a contingent time, the possible and possibly even the impossible time of my journey.

This is not one train and this is not one time but many different possible trains and possible times that run through the ages and will go on running on the tracks of Watson's album. The line gone over again and again, some rhythms meet others double up or fall apart, the train is not a certain thing but a mobile thinging, plowing through the landscape that necessitates it and that it brings into being, expands and extends, into the multiple times of its spatiality.

The time of sound is made of complex materiality, many layers of listening, contingency, and reciprocity. I do not just go forward but stop, pause and contemplate, get involved in another time that creates this time. It is the temporal slices of the landscape that Watson's train passes as ghost, who reveals their existence and who hints at other temporal layers that might be hiding there too, and that we might access on another listening journey. Thus, between the palm house and the ghost train the landscape is revealed as a multiplicity of worlds made from times and spaces that we inhabit as a universe of contingent environments, whose present actuality does not necessarily involve the plurality of all that could be, but compresses what could be into what exists in nominal significance.

Sonic environment as possible timespace world

The artist listens to and produces the possibility of the landscape from the possibility of time and the possibility of space, hinting at the plurality of reality and challenging the singular actuality it is presented as. The invisible mobility of sound informs and incites this exploration and invites the listener to enter into layers of possibility to understand the construction of the real and participate in its reconstruction: to build a timespace world of the possible and make it count within current notions of actuality.

I arrived at the possibility of sound tentatively in *Listening to Noise and Silence*, particularly via the ability of radio to question objective time through the blind temporality of its continuous stream and to subvert the spatiality of the actual world by responding to the spatiality of its own medium: a space created "out of the dark from the unexpected moves of sound."¹³ Through listening to a ghost train and a palm house I continue these deliberations, which motivate my enquiry into the notion of possible worlds as it is discussed in the philosophy of René Descartes and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and later in the philosophy of logic, literary theory and games design study, to bring out from the plurality of the soundscape an understanding and articulation about the plural complexity of the world that cannot be pinned down to one actuality unless we reduce it ideologically and deliberately to what we want it to be.

Listening to the landscape's pluralities and possibilities, hearing the dense multiplicity of its mobile production, allows us to challenge the singularity of actuality and articulate a different sense of place and a different sense of self that lives in those possibilities and shows us how else things could be.

The suggestion is not that the soundscape is otherworldly, mystical, strange, but that it proposes an alternative point of view, or alternative points of view, on what the world is, and how we live in it, showing us what else it could be and how else we could inhabit it. Sound slices through the visual frame and organization to propose others: temporary, invisible, and ephemeral re-framings that demand our participation and re-frame the listener also. These are worlds of mobile invisibility, timespace worlds created continually and contingently from the plurality of time and space created in the sensory-motor action of perception, producing the landscape as temporal environments which we inhabit and which we extend into their consequences by how we inhabit them.

For Descartes and Leibniz the discussion of nature, the landscape, is tied to the idea of God, its creator. He can imagine and create any world and thus he is the necessity of that world, which decides and shapes its actuality. What is actualized is decided by a "divine mechanism":¹⁴ God is infinite and perfect, while humans are finite and imperfect, and thus the possibility is God's. For Descartes there remains then only one actual world but possible worlds are accessible first through intelligible and then through realized extensions.¹⁵ However, given that God sits at the head of the chain of reason that gets us to any of those possibilities, realized or intellectual, the possible worlds reached through either cannot be that different from the actual one. They are not autonomously possible but are the latency of the actual world. They are its zones: "There are thus two zones of truth: the zone of absolute truth, and the zone of that which is not false and, as not false, can be affirmed as true. This positivity gives way to a negation of negation. But thanks to the divine guaranty, Descartes fully obeys the order of reason."¹⁶

For Leibniz too the actual world is chosen by God as "the most perfect of all possible worlds" a choice which 'had been prompted to permit the evil which was bound up with it, but which still did not prevent this world from being, all things considered, the best that could be chosen.'¹⁷ He relates the actual, the most perfect of all possible worlds, very closely to all other possibilities. These are worlds that stay in reference to each other that remain in one universe of possibilities differentiated only by that moment of choice. "For this existing world being contingent and an infinity of other worlds being equally possible, and holding, so to say, equal claim to existence with it, the cause of the world must needs have had regard or reference to all these possible worlds in order to fix upon one of them."¹⁸ For Leibniz the cause of the world's actuality is God, who is its necessity, the bearer of all reason, and truth within this world. But the "regard or

reference” of other worlds, the close bond it alludes to between the possible and the actual, invites a fertile imagination of what could be generated out of the potentiality of worlds if somebody else were in charge.

Our nature, our sense of the landscape and our place within it, is different from that of Leibniz and Descartes because our sense of God, of reason, truth, and necessity is different. Our landscapes are manmade, literally and metaphorically. They are built and built around us, by us, through our sense of nature filtered not through the eyes of a higher power but through scientific reason, knowledge, language, and measurement. The creator is not God anymore; truth and reason have lost their supreme author and in its place comes a post-enlightenment scientific reason paired with individuality, self-interest, and ideology, all of which can be heard, fostered, and challenged via a sensibility toward the plurality of sound. The contingency is not God’s but ours, and if God is still there, he is mediated by our desires and anxieties about who he is and how he relates to us.¹⁹ We might still consider him as we contemplate the world, but our individual and temporal position reflects to us a more contingent truth and reason that articulates a personal necessity elaborated in relation to a rational plan of the world, rather than according to a universal and absolute belief. God’s view is replaced by the viewing platform of individuality and reason, showing us the geography of our own rationality. This is an agnostic version of Michel de Certeau’s position atop the World Trade Center, surveying the unified text of the city driven by a desire for an absolute knowledge of the seen.²⁰ The chain of reason that determines the necessity of this visual topography is not individual; however, rather it is political and economic as well as ideological and social forces that determine the possibility of the actual world. This normative possibility is represented in a geography that produces visible maps, which chart a certain terrain: map paths and determine the impassable.

Traditional geography produces a positivist cartography of maps without sentiment, a taxonomy of place—a topological construct of the actual from above, literally and ideologically. If we take away both God’s view and the platform of reason, as an actual and a metaphorical position of survey and consciousness, what we are left with is a geography of doubt and anxiety created contingently in the singular and solitary action of mapping from individual paths a formless and untraceable landscape in that we share through our action rather than on its terrain, and whose geography remains anxious and affective: full of doubt, uncertainties, and the pathology of who we are.

Human or social geography answers the positive cartography of maps as well as the anxiety of formless mapping through its focus on human interaction within the landscape, and produces its maps from social practices and relationships. This focus on action, on interaction, in principle, opens the door for sound to enter the geographical discourse and thus at

least potentially invites sonic possibilities into the frame of geographical investigations: to come to think of a geography not only of the visible world but of the invisible sonic worlds and sonic socialities and subjectivities that might happen within them. In practice, however, sound is treated mostly as an embellishment, providing content for visual data or demonstrating processes imminently transcribed into a visual language. Overshadowed by the persuasive nature of a visual topography, sound remains unable to overturn the principles of geography to show us a more doubtful and ephemeral world from down below.

Social geography replaces God and cartography with human agency, which includes sound and listening; it does not grant that agency possibilities however, but only uses it to observe and endorse the actual. “Geography is, after all, a quintessentially visual enterprise, traditionally using observation as the route to knowledge, and regarding sight as the measure of truth [. . .] geography has tended to revel as much as many, and more than most, in what we might think of as visual ideologies.”²¹

But how do we map the world in darkness, where the landscape is plural, opaque, and inscrutably private? What sort of geography maps the unseen mobility of sound?

Listening we do not observe but generate, and we are always part of the soundscape we are listening to. We take part in the production of invisible maps that create a temporal geography that does not show and tell, neither the divine, the social nor the map, but generates a plurality of sonic timespace environments that include memory, anxiety, and sentiment. Sound invites to walk and produce uncertain paths that build a contingent geography between the self and the world in which we live, without insisting on a central or determining authority, neither divine nor scientific. Thus, we remain embodied in the obscurity of what we cannot see rather than positioned on a certain path.

The possible worlds of Descartes and Leibniz, considered through a sonic sensibility, are not determined by God or by science, which are not its necessity, the bearer of its reason and truth. Instead, sonic possible worlds are “chosen,” as in generated, by the listener and reveal the contingent possibilities, sonic “extensions,” of actuality in which they take part not through a “negation of negation” but through negotiation between your invisible world and mine.

The Exhibition Road tunnel

sounds the geography of its own location in the shape of a dinosaur roar. Children trying their own voices in the tummy of the beast bend its unyielding structure. Visually the tunnel has a certain shape that explains the acoustic properties of its built and outlines the function of

its design: to unremarkably direct people in two directions. Sonically it is more complex and confusing, expanding and coming together at different places, giving space and taking it, breaking in and out of a rhythm that has no beat. At one place it explodes, at another it remains firm, sending wheels and feet in all directions. I am listening in passing, passing through the stomach of the beast whose roar is above but reverberates below.

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Sonic timespace is time and space as verb, as thing thinging. It does not measure or survey a place but is place as sonic production that sounds as invisible mobility through which I hear its geography that triggers the mapping of my auditory imagination.

It is through this sonic mapping of place as the hearing of sound as well as of my auditory imagination, that listening, as sonic sensibility, contributes to social and human geography. “It is the subject inside sound, listening, and reciprocated in its soundings, whose place and identity is tried on the fluid maps of a ‘sonico-social-geography’.”²² It is this sonic sensibility that imports the affective into the science of place: in sound we hear the pathetic as in the affective nature of the world. This pathetic is not its fallacy, it is not a criticism or an untruth about an absolute world, but is the truth of the world heard in its unseen mobility. It is another truth about the place, the sense of its affective geography, which could make another layer available to its geographical exploration: the mapping not only of actual spatial constructions and processes of society and identity, but also of the possible spatial relationships and subjectivities that each action makes thinkable and doable.

Sonic geography is an agency, a practice of walking and listening, doing and redoing. There is no measure, there is no map, just the present materiality unfolding in our ears—hearing our own geography.

An affective geography of possible worlds, generating the sonic environment

The traveller walking walking walking through (2010)

Clare Gasson’s voice walks through the room, accompanied by its own shadow, and I do not know which is which. They seem to look at each other, sometimes quite anxiously, sometimes in joyful togetherness, other times oblivious of each other, neither knowing who is following who, but together they make one rhythm out of anticipation and division—staggered unison off set and yet finding room together, building a room that encompasses

the geography of the site of her performance, inside Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol, and the geography of where she talks about, the town of Bath, in the place of my listening. Her voices build the tension of those different locations and extend those locations in the time of the narration to build the place of their performance.

the traveller walking walking walking through, scripting the city from the text to the rhythm to the action, walking walking walking through . . . between the walking and the listening and the walking and the breathing . . .²³

The voices meet in refrain and move on their own paths, sometimes in repetition, sometimes in autonomous articulation about listening to the city walking. From her idiosyncratic canon she builds a piece, a work that becomes a dark and intimate world, her world and eventually also our world, within which we appreciate its formless form. We are seduced into this world by her voice and a bluish light, the torch Gasson is holding over her text, her surroundings gradually darkening. This focused light guides her voice through the darkness and illuminates our own listening journey that becomes a journey into the landscape that she builds with her voice. A space that would otherwise become entirely black is increasingly concentrated onto this one point of illumination, this one visual contact we have with a voice, with a place that expands into the dark to become all it might be. For the duration of the performance, we are mesmerized by her voice that we follow like the faint glow of the light from which it emanates.

The voice tells us of a place, a town that she visited before and walked through then, to build a new place to listen to now. Description meets judgment, doubt, and certainty cancelling each other out. One story, two stories my story her story unfold, protract, in-fold and walk on, through repetition, personal encounters, and factual information none of which I want to prove as true but only follow, into a town built as real from all her fragments and mine.

There is a poltergeist too, a third voice beating the drum and giving it rhythm. “Knock – sounds – knock,” the microphone hits the box on which Gasson sits with her voice, making a work making a town out of its outline, out of its beat, affecting our surroundings. Its tapping and pounding is the manifestation of the imperceptible, that in the town told of, which is not there for certain and yet we sense in Gasson’s voice as it accompanies her into this space. It is Gasson’s own presence in the town she tells us of that she cannot access but we can hear in her sound. It beats the rhythm of her current location that her speech fills with the place over-there to become a place over-here full of sentient noises, spirits, and ghosts. “Knock – sounds – knock,” the microphone drums the box she is sitting on, marking

space, physical space, and spiritual space as the place of the world of her work that we get lead into as into a séance, and come to inhabit between the factual and the phenomenal—a world whose author she is but whose inhabitant we become.

Bath, the actual town she tells us of, seems a pre-text, a text about text rather than a town. Her spoken text builds another place, a possible place that is the location of her voice unfolding the town in its possibilities, and that could be anywhere. I follow not the real but the possible, “up Beaconhill” and “down Richmond Rd.” I follow the bluish light that glimmers ever smaller and dimmer as my only beacon in the night.

This encroaching darkness that lights a bright imagination recalls Merleau-Ponty’s night. Merleau-Ponty’s notion of place, which emerges out of Martin Heidegger’s phenomenology, accords space a universal power to connect things as place, and gives the subject the agency to perform these spatializations. However, the place of Merleau-Ponty’s spatializations is visual, brightly lit, not a dark and ghostly phenomenon. It is only when faced with the night that another space emerges from his philosophy, a space that is sustained by a sensibility that comes from darker and deeper recesses of the mind than reached by daytime contemplation, where I do not connect things before me but unite with what is around me. Merleau-Ponty’s night is the place sound makes: “it is pure depth, without foreground or background, without surfaces and without any distance separating it from me.”²⁴ It is a space that starts from nowhere and enwraps us in the contingent place of our imagination for us to inhabit in all its possibilities, releasing our bond with one actual reality in the imagination of all that is possible. Merleau-Ponty’s daytime is ordered, transcendental always already constituted and “sustained by thinking which relates its parts to each other.” His night by contrast “brings home to us our contingency”²⁵—the contingency of our private life-world: our experiential world, where we hand ourselves over to the phenomenal, let go of the visual and give in to the spell of the invisible in the night.

Gasson does not keep this night separate from the day but merges the two; imagination meets the rational mind; the formless unites with the deformed, so that in a Nordic light we may approach Bath at daylight with a nighttime glow that invites us to see the interplay between possibilities and actualities, to recognize how to build the town from all it is and all I bring to it and all she talks about, into a plurality of towns and places that we have to negotiate in a geographical practice rather than its science.

Listening to the possibilities of the night brings a sonic sensibility into the daytime hours. In the night I need the perceptual faith that idealism casts aside in its quest for a knowable ideality; instead, I am knowing, and knowing I awake the next morning to make a bond between variants of the same world at night and day. This is a faith not in the absolute of the map

nor of God, nor even in myself, but in the contingency of perception and social relations as practices of mapping and doubting and thinking the real as a contingent reality made up of actualities and possibilities depending on where you stand. A sonico-social geography produces the topography of the night: the geographical practice of walking in dark terrain, whose blind mapping includes phantasms and visions about who I am as well as about where I am.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology admits possibilities to accompany experience and knows the fragility of the real. "I thought I saw on the sands a piece of wood polished by the sea and *it was* a clayey rock."²⁶ This possible vision is not an illusion, and it is not the "imagination" of the night, but the logic of daytime vision that ultimately refers back to one real object: the clayed rock. Merleau-Ponty calls them "dis-illusions": the loss of one truth, one evidence, and in its place comes another in the shape of an opinion. For him perceptions are mutable and probable rather than real: "But what is not opinion, what each perception, even if false, verifies, is the belongingness of each experience to the same world, their equal power to manifest it as *possibilities of the same world*."²⁷

Merleau-Ponty's possibilities are not real possibilities, but possibilities of the perception of the real world, of which they are but opinions. They are however the real possibilities of our life-world: of the world, which we experience privately and contingently, and which we generate and reciprocate in this experience but which remains a world for us. Opinions and dis-illusions of the daytime world are overcome in "progressive approximations" toward one real world, Merleau-Ponty's transcendental world. The day assesses and re-orders our dis-illusions into the shape of one actuality, which is not "a movement toward adequation" but is the discovery of the world that was there before without us knowing it.²⁸ When we move within his nighttime sensibility however we do not discover the world as it is, but stumble and tap in the dark generating and knowing the world as it could be. Merleau-Ponty's daytime world remains singular, transcendental, and rational, his dis-illusions are but variants of "this unique world that 'there is'."²⁹ But his nighttime world holds the promise of a phenomenological possibility that does not feed an a priori but takes part in the production of a passing actuality, "what there could be," generated from our private life-worlds that we negotiate in moments of coincidence when mine and your possibility enter the actuality of the real world nourishing its fragility from the mobility of the unseen. These negotiations of our private experiences do not negate each other but shimmer as invisible contingencies and bring us to the plurality of actuality. Dis-illusions of the night are the sonic possibilities of the day that do not approximate a single actuality but partake in its plurality. In the darkness of sound, opinions become variants of the lived world, initiating the idea of a "phenomenological possibilism."

Truth and necessity look different in a dim light at the end of a mouth spelling out words that walk a town we do not see. Gasson's voice in the darkness builds from this nighttime sensibility the spell of a possible town as a possible work that is a world we inhabit in our listening, walking through it like de Certeau's "Wandersmänner," blind and full of anticipation, we are not following but producing the text of the urban landscape she spells out.³⁰ We cannot read the town, we cannot read its semantic text, but must inhabit its semantic materiality, "from the text to the rhythm to the action . . ." . . . that we produce with our own anticipation, motioning her footsteps to reveal their mobility that we are listening to and hearing the town in.

There are lorries and articulations, driving the town into its shape, the shape of the artwork.

One pound store and fruit and veg store . . . a better mix all around here . . . a friendly bakery . . . magnolia trees and care homes and care homes and care homes . . . and the glove on Michham Hill.

It is a psycho-geography of a very particular kind that has lost its object, the place, in the poetry of space that extends the tension of its time. It is more Arthur Machen than Iain Sinclair, more psychic than geography—generating not a truth about an actual place but inventing its possibilities that might well be an untruth that has lost its measure and now stands as the only truth available producing distress and apprehension.

I hope you never may for as I saw that face at the window, with the blue sky above me and the warm air playing in gusts about me, I knew I had to look into another world – look through the window of a commonplace, brand-new house and seen hell open before me.³¹

Personal stories wind around streets and reveal a town from the mobility of footsteps, pounding hearts, and breathing climbs. The quotidian takes on a different sense, the sense of our own anxious and solitary trajectories that light up the road ahead in a plurality of paths. The torch we stare at is a decoy that gathers our private listening into one visibility but fails to take care of the plurality that unfolds in the dark. Its blue light produces Leibniz's 1710 explanation of this world as "the best of all possible worlds" in a twenty-first-century illumination, while the darkness invites the private sonic worlds of our narrations to echo all the other possible worlds God had in mind also. Post-enlightenment, and for a post-modern or indeed a post-post-modern subject, the idea of God, not maybe his actuality, has a different value and power, and we understand it to be what is in *our* minds, *our* contingent and individual perception that actualizes the best possible world. Gasson's twenty-first-century rendition

of Leibniz's eighteenth-century thought retains the principle of *possibilia* and unfolds it, out of sight, in an auditory imagination. This allows her to ignore assumed truths, about a place, about a town, about anything, and presents the idea of reality as a sphere composed of a plurality of invisible things thinging. Her world is based not on God but on a different power, the power and imagination of the individual, for whom she invites different spirits to take part in the conjurement of its town.

Since Leibniz, possible world theorists have debated realist and anti-realist positions. Saul Kripke believes in the centrality of one actually real world against which all others are possible but not real,³² while for David K. Lewis every world is an actual world for somebody: "I advocate a thesis of plurality of worlds, or *modal realism*, which holds that our world is but one world among many."³³ His plural worlds are all as real as our actual world, which is only actual to us because we live in it. I believe with Lewis that actuality is not an absolute, but a matter of point of view. This is an internal and invested point of view; it is Gasson's view as she walks and mine as I listen, since it is the inhabitant for whom the world is an actual possibility while it remains merely possible for those outside who in their turn live in another actual possibility. Other worlds to Lewis are *unactualized* possibilities; however, if there are many worlds then every way that a world could possibly be is the way a world is for somebody. Listening, understood as inhabiting, allows for the consideration of reality and meaning from the mired position of living in a world: the reciprocity, complexity, and consequence that brings with it. It is us, the inhabitants of these possible worlds, who as listeners realize their actuality through the invested complexity of our generative reciprocity: being in the world.

The town as possible world and the work as possible world give us access to different towns and different works as worlds in a shared universe. This view allows for equivalence, a hierarchy-less modality of all sorts of towns and all sorts of works. This is freeing but also frightening, no more certainty gained by looking at a map when driving up the M4 past Bath. Instead, we can imagine a possible M4 that could lead anywhere, not just to Wales—"Along Fourfield Rise," who knows where the journey will end.

"No Beginning No End."

Face as Territory/Viso Come Territorio (2012)

Angus Carlyle's piece *Face as Territory*, recordings of different locations in San Cipriano Picentino, near Salerno in southern Italy, treads a quiet path through a European landscape. His personal recordings contrast the clamor of what is broadcast concurrently on political and economic channels. The sounds of goat bells, playtime, work, and leisure are a

humbling reminder of Europe and Italy beyond its political intrigue and financial troubles, of a place where people live quiet lives that are not heard in the hubbub of political wrangling but that have their very own sonic particularity and local intensity.

The work consists of an online map of the region plotted with little blue dots that grant me access to small sonic narratives recorded by Carlyle wandering through the area: up and down hills, into farmyards, playgrounds, cafés, saw mills, and olive groves. It is a rather shy exploration. He keeps himself in the background, and only reluctantly as for instance in *Mamma Mia* do we hear his voice: drawn into conversation by a little girl he apologizes for his inability to speak Italian. His presence is apologetic, aware of his outsidership, unable to communicate he documents. Having heard him once though we know he is there, I can see him in the corner of my auditory imagination. Through such glimpses of his mute transparency, we are there, shyly exploring too: moving from dot to dot we produce our own personal walk through a territory generated by sound.

Carlyle's presence grants us access and invites us into his narrative which is not a fiction in the sense of an untruth, a story only, but which is the actuality of his encounter that in its reality enables mine and expands how I think of my actuality that includes my thoughts about Italy, Europe, its politics, its daily lives. Having visited the environments built in his recordings, we will never return to our actual world, not because it is not there anymore but because our listening has changed; it has pluralized to accept new possibilities that were not obvious in this way to us before. This makes apparent why soundscape compositions, fieldwork, and phonographic recordings are relevant not only as documents of the over there but as expansions of the over here.

I am, as literary theorist Marie-Laure Ryan would say, recentered into the sonic world of *Face as Territory* which for this moment is my actual world, opening up new possible worlds indexically related to this actual world in a universe of possible worlds, one among which is the world I came from, and which I will go back to and make actual again; however, now it will be a different actuality linked to and infected by new possibilities.

For the duration of our immersion in a work of fiction, the realm of possibilities is thus recentered around the sphere which the narrators presents as the actual world. This recentering pushes the reader into a new system of actuality and possibility. As a traveler to this system, the reader of fiction discovers not only a new actual world, but a variety of APW's (actual possible worlds) revolving around it. Just as we manipulate possible worlds through mental operations, so do the inhabitants of fictional universes: their actual world is reflected in their knowledge and beliefs corrected in their wishes, replaced by a new reality in their dreams and hallucinations. Through counterfactual

thinking they reflect on how things might have been, through plan and projection they contemplate things that still have a chance to be . . . ,³⁴

It is important that the notion of fictionality does not trivialize nor render without consequence the exploration of the soundscape as possible world. Rather, it is exactly the notion of sound as a “fiction,” as an alternative world, that allows us to nontrivially reconsider the status quo of what we pragmatically refer to as actually real.

Sound is different from literary fiction in that it does not propose something but *does* something. It is neither a representation of an actual event nor the construction of a possible event, but *is* an event in all its possibilities. The notion of the fictional world of the composition and the recording allows us to think of the soundscape as another world, as a possible world, within a universe of worlds that includes the landscape of which it is one slice and from which it is accessible, and to which we can thus return, but with a new sonic sensibility that makes it look different: opened as the sum of various slices, infected with invisible possibilities.

While possible world theorists like Nicholas Rescher allocate the constructed, fictional possible world no agency and thus no consequence for the reality of the actual world,³⁵ when we follow Lewis’ suggestion that the way the world is, or the way we perceive it to be, is one way for a world to be, we get a different sense of agency and thus get to a different interpretation and consequence of possibilities. By considering Lewis’ idea that other worlds are *unactualized* possibilities that are actualized by our inhabiting of those worlds, we achieve a much more useful relationship between actuality and possibility. Adopting his radical realist view, we achieve a modality that is appropriate for the exploration of a sonic world system in which actuality and possibility exist in a critical equivalence, jointly creating contingent realities rather than representing one actuality.

Rescher fears the ontological costs of an uninhibited possible world theory that has lost its absolute center. By contrast, Lewis, whose possible world theory is based on an indexical actualism, is happy to bear those costs as he feels the benefits outweigh them in a logical space of possibility that represents a “paradise for philosophers.” For Lewis “modal realism is fruitful; that gives us good reason to believe that it is true” and “if we want the theoretical benefits that talk of possibilities brings, the most straightforward way to gain honest title to them is to accept such talk as the literal truth.”³⁶

Following Lewis I can relate those philosophical benefits to sound, and particularly to acoustic ecology and soundscape work: listening I inhabit my environment which thus becomes an actual possible world for me. His philosophical paradise is the opportunity to hear in a context unimpeded by ontology: to explore counterfactuals, philosophical propositions, and events, and imagine all they could be and how they could relate without a

core world to limit their centrifugal expansion. In this way, listening opens a paradise of sonic possibilities, free not only from ontological restraint but also from the truth and necessity that a visual logic demands. Sound, when it does not simply interpolate a source, does not obey the necessity and truth of an object but generates a thing thinging, and thus this thing can be illogical, contradictory, and untrue in relation to the idea of an object, but not in relation to its own materiality.

Sound's truth and logic is plural and it is unseen; its necessity is determined in darkness, not on the surface of the visible world but in its depth. Lewis radical realism enables me to bring Merleau-Ponty's nighttime listening into the "paradise of possibilia," to link the notion of possible worlds with that of sonic life-worlds, whose possibility does not sound abstracted, logical entities, but generates the phenomenological possibility of the world of those entities as a perceived world. In this sense, sonic life-worlds are inversions of possible worlds, focusing on the world experienced rather than on the entities made available for consideration within a world. However, they are complicit with each other, together they build, in the continuity between the logical and the illogical, the true and the untrue, all that the world can be and any way we can inhabit it.

Sound's truth is that of Merleau-Ponty's dis-illusions, opinions of perceptions that are variants not of one transcendental world however, but of the heard: confirming not a unique world but generating its possibility. Sonic possible worlds are private life-worlds that we negotiate: mine through yours and yours through mine, generating a contingent actual world in which we share but not always equally nor lastingly and that produces not a singular but a possible actuality—one slice of many slices of what the real could be.

The notion of a sonic possible life-world enables us to hear in the slice of sound an alternative landscape in which to imagine all that could be, a plurality of things, which we take as sensibility back to the assumed actuality of the landscape where it starts to contribute to the doubt we have in its certain form and from where it entices us to dig deeper, to consider the invisible depth of its surface, to come to know differently where and how it is we live.

To hear the soundscape as a phenomenological possible world, a possible life-world, situated within a cross-referential universe of mutually accessible possible worlds actualized through my inhabiting in listening, recentering myself in their sound, has consequences for my sense of self and my understanding of truth, reality, and knowledge. The pluralization of factuality and counterfactuality, as extensions of perception, bears fruit in the commingling of the possible actual landscape of my "home" world.

The map and satellite images of *Face as Territory* pretend a cartographic singularity and actuality that the work does not have. Staring at the map on the computer screen while listening to the sonic narratives, it soon goes

out of focus, and what I am left with are my own images conjured up in my listening to blue dots—making new shapes and formless forms out of blurred lines on a map. In my shortsighted gaze, the work produces an affective geography, a geography that maps the place as a product of emotional bonds between people, between people and animals, between people and things, and between people and the landscape, created and lived, made appreciable in sound. This geography is not that of San Cipriano Picentino and not of my living room either but that of their possibilities generated in my recentered listening, exploring the material that sounds there and bringing it back into the actuality of my present listening that is ever thicker and pluralized for it.

These sonic narratives do not share in the generality of the visual map, nor in the image we might have of an area around Salerno or Italy. Instead, they produce another visualization from the delicate particularity of its sound that is a reminder of place as home, as lived in by some, in comfortable familiarity, and utterly foreign to everybody else—an unpretentious homely home that no street view on a Google map can represent but sound can communicate the exclusivity and particularity of. This sonic experience of home, of lived native territory, produces neither the analytical clarity of spatial theory nor that of discourses on belonging and identity. Instead, it provides an opaque and sensorial sense of a place that remains invisible and foreign, but in its sonic vicinity reminds us of what belonging is: the plurality of the particular. Images spell out the limits of the portrayed, sound constructs inexhaustibly the experience of the encounter, and that is what we take home. Thus what seems foreign and remote as an image or a name becomes close up and personal in sound—no more so than when listening to *Buffalo Breath* on headphones, letting the animal lick our earlobes and breathe right into our ears.

Playtime too happens in my ears not on the satellite map. My own experience of growing up in a village, the church bells, children playing, expands the soundscape, at once narrating the foreign and offering a path to my own familiarity. The image remains in the present, fixed, awkwardly frozen, and flat, while the sound vibrates in my ears producing another world, a magical world of life lived now, foreign but imaginable through the affective memory I have of my own, triggered by the sounds at this particular blue dot creating the extensity of my present listening.³⁷

I am not following the map but mapping my own while listening. The lines of my territory are not those between the dots, between locations online, on the virtual map as a portrait of the real place. Instead, my lines are fragile threads mapping from my body a delicate net of connections that build a possible map, a possible terrain, a space built of my coincidence with the sounds online, which I temporarily inhabit but which also remind me that I am neither there nor have I come from there. Our lives are not separated by absolutes but by modalities, by the way things are and the way

things could be. Modalities are malleable, truths and necessities change according to context, and the things we have with us, real or imagined, are counterparts of things in other worlds that thus can change shape and meaning despite carrying the same name.

This understanding is reached only when we tread quietly, like Carlyle, unheard but open to all that sounds—when we remain in the shadow of the microphone and listen rather than recognize, in order to hear the particularity of this place in the acknowledgment of the otherness and difference of our own: an estrangement that paradoxically brings us closer to our own familiarity and that opens a new space in which we try to find a momentary coincidence with theirs rather than assume a given association. We are not at the center of this geography; this is not a humanist endeavor; instead, we inhabit a place made of time and space that centers us for the duration that we reciprocate it.

The worlds built by Gasson and Carlyle do not represent, map, or measure, but invite to inhabit, to walk around, to be recentered in, and make them actual through this shift in our circumstance. The experience and sense we gain from these worlds is not about them but about how we live temporarily in the environment they provide us with through sounds, and words, and voices, which we take back with us as a sensibility to re-actualize our actual world in its plurality. This geography is affective: an action of immersion, of emotional reciprocation and abandonment in its terrain. Their soundscapes, through their fictionality, are actual sonic environments for the time that I listen to them. I engage with their semantic materiality and feel reciprocated by it as in a phenomenological life-world: intersubjectively constituted by the sonic possible world generated in my inhabiting, glimpsing a different knowing of place and geography through my walking through, which I will not be able to shake off on the way home.

Modal philosophy offers a model to test and discuss relations, interactions, truths and necessities in a way that can be employed to consider the relationship of the soundscape to the landscape, of sound and a sonic sensibility to the politics and ideology of actuality, and of the voice as a possible counterpart to an actual body that cannot be tied down to one actual visual identity but can be so many different things.

I have no intention of arguing for a pure logic of sound, nor would I be able to explain and adapt the complex models of possible world theory as it is practiced in the philosophy of logic to listening and the soundscape. However, I want to work its ideas and basic principles in relation to a sonic phenomenology, to obtain for a sonic sensibility the benefit of a modality of worlds: the ability to imagine and explore the life-world of the soundscape as an alternative world that we visit and come back from with a heightened awareness and a different sense of sound and self with which we augment and challenge the actuality of the landscape and identity. I want *possibilia*

not to be just an idea, trivialized and marginalized as a mere metaphor that has no consequence and impact on the real actuality of the world. Only a nontrivial conception of the soundscape as sonic possible world will bring Lewis' theoretical benefits of modal logic to the practice of listening as the practice of an anxious and affective geography that maps contingently the invisible paths sound. The unseen worlds of the soundscape produced by this listening-mapping stand not opposed to the reality of the landscape but pluralize its conception and thus they need to be taken into account in the construction of its actuality.

Lewis' possible world thinking is useful in relation to sound as it allows for a consideration of reality and meaning via the subject living in a world—the listener—rather than via an abstract and hierarchical system of truth and meaning autonomous of its inhabitants and their perception. It sets up the notion of actuality as a matter of contingency; it also suggests a “semantic inhabiting” rather than a “semantic reading.” Semantic reading always happens at a distance and therefore neither implicates nor reciprocates the reader. The idea of a semantic inhabiting, by contrast, suggests an invested and generative participation and confirms a connection with the phenomenological inhabiting of a life-world: the world experienced by the phenomenological subject, who *is* through his being in the world and the world is through her being in it, in a temporal and reciprocal bind that actualizes the world through and for him from all her possibilities and those of the world.

Reciprocating the affect: Listening to a sonic possible life-world

Urphänomene (2012)

Signe Lidén ventures into the storm of Longyearbyen on the arctic island of Spitzbergen and listens to a huge empty steel construction elevated on poles. What is normally a desolate and mute building, a silenced symbol of the city's once industrious past, comes awake in the wind that sounds its present abandonment and produces an auditory imagination of what it was and might have been, and makes it what it becomes for me.

Listening I delve into a deep and mysterious unfolding of things of which I do not know what they are. I know what the artist tells us about this location, but out of the sound a different place emerges, one that might well have been recorded on Spitzbergen but whose present location and materiality is less clear. Dark mobility, grating expansion, rolling and crackling material moves around me turning in and out, turning me with it. As I imagine Lidén in the wind I am in the wind too, less cold I am sure,

but baffled and astonished by sound's ability to move us both in space and in time around a thing that is normally still, and still does not move but sounds the potential of movement of what it did once upon a time and what it can do in our imagination now.

In the gallery these mobile, churning, turning sounds are trapped in a concrete block, resting on the floor but suspended from the ceiling, from which they emerge and which in turn holds them into a visual silence a muteness even, that threatens to suffocate and yet lets go and makes apparent not the muteness of the sound but of the visual world: it is not the visual building on its stilts, swaying in the wind, but the sound and our listening that produce what is real as a fleeting materiality, a possibility heard in the cold arctic night that might never have been at all and yet it expands our actuality nevertheless.

Listening we recenter ourselves into a world of dark unfathomable movements from which we build a place that does not exist on a geographical map and that has no purpose and no context beyond this encounter. It is a timespace place trapped deep beneath the snow that keeps on covering my footsteps, preventing my return to base, and whose outline we cannot explore but whose semantic materiality we inhabit and which inhabits us: filling us with churning turning movements, reciprocating our body in its crackling pounding world, whose exploration is not a matter for big boots and survey charts but the sensitivity of contingent ears.

High up in the arctic where autumn and winter sit in permanent darkness, Merleau-Ponty's night seems an unremitting condition of being. Being intersubjectively in the night I do not see to know my vis-à-vis but build him in my blind perception: from the mobility of sound I build a mobile you that mirrors me in my own invisible mobility. Stability is but a shadow in these conditions, an assumption made useless in the dark, whose reciprocity leads to a different knowing: knowing about possibilities, what things could be rather than what they are apparently. Listening I hear the possibility of life-worlds that are not delineated by the visible but conjured from the invisible in sound, whose actuality is negotiated continually rather than assumed. The invisible of sound is not what via Edmund Husserl's phenomenology we logically deduce to know from what the visible presents us with.³⁸ It is not the back of the cube that we assume to see when we consider its front. It is closer to and yet not entirely Merleau-Ponty's perception that understands the visible as "an inexhaustible depth"³⁹ which is filled by the invisible that gives it its sensible appearance, its ideas, but which in turn can only exist through the visible to which it remains attached.

The idea is this level, this dimension. It is therefore not a *de facto* invisible, like an object hidden behind another, and not an absolute invisible, which would have nothing to do with the visible. Rather it is

the invisible of this world, that which inhabits this world, sustains it and renders it visible, its own and interior possibility, the Being of this being.⁴⁰

Merleau-Ponty's invisible opens the world to its being in possibility, but he still ties this possibility to the surface of a visible actuality which it expands but that restricts its depth at the same time. In sound there is no back of the cube *and* there is no surface however expansive. The back of the concrete block suspended in the gallery is present simultaneously with the front: there is no part, which is not there and I deduce from what is given to think to see the whole, or conjure up and expand from the dimension of ideas—there is no negativity. There is only ever the simultaneous presence of what I hear, and thus the sonic invisible is not known; it is not knowable; it cannot be deduced logically and cannot be thought separately, but can only be generated simultaneously in my sensory-motor action of listening as the possibility of sound: as a Being thing that I know through knowing not as ideas.

The possibilities of the acousmatic landscape

The arctic winter night renders Lidén's sounds acousmatic. Her soundscape is disconnected from its visual land: steeped in darkness behind a screen of snow, we do not know where sounds come from and only hear them for themselves and what those selves produce. However, her soundscape is not reduced but expands and pluralizes through its invisibility all that it could be. Her work is acousmatic in a way that develops the term as it is used concurrently particularly in relation to electroacoustic composition, whose interpretation it inadvertently critiques. Recording darkness in the night she provides us with the ultimate acousmatic experience. We do not need to perform a separation, a bracketing off of the sound from its source to hear the concrete object of her sound. Rather, it is the concreteness of the mobility heard that is its separateness as Being thing, as thing thinging.

The particular acousmatic of Lidén's work makes us aware that the term acousmatic needs to be reconsidered philosophically and in relation to practice. Its use has, on the one hand, become rather general, describing any sound whose source is hidden, intentionally or unintentionally. On the other hand, it has led to a very set method of composition, particularly in relation to electroacoustic music and its discourse, whose bracketing, rather than enabling sound to escape the concrete block of its source, performs a limiting of its sonic materiality for the purpose of aesthetic categorization and evaluation.

Lidén's recordings remind me that the work of Schaeffer: the concepts and processes of his explorations from the acousmatic into a concrete music,

are in many ways misrepresented and stultified in a current discourse and practice of electroacoustic music that seeks authority in the boundaries of discipline, to harvest clarity and a sense of “doing it right,” when the acousmatic is about suspending habits of thought and embracing the doubt that comes with such a deferment. What has become a mechanistic method of composition with a fixed sense of what its proper sonic materiality should be, was for Schaeffer a trial, a trying out, an exploring, a doing again and again, to listen and understand what that concrete sound might be.

His *A la Recherche d'une Musique Concrète* was written between 1948 and 1952 as a journal, first featuring dated entries, then organized by ideas and experiments. It is what now might be an artist's blog online, a temporary, ephemeral writing for and out of doing, in doubt about the previous and what is to come. Action activated by the suspension of habits and beliefs, and motivated by all that is possible.

End of April. I spend these days in a state of half belief. If you invent, you must get a patent. A half smile: can you patent an idea? It seems you can. I experiment tirelessly. It is surprising to note how *the same process* carried out endlessly and in different ways never entirely exhausts reality: there is always more to be learned, and always some unexpected outcome takes us by surprise.⁴¹

In print, as an object, the book has a weight that the process of writing it does not have, and a finitude that it is not meant to have. To Schaeffer things are “initial,” “attempts,” experiments “in the spirit of ‘seeing what happens,’” expressing personal doubts and fears about his own undertaking and its effect on what was and what will be.⁴² “What harm was I doing to that respectable place in the first violins that my father had occupied for thirty years?”⁴³

The focus of interpretation of Schaeffer's work is based on its parallels with phenomenology and particularly with the phenomenology of Husserl and his notion of bracketing, his *epoche*: the reduction that does not seek to diminish perception to the empirical data of things, but to suspend all assumptions of an external world in order to get to the pure phenomenon as it presents itself to consciousness. In this way, Husserl gets hold of the essential nature of the phenomenon and of the perceiving ego, to understand their logic, which to him exists before perception and thus can be discovered.⁴⁴

Rather than focusing on the logical phenomenology of Husserl, Schaeffer's project, as a work in progress, not as finished method, has probably more in common with that of his compatriot and contemporary Merleau-Ponty, however, whose phenomenological reductions are less efforts of analysis and more a practice of perception. Merleau-Ponty brings the psychologism of the perceiving body, rejected by Husserl, into phenomenology, which

thus includes the outer world and the inner world of the subject equally in her sensory-motor actions toward the world, understood as the motion of being in the world of perception.

Merleau-Ponty's reductions happen in the being in the world, on the body, on the material, as processes of perception, they involve phantasms and dreams, and are motivated by doubt in the perception of the real: urged on by uncertainty rather than mathematical curiosity.

Husserl's phenomenology explains Schaeffer's project after the fact. It concurs with the logic and truth of his outcome, his taxonomy of sonic objects, "objets sonores," a set of visual symbols drawn and detailed in his *Traité des objets musicaux* from 1966, 14 years after his journey began. They portray a sense of essence, of phenomena distilled that have however lost their phenomenological agency.

Husserl meets Schaeffer in his taxonomy not on his path. The path is the journal of experiments of thoughts and counter-thoughts and contradictions that are not meant to end but to continue, proposing only temporary strategies and reporting contingent developments. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology mirrors such a practice and continues it. It too has no end; the end is an illusion of transcendental idealism, whereas the process reaches his dis-illusions. There is no phenomenological and there is no acousmatic ideal; there are only processes, listening and doubt.

Merleau-Ponty lived and worked in Paris at the same time as Schaeffer. In 1948 he gave seven radio-lectures on "The Development of Ideas" broadcast as part of *The French Cultures Hour* revealing his phenomenological world of perception. His voice was in the air that Schaeffer would have breathed, and even if no biographer can find an explicit meeting point they have met in the feel of Paris, on the airwaves, in the streets, in the *Zeitgeist* of post-war doubt and uncertainty about all that was, and how it should be in the future for the traumatized bodies returning home to find it different.

This shared spirit seems to me a more convincing and useful influence than Husserl's pre-war focus on essence, as it formulates a phenomenological attitude that practices rather than analyzes the doubt in natural habits and stayed assumptions, and invites us to listen in doubt and hear a current concreteness of sound, rather than to focus on its methods and arrest its taxonomies.

In the dark arctic night, Lidén is in doubt about what she hears and I am in doubt when listening to her recordings. It is Paul Cézanne's doubt on staring at the same hill in the Provence again and again: a creative disbelief in stable realities forming deformed actualities, looking instead for the mobility of the brush stroke, the movement of the sound to give us an experience which in its plurality encompasses all it might be.⁴⁵ Bracketing is not about relieving us from that doubt to offer a concrete object to analysis. Rather, it is about ensuring that the hill, the sound, thus perceived in its concrete temporality does not lean for stability on its context but remains

in motion, a vague shape, formless and fluid, left in the dark to be guessed at continually forever again.

Through the Looking-Glass: Buildings [New York] (2001)

Francisco López blindfolds his listeners to get them into the world he builds for them from the soundscape recorded, processed, and manipulated. He demands a focus away from the functionality of the visual, “to access our individual and collective inner worlds of memory, fantasy and reconstruction of experience.”⁴⁶ His is an augmented acousmatic strategy that does not construct Pythagoras’ screen to hide the action but covers the listeners, shutting of their access not only to the source but to their habitual context of listening also.

Following López’s request I sit in the dark, my eyes firmly shut by a blindfold Ed Baxter of Resonance FM had imprinted with SHUT YOUR EYES TO ART to make people focus on the blind space of radio. Unlike in López preferred performance scenario however I sit alone.

Typically I arrange the audience around me, I am in the center and can hear more or less what the audience is hearing. I use the blindfolds in order to get individual darkness. I explicitly say before the performance that wearing the blindfold is optional but highly recommended, because without being able to see we hear better. There is also an element of commitment, you accept that ritual and become part of a collective situation with other people who are blindfolded.⁴⁷

López looks for a commitment to the social situation, to inhabit his work as world collectively, producing a listening condition that invites a reconsideration of the source of sociality as much as the work reconsiders the source of the recorded context.

I have read the sleeve notes; I know where I am supposed to be, although of course I do not know where that is sonically but only in terms of the name, the function, and purpose or location of the building I am asked to listen to: ten different interior spaces in New York, each with their own significance and history from which López separates us visually to bring us closer to the possible place we hear in sound, which we inhabit and produce contingently in the now of his composition.

I practice recollections of the familiar estranged, not quite this and not quite that either, blown out of proportion, shrunk, and rendered formless: the sound of domestic appliances and the hum of the built environment change into something else. Sounds that might have a source lose their access to a presumed actual world. They are dragged into a new

context without context, a world of patterns in motion, a constant flow rather than tactile visible meanings and boundaries. López's rooms are textures and rhythms: sounds spinning relationships between different movements rather than toward something. The insistent stillness of these textures answers the sounds of my current habitat and takes them into its immutability that is not still but does not move somewhere, and instead expands on the spot into a place that is not here but is the possibility of here.

These sounds are not the keynote sounds of Schafer's soundscape project, marking out the soundmarks of a particular place, and nor are they Schaeffer's "objets sonores" as presented in his taxonomy of sound objects.⁴⁸ Instead, they are what is not in Schafer's scheme of good sounds, the lo-fi drone of the industrial habitat; and what is not in Schaeffer's system of sound classification but on his path: the experiments, the journey, full of doubt about his own project and the possibility of finding a concrete sound. López uses this doubt, this uncertainty about the nature of sound, to play with its object, not to re-signify it but to explore a sonic reality; not to give it a new name but to leave it nameless, floundering as a rhythm with no purpose and no aim but constantly so. He composes a building from invisible textures and rhythms that are not behind the visible surface of its walls but simultaneous with it that which the building is rather than its idea.

Inhabiting this world of crackling buzzing rhythms takes time. It takes time to build it in my ears and stand in it with my naked feet feeling its textures as they glide along my hands. It needs an extended duration to build from rhythms walls and experiences that immerse me in the world I build with López, a place in the time he gives from the space that is there to the place that could be there and now is here.

There are no breaks; I move from one interior to the next; they seem mutually accessible sharing in their sonic presence a connection and similarity. Their duration is the unfolding of space in my body and from my body. It is immensely physical as it does not circumvent the object, the building, but builds it through my listening body, which is not at its center, López is, but which nevertheless partakes from its own recentered position in the collective building of the walls of its possibilities. This is sound building the reciprocity of a life-world that creates not the actual world but produces the geography of the possible and negotiates the collective of its interior suggestions: the possible building that expands and critiques its name, location, and function without knowing its name location and function, by building a contingent one, and producing the "sensate sense" of a phenomenological experience.

As I access one building through the next my inner world becomes accessible too, knitted into the textures of López's outer worlds. Phantasms and dreams, conceptions and misconceptions start to drive the

rhythm: a story starts to evolve involving all sorts of airplanes, percolators, conflicts, and fears, built not from these signifiers but from sound. It is only a dream and yet it explores the fabric of the real—the overheard world that feeds the possibilities of the actual world.

Distances and closeness become simultaneity, new sounds changing shape, changing place of the rooms I am in, changing my shape and my place. Semantic material organizes itself in my perception against the pull of truth and necessity in the suspension of habits through which I inhabit the world blindfolded, sensitive to its movements and mine.

I am not reading the meaning of this sonic materiality as reduced “*objets sonores*,” but generate from their reduction a sensorial sense of what they might be. I am not layering meaning but expand sense in continually growing spaces, even if growing smaller: out of the same material forming formlessly different shapes, the agency of buildings, the motion of their inhabiting, and the stillness of their inhabitedness.

Later on more singular sounds call my body and I reciprocate. The peep-peep of the alarm is not aggressive yet it cuts through the rhythm and builds itself on another register. The alarm sounds an emptiness that is not the room as vessel but draws me to the condition of its Being empty, as in spaceless and timeless: a thing thinging for itself. Suddenly I am cut off, left adrift, floating in an open spacious texture that just about holds me still but makes me sway. The walls become thinner the image fainter until there is nothing, not his building not my building, no sense of what a building is, and as I lift the blindfold and stare uncomprehendingly at my surroundings; I am filled with doubt about the certainty of my visual actuality.

The life-world is never certain; it does not assume the conviction of the actual world but is one possible world of many possible worlds that are in the shade of the actual, which hides them in its singularity, but from which in truth it is built through collective negotiations and practices. The life-world is philosophically one and the same with the possible world but its phenomenological doubt and generative uncertainty free it from the necessity and truth of its logic.

The possible life-world is Merleau-Ponty’s logic: the non-sense of his *sensate sense*;⁴⁹ and it is the basis of Schaeffer’s *acousmatic project*, which too involves doubt, fears, and contradictions, and needs to be continued, practiced, and critiqued—started again and again, instead of being unquestionably believed in and continued as an ideology, a stable method. *Musique concrète* is a practice arising from the doubt in existing values, beliefs, and methods and should not be enshrined in ideology and technique, but should continually practice a concurrent doubt and that includes the doubt in its own values and methods even.

The *acousmatic* is a project not a strategy; it goes wrong and denies itself in the final scheme of objects that close the worlds the project opens. But if Schaeffer shares Cézanne’s doubt, he does it again and again not to reach

an ideal truth and knowledge but to respond to the uncertainty of the task with the doubt of his own practice that knows that in the solution lies the problem. The acousmatic is an action of focusing on sound, on reducing its context not in order not to see its source but to rethink the context which names and values the source as one actual object when it is a plurality of things thinging.

The term acousmatic then is predicative; it is a sensory-motor action toward the world blindfolded: plunging the world and the self into darkness and walking toward each other. It means to *do* an acousmatic exploration, one that like López's buildings explores the nominal framework of the social context by listening estranged from the nominal context of the heard. There is a phenomenological intentionality in his composition: the desire to explore the reality of the real world, to come to an experiential and contingent sense of that reality, manifest in the plurality of life-worlds, which the collective negotiates and accepts in both their logical and communicative as well as their illogical and contradictory Being.

Husserl's background in mathematics gets him to a phenomenology of logic, to necessity, truth, and reality, analyzed and validated by perception but not produced by the body. By contrast, Merleau-Ponty's psychoanalytical practice brings him the body that brings him to the world as a life-world that generates that body in its actions toward it. While Husserl's phenomenological reduction comes out of logic and his notion of a mathematical universe, Merleau-Ponty's comes from psychoanalysis and the body's inner as well as his outer worlds. Husserl's body is logical, concrete, and defined; Merleau-Ponty's is not the bearer of necessity but of its own weight.

López's acousmatic buildings are explored by Merleau-Ponty's psychological body that practices rather than analyzes the bracketed interior space. His is an acousmatic practice of the landscape, a performance and generative production of the buildings as acousmatic places, generated out of the time and space of their encounter through doubt in a singular actuality and faith in a plurality of what they might be instead.

Lidén's work brings to attention the problems with a current use of the term acousmatic and explores it in the cold arctic night where it meets Merleau-Ponty's body not to measure but to build the building silenced during the day and yet holding a whole town's past in its present sounds. López's work responds to that problem in the singular intentionality of his practice that performs, live, the acousmatic as a timespace moment: the bracketing off not only of the source, the means of recognition, but also of the habitual context of listening. In this way, both artists create a sonic environment in which we are immersed as in Merleau-Ponty's nighttime place, where we stumble in the dark generating and knowing the work as it could be, from the doubt in what it is into the experience of a life-world,

our private possible actuality, which we bring as a sonic sensibility to the production of the world as real.

Conclusion: Phenomenological possibilism

The use of possibilism in relation to sound does not aim to separate the soundscape from the landscape, to consider it an autonomous and entirely abstracted world physically removed from the actuality of the real world. Sound worlds are not fictional worlds in the sense of parallel worlds that have no ramification for the actual world. On the very contrary, sound worlds' fiction illuminates the plurality of the world: it breaks open the slices of materiality, interpretation, and the perspectives that furnish an apparently actual world with interests, self-interests, and ideologies. It is not a mental possibility but a concrete actual possibility that, when focused upon and taken into consideration, will change the way the other slices of the landscape commingle to produce the world.

The possibilia put forward here and throughout this book generates a phenomenological possibilism, where possible worlds and life-worlds meet in the generative practice of listening to try and negotiate, through language, words, and the tendency to be social, their participation in the notion of a concurrent actual world. Life-worlds are Merleau-Ponty's private worlds that play a part in the negotiation of the shared, the social world. They are invested in perception and bring a perceptual truth to the world. Possible worlds are Kripke's "miniworlds" that together describe "total ways the world might have been"⁵⁰ or, following Lewis' radical realism, the way the world is contingently and concurrently as an actual possibility for its inhabitant. The possible sonic life-world is where phenomenology meets logic, not in antagonism and difference, but in the mutual inhabiting of a semantic materiality, not read but reciprocated through the sound of the listener who is complicit in its construction.

I do not want to use logic to argue the veracity of a sonic semantics but want to utilize its framework of modality and possibility to generate an understanding of the soundscape as one slice of the landscape that pluralizes what we see through the complex simultaneity of its semantic materiality. The soundscape makes accessible, audible and thinkable, alternative states of affairs that allow us to rethink and relive the materiality and semantics of the real world through the possibility of sonic life-worlds that include affection, sentiment, fear, and angst and all those things that fall out of objectivity. The soundscape is then indeed not a slice of the landscape, as Ingold points out, but it is one slice of all the slices that make up the landscape in its commingling existence.

My aim is not to promote a separate world or separate worlds that are playful but ineffective in terms of influencing what is real and how it is talked

about. I do not intend to build a fiction, a scenario of make believe, that remains in the fictional realm. Rather, I want to engage, through sound, in a fictionality that transforms our view on the real and makes us rethink the singularity of one actual world. It is then about requisitioning the plurality of sonic possibility for the actual world, to implode the transparent notion of its reality in the obscure materiality of plural things thinging in dark mobility.

There might, in the end, be nothing logical about my endeavor, my use of logic liberally deviating from its aim, abusing its model. Instead, listening uses logic and turns it on its head to apply it not for the purposes of conferring qualifiers and restrictions of possibility and accessibility, in order to verify truth and reality, but to open it up, without any fear of ontological authority and truth, to the reality of a sonic world of things thinging the intersubjective reciprocity of a contingent life-world. Sonic possible life-worlds are not hindered by the necessity of the essence of its object as they do not have an object, and they do not provide a truth but generate their own contingency as interpretation, as truths and one and a half truths. However, despite all that, and if indeed in the end logic should be dismissed, it is the path, the walking through its territory and thinking its thoughts that grants me access to sonic possible life-worlds and makes available their possibilities to the reality of an assumed actual world.

I want to hear the sonic world as possible worlds, as counterfactual positions that I reciprocate, to investigate its semantic substance, “what it is,” through listening beyond the frame of factuality, knowledge, ideology, and aesthetic certainty, and come to understand how I inhabit that substance, how I partake in the construction of its reality, and how I can negotiate its value within the notion of actuality as a plurality, to know “what it is like” and “what it could be like also.”

This “what it could be like also” invites consequences for our appreciation of the landscape. We can start to hear slices of gender, of race, of belonging and migration, and other slices that have no name as yet but that too complexify a stable sense of place. It urges us to think of culture as invisible agency, as the simultaneous and unseen mobility of sound: actions and engagement rather than artifacts, outcomes, and visible relationships. A sonic culture is not about connections and exclusions but about practices connecting and disconnecting. Its geography does not produce maps and measurements but invites a constant mapping from myself through the sensory-motor action of listening into the world. These actions generate me and the world in a reciprocal process again and again, as the mobility of our own sound. A sonic culture produces an affective geography in that it maps the world through the pathetic triggers of its soundscape, activated in listening and building a plurality of life-worlds

from which we negotiate contingent actual worlds rather than assume one autonomous and singular actuality.

The notion of sonic possible life-worlds is not just a theoretical game of positions and positionings, playing with access and referential relationships, to try counterfactualty and alternativeness in the laboratory of logical thought however. Rather, it creates a sonic sensibility that leaves logic and permeates the everyday to trigger real life consequences, allowing the plurality of possible perceptions and worlds to enter the rationality of the actual world. This sensibility not only diverts logic, potentially introducing contradiction and even untruths into its scheme, it also subverts the idea of God and science, and with it the notion of an absolute that grants divine choice or objective reason over possibilities. Instead, it invites plurality to be lived out down here on earth, on the ground, underground, with its sound, in the realm of invisible social relations, proposing a simultaneous infinity that gives us possibilities that do not stand as dialectical opposites to an absolute, the source of things, but live among each other as what they are.

Having lost our measure in the dialectic authorities of God and science means that our own identity has lost the transparency that it held in opposition to them also. So now a contingent subjectivity needs to be found through the obscure mobility of sound in the mirror of silence that does not hold still.⁵¹ The loss of these absolutes also requires that truth and meaning are produced through inhabiting rather than by reading: generating knowing rather than knowledge about the world and forcing on us an ethics of participation: the need to engage, to participate in composing the mores of the world from its possibilities and contingent actualities, that are the temporary negotiation of my life-world and yours, in the dark mobility of both our sounds.

Sonic possible life-worlds give us a framework from which to explore the landscape as an environment and ourselves within it. This framework contributes and has consequences for everyday listening, soundscape studies, field recording, acoustic ecology, and soundscape composition in that it promotes a new understanding of the sensorial meaning of sound and suggests new strategies for the practical and theoretical interpretation of the sonic landscape. It invites us to know a landscape's geography not through perspective nor as chronology but as simultaneity; and to grasp its meaning not as sense but as non-sense as in sensate sense: sensorial sense that involves the body and the thing in a reciprocal knowing, one of the other, through which we practice sociality as sonic sensibility, that has a tendency to hear and to speak rather than a solid infrastructure of language to articulate and communicate.⁵²

The possibility of sound art will extend the notion of *The landscape as possible world* into the possibility of the work, developing a practice

of listening to sound artwork by entering it as a sonic possible life-world, to experience its semantic materiality by inhabiting it as a timespace place that reciprocates the listener and whose belonging to a universe of other works as worlds grants him access to a whole variety of worlds and works comparatively. The next chapter will use the framework of a phenomenological possibilism to reconsider notions of value, meaning and sense in sound art, and will explore through listening as inhabiting notions of representation, reference, and imagination, following the intuition of possibility into the motivation of artistic production and its criticism.

CHAPTER TWO

Into the world of the work: The possibility of sound art

Kolumba

the art museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne apparently sounds pigeons. I cannot hear any and so I strain my ears, which start to breed them from anything vaguely recalling coo cooing, flap flapping, rustling and picking. I imagine them from their absence; conjure them from my memory that sounds their presence as what I hear now. I add them to what there is. Inside and outside the building. The sounds appear through their invisibility, and merge with the city's soundscape: its humming, its chatting and laughter, and even with the deferential silence of the chapel itself.

SOUNDWORDS.TUMBLR.COM July 04, 2011, 10:23 p.m.

The imaginary force of the sonic artwork, rather than suggesting a parallel world, autonomous from the actual world, and thus without ramification or impact on reality, presents the phantasm of the real world and lets us inhabit it as the world of “what could be” or indeed of “what is” if only we listened. The uncontrollable and ambiguous nature of sound art presents not an untrue counterpart, at the limits of and opposed to the unmistakable reality of an actual truth, but prizes open a window on the ambiguity and uncontrollability of the reality of the actual world. Listening we live in this phantasmic ambiguity and generate the work as the world of our auditory imagination that expands into the world to make us see its phantasms.

Bill Fontana's sound installation *Pigeon Soundings* recorded in 1994, installed outside the art museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne, grants us

access to the concrete possibility of sound that pluralizes a visual world through the rustling and picking of unseen birds, illuminating the dark mobility beneath its stable façade. As I walk on through Cologne I take the concrete sound of Fontana's invisible pigeons with me and expand it here and there with a bark and a whistle, a chatter and hum, the laughter and screaming of the city until finally I arrive at the Dome of Cologne where I merge those unseen birds I might not have heard but imagined to hear, with those I hear and see aplenty here. Listening implodes the actual geography and distance between Kolumba and the Dome, a good few streets away. Through my affective geographical practice they come together, joining in a work that might not even have been there in the first place, to sound through flapping and cooing the vicinity of their mutual provenance.

The possibility of sound art moves from the landscape into the world of the work, appropriating the plurality of sonic possibility for our understanding and appreciation of the sound artwork: to question and expand aesthetic models of engagement and criticism and to propose new, radical ways to listen and hear the work in relation to the world of art discourse and the everyday. This chapter writes an invitation to hear the work as environment, as timespace place that we generate in our listening and that reciprocates us in what we hear, and pursues the concept of possibility not only in the realm of aesthetic fictions and parallel models of truth and necessity, but drags it out of the shadow of a visual aesthetic into the light of its sonic agency: to generate the work and the world in the real fiction of its gestures and actions.

As much as the soundscape offers an alternative perspective on the landscape, revealing the habitual and ideological slices of its build, the sound artwork expands this alternativeness in relation to aesthetics, representation, reference, and sense. It enables the exploration of aesthetic and referential slices of art practice, and how they determine meaning and value in discourse. The conclusions reached in relation to the soundscape in *The landscape as sonic Possible world* can very usefully be expanded and applied here in relation to sound artwork. A sonic aesthetics can be likened to the practice of an affective geography, inhabiting and walking through the work as world, to explore it from its ideational actualities *and* its material possibilities to contingently decide what it is and what that is like.

The idea of a phenomenological possibilism established in the last chapter enables the notion of a concrete artwork and gives us access to it as world, to investigate the perception thereof within the artistic context and how it might extend into an aesthetics of the everyday. It connects the private world of perception with the actual, the shared world of social interaction, by considering the plurality of private life-worlds that take part in the negotiation of this actuality from the contingency of their possibility.

For literary critic Ruth Ronen, possible world theory is interesting and useful for the exploration of fictional texts as long as they remain autonomous of its philosophical background in logic as well as of the ontology of the actual world. “Possible worlds are based on a logic of ramification determining the range of possibilities that emerge from an actual state of affairs; fictional worlds are based on a logic of parallelism that guarantees their autonomy in relation to the actual world.”¹ The use of possible world theory for a sonic aesthetic is equally untied from the philosophical background, using rather than obeying conventions of logic, negotiating and subverting at times even its methods through the sensibility of sound. However, unlike literary fictions, sound artworks are only autonomous from the actual world when considered via a conventional, aesthetics, more seen than heard: when their material is negotiated via a visual referent or source, producing in sound a visual meaning or idea that exists as an aesthetic fiction. When listened to, they sound in the actual world its possibilities: they change the soundscape of the actual museum; sound site-specifically the actuality of the urban environment; and make audible ideas of the invisible; and thus they expand and have direct ramifications for how we hear the real world and how we hear in the real world. Beyond reference, sound produces not an aesthetic parallelism that guarantees its autonomy from the actual world. Rather, it infiltrates the actual world and challenges how we might listen to it, aesthetically, in relation to art, as well as in relation to the world.

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.”² Sonic fictions do not propose a bridge between the actual and the possible but make the possibility of actuality apparent, building reality in the contingent and rickety shape of its own formless form. Thus, the sound artwork as sonic fiction is a phenomenological, a generative fiction, rather than a referential fiction. It is designed from the actions of its own materiality, not as description or reference of an object, a source, but as sound itself; we inhabit this materiality intersubjectively, reciprocating its agency in the sensory-motor action of listening as a movement toward what it is we hear.³

The reciprocity of this movement toward the sound artwork and the simultaneity of myself with the heard in listening demand new exploratory strategies. Both expose what in *Listening to Noise and Silence* I address via Juliane Rebentisch and Theodor Adorno, as the fallacy of much art criticism, namely its inability to grasp the spatiotemporal complexity of a work and make it count in a critical deliberation. The possibility of sound critiques and challenges conventional methods of criticism that remain at a distance and eschew the sensorial; that configure the work from preexisting referents and ideas rather than build it contingently, in the dark, through

the reciprocity of its encounter; and that do not write about it from the precarious complicity of that position as sound demands, admitting doubt and emotions, but remain certain about what there is.

Art criticism invites “intensionality”: a discussion of the work via discourses external to art: philosophical, political, and social texts and ideas, in order to expand how we think about the work as a work of art. Since sound only has a literary, an aesthetic fictionality that is referential and parallel when it is tied to an object or source, but has a fictional agency in its own materiality that expands into the world and makes it audible, criticism that engages in sound art needs to match this intensionality with “extensionality.” This extensionality serves to discuss the invisible mobility of the work, enabling sonic ramifications to pervade the actual art world and the actual everyday world, and make its plural complexity impact on discourse and criticism.

Visual art needs to remain autonomous, not as a modernist category but as a field of activity and discourse, in order to produce aesthetic objects rather than objects. It needs the professional autonomy of the discipline to pursue a critical counterfactualty of the world. In this respect it produces, like literature, referential fictions that have the ability for conceptual possibilities, are parallel to the world, and do not impact on the actuality of the real world. They produce what Umberto Eco calls “Small Worlds” and what W. H. Auden refers to as “Secondary Worlds”:⁴ worlds that are created from elements of the primary world they relate to, but that in the end remain autonomous from the reality of the actual world and its ontology, problematizing its ideologies and construction possibly, but unable to intervene in its discourse directly, the relationship being one of proposition rather than action.

Sound art, however, does not produce an object, either artistic or otherwise. It creates environments, timespace places that are contingent and reciprocal, invisible in the sense of unseen, offering not a logical complement and continuation to what is seen, but producing a mobile place of the heard from the dark possibility of all that sounds, without an ontological trace in sight. The world thus built is not small but extensional. It demands the body of the listener to be involved in what she builds from flimsy, fragile, and temporary walls that are not secondary to a firmer construction but are all there is, and that he inhabits and extends into the world as a sonic sensibility that must permeate how she thinks and talks about it also.

“The basic intuition behind possible worlds states that there are different ways things could have been, that there exist other possible states of affairs.”⁵ According to Ronen, this intuition is what motivates the artist, and thus the exploration of these other states of affairs, the “could have been” and even the “it is” if only we engaged differently, should also motivate perception and art criticism to include the inexhaustibility of artistic possibility.

Art criticism that focuses on the installation shot, on the score, and on the fixed and finite parameters of the work misses this intuition and ignores the sensorial semantic materiality generated and grasped in a phenomenological possibilism: the reciprocal and intersubjective inhabiting of the work's possibilities. It is this inhabiting—grasping and being grasped by the plurality of sound—which extends the work infinitively into the world, not to make the work mundane and trivial but, on the contrary, to grasp the complexity of its semantic materiality, to let it permeate our sensibility and our tendency to be social and to speak, and so to lighten up the world with its own sonic vitality.

It is from within the unreliability of the work, its uncontrollable nature, which criticism tries to define and stabilize in language, that the action of perception launches itself and mirrors its nature. We listen to art and see a work. Yet the sonic material brings forth its own nature: a dark and mobile world, ambiguous and unpredictable; a nomadic timespace environment, constantly revitalizing its context or even denying it, and beckoning us in to generate it for ourselves from its unreliability rather than from its certain form.

Listening accesses the invisible slice of the work. Sound's invisible is Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "inexhaustible depth"⁶ but without surface. There is no part, which is not there and I deduce from what is given to assume the whole—there is no negativity and neither can I summate the unseen from a synthesis of temporal points of view. A sonic invisible is not a mathematically obvious or a perceptually expected, but a true invisible that leads not to a sense of recognition and completeness but into the realm of the imaginary as agency and as extensionality. Listening to sound artwork I delve into the world of the incomplete and the unrecognizable to produce its shape in the formless form of its ephemeral sound and extend it in the ambiguity between the environment of my private life-world and an eventual shared world of aesthetic criticism and social interaction.

Listening actualizes the work as world. To hear the work is to enter it as world produced from the actuality of its ideas extending into the possibilities of its materialities. Between the work and the listener the world of the work expands and pluralizes.

For all my use of phenomenology and logic, I am however less interested in the philosophical consequences than in the sonic consequences of possible life-worlds: the consequences to auditory perception, to its aesthetic discourse and practice, and to a sonic subjectivity and objectivity. To reach these sonic consequences, I am using possible world theory not to provide mental images, metaphors, or ideas of possibilities, but as a real serviceable hypothesis that considers the sound artwork as a sonic possible world that has a concrete semantic materiality which we inhabit in listening and that we thus build presently from the time and space of our perception, and that we extend in negotiations to build the actualities of the real world.

Sonic worlds are not empty logical worlds, conceptual constructs, and they are not literary constructs, textual worlds, either; rather, they are concrete in their materiality inviting a concrete perception and a concrete subjectivity to respond to the demand of their invisibility, without simply making them visible. Thus, sonic worlds trigger not the production of visibility, but are the unseen action of the visual world, the blind mobility, the invisible slice, that is not guessed at or logically deduced from the seen, but needs to be explored in its sonic depth.

The sound artwork as environment: Cells and murmurs

Cells I–VI (1991), Cell (Clothes) (1996)

Louise Bourgeois' *Cells* are silent apart from the sounds that pass through them accidentally and occasionally from the murmur of the museum's visitors, the guards' walkie-talkies, voices and whispers, the rasping of clothing, and squeaking soles of those who step a little closer to look. They are complex installations of life, nominally mute, but including among all they hold and bring forth at least the potential for sound, as suggested for example in the huge gong and detached ear in *Cell IV* (1991).

For all their soundlessness they stage and invite the precarious complicity that sound demands, and admit, and insist even on doubt and emotions. Bourgeois' *Cells* or what she first termed environments are seemingly open and yet entirely closed rooms. The first six *Cells*, produced in the 1980s and exhibited together in 1991, are rooms delineated by doors without handles, wooden doors of different designs, some with glass, some with a glass pane missing, all inviting different levels of access but denying it at the same time. Visually we remain voyeurs, looking in on the signs and symbols of a separate world. We enter by the gaps and fissures between the doors and through the occasional glass panel, to extend ourselves into a world of socks and bed pans, lights, and glass shapes, sculptural elements and everyday objects that as things seem not to do anything but simply thing continually their own presence in the presence of other things.

The build is rickety and fragile; the doors have a tenuous hold on the timespace they build not to frame the things inside but to be with them, to together be inhabited as a world would be.⁷ They are not the outer edges but the invitation to go in and then to go out and implode the notion of boundaries, of the limit of the artwork, and seek its reality and extensionality in the world itself.

These are private rooms, private life-worlds but opened for contemplation, for encounter and negotiation with our own private life-worlds through

the speechlessness of perception into the tendency to speak, to be social and share in the articulation of a plural world. They make accessible and thinkable the contingency of the world against the backdrop of a visual aesthetic that seeks to know what it means and names the worth of it.

The objects gathered are removed from their certainty in function and purpose, and invite the phantasm of the world to extend them into what they might be. They are not ready-mades in a Duchampian sense however, as they do not realize themselves aesthetically through the context of art, but exist vicariously through the context of life.

These objects come from an actual life and reveal the plurality of what that is.

Despite the fact that the objects in the Cells are all evidently borrowed from a seemingly familiar real world, they systematically resist being slotted into any of the perceptual experiences that we have on hand as knowledge.⁸

Instead, they produce knowledge as physical knowing about living as constant connecting, disconnecting, and reconnecting of things, and time and space as place that involves the present and the past as it moves slowly but unstoppably toward the future and our own finitude, into a greater infinite. They question tacitly, how much one can ever know about living in the first place beyond what is on the body and from there conferred onto the things that clothe, nourish, bed, and relieve it, without ever being able to control any of those things.

Bourgeois' *Cells* are worlds made from elements of the real world exposed in their ambiguous, personal, and emotional formlessness rather than as useful and named objects. These things have lost their name, have lost their place in the order of things, and produce new and plural orders that are formless and disorderly in the abstract, but tell of a contingent sense, a sensorial sense, reached through the particularity of living: to be in the unordered time and space of a particular life, something—to be in the uncontrollable flow of life something that presents itself real as a private fiction.

These are separate worlds but not autonomous nor parallel: built as they are from all there is and more. They produce not literary but sonic fictions that do not formulate propositions, but sound as world-creating predicate: to produce the world of the *Cell* and to extend its possibilities as a pluralizing agency into the world.

I only come to this understanding when I engage in the *Cells* through their potential to sound—when I hear them as conceptual sound works rather than as mute sculptures. Bourgeois' *Cells*, like sound, produce not an object, either artistic or otherwise, but invite a generative perception and draw us toward the invisible mobility in-between what can be seen, to

engage in what is present but remains unspeakable, invisible, and without a name. The work needs a sonic sensibility to access not only what is there visibly but what is between the seen, invisible yet present, and inhabitable, even when the doors remain closed.

If we engage in her *Cells* as a conceptual sound and approach them with a sonic sensibility, we can “hear” the processes of connecting, building, and taking apart and explore, not through logical deduction but through a visceral inhabiting what always remains hidden without making it visible through references or as metaphors, but on our body, in the reciprocity of our own formlessness. The *Cells* demand the viewing body as listener to be involved, to inhabit the flimsy, fragile, and temporary walls of this world as a primary environment that knows no other: to grasp the sensibility of the constructions, of their constructing and of our inhabiting them; to understand them as reciprocal processes of production through which we see Bourgeois’ life but experience our own; and to extend this sensibility into the world, into the cells and environments that distinguish from useless clutter and chaos the narrative of our lives.

The *Cells* show us the visible objects of her life, but these objects remain partly obscured by our own viewpoint made from our preconceptions and a priori. They remain invisible in the sense of a sonic invisible that invites us not to deduce the unseen from what is given, as its negativity, nor to summate it through the synthesis of various viewpoints, but instead offers the inexhaustible depth of sound, which we explore through the temporal simultaneity of listening, blindly inhabiting its materiality: hearing the processes of the work unfolding in the process of our audition.

Sound is the depth of the visual spectacle; it is grasped not by seeing the installation, the sculpture, but through inhabiting my own mobile place within its environment: unfolding, refolding, and generating itself in the infinity of its possibility. Bourgeois’ visible objects invite us to hear below the surface of what is seen other possibilities of what could be actual, a plurality of lives of which one is hers and one is mine. Our listening discovers the agency of the work, its predicative nature to produce rather than represent a world; it is our sensory-motor movement toward the work as world that leads neither to recognition nor to totality, but to the phantasm and ambiguity of life that remains forever incomplete.

Art critics and historians see Bourgeois’ *Cells* as a challenge and a redefinition of sculptural work, and they certainly are that, but they also introduce a connection with the world that goes beyond art and its aesthetic interpretation into the living of the world for me. To read them within canons and prior works limits their agency to intensionality. It decodes their visual appearance and reaches a value of them as works of art within the ontology of theory and criticism, but it does not reach the raw materiality that is exposed in their phantasmatic juxtapositions, connecting, drawing

together, and propelling apart signifiers that will never signify but remain continually signifying in the phenomenology of my encounter.

She is there, I am there, her clothes (*Cell Clothes* 1996) stuffed, hanging from coat hangers, hooks, and cupboards—makeshift, rickety, untidy, producing the uncontrollable nature of living that is not apart from us but is how we live our lives. There is no gap between the contemplation and what is there; these are not symbols from a lexicon or a symbolic order drawn on dispassionately. This is the flesh, raw, and demands an equally raw reciprocation.

A sonic sensibility allows me to read her *Cells* not only within discourse and practice but into the world, into the cell of the private sphere, first of Bourgeois and then of my private life-world through which we can participate in the negotiation of the actuality of the world as real, adding a heterogeneous and mobile plurality that continually questions what that real might be.

In fact, a sonic sensibility insists I do not read them at all but inhabit them, even against the barred access of closed doors, in a conceptual listening that knows no such boundaries and that reciprocates what is there with its own invisible possibilities. They are worlds, Bourgeois' private life-worlds that meet mine, joining my possibilities with hers, and rejoining aesthetic worlds, art worlds, to question the geography that defines their judgment and maps their borders, to live on either side.

In many ways, Bourgeois' *Cells* answer the cerebral nature of conceptual art with physical concepts, quasi sonic concepts that invite us to inhabit them as sound works, as sound worlds, to hear in them and through them the murmur of Bourgeois' chant.

C'est le murmure de l'eau qui chante (2002)

Louise Bourgeois chants, her voice untrained singing her own body, into the space, over her own body, under her own body, doubling up, going in circles and moving on.

C'est le murmure de l'eau qui chante, c'est le murmure de l'eau qui chante, . . . c'est le murmure de l'eau qui me remplit de joie, . . .⁹

Through repetition, singing almost the same but not quite, she builds a timespace: an environment made of the time of her voice that I share in the space of her song. I imagine her to be there always, practicing, singing as a trial of the words that have meaning, lose meaning, and get new meanings in the context of her voice and my encounter with it.

Her singing does not sing a text but finds a path through lyrics that do not seem settled, there beforehand, but develop as she sings into their own formless form. To sing them is not to propose them as a text, but to create

them and to trigger the creation of what they might be in our auditory imagination:

de faire le tour de la maison me fait beaucoup de bien . . .

c'est la bouillotte qui marmotte et me dit ses secrets, c'est la bouillotte qui frissonne, qui fredonne, qui ronronne, qui siffle . . . et ne me dit pas ses secrets. . . . et me dit tous ses secrets. . . .¹⁰

. . . her body murmuring the water and exploring the house to hear secrets of things, that cease to be inanimate objects but attain an agency, a personality, that removes them from the object of their name into the action of their perception. They become the holders of secret lives and thoughts that they divulge and keep to themselves, and that give her joy to visit, to walk through the water into the house, to be with those things thinging anew all the time.

The lyrics might seem trivial, nonsense rhymes about nothing in particular but they rhyme together a scene and environment that allows us, among other things, to be with Bourgeois, to be with her body as in one of her *Cells*, intimately sharing the secrets of the house and sharing the secrets of her *Cells*. Sometimes we cannot hear what is being said, overlapping voices cancelling each other out, stopping each other's flow and beginning another one. But the directness of her untrained voice has a body, the body of her skin: the flesh of an older woman's voice that holds a different power. It is not the power of music, of song itself, but the power of the encounter with a life lived in the sensuous environment of materials, works, words, symbols, and memories that come to mean so many things and build an aesthetic knowing that goes beyond words into the things to meet their agency thinging: sensuous ambiguity starting again and again, going in circles around itself yet moving forward.

She sings a journey from the water through the house that meets all its objects to end up in their secrets and loses their form, their names, and the shape of language too. The voice is in practice, practicing, trying the lyrics on a high octave and then—"yes we can take it lower." It is a trial of the body, of the voice, of the words, and their signification not as a semiotic exercise but as a sensuous meeting with the thing of language in the rhythm of the flesh toward the agency of the things that reciprocate the movement with their own thinging in her voice and in our audition.

The "endless mobility" of Bourgeois' words and my listening produces the poetics of Julia Kristeva's signifying practice, "appending territories"—extending her body and words into the rhythm of my experience—but it does not let us know about it.¹¹ Its textual practice is experienced rather than thought. Theory does not grasp the rhythms, only a supposed outline, from which we cannot enter the cell, the environment of the song, but only think it as a trope, as a method. Better to stand inside, to inhabit its

uncertain walls, to practice its experience and meet other words later that are not clear and unambiguous but mirror the ambiguity of the place she builds and keeps on building, in a phenomenological signifying practice that needs no name but produces the object from the possibility of its thing.

Bourgeois' chant adds a voice, a body, to her *Cells*: the delicate but powerful skin of her flesh inhabiting the complex environments concurrently with her visitors—direct, explicit, here: imperfect, unstable, not a musical object, nor an artistic object, but a formless thing of the body thinging the voice and all it carries of the body into the timespace of the environment to reciprocate it in its fleshly stuff. Sound allows me to inhabit simultaneously, sensorially, and sensuously the cells she builds from things. In song I am with her, concurrently, negotiating my life-world vis-à-vis hers. Invisibly, we both lose our transparency and become each other's imagination. Who are you? Who am I? What are we made of and what could we have been and be instead?

The voice goes round and round the object to end in vowels and rhythms without words—emptying out all it was and filling it with new possibilities that sit in a voice of consonants and rhymes, continually nothing that can be anything: a voice of round shapes of many cells; the objects left behind in a context that leaves them be something else.

Bourgeois sings a cell, sings in the cell, a cell that we inhabit in listening, that we go along in her rhythm—her pace and voice more important than the words and what they might reference as useful real pragmatic objects. From the contingent negotiation of her private worlds my own world becomes extended not into a trivial fiction but into a sonic fiction that generates from the possibility of all her stuff an actual world for me. Through her song I walk through the private world of my “house” and generate it from its secrets rather than from what is obvious: to live in the ambiguity of its possibility rather than settle for the syntax of its clarity, “. . . qui me fait beaucoup de bien.”¹²

Listening across works: Aesthetic accessibility

Bourgeois' works are often compared to Constantin Brancusi, Alberto Giacometti, Pablo Picasso, and maybe most usefully to Eva Hesse. Their aesthetic similarities are discussed in relation to the visual form, its provenance, and what can be said about it. Listening to her chant and to her silent *Cells*, we can reach artistic comparisons too but not through their outer form or history, but from the way we inhabit them concurrently. Here the comparisons are with sound, with sound work, and how her work builds environments in which we live contingently as in possible worlds that are actual possible worlds for us for the time that our listening centers

us within them, and that later we bring as possibility to the reality of the presumed actual world.

For Marie-Laure Ryan “fiction is a mode of travel into textual space” to be within it, recentered by its textual materiality.¹³ Sonic fictions trigger this immersion too, seducing us to live in the world of the work. “Once we become immersed in a fiction, the characters become real for us, and the world they live in momentarily takes the place of the actual world.”¹⁴ Ryan’s fictions are literary; they are pretend worlds that remain separate, parallel worlds. Reading we momentarily recenter ourselves in her literary world and suspend our disbelief to live in her text as what she calls an actual textual world. However, the separateness of this textual world connects us not to the possibilities of the real world but to the possibility of the text. Sonic fictions by contrast are generative: they do not pretend nor propose a textual universe; they do not suspend our disbelief but invite us to suspend our habits of perception and create the work from one slice of what it is into what it could be, and to extend its possibilities as a pluralizing agency into the world.

Sound is not a slice of the work, as little as the soundscape is a slice of the landscape, but it is one slice of all the slices that make up the work, in its commingling existence. The relevance of the sonic slice of the work is important not in what it reveals about itself only, but about what it reveals about the work, how we perceive it and how we treat it in criticism.

To travel via sound into the world of the work enables a critical immersion, to live in reciprocity of what there is, to explore its aesthetic materiality, and work out its sense and meaning from within its sensorial composition. It is not a matter of literary empathy, nor of reading a text, producing a synthesis of its entities, but of living in the actuality of the work as a real possible world and, from this complicity, to work out meanings and consequences for an actual reality through the complex and mobile connecting, disconnecting, and reconnecting of possibilities.

In logic, accessibility relations are defined as relative possibilities: how one world is possible relative to another, meaning to what degree the worlds, or the entities in the worlds, are the same or at least do not contradict each other. Logical worlds are not really inhabited, they are not listened to worlds, they are reflective worlds, laboratories of possibilities to consider the problems of philosophical logic. We are not seduced into logical worlds as into Ryan’s world of fiction, by a fascinating plot or intrigue. We remain dispassionate, at its margins, outside the doors, looking in. The “pathetic” trigger of sound however draws us into the work as into a fictional world and renders accessibility not an extraneous pursuit but a visceral mobility that overrides logics insistence on truth, necessity, and noncontradiction, by living capriciously in its worlds.

Accessibility in this sense becomes a key critical term for a sonic aesthetics. It describes the “access” to the work as world, to develop a critical view

thereof from within its timespace; it arranges for the movement between different works as worlds, in order to, from their compossibility, produce a comparative analysis. Accessibility opens the geography of the singular work and of the art world as a whole, not as a map of style, taste, and judgment, but through an affective engagement: subjective, contingent, temporary, building not from the separateness of visual elements, but from their unseen connections, a contingent world. This is an affective geography of art that admits emotions, sentiments, and memory and seeks a primacy of perception, not to achieve a naïve understanding but to capture the work in its unfolding.

“Aesthetic accessibility” is a material accessibility that measures not how the entities in each world are possible vis-à-vis each other, but explores how they unfold through each other. It is not an ideational, neither a historical, nor an epistemic accessibility that seeks the idea, data, or knowledge respectively, but a pathetic accessibility that explores and compares what the work and the world is made of by living in the midst of its things.

The sonic work invites not a logical but a psychological inhabiting. The phenomenological possibilism of the sound artwork is based on psychology, the frailty, and unreliability of the body, not the certainty of mathematics. Listening we do not deduce and synthesize knowledge from what is given, but create a sensuous understanding: from invisible processes we create a sensate sense about ourselves and the work we are temporarily centered within.

Possible world theory interprets accessibility as a device for comparing reality with nonactual ontologies and puts forward restrictions on relationships between worlds: a set of rules of what must be so in either world for them to be accessible, to be possible. In relation to sound artworks, accessibility, the notion of what is actual and what is possible, is not an external predetermined measure, but is a contingent and fluent production generated in the action of listening. The comparisons between sound artworks are thus not based on a logical a priori, derived from ontology, but are generated in a contingent inhabiting. The critical comparison of sonic works as listened to worlds, deliberate their compossibility not in terms of a given reality and truth, setting up and following restrictions, but by lifting restrictions of discourse and discipline, to engage in aesthetic significance as sensorial sense and consequence across works as worlds, producing new realities and truths.

In this way, we can unrestrictedly inhabit Louise Bourgeois’ *Cells I–VI* and then journey on Chris Watson’s *El Tren Fantasma* to explore and articulate compossibly the environment each work builds: their shared and differing production of sense, reality, and truth. Both works build worlds and trigger their affective geography through sounds and things that have an invisible depth that reminds us of their incomplete production

and infinite unfolding and draws us in to inhabit, walk through and walk across, their unreliable processes and the uncontrollable nature of all that is the work. Listening we explore those processes and infinite unfoldings and figure out what they mean and what they are worth comparatively and discretely within art and within the world.

Such comparisons, across works as worlds, from how we place ourselves within them, rather than from their outer appearance, or logical givens, lead to new possibilities for aesthetic discourse. A comparative framework journeyed through as if through an affective geography opens a new avenue for analysis and criticism that does not go back to the visual object or context and is not mapped out by the discipline and its canon, but starts in the environment the work creates from all there is: its sound, its silence, its lighting, its smells, and the visual things too.

Sonic centering, decentering, and recentering

The emphasis on the work as environment, as world, has consequences for the scope and method of art criticism, sonic and visual. It proposes a different access to the work and puts forward a different critical engagement and comparative strategy; practicing perception as a motion of immersion and inhabiting: traveling into the work as world, seduced into its sensorial environment by a pathetic trigger, producing a different work and demanding a consequent language. This perceptual practice needs a language that enters the semantic materiality and expresses not where it is from, what I know about it beforehand, nor what it becomes in pure reflection, but what it could be and might go on to be in its spatiotemporal condition. This means to critique the work as a possible world of perception, as a phenomenological modality, and must involve the reciprocity of the perceptual moment which constructs the work as a complex timespace, whose value and truth is measured through my contingent simultaneity with all there is and how I am with it.

Ryan's travel into the possibility of the text describes a recentering motion. "For the duration of our immersion in a work of fiction, the realm of possibilities is thus recentered around the sphere which the narrator presents as the actual world." I am seduced into the reality of the text, which guides me into an affective geography of art that soon has me walking through the work and across works, opening new relationships and possibilities, reallocating actuality and what is considered to be its alternatives. "This recentering pushes the reader into a new system of actuality and possibility." Following her following David K. Lewis on these travels, the moment we are centered into a fiction, the universe of worlds is recentered around this new actual world opening a view on new possibilities. "As a traveller to this system, the reader of fiction discovers

not only a new actual world, but a variety of APW's (actual possible worlds) revolving around it."¹⁵ But while the philosopher building modal systems retains an unconnected position, extraneous to its modalities, in fiction, sonic, and literary, the affective pull means we relocate and recenter ourselves also, and the alternatives revolving around each new actual world remain not abstracted logical entities, but are the sensorial alternatives of this textual or sonic actual world.

The immersion into the work, the notion of listening as a recentering motion, develops the consequent possibility of centering and subsequently decentering: alternately settling in and abandoning again the aesthetic geography of a work. Once I have accessed the work as world and have centered myself within it making it temporarily my actual world, a whole universe of works opens up which are all new alternatives to our current actual world and which are accessible to me compossibly, against logical restrictions through the pathetic trigger of sound that invites and seduces me into the intrigue of listening and my auditory imagination.

In this way, criticism becomes a moving and shifting: centering, decentering, and recentering, between sound artworks as worlds, to work out what they are, and what they are like, and how they compare, from within rather than from without. This centering, decentering, and recentering as aesthetic movement follows the indexical lines of Lewis logic against logical rationality into the compossibility of works as phenomenological worlds of perception rather than as empty worlds for logical deduction.¹⁶

A phenomenological possibilism identifies centering as an intersubjective reciprocation, which defines my being in the world and the world through my being in it, and holds the potential for decentering and recentering, as subsequent and iterative intersubjectivities. It is only through a decentering and recentering from *this* present possible world into *that* present one, that what was previously only a possible world becomes an actual possible world for me: once I live in the midst of its things. From there the process becomes infinite and irreversible not because we cannot leave the work but because the views opened by the work remain, enabling as memory the complexity of a present perception.

Each perception envelops the possibility of its own replacement by another, and thus of a sort of disavowal from the things. But this also means that each perception is the term of an approach, of a series of "illusions" that were not merely simple "thoughts" in the restrictive sense of Being-for-itself and the "merely thought of," but possibilities that could have been, radiations of this unique world that "there is" . . . and which, as such, never revert to nothingness or to subjectivity as if they had never appeared.¹⁷

These intersubjectivities, as timespace life-worlds, are not to be unproblematically synthesized into one notion of art, one art world, one actuality, “as if they had never appeared,” because they reveal exactly the contradictions and similarities, the fissures, and the complex continuum that is the artwork, built from them, and through which we live in and reassess a current expression. A phenomenological possibilism invites us to access art’s complexity from living in the primacy of the work as a world of perception rather than through what is given: to generate the work through the “illusions” of the unseen, beneath the surface of certainty and names, and to recognize these illusions as variants of the same work that exist not in time, after each other, progressing steadily toward an ideal reading, but simultaneously, each as true as the other, illuminating a different seen. Phenomenological possible worlds as life-worlds exist not in chronology or ideality but in the simultaneity of timespace, and thus they have an impact on the perceived simultaneity of things in the world.

In this sense, the sound artwork not only presents an artistic situation to reflect upon in its own context but also expresses what philosophy must account for: to be able to reflect on the world and the nonknowing of the world before reflection, which according to Merleau-Ponty “is not nothing, and which is not the reflective truth either, and which also must be accounted for.”¹⁸ To reach the world before reflection has formed a certain access, we must try to enter through the fissures and cracks between meanings to inhabit the cells of its semantic materiality contingently.

The simultaneity of things in the world and the mobile inhabiting of those “thing-worlds” through a phenomenological possibilism ask new questions about where aesthetics and philosophical problems come from and how they should be answered. It asks of the listener to negotiate the lived possibility of the work—its imaginations—and it demands of art criticism a complicit plurality of interpretation: a political, social, as well as an aesthetic plurality.

Chimerization, Hinge (2012) and 3 Channel Chronicles (2010–12)

The titles of these three works lend themselves to an etymological and literal reading involving a three-headed mythological beast composed of a serpent, a lioness, and a she-goat, doors and pivots, as well as history and constants, inviting us into a textual fiction. The words that stick out of the works rather than the titles are chime, chiming, bells, and ringing; swarming, escalating, and de-accelerating; grating and scratching: sonic shutters catching words and voices in the density of technology that makes itself audible and triggers a different involvement, inviting us to connect,

disconnect, and reconnect invisible things to generate a sonic fiction without description or provenance.

I want to perform the critical immersion initiated in Bourgeois' *Cells* and *Murmurs* on Florian Hecker's work: to step into the work as world and explore the meaning of its invisible mobility in order to unearth its sensorial sense and live in it for a while. With this sonic inhabiting I hope to reach both: what the work might mean before my engagement and how it comes to mean through my listening—to pivot from what there is to what could be there too, and to bring critical reflection the primordially of the work. This primordially is not a naïve apperception before reflection, but the concrete aspect of the work, which lies at the depth of what we can know now and builds what we will come to know, not as a certain, a finite thing, but as the infinite and inexhaustible process of knowing in sound. It is Merleau-Ponty's "primordial" that is not at the beginning of everything into which it evolves, in an ideal chronology, but at its depth, and which reveals to us the process of perception itself.

On the street level of Sadie Coles Gallery in South Audley Street in London, *Chimerization* alternates with *Hinge* and together they perform an extension of voices and texts, sounds, and meanings, produced and attacked by technology. Voices stutter through technological processes, processing themselves into sounds without words, tinkering, clicking, and rasping met by interludes of bouncing balls and ringing bells. Three black speakers suspended from the ceiling produce connections between digital chimes, rising spirals, and coiled tumbles.

Both works morph into each other and seem utterly indifferent to my presence, speaking inward, into the anechoic chamber that hosted their recording rather than into the acoustic space I inhabit with them. Their sound is not addressing me; it addresses itself as material and as process: its recording and subsequent distortion. What addresses me is the CCTV camera. I am seen listening: walking around a space that is empty except for three speakers suspended from the ceiling. I animate this space for those watching my listening movements in the frame of the mute CCTV footage. I am observed inhabiting the invisible space of the installation, marking with my body the sonic topography of a work that remains unheard. On screen I inhabit visually the mechanism of the gallery that delineates and situates the world of the work on the map of the art world. Listening I am immediately in the paradox of this aesthetic engagement: experiencing the work in a primary perception and experiencing the self-consciousness of thought in reflection.

The reflection of myself in the apparatus of the gallery should not lead me to distance myself from the work, to assume a position of deaf thought that presumes to hear what it expects of the work. Rather, the image of myself listening, the revealing of the process of perception, needs to remind me that it is an inhabiting listening, opening the work to perception as a

primary engagement, which allows us to reach the semantic materiality as a sensorial material rather than as prior signification. My walking through the gallery space engages Merleau-Ponty's discussion of reflection and perceptual faith, and the relationship of a philosophy of reflection to that which is reflected upon, as the originating or the derived. Merleau-Ponty introduces the idea of "a primary openness to the world"¹⁹ as a call for reflection neither to presuppose a preconstituted world nor to abandon reflection for perceptual faith, but to understand reflection as a momentary effort to capture what something is, and this includes an understanding of what we do not perceive this way, and thus what else this something could be and why we cannot perceive it yet.

If therefore the reflection is not to presume upon what it finds and condemn itself to putting into the things what it will then pretend to find in them, it must suspend the faith in the world only so as to see it, only so as to read in it the route it has followed in becoming a world for us; it must seek in the world itself the secret of our perceptual bond with it.²⁰

The work becomes a world for us neither through our preconceptions nor through our surveying of its objects, but through the primary and reciprocal meeting, "the perceptual bond" of my processes of perception with its processes of production: our contingent corresponding in timespace.

I follow Merleau-Ponty's "primary openness to the world" into Hecker's work, and immerse myself in his pieces as in worlds wide open for interrogation from the primacy of perception, moving into words that follow not a pre-established signification but generate the meaning of their reflective effort as a sensory-motor action toward this world that it generates.

Doing so, I am not interested in an unintelligent, naïve articulation of the work, but in how the rational frame of the work reveals the unintelligible and unspeakable: that which we cannot order in words from the symbolic lexicon that preexists perception, but remains things thinging, presently, live, floating in the air at Sadie Coles Gallery roughly at the height of the speakers. The unintelligible is not not-knowable but provides a sensorial knowing that gives us awareness of the process of knowledge itself. Because "it is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation but of assisting at the birth of this knowledge, to make it as sensible as the sensible, to recover the consciousness of rationality."²¹

In relation to aesthetics it is an "assisting" to access the sensible, the sensorial material, not to contradict aesthetic rationality and knowledge, but to recover its consciousness: to recover the awareness of the present and lived materiality, not at the basis but to the side of aesthetic judgment. Since

if we want to know what it is we think to know about the work and the world, we must take its present and lived materiality into account.

The spoken words of *Chimerization* and *Hinge* mean in fragments, as fragments, the technological hacking and slicing of language, its authority and power, rather than its content. They mean as bodies that lose their certain form, as their mouths distort and extend into the digital manipulation of their material expression. The bodies are left formless kept in shape only by the frame of the installation. They hang there not unlike Bourgeois' clothes, from hooks and doors, loose and deformed, stuffed with foam—vocal organs without a body.

“Snakes and Ladders” emerges lucidly from words left undecipherable. Its articulation serves not to know but to initiate the process of going up and down, backwards and forwards, at random but with design, never really to reach a certain objective but as process, processing the sound of language, bodies, meaning, truth, and certainty. The harsh sincerity of increasingly deformed human voices produces distorted, strangled sounds at the edge of technology, almost falling out, holding on only occasionally through a unscathed word or a familiar process of digital manipulation.

Downstairs meanwhile is a three-channel piece entitled *3 Channel Chronics*: sound building in electronic synthesis a retro-computer-game environment that has grabbed some of the sincerity from upstairs and sends some frivolity the other way, which suits both pieces well. Alone it might be a very different piece, time-based, focused on beats and structures, changing rhythms and offering a musical sonority. In this context, it has a new role, to uplift and drop down the earnestness of what goes on upstairs, to add other possibilities to what I hear, to give the harsh monotony of serious voices a beat.

I have no interest in accommodating this work into the ontology of electroacoustic music, this affiliation seemingly the least useful move in its aesthetic exploration. Once there where would I go, what would I hear beyond what I can know of it? Much better to dance in the work's own topography, to answer its beat with mine, and find a body to match the vocal organs that have been left without one upstairs.

This piece is not about making music, electroacoustic or otherwise; it is about making a place or two or even three from the sonic materiality, and the timespace of my engagement with it. It is a sensorial place that invites my body into the primordially of its seat in order to find to reflection from there.

The loudspeakers downstairs are the same as upstairs but instead of being suspended from above they are jutting out of the wall, jutting sound at me, high-pitched melodic tracks, occasionally taking off in upwards motion to power down again, pausing in a drone-like state.

The work upstairs is centripetal, rushing inwards toward meaning, meaning reached not through language but of language and of technology,

of voices and of speech, of their production and manipulation in the isolation of a reflective world. The work downstairs by contrast is centrifugal, extending into the world to find meaning in the midst of its things: moving toward an infinity of possibilities of what they might be. These centrifugal and centripetal movements meet on the staircase where one beckons me down to move to its beat, the other holds me in a grip of tortured words upstairs.

I know these are three separate pieces; in the context of the gallery however they become one environment with overlaps, dubious relationships, and shared causalities through whose affective materiality I walk as I reflect on it from the material toward thought, to voices and meanings and through processes of distortion back to reflection.

I enjoy the persuasive synchresis of what is a hard, grating, and intense double composition upstairs with an electronic dance track downstairs. Together the works build a sonic world, a sonic geography, that triggers my walking as centering, decentering, and recentering: as my constant aesthetic movements whose criticality answers the processes of the work with the process of a bodily perception.

It is not a stable world but a fluid connecting, facilitated by stairs and the unwillingness of sound to stay contained. It is a momentary compossibility that breaks off ever so often to take another jump, to restart and accelerate in spiraling motions up the stairs to meet the harsh constant of *Chimerization* and *Hinge* and power down again. *3 Channel Chronics* does not stop the distorted sincerity upstairs but mocks it a little, prizes it open to give us a glance at its processes and ours, and lets the listener shift between self-conscious reflection and primary perception.

This reminds us that sonic possible worlds are not worlds per se, but one slice of a world of many slices. They are one timespace slice that does not confirm the actuality of one centered world but demonstrates the temporospatial complexity and agency that is the world: its heterogeneity in time and space; the constant process of its production. They are the private slices of life-worlds, phenomenological versions of Kripke's "mini-worlds"²² that are constantly negotiated to produce contingently what the world might be. Possibly, in the end, there might be no actual world at all, but only temporary negotiations of possible worlds between my world and your world, in moments of coincidence, where our maps might overlap affectively, with the actual world being the mirage of joint and equal access that does not exist: the pretence of a fiction of power and ideology, confirmed by a presumed and singular reality, and exposed through the plurality of possibility.

Possible worlds as a phenomenological modality of life-worlds allow for the primordially of perception to co-habit with rationality and knowledge. This phenomenological possibilism stages the compossibility of perception and reflection and enables us to hear the

work, to experience the work, and reflect on it without hiding as occult that which appears primordial in perception, but to take it as a starting point on which reflection once built its sense and to which we need to return, at least in effort, to uncover the ideology and dynamics of rationality: to hear the little people who dance downstairs, who are a phantasm of perception, and yet participate in the reality of the work and show us what we do not perceive and thus what else could be, and ask why we do not see it.

Sound words

The philosopher Reza Negarestani contributed two librettos that served Hecker as the basis for his compositions *Chimerization* and *Hinge*. According to W. H. Auden, a libretto is not a story, is not a story-world, rather . . .

. . . the job of the librettist is to furnish the composer with a plot, characters and words: of these, the least important, so far as the audience is concerned, are the words [. . .] The verbal text of an opera is not to be judged by the literary quality or lack of it which it may have when read but by its success or failure in exciting the musical imagination of the composer.²³

Negarestani's libretto is what triggers Hecker's composition, which in its materiality triggers our re-enactment, our listening movements. It is an impetus of excitement for the composer to generate the work. It is neither the meaning nor the structure of the work itself, but it is the trigger that gets him to compose, to produce from a literary work a sonic fiction into which we enter in listening, to center ourselves in the work as world, to unfold it from the reciprocity of this mobile location to reveal its possibilities. The libretto is what invites Hecker to produce the pathetic triggers that in turn invite us into his world to inhabit it, to meet reflection and perception, and to find what might be possible between them.

Hecker's composition writes the libretto to my corporeal re-enactment, my walking through it, and then, on my turn, finding words to map the affective paths of my journey, words that point my listening into yours. Since as I walk through Hecker's world, accessing it from the processes of its materiality through those of my perception, it is communication, the desire not only to know the works' sensorial materiality but to talk about them that intends my listening. Communication demands that we engage in how we share the possibility of the world; it is based on our tendency to be social, the tendency to speak, and assumes other listeners as things thinging in the world of the work.

The babyphone

sounds a space that is not my space and not her space but our distance that is full of evocations and anxieties, generated somewhere between my innovative listening and the reality of what lies between us. This distance is the sonic space we inhabit, it is our relationship through the night, and in this distance things come forth and invent themselves. I listen to reduce this space, tracing aurally the relationship between my body and hers; I listen for her breath on the waves of the signal, diving in, coming out, a whimper, a hiss . . . all manner of things bounce on the airwaves to share our distance and expand its space. Some of them are really there, like the airplane that passes her shortly before it passes me, and together they create a flange of a space that expands its time. And some things might be there but I have no proof of their veracity but have to believe in their possibility as the contingency of my perception that gets stronger as the light fades: other voices, other children, their spirits, maybe even a ghost. Between aural figures generated in the static waves and real radio connections made, everything becomes possible as the outline loses its visual focus and emerges out of its quiet hum instead.

SOUNDWORDS.TUMBLR.COM September 13, 2010, 11:32 p.m.

Listening is my extension into the world, a radar that hears not only things but other bodies listening too. It is the anxiety of my listening solitude that drives my agency to find you in my ear and to work from the fragile but common ground of our primordial perception to find a language in which to share our reflections—not to find an absolute, ideal true world but to collaborate in the production of a plurality of truths that include phantasms and inventions . . . “. . . other voices, other children, their spirits, maybe even a ghost.”

My knowing of Hecker’s work is not a solipsistic interest, a knowing for me, but comes from a desire to understand how this private world of my listening is shared with that of others and how ultimately it takes part in the production of the knowledge, value, and meaning of the work and the world, and how it reveals the processes of its rationale. In this tendency to speak about the sensorial engagement, we meet the notion of representation, reference, and truth: what do we hang Bourgeois’ clothes on to understand their meaning, and how are we acquainted with the bodyless voices of Hecker’s distortions—what do they show of the actual world and what do they build of its possibilities?

This question invites us to produce something entirely different, something that might still be possible, in a logical sense, but that stretches the imagination of representation, reference, and truth through the unseen materiality of sound into what we cannot yet know but that is there, reached in a primal openness to the work as world.

Sonic representation, reference, and truth

Forêt profonde (1996)

It is a very old preoccupation of mine, this meeting of the imagination adhering to the ‘psychology of depths’ and the mental images projected by acousmatic art; what more appropriate, in fact, than this very language for staging, musically, these fantastical representations?²⁴

The 13 tracks of Francis Dhomont’s 1996 album *Forêt profonde* conjure up the possible from the acousmatic, understood as the unseen depth of a visual source which remains unrecognizable in his sonic processes, providing us instead with the material for its re-imagination.

He calls it the “alchemy of the studio”:²⁵ the power which enchants his sounds to be not a positive source but a thing generated in our presence from the complexity of idiosyncratic sonic material whose meeting converges not in the work but in its extension into the world. Sonic elements extend, merge, and clash with each other, pulling and stretching through processes and intentions across words and voices whose linguistic intelligibility is warped in his mirrored hall of sounds.

The work progresses uninhibited by the need for representation, elongating centrifugal rhythms and sounds that have long lost a shared direction but dance around each other into the world to produce variants of their own existence in my ears. It is a deep and dark wood he is guiding us into. The lack of representation and reference creates not nothing but generates the inexhaustible abundance of a present sense. His sounds are all that can be: between my world and his, the plurality of the world emerges as the condition rather than the source of representation.

Rhythms and vibrations produce things that do not exist as counterfactual elements of a visual, actual world, but open a view onto an unfamiliar existence that lives unseen as the mobility of sound. Listening we conjure up shapes from invisible sonic movements that live in the reality of the seen as another truth, that is not an untruth but the truth of that which has no reference and no memory of what it was elsewhere and at another time, but which is itself as sound that triggers my memory to create presently what it might be.

In this way, Dhomont’s compositions invite us to live beneath the undergrowth in a wild environment of things, to understand them not in relation to true objects and subjects, but from the smell of the earth, and its clammy touch in the primordiality of their existence and ours. In these woods, we are not René Descartes’ “thinking things” but live as “thinging things” that seek not to know the world through the mind but through our bodies, and get to a knowing that is contingent and infinite, moving not toward an ideality but unfolding in innumerable possibilities.²⁶

Cymbals and bells, tingling and laughing, around listening, into listening in the underbrush, triggering my re-enactment of Dhomont's phantasms:

C'est le fantasme qui me donne de l'espérance²⁷

From recording, editing, processing, and manipulating emerges what could be: movements of material forming sonic shapes, deforming, reforming, providing brief glances onto their processes to reveal things that otherwise remain hidden. His tracks produce invisible sonic sculptures in time, sonic modulations creating not a two-dimensional progression but a spacious materiality: almost tangible, static, and moving at the same time, fixed-fluidity expanding its own location.²⁸ The recognizable is covered in synthetic sounds that question its origin and expand what it might be: connecting, reconnecting, disconnecting oddments in timespace, tinkling, clicking, and breathing existence into the unseen.

The fairytales that are embedded in and give a certain order to his sounds are still stories but they get us not to the content of a tale but to its telling: building a story-world that generates itself rather than proposing something else. A story-world that *is* real is not a literary but a sonic fiction: its characters are not nonexistent but illuminations of hidden existences; its plots describe not a parallel world but the invisible goings on of this world, concealed in the solitary life-worlds of perception. Dhomont's story produces the private "voyage through the spirit kingdom of the unconscious" into the awareness of the world in sound.²⁹

Framed by the literary enchantment of fairytales "once upon a time . . ." we are invited into his work to suspend our perceptual faith and query our reflective certainty, to find not the true story but to build contingent truths in the invented but sincere world of his sounds. It is his sincerity in building the fictions of his sonic world that makes them true. This is not a representational truth; it is not about an actual truth, reframed, clarified, authenticated empirically and epistemologically, but a truth built contingently in his composition and in my listening: sound producing truth rather than finding or presupposing it.

Forêt profonde reveals as pre-constituted our ideas of a collective history, of humanity, society, and the notion of shared beliefs and values, and implodes the certainty of our interpretation of those things, of their reference, and of what they might represent. The form and purpose of the fairytale itself are deformed, reformed, and rendered formless. The fairytale is avowed of its universal meaning and symbolic lexicon through the solitude of sound, which exploits the familiarity of storytelling to produce what does not exist normatively and shows us different slices of what we know.

According to traditional philosophy, literary truth is an untruth because it does not follow the "correspondence theory of truth";³⁰ it does not obtain

in the real world, but only contains its veracity within the frame of reference of the story-world. Ronen is interested in using the developments of reality and necessity in possible world theory to re-consider the relationship of truth to a physical object and instead make it determined by its relationship to language, to the textual world: what a proposition does within the story rather than in relation to a real object. "Truth no longer involves a fixed and absolute standard by which true and false world-versions are judged, and by which fictional worlds are rejected from the realm of the true."³¹ She suggests that this reassessment of truth within philosophy and literary criticism has an impact beyond the text: "it enables us to see the actual world not as a given but as a set of propositions indexed by a different operator."³²

In sound this operator is at once the composer, Dhomont, and the listener, who produce the truth of *Forêt profonde* not from their relationship to other woods, to other fairytales, other voices, from the knowledge of digital processes or any other references and correspondences that might be found and affirmed, but from the indexical position of composing and listening. However, these operations—composing and listening—reveal the world not "as a set of propositions," as a linguistic set of truths, but generate a sonic truth of the world, and project it into the world as real, unleashing a multiplicity of realities.

On this indexical valence, the truth of the work is not a correspondence truth but nor is it Ronen's propositional truth. Rather the sonic work is true as the action of its production and the action of my listening. It is not a representational truth but a generative truth whose validity is contingent, a matter of doing, and thus it is a passing truth whose value lingers in consciousness as a sonic sensibility rather than leaves perception solidified in facts and knowledge.

The western philosophical traditions on truth reveal a pre-occupation with empirical objects, with representation and reference, with the correspondence between a visual, positive thing and its articulation as fact. Sound contributes to a contemporary revision of this notion of truth in that it does not propose an object but produces things, whose relationship to reality is not necessary nor corresponding but generative, inventive, and thus including of myths and phantasms and anything we pick up on the way.

The predicative function of sound, its world creating ability, makes audible Richard Rorty's pragmatic view on truth, which separates truth from a metaphysical demand of reality as well as from etymology and social conventions, and instead links it to the moment of its performance in language, its conversation. According to him truth comes out of and "endorses" rather than prescribes or presumes social functions and actions.³³

His truth is a linguistic truth; it is like Ronen's semantic truth, a truth about words. But unlike Ronen, who uses language to propose fictional

truths, Rorty's truths are "conversational": they do not produce nor theorize but describe the contingency between words and the world, which becomes a causal relationship that defies a foundation in representation and correspondence. However, although focused on the social function of truth against its scholastic analysis or a priori beliefs, his remains a social articulation rather than a social action. His philosophical quietism does not practice the noisy truth of Dhomont's work but observes it. Meanwhile *Forêt profonde* goes before and beyond language into a psychological phenomenology that cannot be described but has to invent words to articulate the concrete and practical nature of its truth later on.

Sound is not a language that confirms correspondence between reality and its representation, the source and its sonic expression; neither does it make a proposition, nor does it endorse or observe a social interaction. Rather, it generates its own truthfulness: sound is the unseen dynamic of social interactions and creates them in a truth that might well stand in opposition to a visual or linguistic interpretation of the same moment and thus it poses problems not only for language as the framework of interpretation but also to the legitimacy of a referential and representational truth *per se*. Sonic fictions do not produce untruth but implode the notion of correspondence truth and add generative noise to Rorty's anti-foundationalist conversations.

Dhomont's work creates a different sense of truth, a generative truth which does not take its reference from an actual world but presents the actual world for re-imagination: to obliterate rather than augment the notion of a stable singular actuality in the plural ephemerality of an enchanted composition. Sonic world entities are not nonexistent but are things thinging as themselves, and from that position they illuminate, from below, through the dense thicket of the undergrowth, the myth of truth and reality. It is here, below and beyond language, representation, truth, and reality that the acousmatic can be found, not as a technological or conceptual strategy but as the enchantment of the world from the fissures of audibility: inciting Merleau-Ponty's primary openness to the world through sound as itself.

This acousmatic is not anti-visual but opens the world to its material commingling rather than its signification: sound making its ephemeral plurality bears fruit in the composition of actuality. Dhomont's tracks do not reduce sound or our listening context, but lead us into an enchanted forest: a place produced from concrete sounds rather than their reference. This is an acousmatic action of composing reduced sounds and words to expand our experience of them: tinkling and trickling, dropping crackling sounds producing what is taken as representation but yields a more expanded world. His album produces a slice of actuality that exists compossibly with others near enough for comparison but too far to coexist unquestionably. I have to let go of any vestige of correspondence and language to inhabit his world with the sincerity of his composition, which becomes an opportunity

to make me rethink what I know and invites me to inhabit another slice of the world that shines into what is supposed to be actual, giving it a new form and future: hollowing out through sweeps of synthetic materiality, shutters and stutters, normative voices and spaces to build instead the fragile environment of private thoughts, hopes, and expectations.

This acousmatic is the *epoche*, the bracketing, of truth and correspondence: sounding from between the fissures, cracks, and splits of actuality, those worlds that do not attain but remain themselves.

An ethical center of listening

Some opponents of pragmatic truth relations suggest that untying truth from a correspondence with reality invalidates the notion of truth itself and makes it a useless concept particularly in relation to ethics.³⁴ Sound answers this concern through its contingent and generative practice, which produces a predicative truth that is more demanding and reciprocal than a correspondence truth. A generative truth does not offer a preexistent or referential truth for passive observance; instead, it triggers our involvement in its production and thus demands our ethical participation as a continual engagement in the rights and wrongs of what is being produced. In this generative context, ethics becomes not a matter of rules, of commandments, to be obeyed, but a contingent negotiation and participation in the generation of a concurrent ruling and the morality that it might trigger. The notion of a predicative truth makes ethics far more pressing and significant as it involves responsibility and demands participation in an ethical practice, rather than expecting the fulfillment of an ethical standard or code. It makes it a psychological ethics arising from—“. . . une vérité psychologique.”³⁵

Dhomont's pieces invite an ethical participation in the sonic fiction he creates. He at once leans back into an emotional history and leans forward into a sentimental present out of which a plural future emerges bound up in the processes of its production. The responsibility of our interpretative engagement slips into these relationships: producing the morality of our own present, future, and past.

Between different languages much is intelligible but not necessarily understandable. Meaning rushes over me in the form of material sensuousness rather than structure and linguistic sense. I am seduced into the dynamic places his compositions produce. Their fragile ephemerality invites my body to respond in kind, to enter the process of suspending myself as sound across meanings and reference, to come to a truth that is in neither but whose value is in my engagement.

Inhabiting Dhomont's deep forest we follow some of Merleau-Ponty's motivation for a primacy of perception. We share in his desire to get to the things before the distortion of rationality and knowledge in order to reflect on the rationality and knowledge that caused the distortion in the first

place. In these woods there is no before but only simultaneity: the practical simultaneity of myself in listening with what I hear. This is also an ethical simultaneity that gets to the value of the thing not before its distortion in preexisting principles, but at the moment of its generative practice.

Dhomont's things have no objects from which the sound emanates and which it describes, and thus from which we may glean an a priori understanding. They are not representations of what there is in the actual world but they build a possible actual world into which I recenter myself in listening, and from where the possibilities of objectivity pluralize invisibly in all directions: infinitively, inexhaustibly beyond the capacity of objectivity and subjectivity, into processes processing. The ethicality of the objectivities and subjectivities thus generated lies not in opposition or outside their fluid production, in a stable measure, but in the responsibility of my participation.

The primordial of Dhomont's wood, his sonic world, is produced in the process of listening and soundmaking as processes of opening, generating a world. This primacy of perception triggers not a primary openness upon a preexistent world but produces the possibility of the world in our openness to it. Merleau-Ponty's "ouverture au monde" has a much more active connotation than the English "openness"; it is our movement towards the world that generates it; and it is the reciprocity of this movement that generates us.

Reflection and perception do not negotiate the before and after but are simultaneous in the confusion of Dhomont's sounds that leave no scope for a chronological duration or a structured space but build a place of flat planes, expanded spirals, and stretched movements. His sonic topography expands invisibly around, beneath, and below narrations. Extending into unseen materiality it brings us to the primordially of the world as its present possibility that commences a plural future.

Sound is not primordial in a primitive sense, opposed to the intellectual rationality of the visual. It is primordial as agency, as dynamic that demands not an unintelligent engagement but an emotional intelligence that involves a psychological phenomenology, rather than a mathematical one: a knowing of the world through knowing ourselves bodily within it. It is the circumstance of our private sonic life-world in its fragile and doubtful contingency that we negotiate in listening and in language, as re-enactments of the possibility of Dhomont's woods, to approximate an actual world between us, which we never reach because it does not exist before our engagement but is generated by it. We will thus also never reach a certain sense of what is "good" or "bad," because we live forever in the process rather than the outcome of an ethical participation. Our contingent involvement, our responsibility in the perception and production of a possible actual world generates ethical relationships rather than describes their regulation.

A sonic aesthetics, as a psychological phenomenology, assists in accessing the sensible, the sensorial material, not to contradict aesthetic rationality and knowledge, but to recover its consciousness, to recover a sense of how it is what it is, and what it is like.

Dhomont's compositions carry anxiety, the wood as the unknown, where we get lost, where children are lost, and where innocence is lost to the darker secrets of the world that are revealed in its shadowy interior. Listening as walking along his sonic tracks we lose references and certainties and abandon the measure of the world, to gain the immeasurable, infinite that falls out of our expectation and shows us possibilities: the unimaginable, beasts and formless monsters, as well as inexhaustible joy.

This lack of reference, representation, and the contingent and practical sense of truth and ethics that Dhomont's work brings us to, clarifies how we center ourselves in listening not at the center of the work as a preexisting world, clearly established within the centrality of a visual frame, but in the center of our audition, which blindly sits anywhere in the midst of what sounds, centered not in the work but in the body of listening. It is this body, in its sensory-motor action toward the world that finds new centers in his and in other works: centering, decentering, and recentering not against things, as placed objects and references, "right" or "wrong," but within the truth of our contingent listening, in conversation with the things thinging, realizing the simultaneity of perception and reflection not to recognize and know but to produce where I sit and how to sit there.

This inhabiting participation, our practical simultaneity with the world in sound, and the contingent and generative truth that is the work in our indexical operation of listening, reveals the intensional and extensional, the centrifugal and centripetal agency of sound artwork: to sound the thing in relation to art, as referent and idea, and to challenge the very basis of reference and idea through its invisible plurality. This challenge leads not toward the nihilism of non-referentiality, as rejection of moral beliefs, but toward a contingent referencing and ethicality: the continual action of building and taking apart of where we are and what it is made from that brings about not representation and truth, but performs a generative truth that presents itself and what its values are.

Performing the shape of things themselves

To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation (orig. 1970, performance 2012)

Pauline Oliveros' work *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation* was performed in summer 2012 at Tate

Modern, London, by a specially convened ensemble of 14 female musicians, conducted by Claudia Molitor. Staged on the concourse in the middle of the Turbine Hall, those women stood in a semi-circle and in dimmed light they started to breath into the hum of the building.

The piece produces a constant of sound, taut, and tensioning, fragile yet also full of the strength of its own agency: filling the space with a sonic thread that holds the space as place through the persistence of its temporal materiality. Teasing out of its own fabric, gently but with great strength, what is not there before but produces the contingency of its own existence. This is not a contradiction but the condition of sound in its relentless presence: moving and still at the same time, hovering above the concrete floor of the concourse and grounded in its own concrete materiality.

This is not a rhythmical piece; time is not used to fracture and phrase but to draw a sonic line that draws sound together into a thing made of itself. Although it only lasts 30 minutes, it has the presence of a much longer time: the time of its spatial development, of shapes and forms, formlessly forming, filling, and shaping the place of its own timespace.

The Turbine Hall is a demanding space; it offers no resistance, no bounce, but swallows sound into its vast darkness. The piece responds to the demand of its architectural context by gaining ground. The thread is getting thicker, gaining intensity and clarity through the expansion of its shape: collective and solitary exclamations, vocal and instrumental, expand and pluralize what started as a much thinner line. The homogeneity of the initial thread is questioned not through oppositions, but through pluralizations: through the emergence of different voices from the location of their shared origin—expanding the composition from within, from the center of its own production, centrifugally into the dark and empty space above our heads and behind our backs. Sound getting thicker, intense, and demanding, drawing the listener into an immersive re-enactment of its shape.

Swarming tones and tonalities, materials and materialities, merged not as one but into the complexity of a heterogeneous work that moves horizontally as a thick vertical. There are individual bits, oddments, sticking out here and there, to make another form, to be brought back into the commingling of sounds as the shape of the work's formless flow. The piece is not vague but formless: strongly defined in the absence of prescription. A plural whole, growing and moving in the practice of its own articulation, not toward a definite form but as a form forming in the time of its performance.

I hear instruments and voices, but the sounds produced seem to have discarded the body of the person and of the instrument, which are left behind as thoughts and representations, open mouthed, covered by a thick blanket of their own making that denies their source but enables their expression.

At one moment the piece is quieting down again, back into the size of the initial thread, sitting steady and still on the stage of its own sounds. The thread never breaks however thin the line gets; it moves on as the “trembling life” of all there is in its constant being, not as object and subject but as things thinging their own existence and truth.³⁶

In this work, Merleau-Ponty’s primary openness meets a physical primordially. Raw sounds producing an openness to the world find themselves reciprocated by an openness to the body: Oliveros’ body initiating the performers’ bodies to trigger the re-enactment of the pathetic material through mine. The powerful rawness of the encounter incorporates my own body into the work, silently listening I hear my presence also. This is the self-consciousness of Sadie Coles Gallery in a different guise, triggered not by a solitary CCTV camera, but by the shared space of listening: my body against yours as we sit together on the concrete floor of Tate Modern, listening to those performing before us. We recognize them not by a name or an instrument but through our own body, our own breath, and our own open or closedness to the world of the work.

At this moment we are Merleau-Ponty’s “semblables” a plurality of beings listening together and recognizing one another in seeming similarity even through disagreement and animosity, producing “a spontaneity which gathers together the plurality of nomads.”³⁷ It is a complicity that is not only harmonious and agreeable, but comes from and brings forth also the discomfort of a shared space, performed by the musicians and playing on my body vis-à-vis yours.

It is not only the body of the listeners and of the musicians, but the body of the instrument also that is opening up its physicality beyond the defined shape of its function. I see and read in the program notes the names of what it is I am supposed to hear: a violin, a recorder, a laptop, a theremin, a cello, and more, but the composition snatches recognition from my grasp and forms the known into a formless flow to be sound not source or structure. The instruments generate their name as a temporary call rather than from a conventional timbre, and find together not through the score, but out there on the line of their sounds.

The hold of those sounds within one piece performs a synthesis. However, this synthesis is not technological; it is not an instrumental nor a functional coming together; rather, it is a physiological melding of space and time with bodies and movements, into a whole that is not stable but fluid, a fixedfluidity, building not the enchantment of Dhomont’s *Forêt profonde* but the bodies that live within it, and which, in their turn, recall the bodies living in Bourgeois’ *Cells*, inhabiting her stuffed trouser legs, her shirts and socks, performing the nervous tension of place that marginalizes itself in the canon of male articulation. It is a female body making music from the breadth of her existence, not overplayed or caricatured but elongated, expanded, to demand entry into the world and

to open the world: to add her own plurality to a presumed actuality and ask for her slice of possibility to infiltrate and implode what we think there is as certainty.

Oliveros' work is uncomfortable, noncanonical. It still plays instruments, which hint at their own canonical instrumentality occasionally but divert from their purpose as musical implement and come to be as sound: mimicking, reciprocating, and finally generating their own shape. The uncertainty of this development is demanding. It demands of me that I enter the work and figure out its place from the center of my decentered inhabiting.

It opens a musical space not to enter it into musical descriptions, observations, or even endorsements, but to produce music from the fissures of sound that suggest different practices, different possibilities of what the body might be, of what music might be, of what the world might be.

It performs the force of sound overcoming music, turning in its canonical formation, imploding it, and demanding new ears.

It slices open conventions, preconceptions, positivist representations, and ideas of what things are, to perform the shape of things as themselves.

Finally, it abandons reference and comparison not to disavow a location within music and art but to recenter those fields around its own location, its own body in performance, contingent and fleshy, formlessly itself. This self is not solipsistic or unnamable but practical, and thus it demands not a deaf perceptual faith nor a preconceived reflection, but faith in listening as participation in the contingent conversation of me and you in sound. This requires the stamina to be with formless forms wanting constant re-imaginings, and it commands of reflection to show its preconditions and to abandon them.

The work pluralizes musical and artistic discourse from the undergrowth of a sonic expression, shining bright and painful lights through dense dark leaves. From there the work continues to expand its thread, to grow and extend its shape, outward and inward, sounds mounting each other, voices pitching through, building new shapes and new forms. These organs without a body can take on any form they please: shrill points and buckled flesh sticking out of a certain shape to assert singularity within a plural nest. Producing the movement of many heads and many tongues, voices and breaths meeting and dissipating in sound and yet attached to the same place: the undefinable ground of "feminine composition."

This feminine composition mirrors sound in Hélène Cixous' notion of an "écriture feminine," a feminine writing that "cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way"³⁸—and so as they sound, these voices too are volcanic: they do not embellish to narrate, instruct, tell, or guard, but to erupt; to do their own

shape and perform its expansiveness in a darkened space that deliberately hides their origin, source, and purpose. They are not intelligible, neither ugly nor beautiful, but free from the prejudices of a visual body to perform instead the contingent function of its practice without ideal, without aim, on the plural line of shared sound.

This is another acousmatic that answers Dhomont's enchantment with mediation and transformation. Here too the source is not reduced in a technological process nor in an ideational scheme but slips away, not from the context but into sound itself, to become sonic and defy gravity, prejudices, and preconceptions in its formless form: to be as sound the plural possibility of the visual shape, to shatter that shape in the generative truth of sound that gets to the presence of the body through the memory triggered by its own pathetic material and finds a future, hope, and expectations from its insistent idiosyncrasy.

To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation performs a bracketing off of the visual body, to cut definitions of gender and identity and produce a body made from sound; it prevents a recognition and valuation via canons, instrumentality, and music to sound as things thinging, expanding the concrete possibilities of sonic articulation. The work has the pathology of a psychological phenomenology that seeks to grasp and be grasped in its trembling rather than by extinguishing its perpetual motion in the certainty of discourse, representation, and reference.

The truth of the work lies not in its performative parameters nor in its structure, but in what it creates in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern reminding us of Bourgeois' *Cells* that not so long ago were exhibited upstairs, and of her Spider, *Maman*, that in 2000 sat on this very spot with its long legs and suspended body, and that in its spirit is lurking still, permanently hiding in the crack in the floor made by Doris Salcedo.³⁹

My participation in the work, sitting among other listeners, is an ethical participation in the production not only of the piece but also of identity, as a sonic subjectivity that is born in the collectivity of listening and finds from private life-worlds to a contingent possible actuality that is not more actual than any other, that might well obliterate the idea of actuality, but resembles it a bit still in effort but not in ideology. Rhythms made not on the sheet of the score but through the breathing body, first Oliveros', then the performers' and now mine, as we all sit simultaneously in the presence of their production.

This is not an interpretation of the music but a participation in its sound. It is an interpretative participation that breathes with Oliveros, expanding her possibilities via the performers' into mine, to become one body of plural legs and arms and heads, not homogenized nor formalized but included: formless forms commingling alone together in what this world her work is does.

Conclusion: Consequences of a contingent sonic truth

To travel into the world of the work as into a sonic fiction means to travel into its temporospatial expanse, the affective geography of its materiality, and to come to understand the work and ourselves through inhabiting its invisible topography.

Here the work is an environment, a place made of its space in the time of my engagement, where our processes meet and reciprocate each other. It is from within this timespace that in a complicit and reciprocal engagement we start to understand what the work does within art and without—in its intensionality and its extensionality. How it sounds as artwork and how it sounds into the world. Folding, unfolding, and refolding, I listen to the things that sound through my own thinging and come to a “material sound” and a “conceptual sound” that jointly develop a sonic sensibility, which hears the invisible mobility of sound connecting, disconnecting, and reconnecting things that we believe to see in stillness.

From invisible pigeons to murmurs of water, from the sound of distorting voices to deep woods and sonic threads, we walk, centering, decentering, and recentering ourselves through alternative intuitions that produce variants of the same world and show us the slices of which it is made.

These are aesthetic slices, slices of materiality and conceptuality that pluralize how we understand the work not from its outer edges but from within: simultaneous with its unfolding we are unfolding too, finding not just a primary openness upon the work, but generating the work as a primary openness, as a perceptual openness that does not deny critical reflection but overtakes it and questions its rationale in reciprocal processes that reveal not one actual shape but the unformed and invisible possibilities of the work’s formlessness. This is an “aesthetic possibilism” that uses the “phenomenological possibilism” of my listening to meet the structured shape of the artwork to reflect on what else it might mean: suspending not my belief in a normative reality but myself, across the work and across works, across aesthetic expectations and material preconceptions to generate what they might be in my contingent perception.

The pathetic trigger of sound entices us into the work, decentering us from a past into a current position and recentering us in a new current one. Sound is the intrigue that gets us to live in the work as world, and through this critical immersion we come to understand what it means in relation to the art world—its aesthetic value and significance—and what it means in relation to the world—its truth and ethicality. The intensionality of aesthetic slices locates the work’s value within discourse; the extensionality

of aesthetic slices bleeds into the aesthetic of the everyday and has us hear the world.

The movement within and across works as worlds, the aesthetic access to a work's materiality in a critical immersivity, and the compossibility of works, not as logical and abstract but as concrete and lived worlds through which we move in listening, from one to the other, grants us access to the fissures and the continuum between works. We move not along historical and canonical lines but through material trajectories, which exist not before my listening but which I create through my inhabiting of their possibilities in a contingent practice of participation. This is an unpredictable listening that does not know what it will hear and what it is listening out for, but aims to at once hear and reflect on the heard without prejudicing one with the other. Such a listening tries to meet language not before a perceptual engagement but to conjure it from the possibilities of the heard. The language thus summoned is there beforehand in the intention of my listening not however as a structured given. It is language as process rather than as the infrastructure of words and grammar. It is the tendency to speak that assumes other listeners as things thinging in the world of the work, and drives my solitary perception, my private sonic life-world, toward the negotiation of a shared work.

This listening does not recognize; it listens not for what a sound might represent but hears what it might generate. It hears sound as verb, as a world creating predicate. The plurality of the worlds thus produced emerges as the condition rather than the source of representation and reference: to show us the infinite and inexhaustible process of the world in sound.

Sonic truths lay bare the ideology of a positive reality and question the sustainability of a singular actuality, as one real world *and* as idea. Listening makes all possibilities actual as generative actualities: generative truths that produce their own veracity, which we reciprocate by centering ourselves in their possibilities. It removes the idea of a pre-constituted actuality in favor of contingent possibilities, which are actual as the pluralities of our life-worlds, and find to temporary and tenuous actualities only in moments of coincidence, when we negotiate our private perception through our tendency to be social and to engage in conversation.

Listening as the aesthetic movement of centering, decentering, and recentering is a social performance, performing the material of sound against givens of truth, reference and representation, and undressing the material of its givens to reveal organs without a body, without prejudicial shape, gender, race, or creed, whose clothes rather than whose flesh was used to label them before.

This is not a relative proposition but one based and situated in the concrete materiality of sound and the concrete action of listening. In those concrete actions, the "other"—the noncanonical, the feminine, the ethnic, the migratory, and as yet unnamed others—gain access into discourse

through their possibilities. Not anything goes, this is not an aesthetic relativity either, but an openness and heterogeneity that comes from the strength of concrete sound, unrestrained by expectations or preconditions. I can reach this alternative slice of another sound making only in my complicit listening, when I recenter myself into the work as into a current actuality, to appreciate what it is and how it participates in the actuality of the art world without knowing what that should be.

In this sense listening is a generative performance that works from the unseen, the oddities, what falls out of representation, reference, and positive truths and remains fluid, invisible, hidden. It is the performance of unnamed materiality that generates the world in its own truth, whose openness accesses plurality, ethics, thought, and consciousness as efforts of participation rather than as givens.

The question remains however how we deal with this invisible materiality unearthed from beneath the taught surface of the work. How do we grasp this mobile and unseen thing in thought and speech, to make it count and impact on the actuality of a discursive art world? How does the possibility of sound mean, and how does it meet discourse beyond the description of its plural action?

The next chapter will move from the world of the work into its materiality and plunge into its unseen mobility to explore the possibility of sound within the notion of a *Sonic materialism*—grasping the invisible thing of sound—and generate from the experience of its materiality a critical language that implodes the preconceptions of discourse and discipline through the plurality of the heard. In this way, the next chapter accesses the ephemeral and engages in the invisible to make a contribution to the development of a contemporary materialism.

CHAPTER THREE

Sonic materialism: The sound of stones

Communion

sounds the awkward commotion of people shifting out of tightly organised chairs all at the same time while trying to keep the reverence of the moment. This moment is made of small sounds, tiny self-conscious sounds that reflect the uncertainty of individuals as they gather up to become a group. The boom of the organ exposes bare and discomfited bodies lined up together, opening a vast and empty space to surround them with. Sonically cowering in the organ's shade, hushes and whispers outline a semi-circle formed shyly, syncopated by the certain steps of the reverend moving swayingly from one to the next, to the next, to the next, to draw in certainty the timid participation of quiet sounds.

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The Japanese father who had only gone to a Catholic communion to please his son walked back with the wafer in his hand, unsure as to what to do with it, but with an unease certain enough not to put it in his mouth. The churchwarden caught up with him and asked him to give it back; it was after all the body of Christ he was walking away with, uningested.

Communion is about the visible and how we believe in it. How we relate to the wafer and wine as the real body and the real blood of Christ or as its metaphor? Both the wine and the wafer are a material that is real, true to itself as wine and as wafer, with a certain shape, texture, and taste, but its referential self depends on beliefs, ideology, and tradition, which group you belong to rather than what it is.

The visual symbol is persuasive; it organizes bodies and objects, constitutes groups, and gives clarity about what things are. The dialectics of the infinite body of Christ opposed to our finite bodies is expressed and harbored in a slim white bit of dough and a small hastily taken sip of grape juice. It grants objects power over man through their sanctioning by God, which at the same time ensures their readability: the certainty of what they are in an otherwise unintelligible world.

The deferentiality to God, embodied in the Communion, is overcome by humanism's focus on the infinity of human thought versus the mortality of the human body; the dialectic however remains: the object authorized not by God but by human thought reflects not its materiality and experience but an anthropocentric purpose. It pitches objects against other objects and subjects, articulating what they mean against each other, from the point of view of mankind, which determines their value and what use it intends to make of them. "Human being is a facticity that gives itself validity *de jure*."¹ The issue of the communal, the "bare and discomfited bodies lined up together [. . .] to become a group" of bodies, of flesh, the contingency and fragility of that meeting and how each body experiences rather than understands the wafer and the wine, the materiality of the object, is not considered in humanism's idealist philosophy, but is simply subordinated to thought, to the idea, which defines certain groups and ideologies pitted against those of others that remain unmentioned or actively suppressed.

Humanism does thus not reach the material, but only its own reflection on the surface of the object's visual organization, and it is unable to account for plurality, because it does not inhabit the world as one possible world, holding a multiplicity of point of views, but remains extraneous to one presumed actual world, as a quasi God without his power of creation: producing a gnosticism of the assumed and inferred rather than the experienced; evading the body and the invisible in favor of a cerebral understanding of the seen.

The universalism of an anthropocentric positing of thought in objects is what makes vision and visual discourse problematic. It is not vision nor the visual that are at fault, but the heritage of religion and humanism that ties materiality to its philosophical persuasion and determines its language in a teleological or material idealism. By contrast, the invisible mobility of sound shows the nonideal as a subjective ideality that is contingent and full of doubt.² It reveals the tentative and fragile communality of this material conception and introduces alternative relationships between humans and the world as things thinking in complex equivalence.

Sonic materialism proposes to pursue a phenomenological materialism that engages in the reciprocity of being in the world and the world being the commingling of all the slices of its possibilities, complex, plural, and possibly at times unintelligible and unreliable but felt and lived. It tries to grasp the experience of the mobile and unseen thing of sound in thought

and speech, to make it count and impact on the actuality of the work and of the world. This chapter sets out to explore the possibility of sound and what it means, and how it can be written about beyond a simple description or anthropomorphic imagination. For it to do so, I will move from the world of the work into its materiality to consider its experience and how it guides us into meaning, truth, reality, and language. I will listen to the possibility of sound from within stones and across sonic bridges, in voices and chapels, to try and access in the material of sound a critical language that produces an aesthetic possibilism that gives voice to the actuality and the possibility of the material beyond the strictures of discourse and discipline, belief, and ideology, in the contingent experience of the heard.

The aim is to consider sound through its material processes in relation to the processes of my perception in the awareness of the meeting between primordially and reflection, conscious of the rationale of their relationship. This primordially is not naïve apperception; it is not at the beginning of everything, but is Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "openness to the world" as an openness to the work that lets us uncover the process of perception itself.³ It reveals the ideologies and dynamics of perception and knowledge and invites a different effort of reflection to reach the infinite and inexhaustible process of sound in its materiality—to reach the inexhaustible formlessness of its production that does not settle in knowledge but drives knowing as a sensorial engagement.

The primordially of the sonic material lies not in its simplicity but in our openness to its possibility. The material triggers this opening; it is the place from which, with Merleau-Ponty we plunge into the invisible depth beneath a presumed visual ground, unsure of what we will find.

It [reflection] must plunge into the world instead of surveying it, it must descend towards it such as it is instead of working its way back up towards a prior possibility of thinking it—which would impose upon the world in advance the conditions of our control over it. It must question the world, it must enter into the forest of references that our interrogation arouses in it, it must make it say, finally, what in its silence *it means to say*. . . . We know neither what exactly is this order and this concordance of the world to which we thus entrust ourselves, nor therefore what the enterprise will result in, nor even if it is really possible.⁴

The sonic material is the groundlessness of our concrete experience that does not negate the visible but reveals its limits by opening its depth, which we inhabit in listening and in which we share not through preconceptions but in its experience, its duration, its expanse: fragile and tentative private life-worlds meeting the possibility of others in the formlessness of sound that reveals the deformed nature of forms. It is the circumstance of our private life-world in its precarious and doubtful contingency with the work

and with others that we then negotiate in language and in action, from its silence, as a re-enactment of the possibilities of the material, to generate, temporarily and by coincidence, a work and a world between us.

Listening to the concrete materiality of sound we do not order things as objects and subjects, neither according to a higher power, nor in a humanist scheme, but eschew ontology, history, and discipline to participate in the production of the possibilities of what there is. However, a sonic materialism leads not toward nihilism, the rejection of sociality through unethical ephemerality and carelessness, but toward meaning as participation, sociality as agency and action. To hear the shuffling of chairs, the quietness of human bodies together from within recentered not at the center of a humanist universe, but at the center of a possible life-world: inhabiting its sensorial material in reciprocity rather than observing the aim of ingesting religious or philosophical principles. An ethics of participation demands this unassuming but committed position; otherwise, we do not participate in a complex equivalence but order, organize, hierarchize, and make into the image of our intentions what the invisibility of sound might be.

My desire not only to know the work's sensorial materiality but to talk about it intends my listening, and I want to answer this intention not through preconceptions, genre specific vocabularies, or prepared interpretations but through the practice of the material heard. I listen to the work to hear its materiality and to hear you and speak to you about what it might be.

There are in the world of the work other listeners who we meet as in communion, tentative and full of doubt, trying not to make a sound while listening and still we are heard taking part in the production of its world. My ears point through the work to you. It is not me or you whom I hear in its material but I hear both of us relating to the material processes that encompass our processes of listening. We hear each other through our duration within the work. The sonic material is not a mirror but a depth into which I entrust myself in listening and from where it moves that which is above, on the surface of the visible world, including my own visibility and my relationship to yours. The sound work gives us not the certainty of the visual object, neither actually nor metaphorically, but invites us into an invisible place that we co-inhabit for the duration of our listening and through which we generate each other in a different light.

The desire to work through the sonic material to communication, to meet language in the concrete materiality of sound rather than in its source, its description, or its genre, leads me to explore the relationship between perception and reflection, between the private experience and shared words, to produce a complex continuum of sound in works and words. The aim is a language that carries not a visual heritage, nor a disciplinary certainty, but a sonic sensibility that can contribute to what a contemporary materialism might be.

Hastening Westward (1995)

Robyn Schulkowsky's composition *Hastening Westward* consists of seven tracks that each open, between conventional instrumentation, trumpets, piano, and percussion, a space for sound to emerge in another shape. These sounds merge, emerge, and continue, rhythmic and without a beat, ephemeral materiality developing through hitting and stroking, gently and hard, instruments and non-instruments, metals and woods, bows and bells.

It is a piece of music that makes sound—that is produced from sonic material rather than tones. As a musical work it is unreliable and unpredictable. It produces not an order of musical things but puts into disarray what things sound like. We listen to hear a work but reach sonic materiality that brings forth its own nature: an incomplete production and infinite unfolding, which draws us into fluid processes and the uncontrollable nature of sound rather than into its structure. The piece builds the material of its environment as a roaming timespace place and triggers an affective geography that moves without a visual tendency against its context and expectations, daring us to commit to its material to generate it from its sincere waywardness rather than from a certain form.

The album was initially called *Hastening Westward at Sundown to Obtain a Better View of Venus* and found it of none, a quote from Samuel Becket's *Stirrings Still* (1989). There is no better or best view on the material, just elaborations, additions, continuations. The work could go on infinitively as experimentations, trials of musical and sonic material and how the two relate: folding and unfolding each other to expand what each of them is into what they might be.

Listening, not as habit or re-action, but as an action of inhabiting, we do not grasp the material as signification but in its signifying; we do not grasp it from without but in a critical immersivity, simultaneous and reciprocal; we do not restrict the heard to intensional interpretations, but propel it into the world, producing continually a centrifugal extensionality which carries the doubt of suspended habits in a sonic sensibility.

Schulkowsky's work and this album in particular trigger an engagement in sonic materiality within and without music and vis-à-vis sound art as well. They compel us to think what each of them is and what they could be away from generic identification and historical reference, as sound, as material—as a sonic materialism.

David K. Lewis' sacrifice of ontology to reach the paradise of possibilities⁵ invites us to abandon the ontology of the heard, to ignore disciplines and histories in order to plunge into Merleau-Ponty's world of the work as material folding, unfolding, and refolding presently and, without a certain citation, enveloping us in its plurality through our own. This means to sacrifice the transcendental in favor of present possibilities

by performing a bracketing of the object not only in space but also in time. Such a time-acousmatic adds to a spatial epoche, the cutting off of the source, producing a timespace bracketing of sound into a historical and geographical groundlessness that opens the paradise of a possible place.

The trumpet holds us in the spell of music, the percussion of indefinite objects expanding as well as holding the irregular pulse of non-referential sound that emerges at its side, drags it away from certain instrumentation to be as sound a materiality without a site or history but producing a plurality of meanings.

This non-ontological phenomenological possibilism, which does not insist on precedence and provenance, but focuses on the generating of the present through our relationship with the plurality of materials that are the world and that we are through being in the world, grants unrestricted access to sonic variations of objects and subjects that have gone beyond the idea of a referential reality into the truth of their own generating.

Hastening Westward holds the truth of its experience and produces a material continuum that relates not styles and genres but rhythms and exclamations. It continues and breaks with instrumentation and music in equal measure, abandoning a past while continuing a future for what came before nevertheless—sounds turning and re-turning, and moving on, free to play themselves rather than responding and finding a “better” view.

Schulkowsky is the anchor of this broken material continuum. She is the operator, not controlling but initiating a reciprocal and shared process that soon becomes its own dynamic. The percussion sounds are self-generating, arising from the silence of listening into the track of the trumpet and the notes of the piano—focused explorations of sound not to know the things of their origin but their thinging. The percussion sounds the visual material and her visual body through the invisibility of its sonic materiality, opening through the work a thing that is the reciprocity of their relationship as the primacy of production: corporeal, exploring each other’s physicality bodily.

The tracks break gently, moving into silence, before emerging again in another trial of sonic materiality. That silence connects them, and yet they are each very different as if to sound another variant of the same sonic world in self-governing similarity. These are material slices commingling into a piece that contains all their possibilities, to which we get not by inference nor by synthesizing various view points, but by centering, decentering, and recentering ourselves from moment to moment in the complex continuity of the work to experience its fractures.

These seven tracks eschew a certain shape and provenance. They build not a musical work but a sonic material: a thing of sound, of invisible processes, and of unseen depths, which focus us on their contingency, their unpredictable and equivalent unfolding into a plurality of formless

forms: what they open from within themselves and what they make us open from within ourselves.

My desire to write about Schulkwsky's work beyond the restrictions of the discipline, not as music and not as sound art, but as material processes and how we respond to these processes, brings me to the need for a sonic materialism that enables listening and understands the invisible as material, as relationship and as dynamic, and offers a way to analyze how we live among it—to get to know the unseen dynamic of the work and the world and ourselves within it.

Conceptual sound

Box with the Sound of Its Own Making (1961)

Robert Morris' nine-inch walnut cube contains a three-and-a-half-hour tape recording of its construction. It is embedded in the cube, invisible from outside but nevertheless expected to be within it, framed and made visible by the box that conceals it. The "it" of course is not the sound but the tape-deck. The sound remains invisible even outside the box; its placing is metaphorical and practical rather than necessary.

At the time there were a number of boxes about in the art world; however, none made sound. Those were mute boxes made by Morris himself and by other artists like Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt. They were rectangular shapes that set boundaries and performed the conceptual containment of nothing. They manifest the minimalist drive of sculpture finding its basic form: the nonform of hollowness, containers without content, an entirely nonfunctional functionality.

Morris' box is not about the walnut wood it is made from, and despite the soundtrack of its own making it is not about its processes of production but about the separation of the thing from its origin and function in the intellectual conception of its form. The sound highlights rather than redeems the absence of reference and origin and aids toward minimalism's aim of non-referentiality. This is however a very different non-referentiality than the one Schulkwsky's work brings us to. Morris achieves a certain nothingness rather than an unpredictable extensionality. The sound of its own making is a conceptual sound that changes the imagination of the visual form; it does not delve into its depth however, but focuses the surface on its emptiness. By contrast, *Hastening Westward* delves into the invisible and expands into the possible.

Morris' sound breaks through the heavy muteness of traditional art practice and in particular of Modernism, but his sound does not sound. It does not reveal the materiality of sound but points toward the immaterial of the box as concept.

It does not reflect sound but takes sound to reflect its time onto a spatial thing, augmenting its deliberate nothingness in relation to the more worthy themes of art by being its own persistent self. Sound in this context introduces not a new reflectivity but deflects the convention and nominal relationships and values set up by visual traditions. The durational aspect of the work, three-and-a-half hours of sound, denotes not the time of the box but the timelessness of the box as a nonfunctional object that has no purpose and thus it is not produced; there is no process of its own making; and there is no destruction either; instead, the box is an ideal “non-ontology.”

Morris’ work sits against high modernist transcendentalism, historicist narratives, the heroic scale of abstract expressionism, the idea of valuable artifacts, and against the notion of an interesting visual experience, but it does not introduce an interesting sonic experience. His work uses sound to hollow out the notion of the box, of the artwork, and what it might hold. It deflects from the visual, spatial, and tangible, onto something more ephemeral and immaterial, which however is not invisible and inexhaustible but captured in an ideal conceptuality.

The sound of the making of the box reveals not the material of sound but engages in the material of the box as process. In this way, the work disavows sound its materiality and renders it the bearer of the concept of immateriality and nonfunctionality. The work uses a sonic conceptuality to deflect visual materiality and reveals the idealism of minimalism as the objectivity of nothingness. By contrast, a sonic box as sonic thing insists not on the mentioning of its provenance, its ontology, and deflects not from a present visual form but expands this visual actuality through the invisibility and inexhaustibility of mobile sound.

The sonic thing

A thing like the cup on my table is an actual object; it is real in the most primitive sense of the word: I can touch it; it has a function and a form, and guarantees and locates my experience: to be thirsty, to drink tea—to which I relate a value and a name in which is placed the authority of the cup as object. If the cup was broken or if it were in a museum, removed from its primary function, unable to hold tea or highlighting its decorative nature instead, that would be another thing altogether. It would be a possible cup, if only it was not broken or if only it was not an artwork, but remains actual as a broken piece of crockery or as an exhibit. The broken or exhibited cup is still actual but differently real and it is also still an object with its own name and location, not just a thing.

Language makes things into objects by corroborating and locating their experience in a sense of actuality testified by a referent. In this way, language

is the underpinning of our idea of the real as a notion of actuality, which is crucially not the same as lived reality but is the construction of reality as a logical and shared state of affairs: actuality answers the demands of logic and of language to be real in the sense of being truthful, consistent, and not contradictory—reality involves the contingent experience and that might well at times lie, be inconsistent, and contradict itself.

So as it sits on my table, intact and filled with tea, the cup is more than a thing; it is a thing with a provenance and a purpose, a past and a future more than indeed a present. It is a thing with the authority of the object, qualified independent of my present experience, by the validity of its name. It is an object whose property does not contradict its purpose or form. It can go back in the cupboard where it remains a cup.

In contrast to this linguistic and logical actuality, sound always remains a thing thinging. It exists strictly in the present and is mostly nonfunctional unless it signals the function of something else. Sound is as much possible as it is actual: temporarily generating an actuality that might well be different; hinting at the existence of other possibilities hidden in the invisibility of its passing. The actuality of the cup is a linguistic reality autonomous of perception; the actuality of sound is a temporary materiality that demands listening and generates itself as the possibility of the heard.

Airplanes landing

sound a menacing shape in the dark. Periodically bursting forth from nowhere, to pierce a thin whining line that eventually flattens out into a thick form that covers my space, formless but determined. A small murmur becoming large; a great big dragon fly enveloping my room, expanding its body and imploding its shape to enfold the whole space with the force of its cry, until it moves on, lighter now as if unburdened, vanishing into the night.

SOUNDWORDS.TUMBLR.COM October 08, 2012, 10:10 p.m.

Language has great difficulty in locating sound and finds it hard to testify to its existence. The name “the sound of airplanes landing” is not the sound’s name; it is the landing airplane’s attribute, and thus I cannot place the validity of the thing of the sound in it, I cannot make it an object. “The sound of the airplane” has the function of making us aware of the airplane overhead, that is however not the function of the sound, it is the function of the name “the sound of the airplane.” The sound itself has no function, and so my experience of it, once we disregard the signification of its source, is much harder to locate, and harder even to articulate in language. I can try onomatopoeic exclamations but they mimic the sound, only producing another, rather than articulating its actuality. So it remains without a name

and without a location, eschewing signification and semantics, and thus it must continue as a thing thinging presently proffering possibilities rather than confirming one actuality.

The sound of the airplane landing offers me a possible thing that might not be the airplane landing at all, but a narrative, a sonic fiction. Listening I extend what I hear well beyond the recognition of the object into the imaginary scenario of the sonic thing, of what it could be: an American airplane, a British Midlands flight, a fighter plane, a plane crashing, a plane taking off, not an airplane at all . . . sound hints at the improbability of one truth and meaning of things and instead opens the imagination to the possibility of all that could be. It is unstable and doubtful: I can never be sure of what I hear. Instead, I invent a contingent reality of the heard that is not a singular actuality but a possible reality.

Sound is not ideal; it does not strive toward one truth about the actual but enables the imagination of all that could be real, generating its own truth. It invites us to generate a plurality of things out of its own temporal passing, and in this way it offers us an alternative perspective on objectivity, subjectivity, and materiality. This other perspective is not based on a fundamental essentialism that separates the sonic material from the visual, but it distinguishes it from a visual philosophy, history, and expectation that see the visible but neglect the invisible.

Sound can invite us into a different world in which we can appreciate objects as things, autonomous of their name, established contingently and temporarily, generating different material dynamics and relationships. Such a sonic world is a place made from sonic things producing an acousmatic timespace that, in order to hear, we need to inhabit as sonic things thinging ourselves, sensible to the fluidity and passing nature of its reality that might well be possible rather than actual, but which nevertheless we hear.

The notion of a sonic world of sonic things grants sound a framework of reference that can take care of rather than override its fluent invisibility without making it insignificant. It is the composer and the listener, initiating and inhabiting the invisible space of sonic materiality who are the operators of its possibilities and whose experience finds words for the passing nature of its actuality. According to Lewis' indexical analysis of actuality every world is *actual at itself*, meaning it is actual for its present inhabitant from whom it is a possible actuality.⁶ Lewis accepts as unavoidable the relativity of his position and prefers the downside of relativity to the problem of rigid worlds. The phenomenological possibilism put forward over the last two chapters answers his dilemma by offering the abstract entities of logic the body as flesh of experience that grounds the actual as a possibility not in a rigid earth but underground in the invisible mobility of its production, where it is fluid but not relative: where it does not exist in relation to but generative of actualities. In the materiality of sound, Lewis' indexicality describes not a belonging to an abstract world that preexists our inhabiting

and that is actual relative to another such actual world, but recounts the production of a concrete world that we generate in the process of living in it as in a life-world. Thus, the words gleaned from the sonic material of this sonic possible life-world do not override or relativize sound's mobility but mirror its fluent and invisible generation.

Equally the focus on listening as inhabiting does neither render a sonic possible actuality anthropocentric, nor does it refer the reality of this actuality to a representational truth of correspondence and certain reference. Rather, inhabiting produces a phenomenological index of the flesh that produces a "generative referentiality," whose validity is contingent and reciprocal: a matter of living in the invisible dynamic of the world and generating its truth from that simultaneity. On this indexical valence of flesh and sound, the sonic work is true as the action of its production and the action of my listening: the sonic world of sonic things is a passing truth whose value lingers in consciousness as a sonic sensibility but leaves no facts and knowledge that could be relativized or referenced.

This sonic sensibility allows us to reference the material as action, as thing thinging, rather than as object, and understands the inhabited reciprocity of its reality.

The sound of stones: The material of histories and geographies

This has already had a history (0) (2011)

. . . and in one corner of the room was a large table on which were horseshoe nails and pebbles and little pipe cigarette holders which one looked at curiously but did not touch, but which later turned out to be accumulations from the pockets of Picasso and Gertrude Stein.

*playing in pockets to spill object objects become
objectframeobjectframeobjectframeobjectframeobject stuff pockets⁷*

Patrick Farmer's performance of three of the twenty-two pages that make up his score *This has already had a history* (0) is difficult. It is difficult in its performative and material abrasiveness, using the literary and material friction of things to sound each other not in a usual everyday manner but against their habits: subverting materiality and reference at the same time, and questioning the authority of performance itself.

The piece is based on *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) by Gertrude Stein, a fictional autobiography authored under the name of Alice B. Toklas, Stein's lover. This text is Farmer's libretto, the textual material that he enacts and that enables our re-enactment of his sonic

material performed at the Centre for Creative Communications in Kings Cross in London. This center is an austere space, built for thinking and research rather than bodily and sensuous engagement, bare, white floor tiles, and sharp white painted walls. It clearly sits above some tube lines that shake and sound the space at regular intervals with a heavy rumble. It is within this context that Farmer performs *This has already had a history* (0) in October 2011 as part of a POLYply event. The audio-visual environment, its intended use and ambience, highlights the pull between cerebral conceptuality and material playfulness and amplifies the difficult and even paradoxical relationships that his work builds.

He sits at a desk, two acoustic turntables on either side, head down, passing time to the sound of nonamplified turntables turning, their steady range of low frequencies carving a sonic ground of a certain depth out of the space for us all to recenter ourselves in. This undulating sound creates a readiness, an invisible focus in which I sit and listen to hear what else might emerge. It is met at regular intervals by the rumble of the trains down below but holds its own track, while making the listener aware of its context.

Farmer moves through various actions and inactions, scripted and meticulously performed yet at the same time lacking entirely in purpose and operational investment in the objects and actions performed. This paradox is striking and even absurd, questioning the notion of the performer's authority and rendering the materials used willful events rather than inert objects. They become a formless contingency whose function is not their design but their present use that is thus not predetermined but evolves into whatever it can be.

Beside the two turntables are two metal candleholders and a tub of pebbles announcing their imminent use and triggering expectations. After a long period of focused inaction Farmer gets up and prepares the record player, quietly following still along its endless undulation as if in private preoccupation he patiently crafts a fulcrum to keep the turntables in motion while he places the base of a candleholder onto the vinyl, trying to find a groove for it to sit in and resound.

The contact of the candleholder with the record produces a shrill sustained sound that sounds not the record player nor the candleholder but their other possibilities. What they are not in isolation, as separate entities, nor in their named function or as visual forms, but in the contingency of their meeting, their interaction, their action toward each other that builds not two separate objects in dialectical negativity—telling us all they are not—but triggers the production of materiality as mobile reciprocity: inexhaustibly all they can be.

Sound sounds not one object against another, but sounds the between of things. It is not the candleholder nor the record player but their coincidence that sounds. Sound is neither distance nor closeness but it is the measure of the relationship as sonic thing always here and now, and my part in this

relationship is equivalent and participatory: I am listening and sounding this coincidence too.

The rhythm of the piece is not its beat but the interactions between objects as things thinging and Farmer's movements toward them. He does not control the objects but performs their reciprocity in which their latency is realized momentarily as one of the possibilities of the material. The sound heard is one slice of all the slices of what the material of the thing might be, questioning the positive interpretation of anything through the plural thinging of things together. The sonic material of the candleholder is not a homogenous physical form but is its invisible expansion and fragmentation. It is not an object but an event, a thing thinging that realizes itself from its fragments, not in isolation but through its relationship with those of other thinging things and the listener as a complex thing thinging as well. In this dynamic existence it realizes not its predetermined function but its nonfunctional contingency: its extensionality into the world through the temporality of its being as action toward others, producing a commingling rather than a discrete materiality.

Farmer is neither sanctioning action and nor is he restricting it; instead, he sounds, simultaneous with the unfolding, folding, and refolding of the material its relationships. His preparations and authorship lead not to a certain sonic form, but to the unreliability of sound asserting itself. His actions and inactions, his sitting still and getting up are part of the work, his own sonic materiality contributing to its development. The trigger of his actions is the textual material, which he worked into a score whose instruction he follows meticulously. However, the action of following leads not to the realization of the score as ideal but to the realization of the unpredictable latency of the sonic material.

The sonic material of the candleholder being pushed into one groove of the record does not have the certainty and function of a named object but sounds its formless and expansive plurality: the sound of its eventness, which pluralizes the object in time and space. This eventness estranges us from the still actuality of the seen and brings us closer to the invisible, the possible, the depth of the work where it leaves the script and makes the world audible as mobile relationships.

Without sitting down Farmer takes the tub of pebbles and empties them forcefully onto the spinning turntable. This action is shocking in its predictability: it is what I expected him to do and what I hoped he would do. It is an almost childish defiance of instrumentality realizing the desire not to be responsible, to escape the mechanistic functionality through a generative subversion. But it is also shocking how this action does not fulfill that desire but leaves me desiring more: leaves me disappointed at how quickly things go back to normal, pebbles still on the floor, all agency spent, the sonic event hidden in the immobile realm of the visible.

Farmer too drops into a prolonged inaction, sitting down, pensive until he gets up to stuff the pebbles into his pockets—gathering up the crashing sound of their previous action in a quieter more intimate friction of stone against stone in the deep pockets of his trousers.

This piece re-imagines the candleholders, the turntables, and the stones not against their name and function but through their action and inaction as their being in the world and through our being in this world with them. Their agency is not a mystical nor a metaphysical vitalism however, but is their relationship with each other, as other things as things thinging, as shared action. The sonic vitalizing of the visual world happens not in the objects nor in the subjects but in our relationships, in our reciprocity through which we build the sense of the material world not as separate from us nor as made from abstract entities, but through our inhabiting of the commingling of things as events.

A sonic materialism is a materialism as possibilism that does not obey ontology but invests in a permanently present action of connecting, disconnecting, and reconnecting. The sonic thing is not through its autonomy but is its action as interaction, creating not itself but the event of the moment, the aesthetic moment of the work and of the everyday as the commingling of what there is together rather than through deduction and adding up of what there is apart. In the same way, my private life-world thus produced as this commingling of what there is together, is not apart from your life-world, cannot be added nor deduced from it, but exists in our relationship as the possibility of what we are collectively.

The material already has a history; according to Farmer, it has the fictional history of Stein's fictional autobiography, a made-up story based on lived reality, fictionalized through the shifting names and format of the publication. This history is present; it is folding, unfolding, and refolding now, producing the material history of its presence as the sonic fiction of its visual materiality. This does not describe a historical materialism, a referring of pebbles, turntables, and candleholders to the past of its social production and significance, but generates a materialism that has a present history that uses time not to go back and forward but to perform their continually present eventness. This eventness is the performance of the possibility of things together rather than the actuality of objects apart. The things performed are not productive; they do not contribute nor represent social productivity but perform a nonproductive present materiality in a plural form. This produces a "possibilist materialism" experienced in a phenomenological inhabiting that enters the framework of logic to generate the substance and relationships of modal entities rather than consider their necessity, truth, and coherence. This phenomenological engagement inhabits the framework of logical worlds not to consider the named entities within these worlds but to explore their materiality, not through logical comparisons and counterfactualty, but through the experience of their

intersubjectivity: through the experience of what they are together and what else they could be between rather than in relation to each other.

The sonic materiality of the things—the turntable, the candleholders, the pebbles—does not deflect attention from their visual material but brings us into their invisible depth to suspend the habitual, anthropocentric view of the objects in a reflection of their primary perception. This effort leans not back in history but must forever lean into the present to hear an alternative materiality in the plurality of its possibilities, whose diversity evokes not human control but responsibility.

This has already had a history (0) produces not a track but extends itself, from the continuously undulating base of the acoustic turntables, its metaphorical primordial ground, into the continuously present history of its reflection. It builds a sonic timespace environment, made from the invisible relationships of visual objects that have lost their name and purpose in the eventness of sonic materiality.

This is a timespace environment made presently from what there was before: the austere acoustic setting of a research center, the rumbling tube train, with all that started to interact through its performance. The sonic material is not an entity but an environment, a mobile timespace world made from “possible-things-of-sound” to which we find not through their differences or similarity but through their simultaneity, their equivalent actions as interactions that produce what they are contingently from all they could be, in our reciprocity, producing permanently a present history without an ontological ground.

30 Minutes of Listening (2012)

Mark Peter Wright’s gallery installation *30 Minutes of Listening*, composed from material gathered and recorded in South Gare, an area of reclaimed land and breakwater along the northeast coast of England, builds a timespace of sonic possible things. It brings us to the event of the material, its processes, to which we respond with our own: building in equivalent proximity the distance and closeness of the work.

The recentering invited by Farmer’s acoustic turntables finds a more explicit demand here. The audio-visual material of Wright’s installation, its mobility and fragmentation, asks of us to walk through it and practice the visible and invisible elements of its topography to know where we are and what it is made of. The work produces an affective geography that hints at an actual geography at a distance, in South Gare, and brings us close to a geographical possibility at IMT Gallery in Bethnal Green Rd. in London. The first follows the tendency of geography to be visual, to map and measure; the latter delves into the invisible depth of sound to re-imagine the place from an inhabited simultaneity.

The exhibition consists of three parts: in the front room of the gallery is an installation comprising of a video, an engraved mirror, and two heaps of stones on each of which sits a speaker; in the middle gallery is a split screen video and two slag stones on a shelf; and in the back we find an invitation to do this all ourselves. All of these parts are inherently connected through the site, the notion of site, and how we walk through it; through the idea of the object, a plethora of facts lettra-setted onto the gallery walls; as well as through those very walls, which deliberately let each part permeate the other.

Wright's installation brings the sonic materialism of the artwork to the everyday and invites us to think about the acoustic environment that surrounds us, not through its purposive actions and directed organization but through the way we coexist with its materiality and how our processes and its processes mirror each other in the equivalence of a camera lens and the recording equipment.

In the main gallery space the actual site of South Gare circles as a massive video projection, round and round, in 30 minutes from dusk till dawn, encircling us in our own experience of it. The slightly curved gallery wall responds to the circling motion, and a small round mirror at the back completes the loop. These architectural and installed features extend the pull of the image, which is propelled and spread out inexhaustibly through the sound—ostensibly the sound of all the things engraved in the mirror: Herring Gull, Seaweed, Swallow, Boat, Engine, . . . which as possible-things-of-sound sound so very differently than the collection of their names.

Turning back to the mirror, to the names of sounds engraved on its surface that reflects me at the same time as I read them, recalls yet again the impossibility of a sonic object and the necessity to consider the sonic thing from its “material eventness” and our engagement in this “event materiality” instead. The sounds I hear are not those of the Gulls, of Seaweed, of a Swallow or a Boat Engine. That is just their visual affiliation. The sounds I hear do not represent nor reference those objects but produce their own things. What I hear is one slice of all the slices of what the material of those things might be, questioning the positive interpretation that is staged in their names and re-staged in the scientific facts about South Gare that are lettra-setted all over the gallery walls.

Sound produces not a transparent positivity and nor is it a negative, “all it is not”; rather, it is the radical inexhaustibility of “all it could be.” The sonic material is heard not as separate entities but from the plural thinging of things together, from the slices of its possibilities commingling to create contingent actualities of opaque possibilities. Sonic materialism is not objective but produces subjective objectivities,⁸ the materiality of private life-worlds, from which we negotiate contingently the material form of the world.

The visual is haunting and beautiful, mute it might invite the notion of a sublime, a seemingly endless stare into the void of the world, but the sound denies us this indulgence. In sound we do not plunge into the absence of the image but into the presence of its materiality. We cannot vanish into sound; instead, through our listening as reciprocal and generative proximity, we make appear different forms and formless shapes out of which the world emerges rather than disappears into.

The sonic world emerges as a present geography captured not on maps but unfolding between the material and the person walking through it, on the ground, underground: generating geography as social and political actions on the surface of the world, which through their mobility draw us into its depth, the invisible place of their interaction, where in dark and unseen movements time and space take on a formless material shape to become the ephemeral topography of sound.

The reflection of the red recording light that turns as a fuzzy spot within the frame of the video reminds us of Wright's presence in this topography. This is not a God like view, a dispassionate study of the environment, but a personal generation of place from the time and space of its lived materiality. Wright is not a transparent subjectivity. It is his particular recentered listening to South Gare that shines as a red light inside the frame of his work—a presence toward which I extend myself to meet him in my own perception. However, it is not me nor him that I hear, but I hear us both relating to the material processes through our processes of listening, not as an anthropocentric projection but through our equivalence in the concrete materiality of sound.

In this red point the technology shows its own instrumentality, which reveals itself not as neutral automation but as generative perception. The landscape that turns before me is not a representation but an interpretation: the generative creation, from inexhaustible possibilities, of one actuality of place that in my turn I recreate as another possible actuality in the contingency of my interpretation: meeting Wright in his work of which he becomes thus one element, another slice of material possibility.

This is not a geography of facts but of sonic fictions, of inhabited interpretations that bring a different socio-political awareness and responsibility to geography and to our sense of place. The red light interpolates us and calls us to participate in the production of the work and the world. It marks Wright's responsibility and hints at mine: to understand the materiality of South Gare not only from its facts and names, but also from its fragmented mobility that reveals its socio-political production rather than its final location.

South Gare is a contested area. It is a man-made jetty built to offer a safe harbor from the stormy sea, and used to transport materials to and from nearby steelworks. These steelworks were shut down, bringing into question the purpose of this land and inviting the reconsideration of its

geography through the processes of its inhabited materiality rather than the outline of its use.

The slag stones, of which the jetty consists, and that were piled into two small heaps housing each a speaker in the main gallery space, are used as instruments in the next room. A split screen video shows Wright's headless torso, once on site in South Gare, once in the gallery, build a pattern by hitting together two of those stones, while the same sit mute on a little white shelf to the left of the projection. This sound sounds not the object of the stones, but their participation in the building of the environment of the site, that of IMT Gallery and that of South Gare. The first is reverberant, wet, and loud, the latter but a dry, quiet clicking. The video holds a mirror to the source of the sound, reflecting back not a name but a latency, the dormant thinging of the thing awoken in Wright's own movements. This latency insists on context, on relationships, and brings to the work an aesthetic possibility and to the site a geographic possibility that can infuse and refuse the determination of purpose, immediacy, and vision.

Every detail of Wright's work is sincere; there is a fervor and earnest desire to persuade us of its worth, its value not as a piece of art but as an endeavor, a thing to do and know the world by. His work repositions materialism as a strategy of involvement, pairing the ethics of participation with a participatory materialism, confirming the simultaneity, reciprocity, and ethicality of sonic possibilism.

This impression is confirmed in the very back room of the gallery where on an A4 sheet of paper he gives us instructions how to do it ourselves: how to do 30 minutes of listening to *our* site. It is a call to a kind of "musica practica" of field recording, an invitation to share in sincerity and in the socio-political as well as the aesthetic relevance of his endeavor, to listen to our own site-specificity, and hear our participation in its material processes.

Sonic crossing: Intertwining without fissure

Bridges are constructions that connect places and objects. They are the material infrastructure of connecting, the mapped site of crossing, determining distance, and being together. Maps reveal their position, directing us where to cross and mapping a visual geography of measured objects and separate places.

Bridges rely on the notion of distance, a separation that needs to be bridged, metaphorical or actual. In this sense bridges are entirely visual concepts; they cross the distance to connect and at the same time they evidence and maintain the distance that exists in the first place. The visual moves through distance and differentiation, to build connections that do

not merge the places and things thus connected, but stabilize and confirm their distance and differentiation even.

The Millennium Bridge, for example, outlines the distance between Tate Modern and St Paul's even if the Thames were to disappear. It is an arch that solidifies what otherwise might remain in flux, changeable and moveable. This arch relies on the notion of the bridged as inert materiality, as fixed points on a map or fixed identities on a social spectrum, whose own existence is defined in that separation, rather than as autonomous, free moving agency.

This is the paradox of the bridge, of bridging, as it starts with a separation, which it takes for its a priori and henceforth seeks to overcome, and attempting to do so it can only reinforce the separation of what it seeks to bridge—reinforcing also the immobility of things and subjects, places, and beings.

One story that illustrates the force of emotion and paradox attached to bridging is the fable of the devil's bridge at the Gotthard Pass in Switzerland.

To reach south across the Gotthard mountain into Italy the inhabitants of Uri tried several times to build a bridge across the river Reuss, to no avail. The terrain of the ravine at Schöllenen was too steep and difficult, and each attempt at erecting a crossing failed. The only way forward was to make a pact with the devil to build a bridge for them in exchange for the first soul that would cross it. However, when the bridge was finished it was a goat rather than a human that crossed it first, this made the devil so angry that he immediately sought to destroy what he had built. To this end he went down to Wassnerwald to pick up a huge bolder. On the way up the devil set down the heavy rock to take a brief rest at Göschenen. There sat an old pious woman, who quickly drew a cross on the heavy rock, making it impossible for the devil to lift the bolder from the ground and get it all the way up the mountain to destroy the bridge. And thus the bolder now rests at Göschenen and the bridge remains intact. The devil himself was never seen in Schöllenen again.⁹

The relevance of this myth remains, as it was used as recently as 2000 to protest against European Union (EU) lorries using the Gotthard road instead of transferring their load onto trains going through the tunnel. The Devil's stone was draped in red cloth highlighting its reminder of the separation between north and south, and in this case between Switzerland and EU regulation on lorry transports. The red cloth invoked the possibility to still use the stone and destroy the bridge, to renounce the pact with the devil and shatter the connection to become the geography of formless forms once again.

The bridge is then not only an architectural and engineering feature, a necessity of infrastructure planning, it is also a material made from sentiments and ideas, and works as object and as metaphor, reflecting a social reality and ideology as well as a political focus and agency. The bridge converges a materialist enquiry on the relationship between functionality and emotions and pairs movement and connecting with the apparently motionless state of the visual environment.

Listening engages in the relationship between movement, the emotional performance of crossing, and the geometry of distance, by replacing the image of fixed entities that are bridged with the bodily intertwining of the flesh, Merleau-Ponty's corporeality that is the bridge of the self as thing to things and to other bodies as things. The flesh is the contingent body of perception, the "sensible sentient" that does not see and hear a positive, transcendental object separate from itself, but perceives things through its simultaneity with the world. The fleshly body sees things through being seen and touches itself touching others. Its perception is the intertwining of the self with the world. This self is not a transparent identity but a contingent subjectivity, constituted in this entangled practice of perception: "It is a self through confusion, narcissism, through inherence of the one who sees in what he sees, and through inherence of sensing in the sensed—" ¹⁰

The flesh is the body as sensible sentient, as bodily indice in the world, where we do not perceive exteriority but respond to the world through the position of our body within it, and form our reality from in-between—not between things but between ourselves and the things. "Things are an annex or prolongation of itself [the flesh]; they are incrustated into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the same stuff as the body." ¹¹

This practice is not anthropocentric; it does not control the seen but produces the seen in the light of vision, seeing as flesh on flesh. The reality and metaphor of the bridge brings materialism out of an analysis of extraneous objects and their historical, purposive, deterministic, instrumental, or geometric relationships, to explore those relationships through the movement of the body as flesh, as a continuum between things and body as thing, always now. "Things have an internal equivalent in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence." ¹² Merleau-Ponty's equivalent and carnal relationship that marks a finite now rather than anytime stands in contradiction to the cerebral infinity of humanism, which relies on an irrelevant or a positivist body that does prolong itself into the world but measures it. By contrast, his fleshly corporeality knows the world through its contact with it, and its finitude makes for an urgent present.

Merleau-Ponty's interpretations of this flesh are developed from painting and vision and remain on the surface of the visible world, meeting the invisible only in its shade. "The painter's world is a visible world, nothing

but visible: a world almost demented because it is complete when it is yet only partial.”¹³ A “demented” visibility demands the flesh to respond, to control the frenzy of visuality by bridging the distance its partiality brings about to—complete what vision is through the thickness of the flesh. This thickness is the flesh at once enabling contact with the world—granting the world visibility and the flesh corporeality—but needing to be bridged. His flesh has to overcome the fissure, the space between seer and seen, toucher and touched, to become the thickness of vision: the commingling of all it is.

The sonic flesh continues and radicalizes this idea. A sonic thickness is not the separation from the world, from sonic things: the fissure that needs to be bridged in perception but is the sonic thing and the self as sonic things thinging simultaneously. Just as the distance heard is not the gap between two things as objects, but is the thing heard, so too the sonic thickness between hearer and heard is not a gap but is the heard, the sonic thing and the sonic self as flesh: at once audibility and communicative axes.

Merleau-Ponty’s flesh outlines a conceptual sonic sensibility that finds application in listening rather than in seeing. This distinction is not essentialist but philosophical and cultural, a matter of how we think and experience through vision and sound respectively, and it concludes not in sound but reveals a deeper visuality: a “sonic flesh” that “sees” itself looking in the thick undergrowth of the visible world as its own simultaneity.

Listening plunges Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology into a deeper entanglement with the world. I hear myself hearing not on the surface of the world but within its mobility, in the unseen timespace of its depth. There I do not just perceive the heard but experience the time of its unfolding in my generative perception: inventing us both as the moment of our encounter; there is no limit to my hearing myself listening; there is no back of myself that I cannot hear but need to assume. In sound I am fully in the world; my sonic flesh is the critical immersivity of listening to the possibilities of its invisibility. The thickness of vision is the mobile expanse of sound, which is not a variant in relation to its visible surroundings, the apparently actual context of the world, but in relation to the possibility of its invisibility, building from its materiality its own context as a possible actuality.

Listening is the flesh as sonic bridging, suspending itself across not to reach the perceived, but to perceive the materiality of crossing. Neither this materiality nor myself exists before our encounter but we generate ourselves in reciprocal simultaneity: there is no gap, neither in space nor in time; there is no *a priori* that comes together in the moment of perception; rather, the moment of perception is the production of the material and the flesh as event. There is no “connective tissue” between the hearer and the heard, no membrane however thin that is crossed, this action is continuous, concrete, invented, and without provenance.¹⁴

Merleau-Ponty's visual intertwining is a crossing, sound intertwines without a crossing but is crossing as what sounds. It sounds not the distance to an object; the distance is the sonic thing I hear. Hitting together two stones, as Wright does in his installation *30 Minutes of Listening*, makes this apparent. Listening to his hammering actions we hear not the stones nor their distance and rhythmic closeness to each other or to us; instead, we hear the sonic thing as it emerges from the materiality of the stones and participates in the construction of the environment of IMT Gallery and of South Gare as event. Recorded on the site of the gallery and on the site of South Gare, replayed in the gallery, we hear the thing thinging the circumstance of its production and our perception, through the "operations" of Wright's movements and our hearing of it: we hear the complex plurality of the thing from the relationships of its doing as the Being of what it does, and sense the environment it participates in from our present simultaneity with it.

I cannot take apart the different elements and actions to transform them into entities and tell you where they meet. I cannot visualize the bridge that connects the stones, Wright's movements, the gallery, South Gare, and I. Instead, they *are* their meeting, intertwined in the aesthetic moment of Wright's work. They leave the outline of their source behind and sound the invisible aspect of the gallery and the site to reveal their mobile and plural architecture through their simultaneity with it. This complex and simultaneous thinging is contrasted by the two stones that sit next to the screen on a little white shelf, all mute and still, happy in their inert separation, denying having ever met us or each other, they insist on their name that reveals nothing of their whereabouts nor of their materiality, which is the entanglement of their encounter.

Sound does not establish bridges that relate and differentiate objects but generates the fleshly simultaneity of the world that builds its shape as the formless passing of the entanglement of all there is. Listening is a sensory-motor action toward the world, which thus is the crossing not the crossed. Hearing is parteciple and generative, creating the world and the things continuously in all their vitality from my moving within and toward myself also.

The sonic thing is not inert: it is not fixed in shape, form, and identity; rather, it is formless and shape shifting. It has self-transformative power, an agency that meets my transformative power, my agency in our encounter. This transformative power is the meeting of Farmer's metal candleholder and tub of pebbles with the spinning turntables that transform themselves into the possibility of sound that emerges from their intertwinedness as a shrill sustained expansion. The thing thinging is not animated through me but with me. There is no ideality to this meeting; we are not on either side of a bridge but in the middle of the water, knee deep in whatever it is we are in.

This being engrossed is the plunging into the world that Merleau-Ponty advocates in his text *The Visible and the Invisible*. He reminds us not to survey the world, which is what I do standing on top of the bridge, crossing it with a purposeful stride and a sense of direction, but to “plunge into the world,” into the water beneath the Millennium Bridge to understand not the distance between the Tate Modern and St Paul’s but to experience this distance as the material which lies between.¹⁵

This is not crossing as bridging objects and subject, it is crossing as journeying; it is listening to things thinging. It has no source nor outcome, it reaches not another side, no totality nor name, it remains exactly where I am and that is always somewhere else, without having had a starting point to measure and judge my movements by. This describes a sonic geography, the geography of our unpredictable and unreliable movements that start from nowhere and go everywhere, and that intertwine to draw not a visible map but map the invisible mobility of the world.

Myriad Mouth Line (2013)

Cara Tolmie’s performance at the Oslo Contemporary Museum unfolds in five “frames” that intertwine her body with her voice and the building of the Museum to create the architecture of their passing circumstance in which I listen for the duration of her work. Each of those frames walks the same physical terrain: a rectangular shape staked out precisely and methodically by her naked feet and expanded forcefully by her voice. All five frames use the voice in a linguistic function and in a physical nonfunction: the first trying to grasp the latter’s uncontrollable nature but only finding its own.

Tolmie’s voice moves between the primordially of the body as flesh and its measure in reflection, engaging in the meeting of rationality and experience, voicing and language. Her vocal actions are performed with a microphone and an amplifier around a black swivel chair without a back, allowing her to retain the perpetual motion of the piece even when sitting down. All movements reflect and expand on each other, working through different voices and languages to illuminate the innumerable plurality of the body and its agency.

The first frame consists of vocal exercises in two tones, singing intervals: rhythmic, precise, up and down, up and down, adapting the voice to the space and the space to the voice in the time of her marching the outline of its rectangular shape. These exercises do not practice the vocal chords but bring the voice to the space, to intertwine and try the sound of their circumstance together.

The second frame sways through the space as operatic sounds, staged and over-performed musical elements that give the voice an instrumentality

and purpose while mocking the same. Her operatic voice sounds the museum's space in this new intertwining as a concert hall, bringing out different features of its architecture and bringing the audience into a different fold.

The third frame has her sitting down on the swivel chair—her arms up in the air, her naked feet touching the ground just enough to allow her to move, to suggest turns and stay in motion, while using the stability of language to narrate her performance of myriad mouths and bodies as myriad lives. This movement works with the semantic materiality of language rather than that of its sound not to explain but to expand the vocal dance into metaphors and into poetry, a textual fiction that becomes a sonic fiction in her voice and does not propose but produce her movement.

The fourth frame explodes the semantic materiality of the architecture and of her language into a sonic clicking and screaming her body in motion. Clicking, shrieking, and dancing to a solipsistic rhythm that remains private, her body moves as flesh through its sound, producing a continuum between things and the body as thing that have lost the infrastructure of visual organization. The sonic body becomes the formless body of possibilities, losing its shape but gaining extremities that continue into the formless shape of the architecture and make their sound fall out of the semantic pale to sound as invisible materiality.

The fifth frame retells the other four, working from description and explanation toward analysis and into their continuation. Primordially meets reflection and does not override the first but expands it and brings it to the fore. This frame reflects back on her action of walking and singing and my action of listening. It confirms and corrects the sonic place created between the enactment of her body and the re-enactment of my listening, admitting that a solid interpretation cannot be found. Instead, her analysis continues the suspension of linguistic sense by crossing not into a different register but expanding their entanglement, suspending our habit and expectations to hear the voice.

Tolmie's voice performs the simultaneity of voicing and hearing one's voice, the co-presence of a social and a private subjectivity, and reveals the place of the body as voice in the world: intertwined with its processes, materialities, and structures—aesthetic, ideological, and socio-political. It contains my imagination to sing, shout, click, dance, and talk and continues language and bodies into a timespace of their own built. Yet, the sense of the work is not in her voice; it is not in what she sings or does not sing; it is not in the primordial nor in its reflection in language; instead, it is in the potential of our meeting: my body and hers, in the actual circumstance that is built through both our possibilities. This meeting is our coincidence as a moment of interpretation and continuation in thought and in action, on the communicative axes of our sonic flesh, to understand not what the work is about but what it is.

Her voice and body singing and walking a rectangular shape builds the circumstance of mine, not before or after me, but with me, at the same time, in my duration and her expanse. There we stand, and here I stand with other bodies listening and watching, collectively leaning into the space thus produced that is the circumstance of her performance in which we participate. We are possible bodies rather than actual bodies, performed, expanded, pluralized bodies that challenge aesthetic, ideological, and socio-political shapes.

The body, voice, and place of *Myriad Mouth Line* as timespace thing things intersubjectively and sounds its passing circumstance as the affective and poetic geography of its encounter. It creates an invisible and temporal geography that I “retrace” and “detrace” in my listening: producing, reproducing, and destroying the materiality her performance provides me with along plural lines.

Crossing geography: Crossing identity

We meet in the material processes of the work and of the everyday. This meeting does not measure but reveals our distance and difference, our otherness to each other, which visually must remain total: I cannot be you, you cannot be me. I can only see you when you are at a distance from me and every attempt to understand you to be with you is a social bridging, a crossing of difference to a momentary sense of similarity kept in check by the parameters of the bridge that got us there in the first place, and whose constitution inheres our total separation. The bridge is what keeps us both in place, what marks my belonging, and tells you where you belong. Merleau-Ponty’s visible flesh approximates this difference; he shrinks it to the thickness of the skin, “the touching of the touch,” but however thin it remains a distance, a gap, that has to be overcome.¹⁶

In sound we meet not on the other side of a gap. It is not a meeting point that is preceded by our separateness, our difference. Rather, it is the primacy of meeting, where we meet for the first time, indifferent and ignorant of what we should be we generate each other through the being of ourselves. It is not a meeting that counters an isolated identity, a movement against something, but is the action of meeting building identity as subjectivity, reciprocal, intersubjective and on the spot, autonomous of an a priori sense of self and other but full of the responsibility of the moment.

We meet not across the bridge but via the primacy of intertwining, as sonic flesh. Merleau-Ponty’s flesh, the physical conflation of the look with the seen, and the touching with the touched, is clarified and refined in sound, which has not a look and a seen and a touch and a touched that overcome their difference in the moment of perception as a moment of crossing similarities that is thus positioned against the background of

difference. Instead, listening invents the thing and the listener as thing heard in a generative and reciprocal action of perception. The action of listening produces the thing listened to and the listener all in one move, autonomous of the notion of an a priori, autonomous of prior reflection and name, in practical equivalence: producing an invisible flesh without a skin. There is no gap, nothing is hidden, the encounter is all there is, and thus no partiality has to be overcome to complete the heard.

Listening does not consider the thing but does the thing. In this sense listening to sound is the intertwining action as Merleau-Ponty's primacy of perception. It is always already intertwining without a prior divide; it is always a primary; however, this primacy is not naïve, primordial in a nonreflective way; rather, it brings the sophistication of its action as a practice of production to the ground of perception and demands of language, of the articulation of reflection, an appreciation of its complex and sophisticated predicativeness in return.

Listening generates what we are together not in contrast to each other. In this way, listening transcends lines that cannot be crossed and forges relationship that cannot be made, not simply by not "seeing" the lines and separations, ignoring difference and differentiation, but by working from the primacy of the encounter as all there is into differences and similarities that are contingent and reciprocal.

The ethical responsibility of this encounter is then not toward the other, as an absolute, an a priori other, beset with prejudices and assumptions, but toward our participation in generating each other as contingent selves without a framework of comparison or judgment, from what there is concurrently, into a passing judgment of myself as well as of the other through myself. The judgment reached is not necessarily benign, the meeting not always blameless, but the difference is produced rather than assumed to begin with. Listening is thus not per se better than seeing; it does not prevent us from discrimination and differentiation, but it cannot avoid the responsibility in how it hears the other and the self.

In comparison to a visual geography, sound makes invisible connections that transcend social and architectural boundaries and ideological limitations. Listening invites us to map, from the ephemeral stuff of sound, the place as contingent locale emerging out of time and space as the inseparable contingent place of its entanglement. Such a timespace place does not sound distances and differentiations but is distance as sonic equivalence, always what is here, indifferent to expectations, visible structures, and hierarchies.

Bridges, social and architectural, insist on the separation between time and space; they are built on Euclidean geometry and a Cartesian worldview, which sets the notion of perspective and all its laws of physics and reason before the perceptual process, informing and prejudicing how we see the world and how we experience ourselves in this world. Both

Euclidean geometry and Cartesian philosophy are silent, mute even, not a peep that could unsettle the conviction of their vision. As soon as you make a sound however their certainty collapses. Sound not as a mathematical fact of waves and acoustic laws, but as a perceptual phenomenon, as thing thinging, does not create a perspective: the small things on the visual horizon sound their own size right here in my ear. No lines of flight can be drawn and constructed to meet them, before I start construction they are already gone and another distance is heard yet again. Listening to sound lacks perspective in favor of invisible processes, here, there, everywhere, building and taking apart the notion of a geometry of place in the formless timespace of its invisible materiality.

This invisible building and taking apart is done for example by teenage kids with MP3 players, who counter the fixed geometry of the city with a fluid soundtrack of their own. These kids are not deformed into the urban design, as adults largely are—mapping the city's terrain according to purpose and schedules. By contrast, teenagers remain formless, continually re-designing as they walk and play their environment, as contingent and personal paths through a temporal town.¹⁷ They have a sonic flesh: intertwined with the world, they do not understand why you might wish they turn their soundtrack down, to sever the seamless and continuous connection as flesh to things thinging through the sound of their MP3s.

Sound only knows the intertwining: a primary closeness. It is then not a matter of crossing the bridge, crossing the subject–subject or subject–object divide but of experiencing a world of primary simultaneity without separation. This does not mean not to see and hear discrimination. Rather, it is exactly the divisions and separations of a visual ideology that conceal discrimination, inequality, and oppression in a horizontal space that unfolds itself along mechanistic and deterministic lines rather than as a fleshly event, and whose purposive directions fire the principles of separation and discrimination.

Sound invites a different sense of what belongs together and where things belong. It looks at the contingency of belonging, not at its provenance or future place. The sonic flesh has no ontology and its intertwining with the world does not overcome a prior difference but is what it is. It does not situate but generates the place of being always now. It does not create nouns but remains a verb, *doing*, demanding of us that we participate in its predicativeness by doing listening also.

This same demand has to be made of language that tries to describe and critique the acoustic environment as well as sound artwork. Language, the vocabulary used to discuss sound and listening, should not rebuild, in a crude backward move, the bridge to sound. It should not seek to simply re-attribute it to its source opening a chasm that does not exist in listening and determining a materiality that in fact remains indeterminate. Instead,

it should articulate its action in the intertwining of listening and generate a language from its contingent and reciprocal doing.

I keep falling at you (2010)

Shilpa Gupta's installation *I keep falling at you* mobilizes a fleshly build of over 1,000 microphones suspended from the ceiling but not quite touching the ground. They form "a dark cloud of microphones like angry bees," and I cannot help wondering what is inside this dense weave, what has attracted the bees to swarm together so irately to make this menacing and overwhelming shape?¹⁸

The microphones have been rewired to recreate them as loudspeakers, to close the loop between hearing and heard, recording and playback, to sound their own recording as the inexhaustible presence of sound generating its own context. The mute recorder has reversed the process and attained agency to exact revenge and finally say what was on its mind all along. Peter Weibel hears in its multichannel chant an angry swarm following public figures and politicians, others interpret the content of the words into a post-colonial refrain against invasion and in hope of building one's own land.¹⁹

I keep falling at you
But I keep falling at you (chorus, repeat)

Your garden is growing on me
I will take it away with me

To a land which you can mark no more
Where distances don't grow anymore

I keep falling at you
But I keep falling at you (chorus, repeat)²⁰

There is also the personal, the private sonic fiction I hear in my contingent encounter, a romance of belonging and possession as well as the anxiety of what lies beneath, what is buried, and whom it will fall on—the angry lover who has drenched her scorned partner in honey to have him smothered by bees, a sweet and dark burial into which we are drawn too.

The visual provides us with a surface, with a shape and an outline, an installation shot that carries some of the meaning, but whose possibilities are only attained in my listening participation. The porous surfaces of the microphones are conduits into another world, where directions are reversed and nominal positions and relationships put into question. What should be

my talking becomes my listening: the hearer and the heard crossing not to produce a space between them but to create the materiality of crossing, as all either is. The social phalanx of material is not crossed but heard as the invisible connection without skin, just bare flesh entangled.

The heard of my listening is not the object but the duration of hearing the work, equivalent and reciprocal. It triggers a critical immersivity that builds the work and the self in a primary intertwining, producing our entanglement rather than its entities: a world of honeyed grasping in which the invisible thickness reveals reality from its possibilities and eschews an actuality built on the surface from what was known before.

We hear not what is at a distance, either geographically or semantically, but what is in our ears as the visible pore of our own microphony—the metaphorical conduit into our sonic world: the sonic flesh that has no dermis but carries the invisible thickness of the world within it and inhabits it.

At the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe (ZKM), the work is installed in a partitioned space, whose entrance throws an uneven light on the dense bundle hanging from the ceiling, plunging half of it into darkness, a darkness which I explore through my walking around it on the narrow path between wall and work that leaves little room and thus demands my closeness. The negotiation of installed distance and closeness is a reaction to the visible shape rather than to its invisible depth, whose distance and proximity is its materiality. The sticky honey that attracted the bees in the first place to grasp whatever is at the core of its swarm is grasping me in the reciprocal and inevitable embrace of sound. My listening “honeys” me into the work, which thus expands toward me, swarming over me, words burying me in the sensate sense between articulation and permeation.²¹

The work compels me to walk around it and in turn walking around it compels my listening as a turning, a movement into the work, although our visual distance remains the same. The shape reveals itself not on the installation shot but in my participation, in my walking its mobile form as a teenager would, non-deterministic, without purpose but compelled by its material to generate a formless context from the invisible that lies beneath but gives it shape.

The reversal of the microphones demands a reversal of ourselves: to inhabit the recording apparatus, to recenter ourselves in what it says rather than what it records. The chanting swallows our words and reminds us to hear our own listening as the heard. It sings not Gupta’s otherness nor her sameness but our encounter as a primary meeting, for the first time, indifferent and ignorant of who we are, we generate each other through the being of ourselves. It is not a meeting that encounters a certain identity, but is the action of generating identity as subjectivity, as a sonic subjectivity: a self entwined with the world.

The voice is a possible voice chanting the innumerable voices of multichannel mixing as one voice of infinite possibilities. The disembodied voice pluralized reinforces not what is visible but builds a depth of reverberation within which mirrors do not reflect but grant us access to our own narcissism and confusion.

The metaphor of swarming bees admits us to a lived materialism that draws with it a lived subjectivity. This is a sonic subjectivity that lives in the thickness of a sonic materiality as its flesh: its axes of generation, perception, and communication.

Sound has Aristotle's generative immanence in a purposeless guise, creating Merleau-Ponty's intersubjective life-world as the actuality of material potentiality, the possible actuality of private processes that realize not an a priori but generate the work and the world from its inexhaustible flow.

Sound's purposelessness is not its irrelevance or non-intentionality. Listening and sound making are highly intentional and generate their own contingent purpose. However, sound is purposeless in relation to a transcendental aim, whose purpose is deformed by given objectives. Sound's purpose by contrast is formless and contingent, and therefore, within the scheme of the actual world it is purposeless, but within the scheme of sonic possibility it has a purpose and intentions, which are not given but emerge out of the work, the sound, itself.

The microphones of Gupta's installation do not make a geometrical shape but generate a formless form, a swarming mass, a vibration, and vitality that is not a mystical or occult vitalism but the vitality of a contemporary interpretation of Aristotle's *De Anima*.

Aristotle's potentiality is purposive; it is the inside, the "soul" of the thing that shows itself on the surface of its appearance to be that which it wants to become. It is the movement of the material transforming itself toward the aim of its form.²² Sound, by contrast, is a non-purposive potentiality. When it is not "the sound of . . ." but is sound itself, its materiality is the potential not of a visible realization but of an invisible perpetuation. It is being in the dark as a doing without objective, without determinism and instrumentality; it outlines a transformative power that does not do in order to take on a form but does as formless being. Being as doing, not of worthy and purposeful things but as the fundamental act of living, is a doing of indeterminate participation in the comingling of things. Sonic immanence is not the coming forth of an a priori power, god or spirit that lies within the thing. Rather, given that the sonic thing does not preexist its encounter but is generated by it, sonic immanence is the strength of that generation: it is the inexhaustible process of its creation that produces the listener and heard in a primary intertwining, knowing each other as flow.

This indeterminacy meets sense and purpose but not prior to its unfolding but during it, per chance and by good luck, the result rather than the aim of materiality.

Sound's purpose clarifies itself contingently during listening not before. It is the purpose of the thing invented in audition rather than of the thing heard. It is the sonic possible thing that is in Gupta's work, and remains invisible, unthinkable even, and yet it is there, in her piece and in our imagination of it from which eventually through commitment and participation it will emerge, not separate from the visual but with it, creating a new viscosity of the installation. This viscosity is darker, thicker than anything we could ever see on an installation shot. It is a sonic viscosity that has the thickness of the flesh and of time, and unfolds itself in their reciprocity to produce not a demoted visibility that needs to be controlled by completing the seen with an assumed invisible, but that "sees" the invisible on its own flesh, in their equivalent doing, incomplete and inexhaustible.

The sound of Gupta's installation directs us toward the "soul" of the work, toward its core and inner construction, not however to show us a complete form that realizes unambiguously the objective of what lies within, but to engage us in the invisible mobility that shines outside through the reversal of the apparatus of the microphone and the multichannel setup of playback. The "swarm of bees" vibrates the potential of the work not in a visible sense but in an invisible process, entangling me, the installation, the space, and the sound together in a formless embrace, honeyed we are in a sense that remains sensible rather than rational.

The immanence of the work, its material potential communicates with the potential of the body, to be in doing, in the invisible processes of our perception, not toward a certain goal but as the participation of listening to things without a source, reference, or name: primary and unencumbered; intertwined with all there is.

The magnitude and might of sound

The intrigue of Gupta's work is the ephemerality of its weight. It is a great big bunch of stuff, looming, impressing, and pressing on me, and yet it builds no object and holds no weight but produces movement in the time of its expanse. It is a material entangled in itself, a thing that is its duration not its outline or its mass. The porosity of the microphones leads to a multiplicity of surfaces that fold into themselves, enfolding the world and enfolding me in the mobility of their assertions. Her body, my body, her "lover's" body all covered with honey and bees, revealing on the other side of nominalism a continuity between the body and things that generates different relationships.

The work produces a continuity that is not humanist but emotional, sentimental; and that does not answer the cerebral view of the thing but descends into its visceral depth to be with sonic things a sonic flesh. In this darkness the work also frightens: to be seduced by its ephemeral weight and persuaded to give up my autonomous shape is a threat to self and articulation. How can I talk immersed in a swarm of bees, my tongue stung repeatedly and swollen so as to make my utterances unintelligible; the body a formless form with reversed circulation in which hearing and the heard bleed backwards.

I am at once drawn to it and repelled by it. I want to keep on walking around it, from light to darkness and back into the light: to hear again and again what soon I do not really hear anymore as words but as rhythms, as bodies that have given their shape to the flesh of their encounter. It is a 3-minute-12-second audio loop, playing as I walk and I walk as it plays. Over and over again it swarms around me and swarms with me, entangling me in its hive, but I do not disappear in to the sound but explore its inexhaustible possibilities that open mine within them. We cannot vanish into sound. Listening makes different forms and formless shapes appear, out of which the world and the self emerge rather than disappear into.

The work is not frightening because of our inability to comprehend it. The might and magnitude of this installation is not a mathematical measure or a cognitive demand. Rather, it is frightening because of how it reflects the self in its dark depth. Thus, it does not trigger Immanuel Kant's worrisome sense that the imagination is inadequate to grasp the whole, but invites us into its material inexhaustibility, which moves perception beyond simple comprehension into the realm of experience. It is irrelevant that I cannot grasp the work and thus I do not have to overcome the ensuing displeasure and frustration through a rational explanation. My task is not to grasp it but to be grasped by it, to be buried in its ephemeral weight that does not swallow me but responds to my sonic flesh so we might continue each other.

This does not render my imagination inadequate but challenges the demand to see the whole, identifying it as futile and reductive against the complex experience of what is there. The whole, the complete, the visual magnitude and might of the work is an illusion that does not bring us to a fleshly comprehension but to an intellectual understanding of something that has long since changed its shape. The sonic magnitude and might of the work by contrast is its invisible thickness that is mobile and incomprehensible not as a dialectical proposition but as a continual practice not of infinity of mass and dynamic, but of inexhaustibility of materiality.

Sound is not infinite as this is still a measure, mathematically representable and deducible: rather it is inexhaustible. It is the invisible depth of the work that is not there before its encounter but is the mobile dynamic that produces its magnitude not as a permanent visual manifestation of the work but as

the might of its experience. The mental power might surpass infinity not however inexhaustibility out of which it emerges itself and in which it finds experience that surpasses reason.

Conclusion: There is no sonic sublime

For Kant the failure to comprehend the magnitude or might of an object or event marks the sublime; it is man's reason and rationality, his cognitive power that counteracts this failure and leads from frustration and displeasure to the joy and satisfaction of having overcome it. It is man's "supersensibility" that triumphs over the infinite magnitude of the sublime. Thus, the sublime is never in nature, in the thing, but is in the mind of man as a sense of self vis-à-vis the frightening and awesome infinity of an external world that she is at a distance from and that he has to conquer to stand tall in the world. "Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense."²³

Sound proposes a different perception of human identity and of materiality. Listening works from a psychological phenomenology that explores the possibility of the world through the equivalent participation of subjects and things in the building, trashing, and rebuilding of perceptual life-worlds that are not made by stacking up entities but flow as fluid relationships, and that do not overcome man's fear but mirror it in the contingent production of possible actual worlds.

There is no sonic sublime as there is no sound whose magnitude is external to my listening. There is no horizon, no off the map that impresses the fear and awe of my own disappearance. There is only a complex and plural continuum in which things are not bigger or smaller; they do not have a magnitude and might that invites a vague and frightening idea of their power, which needs to be overcome. Rather in sound I have the same "size" as all around me; this is not an intellectual, a mathematical deduction, but a primacy of intertwining; it is not a morphing of the world to human size but a perceptual equivalence that brings with it responsibility rather than power.

The unimaginable of Gupta's work is not the magnitude and might that thought cannot grasp and thus seeks to rationalize in a mathematical notion of infinity; rather, it is the as yet not-imaginable of the invisible which does not trigger awe and horror but participation to get to what could be imagined from the possibilities of its thickness.

Her work is not an object; it is an idea, but this idea is sensorial rather than conceptual. My access to the work is not through deduction and calculation of what I know and see to what remains invisible and inscrutable. It does not acknowledge the finitude of an art object and thus the possibility of its judgment, and nor does it invite the sublime as the idea of the infinite and

overwhelming vastness of the world. Rather, it allows the unimaginable to swarm on the size of my body, on which it might fall or which it might bury, but which gives it a measure of imagination in the inexhaustible depth of its possibility.

Kaspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea Fog* (1818) does not listen. If he did he would know that the outside is not overwhelming and infinite, but is the intertwining of himself, his agency, with the agency of nature, equivalent, reciprocal, and generative. He would know that he does not work from a separate interiority into the world that thus appears strange, forbidding, and awesome, but that he is in the world and the world is through his being in it. A double exteriority intertwined in all the possibilities of its actuality: inside and out. He is and I am like Wright's stoness the sound of my own clapping hands, which sound the circumstance of my encounter with you and with objects as things thinging. There are no physical limitations in the face of nature's vastness as my being is generated contingently in its own vastness, inexhaustibly myself through the inexhaustibility of my sound.

Sound is not a greatness and nor is it a universality. It is vast and inexhaustible in its smallness; in its ephemeral temporality, it is particular but everywhere; and it is universal in its practice not however its outcome, of which there is none or rather of which there is an infinite plurality of all that could possibly be—and maybe even that which could possibly be.

Kant's noble, splendid, and terrifying is sonic formlessness mirrored by my own. We are two formless things intertwined in perception: the sensory-motor action toward the world as a life-world that holds, and folds and unfolds us both in one cloth. There is no perfect distance from which the magnitude of the sublime reveals itself; there is only simultaneity and coincidence and the imperfection of formless being as doing. Maybe as Friedrich's wanderer wishes for a bridge to cross the foggy sea, the listener hears the water below into which she is drawn and where he belongs in hearing as a plunging into the world.

The lack of a void, the lack of a distant magnitude, reveals a romantic vision of universal anxiety, and instead invites a counter-purposiveness that is not troubled but free to imagine and act from private life-worlds into a social realm built not from gaps and ravines but through the primacy of intertwined bodies, listening from a sonic subjectivity into a world they are entirely part of. Such a worldview is more equal and does not grant the power of conquest but the responsibility of togetherness.

There is then something deeply political and social about the sonic—something that comes particularly into focus when considering the notion of the bridge, bridging, connecting, difference and distance. What emerges is a sonic world that is vital, that has a transformative power that is not bound to subjectivism and its resultant geometry and philosophy. This is

a sonic world that is not at a distance but sounds distance always here, full of possible meanings, as sensate meanings, which we comprehend in a semantic inhabiting, always up close, and which drags us into the material and processes rather than directs us to a survey thereof. It invites the notion and experience of a plurality of things and worlds, generated in listening, whose relationships are what we hear and in whose midst, but not necessarily at whose center, we unfold our own thingness, intersubjectively, generatively, and contingently.

This sonic world describes not a terrifying exteriority opposed to a weak and trembling interiority, but instead it brings them together in a primordial embrace, an intertwining that is not preceded by a gap nor anything else, but is the inexhaustible generation of one through the other. There is no void or distance that needs to be bridged; instead, sound generates things as ephemeral and invisible crossings, out of sensate sense into names and knowledge that bare the fragility of their materiality rather than assume the certainty of an a priori lexicon and epistemology.

The next chapter, *Hearing the continuum of sound*, tries to entice music into this inexhaustible plurality and free it from the determination of its discipline, the limits of its instrumentality, and the virtuosity of its practice and interpretation, to sound as sonic material with the soundscape and through sound art. I will listen to the musical work as world, to affiliate it with sound art, whose provenance it is without however giving it a ground and history, to resound in its contemporary presence the continuum of the heard.

CHAPTER FOUR

Hearing the continuum of sound

The golf club

sounds the heavy and expansive silence of assured privilege that overshadows the adjoining park and weighs heavy on its land. It's a space hogging nothingness that is punctuated and confirmed in deliberately slow but regular intervals by a metallic bursting forth—shot like—followed by a male bellowing—shaping and carrying the silence in a confident and self-evident air.

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The expansive silence and self-evident air of music is the organization of sound into a shape privileged by history and canons, set apart by virtuosity and the esoteric knowledge of the discipline: knowledge built from inside the discourse to retain control from outside interference, to remain self-sustaining within its own ideology that justifies its existence to an outside world, while keeping it out.¹

Hearing the continuum of sound proposes to listen to the musical work as a sonic possible world: to draw music into the universe of sound and sonic production and find a shared accessibility that offers not an unproblematic, linear, or homogeneous history, but pursues a folding, unfolding, and refolding of each other from the possibility of sound into the experience of listening. The musical work as world, accessible within the modalities of other sonic worlds—other musical worlds as well as the soundscape and sound art works—offers a comparative framework and historical re-evaluation, not based on dates and chronology nor hindered by disciplinary boundaries and discursive givens, but enabled by a critical

centering, decentering, and recentering: moving through sonic possibilities to explore and compare what the musical work is made of by living in the midst of its sounds.

Sonic possible worlds make accessible and thinkable the relationship between music and sound art not as two separate and distinct disciplines but as things sharing possibilities with each other and through each other. This is accessibility not as a logical pursuit, comparing the necessity and possibility of entities in abstract modal worlds, but as a visceral mobility within and across artworks as worlds. This accessibility overrides the disciplines' insistence on givens, reference and value, and draws together seemingly separate works through the possibility of inhabiting them compossibly, by way of an unprejudiced listening rather than via their organization.

Accessibility becomes a key critical term in this chapter as it arranges for the movement between works—musical and sonic—as worlds, in order to from their compossibility reach not the finished actuality of music but its sonic possibility, which might well remain unfinished and potentially unrealizable, but which is nevertheless important to hear and practice the continuum of sound.

Listening for the possibility of sound in the musical work does not aim to come to a structural or post-structural interpretation of works vis-à-vis each other, but tries to augment the sense of one through the practice of the other. Aesthetic accessibility as a material accessibility measures not how the entities in each world are possible in relation to each other. It does not “read” musical sounds versus a sonic materiality, but explores how they unfold through each other. It is not a linear or historical, and nor is it an epistemic accessibility that seeks the idea, data, or knowledge respectively; rather, it is a “pathetic” accessibility that explores and compares what the work and the world is made of by listening to it as a thing of things thinging. Accessibility in this sense does not confirm and protect the discipline but makes it available for scrutiny by outsiders, taking them into its midst and opening that out in all its possibilities.

This chapter answers a current trend in criticism that quite unproblematically and almost exclusively develops a history of sound art from its emergence within visual practice. Contemporary art historians and critics inadvertently find a lineage within their own discipline, and recognize context and connections from the pool of its practice instead of granting sound its own critical engagement, exploring its re-evaluative potential and plural heritage. The sound art histories put forward to date invariably position sound within the specter of Duchamp's anti-retinal stance, the eventness of Fluxus, conceptual art's immaterial practices, the bodily aspects of performance art, or painting's minimal phases and new media art's temporal dimension, without however listening to any of them.

In this context of post- and post-post-modern art discourse, sound comes not to be as source of the object but as source of the concept, offering a fertile ground for the invisible work without having to explore its depth by capturing it within the idea of the visible work. There it remains pure concept, not felt but thought, a hint not a trigger, to see more rather than to listen. Listening we reach not the idea but the sensorial depth of Duchamp's translucent *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even* (1915–23) and hear the forceful muteness of Joseph Beuys' *Homogeneous Infiltration for Piano* (1966); we inhabit Mel Bochner's *Measurement Room* (1969) where the sound measures us, and live in Louise Bourgeois' *Cells I–VI* (1991) where a different mobilization of materiality, conceptuality, and reference takes place.

While the affiliation of sound art with visual practices has offered important references and insights, and has certainly made it more visible, bestowing it a critical discourse, history, and recognition, it has not necessarily made it more audible. The visual emphasis on context and concept has performed yet a different sublimation of sound to the visual, to be as thought the infinite shadow of the finite work. What is missed in this critical deliberation is its thickness and how I inhabit it and glean from it not what the work is about but what it is. With this reciprocal timespace of sonic materiality is missed the potential to reconfigure how we access work, what histories we draw from, and what present we inhabit and participate in.

To consider sound artwork not against a visual tradition but within a musical presence, to listen and hear an alternative trajectory, as this chapter tries to do, intends not to negate previous writing on sound within the visual arts. Rather, it seeks to contribute to the discourse, to open a plurality of possibilities for connections, histories, and references that not only enrich the critical access to sound art, but might also critique, challenge, and augment a current visual criticality, drawing it away from a conceptual and contextual position and inviting it into the dark invisibility of sound. There, vision might live in its own mobility, in the formless shape of the unseen, rather than on the surface of ideas, and it might haul words for critical reflection out of sensorial immersivity rather than from a thin layer of thought.

At the same time, to invite music into the universe of sonic possible worlds intends not to disregard traditional musicology but to challenge and augment its methodology and aims—its intellectual analysis and disciplinary boundaries—by considering the possibility for a post-humanist musical discourse that hears the sounds that make the world of the work and inhabits this world to find a critical response from within its materiality rather than in relation to its discipline. The more recent structural and post-structural efforts of musicology—feminist-musicology, ethno-musicology, popular-musicology, and so on—have challenged and widened the study of

music's inward focus by taking into account the context the work develops and plays in, not only allowing for the articulation of aesthetic and musical knowledge and consequences, but also opening connections to social, economical, and political realities. Contributing to this development I am interested in the context the work builds, its contingency, its possibility, not as a prefix easily separated and disregarded from the core of musicology, but as an integral part of music theory, that questions the term music rather than its prefixal focus of investigation.

For Ruth Ronen the usefulness of possible world theory for the study of literary fiction is that "there is no longer an attempt to locate the fictionality of texts in a textual property." There is no longer a need to locate musical value in the score, the musical text. "More specifically, in the context of explaining the logico-semantic implications of the fictionality of literary worlds possible worlds serve literary theory in a variety of ways."² Chief of which, in relation to music, is the suggestion that possible world theory offers a way of "escaping hermeticist claims about the literary text and the intro-systemic tendency of literary studies." Instead, it opens the work into an interdisciplinary universe of relationships, references, and connections to appreciate that there are "other ways things could have been."³ Free from musical determinations, from its shape and expectations, listening can play with its materiality to invent what music could be, to abandon its name and discipline in favor of its processes and what it is we hear.

The aim is not to produce another history however; rather, it is to articulate the plurality of present listening that might well have no ontology, no ground to stand on, but that inhabits a critical immersivity and produces a contingent conviction: a virtuosity not of musical composition, interpretation, and discourse, but of a physical engagement and commitment, established presently and precariously in the midst of its sounds.

The aim is to inhabit musical possibilities rather than to theorize musical actualities. The term music itself is under consideration. It is, with Morton Feldman, not musicianship but a certain kind of musicality that we are pursuing here. In *Liner Notes* from 1962, Feldman writes how he was "instilled with a sort of vibrant *musicality* rather than musicianship"⁴—with the sensibility rather than the discipline of music. It is such a musical sensibility that releases us from the limitation of hearing within the conventions of music, but reminds us of the rigor of its practice. Thus, the musical work can sound all sorts of things without becoming just anything. This is a musicality not delineated by genius, perfection, and the right interpretation of a piece of work, which protects a specialism from outside influence and interference. Rather, it is a sensibility that invites outsiders to practice the imperfections of the body on the inexhaustible flow of sound.

This chapter hears the continuum not as a homogenous thread but as a multiplicity of connections, plural references, and hidden influences, and listens to the possibility rather than the actuality of music.

Organized, disorganized, and reorganized sound

In his *The Future of Music: Credo* from 1937, John Cage replaces the term music with “organized sound.” “If this word ‘music’ is sacred and reserved for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century instruments, we can substitute a more meaningful term: organization of sound.”⁵ The focus on the organization rather than the nature of sound frees the sonic content from the conventions and expectations of music, allowing all sounds in, and yet keeping it within structures and “intro-systemic tendencies.”⁶

The disavowal of music through the organization of sound marked a significant shift, which over time however moved organized sound closer to the concerns and conceptual interests of visual art rather than moving music closer to a musical sensibility. Thus, music proper and its discourse remained largely unaffected, playing on regardless and shielding themselves with prefixes against any new development: electroacoustic music, experimental music, minimal music, improvised music, konkrete Musik, and so on—adjectives that are easily peeled off to reveal at their core an unchanged and unchanging tradition and value system against which most sounds remain extra-musical.

Cage’s aleatoric compositions, like his silence, were an attempt to open the musical tradition to other sounds, to prize open the exclusive doors of practice and discourse, firmly shut through the esoteric knowledge of the profession, virtuosity, and the notion of a right kind of sound. His works and concepts are not an extra-musical attack however but a challenge that comes out of music itself: responding to the limitations of early twentieth-century musical materiality and agitating serial threads via aleatory extensions. In this sense his work is necessitated by its own history in music, and demonstrates a logical continuation of music’s development, and yet his concepts of silence and of chance crossed disciplinary boundaries to enrich visual art more than impacting on the future of music.

To understand Cage’s work within a musical lineage, to tease out its critique of the discipline, and to further challenge the practice and listening of music, I want to consider his “organization of sound” within a phenomenological possibilism. The musical work as sonic world can be organized, disorganized, and reorganized, not within given structures but through listening. The compositional organization listened to musically

becomes its own limitation and finite shape: an ideal invested in history and discourse. Listening to its sound, by contrast, we hear the possibility of a musical shape, and shatter that shape in a generative engagement, pluralizing what it might be.

The musical organization is what we have to try not to listen to in order to hear its sound, organized contingently as a sonic possible world, from within which we hear what it could be and how it extends into the world challenging its actuality, rather than confirming where it came from and what it references. I want to practice a generative listening to music, to get to the context the sound builds, not to the references the musical work draws on; and I want to inhabit music's materiality, sound, not to deny music and musical listening, but to free them from disciplinary hermeticism and semantic limitations and allow us to hear a contemporary relevance.

Cage's indeterminacy is, in some respects, a continuation of Arnold Schönberg's twelve-tone composition: music stripped bare of "Wohlklang," an agreeableness of sound, by mathematical structures, gleaned not from outside the discipline but revealed as its internal force. Schönberg's serialism presents a nonfunctional tonality pulling at music from within the discipline, to give up notions of beauty and perfection that distracted from a contemporary situation, in order to instead sound the impotence, abjection, and imperfection of the day and retain sonic relevance. His music is freed from what he terms the "comprehensibility of consonance" and organized not according to harmonic order but by strict rules that forbid repetition of one tone before all other in a nonharmonic series have been played. Thus, it performs an "*emancipation of the dissonance*" and "renounces a tonal centre":⁷ consonance, dissonance, and tonality lose their meaning vis-à-vis each other but become sounds through each other in a democratic tone-field ruled over by mathematical order.⁸

Schönberg's twelve-tone works reverse and mirror, disorganize and reorganize sounds to find a principle that relieves them of harmonic hierarchy, taste and habit, as well as intra-musical meanings, to generate the work through its musical possibilities rather than organize it into one musical actuality removed from what can be heard. It is seemingly paradoxically the strict mathematical rules employed in twelve-tone composition that make it generate rather than organize, producing rather than controlling a sonic place within music that implodes musical semantics to include new sounds and invite a different listening.

However, Schönberg's work, in turn, does not oppose but continues nineteenth-century composition realizing its consequence, musically and politically. The rules of Schönberg's dodecaphony bring to a climax the progress of musical systematization and turn it against itself to disavow its ideality. The dispensation of rules opens the work to its own possibilities rather than making audible musical actualities and anthropocentric tastes. It frees the sonic material from its harmonic organization in musical

language. Thus, it becomes about sound, about a musical sensibility and a musical thinking that emerges from the work and narrates not the score but what *it* is.

Ein Überlebender aus Warschau op. 46 (1947)

A Survivor from Warsaw is an approximately 7-minute long piece for narrator, male choir and orchestra, whose sounds build a formless timespace that defies ontology and reference to sound the horror of the holocaust as a musical presence.

The sounds come at me as a forceful blow, an even pressure that expands in all directions—a powerful discharge made up from a plurality of entirely different but equal sounds whose diverse fragments and compositional events do not hierarchize or subordinate but add, enlarge, and expand into a dense spatiality whose form is unclear but powerful, produced in concert with, against and through each other.

Playful snippets and instrumental voices build up tensions and torsions of syncopated vignettes dragged together by a voice that does not sing but shouts its story of the horror of the Warsaw Ghetto. The words order the disorganized sounds and drag them into a darker togetherness, to build a building of bodies and corpses, horror and flesh, dead and phenomenological.

My access to the piece is via the complexity of the material rather than its organization—not through how it is put together but by what it builds, what it constructs from fragments of equal difference generating not a form but a formless thickness into which I immerse myself to hear the flesh of the musical building as the continuation of myself.

The sonic flesh extends as continuum between things and bodies—sound and listeners. Schönberg's music thus becomes the touching and the touched rather than its surveillance and scholarship. The dense thickness of Schönberg's composition produces not a gap between hearer and heard but is the heard, the sonic thing and the sonic self as flesh: at once what is heard and what sounds. Its perception, rather than listening for an outline and a form, is the intertwining of the self with the work as a formless shape and shatters that shape in a generative listening that produces the work as possibilities rather than as one actuality.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests that this flesh has “no name in any philosophy”⁹ and nor does it find articulation in music discourse, and yet it is in the work; it is what allows me to build my private life-world in the environment of Schönberg's composition, to understand the work neither from a musical lexicon nor from a symbolic register, and not by crossing them either, but through my inhabiting it, simultaneously and reciprocally.

The flesh is the contingent body of perception, the “sensible sentient” that sees and hears not a positive, transcendental object separate from itself, but perceives things through their common simultaneity within the world. The fleshly body sees things through being seen and touches itself touching others. I am the flesh and I am in the flesh of sound, which I know not through prior acquaintance but through its present impression on mine. The “musical flesh” of Schönberg’s work assures me and assaults me at the same time. Sounds disperse in all directions and yet stay together as a dense sonic materiality, immersing me forcefully in a musical space that becomes a sonic environment, a space of action and interaction whose agency is my listening and whose locale is the corporeality of my body centered in its world but not at its center: one element of many, whose relationships build the work rather than hearing it.

A Survivor from Warsaw uses the demand of sound to be heard to make a piece, rather than hiding that demand by making harmonies. The piece thus made is an event, an environment of sonic action that holds not entities, tones, and does not pitch them against each other to realize the context of the work, but builds from them the sonic materiality of its own context. The sounds are brutal, unformed, responding to a demand to be deformed, to fit in, by not fitting in: stagnant motion diffusing in all directions, sounding the relationship, the thickness of dispersion rather than appearing as dispersed entities. The work sounds as material entangled in itself, producing a musical materialism without a past memory of music, inventing what it might be in the present instead.

The text is spoken not sung; the body has no melody, only the contingent rhythm of its voice expanding itself into the world. This rhythm has no organization beyond the contingent shouts of the body that escape musical attention and instead find a rhythm on my own body which shares the potentiality to voice. The virtuosity of the singer, his training and aim at a faithful reproduction, is replaced with the virtuosity of a contingent commitment and action in which I can participate through my own. This seems to work best when the voice is not an operatic voice, when it has left behind the virtuosity of itself as instrument and sounds as the imperfection and urgency of the body.

There is a semantic meaning to the words, but in the dispersed context of an atonal field of sound this meaning is reassessed, rebuilt not on the certain ground of the text, the score, but from beneath, from the undergrowth of sonic articulation that remembers not where it came from and yet it comes from there nevertheless.

I cannot remember everything. I must have been unconscious most of the time.¹⁰

In listening I inhabit the work, the confusion, the horror, and the fear, not from remembering its discipline or language but through being in its

sounds and being through its sounds. I too cannot remember everything but listen to hear for the first time, to know not what it is about but what it is now, in a current context, holding a current relevance that does not deny an earlier one but that stops nostalgia and romanticism to rule over what that past means. A past made of dates and names, chronologies and consequences is cast in stone rather than revealed under it. Schönberg's composition reveals a more pertinent memory that remains not in the past but unfolds in the present: folding, unfolding, and refolding what we think of it.

We can only know the past in the present, and it is in the present that the past continues as its future prophecy: to illuminate in sound the invisible possibilities of actuality built of an apparently solid history whose certainty is shattered in a present that forges a plural future. This future is held in a memory not hauled up from the past but triggered by the presence of sound that generates it and to whom in turn it gives a thickness and a duration: presenting a present timespace place of sound that produces an environment of a thick, vertical duration, rather than as chronological progression.

In this thick duration Schönberg's work can hold not only its particular horror but all those that are to follow and fill the remainder of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. This dark pool of things bestows his music a memory that thickens its present and makes it current. Within the establishment of musical scholarship, this quality and potential remained largely ignored however, or became aestheticized: losing the dark depth of time on the surface of style, the structure and method of its organization. However, without that memory pool music does not have the thickness or depth from which to build a present relevance, as Schönberg did from his memory and his deliberate present forgetting of what came before him.

The democratic tendency and pluralizing agency of Schönberg's work inverses the very purpose and standing of nineteenth-century music: its structure, aesthetic content, ideology, and value, while it continues its consequences. It counters a humanist ideality with a post-humanism that abandons and critiques notions of the romantic and the universal, and presents a renegotiation of belonging from the horror of individual life, the private life-world, through which we negotiate who we are and where we are, and through which we participate in the production of actuality from the contingency of our possibility. His work is political not just in relation to its theme but through its compositional processes and by the listening it fosters. It produces an aesthetico-political challenge that was never really taken up by the establishment of music or by the audience. But within its presence there is a prophecy, followed by Cage and others, that demands of music to be without a form and yet makes formless shapes that need to be engaged in, to build contingent forms and contingent contexts and figure out what they mean by inhabiting them.

Vertical music

Inhabiting the musical work as a sonic possible world allows me to link a discussion of the musical structure—its organization, disorganization, and reorganization—with its content—its musical and sonic materiality—and to deliberate them together, not in relation to the musical work as a whole, but in relation to each other. Possible world theory joins the problematic of the semantic material with that of language and affords me what Ronen terms an “explanatory power” of their relationship: hearing the material and its structure within each other, rather than as separate musical actualities confirmed in relation to the discipline.¹¹ The musical work as musical world enables the exploration not of its entities, but how they sound together, not in relation to the superstructure of the work or the expectations of conventions, but in relation to the contingent context of an inhabited listening.

Particularly the phenomenological possibilism elaborated throughout the last chapters produces an understanding of the musical world not as container filled with a set of entities, whose necessity and ontology is being heard via preexisting schemata, but as an entangled world: a world built from all there is, rather than hosting it. This world is listened to in doubt and astonishment rather than in certainty: it is the suspension of habits rather than their training and scholarship that gets us to the depth of the work; it is the ontological groundlessness of the entanglement and the invisible mobility that it makes accessible rather than the names of the entities or its container that allows this exploration, which pursues not a logical abstraction, but practices a visceral inhabiting. The abstraction of logical possible worlds becomes applied and inhabited as life-worlds: sonic possible life-worlds that participate in the construction of a concurrent actuality through the practice of listening and how things can be heard in the thickness and duration of their commingling rather than against each other.

This means music, the container of the discipline, loses its privileged status and certain architecture, and instead is built from its content in the contingency of a formless organization, disorganization, and reorganization.¹² At the same time musical listening loses the certainty of form and content in relation to the a priori of the discipline and now hears sounds entangled in each other in formless plurality, finding a passing form in a present and contingent listening rather than beforehand. The musical work as world thus becomes a musical possible world and attains “*a new conceptual lexicon*” that works not only through horizontal references but also produces a vertical arrangement: a sonic depth and duration that holds its past and allows us to forget it in a present production.¹³

The musical work as world does not follow a chronological line but builds a network through horizontal and vertical connecting, disconnecting,

and reconnecting that does not designate tonal relationships but produces the continuum between things thinging and the listening subject as a thing thinging: centered, decentered, and recentered in the work as world. The equal difference between tones as sounds, ushered in to music by Schönberg, remains if not as practice of composition then as practice of listening: as a critical immersivity that does not rely on the virtuosity of practice or of discourse to reach its evaluation, but is produced by a committed inhabiting of its sonic materiality—a musicality of listening rather than the profession of musicianship and listenership.

To listen to the musical work as world is very much a listening on the ground but without an ontological ground; rather, it is the ground of the concrete sound and of my own concrete experience that justifies and frames this listening. The rigor and critical value of this practice comes not from a pre-given vocabulary but from the effort of writing a fleeting one—not on the ground of the score but underground, at its invisible depth, where its thickness meets mine and together we produce a post-humanist music that does not reach back to the infinite superiority of God, and nor does it replace it with the cerebral infinity of the human mind, but accepts the contingency and passing nature of life.

The sonic timespace of possible music does not progress along the purpose of a chronological time and nor does it have an ideal instrumentality. Instead, it is centripetal and centrifugal, producing a space of verticals and horizontals, noting not their direction but existing in their relationship as a dense expanse of invisible things moving and being still. Listening we access this timespace place not via a professional knowledge but via the primacy of intertwining, as sonic flesh, that is not before reflection, naïve and ill informed, but is simultaneously reflection and perception. This primordial perception brings the sophistication of listening as a contingent practice of production to the ground of perception marking a different virtuosity and demanding an appreciation of its generative complexity in return.

Rothko Chapel (1962)

Composed in 1971 and first performed in 1972, Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* was commissioned by John and Dominique de Menil in memory of Mark Rothko, who had committed suicide the year before. Rothko, who had created the 14 paintings for this non-denominational sanctuary in Houston, had been a close friend of Feldman. Feldman in turn admired the uninterrupted spatiality of Rothko's paintings and sought to emulate their expanse with his sounds. The influence of Rothko's paintings brought into Feldman's music the possibility not only of a visual expanse but also the duration of all one can hear.

The work produces a space held in sound, continuous but not chronological, spatial but not solid. The composition is created as a tension beyond the line, on a base, which drowns the space and holds it. Instrumentality is forfeited in favor of “Klang” that is not sound exactly but reverberance: the ephemeral inexhaustibility of its material expanding in all directions without a source.

Rothko Chapel produces Feldman’s “vibrant *musicality*,” his musical sensibility rather than music’s discipline. Its material is demanding and complex and draws me into its verticality to be immersed in its horizontal expanse, which builds not a sequential work but a musical world. It remembers the stagnant motion of Schönberg’s temporality that had abandoned the epic of the symphony to sound as short pieces a vertical density of time diffused in all directions rather than obeying chronological progression, and continues this fixedfluidity in its own dense flow.

While the work holds in its present thickness the memory of other works, its own memory lives in the duration of other pieces also and lines up a complex and incongruous continuity between music and sound art. The dense transparency of the piece creates a musical place that gives new ears to listening that hear not only the work itself but recall older pieces, contemporaneous works, and hold the prophecy of future sounds: *Rothko Chapel* resounds Henry Purcell’s *Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary* from 1695 and gives space to Francis Dhomont’s *Forêt profonde* composed in 1996; it makes a musical room for Francisco López’ *Buildings [New York]* (2001) and remembers Joanna M. Beyer’s *Music of the Spheres* (1938); it enables listening to Florian Hecker’s *Chimerization* (2012) and all that might sound soon. It does this not in a post-modern way, establishing referential connections, but by providing space to sound as present memory of other pieces and of music, as instrumentality and as harmony, not indulged in but opened up and reset: set into space and diffused.

The work is a building of sonic materiality: strokes, individual tones, articulations that come together as the environment they produce from between each other as things that pronounce themselves not against but through each other. We hear not the gaps, the steps, and developments toward a final work, but hear the folding, unfolding, and refolding of sounds from all directions toward a piece that is their meeting as the environment of their action together: an action that does not accomplish something beyond itself—a musical piece—but produces a musicality, a world made of sound, of bits and pieces of sonic materiality, loosely fitted with great rigor to reach not an ideal but the process of its own making, which in turn triggers our participation in its production and hints at what that might be.

Rothko’s paintings are site-specific, painted for and installed in the chapel built by the de Menil Foundation as a sacred refuge open to all. Feldman’s

answer is a much more singular site-specificity. Although commissioned for and played in its inaugural performance at the chapel, the recording of it offers me the specificity of my location: the acoustic environment through which I hear the work. Listening I hear the environment not as a set of causal relations and pragmatic particularities at a distance from me, but as an expanse of which I am part. My listening generates my place in his work, and it is there, between his composition and my listening that all manner of things resound and sound for the first time.

There is no sense of beginning and no sense of end; there is only expansion not on a line but from nowhere into a place built from the timespace of its own sound: simultaneous centripetality and centrifugality—coming down, going up, meeting in the middle, and expanding to all sides while drawing my listening into an invisible focus somewhere else—building a possible place without boundaries to the outside world or within. Here I am beyond what sounds but not in front of it. This is a place only reached through listening, not through the contemplation of scores or ideas. It is the place of my reflection as a primordial perception that is neither naïve apperception, at the beginning of everything, nor does it reduce knowledge to pure sensation; instead, it reveals the work through my participation in its depth where it produces a phenomenological knowing of the material.

Merleau-Ponty's "primordial" shows us the process of perception itself. It positions reflection not separate from perception but as compossible, accessed through a bodily knowing of the world "to recover the consciousness of rationality"¹⁴—to recover the consciousness of a musical rationality, to take away its self-evidence and habit, and instead meet the work through "a primary openness": a perceptual openness that does not deny critical reflection but questions its purpose and reason and listens to the semantic materiality as a sensorial material rather than from its disciplinary closedness.¹⁵

The challenge to musical rationality via the primacy of perception does not deny music as practice but puts its theoretical description and disciplinary definition into doubt. It does not stop Feldman composing nor me listening, but makes our practice less reliant on the disciplinary framework and the virtuosity of its discourse. Instead, we engage in a different rigor, one invented on the spot and in passing that does not rely on the knowledge of musicianship but produces what music might be contingently. This reference involves a historical and contextual consciousness that remains not in the past or over there, as a stable actuality, but that realizes itself as the thick duration of the present performing the plural possibility of its future: sounds swinging back and forth—a movement on the spot expanding the present and moving it on.

There is no progress only process, into its depth, burrowing without force formless shapes from the materiality of music; burying the listeners,

softly embalming us not to make us disappear but to give us a place in its composition, not at its center but centered within it, to access the work and everything that resounds within its musical sensibility.

The work builds a world to inhabit in a phenomenological possibilism: a reciprocal place that does not make me recede into its materiality but makes me present in the work and thus makes the work present through me. This presence is meditative but it is not sublime: it does not inspire awe and makes neither might nor magnitude, whose infinity and power instills in us a sense of inadequacy and smallness, and which thus urges us to overcome our own inferiority through reason and rationality to reach the joy of the mental triumph. Instead, it produces fluid relationships that invite a primacy of intertwining: a listening to the work in perceptual equivalence with its sounds—vertical and horizontal. Mirrored in its composition we generate its expanse: two formless things, without reason but with responsibility, intertwined in perception, not toward a purpose but in the presence of experience, whose pleasure arises not from the overcoming of a displeasure but from inhabiting a plural field of sound.

There are surprises and asymmetries: the unpredictability and uncontrollability of sound. Streaks, tiny bells, rumbles, and reverberant melodies suddenly occur that surge into the dense flow. Maybe this is what Feldman meant when he talked about leaving sounds their own proportion: not to force them into a composition but to arrange them to sound as themselves. The piece feels autonomous, not constrained by a compositional effort but free to play. Feldman is not present as a composer but as a facilitator of sounds, who with the early encouragement of Cage had embraced his intuitive working and came to enjoy his own happenstance. “I don’t know how I made it.”¹⁶

This does not mean the work is not particular, it is very particular. Never is it erased by hearing other works and other things, only ever expanded. Feldman’s sounds absorb works and acoustic environments, expanding them gently but with the conviction of its own workness. The particularity of reference is the listener’s; the particularity of play is the rigor of the work: the rigor of sounds tumbling down on me with great precision, one by one, producing a room, filling my ears, expanding and sounding a world that is at once horizontal and vertical, but that is not held together by a sense of music but through the intertwining, without a gap, of solitary tones that are neither tonal, nor atonal, but produce a dense fabric of sound.

This sonic density, built from solitary tones that meet in careful discrepancy to be as entanglement a work that came from nowhere but meets other things on its way, pursues a deliberate “sonic solipsism”: an estrangement of tones from the scheme of musical conversation and convention, abandoning the communicative base of the discipline to let go of habits and taste; to de-sound and re-sound tones and provoke a de-listening and re-listening to the material, to come closer not to the

known but to a new knowing of music as musicality, as sensibility and as world. This sonic solipsism does not deny a shared listening or a connection between sounds, but hints at the doubt in a harmonic whole and a shared understanding: the possible impossibility of hearing the same, and the difficulty of communicating what that is. Instead, it makes room for the collective solitariness of worship in the sacred space of the chapel, to share not understanding but listening.

This purposeful solipsism as a musical strategy achieves a decoupling from a historical obligation to hear a present continuum that connects the work backwards and forwards, into music and into sound art, and enables a different listening to both in a discontinuous continuity for which words have to be found that communicate the work beyond music as a musical world—to expand its solipsistic tones into a new exchange.

Musical worlds

Feldman's work transforms the compositional process beyond music on the way to sound, and provokes a different understanding of how to listen to anything: music, sound art, and the acoustic environment. It invites listening to vertical narratives in horizontal non-causality, rather than chronological order or harmonic developments, and ignites hearing the way sounds fall to earth and make a different planet, a strange planet that defines time as the place of my listening and embalms me as a sonic subject, horizontal and vertical, the same as its sound.

His music is a world making predicate: producing not the hermetic world of music, of the musical oeuvre and its certain discipline, but the fragile and doubtful world of a phenomenological possibilism, private musical life-worlds, full of non-sense, sensorial sense, that meet others in passing moments under the cover of dark, where we see not what we hear but search for moments of coincidence to share a fleeting world of sound and tones that might make music or that might make something else.

Sound not music is the predicate that triggers the production of the sonic world. Music is the instrumentality of sound; it gives it a form and actuality that often belies the formless possibilities of its trigger. It is the gap between the composer and performer, which facilitates and frames this instrumentality and demands virtuosity and a correct interpretation. This gap is the locus of perfection, of ideality and virtuosity to be achieved playing and listening: bridging signification and creating significance. Listening to sound instead closes the gap between composition and interpretation. It proposes a generative practice, an entrainment in and improvisation of the material whose interpretation is not ideal but passing; building music not as an object but from things, and building a musical world not from the positioning of such things vis-à-vis each other, defined

by their relationship, but through their compossibility, through their equal difference, that sounds the work as world. This musical world does not differentiate between the ground, the line, the score, and the sound, making one the necessity of the other, and the other the explanation of the one, but is both at once, not on a ground but in the groundlessness of a present production that is unfinished and not-finishable, without a middle beginning or end, but formlessly forming what it might be.

This understanding is reached via Martin Heidegger's consideration of the origin of the artwork, his debate on the relationship between the originary material, das "Zeug," the stone, the wood, the tone that the work is made of, and the work as "Werk," as the artistic working of the stuff of the Zeug and how it relates to it. Music as discipline subordinates the tone to its ideal in tonality; music as world is built from the compossibility of its sonic materiality. The work, the Werk, can remain the same; it is in our "Betrachtung" our attitude and expectation, of the work as a thing of things, rather than as a quasi-musical object, that a different understanding arises.

Das Werk stellt als Werk eine Welt auf. Das Werk hält das Offene der Welt offen.¹⁷

This holding open of the opening of the world shows the Zeug, the fabric of the thing, not in its service toward a purpose and a meaning, but in its materiality. This "Offene der Welt," the opening of the world, is not that which is shown through scientific, musicological knowledge, but on the contrary, it reveals that which remains hidden and inaccessible in knowledge but is sensible, as in open to the senses, from the invisible depth of the work, rather than through its appearance and measure on the surface—in the text or the score. Below ground the work refers not to the tonality but to the "Klang des Tones," the vague and immeasurable sound of the tone.¹⁸

Die Farbe läuchtet auf und will nur leuchten. Wenn wir sie verständlich messend in die Schwingungszahlen zerlegen, ist sie fort. Sie zeigt sich nur, wenn sie unentborgen und unerklärt bleibt.¹⁹

This "unexplained" and "unrecovered" is not a naïve position but creates knowing as an aesthetic knowledge of the material as opening that impresses itself on me and forces me to rethink what I thought I knew before and challenges how I might listen and how I might judge what I hear, and ultimately how I might try and talk about it.

Heidegger's opening of the world precedes and is continued and reciprocated in Merleau-Ponty's "primary openness to the world."²⁰ Their conflation—the work as holding open the opening of the world, and listening as an openness to the possibility of the work as world—brings together the

compositional opening of the Zeug of the tone as Klang, as sound, with listening as a primary openness to the work of that Klang. It brings to the musical work a primary openness that lets us uncover the process of perception that reveals the ideologies and rationality of musical knowledge while practicing a listening that hears alternative possibilities; it grants us access to Heidegger's "Seiende," the Being of the thing, Merleau-Ponty's sensible, that we meet as sentients, not across a bridge—the discipline and language of music—but within the simultaneity of sound. This meeting is without words but through listening and through its wording it opens a place in the work within the unseen fabric of the sonic material.

Fantaisie variée, piano, orchestra (1912)

Nadia Boulanger's piece for piano and orchestra creates a forceful place that does not fit together but is sustained by intentions and sonic relationships. The forward drive of the material is compelling but not linear, and while it moves ahead it also falls behind and breaks down the rules of musicianship and forms different shapes, and falls apart shapelessly, to rally again, against a tide of expectations. The work stubbornly refuses to progress and instead becomes iterative: sounding on the spot as well as into all directions as a music that holds the anarchy of its own potentiality.

There is a verticality and horizontality to the composition that pre-sounds Feldman's, and yet its dense fabric does not fall to earth to build a different planet, but pulls on and on to give images to an invisible spectacle that is not a film, a fictional parallel reality, but the spectacle of life unfolding in a musical sphere. This is a spectacle inhabited rather than seen, expanding from my body into the music and back—finding not a voice but a place, from the movements of the sound and mine toward each other.

Her composition like Feldman's creates a tension beyond the line. However, her line is not drowned and it is not ignored but manipulated and stretched. She holds onto its support to grant a place for sonic possibilities to erupt musical expectations. There is a core to her music that keeps the work within musicianship rather than musicality, within the discipline and its actuality, but it also opens an opening to a "welten"²¹—a worlding, a world making—through a more anarchic putting together sequences, harmonies, tones, and intervals, that undoes that core at the same time and hints at other possibilities.

Passages seem to be played backwards, defying harmonic progression and perceptual gravity and putting into question the rightness of one direction in favor of a different expansion. Instrumentality is made forcefully apparent in order to abandon it in the soundscape produced by its agency rather than its tones. The purpose seems to be elsewhere,

not with the musical oeuvre and its inner musical tendencies, but with its sound and what it creates.

There is a narrative development without being programmatic, not hindered by telling an extra-musical story but unfolding a story-world that is a musical fiction.

Sonic fictions are phenomenological story-worlds; they are generative rather than referential and do not describe or propose an object or event, but produce the event as environment, as fictional predicative worlds, which we inhabit intersubjectively reciprocating their agency in the sensory-motor action of listening. These sonic fictions are not untrue worlds opposed to an affirmed singular actuality; rather, they question the notion of one truth and actuality and propose a plurality of possible realities instead. The things and the characters as things that constitute those possible sonic realities are not nonexistent but illuminations of hidden existences; their actions do not describe a parallel world but generate the invisible goings on of this world.

Musical fictions are like sonic fictions in the way they immerse us in a generative world: creating the access to the opening of the world and triggering our openness to that world. However, while sonic fictions generate sonic possible worlds that reveal the invisible mobility of the world, that show the plural slicing of the landscape and the material complexity of the sound artwork, musical fictions generate aesthetic possibilities and reveal the unseen dynamics and ideologies of music's invisible mobility.

Boulanger's musical work has a text; it unfolds as a textual work that manipulates and challenges its position as a singular actuality rather than critiquing the use of the text. *Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra* follows the tension of the line and stretches the line beyond a current form yet does not let go of it. The work is thus not reduced to one textual reality, one perfect interpretation and ideal audition, but expands into possible textual worlds. These textual worlds are thickened through performance and perception, through memory and duration, and through the replacement of a musical language with a musical perception that comes out of a sonic solipsism: de-sounding and re-sounding the conventions and communicative base of music; triggering, through doubt in a shared understanding, a de-listening and re-listening, rather than a confident assumption of the heard; and generating, via a phenomenological possibilism, a plural and sensorial sense that finds meaning through the tendency to be social and to communicate.

If we follow the actual musical text, the score, we find readings and interpretations in the referential actual textual world that give sense and pleasure but which, separated from the generative fiction, remain defined within its actuality. If we immerse ourselves in the possible musical text of the material something else emerges that is not a proposition, nor a reference, but that sounds the world of the work and into the world as the

agency of its possibilities. Inhabiting the musical work as a possible musical textual world allows us to rethink the work through its organization, disorganization, and reorganization, to illuminate not only its content but also its structure and its structuring: the ideology and investment of its order.

It is the musical structure as the dynamic and ideology of the musical world that Boulanger seems to attack while using it to generate her work. The structure, the musical organization, is disorganized and reorganized, un-forming and re-forming musical actuality: working with recognition and expectation against itself—remembering and forgetting. In this way, the work holds music and unfolds music not to confirm its actuality but to open its possibility and to show us the rationale of its construction.

The work appears unfinished in conventional terms, open on all sides, oozing out, crossing boundaries, permeable and permeating, but still playing with form and on the form into a prophecy of formlessness taken up in later works. The work sounds an un-finishedness that is not a failing but is the agency of memory and prophecy, which holds the work open rather than sealing it into a closed actuality.

This is a deliberate un-finishedness that does not aim to fulfill a musical demand and ideal relative to its ontology: realizing the ramifications of a previous work, the canon and musical history. Instead, it remains inexhaustibly all that could happen and opens out on a past that acts not as a path of reference but as a present memory, which has the thickness and duration of history as a non-dated eventness rather than as a pressing chronology. This conscious non-fulfillment of a past musical promise is made apparent in Theodor Adorno's remark on the relationship between the music of Alban Berg and Schönberg: "Berg would have been uneasy at the thought that he had fulfilled in *Wozzeck* that which was indicated as a mere possibility in Schönberg's Expressionistic works."²²

The fulfillment of the past means stylization, aesthetization—an emptying out of the possible into one actuality, rather than expanding musical possibilities inexhaustibly in a boundless continuum of sound. An actualized music is unable to critically reflect on a current structure, the organization, and ideology of its discipline. Its text holds no generative agency but only referential significance. It loses relevance as a mode of communication and as content. It does not have the thick duration of the past but fulfills its necessity, as it closes its opening as a world in the perfection of its text.

Boulanger's composition reaches not the security of form but remains formless within music. It does not achieve the fulfillment of the musical idea and style but opens its possibilities through a musical fiction. These possibilities are not infinite in a theological sense, but unfinishable, imperfectable like the human condition itself. They drive music to new inventions that hold plural pasts in their possible present unfolding;

however, they do not confirm those pasts but generate the music of the present in a contemporary relevance.

Her work remembers and forgets in equal measures—holding and letting go of what came before not to fulfill it, not to give it an ideal rendition and realization, but to continue a precarious memory of it in a present unfolding to achieve the thickness and duration of a current composition. This present memory is the transformative power of the work. Unseen it provides the depth into which we immerse ourselves in listening, and in which we do not find references but produce them, contingently as plural possibilities of the present musical work which moves unstoppably into its future plurality.

Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra makes audible other works and appropriations but remains resolutely itself, not stylized nor closed, building instead a sonic opening from rhythms that undulate between what is known, what holds together as music, and what implodes as sound. Swaying, the piece produces musical vertigo, the fear of losing one's path, one's ontology, and certainty of reference in the provocation of "many things go," disbanding music in all directions, and yet the work remains a musical place: a timespace made from organized, disorganized, and reorganized sounds, which I inhabit in listening through the opening of its Zeug, the tone, and my openness to the structure, its rationality, as the topography that maps not a path but a depth into the material of the work as a worlding world.

Musical geography

The sonic fiction of sound art holds the musical as an unfinished fiction within its world. In turn, the fiction of music gives sound art the duration of a present past and the prophecy of a plural future without tying it down to specific canons and works but lending it a sensibility, a musicality of listening and composing that sound art takes into its own shape: generating a shapeless shape whose duration and thickness still holds music's sensation, the pathetic, now unbound from a semantic origin triggered instead by sound itself.

Boullanger's fantasy for piano and orchestra creates a musical world that triggers affect and admits emotions and sentiments, whose modulations however evade romantic references and instead explode into anarchic motions and rhythms that work as agency rather than as representation. The work produces the enchantment that later also reverberates through Francis Dhomont's woods, and produces an affective geography of music whose relationship to a map, the score, is tenuous and doubtful inviting instead a listening as mapping: as walking, as exploring rather than as recognition and knowledge of a musical language.

The geographical measure of music is the map of the score which can be read and followed by those who have access to the esoteric knowledge of the discipline, those who can read the score and know what it means and what it is worth within the hermetic frame of the discipline and its intro-systemic tendencies. The map of the score produces a positivist cartography without sentiment, it demonstrates a taxonomy of sound that carries the visual tendency of conventional humanist ideology: the subordination of objects to the human gaze and purpose.

By contrast, the musical world demands the mapping action of listening as the primordially of perception, to generate fluid and contingent maps whose subject is not transparent and dispassionate but in the work, part of its unfolding, while experiencing the self-consciousness of that position in reflection. Pulled in by the pathetic trigger of sound the listener inhabits the work, not at its center, but centered, decentered, and recentered within it: walking through the work and across works, lifting restrictions of discourse and discipline, to engage in aesthetic significance as a sensorial sense that opens new relationships and possibilities, re-evaluating a musical actuality, and hearing its alternatives.

The listening subject inhabiting the sensorial sense of the work is not a humanist subject but a post-humanist subject who lives in equivalence and reciprocity with her environment and understands his role as one of responsibility instead of superiority. She does not read the map but is drawn into the reality of the concrete material, which guides him into an affective geography of the work, which in turn leads not to a naïve apperception but to a generative perception as the mapping of the heard.

The map of Angus Carlyle's *Face as Territory* is the score that charts his walking and guides our listening but at the same time it limits what we hear to its representation. It is only when I stop following his visual path and engage in the sonic narratives that I start to hear the invisible mobility make a place rather than a map. The online map and satellite images pretend a cartographic singularity and actuality that are imploded by the sound triggered at each blue dot. The recordings of different locations in San Cipriano Picentino offer a more contingent and emotional work that is not reduced to the realization of a visual topography but expands what that might be, and shows us another world, off the map, beneath the grid, in the contingency of private lives unfolding in sound.

The score offers a dispassionate scheme and leaves my subjectivity transparent, uninvolved, not reciprocated and nor is it reciprocating. Boulanger's musical fiction follows the map and exceeds it. It generates sonic possibilities that reveal a musical rationale while expanding its ideologies through unseen mobile extensions. Listening as mapping, as walking through, gets us to the anarchic rhythms of her work: to think about them from within their pulsation; to come to an idea of the work

through a practical reflection and enter its worlding not from its language but from within its sound.

Music of the Spheres (1938)²³

Johanna M. Beyer's composition draws me into its material through an initial roar of sound that unfolds into four voices that come to sound an expanse between themselves as a place made from synthetic rhythms and a triangle. They sound together and alone the fluid space of an ephemeral topography. Measuring their pace against each other and through each other, they take haste and slow down in a musical exchange that goes beyond music and builds a musical world instead. The environment thus built is a timespace topography that involves the listener not only in its space but also in the geography of its time: viscous, expanding and pulling together, giving space and taking time. Time and space built from the same thing of sound and measured not by either but by my inhabiting of their simultaneous unfolding.

Music of the Spheres creates a geography of rhythms and long lines going against each other and expanding themselves: accelerating and de-accelerating, exhilarating and calming down. They lose the track of the musical score, of the musical line, and draw a synthetic one instead, to follow when the ground has been lost, when the map falls short, and a new exploration discovers a different musical terrain.

Percussive rhythms, stretched and stretching, lose their regular pulse and sound instead a thickening sphere that is not the portrait of a landscape and not the geography of the soundscape, but is the invisible depth of music—invisible music that cannot be deduced from what is there, nor synthesized from different standpoints, to create a musical whole, but sounds the possibility of musicality from the depth of sonic materiality that has lost its certain ground and demands a contingent grounding in listening.

Listening I am following Beyer into this invisible depth to hear the mobility of a musical geography not as a map but through my mapping, my walking its sphere: centered, decentered, and recentered in its locale to make a place, a home in its sound that will give me neither agreeableness nor comprehensibility, but brings me its demand, which I answer in a contingent and perpetually unfinished realization of the work.

This listening is not a measuring; it does neither follow the score nor does it replace the score; instead, it builds a score as the contingent mapping of its place made continually from its sounds and all there is, as a place of many slices. It does not reference a landscape nor does it replay a soundscape but generates its own environment made from sound that stretches what I see and hear into its viscous being as thing.

Beyer's musical sphere queries the transcendental earth of Heidegger, his notion of the "Hervorkommende-Bergende," that which enables creation and holds it at the same time—his ontology. For Heidegger "Erde," earth and planet Earth, is the inexhaustible ground of the world that brings out the work and encloses it too. "Die Welt gründet sich auf die Erde und Erde durchragt die Welt."²⁴ His ontology enables creation and orders it within a historical and a quasi-geological certainty, allocated to a historical people and a geographical location.

For Heidegger an artwork is produced on this ground and reveals this ground by disappearing in its inexhaustibility to arise as artwork rather than as function thereof. Beyer's sounds never are as *Zeug*, as material from the "earth," as stone, wood, or tone. Thus, they do not create an opening, revealing a preexisting ground, but are an opening as access to themselves as music without ontology, without a historical ground or a geographical map, but triggering the desire to explore all it might be through contingent mappings.²⁵

Heidegger's artwork is transcendental; it has to overcome its origin in the earth to become world and reframe and confirm that earth. Beyer composes a music that circumvents and ignores this transcendentality and generates a world from a purposeful groundlessness instead: the conscious abandonment of history as a historical knowledge in favor of a sensorial knowledge of the thickness and duration of the work in a present past, vague, anecdotal and contingent, not dated, and not locatable, but real as its present possibility nevertheless.

She composes a musicality with roots in a sensorial sense rather than in historical significance: offering a space to narrate vertical and horizontal histories rather than finding them confirmed or negated. The ground of her sound is not the tone of the discipline of music but the possibility of its groundless materiality. Her synthetic sounds compose a material without a source that needs to be transcended to become a work. Instead, they produce a possible musical world, whose sounds do not transcend tones to bring out their *Klang*, but are always already thinging. The scope and sensibility of this groundless musical possible world however is not confined to sounds that have no source, synthesized or digitally generated sounds. Rather it lives as its generative nature and agency in every sound and thus opens all composition, sound artworks, and the acoustic environment, to the possibilities of a groundless musicality.

Her music also clarifies Merleau-Ponty's primacy of perception as an openness not to an immanent, hidden potential of the work that preexists perception, but as an openness that creates the hidden of the work. The possibilities are not a latency dormant in the material, present before the encounter, activated through listening; rather, they are the latency of perception that intersubjectively generates the work, as well as the listener inhabiting the work, as world. Thus, what is created in listening are not

realizations of another world, but “*possibilities of the same world*”: “And this is why the very fragility of perception [. . .] far from authorizing us to efface the index of ‘reality’ from them all, obliges us to concede it to all of them, to recognize all of them to be variants of the same world, and finally to consider them not as all false but as ‘all true.’”²⁶ Listening to the variants of the *same musical world* grants truth and reality to all musical possibilities rather than insisting on one musical actuality, which determines a “true” music to the exclusion of everything else.

The immanence of the possible musical world, like sonic immanence, is not a potentiality, a latency of the work or of sound, immanently audible, but is the potential of listening to hear the inexhaustible process of the material that generates the work as well as the listener in a primary intertwining: reciprocal and simultaneous, variants of the same world, which is true in all its possibilities.

This intertwining is Merleau-Ponty’s corporeality, the connection of the self to things as flesh: the contingent body of perception—the sensible sentient that perceives the world through being perceived within it. However, the sonic flesh radicalizes Merleau-Ponty’s intertwining and leaves no gap between sonic things and the self as sonic thing thinging. Between hearer and heard, there is not the thickness however thin that defines the relationship between the toucher and the touched, the seer and the seen. Rather, the sonic thickness *is* the heard, the sonic thing and the sonic self as flesh: at once generative process and audibility.

The sonic flesh inhabits music without the bridge of the score to control “the frenzy of audibility.” Instead, it is listening as a primary openness that creates the hidden of the work as the potential of music to sound the commingling of all there is. A musical flesh is the flesh of material simultaneity that sounds the possibility of a sensorial sense of the musical work rather than its actuality or significance. The musical flesh intertwines not with musical knowledge but with musical knowing: generating the musical material from its contingent perception and its private connecting, disconnecting, and reconnecting rather than via historical trajectories, canons, and the theoretical language of its discipline.

The invisible mobility of sound discussed throughout this book is thus clarified not as an immanent revelation of a transcendental preexistent: an unseen a priori to be reached, opened, and be open to. Rather, composing is proposed as the opening of the sonic material, not as the tone of the Zeug, but as sound itself, always already thinging; and listening is elucidated as a primary openness of the flesh that does not reveal but produces the possibility of the work and of the world in our un-bridged simultaneity with it. The musical possible world is not open onto something but opens as itself, as a slice of the world that adds its reality to the slices of sound art and the slices of the acoustic environment, the slices of the landscape, of subjectivity, and so on, to construct the contingent plurality of the work as

a possible world and to have a relevance in the world as a slice of its reality understood not as one actuality but as actual possibilities.

Music of the Spheres frees musical listening from disciplinary boundaries without abandoning the rigor of practice and reflection. It brings music to the same sphere of sound that is inhabited by sound art and the soundscape; thus, it makes a joint critical framework, a comparative discourse, that walks through works and across works as worlds in a shared sonic universe, possible.

For David K. Lewis the price paid by losing the ontological ground is worth it to reach the paradise of possibilities, where a closeness of worlds can help us to understand their “truth.”²⁷ In this paradise we can bring different worlds close together, make them compossible, accessible to each other without the constraining limits of disciplines, to reach an understanding of different works together rather than apart. “It is only by bringing the other worlds into the story that we can say in any concise way what character it takes to make what counterfactuals true.”²⁸

The absence of an actual ontology, replaced by a plurality of non-hierarchical histories as anecdotes and contingent connections that do not reveal an a priori but generate their own secrets, and the fact that these possibilities exist in ‘closeness’, as possibilities of one sonic universe, makes a joint critical framework for music, sound art, and the acoustic environment possible. The paradise of a sonic possibilities allows us to hear a continuum of sound that neglects disciplinary boundaries to sound music, the soundscape, and sound art as close worlds and gives us new insights into the possibility of the world of which they all are variants.

A joint critical framework

Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary: March and Canzona (1695)

Henry Purcell’s composition for the funeral of Queen Mary consists of three pieces: the march, the anthem for choir and orchestra *Thou Knowest, Lord*, and the canzona. It is not known which pieces were actually played at the Queen’s funeral but together as they are now they perform a funeral, a celebration of life and death, of this world and of the possibility of another.

The composition starts with a march, a procession that is a performance, whose performers walk and set a rhythm for me to march to: to enter into their rhythm, between beats and purposeful gaps in whose silence the reverberation of the drums illuminates the space that I share with them, making me aware of its architecture, its size, and materiality, and making

me responsive to whom I share it with. The drumming is a gathering up of all that is present at that moment, building the environment of the work and sounding the work as world. Drums drumming the drums and drumming the space and drumming the drummers; making audible invisible relationships, and opening a room in their rhythm of beats and through the stillness left deliberately and carefully between them, for us all to be brought together in.

These are solipsistic beats, separated from each other to sound not as sequence, as musical purpose, but as slices of sound that potentially run continuously but remain distinct to build a nonconsecutive but spatial rhythm that leaves room to hear the opening that opens me—not to hear the music but to hear a place, even to see a place, a musical place, whose visuality includes me beneath the visible in a sonic invisibility that is the agency and mobility of the work and remains unseen, but whose experience confirms its plurality.

Purcell's march makes a timespace composition rather than a chronological piece, and sets up a frame for a sonic complexity that does not play presently but is enabled as possibility and hints at what could be playing and what could be heard. The stillness framed by the drums produces a place that is realized in his other works by complex rhythms and voices but here it makes room for those to be imagined, felt as possibilities of the musical timespace rather than as realizations of the actual musical work. The march leaves room in my auditory imagination to produce from myself what in his *Fantazias* from 1680 Purcell plays out in a complex plurality of voices and rhythms expanding each other. It presents this complexity as the inaudible possibility of the work that reverberates through the gaps of the drums, and unheard it has an impact on the experience of the piece: on how I connect, reconnect, and disconnect what is there into what could be there also.

The gaps and silences build an environment that I enter to be in the work: to fulfill temporarily and continually as unfinished renditions what the work might be through the inhabiting of my contingent listening—the present practice of my listening histories, personal references, and private anecdotes.

Into this timespace place produced by the rhythm of drumming, English flatt trumpets enter, adding another breath and rhythm on the line of the drums and around it, expanding horizontally the gaps in whose stillness I centered myself. It is in these gaps between each beat that the sorrow of death takes its place in the shape of the trumpets' sound that expands that space while the drums move on. The trumpets are lamenting the hollow left by the drums—Queen Mary's life, our life, the continuum and simultaneity of life and death performed as a timespace procession, a sound walk: walking through and across sonic worlds.

The trumpets do not push me out of the rhythm, but come to sound around me, encircling me and expanding the vertical pulse of a drummed space with a drawn-out horizontality. They lengthen the firmness of the steps and produce a conceptual rather than musical counterpoint that lets the work slide in and out of shape to be fluid in the certainty of its beat.

Out of the reverberant stillness produced by the drums, the trumpets carve a broader place, a thickness of sound that I respond to fleshly, with my being in the world of the work. Together those two musical actions, drumming and trumpeting, build an affective geography, which I inhabit in listening, living in the tension of their relationship. Their sliding thickness holds its own present memory and produces ours, which is the prophecy of the work then and our present past now.

The marching in the carved-out hollow of one's life reminds of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Dark Pool* (2009), in which I walk in the semi-dark, around things piled up on a table and stacked up against the wall, brought in concert and to my consciousness in their togetherness through sound. Some things sound, some remain silent, amassed and gathered in a room, as an archive or as a death shrine, dead and alive at the same time, performed by my walking through it, six people at the time. We march and process, our steps marking a beat and other sounds expanding its consequence beyond our own footsteps.

In both works I must walk, perform my steps in the demanding rhythm and the reverberant space created by sound, acknowledging the pathetic that it signifies but that also triggers it: signifying the emotions of its context and triggering the affective geography of my walking as my contingent participation therein. This is an upright walk that hears the primordially of life and death through the consciousness of a reflective rationality, a posture we retain and strengthen throughout the anthem and into the canzona.

The canzona answers the march by giving the trumpets the first voice, a role they accept to expand the carved-out space beyond the limitations of a vertical structure, formless and inexhaustible. The beat remains but as a private imagination: my own steps, my own walking, while the trumpets expand as a multilayered horizontality that holds the vertical connections without being tied down or counted however. Different temporalities are laid next to and on top of each other to produce time as an expanded contradiction.

The sliding and swaying trumpets are rejoined by drums a little further in, intermittently drumming in an expanded space to sound as reminders of their absence rather than as the necessity of their presence—furthering the polyphonic imagination through the audibility of polyphonic rhythms that remain unarticulated but present nevertheless. Only sporadically do the drums sound through and thereby show the groundless ground of their

action: to sound not as a musical prerequisite but as the sonic possibility of their own absence—as the plurality of what they can be unheard rather than as one actual rendition.

The emphasis, musically and conceptually, is on the horizontal expanse, the stretching of sounds through multiple layers, which occasionally meet with vertical beats that do not tie them down but propel them up. As if reversed, the trumpets give a beat and a space to absent drums to conjure them in my auditory imagination into which they enter as the possible reality of their performance.

The canzona is still a lament but one that has taken on its own rhythm, the autonomy of its own sonic world. The lament has turned into a fanfare, a celebratory event built from complex relationships to which we at first remain an audience and become a participant later on.

There is no actual voice; the human voice is missing from the song but is taken up in the trumpets as the voice of another world, euphoric and elated to be as itself. However, the canzona is not about transcending this world to reach another but about being simultaneously in another, the music hinting at the closeness of worlds: the march and the canzona, life and death, answering Lewis' indexical *possibilia*, where we walk crossing and across worlds within the same universe of possible worlds to understand them not through their difference but through the simultaneity of a compossible experience.

Purcell's music is not transcendental, either conceptually or compositionally. It does not overcome the practical functionality of everyday "Ton Zeug" in an ideal composition, where the work is an opening to the sound of the tone that preexists it as earthy Zeug and into whose earth it returns to re-appear on its ground as a truthful and actual Werk; and nor does it conceptualize the overcoming of life in death. Instead, tone and sound, life and death, remain simultaneous and compossible: autonomous within a universe of worlds that make not a geographical and historical earth but a contingent environment made from "variants of the same world"²⁹ that we inhabit and walk across ourselves variants of all we might be, and that we explore not for the revelation of an immanent potential but through the potential of our participation in the inexhaustible process of the sonic material which is true and actual in all its possibilities.

Purcell does not make music in the sense of organizing sound within the expectation of tonality but disorganizes and reorganizes what that might be. This is not a piece that starts as music but makes music, unmakes music, and remakes music to be as a contingent practice the flight of sliding sounds. It does not remain within a given discipline but composes people, places, and sounds in a present performance that allows them to be in music rather than listening to it. I am a participant, entrained in his sounds, rhythms, and stillness, drawn across them through the sliding sounds of the trumpets and engaged in the reflective concepts of his lament.

Purcell's sonic environment, created between rhythm and sound, finds contemporary repercussions in work that hovers between sound art and music, performance and video art, across platforms, to produce a procession that takes us along and expands to make a space from its stillness and its laments, in the rhythm of our own steps.

In this way, Purcell creates a musical world that makes audible a sonic environment including silence, rhythmic and sonic, within which sits its possibility to sound outside the musical work as a soundscape, as a walk, as a soundtrack. It predates the conceptual silence of Cage's 4'33" and makes us rethink the 257 years between them, and the place we have taken in the musical work since then, deliberately and inadvertently, through education or ideology and the fabrication of taste, and thus it makes us consider where else we might want to sit in a contemporary work.

Weite, Weisse Stille—Vast White Stillness (2013)

Claudia Molitor's *Vast White Stillness* is a pre-recorded composition with instruments and voices and an almost silent appearance by the artist herself, performed live at the Swiss Church in London. Two separate videos are projected in different sizes against a white wall which is bare except for some commemorative plaques and an artifact, which is propped up with deliberate casualness against that same wall.³⁰ The piece explores "Heimweh," which Molitor describes as "a sensation of longing for another place. A feeling trapped between happiness and sadness, giving rise to melancholy and a sense of loss."³¹

The work sounds textures, building from small sonic things a shell, a structure, that is not outside of something and thus does not structure it, but is the piece as a structured surface of sound, hard and brittle and yet giving generously, merging into the space of its performance to sound as a vast stillness the place of its quiet reverberance.

The composition starts with tiny things, invisible entities, that generate the track of the work and expand into the room and expand the room into a covering surface that has no certain beat but sounds the pulse of its own materiality, whose depth is not built from horizontals and verticals, but sounds the continuity of what it covers.

The work persuades as a thick surface. This is not a contradiction but a mode of being—being present as a thin layer with an inexhaustible depth that remains invisible but feeds the surface and gives it a hold and mobility in order not to be insignificant but slight: unadorned but with great strength within which we can inhabit the work.

The reverberant space of Purcell's march, offered by the drums, carved out and stretched by the flatt trumpets' lament, is here produced as a white expanse into which we center, recenter, and decenter ourselves, to hear

not music but architecture, voices, ourselves and our co-listeners generate a musicality not from historical precedence but from our commingling presence. The quiet sounds produce a taut covering that makes audible invisible relationships and opens a room in the stillness of its pulse for us all to be brought together in.

The sounds are constantly developing, enveloping, and revealing, moving on while standing still, expanding on the spot into the spot, fluid and yet fixed the work takes space and makes space from its apparent thinness and invisible depth. The visuals offer a surface that the sound makes fleshly, corporeal, and material: rescued from vanishing into the representation of *Heimweh* it produces a melancholia that does not invite my disappearance but in which I appear. The sentimental is the location of my participation producing the work as sonic immanence: my listening discovering not a hidden assumption but producing the appearance of its present perception.

The material is at once fragile and substantial, woven out of quiet, loud, and even inaudible sounds crackling as a discontinuous continuity and producing a grating *Wohlklang*, that is not given in tonality or in relation to musical conventions but reached by obeying the demand of sound to be engaged with all there is, sonically and visually, from in-between, from adding up, and from adding to it.

Molitor leaves a space for sound to be conjured up and stop to sound. She produces a place made from sound and is not worried if we cannot hear it anymore: "So maybe there is no need to worry about the desire to delay the demise of the sounds I dream up, after all, they will become part of the vast un-sound stillness of our brains."³²

Her composition sounds audible and un-sound sounds: that which we remember to have heard and add to her composition without hearing it sound, and that which her composition becomes once its sounds are not heard anymore but have become part of our auditory memory, where they exist not as sound but as trigger, to trigger and renew the un-sound as a different sound. Thus, in the un-sound we meet the absent but nevertheless heard sound of my auditory imagination, which expands the work now and which will continue the work after its audition.

The pulse of a bow connects the crackling silence, which becomes nothingness interrupted by sharp breaths that bring new sounds, louder sounds, and a blackness, a drone that wipes out what was slight and small before—a blizzard of snow and sound, wiping the screen and clearing the room. Instrumentality is recognized and subverted into sound, into bowing rather than the use of a bow. The connection between the sounds and their referent is not mapped through music but produced by listening to them in the room they build themselves. It is a material and experiential rather than a signifying referentiality that builds its own place, its own present and past, as anecdote rather than as history.³³

A voice evolves and takes shape next to loud and abrasive sounds, which are menacing but do not overwhelm. Their volume and shape have a reality determined by the body singing and the body listening not as measurement but as sentiment. Thus, they have neither might nor magnitude whose infinity and power instills in us a sense of inadequacy and smallness, to be overcome in order to achieve joy and satisfaction; instead, they give us the measure of ourselves as an immeasurable pleasure of being sad and happy all at once.

The text is sung in German composed from poems by Rainer Maria Rilke and Hermann Hesse.

Wenn es nur einmal so ganz stille wäre . . .³⁴

While the precise pronunciation of German is important, mirroring the increasingly harsh sonic textures that give the voice their beat and plot, the words are not, they are the libretto, providing the trigger to compose and the invitation to listen without controlling the composing or the listening.

The words are traced in language, through the voice, slowly and expansively, retraced, and let go off. My listening follows them into this forgetfulness and is in turn traced visually and sonically, touching and being touched without the separation of the skin but inside the body, at the heart of melancholia and the open rawness of a softer flesh that is intertwined in sound rather than in its source. There is no gap, no chasm, across which and through which we know each other; the knowing is immediate but not total; it is fragments fragmenting, exploring, and knowing rather than reaching a certain comprehension and idea.

The voice mirrors and concentrates the threatening sounds that engulf both me and the projected images: piercing strings and gasping breaths, distressing accelerandi—and yet there is a peacefulness captured in the images that give the work a space beyond its own frame, in a far less clear dispersion that grays what seemed in focus before.

The performance space does not hold the audio-visual material; it ingests the images and diffuses the sound. It sends the composition away and around, thinning out its sounds but offering a thickness of experience in their dispersed playback, enfolding all over the walls, the floor, my body, and against the large glass pane behind me—diffusing and infusing the space and through the space. The images too are not projections but injections into the wall, to bring forth an impression of stillness, sentimentality, and loneliness that might well appear to live within the building, at its core, and yet is not a hidden aspect of its material and symbolic quality, but the potential of what I might conjure up.

This spatiotemporal ingestion and dispersal of images and sound is brought to an end by a stark video sequence of a person dressed in blue walking through a snowed in wood. The synch sound brings the diffused

composition momentarily back to a point where we can all agree on what we see: we meet in the crunching of the snow, in the steps of the image, before a long poignant silence when we are joined by the artist entering the space.

Dressed in a long robe and with bare feet she walks self-consciously around the silent room, her footsteps drawing a tense line in the absence of sound. She holds a small metal cup in her hand and walks tentatively around the big concert piano in the corner, sitting down, setting the metal cup to its side, readying her hands to play just as the pre-recorded composition overtakes her presence and plays the potential of her sounds. The recording lodges its sound in the mute instrument in front of us, her presence having guided it there to leave it unperformed but sounding, while she runs out of the room to come back as voice only, doubled up, singing the same lines slightly apart, building a reverberant body through modulation and slippages, and continuing the tensions drawn through the melancholia of our fleshly touch in sound.

Seltsam Im Nebel zu wandern, einsam ist jeder Busch und Stein, kein Baum kennt den andern, jeder ist allein . . .³⁵

Harsh hacking and tapping and plucking, tense and intense production of noises, squeezed out as a forced imperative and incessant demand, calmed only by separate piano sounds, not chords or cadenzas but singular fingers pressing down to reach each sound from the isolation of their potential into the realization of their presentness.

Seltsam im Nebel zu wandern, Leben ist einsam sein . . .
kein Mensch kennt den andern, jeder ist allein.³⁶

Molitor's work re-sounds and un-sounds the loneliness of the human condition with delicate delight, plucking and clicking at things, making contingent rhythms, small sounds that do not hold the expanse of what preceded them. Instead, they play as if in monolog, just to themselves, zipping and clapping, they live in a shallower space carved out by themselves: a diminutive sonic environment in which I recenter myself as a smaller me, as in a dream or in a sonic fiction.

Wie meine träume nach dir schrein . . .³⁷

The stillness is produced in sound, not in the gaps but in its expanse: in the presence of sound as its own variant. The loudness is produced in the stillness, not against it but amplifying its vast expanse and performing its continuation. In that continuity between the work as silence and as noise, between the work as music, as performance, as video, and on, across platforms, crossing platforms, we listen for what sounds and what remains

or becomes un-sound but contributes to the heard nevertheless. “Leaving the audience’s un-sounds to take their proper place as the only remaining trace of the initial sonic, visual, tactile experience.”³⁸

. . . Nur diese weite weisse Stille in die mein tatenloser Wille in atemlosen Bangen lauscht³⁹

Conclusion: the un-sound and the unheard

The musical work as a musical possible world is autonomous of the discipline and the history of music while responding, de-sounding and re-sounding its processes, rhythms, and tonalities. It takes on new forms and moves across platforms into performance, visual art, improvisation, and sound art, remembering and forgetting its provenance, from where it arises not out of necessity but as the possibility of the present and the future of organized, disorganized, and reorganized sound.

Musicality as a possibility of making work injects and makes audible a musical timespace within other practices: it expands their visual surface with an unseen mobility, with tonalities and harmonies, abandoned and continued and it mobilizes in their depth a sentimentality and melancholia that we share as intertwined subjects, driven to break our own solipsism in a sonic sociality rather than seeking to overcome its emptiness through an internal intellectual triumph. In turn, listening to the musical possibility of sound and visual art projects from these crossing platforms into the discipline of music, to review and expand its restrictions and make it take on visual and sonic concepts and sensibilities to implode its intra-systemic tendencies.

Musical possible works live in the non-ontological paradise of possibilities as independent but crossing worlds that are close to other musical, sonic, and visual worlds, sounding as variants of the same world and granting explanatory power to hear the material and their structure within each other, rather than as separate actualities confirmed in relation to each discipline. Within this paradise, through de-listening and re-listening, we hear the sounds free from disciplinary hermeticism and semantic limitations. A musical sensibility, rather than the discipline of music, allows music to ooze into anything, and for sound to flow back to produce a work that sometimes is music and sometimes is something else.

To inhabit this musical possible world in a phenomenological listening confronts the esoteric knowledge of the discipline, virtuosity, and the closed-off privilege of canons and genres with a contingent practice, whose truth and value is not pre-given in the score and in history, the timespace map of the work, but is produced contingently as a walking and mapping of its sound in a temporal geography that presents not a

visible topography, a textual surface, but produces the invisible mobility beneath as its unseen depth. Thus, musical truth does not correspond to the demands and principles of the discipline but to its own production, to the work it makes contingently; its reality is not actual but possible, real not as an abstract piece but as an inhabited timespace: the plural and unfinished performance of its sounds heard contingently.

Following Lewis, actuality is an *actuality at*; it is an indexical possibility whose truth and reality however are renegotiated in a sonic sensibility not as a relative position but as the actuality of a concrete sound generated in an inhabited listening. Thus, every world that is possible is an actual possible world for somebody, and every musical work that is possible is the actual possible musical world for her who generates its musicality in the process of living in its concrete materiality as in a life-world.

Music as sonic possible world produces an immersed reality and an ephemeral truth, as generative and passing as its sound, rather than as fixed as the stability of the score, the text. Plural, but indexical, its truth and reality are bound to the body, which at the same time ensures its plurality and sends it as a pluralizing agency into other works and into the world to make itself count as one slice of its actuality imploding the pretence of an actual music.

The critique of musical virtuosity and knowledge, and the rejection of a singular musical truth and reality, does not lead to an “anything goes,” an abandonment of value and judgment, but shifts the burden of valuation from the craftsmanship of the interpreter, the instrumentalist, and the critique, onto the individual listener, who produces opaque and plural references rather than a transparent lineage, but whose communication, in words, about what the work means and what it is worth, seeks to establish a rigorous knowing of the work that expands and challenges the closed-off principles of musical evaluation.

Listening not to musical expectations but to sound closes the gap between composition and interpretation, the chasm within which ideality and virtuosity take shape and convince the listener of his outsidership, of his shortcoming in the face of musical perfection, which can only be overcome through the knowledge of the discipline.

It is through a “*musica practica*” an entrainment in the sound of musicality rather than of music, the committed and rigorous practice of listening and sound making as proposed by Mark Peter Wright in his *30 Minutes of Listening*⁴⁰ that a generative practice of the material can develop, whose interpretation is not ideal but contingent and passing: built between the freedom to sound and the commitment to listen—building a work that might or might not be music, but whose formless musicality does not prevent it from being a work.

This entrainment is rigorous and committed, and thus the musical work can sound all sorts of things without becoming just anything. The

ethics of this musical practice lays not in the perfect rendition and the right interpretation of a piece of work; rather, it is an ethics of participation⁴¹ an ethics of doing things, not of doing things well but of participating nevertheless, not to follow the rules and principles of the discipline but to invent and re-invent through listening, de-listening, and re-listening, what they might be continually.

This ethics of participation does not ensure the benign use and content of music, that is a different matter, but it proposes an ethical responsibility in the world the work makes. This participation is not controlling; it is not authoritative but equivalent: listening in the midst of all that sounds and everybody else who is listening also. The musical work as world creates a post-humanist environment, whose shape is not anthropocentric but formless. I am within this formlessness, not at its center, but centered, decentered, and recentered within it, enjoying not privilege but equivalence with all there is, and acknowledging the responsibility rather than the power of my position as a post-humanist subject.

A phenomenological possibilism, the doubtful inhabiting of the musical work as a reciprocal and reciprocated world, performs the suspension of habits and taste in a primacy of perception that creates a “timespace acousmatic,” a spatial *and* temporal *epoche* of the work that ignores as good as possible, geographical, and historical sources and gets us to the material of the work in its contingent and passing elaborating of its own continuum.

This continuum produces not transcendental lines, but is musical possibility opening itself as sound; it does not reveal an immanent invisible, hidden but always already present sound of the work, but triggers a musical immanence: listening as openness to the work; performing a generative discovery of its material.

This musical immanence produces a “fleshly music,” a primary intertwining without skin, without the membrane of musical knowledge and language to keep open a fissure, however fine, to reinsert difference and seek a harmonic order. Rather the musical flesh is the unbroken continuum between the sonic thing and the sonic subject who produce the work together through a corporeal knowing of its material and the subject’s own possibility to sound. This intertwining is the condition of musicality without discipline: the entrainment in the production of sound as a solitary and as a social agency that works from the solipsism of each tone, and the solipsism of each listener, into the contingent composition of sounds, and the fragility of a shared listening that makes music as musicality.

In this primordial reflection the totality of music’s actuality is opened from below, from within the unseen process of its unfolding; and the possibility of music as plurality, unfinished and unfinishable, is heard on the surface of the work and expanding it. The musical possible work builds a present world as an unfinished continuation of the past that does

not realize its necessity but opens it to new inventions and inexhaustible possibilities. It achieves not the fulfillment of the musical idea and style, as finite and finished, but opens musical possibilities through a musical fiction, not as the actualization of what went on before but as the plurality of where it might lead.

Equally the sound artwork does not fulfill and finish the musical fiction. It does not complete the progress of the musical possible world into a sonic possible world as the representation of the perfection and ideality of its formlessness. Rather the sonic fiction of sound art represents one possible development in an unfinished continuum: imperfect and without a certain style or form, remembering but also forgetting where it came from, going somewhere that holds the memory of a musical past in its invisible thickness where it commingles with other slices of inheritance, to be a present sound art.

The next chapter concludes without finding an end, to perform an unfinished text within which the possibility of the impossible arises as a logical consequence but not the necessity of my pursuits of sonic *possibilia*.

Molitor's work gave us the un-sound as a reminder of the unreliable nature of sound and the uncontrollable audition of the listener. Her un-sound is what does not sound but is added in the listener's auditory imagination, and it recalls Purcell's unheard drums to invite us to consider also what does sound but is not heard. The un-sound and the unheard are part of their compositions and of other work as well. It is what expands the invisible into an inaudible but nevertheless present sound: the absent, the imagined, and the ignored that both sound art and music share and both also try to make audible.

The next chapter listens to the inaudible—the “possible-impossible-thing-of-sound”—to consider why we do not hear it and what other slices of inaudibility there might be and what they might mean.

CHAPTER FIVE

Listening to the inaudible: The sound of unicorns

Walking along the Seven Sisters Road

I ask my son walking next to me what he hears. His answer—"nothing."

He had zeroed the acoustic environment to the steady stream of sounds constantly moving at our side, creating in concert a solid wall, rushing onwards, up and down its concrete path and determining ours. Its dense drone, differentiated only where a particular hum perforates the concentrated wall, is punctuated infrequently by its own sudden deafening absence, followed by an even greater surge of sounds all revving up individually soon to fall back into a compound stream again.

It was only when we turned the corner at Marcus Garvey library that he told me he could hear "shouting."

SOUNDWORDS.TUMBLR.COM June 26, 2011, 9:23 p.m.

This last chapter concludes without concluding, not to find an ending to the idea of sonic possible worlds but to lead its possibility beyond the heard into the inaudible, that which also sounds but which for physiological, social and political, or ideological reasons, and decisions of taste and preference we cannot hear. The inaudible is what expands the invisible, what questions its boundaries and confirms the inexhaustible nature of sound. It is the critical edge of sound art and musicality, both of which share the absent, the un-sound and the as yet unheard, the imagined and the ignored, and work from their present possibility into the unheard manifestation of its sonic materiality.

The inaudible is a radical articulation but not the conclusion of a phenomenological possibilism. It is not only where doubt and astonishment suspend habits and taste and consider anew what is assumed as known before, but where we accept the presence of the unknowable. It is where perception must plunge not only into the possibility of the world but also into its impossibility: into what might not exist, what is not yet known to exist and what goes as yet unnoticed, or what might simply be imagined, but which all nevertheless might turn out to be possible. This radicalizes Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of a primacy of perception and proposes a "phenomenological impossibilism," which demands we plunge into what is not known or known about, and which leads not only to the suspension of a priori knowledge and thought but to the rejection of the limits of the knowable and the thinkable, insisting we open ourselves to what appears unknowable and unthinkable and consider what the possible impossible, the inaudible means, and what it reveals about what we do hear and about what remains unheard; ". . . it must make it say, finally, what in its silence *it means to say*. . ."¹

This chapter tries to conjure up the unheard and the un-sound, the inaudible, not to solve their mystery but to add them to the repertoire of listening and articulation. It explores how the inaudible changes what we see and hear, and how we inhabit an audio-visual world knowing that there are other slices, variants of the same world, that coexist but are seemingly inaccessible, because for various reasons we are not equipped or willing to reach and experience them.

It tries to discover how this inaudible, invisible mobility has an impact on the sensorial sense of the seen and heard—on how we experience the Seven Sisters Road, from what we hear and what we do not hear or do not acknowledge to hear, but that nevertheless sounds and has an impact on our sense of the area as the sensorial non-sense of it. The inaudible, as the possible impossible, continues the actual and the possible and we need to start hearing it, or at least we need to start listening out for it, in order to understand the rationale of our judgment of the world and of the work as world, and comprehend its limitation reflected in what we cannot yet hear.

In this sense a phenomenological impossibilism performs a primacy of perception that reveals the rationale not only of the reflection of what is known to exist, the actual, or of what might exist, the possible, but also of that which is possibly not existing but is nevertheless imaginable, and of that which is not imaginable but nevertheless existing, the impossible, all of which play a part in the plural possibility of actuality and thus need to be accessed.

Merleau-Ponty's primordial pursues an access to the world through a bodily knowing "to recover the consciousness of rationality," to question the purpose and reason of critical reflection.² The possible impossible does

not recover the consciousness of rationality but discovers a consciousness of perception and uncovers what belongs to it also but remains unheard, un-experienced. It performs a critical phenomenology, which questions not only the method of reflection but challenges the threshold of the thing, the phenomenon, reflected upon.

To reach this phenomenology of the impossible, this chapter listens to the fissure between the audible and the inaudible, to think what it means, what it reveals about what we do hear, and what else there is to hear.

Electrical Walks (2004–)

Christina Kubisch's *Electrical Walks* give us access to an inaudible slice of the world that drives and shapes the relationships and dynamics of our visible surroundings. Her specially designed headphones make it possible for us to access the impossible, in the sense of the physiologically not reachable whirr of electromagnetic activity that dominates the inaudible urban soundscape. They make audible the unheard vibrations of the city, which are beyond our frequency reach and yet are so important to our understanding of where we live and how we live there. They are like the inaudible hum of Seven Sisters Road what we ignore or recompose almost unconsciously to sound as silence the zero point of the soundscape, and yet the humming of the road and the whirring of the electromagnetic activity dominate our visual surrounding and make possible what we can do and determine what is not possible.

The quasi-deliberate unhearing of the traffic and the physiological not hearing of the electromagnetic activity are both in their own way rendering inaccessible, impossible slices of the invisible, the unseen mobility of a place, and thus restrict our access to the complexity of its visual construction—leaving us with a reduced view.

Kubisch's participatory installations had since the late 1970s worked with custom-made headphones able to pick up electromagnetic signals and convert them into sounds. She used them for her audiences to pick up composed soundworks staged within spaces constructed by electromagnetic cables. Since the 1990s she noticed the increasing electromagnetic disturbances that infiltrated her own compositions and decided to focus her work on those instead.

Electrical Walks started in Cologne in 2004, with maps designed by the artist, charting her exploration of the city's unheard dynamic and inviting us to follow her through its inaudible composition. She explores the underground, the mines of the cityscape, where its energy comes from and where its shape is determined in the formless flow of sound, and leads us on a soundwalk below the surface of the heard.

She expands in the early twenty-first century the twentieth-century notion of “Walking in the City.” Her walks are not focused on the pavement, on the sidewalk, on the trajectory of Michel de Certeau’s individual “Wandersmänner,” his pedestrians, mapping their singular paths and producing the city as temporal trajectories in the blind space between tall buildings.³ Rather, she buries us deep within the city’s material, observing not its build but what it is made of and what it is building: drawing toward us and from us, determining relationships and dynamics that are hidden within its visual design but whose revelation makes us rethink the provenance and purpose of that design and how else a city might be built.

We are moved away from de Certeau’s focus on the singular walker, who generates his own path, into the collective of an electromagnetic rush that pulls us along and reveals a different belonging in an inaudible organization of sound.

All the cities explored by Kubisch—Oxford, London, Berlin, New York, Riga, and many more—have different sonic profiles: old industrial sounds, digital signals, pulsing machines, . . . sound signatures that remain unheard with the naked ear but that are as particular as those outlined by R. Murray Schafer in the late 1960s in relation to the audible soundscape and thus deserve the same attention and reflection to get us to understand the complexity and dynamic of our surroundings, how we live in them presently and how their inaudible sounds might shape them into the future—how from the inaudible edge of sound, the visible emerges in its future guise.

Kubisch’s work is poetic, revealing an inexhaustible signifying flow of acoustic inarticulation beneath the surface of the seen, the knowable and the thinkable, that expands and stretches that seen and puts its boundaries into doubt; and her work is political, revealing the invisible dynamic that facilitates and determines our movements on the visible surface of the world. It makes audible an inaudible, possible impossible sound, as another slice of the many slices that make up the world; and it makes accessible and imaginable what we cannot hear, not only suspending our habits of thinking about what we know to be there, but opening us to what before we did not know was there; to reconsider what is there and to imagine what else might be there also.

Her works enter the material and structure of Francisco López’s silent *Buildings [New York]* to uncover their soul.

The sound of unicorns

So it is said that though we have all found out that there are no unicorns, of course there *might* have been unicorns. Under certain circumstances there would have been unicorns. And this is an example of something I think is not the case [. . .] I think that even if archaeologists or geologists

were to discover tomorrow some fossils conclusively showing the existence of animals in the past satisfying everything we know about unicorns from the myth of the unicorn, that would not show that there were unicorns.⁴

Saul Kripke explains that this thing found by the archaeologists or geologists, despite matching all the traits of the thing we call unicorn, is not a unicorn, because that name “unicorn” has already been given to something else: to that mystical beast that we call a unicorn and that thus exists in that name within the context of the myth, making it impossible for the fossils found in the woods to belong to a unicorn even if it looked exactly like its description in the fables. Any similarity would be coincidental rather than real, and thus would not warrant to give the fossilized animal the same name.

His reasoning why there cannot have been animals we can call unicorns moves the philosophy of language away from a descriptive theory of reference toward a process of naming as reference. The unicorn we speak of is real as the mystical beast that has been named so. It does not have to be validated in flesh and bones, and were such bones to be found they would be something else, they could not retrospectively climb into the name and its reality, which is the designation we have given it within the context of its reality.

Kripke’s theory of language as articulated in *Naming and Necessity* (1972) outlines, against a Kantian background, a realist philosophy that does not describe or structure the world with words but that names, as in baptizes, the objects and subjects in the world, which then remain named so in all counterfactual situations, even if their description, what they are doing and look like, and their valuation, what we think of them, change.

His language does not represent an object or subject but names it through “rigid designators” whose reference remains and is unchangeable even though everything else about the object or subject might change. In this regard, his realist philosophy of language, arrived at through a renewal of Aristotle, turns Immanuel Kant’s philosophy on its head and demands complete reconsideration of the relationship between words as names and the object, subject named.

In Kant’s idealist philosophy of language the description “justifies” the name, and thus if the description does not fit anymore, in a counterfactual situation, what was named B in that world is not B in this world. In Kripke’s realist philosophy of language, the thing is named B and remains B in whatever counterfactual situation we encounter it. That does not mean that things around thing B have not changed, or indeed that B has not changed, but it is still thing B. That is why the fabled beast that is named unicorn within the myth remains that unicorn and the bones found in the woods cannot all of a sudden become those of that unicorn also but have

to be given a new name: we could call it “unicorn2”; it cannot however be called “unicorn.”

Kripke’s naming, his baptism of things rather than discovering, structuring, and ordering them according to an etymological and ontological trajectory and truth, holds some similarity to Merleau-Ponty’s primacy of perception. Both evoke a “primordially” that might, as Richard Rorty suggests, seem “merely a Gothic curiosity, the last enchantment of the Middle Ages,” neither of which is naïve however.⁵ On the contrary, both understand the fallacy of habits and conventions and seek to interrupt the path of normativity by renewing our focus on perception and designation, respectively, leaving room to see the rationale of reflection and of articulation.

Kripke’s designators are rigid but they do not restrict; rather, and seemingly paradoxically, the primordially of his realism, not to rely on description, similarities, and differences, but to name, means the named can be a much more fluid object or subject, contextually determined rather than in relation to a preexisting register. The named is certain to be who he is—a unicorn, a dog, a human—but there are many variants of how it can be so without ceasing to be itself.

Sound radicalizes Merleau-Ponty’s primacy of perception and demands we plunge into the invisible of that which we know exists, and dive into the inaudible, that which is not known to exist yet: opening us to the possible and the possible impossible. Similarly, sound challenges Kripke to name the experience of the ephemeral and passing. By not offering him a stable object or subject to name, his designation is stretched into a naming of the possible and the possible impossible, the invisible and the inaudible—suggesting a phenomenological logic of language, not as contradiction but as challenge to both philosophical enquiries, and as extension of each other.

Sound is not an entity, or it is only then an entity when it exists within a Kantian scheme of language, as b flat, as c sharp, the sound of a lorry, or a dog, and so on. Sound as sound, as the thing in itself, as an acousmatic timespace thing, challenges Kripke to name the ephemeral and temporal and adds a phenomenological demand to his mathematical logic by bringing him phenomena that function not as objects or subjects, as entities, but sound the temporal connections between objects and subjects as things thinging, contingently, and which might remain inaudible even.

We do not hear entities but relationships, the commingling of things that generate a sonic world, which we grasp not by inference nor by synthesizing various viewpoints, but by centering, decentering, and recentering ourselves from moment to moment in the complex continuity of sound, that we name not to make a proposition nor to represent it or to testify to the veracity of its description but to grant another listener access to the heard and invite her to inhabit its sonic possible world and even its sonic possible impossible

world, to name his own sounds and to consider her un-sounds and what remains unheard.

Sound's temporality means that the baptized thing cannot be held, the name is not only contextual but also contingent, not a designator but a portal, granting entrance to an experience that will have to be renamed continually. How will Kripke designate this invisible but nevertheless present sound that is the soul of the visible—its mobility, dynamic, and agency—but does not offer him a form, an entity, and does not work as a source, but is the commingling of all there is building a world not with objects and subjects stacked against and on top of each other, but as the honeyed fabric of a timespace place?

In relation to sound, language cannot, as in a Kantian idealism, represent or describe, but it can also not adopt a straightforward Kripkian designation. It is not language, not what we say about something, but sound, that is generative, that is the world creating predicate; and its truth is not corresponding, nor positivist because it is what it sounds itself and “what belongs to it absolutely.”⁶ A sonic philosophy of language does not describe nor name, but grants access to its actions through the experience of its ephemeral audibility and inaudibility, out of which words come tenuously and in great doubt about their capability to communicate the heard but that try nevertheless, practicing a phenomenological rather than an analytical philosophy of language. Listening engenders a phenomenological naming that knows neither an a priori nor necessity, but performs a non-ontological and non-etymological trial to grasp and communicate what it is we hear and accepts failures and misunderstandings as its most likely outcome.

In relation to sound, Kripke's names do not designate identity but are the portal to experience that then has to find words not to describe or structure the experience but to make it accessible, thinkable, and knowable again and again. Adapted in this way his realism is useful to understand the immanence not of the thing heard but of listening, and to grasp the ephemeral contingency of the heard.

But what about the sound of the unicorn, what is *its* name?

In a Kantian philosophy of language, which arguably follows and produces a visual sensibility, names function through the predicates associated with them. Man X is man X because he is the one who does this that or the other. A sonic sensibility has no man X to associate a predicate to but is itself the predicate, the verb, the doing that has taken the place of the noun and thus has become its own name.

Sound cannot be named independent of its audition. The name of the sound has to be given while hearing it within a particular and contingent context. It is a designation that is a contextual and particular naming that has no problem with abandoning etymology and knows it is passing and represents no truth but generates its own. The name of the sound cannot be assumed to exist beforehand and it cannot be deduced from a description that matches it—a thing heard does not obey a lexical definition but gets a name from what it sounds like, motivated by our socio-linguistic tendency to want other people to hear it also. We have to baptize sounds not to structure them but to grant access to them, to hear them, and to share them. This means we can consider the inaudible, the sound of the unicorn, as a sonic myth that while unheard is nevertheless real and deserves a name through which it becomes accessible as a possible impossible and gains its generative power to infiltrate a sonic imagination and make itself heard.

The purpose of naming the audible and the inaudible is not one of structuring them within a musical, an ecological, an anthropological, or other framework, but to grant access to them, to create a portal to their experience, through which we enter not via an analytical listening but by approaching tentatively and full of doubt to perform a phenomenological inhabiting that does not seek to confirm the name but to experience the sound. The sound is thus not ideal and nor is it anthropocentric; it is absolutely itself manifesting its own truth and reality rather than obeying another.

Kripke's naming allows us to understand how sounds could have designation without reference to something else—a visual source or a structural register that inevitably suppresses its essence in a descriptive reference, which fixes and restricts what we might hear to the fulfillment of that description. However, sound also refutes the spiritual permanence that his baptism evokes. A sonic sensibility names, denames, and renames all the time, as it adds to the context of historical time and geographical place a present time that is ephemeral and passing, unstable and unreliable but intersubjective and reciprocal, holding the duration and thickness of the past and enabling the thin plurality of the future.

No fossils can be found in the woods that might or might not belong to a sound from a mythical fable or a time long gone. The sonic memory exists not in bones and stones but in its material trigger and the thick duration it carves in the present, and the future it prophesies. The audible holds the past without being named by it, and the inaudible sounds the future without yet designating what that might be.

The sound of the unicorn is the inaudible possible impossible. It cannot be called, and yet it triggers an imagination. It sounds at the critical edge of audibility hinting at an inexhaustible depth of inaudibility beneath and behind everything we hear, to sound what we might possibly hear also, but

what remains, for now, inaudible—impossible. But to have the possibility of rigid designation, of naming, if not yet the name, means the inaudible has a place to sound from eventually, and grants us access to that which sounds already but we cannot yet hear.

Logic is about language, and what language can do, it is enabled and restricted by its demands and what it provides. Sound by contrast is about the world and how it generates the world. Thus, a sonic language cannot describe this sonic world but names access points for its audition and attempts a doubtful effort at communicating the heard. Kripke's realist view focuses on the thing and brings us not into language but into the world, to the named rather than to its description. It allows us to reflect on the rationale of language, what it carries with it and what it effects, and invites us to go back to a primordiality of the object and the subject facing their own name. This is how from a "Gothic" metaphysics Kripke denies the philosophy of language its status as a first philosophy and makes us consider what we hear first.

Inaudible soundscapes

The inaudible in the soundscape is not literally the sound of the unicorn, but the "sound of the unicorn" is what engenders its imagination. There are in the woods not sonic fossils but other, present sounds, which we do not hear and yet they impact on how we see the trees. Francis Dhomont's *Forêt profonde* brings from the darkness of the woods other shades and formless forms to our imagination that start to populate and produce its place beyond a visual description in an invisible experience where much remains inaudible and yet moves the undergrowth and seeks passing names to act as portals into the reality of its sonic possible impossible world. It appears to be a matter of having the right "tools," technologically, artistically, or in terms of sensitivity, to access these sonic possible impossible worlds that unfold in the brushwood.

Ultrasonic Scapes (2011)

Eisuke Yanagisawa's recording of ultrasonic landscapes are not beautiful or particularly harmonious: they clip and grate, flange and crackle, whizz and hum, sounding more like scrambled signals than a soundscape, and yet they intrigue through what they hint at and make us hear between what actually sounds and our auditory imagination.

The ultrasonic recorder modifies frequencies beyond our hearing range into audible material, translating between an audible and an inaudible world, and granting access from one into the other—adding the unheard

to what is audible and making the two compossible. These recordings present the inaudible as a variant of the same world and thus expand the threshold of its actuality and possibility into the invisible depth of the unheard—the impossible.

The first track of the album is of bats calling, presumably in crepuscular woods, evoking the sighting of all sorts of other creatures, real and mystical, that might live here in actuality or in possibility, and that might be heard if only we had the right device to shift their frequency within our range. The opportunity to hear this inaudible, impossible sound, invites the imagination of a host of other sounds emerging from the darkness to appear between the trees and shrubs and thicken the agency of a seemingly still landscape.

The bats' calls serve as a portal into another world, a possible impossible world, whose impossibility is determined not by their nonexistence but by our physiology. Their clicking is the natural partner of Kubisch's electromagnetic whirr and hints at a primordiality of other worlds that live as slices of this world in the inaccessible shade of the visible and the audible, and yet impact on what we perceive.

Kubisch's whirr is manmade, an addition to the soundscape through our economical and scientific activity and reflecting on it. The bats' call sounds independent of us and opens a world beyond human organization: a wilderness at the verge of our actual and possible worlds. It also precedes us and thus does hint not only at a contemporary inaudible but also at past inaudibility, things that might have lived and sounded here but that have now ceased to do so, and we will never know about their sounds or how to call them. These are the sounds of a post-humanist or indeed a pre-humanist world that reveal the Gothic souls of animate and inanimate objects and make us rethink the trajectory of descriptive referencing, which we adopted through an idealist philosophy chosen over a contingent and contextual naming that produces not an analytical but a phenomenological logic.

Of course, we know that bats exist and that they use ultrasound to find their way in the dark, but the rational understanding of this zoological fact does not thicken and mobilize the woods at night. The ultrasonic recorder grants entry into this other world, and invites us to add it to the slices we know about and consider actual or possible; it gives them a deeper depth and a darker groundlessness—and so when next I step into the semi-darkness of the early evening light, between trees and ferns, I will sense the agitation and mobility that composes my view.

Yanagisawa's bat recorder renders the inaudible audible not to get me to one inaudible as a mere curiosity, but to open myself to the possibility of many impossibilities: to tune my sense to what I do not hear; to make me think of all the slices of actuality that are possible but remain impossible in a zoological, structural, archeological, and so forth, description, but

which need to be heard in order to name, to gain and share access to them nevertheless.

To talk about the inaudible serves not to create a structural reference for the possible impossible, but to gain access to it, and to share those invisible points of access at the verge of possibility, not to finalize the unheard but to make it count. I do not want a scientific, aesthetic, or ideal descriptive reference of the inaudible but need to engage in its processes and materialities to name, dename, and rename what I think might sound but that I do not yet hear, to make you listen out for it also. For this purpose we need a language that emerges from listening rather than words that restrict what can be heard. This language needs to be part of the listening practice and share in its generative sensibility to produce words, the material of language, in response to the material of sound, and embrace the possible world of the audible and seek to make accessible also a sonic possible impossible world from the invisible actions of its inaudible things. Such a language allows us to reflect on the limitations, hierarchies, and idealities that restrict my hearing when it wants to obey a descriptive reference instead of plunging into the possible and diving into the possibility of the impossible.

A philosophy of sound does not follow an analytical philosophy of language but renders description secondary to the naming of its practice that takes care of the audible as the possible, the “what could be,” or indeed the “what there is” if we would only listen, and unlocks the possibility of the sonic impossible, understood as the as yet inaudible but nevertheless present sound. It is a philosophy that gives us access to what is there if we would look past the object into the complex plurality of its processes and materialities, the passing and unreliable nature of sound that does not fulfill its reference but makes its own.

If the sonic possible thing lacks language adequate to express its essence, the sense of its experience, rather than describe its source and properties, the sonic impossible thing lacks listeners even, but it nevertheless has an impact and thus is worth considering. It is worth talking about and listening out for, since, this is where, out of inaudible strands of sound the impossible but nevertheless real emerges and makes the audible sound.

The sound of impossible things

While the possible-thing-of-sound is an alternative state of affairs that might not convince everybody, that might not be taken into account, that might be deliberately marginalized, it nevertheless demonstrates a possibility or possibilities even, in how things might be if only we listened. It will for many remain a lesser, or less noticed influence on reality, but

there is a momentum of conviction in its coherence and truthfulness strong enough to consider the “if that . . .” and come to a sonic “then what . . .” of possibility.

Beyond that “then what . . .” of the possible-thing-of-sound the inaudible meets no such conviction and cannot make itself heard. Actual listening, listening that obeys the rules of the actual world, cannot hear it. A possible impossible is to use Daniel Nolan’s words “badly behaved”:⁷ it does not follow the logic and non-contradiction rules of the actual world and does not produce coherence with it because it has a property contrary to its essence. But what is the property of the inaudible and how can we make it sound the essence of actuality?

If the inaudible contradicts the essence of the actual world, then it is not because what is inaudible is contradictory but because the notion of singular actuality depends on descriptive references and a priori knowledge and the inaudible is what we do not yet know about and thus cannot describe. However, it is intrinsically knowable and in its possible impossibilities it can expand what that knowledge is and what references it might produce.

The sonic possible and the sonic possible impossible, the audible and the inaudible, do not contradict but extend the logic of the actual world and challenge the scope of its language. The possible-thing-of-sound makes apparent the plurality of the object as things thinging. It brings to attention their processes and materialities and makes them graspable as sensorial things that do not obey description but trigger their own name. The inaudible augments these insights and deepens them. It has the permission to be “further away” from actuality, beyond the limits of the knowable and the thinkable, and so does not have to start with the restrictions of the actually known, and neither does it have to be limited to the imagination of the possible, but can generate the as yet unknown and unimagined from all that might sound but remains unheard—ultimately influencing the notion of the known and the imagined, discreetly expanding the idea of actuality through the incoherence of the impossible.

The audible as a sonic possible makes apparent the limitations of the notion of actuality, revealing what it hides in its opaque clarity, and the inaudible as a sonic possible impossible makes apparent that there are things we do not know yet but which are already here. The possible-thing-of-sound and the possible-impossible-thing-of-sound both have an extensional quality, they extend the actual object, the work and the world, and make the inconceivable conceivable as part of the future actual work and actual world and also remind us how to live in it.

With the possible-impossible-thing-of-sound to quote Nolan again “we allow ourselves to talk of what cannot be, in a way which allows us to nontrivially make claims about how things would be if various impossibilities were the case.”⁸ These impossibilities are aesthetic as well

as political, facilitating the discussion of exclusion: exclusion of work, exclusion of people, and exclusion of ideas and values.

The aesthetic inaudible

The aesthetic inaudible is badly behaved in relation to artistic and musical expectations. It falls outside the language of art to sound inaudibly something else. It remains unseen and unheard; it cannot break into the frame of visibility and audibility to be seen and counted within the work and yet it is the critical edge of artistic production, where it makes audible and sensible new slices of the work as variants of the same work that expand what that work is.

It is what advances composition and sound art production not toward an ideal but toward new sounds, and it is what keeps on opening the soundscape and my perception of it not toward a whole but toward the inexhaustible plurality of its slices. However, the aesthetic inaudible is not the “avant-garde,” the front runner, of artistic production, it is a much humbler inarticulation that is below and beneath the work and remains unheard and un-sound.

The inaudible is what artists work with in their doubt of the actual and their constant pressure on the possible. It is what challenges aesthetic givens and expands its imagination and thus it is what we should learn to listen to, what writers need to insist on trying to hear and write about, and what curators need to make accessible in the staging of the work even though they do not hear it themselves. In this sense, the inaudible-thing-of-sound is the real object of sound art and music education: training not to hear correspondences, the known, the referent, but to listen for what else might sound; to hear that in the work which has as yet no articulation but provides its strength and weight.

The inaudible refuses taste and style and knows no right sound, no actual music and musicianship, but haunts the formless shape of musicality, of organized, disorganized, and reorganized sound, and ensures the unfinishedness and imperfection of the work. It does not permit taste as it knows no reference to orientate its discernment by, and defines no value but enables the reflection of its rationale.

It remains unheard and yet we sense it in what remains alien. It is not a tone, nor a signifier; it has no semantic meaning but swings in the sounds of the possible to give them a thickness and duration that is not a present memory but a future audition. The aesthetic impossible is contingent and contextual, and while we cannot hear it at the time we can guess at its location and impact in hindsight.

It is the strand of sound in Nadia Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée, piano, orchestra* (1912) that does not follow the line but sounds beside it, inaudibly

questioning its path; it sounds the relationship between conventional instrumentation and percussive rhythms in Robyn Schulkowsky's *Hastening Westward* (1995), without making a sound; it is the earth in Chris Watson's *Whispering in the Leaves* (2010) that does not place the trees but reveals their relocation; and it is the inhabitants of López's *Buildings [New York]* (2001) that breathe their rhythm without being heard. These sounds remain unheard but they are imaginable, as the inexhaustible and generative unfinishedness of what we do hear. The possible heard reveals not an end to audibility, to what sounds, but reminds us that there is always more to hear and that even listing these inaudibles, and thus potentially rendering them possible, leaves many still unheard.

Thus, the aesthetic inaudible is not nonsounding; it is not a thing that does not thing, but it is not heard. There is a deliberateness in this stance, culturally and ideologically, a desire not to hear or a disinterest strong enough to block it out, to keep it apart. The sonic materiality is there, but we lack the sensibility, will, and wherewithal to hear it.

The politics of possible-impossible-inaudible-things

The inaudible is a possible impossible, not only because it is not, but because "it cannot be," which is to mean it should not, could not, really would not do to be. It is not only that its proposition cannot hold logically or in terms of physics; rather, it hints at a greater impossibility of inclusion and that is not trivial and that is why it is so important to listen out for it: to engage not only in the audible but in what could be heard also given the right circumstance.

The line between what is listened to and what is heard can get precariously slim. The inaudible is not the dialectical opposite of the heard but is the extension of its audibility, and ultimately also extends the visibility of the visual. It is anti-semantic, against a descriptive reference to structure things and beings, but invites the extension of what can be inhabited as semantic material, sensorial, plural, and inexplicable.

The impossible-inaudible-thing is always there, but our interpretative listening edits it out, ignores it, pushes it into the background to hear something else, something deemed important and valuable, something inline with a current notion of sense, validity, and purpose. We need the sonic possible to make visible the invisible and deal with its consequences, and we need the sonic possible impossible, the inaudible, to become able to imagine the as yet unimaginable and let it infiltrate actuality to make it real as a lived experience.

I am still not sure "what it is like," but I know where it is. The inaudible is where expectations, aesthetic preconditioning, musical training, as

well as social and political ideas determine the nonexistent, and where ideology, hope, and despair cross in the sand of social and political noise making.

Sounds from Beneath (2010–12) and SeaWomen (2012)

Mikhail Karikis' audio-visual works focus listening on the voice, on a voicing of what has become unheard and what will soon be unheard, and sound the context and consequence of this present and immanent inaudibility.

Sounds from Beneath is a single screen video that culminates Karikis' year-long work with ex-miners from the Snowdown Colliery Welfare Male Voice Choir at the former coalfields of Dover.⁹ Karikis encouraged the ex-miners to remember, imitate, and re-sound in song their acoustic environment down the mines, which they had heard daily, but which was now inaccessible, inaudible—impossible.

The miners' voices, their onomatopoeic explosions: whirring and roaring equipment and machines; breathing, clacking and wooshing bodies, stones and hard work, access what Kubisch's specially designed headphones and Yanagisawa's bat recorder make audible in the city and in the woods, underground, in the mines, whose soundscape is not accessible anymore, but whose effects remain present. Their physical sounds articulate the acoustic environment beneath in abstracted mimicry and tuneful songs that are interrupted and joined by actual words, "drill," "shovel," "hammer," . . . "fire," "underground," . . . that cease to function as signifiers but become sounds naming themselves.

Their singing of an environment beneath the ground makes audible an inaudible slice of the world that has stopped sounding but reveals present scars and consequences in the community, in the landscape and in society, whose re-sounding is essential to hear not the rationale of the political decision to close the mines, but to inhabit and comprehend its significance sensorially and intersubjectively: to center, decenter, and recenter ourselves in this impossible world beneath, to know not what it served economically and politically, but to sense what it meant socially, for the community, for identity, belonging and a sense of self.

Sounds from Beneath sound the invisible inaudible sound of a groundless depth beyond political opinion and ideology, in a personal sphere that is mirrored in the somber but proud faces of the men, who have been made inaudible, impossible, in a society that hears other things now.

The voices admit sentiment and trigger a pathetic engagement, whose partisanship is reframed however by the images of the scarred landscape, reminding us also of what is inaudible there because of what the miners re-sound.

Their song joins the unheard and the un-sound, that which they remember to have heard in the mines with what was never heard but what was added in memory, to build a sonic fiction that is not untrue, but builds a truth about mining now. From the inaudible, its political and economical impossibility, in song, a different possibility emerges that makes us rethink the rationality and necessity of a present actuality. This sonic fiction is generative, building a possible audibility that does not document an over-there or another time, but sounds what it means at this moment.

The work is not about sound but about what does not sound anymore, what is inaudible, impossible, but what was once possible and what you can still see in the relic of a mute landscape that as fossil carries the inaudible impossible mining, and the inaudibility of *its* consequences too.

SeaWomen echoes the *Sounds from Beneath* and mirrors them on the surface of the ocean. The work is an audio-visual installation that documents and narrates the life of a community of female sea workers living on the North Pacific island of Jeju a volcanic rock between South Korea, Japan, and China. It makes audible and sensible the sound of the women divers, who in the past, through tax laws and a physiological advantage, became the main bread earners and matriarchs in a Korean culture otherwise ruled by men, but who are now, through the progress of our civilization, education, and global warming, soon to lose their standing again.

The piece foretells the disappearance of their sound that is still just audible but whose imminent inaudibility reveals the political and economical changes on the island. Making them audible now Karikis allows us to imagine their future inaudibility, what their disappearance will mean, for them and for our world, having lost a slice of its variance. The work inadvertently asks what other slices we have lost and will be losing, and whether the inescapable drive toward a global capitalism self-fulfillingly serves the aim of its assumed singular actuality.

The seawomen called “Haenyeo” dive great depths of up to 20 meters, without oxygen masks, to bring up seafood and pearls. An ancient breathing technique passed on from generation to generation allows them to stay underwater for up to 2 minutes, after which time they dart to the surface emitting an eerie whistle that sounds the sharp opening of their lungs and allows them to locate each other in the choppy sea—to look out for each other.

The 12-speaker work has been shown in different configurations, with multiple monitor setup as well as with single screen video projection, viewed sitting on mats woven from material from the area in the method of the Jeju Islanders and featuring water colors of the diver’s faces painted by Karikis, in the time he managed to hold his own breath.

It is this physical participation, the practice of the women’s breath in his paintings, the bodily commitment to understand their way of life by

sharing their rhythm and voices rather than document them from afar, that gives Karikis' work a strength and brings out not a factual landscape but a sensorial soundscape that we are invited to inhabit with him, on the mats, in the dark space of the installation, filled with sounds and images of a sonic possible world that is approaching its horizon.

The physical, breath-filled sound of the women emerging from the bottom of the sea dominates the soundtrack, subtly but insistently, helping us locate ourselves in its narrative to give us a rhythm with the women and understand their community through its invisible mobility. It brings us to the breath, the soul of the body, as it articulates the reversal of the dive in a physical formlessness, sounding the resurfacing from the bottom of the sea and the bottom of their lungs with a breathy high pitched whistle that has a body, but that momentarily might not be human.

Other vocal elements of Karikis' work are the singing of the Haenyoe, strong swaying songs that mimic the rolling of the ocean and the rowing of boats, making audible the rhythm of bodies working together in the sea, finding a pulse together and a voice. There are also discussions and laughter that sound a joyful and solid matriarchy soon to be silenced by a capitalist system that has lost the possibility to sing together or hear each other and care about where in the deep sea each of us is. The piece witnesses their sustainable practices and observes a strong sense of community, of shared work and reward, and an obvious professional identity and satisfaction, a pride once had and visibly mourned on the aging faces of the miners in *Sounds from Below*. However, this ancient and exclusively female profession is now practiced by 50–90-year-old women only; for the younger generation it has become an untenable choice as jobs in the tourist industry offer a better alternative and global warming makes the catching of pearls rare. Their sound is still audible but slipping away into the dark sea never to dart to the surface again.

We, in the general sense as contemporary workers, do not sing together. Our bodies have no rhythm, no response to each other or to the environment we work in. Our inaudibility signals the abstraction of our doing into a visual context and a structural language, alienated from our own bodies and each other's, producing a communication that often fails to communicate but does not accept its own misunderstandings in the face of its linguistic visibility.

The visible title *SeaWomen* makes us aware of the lack of a name for a female seaman in the English language, and the imminent inaudibility of the named means its designation soon sounds the impossible also. It is a baptism that never happened and if it happens now it will portend its own immanent impossibility. However, even if its designation sounds the impossible, the unicorn, rather than flesh and bones, its baptism remains as hope for a future situation that defies what seems inevitable now. It is the

inspirational life of these women, and this hope that other such equitable lives might be possible that motivates Karikis to do his work, to show us this slice of the world not to mourn it but to see its strength and possibility, for us to name it not for what we lose but for what else might become possible.

Sonic horizons

In the ephemerality of sound the horizon between what exists and what does not is in doubt. The inaudible, understood as that in the work and the world, which for reasons of expectation, knowledge, and ideology we cannot access but that nevertheless influences our perception, should at least be assumed to be there. We need to talk about what we hear to prize it away from the restrictions of an analytical language and to articulate its own designation; and we need to talk about the inaudible as the possible impossible, which is what once sounded and still has consequences, and which is what sounds now but we cannot or do not want to hear, but which one day, when we know how to inhabit its environment, becomes the possible and the actual enabled by and hiding another inaudible yet again.

The inaudible is the verge of the soundscape. It is its portal into a plurality of worlds that are all variants of this world but which we can neither see nor hear because we do not know how to or we do not want to; and it is the criticality of the artwork, it is its radical edge over what we know, inviting us to sense beyond “what is” and “what might be” the possibility of impossibility: the invisible inaudible slices of the work, whose presence we might sense but whose materiality we cannot grasp.

The possible impossibility of the work is what gives it the strength to continually push at the boundaries of aesthetic knowledge to move us into that which we deliberately or inadvertently exclude from our sense of the work, without becoming itself audible. It is an aesthetic force rather than a sound whose sound once revealed hides and enables others still.

The possible impossibility of the world is its political, ideological, and social horizon, beyond which we pretend not to see anything even once we start to hear it rumble. It is the ground beneath which are hidden those things that do sound but which remain unheard and those that once did sound but have become silent, but often not yet mute.

Sound work that seeks the inaudible anew all the time embraces its passing ephemerality; it embraces its own essence in disappearance and accepts its fleeting property not as a structural necessity but as a generative designation. This is a predicative name that does not describe “what is,” “what might be,” and “what is not allowed to be,” but makes us sense it. Such work is aesthetico-political in that it not only encourages us to see the

actual and hear the possible expand its vision, but encourages us to listen to the inaudible in the work and beyond—into the future variance of the world.

It is the artists' job to open the possibility of the impossible, and it is the writers' responsibility and the listeners' challenge to engage in the inaudible to tease it out, not to come to an ideal audibility but to constantly work on the boundary between the audible and the inaudible, to make the impossible re-sound the possible and pluralize the actual.

NOTES

Introduction

- 1 These alien space ships, cats, dogs, and microwaves are not made of visual material or as linguistic signs, but are generated in sound, and in that temporal and invisible condition they make uncertain what their visual referent might be.
- 2 This is one entry from my blog soundwords.tumblr.com. This blog writes short phonographic texts that work from my listening into language. Such entries will appear throughout the book, to ground the reading in a listening practice.
- 3 The term phonography, originally translated from Greek to denote the transcription of speech, has, in relation to sound art and soundscape practices, come to describe the audio recording of the everyday. The term hints at a comparison with photography, and parallels as well as augments the term field recording, to suggest that the field of phonography could be anywhere, beyond the traditions and conventions of its first delineation in naturalism and acoustic ecology.
- 4 In *Listening to Noise and Silence*, I introduce Martin Heidegger's notion of "das Ding," the Thing, to articulate the thinging of the thing of sound. Das Ding as articulated in his 1962 text *Die Frage nach dem Ding* is Heidegger's attempt to bring being back into the object, and it allows me to identify the sonic object as a sonic thing that is not the attribute of the visual object but is the object of sound itself, whose thinging renders it a verb and whose thingness places it in the location of the noun. The sonic thing frees sound from visual expectations and instead allows it to unfold in the complexity of its own material processes, impressing on the listener its contingent production. This book continues and develops this designation: the sonic object and the sonic subject are identified as things thinging their own substance contingently, avoiding the pull toward a visual source that hears not sound but the description of the seen.
- 5 This recalls Christian Metz's notion of a "primitive substantialism" which according to him reflects Western philosophy since Descartes and Spinoza, and which is apparent in the sentence structure of Indo-European languages, where the noun, the object or subject, determines and organizes the predicate, the action, which is thus sublimated to this noun. I suggest that sound calls for a different language, one that acknowledges the predicativeness of the sonic thing thinging its own ephemeral substance as action, and that thus puts it in the place of the noun in the shape of the verb. Christian Metz, "Aural Objects," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th edition, edited by Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy, 313–16, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- 6 *Listening to Noise and Silence* uses Maurice Merleau-Ponty's association of the complex unity of perception with the act of being honeyed to articulate

the reciprocity of hearing sound: “Honey is a slow-moving liquid; while it undoubtedly has a certain consistency and allows itself to be grasped, it soon creeps slyly from the fingers and returns to where it started from. It comes apart as soon as it has been given a particular shape, and what is more, it reverses the roles, by grasping the hands of whoever would take hold of it.” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, translated by Oliver Davis, London and New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 41. Just as honey grasps those who touch it, so sound too, its formless and mobile complexity, grasps the listener in an intersubjective embrace.

- 7 “Sonic sensibility” articulates the idea that listening not only describes the effort of hearing, but it also defines a more general perceptual sensibility that stretches beyond normative expectations and habits. Listening, as a sensibility, as a susceptibility toward the world and the things, is not only a physiological act but an aesthetic and perceptual attitude that influences how we understand the world, its reality, knowledge, and truth.
- 8 The notion of “time” in sound is neither time as opposed to space nor is it time plus space. At the same time the sonic idea of “space” is not opposed to that time nor is it space plus time. [. . .] Listening to sound art and the sonic environment engages in the playful tensions of spatio-temporal productions and highlights the critical equivalence between spatial and temporal processes. (Salomé Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, New York: Continuum, 2010, p. 124)

I propose that in sound time and space extend and produce each other as one complex and productive composite, and use the term timespace to express this non-dialectical relationship.
- 9 Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, p. 188.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Theodor W. Adorno, “The Essay as Form,” in *The Adorno Reader*, edited by Brian O’Connor, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 93.
- 12 “Moments of coincidence” are the fleeting moments of understanding, which emerge occasionally from the flow of conversation. The suggestion is that, rather than assuming that we do understand each other save the exceptional moments when we do not, it is understanding that is the exception, which emerges not from language but from the effort and the desire to understand each other in moments of coincidence, when our sense of things meet in passing by sheer luck and good will, rather than on the basis of a linguistic and cultural lexicon that purports translation and communication.
- 13 Conceptual listening is an attitude toward the world that approaches it through a sonic sensibility that reaches beyond the heard and engages in the visible and the invisible as if hearing it as well.

Chapter one

- 1 The acoustic environment is the formless form of the world in the sense of Theodor Adorno’s interpretation of the formlessness of the empirical subject that is real in its concrete being, but formless with regard to the power it holds

- in society. The transcendental subject by contrast is, according to Adorno, always already deformed into the functions of sociality through which it gains its influence. In relation to the environment, I understand it is sound that is the formless form of the world and that is more real in its concrete being as a possibility but does not hold equal power in the construction of the actuality of the world as real. Theodor W. Adorno, "Subject and Object," in *The Adorno Reader*, edited by Brian O'Connor (pp. 137–51), Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 141.
- 2 "Against Soundscape," in *Autumn Leaves, Sound and the Environment in Artistic Practice*, edited by Angus Carlyle, Paris: Double Entendre, 2007.
 - 3 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 - 4 *Ibid.*
 - 5 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
 - 6 *Sounds from Dangerous Places* is an ongoing sonic journalism project by field recordist Peter Cusack, who uses sound to reveal ecological and social dangers, <http://sounds-from-dangerous-places.org/>, accessed on November 11, 2013.
 - 7 *The Tuning of the World* is the title of R. Murray Schafer's seminal book that in 1977 introduced a first notion of soundscape studies.
 - 8 R. Murray Schafer, "Music of the Environment," in *Audio Cultures, Readings in Modern Music*, edited by Christopher Cox and Daniel Warner, London: Continuum Books, 2004, p. 37.
 - 9 R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, New York: Knopf, 1977, p. 5.
 - 10 Chris Watson talking at the London College of Communication, UAL, February 16, 2012.
 - 11 Lucile H. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens*. New York: Academic Press, 1979, p. 3.
 - 12 Chris Watson talking at the London College of Communication, UAL, February 16, 2012.
 - 13 Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, p. 160.
 - 14 In his book *Nature*, Merleau-Ponty explains that for both Leibniz and Descartes it is the reasoning of God as the "‘divine mechanism’ thanks to which the heaviest possible came into actual existence." Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, translated by Robert Vallier, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003, p. 11. For Descartes this reason is an intellectual will, separate from the reason of the material of the world, manifesting a divine materialism.
 - 15 In his *Sixth Meditation*, Descartes discusses the intellectual extension, pure understanding, in relation to imagination as the realized extension, when the body moves toward the possible to actualize it in that movement. However, his insistence on the subject as a "thinking thing" means that the body, the imagination and sensation, remains secondary to thought,

Therefore from the fact alone that I know that I exist, and that at the same time I notice absolutely nothing else that belongs to my nature apart from the single fact that I am a thinking thing, I correctly conclude that my essence consists in this alone, that I am a thinking thing. And although I have a body that is joined very closely to me, [. . .] it is certain that I am really distinct from my body and that I can exist without it.

 René Descartes, *Meditations*, translated by Desmond M. Clarke, London: Penguin Books, 2000, p. 71.

- 16 Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, p. 17.
- 17 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy, Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*. Gutenberg eBook, www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17147, 2005, p. 69, orig. 1710.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- 19 The oppositionality of the perfect infinitude of God against the imperfect finitude of human kind in Leibniz and Descartes identifies a theological dialecticism that determines Western philosophical thought to date. By contrast, listening to the sonic environment engages in playful tensions that reveal equivalence, equal difference, rather than opposition, and meaning is produced in the action of perception as the sensate sense of sound rather than between things. In the vague absence of God, we must rethink the dialectical and come to understand the world through a sonic sensibility of generative simultaneity that seeks no perfect infinite but produces what is always now as an endless and plural finity.
- 20 In his text “Walking in the City” from *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau discusses New York from the top of the World Trade Centre and on street level. He juxtaposes the viewing of the total urban text from above, the gnostic drive that directs this “God like” view, with its production by the “Wandersmänner” “down below,” “whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it.” Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City,” in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Randall, London: University of California Press, 1988, p. 93.
- 21 Susan J. Smith, “Beyond Geography’s Visible Worlds: A Cultural Politics of Music” (pp. 502–29), *Human Geography*, 21(4), (1997), 503.
- 22 Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, p. 137.
- 23 This is a transcribed element of her narrative. I am using excerpts of her narration throughout the discussion of her work. These are denoted by single quotation marks.
- 24 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 330.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 330.
- 26 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, edited by Claude Lefort, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 40.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 30 De Certeau’s city on the ground level is created by the “Wandersmänner,” the pedestrians, who as blind practitioners hear rather than see its text, and produce with their footsteps the city as a heard phenomenon. De Certeau, “Walking in the City,” p. 93.
- 31 Arthur Machen, *Tales of Horror and The Supernatural*, Yorkshire: Tartarus Press, 2004, p. 154.
- 32 Explaining his view on the use of possible worlds in philosophy and its relation to reality, Kripke talks us through a game of dice:
The thirty-six possible states of the dice are literally thirty-six ‘possible worlds’, as long as we (fictively) ignore everything about the world except

the two dice and what they show. [. . .] Only one of these miniworlds—the one corresponding to the way the dice in fact come up—is the ‘actual world’, but the others are of interest when we ask how probable or improbable the actual outcome was (or will be).

Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1981, p. 16.

33 David K. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, p. 2.

34 Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 22.

35 Nicholas Rescher outlines his position as follows:

By definition, as it were, only the actual will ever exist in the world, and never the unactualized possible. [. . .] Of course, unactualized possibilities can be conceived, entertained, mooted, hypothesized, assumed, etc. In this mode they do in a way exist [. . .] but it goes without saying that if their ontological footing is to rest on *this* basis—or anything like it—then they are clearly mind-correlative.

For him, “the world of mind-independent reality comprises only the actual.”

Nicholas Rescher, *A Theory of Possibility*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975, pp. 197 and 199.

36 The “paradise of possibilia” that David K. Lewis articulates here is interesting in terms of the opportunity of a possible world framework, free of ontological restrictions, grants the theorization and evaluation of the sonic experience and its impact on notions of a normative, “visual” actuality. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, p. 4.

37 In *Listening to Noise and Silence*, I discuss how sound as “pathetic trigger” sets off an emotional engagement in the heard that generates the timespace extension of a work through the agency of memory in its present perception (pp. 171–90).

38 Edmund Husserl’s sense of the world is bound up with experience and consciousness, but within his transcendental idealism the scope of this experience is restricted to the real world as a priori. “It is an essential requirement that what exists already *realiter*, but is not yet actually experienced, can come to be given, and that that then means that it belongs to the undetermined but the *determinable* marginal field of my actual experience at the time being.” His thing-experience does thus leave room for possibilities, but these are “*predesignated in accordance with their essential type*.” Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, translated by W. R. B. Gibson, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1931, p. 149.

39 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 143.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 151.

41 Pierre Schaeffer, *In Search of a Concrete Music*, translated by Christine North and John Dack, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2012, p. 8.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

44 Husserl’s epoche or bracketing does not deny the “fact-world,” the scientific context of experience, which remains beyond the brackets; he simply suspends our access to that “fact-world” in order to scrutinize what has been bracketed off through the standards of those sciences. “Our phenomenological

idealism does not deny the positive existence of the real (realen) world and of Nature. [. . .] Its sole task and service is to clarify the meaning of this world, the precise sense in which everyone accepts it, and with undeniable right, as really existing (wirklich seiende).” Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, p. 21.

- 45 In his essay *Cézanne’s Doubt* from 1945, Merleau-Ponty discusses the motivation of Paul Cézanne’s practice to be born out of doubt in the world before him and our mechanisms for its perception (i.e. our perspectival scheme). He describes Cézanne’s artistic processes as a suspension of these habits: “the task before him was, first, to forget all he had ever learned from science and, second, *through* these sciences to recapture the structure of the landscape as an emerging organism.” Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetic Reader*, 3–13, translated by Michael B. Smith, edited by Galen A. Johnson, 2nd edition, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996, p. 67.
- 46 Francisco López sleeve notes from *Through the Looking-Glass*, KAIROS, Germany, 2009.
- 47 Francisco López, interviewed in *In the Field, The Art of Field Recording*, edited by Cathy Lane and Angus Carlyle, Devon, UK: Uniform Books, 2013, pp. 104–5.
- 48 In his book *The Tuning of the World*, R. Murray Schafer develops a glossary of soundscape terminology:
keynote sounds are those sounds of a given place that are essential and even archetypal, they determine our understanding of the place and may even affect our behaviour.
soundmarks are sounds that possess qualities which make them especially noticed.
 R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*. New York: Knopf, 1977, pp. 9–10.
- 49 In a collection of his essays brought together in the book *Sense and Non-Sense* (1964), Merleau-Ponty articulates “non-sense” not in reference to rational sense, as its nonsensical opposite, but as a sense that comes out of “sensation.”
- 50 Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 18.
- 51 “Silence is at once reflective and encompassing: taking into itself all that is audible to echo back to me my own listening engagement. It provides a thick surface in which I hear myself listening to my surroundings, to gain a knowing about these surroundings from myself within them.” Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, p. 89.
- 52 In *Listening to Noise and Silence*, I discuss language, speech, and sociality not as givens, the social infrastructure and lexicon of communication, but as a tendency: an impetus and will towards exchange with no means to ascertain its success.
 This [language] is a bridge without pillars, without an ontological ground on which its words move upwards towards the illumination of meaning. [. . .]
 The connections are tendential, fragile and a matter of my own effort rather than held in the social contract of a lexical semiotico-symbolic relationship. (p. 107)

Chapter two

- 1 Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*. Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 8.
- 2 James McCawley in Ryan, *Possible Worlds*, p. 19.
- 3 The term “sonic fiction” is reached via a different route and crossing different references, but it nevertheless shares in description and conviction with some of Kodwo Eshun’s ideas as articulated in his book *More Brilliant than the Sun*. Like his sonic fiction mine too “. . . lingers lovingly inside a single remix, explores the psychoacoustic fictional spaces of interludes and intros, goes to extremes to extrude the illogic other studies flee. It happily deletes familiar names [. . .] and historical precedence.” My sonic fiction lingers in the illogical found via the body listening rather than in history and canonical names, to ignore “comforting origins and social context” and build contingent ones instead. But it does so via literary evocations and as possible worlds rather than as science fiction. Kodwo Eshun, *More Brilliant Than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, London: Quartet Books, 1998, p. 4.
- 4 Umberto Eco and W. H. Auden outline their sense of literary and artistic possible worlds in their respective texts “Small Worlds” published in *The Limits of Interpretation* (1994) and *Secondary Worlds* (1984).
- 5 Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, p. 21.
- 6 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 143.
- 7 Philosophers of logic do not deal with the worlds themselves but with objects, as abstract entities, posited in world models. Their interest lies in empty modal worlds that serve to explore the possibility and necessity, the ontology, of those entities as counterfactuals. By contrast, I am interested in the fullness of possible worlds, and how they are built by sound, beyond the visible surface, in the invisible materiality of their mobility, which we inhabit in our own sensory-motor action toward them. Thus the worlds are not models, they are, much like the doors of Bourgeois’ cells, not a frame, but are part of the making of the world; they are themselves its substance.
- 8 Rainer Crone and Petrus Graf Schaesberg, *Louise Bourgeois the Secret of the Cells* Munich, London: Prestel, 2011, p. 96.
- 9 “It’s the murmur of the water that sings . . . it’s the murmur of the water that fills me with joy, . . .”
- 10 “Going around the house does me a lot of good . . . it’s the kettle that whispers and shares with me its secrets, it’s the kettle that shivers, that hums, that purrs, that whistles . . . and won’t tell me its secrets . . . and shares with me all its secrets.”
- 11 Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, translated by Margaret Waller, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 102.
- 12 Bourgeois’ *Femme Maison*, a drawing done between 1946 and 1947 of a woman’s lower body exposed and naked while her torso and head is trapped in a house, is revisited in this chant. The drawing, a recurring theme, fixes tiny arms and confines the head, arresting creativity and intellect in the prison of the house. By contrast, this song, from 2002, 55 years later, is the

breath that runs through the body enjoying the house, “qui me fait beaucoup de bien” . . . “which does me a lot of good.”

- 13 Ryan, *Possible Worlds*, p. 5.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 16 Lewis’ possible world theory proposes an indexical actuality: “I suggest that ‘actual’ and its cognates should be analyzed as *indexical* terms: terms whose reference varies, depending on relevant features of the context of utterance.” This approach is difficult for some other logicians, notably Rescher, because it means to abandon the notion of a privileged ontology of one actual world and accept in its place “indexical terms depending for their reference respectively on the place, the speaker, the intended audience, the speaker’s acts of pointing, . . .” David K. Lewis, “Anselm and Actuality,” *Noûs*, 4(2) (May 1970), pp. 184–5.
 For sound, for a sonic sensibility, an indexical possibilia is interesting as it is exactly the absence of a singular ontology, replaced by an inhabited and present action of listening that allows a sonic aesthetic to articulate a different materiality, reality, and truth.
- 17 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 41. I understand this uniqueness of the world not as an acquiescence with a unique singular actual and logical world, but with the uniqueness of a perceptual world that is always contingent, made up as it is of temporary negotiations of private life-worlds.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 21 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, translated by James M. Edie, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964, p. 25.
- 22 Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 18.
- 23 W. H. Auden, *Secondary Worlds*, London: Faber and Faber, 1984, p. 79.
- 24 Sleeve Notes from Francis Dhomont, *Forêt profonde*, empreintes DIGITales, IMED 9634, Canada, 1996.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 For René Descartes the essence of the subject consists only of thought. It exists as a “thinking thing,” whose body is close by, but does not impact on this pre-eminence of thought. René Descartes, *Meditations*, translated by Desmond M. Clarke, London: Penguin Books, 2000, pp. 71–2.
- 27 “It is the phantasm that gives me hope.” Lyric *Forêt profonde*. Francis Dhomont, 1996.
- 28 This fixedfluidity is not a term of contradiction or paradox but describes the critical equivalence between spatial and temporal processes in sound: extending each other to produce place as timespace.
- 29 Lyric *Forêt profonde*, Francis Dhomont, 1996.
- 30 The correspondence theory of truth defines truth as corresponding to a fact, and describes it as relational to reality. “Thus a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact.” Bernhard Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971 [orig. 1912], p. 129.
- 31 Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, p. 41.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

- 33 Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 3–20.
- 34 Pascal Engel is one of those voices writing against the decoupling of truth and reality. In his conversation with Richard Rorty, he expresses his fear that the abandonment of truth as a notion of reality will eliminate its importance as a virtue. Richard Rorty and Pascal Engel, *What's the Use of Truth?* edited by Patrick Savidan, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 26–8.
- 35 “. . . a psychological truth.” Lyric *Forêt profonde*, Francis Dhomont, 1996.
- 36 This is the “trembling life,” which, in *The World of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty attributes to those paintings that seek not to capture a geometrical perspective but produce “a world in which being is not given but emerges over time” (p. 41).
- 37 Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, pp. 10–11.
- 38 Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” in *New French Feminisms*, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (pp. 245–64), Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1981, p. 258.
- Against these masculine investments and frameworks of institutions, Cixous encourages woman to write. To write in public not in secret, not to feel ashamed but . . . “Write! and your self-seeking text will know itself better than flesh and blood, rising, insurrectionary dough kneading itself, with sonorous, perfumed ingredients, a lively combination of flying colors, leaves, and rivers plunging into the sea we feed” (*Ibid.*, p. 260).
- 39 Doris Salcedo’s work *Sibboleth*, a crack in the concrete floor running the whole length of the Turbine Hall was shown as part of The Unilever Series, at Tate Modern between October 2007 and April 2008.

Chapter three

- 1 Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, p. 22.
- 2 In response to G. W. F. Hegel’s objective idealism, the sublimation of opposites and differences into one total and ideal truth, in *Listening to Noise and Silence*, I worked with the idea of the subjective ideality of my innovative listening producing my contingent conviction, fleeting and ephemeral, generating a truth for me from the invisible of sound. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, pp. 107–8.
- 3 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 37.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 38–9.
- 5 David K. Lewis purports a radical realism for which philosophy sacrifices ontology and gains the paradise of boundless possible worlds. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, p. 4.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 93–5.
- 7 This is the last page from the score of *This has already had a history (0)* which is available in its entirety at ideasattachedtoobjects.blogspot.com/2011/10/this-has-already-had-history-0.html, accessed November 7, 2013.
- 8 “Listening to sound is where objectivity and subjectivity meet, in the experience of our own generative perception we produce the objectivity from

- our subjective and particular position of listening.” Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, p. 14.
- 9 This is an abridged version of the Swiss myth “Die Teufelsbrücke in Uri” (my translation). It can be found in full in *Schweizer Fabeln und Heldengeschichten*, edited by Meinrad Lienart, Germany: Marixverlag, 2006, pp. 72–4.
 - 10 Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, pp. 162–3.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 166.
 - 14 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 131. Merleau-Ponty’s intertwining still leaves a gap, a temporal and spatial chasm, however small, between my left hand and my right hand, between the toucher and the touched, the seer and the seen. The size of this gap is a matter of degree rather than of kind, and thus the principle of the chasm still determines the intertwining.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 133.
 - 17 Listening teenagers are like Adorno’s empirical subjects. They are not always already deformed into the rationality and abstraction of a current society, architecture and infrastructure. They relate to space through their contingent experience of it rather than through its transcendental function and purpose, and so they formlessly form contingent paths. However, the formlessness of their paths, their invisibility in relation to the map, grants them a less influential place in the social totality. Adorno, “Subject and Object,” p. 141.
 - 18 Peter Weibel 2013, quoted at <http://artvantage.collectorsystems.com/public/20/18>, accessed October 7, 2013.
 - 19 *Ibid.*
 - 20 Lyrics from Shilpa Gupta’s website <http://shilpagupta.com/pages/2010/10ikeepfalling.htm>, accessed November 4, 2013.
 - 21 This honey recalls Merleau-Ponty’s association of the complex unity of perception with the act of being honeyed and articulates the intersubjective embrace of hearing sound. Shilpa Gupta’s installation produces this honeyed listening and reminds us of the reciprocity of sound. Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 41.
 - 22 Aristotle’s idea of entelechy, the soul, or vital function, which realizes the full potential of the thing, articulates this purpose. It moves what is merely potential into actuality:

The present account [of the soul] meets this condition, as it is the nature of the entelechy of each thing to be in what is potentially it and in its own matter. It is clear then from all this that the soul is a kind of actuality and account of that which has the potentiality to be of the appropriate kind.

Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred, London: Penguin Classics, 1986, pp. 161–2.
 - 23 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, translated by Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987, p. 106.

Chapter four

- 1 The profession is, in fact, allowed to define the very standards by which its superior competence is judged. Professional autonomy allows the experts to select almost at will the inputs they will receive from the laity. Their autonomy thus tends to insulate them: in part professionals live in the ideologies of their own creation, which they present to the outside as the most valid definitions of specific spheres of social reality.
Margalli Sarfati Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism*, Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1977, p. xiii.
- 2 Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, p. 20.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 4 Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, collected writings of Morton Feldman, edited by B. H. Friedman, Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 2000, p. 3.
- 5 John Cage, "The Future of Music: Credo," in *Silence, Lectures and Writings* (pp. 3–7), London: Marion Boyars, 1995, p. 3.
- 6 Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, p. 20.
- 7 "The term *emancipation of the dissonance* refers to its comprehensibility, which is considered equivalent to the consonance's comprehensibility. A style based on this premise treats dissonances like consonances and renounces a tonal centre." Arnold Schönberg, *Style and Idea* (1950), New York: Philosophical Library, 2010, p. 105.
- 8 Schönberg works from the "Grundgestalt," the basic dodecaphonic composition, through inversion and reversion, to produce his work.
- 9 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 147.
- 10 First line of the male vocal.
- 11 Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, p. 73.
- 12 The term music carries with it a privileged actuality over other sound making possibilities. It carries a value and meaning beyond the individual work affiliated to its discipline and in turn gives the individual work situated within its discipline status and intelligibility. However, if we follow David K. Lewis' radical realism, then every sonic work is a possible world, none is granted an advantaged position within the universe of sonic worlds, and it is only our contingent listening that prioritizes one, temporarily, as actual.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 14 Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, p. 25.
- 15 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 37.
- 16 Morton Feldman talking to John Cage in 1950 about a String Quartet. Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, p. 4.
- 17 "The work creates as work a world. The work keeps open the opening of the world." Martin Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2008, p. 41 (my translation). Heidegger goes on to qualify this world and what it does by stating: "World is not the simple collection of existing, countable or not countable, known and unknown things. World is also not simply an imagined frame added to the sum of the existing. *World worlds* (generates world) and it is more Being (Seiender) than the graspable

- and the appreciable wherein we believe ourselves at home.” Ibid., pp. 40–1 (my translation). His notion of world, while useful to appreciate the work as an opening of the material, sits on a ground: the earth, ontology and history, of a particular people, “eines geschichtlichen Volkes,” of a historical people. By contrast, the opening of sound as Klang rather than as tone, and our openness to its primordially, eschews ontology and sits not on a certain earth but is the invisible mobility beneath it.
- 18 Ibid., p. 42.
 - 19 “The colour glows and wants to simply glow. If we measure it scientifically and fragment it in frequencies, it is gone. It shows itself only, if it remains unrecovered and unexplained.” Ibid., p. 43 (my translation).
 - 20 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 37.
 - 21 Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, pp. 40–1.
 - 22 Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, London: Stagbooks, Sheed and Ward, 1994, p. 30.
 - 23 This piece is a 6-minute interlude from Beyer’s unfinished opera *Status Quo*.
 - 24 “The world grounds itself on the earth and earth penetrates the world.” Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, p. 46 (my translation). The distinction between earth and world is important in this context. The word *Erde* is earth, as well as planet, while the word *Welt* refers to world as an organized civilization. *Erde* is the earthy, clammy, natural, material of the ground we stand on and holds this connotation of a ground while at the same time pointing to a wider planetary system within which the world is one organized civilization. For Heidegger there is a dialectical and conflictual relationship between those two concepts that is overcome in the artwork.
 - 25 This point is interesting in relation to Beyer’s own biography. She left Germany in 1928 and had, according to her own account, no family in the United States nor made any efforts to keep any contact with any family she might still have had back home. Her own groundlessness, the non-ontology of her own life enables her to invent herself and her work away from the classical training received in her homeland into a music that explores what else it could be. Interesting is also that the text *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* in which Heidegger explains the relationship of the work to the world and the work to the earth was first given as a talk in 1935, demonstrating clearly the *Zeitgeist* of a much more earth, ground, ontology, and place bound philosophy in Germany at the time. For Heidegger art is dependent on a historical people, ein historisches Volk, and eine Heimat, the ground of home, to find its real articulation; Beyer leaves hers to be able to articulate herself.
 - 26 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 41.
 - 27 Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, p. 3.
 - 28 Ibid., p. 22.
 - 29 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 41.
 - 30 The production of this work as it is discussed here was directed by Dan Ayling.
 - 31 Claudia Molitor quoted in press release for the event.
 - 32 Claudia Molitor, an unpublished talk given at Kent University in 2013.

- 33 These are not anecdotes about composers, whose use within music education Schönberg bemoans. Rather this is the anecdote of my own listening, of hearing one's own story rather than that of a ratified history. Schönberg, *Style and Idea* (1950), p. 38.
- 34 "If only there were peace, utter peace . . ." (Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Book of Hours* (1989), translated by Susan Ranson, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008).
- 35 "Strange, to wander in the fog / Each bush and stone stands alone / No tree sees the next one / Each is alone" (Hermann Hesse, *Im Nebel* from *Unterwegs* (1911), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 517, Germany: Surhkamp, 1958, translated by Scott Horton, Harpers Magazine blog, September 22, 2007, <http://harpers.org/blog/2007/09/hesses-in-the-fog>).
- 36 "Strange to wander in the fog / To live is to be alone / No man knows the next man / Each is alone" (ibid.).
- 37 "How my dreams call for you . . ." Rilke, *Wie mein Träume nach dir schreien* (1897) (own translation).
- 38 Molitor, an unpublished talk given at Kent University in 2013.
- 39 ". . . nothing but this wide white stillness, in which my hopeless desire listens in breathless disquiet." Rilke, *Wie mein Träume nach dir schreien* (1897) (own translation).
- 40 As part of his solo show *30 Minutes of Listening* at IMT Gallery in London, Mark Peter Wright instructs us, on an A4 sheet of paper, hung at the very back of the Gallery, to do 30 minutes of listening to our own environment.
- 41 In *Listening to Noise and Silence*, I work with the idea of an "ethics of participation" to describe a sonic ethics that is not bound to rules or cultural codes but negotiated in the contingent engagement with the work in listening. "In other words the ethical dimension of art concerns the responsibility of the audience to engage in the work's affective production and to produce their own emotions that reveal to each listener her own ethicality." Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, p. 182.

Chapter five

- 1 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, pp. 38–9.
- 2 Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, p. 25.
- 3 Michel de Certeau's "Wandersmänner," the pedestrians "down below," construct the city with their footsteps: their movements generating a temporal and invisible urban text, a mapping rather than a map; producing a passing place from invisible trajectories. His "blind" city is produced on the sidewalks, below the World Trade Centre but above ground. "Walking in the City," p. 93. Kubisch's electronic walks go deeper than de Certeau's audible "down below" to reach under the surface of those blind trajectories an inaudible "beneath" that creates their possibility: beneath the audible paths lies the possible impossible, which inaudibly creates our environment and directs how we walk and live in it.
- 4 Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 24.

- 5 In his “London Review of Books” essay about *Naming and Necessity* from 1980, Richard Rorty suggests that Kripke’s realist philosophy appears initially as a naïve view that considers the essence, or what Aristotle terms the soul of the things, the way things are in themselves, their immanence, which is understood by contemporary philosophy of language as an unreflective view. However, he goes on to elaborate the radical challenge Kripke articulates for the language of philosophy, robbing it of its status of first philosophy by guiding us ironically via a “Gothic” metaphysics, toward a pragmatic consideration of the world, rather than its language. Rorty, “Kripke versus Kant,” *London Review of Books*, 2(17) (September 4, 1980), 2.
- 6 Ruth Ronen, “Possible Worlds beyond the Truth Principle,” in *Fabula, La Recherche en Littérature (Atelier)*, April 6, 2006, online journal, p. 1, accessed August 9, 2013.
- 7 Daniel Nolan, “Impossible Worlds: A Modest Approach,” *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 38(4) (Fall 1997), 554.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 545.
- 9 Sounds from Beneath is a project by Mikhail Karikis, with a video by Mikhail Karikis and Uriel Orlow.

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