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**Hearing on the Verge: Cuing and Aligning with the Movement of the Audible**

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'Hearing on the verge: cuing and aligning with the movement of the audible'

We engage the sonic-landscape by recording and listening in movement. Within the specificity of place, (of Basel and the Hague) recording converges with time and the qualities of the audible, opening to new attunements and techniques of listening. As we relay the sound across our respective urban ecologies we cue and align in an emergent counter-point that connects cities, rhythms, qualities and audibilities.

Recording and listening in movement links a plurality of sounds (sounds in place and in time) into new continuities and convergences. In the moving and listening, fidelity is no longer a capturing of objective sound but a dance with record-ability. Within this dynamism, the recording device becomes an intercessor with which to re-hear and re-encounter the listening body in movement. Put otherwise, the process of recording intercedes tendencies of moving and hearing.

In emergent listening, there is a synthesis between the immediacy of listening in the present and the embodied past. Deleuze relates: 'the thousands of habits that compose us, our contradictions, thoughts, pretensions, presumptions, satisfactions, fatigues and variable presents—form the base domain of passive synthesis' (1968, 107 my translation). So movement becomes audible, both in the movements of the body through space-time and in the dynamics of hearing with the inhabited past-ness of the body.

What's more, listening while recording opens to undetermined differentials of hearing and non-hearing. William James' affirms the dynamism of sensing with the body. James states 'denoting definitely felt transitions, lies all that the knowing of a percept by an idea can possibly contain or signify' (James 1904). The audible is then always situated in the experiential, in the inhabited. To describe this phenomenon, David Ellison raises the example of the audibility of a buzzing light, which is often only experientially audible in the moment when it stops buzzing (pause). In Ellison's words 'we notice what we need or desire to know and negate the perceptibility of the which fails to meet these criteria' (Ellison 2012, 136–7).

Brian Massumi clarifies the conceptual importance of understanding movement as emergent embodiment and not merely as the displacement of static bodies and positions. Positions can be easily mapped or plotted on a grid, accounting for multiplicity and displacement but not qualitative transformation. In motion, the potential of the body unfolds in variation; it 'does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation' (Massumi 2002, 3-4).

If we take this notion of the transitional body seriously, then the qualities of the recording, or the recorded trace in audible space-time, is distinct from the *experience* of hearing. Recording in with movements through space-time, and movements of hearing, is then a double process, consisting of both tracing sound, and of inhabiting ways of hearing. While the recorded trace and the experience of hearing do not coincide, recording in movement does open to new ways of feeling and moving with the intensities and qualities of the audible, inciting new inhabitable refrains. Manning might call this

emergence of the inhabitable *'the shape shifting of the interval'* or the intensive emergence between tracings. Importantly, it is this intensive movement between that 'returns as a refrain' (Manning 2011, 23).

For example, sounds become soft, smooth and fast as they merge with space, time and inhabited memory. The affects of affinity or familiarity might congeal into a way of feeling closeness, firmness and tangibility of sound, whereas affects of disorientation and chaos might create a charge of sonic disintegration (Woolf). These qualitative dynamics affirm that sounds are affective and that the body activates a kind of resistance that refuses pre-given categories and positions, but instead charges sound with emergent tonality.

Listening in the recording, in movement, is thus intensive. This intensity can perhaps be described as the convergence of sound and the body in the groping with and across the multiplicity of hearing. The intensity can perhaps be described as a scaling both inward and outward with the body, a meeting of new ways of entering into hearing. This intensity can perhaps be described as a new continuity between the qualities of sound with seeing, feeling, smelling, touching and remembering. This intensity can perhaps be described in the way the audible becomes newly textured, thick, smooth, dense and differentiated within the specific immediacy of its articulation.

The issue, then, is not to counter-pose movement and stasis in hearing, since hearing is always mobile. Instead, it concerns tracing or mapping emergent listening in movement, space and time. The following examples describe the way that new attunements coincide with audible rhythms, qualities, continuities and relays, new sensitizations and desires, but also new listening choreographies.

1. In the walking through space, the brushing of clothing and of footsteps becomes an audible registration. The consistent pace of walking generates different durations of passing sound, making nearness, loudness and sound quality hear-able relative to the spacing in walking. In this dynamic audibility, space punctuates the interval between steps with off-beats, or fills the interval with approaching sonic tonality. Walking rhythms converge with the hearing of moments of impassioned, patient, difficult and frustrated speaking, of distant bells ringing and resonating in waves with the wind, of wind tunnelling through streets, then being punctuated with stillness in the turning around a corner, of carnival troupes tunnelling the sound of piccolos and snare drums through the streets.

While walking, *the approach of the beautifully distinct swishing sound of nylon sleeves swishing against nylon sides, first as a rhythmic off-beat. Then the audibility of my own rhythms (woollen sleeves brushing against woollen sides) converges with the regular movement of the nylon body briskly swishing from behind, then overtaking the brushing wool. as the swishing and brushing bodies regain their distance, the sound of walking fabrics again separates into distinctive beats.*

2. In the hearing of the recording there is also a hearing of movement through space with the qualities of surfaces, with their sonic textures resonating in air, under bridges, through

streets. The soundings echo, sweep over street surfaces, drain covers and cobbles. The qualities and density of surfaces are also hear-able under the heavy flow of water into drains, or its variable lightness when dripping down from the stacked levels of aluminum scaffolding.

*The wheels' of suitcases continuous contact with surfaces articulates their cracks, textures and densities. The way the rolling wheels register surface texture reminds of knocking on drywall to hear where the wall is hollow. As movements get low to the ground the registration becomes more nuanced. But the sounds dissipate when oncoming traffic closes off the physical space with which I inhabit the listening. But in the listening of the recorded sound, the textures of the pavement that were so delicately articulated in the physical closeness of hearing, smooth out and remind of the groaning, mundane sound of passing trucks. Then, an attunement to the sound of car engines - belts moving over motors and tires rolling over bridges, the streetcar bending and screeching over smooth metal rails.*

3. The emergent attunements in the listening with recording while walking, incites the desire to follow particular sounds, to double back and rehear, to vary movement trajectories through a particular sonic milieu so that new dynamics of audibility in movement become hear-able:

Doubling-back to hear the movements of crates sliding against the sandy floor of an open van. Or, repeatedly walking through an automatic sliding door to hear what it is like to pass through the door... but also to slide over the door's tracks. In the listening, a waltz of lifting the recording to bring hearing closer to the sliding mechanism, then bringing it down again to pass through the door, then a turning pivot and re-lifting to hear the closing sliding of the opposite opening.

Then, listening pulls me into following the passing sound of a pair of jeans rubbing against inner thighs. Then of a purse, a cable or paper bags crinkling against the thumping force of a walking gait, or the crinkling sound of a hand reaching into a small paper bag in search of a snack. This is an attunement with the rhythms and durations of audible intimacy, or the way that hearing is also an entering into new proximities, into nearly touchable and smell-able closeness within the immediate textures of the sonic ecology.

4. In recording with the sound and with wind, one hears the way air is pushed around in small breath-like movements, which are sometimes so subtle that they are only felt in the hearing. On this verge of sensibility, the skin bares and thins—the skin becomes a dynamic membrane with which to register the sonic qualities of air. In tending with these subtle, sonic registrations of air pressure in the hearing, one feels the viscosity of air, the way it is stirred, swallowed and waded through.

Heavy doors close and push into their frames, into latches, pressing a single wave of air down echoey corridors. The recording registers a small exhale of wind amidst the

otherwise heavy, resonant expanse. Then, the pressing of air in speaking, through words, over the tongue - (and then breathy speaking).

The pathways of roads and corridors that map and prescribe trajectories through space lose their force of extensive continuity, or the authority with which they delineate space and script direction and position within it. Places are felt in the immediacy and intensity of sonic consistency.

4. In continuous movement with recording, the continuities of listening intensify. The way a door slides in its tracks, then into and across three doors or ten weighs on hearing. Doors slide into each other: a soft brush against glass, then metal, then plastic. Then the doors slide into voices, the flow of water, the feeling of stones against the soles of shoes as they clack against asphalt, carpet and linoleum. Hear-able surfaces get closer, nearer and touchable and simultaneously more distant rough and soft. The soundings of movements through Basel merge and meet with the pavements of The Hague and through doors across both cities—an audibly seamless portal through time-space, an opening that moves across cities ... but also across the hearing attunements of another inhabited body.

Conclusion: In the dynamic, cuing aligning in the movement of listening, hearing becomes a process of rendering the body, of gathering hearing with the rhythms, refrains and qualities of embodiment. Hearing in movement intensifies the verge of the audible—it opens hearing to incipient audibility. Erin Manning states: 'to choreograph is to hold incipency to measure' (Manning 2009, 17). To hold incipency to measure is to hold relation in a relation of holding, in suspension—or to open ways of thinking with the experience of relation and of its variation (Manning 2013, 41). Manning considers this attunement with relations to be the very craft of choreography. For Manning, choreography crafts relations, the attunement *with* relations (Manning 2013, 76). Listening in movement is then choreographic in that it crafts relations of the body with different activations of the audible, or the way that moving and listening in recording open to ways of making the qualities of sound feel-able, touchable and thinkable.

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