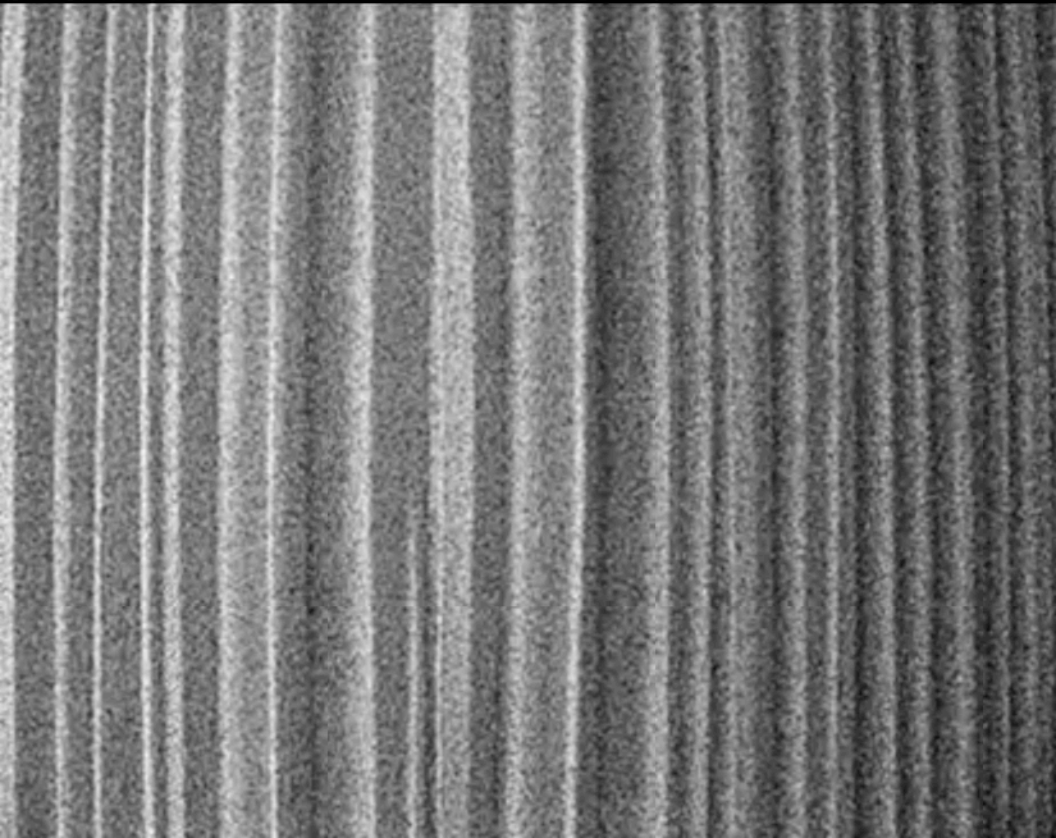


# A Sanctuary of Sounds

Andreas Burckhardt



# A SANCTUARY OF SOUNDS



# A Sanctuary of Sounds

Andreas Burckhardt



dead letter office

**BABEL Working Group**

punctum books ★ brooklyn, ny



A SANCTUARY OF SOUNDS  
© Andreas Burckhardt, 2013.



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

This work is Open Access, which means that you are free to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work as long as you clearly attribute the work to the authors, that you do not use this work for commercial gain in any form whatsoever, and that you in no way alter, transform, or build upon the work outside of its normal use in academic scholarship without express permission of the author and the publisher of this volume. For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work.

First published in 2012 by  
dead letter office, BABEL Working Group  
an imprint of punctum books  
Brooklyn, New York

The **BABEL Working Group** is a collective and desiring-assemblage of scholar-gypsies with no leaders or followers, no top and no bottom, and only a middle. BABEL roams and stalks the ruins of the post-historical university as a multiplicity, a pack, looking for other roaming packs with which to cohabit and build temporary shelters for intellectual vagabonds. We also take in strays.

ISBN-13: 978-0615814872  
ISBN-10: 0615814875

Editorial-Creative Team: Noelle Norris + Carrie Smith

To Friederike, My *Juliette*, My Wife.

Oh! What a picture! Almighty God, what a strange medley of hardness and mad unbridled lust! It seemed as if the Supreme Being, during the first of such circumstances in my life, wished to imprint eternally on my soul an image of all the horror I ought to feel for the kind of crime, or sin, which so often has its genesis in an abundance of evils similar to those with which I was threatened . . .

– Marquis de Sade, *Justine*

If the way I have shown to lead to these things now seems very hard, still, it can be found. And of course, what is found so rarely must be hard. For if salvation were at hand, and could be found without great effort, how could nearly everyone neglect it? But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.

– Spinoza, *Ethics*

Oh baby I am writing it all down, transcribing it all. My hands are shaking and sweating. I feel so cold inside you touch my fear. All white And black. My Queenbee—your stings they hurt so bad. Your thorns do pierce my skin and scar. Holes in my flesh filled by you in ways I could not wish for, hope for. All the goddamn goddancers spinning around your nest. They drive me insane. An orgy! I want them! Sting me fill me hurt me depraved. My heart is hitting against my chest so hard I can hardly write this. Make it the best story ever—Fever—it already is. Give me my blackest death and set us free. My Murder My Holocaust. Freedom is gold.

## Foreword.

Above all the acoustic park should be kept simple, and it is for this reason that its chief adornment may be nothing more than the Temple of Silence, a building with no other purpose other than meditation.

– R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape:  
Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of  
the World*

Be a hydro-leak engineer; make things leak out.

– Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia:  
Complicity with Anonymous Materials*

Raping a Rape—crossbreeding soil for The Soniferous  
Garden. Senses deranged—naked and cut.





# **A Sanctuary of Sounds**

There is only one question: When will I be blown up?

– William Faulkner, Nobel Prize speech

Basel, 2011 – New York, 2013



## **Thirty-one.**

She seemed to follow with her eyes the waves of music to dissolve into the dying brasses across the pool and the opposite semicircle of trees where at somber intervals the dead and tranquil queens in stained marble mused and on into the sky lying prone and vanquished in the embrace of the season of rain and death. In the pavilion a band in the horizon blue of the army played Massenet and Scriabin and Berlioz like a thin coating of tortured Tschaikovsky on a slice of stale bread while the twilight dissolved in wet gleams from the branches onto the pavilion and the somber toadstools of umbrellas Rich and resonant the brasses crashed and died in the thick green twilight rolling over them in rich sad waves. and in the sad gloom of the chestnut trees the dry click of balls the random shouts of children had that quality of autumn gallant and evanescent and forlorn. Psssst he said the sound cutting sharp into the drone of the minister's voice psssst. After a while the minister heard him rise and cross the floor then return to the coat. All the morning the turnkey heard his voice raised in pleading and anger and expostulation by

noon he was hoarse his voice not much louder than a whisper. After a while the turnkey went away quietly. like he might be listening to a song he was too lazy to like or dislike and the Court telling him on what day they were going to break his neck. the lawyer babbled. he looked back at them in a slow silence. He heard doors clash Now and then he heard voices from the other cells somewhere down the corridor a negro was singing. quiet. shrieking while the shouting face of the grandmother vanished into the smoke. three alarms. fire alarm. he would come roaring into the house at dinner on Sunday. he didn't ring the foot-bell when the trolley passed. He would ring the foot-bell.

## **Thirty.**

he heard the wire die. Little B's voice was breathless controlled cool discreet detached. Little B's voice said thin and faint again Horace heard them scuffling a breathless interval. her voice came back thin and faint. The wire answered. in the voice of a reclining person. he said quietly. I heard.



## **Twenty-nine.**

Horace couldn't hear them he couldn't hear the man who had got burned screaming. He couldn't hear the fire though it still swirled upward unabated as though it were living upon itself and soundless a voice of fury like in a dream roaring silently out of a peaceful void. but he could not hear the voices. but from the central mass of fire there came no sound at all. he could hear panting shouts. then he heard the sound of the fire the furious sound of gasoline. he heard beyond a door a voice. It was not a sound Horace heard now it was something in the air which the sound of the running feet died into. he heard someone pass under the window running The runner's feet sounded louder than a horse echoing across the empty square the peaceful hours given to sleeping. He heard the clock strike twelve. and one wing of the building rising above the quiet and empty square. Then the square was quiet The clock struck eleven. listen to the man in shirt sleeves. There is too much talk Noise. he began to hear the the sound the voices. his sister said quite gently.





## **Twenty-eight.**

shhhhhhhh. The child made a fretful sound whimpering. in a long sigh. The room breathed a buzzing sound like a wind getting up. slow whisper of collars. a thin clash. The room expelled its breath sucked it quickly in and expelled it again. He walked steadily up the aisle in a slow expulsion of silence like a prolonged sigh. slow hissing of collars. you have listened to this horrible this unbelievable story which this young girl has told. The room sighed a long hissing breath. The room sighed its collective breath hissing in the musty silence. a scarce distinguishable voice.



## **Twenty-seven.**

beyond the window beneath the unhurried pigeons the bailiff's voice still droned reiterant importunate and detached though the sound of the bell had ceased. From beyond the balcony window where the sound of the bell seemed to be and where beneath the eaves the guttural pigeons crooned the voice of the bailiff came. rising out of and sinking back into a hollow rumble of feet in the corridor below and on the stairs. The hum of the voices and movements came back upon the steady draft which blew through the door. Overhead the clock was striking nine. The bell was already ringing. he said quietly. who had sat so quiet. talking quietly. ceased snoring. I sat there with the music playing and all. never heard. snoring regularly. he whispered. Outside the clock struck twelve. he whispered. He was snoring a little. she whispered. Horace whispered. the glazed paper crackling faintly. she whispered. They spoke in whispers. Moving quietly. Horace whispered. she whispered. The child whimpered stirred. The clock above the square struck nine and then ten. A shrill voice shouted something he waited a moment he was about to knock again when he heard the voice

again shrill and wild and faint as though from a distance like a reedy pipe buried by an avalanche. He leaned toward him and whispered. the other sat quietly. Twice G tried to interrupt and was silenced by the Court. the wire clicked in his ear. He heard the receiver click Yet the disconnection was not made at once He heard the receiver thud onto the table where the telephone sat and he could hear Miss R shouting for Minnie. Her voice was thin harsh over the wire.

## **Twenty-six.**

her voice tranquil without threat. her tone cold and level. he lowered his voice a little. feeling quiet and empty for the first time.



## **Twenty-five.**

they could hear Minnie's voice lifted in adjuration. making a kind of whinnying sound. She'd hear them quarreling. Miss L made a faint clucking sound with her tongue. They were all talking at once again in half-completed sentences but without pauses for agreement or affirmation. she said raising her voice. They murmured ceremoniously. The dog's head snapped around its teeth clicking. the woman with the handkerchief began to weep aloud. Again they assailed her with snapping eagerness again she flung them back against the wall in muted thuds. Beyond the house door the dogs set up a falsetto uproar. a voice shouted. The orchestra had ceased and were now climbing onto their chairs with their instruments. The orchestra was playing It was immediately drowned in a sudden pandemonium of chairs and screams. the woman cursing shrilly. she shouted. In the main room a male quartet engaged from a vaudeville house was singing They were singing mother songs in close harmony they sang Sonny Boy The weeping was general among the older women Crying The orchestra played again. the woman in red shrieked. in a broken voice. the



proprietor shouted. they shouted. he shouted. As though swept upon a brassy blare of music. Ra-a-ay-y-y-y they shouted clashing their cups drowning all save the pantomime as G knocked the bowl of fruit from the waiter's hand and fell again to dumping raw liquor into the bowl splashing it into and upon the extended hands and cups. The two youths opened bottles furiously. shouting monotonously. rich blare of the cornet. weeping quietly. The cornetist rose and played In That Haven of Rest in solo. he shouted. the music stopped. Shhhhhhhh voices said. The orchestra played Nearer My God To Thee the audience grew quiet. the women were beginning to talk a little shrilly. The proprietor and a second man were conferring with the leader. From the dancehall came a strain of music. he resumed his harsh monologue. in a harsh voice. The room began to hum with shrill hushed talk. with a hushed macabre air a little febrile.

## **Twenty-four.**

she opened her mouth to scream. The music was playing. She began to grind against him dragging at his head murmuring to him in parrotlike underworld epithet. She strained her mouth toward him dragging his head down making a whimpering moan. With her hips grinding against him her mouth gaping in straining protrusion bloodless she began to speak. She began to say Ah-ah-ah-ah in expiring voice her body arching slowly backward as though faced by an exquisite torture. the music swirling slowly about her in a bright myriad wave. feeling the desire going over her in wave after wave involved with music and with the smell of her own flesh. She could hear herself shouting to the dice. She was rolling them winning the counters were piling up in front of her as Popeye drew them in coaching her correcting her in his soft querulous voice. her body following the music without hearing the tune for a time. Then she became aware that the orchestra was playing the same tune as when R was asking her to dance. She could hear herself saying I hope it has. A voice began to buzz faintly at her hearing then Popeye was gripping her wrist shaking it and she

found that her mouth was open and that she must have been making a noise of some sort with it. The music started again. He said in a level tone. One of them at the other table hissed through his teeth. she whispered. she whispered. she whispered. When the music ceased she had another drink. The music started. She began to laugh shrilly. She could hear the vertebrae grating faintly together and his voice cold and still. she cried. Behind her the music beat sultry evocative filled with movement of feet the voluptuous hysteria of muscles warming the scent of flesh of the blood. a sultry burst of music came. she said in a muffled voice. she said in a voice small and faint with self-pity. She began to cry quietly. She whimpered. Temple began to whimper moaning behind his hand drooling upon his fingers. with breaks squealing. a policeman shouted. cold soft voice. no sound. He made no movement spoke no word. She descended swiftly and silently. She could hear voices. her eyes focusing into blank pinheads at every sound on the stairs. listening to every sound on the stairs. listening. she heard Minnie mount the stairs. Minnie lifted her voice again. Temple sat up her head turned aside as though she were listening fingering with deft habitude at her hair. She rose quietly and went to the door and

listened again. in thuds and splintering crashes. The house was utterly quiet with that quality as of spent breathing. beating her hands silently together. She made no sound. Temple leaned silently.



## **Twenty-three.**

far beneath she could hear the faint furious uproar of the shucks. toward a crescendo like held breath an interval in which she would swing faintly and lazily in nothingness filled with pale myriad of points of light. the blackness streaming in rigid thread overhead a roar of iron wheels in her ears. The voice of the night insects whatever it was had followed them into the house. the man speaking in a low tone unprintable epithet after epithet in a caressing whisper. The insects had fallen to a slow monotonous pitch everywhere nowhere spent as though the sound were the chemical agony of the world left stark and dying above the tide-edge of the fluid in which it lived and breathed. thinking of a gentle dark wind blowing in the long corridors of sleep of lying beneath a low cozy roof under the long sound of the rain the evil the injustice the tears. I could hear the shucks. It made a kind of plopping sound like blowing a little rubber tube wrong-side outward. And I'd lie there with the shucks laughing at me. the shucks began to make so much noise it was like laughing. She could hear the blood in her veins and the little muscles at the corner of her eyes

crackling faintly wider and wider. listening to the  
shucks and hearing the darkness full of movement.  
I'd hear them getting drunk on the porch. I could  
still hear them. when I breathed I could still hear  
them. whenever I breathed I'd hear those shucks. I  
never did hear one in the house. listening to the men  
on the porch. talking at the top of the unstirring  
ridge. learning to be deaf. the general tone of the bed  
unbroken. He sat quietly. He heard her speak to  
Minnie in the hall then he heard her toil up the  
stairs. And that's the last time he's even rung the  
bell until tonight. moaning to himself like the wind  
in a chimney. without no noise. now and then voices  
came and went. in a penetrant undertone. someone  
called his name

.

## **Twenty-two.**

somewhere a whippoorwill called reiterant tremulous plaintful above the insects. The man sounded as though he was breathing in Horace's ear a placid gross sound suddenly portentous somehow. He could hear the gross breathing of the man. whispering. The victrola blared faint far away. the telephone shrilled into the quiet where he sat reading one evening he thought it was Narcissa until across a remote blaring of victrola or radio music a man's voice spoke in a guarded tomblike tone. screamed invective at them in her cracked voice.





## **Twenty-one.**

Virgil said. They could hear music inside and shrill voices and feet. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. whispering. Virgil said in a sullen voice. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. In bed in the dark they could still hear the piano. The piano was going full blast. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. he would lie beside the steadily snoring Virgil his ears strained for the murmurs the whispers of silk. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said his voice already dull with sleep. he whispered. He began to hear sounds in the house voices laughter a mechanical piano began to play. in a murmur of silk in panting whispers the apotheosis of his youth assumed a thousand avatars. the strange bed the room and the voices. They could hear the city evocative and strange imminent and remote threat and promise both a deep steady sound upon which invisible lights glittered and wavered. breathed harshly. they could hear the dogs behind her. He rang the bell. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil said. he whispered. On the street more cabmen barked. Virgil said. Virgil said. Virgil

said. Virgil said. Virgil said nothing. ceased talking and began to grow quieter and quieter while on the contrary his companion eating from a paraffin-paper package of popcorn and molasses grew livelier and livelier with a quality something like an intoxication seeming not to notice the inverse state of his friend.

## **Twenty.**

Horace said. Horace said. Horace said in a dry furious voice. Horace said He spoke shortly. his voice lowered. She rang the bell. Her cold unbending voice shaped the words in the darkness above him. Through the window upon the blowing darkness came the drowsy dissonance of cicada and cricket. After a moment her cold unbending voice came down to him. felt rather than seen or heard. Horace said. he said in a dry light voice. Horace said. Horace said. Horace said. in a placative tone. Shhhhhh. He lowered his voice the toothpick in his fingers. Horace said. Horace said. Through the open window came the myriad noises of the square—cars wagons footsteps on the pavement beneath. It no longer breathed in those weak whistling gasps as it had. Horace said.



## **Nineteen.**

The train whistled. From a block away I heard the Memphis-bound train come in. Horace said. in his harsh assertive voice. Horace said. Horace said. Horace said. Horace said. The train checked speed a jerk came back and four whistle-blasts. A half hour before the train came they began to gather strolling down the hill and gathering along the platform with thin bright raucous laughter. listening to the sweet cloistral bell. like music moving like honey poured in sunlight pagan and evanescent and serene thinly evocative of all lost days and outpaced delights in the sun. Horace said. lowering his voice. They whistled clapping their heels on the floor to furious crescendo saying duh-duh-duh. The whistle reached crescendo clapped off by his hands on knees ejaculating duh-duh-duh. Then he just squalled meaningless vertiginous to Horace it was like sitting before a series of printed pages turned in furious snatches leaving a series of cryptic headless and tailless evocations on the mind. He began to whistle between his teeth a broken dance rhythm unmusical. in a frank pleasant tone. he chanted. the conductor's punch clicked twice. He could hear them

breathing. he chanted. with plaintive fretful cries like a bird. like identical artificial flowers surrounded each by bright and restless bees. topped by hatted cannonballs swaying in unison while gusts of talk and laughter blew back and kept in steady motion the blue acrid air. a child wailed hopelessly crunching peanuts under his feet. blinking at one another with dead eyes in which personality returned in secret opaque waves. The train clicked on stopped jolted. their throats turned profoundly upward as though waiting the stroke of knives. the day coach filled with snoring. snoring. until he heard the court-house clock strike three. he looked at the familiar image with a kind of quiet horror and despair at a face suddenly older in sin. darkening into the pale whisper of her white dress of the delicate and urgent mammalian whisper. The night was warm the darkness filled with the sound of new-fledged cicadas. Horace said. Horace said. and he could hear the footsteps and voices of people. Through the open window came the myriad noises of the square-cars wagons footsteps on the pavement beneath. It no longer breathed in those weak whistling gasps as it had. Horace said.

## **Eighteen.**

a harsh choking uproar of obscene cursing. His hand clapped over her mouth and gripping his wrist the saliva drooling between his fingers her body thrashing furiously from thigh to thigh she saw him crouching beside the bed his face wrung above his absent chin his bluish lips protruding as though he were blowing hot soup making a high whinnying sound like a horse. opening her mouth to scream. Watching his face beginning to twitch and jerk like that of a child about to cry and she heard him begin to make a whimpering sound. she began to whimper she whispered. Still without making any sound he entered. Temple neither saw nor heard. voice rose again as she hammered. the man and the woman made no sound. It died away into terrific gasping then it rose again in the gross and virile cursing of a man. She listened to Miss R's voice shouting hoarsely into the blank. the man and the woman were utterly quiet so quiet that Temple thought of the dogs again thought of them crouching. hammering at the next door with the metal tankard and shouting. Then she heard. She heard two people a man and a woman mount. Later a mechanical piano



began to play Now and then she heard automobile breaks in the streets beneath the window once two voices quarreling bitterly. She had been hearing them. distinguish voices. listening. Again time had overtaken the dead gesture behind the clock crystal. she roared in harsh choking voice. her breath whistling her mouth gaped. she wailed choking her rings smoldering in hot glints within her billowing breast. her breath whistling clutching her breast. It struck the door jamb and splashing up the wall rebounded with a forlorn clatter. He open mouth studded with gold-fillings gaped upon the harsh labor of her breathing. a stifled concerted sound of utter despair. voice booming somewhere and listened. Two people mounted. She heard the bell again then another in a slightly different key. Across a shrill rush of a woman's voice a door banged. a bright uproar of voices and clattering forks. The house was full of sounds Indistinguishable remote they came into her with a quality of awakening as though the house itself had been asleep rousing itself with dark she heard something which might have been a burst of laughter in a shrill woman voice. savage petulant spoiled the flatulent monotony of their sheltered lives snatched up without warning. the bed the dogs made no sound.

closed quietly. she heard. snapping and snarling at her in mad terror. at her with whimpering asthmatic snarls and clicking teeth. whimpering. they came too steadily and too highly. waiting to hear. The noise passed the door and stopped and became utterly still so still that she could almost see. in a furious scrabble. the darkness beyond was full of the sound of the city. A car started beneath the window with a grind of gears again the faint bell rang shrill and prolonged. She listened to the watch. The feet went on past the door and mounted. She found that she had been hearing her watch had been hearing it for some time She discovered the house was full of noises seeping into the room muffled and indistinguishable as though from a distance. A bell rang faintly and shrilly somewhere someone mounted the stairs in a swishing garment. She drew the bolt quietly. crossed the room quietly. She locked herself in the bathroom and they could hear her being sick. suspended in nothingness the original chaos. she heard the door shut and the descending feet the doctor's light unceasing voice of Miss R's labored breath grow twilight-colored in the dingy hall and die away. gleamed in hushed smooth flexions. she began to cry. she whispered. She slipped the bolt soundlessly then she turned and sped back to the

bed her naked feet in patterning diminuendo. silently. Temple could hear. She panted harshly. her voice faint and small. They knocked at the door for some time before she made any sound. listening to the secret whisper of her blood. At once she began to hear a hundred conflicting sounds in a single converging threat. her ears acute her eyes a little blind with the strain of listening. The shades blew steadily in the windows with faint rasping sounds. The sounds died away. Temple could hear. Temple whispered. shoving the dogs gingerly aside while they clicked their teeth at her ankles. Temple whispered. their teeth clicking about her hands. the dogs began to whimper louder. Temple whispered. In her hoarse fainting voice she began to tell. cracked into a myriad pattern like old skin blew faintly on the bright air breathing into the room on waning surges the sound of Sabbath traffic festive steady evanescent. hear the rhythmic splush-splush. hear them sniffing. claws clicking on the metal strips. discreet whispers of flesh stale and oft-assailed and impregnable beyond each silent door. vivid noises of sunlight. snarled at her in vicious falsetto. in a harsh expiring maternal voice. flatulent sounds blowing into the rich pneumasis of her breast and tonguing. Temple could hear. gap with an effect as of

magic and vanished with a stupendous clatter. sound of traffic-motor horns trolleys-passing high. he whispered. into the car quietly. she whimpered. she wailed in a choked voice. she whispered. she whimpered. she whimpered. she whimpered. she whimpered. she whimpered. she whimpered. gripping her silent. erect she screamed tasting the gritty acidity of his fingers while the car slewed squealing. a wail rising cut suddenly. at the rushing roadside Temple began to scream. in green retro-grade before crescendo. listening to the hot minute seeping of her blood. that had already given way to a smooth increasing hiss.



## **Seventeen.**

Horace said. in the attitude of one crucified breathing in short whistling gaps. Horace said. He heard the town clock strike. Horace said. Shhhhh-hhhhhh. wailed a thin whimpering distressful cry. She said nothing her head bent over the child it wailed. Horace said. still whimpering now and then. Horace said. Horace said. Horace said. one night he would be singing. Horace said. whimpering. Sometimes during the day he sang also. singing in chorus with those along the fence below. in shabby rise and fall. The last trumpet-shaped bloom had fallen from the heaven.



## **Sixteen.**

Horace said. the heaven tree shuddered and pulsed monstrously in scarce any wind rich and sad the singing fell behind. into the sound of the singing. in a low level tone. The singing followed them dimmed by the walls the lights. drummers sat in chairs along the curb listening to the singing. the blended voices swelled rich and sad into the soft depthless evening singing of heaven and being tired. Horace said. Horace said. mounted to a crescendo. she started to say something else looking at him quietly. She did not appear to be listening. Horace said. Hmmph. Horace said. I wish I never heard the whole thing. Horace said. his sister said her serene face her voice furious. the street would listen. Sometimes during the day he would lean there singing alone. and in chorus with the murderer they sang spirituals while white people slowed and stopped in the leafed darkness that was almost summer to listen to those who were sure to die and him who was already dead singing about heaven and being tired or perhaps in the interval between songs a rich sourceless voice. up the quiet moonlit lane.





## **Fifteen.**

sunny air was filled with competitive radios and phonographs in the doors of drug and music stores. Before these doors a throng stood all day listening. The pieces which moved them were ballads simple in melody and theme of bereavement and retribution and repentance metallically sung blurred emphasized by static or needle-disembodied voices blaring. the back of their eyeballs you looked at while they were hearing music you couldn't hear. chortling and glugging. faint hissing noise chortling. He made no sound. he heard his sister come.



## **Fourteen.**

she heard it coming.



## **Thirteen.**

she screamed voiding the words like hot silent bubbles into the bright silence about them. Moving he made no sound at all the released door yawned and clapped against the jamb but it made no sound either it was as though sound and silence had become inverted. She could hear silence in a thick rustling. To Temple sitting in the cottonseed-hulls and the corncobs the sound was no louder than the striking of a match a short minor sound shutting down upon the scene the instant with a profound finality completely isolating it. whispered. There was no sound. moving without a sound. She heard Popeye cross. Then he sighed. It was a dry sort of sound. hearing. her voice making a thin eeeeeee-eeeeeee sound like bubbles in a bottle.



## **Twelve.**

silently into. heard. with light finicking sounds in  
the underbrush Then they ceased. Somewhere in  
the swamp a bird sang. a dry flat sound.





## **Eleven.**

clattering vibration of loose planks. she whispered. with a wailing shriek. Temple stood in the sand listening to the birds among the sunshot leaves listening looking about. She took up the coat and hat and listened again. she thought quietly with a kind of dull spent astonishment. thinking about the bells in cool steeples against the blue and pigeons crooning about the belfries like echoes of the organ's bass. listening into the silence. blind man's stick clattered again. toward the cool unhurried sound of bells. She could hear him. tapping ahead with the stick. numb hands scoring at the undressed planks until she could hear her finger nails. tingled through her cramped muscles she lay gazing quietly.



## **Ten.**

whispering eyes. Jesus Christ he whispered his body  
writhing inside his disreputable and bloody clothes  
in an agony of rage and shame. whispering Jesus  
Christ. a blundering sound approaching across.



## **Nine.**

the woman whispered. the woman hissed. a dying whisper of fairy feet. Temple heard. Temple in a whisper a sound no louder than a sigh and filled with fury. Temple whispered. snored savage and profound. The woman could hear her wild breathing. a thin fierce whisper. but making no sound. She heard them. without a sound as though the stealthy evacuation of his position blew soft and cold upon her in black silence without seeing or hearing. She could hear no sound. snoring and choking and snoring. also soundless. She could tell all of them by the way they breathed Then without having heard felt. The woman could hear. without trying to be silent. She heard. choked and snored and moaned. After a while they got quiet. snoring.



## **Eight.**

he whispered. dying away into that warm unhappy feeling that fiddle music gave him. snored. bare feet whispering on the floor. silent on his bare feet his neck craned a little with listening. snored each respiration choking to a huddle fall as though he would never breathe again. jouncing to the dying chatter. clattering soundlessly inside. his breath hissing through. shouted. gone like a furious gust of black wind leaving a peaceful vacuum in which they moved quietly. shouted. hushed and furious. The voices were still he had completely forgot them until he heard G say A chair crashed over he heard G's light thudding feet the chair clattered along the porch as though it had been kicked aside and crouching his elbows out a little in squat bearlike alertness T heard dry light sounds like billiard balls. The voices had got quiet for a moment and in the silence T could hear a faint steady chatter. T could hear the mattress crackle. a faint dry whisper of shucks. He could hear them. whispered. hear the voices from the dark. no sound. whispered. light thuds. talking quite loud. whispered. listened. stupid tales of city life with rapt interest guffawing. whispered. whispered. guffawed scraping. laughed.





## Seven.

the men's voices grew louder She heard a trampling of feet in the hall a rasping of chairs the voice of the man who had laughed above them laughing again. whispered. A thin whisper of shadow cupped its head and lay moist upon its brow. Across it a crack ran in thin silver curve. said nothing. whispered. laughed Her mouth laughed with no sound no movement. whispered. her lips scarce moving in her still dispassionate voice. whispered. their voices were like shadows. in her cold undertone. Temple moved her mouth as though she were experimenting with words tasting them. It opened its eyes and wailed. whispered. whispered. wailed. whimpering. and the hissing of the kettle on the stove and the voices the harsh abrupt meaningless masculine sounds. The meat hissed. in a wailing tone. she could hear the voices—a word now and then a laugh the harsh derisive laugh of a man easily brought to mirth by youth or by age cutting across the spluttering of frying meat on the stove were the man stood Once she heard two of them come down the hall in their heavy shoes and a moment later the clatter of the dipper in the galvanised pail and the voice that had laughed cursing.



## **Six.**

she moved quietly on tiptoe. strolling towards the sound of the supper bell. her heels clattering. the man whispered shaking with silent glee. his head bent with listening. Pssst.



## **Five.**

she could hear no sound save the voices from the front. through which the breeze drew with a sad murmurous sound.



## **Four.**

the engine ceased though the lifted front wheel continued to spin idly slowing. her mouth open upon a soundless wail behind her lost breath. the yawning glitter of the bass horn the green diamond dotted with players couching uttering short yelping cries like marsh-fowl disturbed by an alligator not certain of where the danger is motionless poised encouraging one another with short meaningless cries plaintive wary and forlorn. puffs of vapor that had almost died away when the sound of the whistle came back. they could hear the other scrambling. After a while the car door slammed. in a bitter lilting falsetto. in a wan aftermath of motion and noise. Later the music wailing beyond the glass they would watch her through the windows as she passed in swift rotation from one pair of black sleeves to the next her waist shaped slender and urgent in interval her feet filling the rhythmic gap with music. vanish in a swirling glitter upon a glittering swirl of music. a final squatting swirl of knickers or whatnot as she sprang into the car waiting there with engine running on that particular night.





## **Three.**

it was sometime before he heard. the small bell rang.



## **Two.**

guffawed in undertone. guffawed. guffawed in undertone. whispered into sand. There came a noise. His voice was not loud almost a whisper When she spoke she did not lower her voice. Then she heard the stranger. He passed her without a word. listening. The stranger's voice went on tumbling over itself rapid and diffuse. murmur of the wild grape. She listened to him. She listened to the stranger's voice a quick faintly outlandish voice the voice of a man given to much talk and nothing else. listening to them talking listening to the stranger talking and to the thick soft sound of the jug as they passed it among themselves. silently and steadily.



## **One.**

as though he were ready to laugh at a joke waiting for the time to laugh. There was a shuffling sound. a pan of meat hissed. on a soundless feathering of taut wings. heard the bird again trying to recall the local name for it On the invisible highroad another car passed died away Between them and the sound of it the sun was. Now and then the bird sang back in the swamp as though it were worked by a clock twice more invisible automobiles passed along the highroad and died away Again the bird sang. Behind him the bird sang again three bars in monotonous repetition a sound meaningless and profound out of a suspirant and peaceful following silence which seemed to isolate the spot and out of which a moment later came the sound of an automobile passing along the road and dying away. against the sunny silence. he had heard no sound. Somewhere hidden and secret yet nearby a bird sang three notes and ceased.



## Coda I.

God, are you drunk too?  
– William Faulkner, *Sanctuary*

William—*Il miglior fabbro*

No but you see I've got to explain all this frenzy of taking thinkers from behind—minds and bodies and bodies and minds—this corn-cob-feast deep tissue scar tissue heavy blows. When in the end it's not clear who stole what from whom and it's all one big theft with no beginning to begin with.

Listen to the music of transfiguration looking back at what we destroyed what we tore away from the self—etherized upon a table. A gape—yes—eyes pop-out Pop-eye heavy on the spinach. Electro-shocked Momo singing the body electric—by now electricity is spreading its blessings while we put together this fiction of appearing as the Nonperson Nonhuman my Joy.

Nonmusic—the silence of art and the art of silence!  
Debauchery—mon chere—outrage and revenge.



Because there is no difference now between what's allegory and what's literal in this swamp of paradox and perversity. No difference between our fiction and my story. No difference between becoming woman-child-animal and becoming imperceptible. The fine line between the horror of rape and its creative potential—getting thinner and thinner while touching the innocence of our children. Becoming men—Temple Drake—raped. Raped by impotence and imposture raped by Popeye and a corn cob raped by America. Guns for education—Alice in wonderland—pregnant!

The Founding Fathers cutting freestone cube for the Temple to come—America—Great Temple of Solomon! Where poets are prized with toys that don't advertise the winner—potboilers for the big screens—the big dreams. Where purity was profaned at the beginning with no beginning to begin with. First came the word and the rest was rape.

All those stolen words—William—all those stolen words. The Sound and The Fury—Faulkner or Shakespeare? Faulkner and Shakespeare! One original breath and the infinite permutations follow. Real without being actual—ideal without being abstract.

Becoming imperceptible—not an ode to dejection but  
a dead letter to you—a refrain for all the chanti-  
cleers in the morning.

Noise—the sound of Genesis.



## **Coda II.**

8 April 2013

Dear Eileen,

Originally I decided to write a collection of the soundscapes present within the novel as I was struck by the musical quality of Faulkner's words, reading him musically, as an aural experience.

As a musician I got interested in sampling once I discovered the work of Christian Marclay through his collaborations with John Zorn. I felt drawn to the cut-up technique; how William Burroughs' ideas, which stemmed from Brion Gysin and the visual arts, got appropriated into music after being translated into language, which could also be extended to the body as in the work of Genesis P-Orridge. Then, also through John Zorn, I discovered the work of John Oswald and his essay *Plunderphonics, or Audio Piracy as a Compositional Prerogative*. I started to ask myself what was the difference between using one source material instead of many?

Does multiplicity disguise the process, rendering it unrecognizable?

Further questions regarding authorship and authenticity arose once I started to sample noise music itself, treating each composition as a finished, commodified object, just like any other pop-product subjected to the plunderphonic technique: flattening the experiments of Merzbow's sound-walls, Chris Watson's field-recordings, or Radu Malfatti's silent-outbursts by treating them like a disposable Madonna-fragment. The horizon of the vanguard and the limits of the experimental soon dissolved before my very ears. No matter how radical the performance and how loud the sound, experimental music began to feel like a series of empty gestures: both composition and improvisation as failed repetitions of actions from the past dissolving into forms of self-entertainment. Noise = Capitalism.

I started to feel that much of the arts are about recycled material. Take Kathy Acker for example and her work on *Don Quixote*. Or Jorge Luis Borges's *Parable of Cervantes and the Quixote*. Or take Anne Carson's work. Do you need to translate (Sappho) into a different language in order to

disguise the work as your own? After having read Ovid and Homer it became clear to me that not just literature and the arts, but Western thought, is constantly revisiting the same ideas, transforming them each time into the language of the present, like Ezra Pound' *Cantos*, T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, or rewriting *Moby-Dick* into *The Old Man and the Sea*. Philosophy indeed is a footnote to Plato.

Once I discovered the work of Kenneth Goldsmith I realized I had hit on a problem of today's language through my own process. Ubuweb as the poem of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the assemblage of assemblages, Borges's Library of Babel. To Goldsmith, writing is transcribing. If this is the case, in our age of overproduction, saturation, inflation, stagnation and simulacra, then selection becomes the core issue. It is *what* you select, *how* you transcribe it, express it, present it, and appropriate it. It is *where* you put it, which is why I chose punctum as I vehemently adhere to its credo. Writing is organization of data: selection out of chaos. Translation is not the process of changing words from one language to another, but how you select and transform them.

I regard my work as pushing the ideas of Kenneth Goldsmith to their logical conclusion, which results in somewhat of a paradox and parody. If writing is about transcribing data, then what is the difference between traffic reports and literature? How can we make poetry exciting once again? The history of Western art is a dialogue in which participants recognize themselves and each other, with each artwork assuming a position within its discourse. The work of William Gaddis is concerned with such moments of recognition, by focusing on the corrupted notion of authenticity, even cunningly accusing Thomas Bernhard of stealing his work before he even wrote it.

The content in Faulkner's *Sanctuary* affected me for personal reasons, which prompted me to work with it, prior to any formal concerns. The *Ursprung* of *raping a rape*. Marcel Duchamp had to justify his *pissoir*, so to be cynical and clinical, the added value of my poem is the act of appropriation itself: the process of selection and reorganization. Recomposing the order of its music—unfolding the plot—in order to get back to the origin—the rape—the source of evil: the problem of language, of the Idea and its representation, poisonous from its inception, its

*Genesis*. Sharing an affinity with David Markson's work or Abbas Kiarostami's *Copie Conforme*. Appropriation is not a simple aesthetic practice but has broader epistemological and ethical implications. It is ironical, paradoxical, tragic and affirmative at once.

Picasso said that good artists borrow but the best artists not only steal, but they steal from the best: Faulkner. Or in Stravinsky's words, they don't imitate but steal; with Milton defining piracy as occurring only if the work is not bettered by the borrower.

I understand your concerns. n+1 magazine recently termed Michael Haneke's work as *sadomodernism*, an idea that resonates with my work: *raping* the audience *into consciousness*. Haneke felt so strongly about *Funny Games* that he needed to bring it to Hollywood. I feel strongly about it too. I feel so strongly about it, that, should I have to, I am willing to rewrite the entire thing twice over. One more time makes no difference.

We have become so accustomed to violence through entertainment that transgression itself has merely



become another capitalist performance. How then can we elevate art, how can it be a reaction to the *Other* instead of its medium? How must we act when yesterday's transgressions are today's commodities? How can we feel, when writing and all worthwhile creations stem—like suicide—in Gaddis's words, from outrage and revenge?

Through the appropriation of data and redistribution of value. By leaking and silently exposing the brutalities of institutionalized practices. Not by elevating ourselves and our personal gratification, not by getting too comfortable, but by becoming *imperceptible*, blending into the artwork itself, by operating in the recesses of established order. By appropriating the interior mechanisms of capitalism itself and accelerating its process. Noise = Chaos.

Noise as a genre has reached its logical impasse. In order to justify its own generic existence, it has to continuously negate itself. *Rite of Spring*-like collective revolt is neither found nor expected at any of its events. A political problem that fares no better within politics itself: *Arab Spring*-like revolutions, flawed at their outset by relying on outmoded tactics of subversion. Forms of revolution that generate

collective intensities and move the masses through space for a varying amount of time but nevertheless fail to produce the desired effect as the movements merely occur on the surface of political structures: appropriating a form of Western neoliberalism, while the West still fails to produce its necessary alternatives under the spell of what Mark Fisher terms capitalist realism. Capitalism = Reality.

In his essay “Genre is Obsolete,” Ray Brassier directly links the limits of noise as genre to the commodification of experience itself, not merely through ideology but as “a concrete neurophysiological reality which can only be confronted with neurobiological resources”. Thus before constitutionalizing the multitude’s demands, as suggested by Hardt & Negri in their “Declaration for Occupy Wall Street,” the first crucial, if not difficult, step consists in dismantling the primacy of subjective human experience deeply rooted in the Kantian Idealist tradition. In order to release the multitude’s productive agency, resigned to forms of hedonism under the rule of cognitive capitalism, we must produce a cartography of desire and relocate its topos of individuation. Before undergoing the process of territorialization on the plane of intensi-

ties, we must take further steps in the process of deterritorialization, hence Deleuze and Guattari's schizo-equation in *Anti-Oedipus*: "Nature = Production = Man (a new humanity)."

The posthuman avant-garde (nonhuman and inhuman) does not imply the elimination of man from art. It calls for a renewed question of art itself and its necessity. Pushing the objectified back into an exploration of objecthood, the Kantian noumenal. Not art for art's sake but a return to the question of the object, the *thing-in-itself*. Art, like life and *cruelty*, is a process, which is already hidden in the relationships between objects. What does it mean to sample data, not of finished artworks, but of noise itself, the environment? Being victimized by the crushing quality of noise is all too human. Art must become an acoustic ecology. Noticing the landscape of objects, the relationships, the environment itself, in order to compose the music of tomorrow. Let the song of *vibrant matter* sing itself. A science of vibration to tap into the Unsound; "an ontology of vibrational force as a basis for approaching the not yet audible" (Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare*).

White noise, pink noise, brown noise, purple noise,

grey noise.

Noise = Chaos = Capitalism = Reality = Nature =  
Production = Man = Unsound = Vibrant Matter =  
Universal = Knowledge

A chimera: a new language to navigate the local and the universal, the molecular and the molar. The trajectory of becoming: towards the molecular vibration of the noumenon and back. The glorious organism, the cosmic machine, the polyphonic object. From the music of man to the music of birds to the music of insects to the music of matter itself. A mathesis universalis traversing multiple disciplines. Engendering the production of knowledge by entering the universal relations constituting the Idea and its singularities, giving meaning to the performative gesture. Towards a radically Enlightened modernity through the appropriation of its most resonant functors. Knowledge = Universal.

As Reza Negarestani's mentioned in a talk "Topos of the Earth: Telescopic and Stereoscopic Visions of the Abyss-in-one": (Copernican) revolution does not exist. The creation of knowledge is a process of appropriation, drowning out the noise and selecting

information from chaos, from the abyss, just as evolution is a selection and recombination of DNA. “The accelerative grasp of the culture of modernity should be understood as an epistemico-performative approach to nature” (Negarestani, “Nature, Its Man and His Goat”).

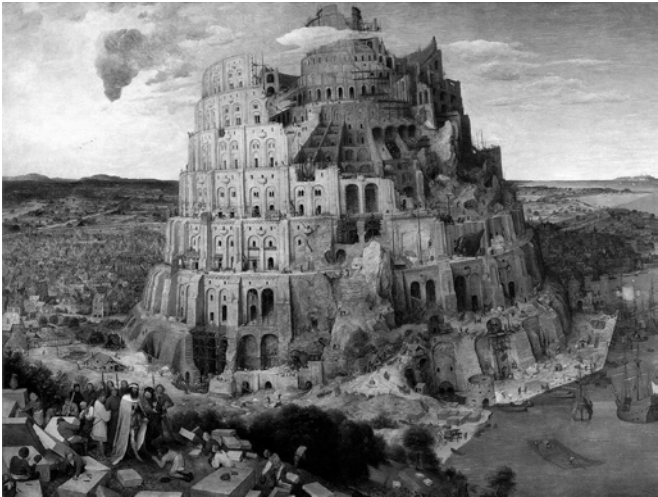
*Pour en finir*, in Negarestani’s words on Artaud: *be a hydro-leak engineer; make things leak out.*

THANK YOU!

Andreas











W. dreams, like Phaedrus, of an army of thinker-  
friends, thinker-lovers. He dreams of a thought-  
army, a thought-pack, which would storm the  
philosophical Houses of Parliament. He dreams of  
Tartars from the philosophical steppes, of thought-  
barbarians, thought-outsiders. What distances  
would shine in their eyes!

~Lars Iyer

[www.babelworkinggroup.org](http://www.babelworkinggroup.org)

# A Sanctuary of Sounds

Andreas Burckhardt

*Be a hydro-leak engineer; make things leak out. ~Reza Negarestani*

*A Sanctuary of Sounds* is an aural rewriting of William Faulkner's novel *Sanctuary* (1931). A polyphonic object. A garden — assemblage of blooms, of affects, of sounds, of meaning. An invitation to rethink appropriation ethically, aesthetically, and epistemologically. The appropriation of a body of work, of a physical body, of an idea, of data. The history of knowledge and its production is enabled by the process of appropriation, by the differentiation of noise. *A Sanctuary of Sounds* is a noise-totality. Noise — nothing but noise. Noise as the first object of metaphysics. Noise as the synchronic/diachronic mediator of production-processes and their reorganization in society. Utopia and dystopia at once. *A Sanctuary of Sounds* is a dialectical poem, it is noise against noise — raping a rape.

dead letter office





Burckhardt, Andreas

*A Sanctuary of Sounds*

punctum books, 2013

ISBN: 9780615814872

<https://punctumbooks.com/titles/a-sanctuary-of-sounds/>

<https://www.doi.org/10.21983/P3.0029.1.00>