

Fab maps and the cartography of the invisible: Fragments on feedback ecology and participatory field recording

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Disciplinary background A. Basis in critical theoretic approaches within the broader discipline of philosophy.

Disciplinary background B. The work is shaped through experimental music and sound art practice.

Abstract

Explicate the influence of cybernetics in experimental music/sound art that deals with ecology and nature, relating this to art in radical politics

The presentation evaluates modes of field recording practice in experimental music/sound art that are self-consciously participatory, rather than strictly observational. I will consider such modes that emphasize ecological relationality as a means of avoiding ethical dilemmas of documentary representation: namely, observation that tends to isolate or fix its objects of study as material for exploitation thus perpetuating colonialist anthropology. Considering that the human observer is also nature, I will look towards models of collaboration, drawing on Adorno's concept of second nature. Such collaboration will provide criteria for an immanent critique of cybernetics thru assessment of system/observer interactions in ecological relationality. This engagement with cybernetics will contextualize experimental music practices that carry residues of mid-20th century optimism in technological innovation into our early twenty-first-century era of algorithmic entanglement and environmental crisis. Autoethnographic feedback will provide a means of charting the echoes of the observer's values that are projected onto the landscape thru their engagement with the environment via technological media. The field recordist emerges as a conduit or circuit conductor for the invisible forces that shape a landscape. Thus, disjunction between seen and heard, presence and absence, become eco-political points of rupture between past and future under the ban on images of utopia (Bilderverbot). This mediation of historical memory will be carried forward thru Deleuze & Guattari's account of fabulation where the artist is a "becomer" and "goes beyond the perceptual states...of the lived", in order to channel the collective optimism and utopian energies invested in the cybernetic era, now scattered in the landscape like shards of a monumental shipwreck.

Interdisciplinary implications. Philosophical aesthetics offers an entry point to the history of science and guide to addressing environmental crisis.

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