A Hauntology of Clandestine Transmissions: Spectres of Gender and Race in Electronic Music

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Abstract

Electronic music is often presented as originating with the Futurists, John Cage, Robert Moog, Kraftwerk and the Detroit techno scene, yet such descriptions elide the role of women in the history of electronic and experimental music and, importantly, occlude contributions from non-western and non-white musicians. This clandestine history is further obscured by the fact that although there are as many women artists working within electronic and experimental music as there are men, men continue to dominate related events and festivals. In this article, I use Jacques Derrida’s notion of hauntology—a portmanteau of ‘haunting’ and ‘ontology’—to frame such practices of historiography. For Derrida, hauntology marks not a belief in ghosts but, rather, an ethical injunction to preserve otherness, even while such otherness may not be wholly comprehensible to us. The aim of this article is thus twofold: first, to provide a contextualisation of hauntology; and second, to produce a spectrography of electronic and experimental music, of occluded histories and their haunting presence/absence coordinates, in

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order that we might remember—sit with—the forgotten h(er)istories while all the time acknowledging that these tellings are themselves necessarily partial.

**Keywords**

Electronic music, hauntology, race, gender, technology

**Hauntology: The Work of Memory, the Work of Mourning, the Work of Laying Bare**

Hauntology—a portmanteau of ‘haunting’ and ‘ontology’—is a concept introduced by the philosopher Jacques Derrida, inspired by the film *Ghost Dance* (McMullen, 1983) and first coined in his book *Spectres of Marx* (1993). For Derrida, hauntology marks not a belief in ghosts and other unnameable beings but, rather, ‘an ethical injunction insofar as it occupies the place of the Levinasian Other: a wholly irre recuperable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving’ (Davis, 2005, p. 373). In part, then, hauntology is the work of memory, itself a kind of spectre of ‘inheritance, and generations, generations of ghosts, which is to say about certain others who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us’ (Derrida, 1994, p. xix). For memory holds within it a certain sense of non-contemporaneity: that which is remembered or commemorated is neither here nor not here. Thus, it marks a trace of a presence/absence, a *sign* in philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s sense, which discloses a complex matrix of affects, effects, intensities and thresholds. We might even say that spectrality has a double function—a double of experience—in that it functions as vectors that simultaneously lay bare and obscure the presence/absence of the ghosts of the present-past. In Derrida’s words:

> A spectre is both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance. The spectral logic is de facto a deconstructive logic. It is in the element of haunting that deconstruction finds the place most hospitable to it, at the heart of the living present, in the quickest heartbeat of the philosophical. Like the work of mourning, in a sense, which produces spectrality, and like all work produces spectrality. (Derrida, 2002, p. 117)
What the passage intimates is that while hauntology is in part the work of memory and heritage—of sitting with ghosts, being attentive to them, even listening to them—it is also the work of mourning. Mourning here, however, does not simply denote the observation of sorrow, for its de facto deconstructive logic entails a coming back to, ‘a structural openness or address directed towards the living by the voices of the past or the not yet formulated possibilities of the future’ (Davis, 2005, p. 379). It is a making known, a laying bare, which is absent/present and, in this sense, it is the work also of history and historiography. Yet, while it is historical, it is not dated: ‘it is never docilely given a date in the chain of presents’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 4). Hauntology, to be sure, is a haunting, a persistent phantasm, an unearthly stalking, a disquieting. Perversely, the ethical supplication of spectrography arises from the very discomfort of the Other, which emerges as an absence/presence makes itself felt. Spectres, however, are only one aspect of hauntology; as much as it is about ghosts, it is also about a ‘way of perceiving space’ (Blanco & Peeren, 2013, p. 483)—atmospheres and ambiances expressing ‘a range of spatio-temporal conditions that challenge static representations of space’ (Buser, 2017, p. 8). In this, attention is paid also to fluctuating ‘moods, feelings, sensations and dispositions’ (Lin, 2015, p. 287)—affective states beyond perception and atmospheres outside the reach of usual go-to representations. In other words, a spectrography always exceeds that which is representable but, even as an imperceptible atmosphere, it nevertheless impresses itself upon us and implores us to act. Such acts take many forms; sometimes they entail sitting with, at other times they entail listening, and at other times still they may involve ‘a gathering of stories around a location’ (Blanco & Peeren, 2013, p. 483), though no spectrography can ever claim to know the full narrative and no hauntology is reducible to the telling of stories.

Hauntology is, of course, also a genre of music marked by its evocation of the past, achieved through the creation of time loops from which emerges a false nostalgia that melts past, present and future into an eerie, hypnagogic coil. Artists create this wistfulness by sampling older sources so as to evoke a specific atmosphere: a haunting presence that conjures revenants, forgotten places and otherworldly tales at the very limits of modern experience. Modernity, at any rate, ‘was built upon technologies that made us all ghosts’, writes the late Mark Fisher, ‘and postmodernity could be defined as the succumbing of historical time to the spectral time of recording devices’ (Fisher, 2013, p. 48). In this reading, spectral time resides in and emerges from the uncanny—a certain absurdity and incongruity—captured in music through, for example, the
‘foregrounding of the sound of vinyl crackle’ (Fisher, 2013, p. 48) that apparates as spectral sounds. Hauntology is usually associated with the UK record label Ghost Box, and artists such as Philip Jeck, Ariel Pink, The Caretaker and Burial. Like the hauntology of Derrida, sonic hauntology deliberately fuses non-contemporaneity with contemporaneity, willing the past into the present even as the present slips away alongside the not-yet expressed possibilities of the future. It is here, in the slip-sliding, that ghosts reside and, as may have become clear to the reader, it is precisely this which occupies the current article: ghosts, the spectral, haunting atmospheres. Specifically, it is a spectrography of electronic and experimental music, of occluded histories and their haunting presence/absence coordinates. It is about remembering these forgotten stories, mourning these h(er)istories. It is also about telling these stories, yet even as I write these h(er)istories into this moment, I am obscuring others. These stories are, therefore, necessarily ghost stories: their absence/presence always already imploring us to sit with even more ghouls, next to unmarked graves, in the farthest reaches of the galaxy.

A Hauntology of Clandestine Transmissions

Electronic music is often presented as originating with the Futurists, John Cage, Robert Moog, Kraftwerk and the Detroit techno scene (Rodgers, 2010, p. 14), but these descriptions elide the role of women in the history of electronic and experimental music and, importantly, occlude contributions from non-western and non-white musicians, as Budhadiy Chattopadhyay notes (Chattopadhyay, 2020, p. 147). There are a few exceptions, such as Laurie Anderson and Pauline Oliveros, but other (ghostly) women that bear mentioning in terms of past and current contributions are Caterina Barbieri, Bebe Barron, Wendy Carlos, Pan Daijing, Delia Derbyshire, Beatriz Ferreyra, Gudrun Gut, Jutta Koether, Christina Kubisch, Thessia Machado, Hayley Newman, Daphne Oram, Puce Mary, Lana del Rabies, Clara Rockmore, Michelle Webb, Pamela Z and many more. The website Syrphe¹ is an exceptional database of non-western experimental artists, such as Alice Hui-Sheng Chang, Aki Ito, Itta, Kismett, VAVABOND, Verita Shalavita Koapaha, Lau Mun Leng, Okkyung Lee, Rhéa Dally and perhaps more known names such as Michiko Kawagoe, Dark Muse, Passiflora, Suzanne Quincey, Meri
von KleinSmid, Analog Tara, Ava Mendoza, Fe-Mail and Experiment Haywire, to name a few.

This clandestine history is further obscured by the fact that although there are as many women artists working within electronic and experimental music as there are men, men continue to dominate at related events and festivals, as French electronic musician Éliane Radigue laments (Bliss, 2013). When women are present at such events, it is often tokenistic—a kind of ‘pinkwashing’ of ‘pink’ noises—further entrenching the seemingly ‘natural’ and gendered assumptions about women making electronic music, and women and technology. For example, writing on Laurie Anderson, musicologist Susan McClary notes the following:

When Anderson involves herself with electronics, she confuses still other habits of thought grounded in gender difference. For it is supposed to be Man who gives birth to and who tames the Machine. Women in this culture are discouraged from even learning about technology, in part so that they can continue to represent authentic, unmediated Nature. (McClary, 1990, pp. 110–111)

Such tropes of incompatibility serve to render women in technological fields invisible. This is clear, for example, from the recent BBC documentary on minimalism, Tones, Drones and Arpeggios: The Magic of Minimalism (Whalley, 2018), in which Charles Hazlewood follows the careers of La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich and Philip Glass to showcase the history of this musical movement.² While I, like many others, have derived much pleasure from their music, the documentary disregards the important role of women entirely. Commenting on the documentary, cunningly giving it the moniker ‘menimalism’, Jennifer Allan notes the following:

Being ignored is very different to being forgotten, and while they have been ignored for this two-parter, plenty of people haven’t forgotten about Pauline Oliveros and Joan La Barbara, both central and crucial figures in the scenes discussed. Or Meredith Monk, Éliane Radigue or Laurie Spiegel, all of whom are still composing...Charlotte Moorman, shown performing with John Cage, isn’t named at all. (Allan, 2018)

The same is true of the 1998 documentary Modulations: Cinema for the Ear,³ which presents a history of electronic music and lists close to 80 informants, all of whom are men, the spectres of women musicians marked only by their absence/presence. Likewise, the 2008 movie-length
documentary, *People Who Do Noise*, features only one woman, Kitty Midwife, despite the fact that there were many women working in experimental noise music at this time, including, but not limited to, Pharmakon, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Maryanne Amacher, Mama Baer, Sachiko M, Junko, Diamanda Galas, Maja Ratkje and Ikue Mori.

Besides rendering women invisible—*spectral*—tropes related to the incompatibility of women and technology serve also to generate an order of ‘normalcy’, which itself then establishes a second presumption: ‘the idea that normalcy is the best option’ (Pieri, 2019, p. 561). If, then, it is Man who gives birth to and tames technology, the ‘normal’ conclusion would be that Woman is unable to and, even if or when involved, is not a creator. This is not a new cry to feminists and, on this point, Maggi Payne remarks that while there have been major shifts in electronic music in terms of gender, especially in composition, there are still very few women engineers (Payne, 2010, p. 71). Thus, as Tara Rodgers, the author of *Pink Noises* argues, the still pervasive logic of women as *reproducers* continues to undermine women as *producers* (Rodgers, 2010, p. 12). Radigue, known for her use of ‘feedback, tape loops, field recordings and, beginning in the 70s, the ARP 2500 modular synthesiser’, notes correspondingly in an interview that if she had claimed to be more than an intern for the composers Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry, they would not ‘have accepted me, because they were both the damndest machos!’ (Jones, 2018). Another example of this kind of logic can be found in the 2017 documentary, *A Life in Waves* (Whitcomb, 2017), which follows the career of Suzanne Ciani. Although the documentary showcases her career as a pioneering electronic musician, it ends with Ciani speaking about herself as a romantic. I am not suggesting that Ciani is not, or that this should not have been included, but the direction of the film towards the romantic ending does follow the story arc of a fairy tale, and women are cast in particular ways in these. The documentary could have included this clip anywhere else in the arc to shape the narrative in ways that runs counter to myths of biocentric logic, especially as Ciani is still a performing electronic musician. Having said this, it should be noted that there are varying and sometimes contradictory ideas about the gendered nature of women’s music, even from women themselves. Some women, such as Kaffe Matthews, contend that women and men make music differently, ‘Simply because we’re different creatures’ (Matthews, 2010, p. 42). Other women artists find such notions essentialist. For example, abstract turntablist and improviser, Maria Chavez, does not consider herself a ‘female’ musician. As she puts it, ‘I don’t think anyone would want to. And I don’t think my sounds are
feminine’ (Chavez, 2010, p. 101). This raises pertinent questions not only about h(er)istoriography but also about what it means to be a woman in electronic and experimental music, and the notion that certain sounds are ‘feminine’ and others are ‘masculine’. Rodgers goes on to note that even the ‘terms technology [in combination with] music are often marked as male domains’ (Rodgers, 2010, p. 2). The visual and linguistic tropes associated with these kinds of genres too have been marked by a patriarchal legacy. We may think here of the sexualised, racialised and even orientalised images of women on the covers of electronic albums (see Taylor, 1993, pp. 387–393). Andra McCartney quotes a particularly revealing conversation from a ‘disc-swapping’ party that took place in Toronto:

I brought in a disk that had some interesting vocal sounds on it, that I had sampled, and [the other contributors] had not really experienced anything like this before. And [one of the participants] said: ‘Oh, I’ve got to rape that disk.’ Then I said ‘What did you say?’ I think he even repeated it…. And then…5 minutes later, someone else came along, and said the same thing to me…. Really it’s a certain jargon that they have, and people don’t even think about it. It’s just a language that they use, all the time. (McCartney, 1995, pp. 57–58)

These metaphors, symbolism and linguistic tropes, as McCartney argues, ‘embody powerful cognitive and performative functions’ (McCartney, 1995, p. 58) so that ‘a conceptual order of things, an animate hierarchy of possible acts’ (Chen, 2012, p. 3) starts to take shape. Within this animate hierarchy, speaking of raping a disk, dominating a synthesiser and getting killer sound from drums is ‘business as usual’ (McCartney, 1995, pp. 58–59). This is exacerbated by the fact that the existing canon, so occupied with mostly white men, is deeply ‘entrenched in all the educational institutions, and in music teachers, who don’t give it a thought’, as Pauline Oliveros remarks (Oliveros, 2010, p. 31).

Oliveros, known for her pioneering work as an electronic-music artist, as well as her feminist work in this regard, studied at the University of Houston in 1949, after which she moved to San Francisco, ‘where she would meet many of the people involved in pulling experimental composition away from its dry and institutional background’, including Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Morton Subotnick, Jon Gibson, John Chowning and Loren Rush (Duguid, 1998). Oliveros, in fact, would go on to do free improvisation with Riley and Rush and perform accordion in the 1964 premiere of Riley’s In C. Although she never considered herself a minimalist, Oliveros ‘was interested in the music and knew the composers’
(Duguid, 1998). It is, therefore, not amiss to claim that she influenced the milieu and, at the same time allowed it to wash over her. Yet, despite her influence and enormous contribution, she, like her many of her women contemporaries, did not make the cut for \textit{Tones, Drones and Arpeggios}. In this way, then, her heritage is exorcised, rendered a presence that is no longer, yet remains as ‘virtual, insubstantial’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 10).

Laurie Spiegel was as hugely influential in New York as Oliveros was in the Bay Area—the two areas of interest in the discussed documentary. Born on 20 September 1945, Spiegel continues to work as an electronic musician. Although she, like Oliveros, was not included in the BBC two-parter, a short documentary on her by Aura Satz\textsuperscript{6} is available online, as is a career-spanning interview on Wavershaper Television.\textsuperscript{7} These, however, do not make up for the persistent ghoulish ‘problem’ of h(er)-istoriographies, which pertains here not only to the relaying of the past but also to the present and, as such, to the conditioning of the future. Notably, a number of websites, such as \textit{Feminatronic},\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Audible Women},\textsuperscript{9} \textit{SoundGirls},\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Her Beats},\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Her Noise Archive}\textsuperscript{12} and \textit{Electronicgirls},\textsuperscript{13} are aiming at correcting the historical narrative by increasing women artists’ visibility, archiving women’s music, announcing festivals with female electronic and experimental artists, and so on.

What also bears mentioning is the development of noise in South East Asia—which includes Japan, Indonesia and Singapore—as well as the contributions of artists from the Soviet or Communist blocs. The noise scene in Japan, often referred to as Japanoise, is particularly notable for its scope and continues to be a thriving context. An important figure in this scene is the Hijōkaidan vocalist, Junko (Hiroshige), whose way of using her voice is noteworthy for its political resistance to the sociosemiotic function of the extremely high pitch—the ‘sweet voice’—often adopted by Japanese women in the enactment of womanly roles (see Star, 2015, pp. 1–34).\textsuperscript{14} What is thought-provoking about the high-pitched sounds Junko makes is that they come across as ‘troublesome and irritating’ and, in this way, disrupt the sweet, polite character associated with, and historically bestowed upon, the female voice in Japan as well as in many other parts of the world where patriarchy is structural (Chuter, 2014). It thus disrupts the semiotics of the dogmatic images of thought associated with ‘feminine’ voice qualities. As David Novak, the author of \textit{Japanoise}, notes the following:

\textit{I was struck dumb a few milliseconds later, when Junko opened her mouth and emitted an amazingly ear-splitting sound…. Her screaming, I knew in a sudden flash—and then with a wave of nausea and humiliation, as I became}
conscious that we had just begun our ‘collaboration’—I wasn’t just screaming, and Noise wasn’t just ‘making noise’. (Novak, 2013, p. 36)

The histories of hip-hop and rap too are conspicuously absent from the telling of these stories of women in electronic and experimental music. In part, this may be because of the continuing legacy of white supremacy, though it is, in part, also due to the contentious nature of these genres, as Tricia Rose notes. Hip-hop and rap, praised on the one hand for their ‘role as an educational tool’ and the ‘aggressive pro-women’ lyrics of black women rappers are, on the other hand, critiqued for ‘violence at rap concerts, rap producers’ illegal use of musical samples, gangsta raps’ lurid fantasies of cop killing and female dismemberment, and black nationalist rappers’ suggestions that white people are the devil’s disciples’ (Rose, 1994, p. 1). However contentious they may be, hip-hop and rap ‘came of age at the beginning of a new technological revolution’ and, as such, should be given space in conversations about women in electronic and experimental music (Rose, 2008, p. 14). It is, in particular, through the relations of new technologies with various ‘commercial industries’ and ‘mass media outlets’ that ‘rappers attempt to rewrite, rearticulate and revise popular, national, and local narratives’ (Rose, 1994, p. 184). Controversy remains a problem, though, often due to a misinterpretation of contextual factors. For example, when black feminist performance artist Sarah Jones’s song ‘Your Revolution’ was released, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a $7,000 fine to the KBOO radio station in Portland, Oregon, for ‘patently offensive sexual references’ in the song. What they failed to see was that Jones was using ‘common phrases from some of hip-hop’s more sexist lyrics in reverse’ to comment on the sexism in hip-hop and rap (Rose, 2008, p. 123). The fine was later rescinded, but the damage was already done as the song was lumped in with tropes that see hip-hop and rap as little more than music in which violence and ‘sexually explicit misogyny’ are ‘valued’ cultural products’ (Rose, 2008, p. 13). Rose warns, though, that not all explicit material used by women is ‘feminist, anti-patriarchal, or empowering’; pro-sex campaigns are absolutely vital, but using the body in hypersexualised terms does not necessarily mean Lil’ Kim, Trina and Foxy Brown have escaped patriarchal sexual tropes and traps (Rose, 2008, p. 124). These complexities notwithstanding, hip-hop and rap, as Ediz Ozelka argues, should be remembered as a ‘culture founded on African American musical and literary forms’ and ‘an understanding of African American intellectual movements, political struggles, and race consciousness’ is, therefore, crucial not only for contextualising hip-hop
and rap, but also for shaping its aesthetic as a continuous revision of such critical events and practices (Ozelka, 2019).

Perhaps because hip-hop and rap are so steeped in controversy, it is doubly refreshing to find positive critiques of contemporary artists such as FM Supreme,16 M.I.A.17 and Moor Mother (Camae Ayewa),18 the latter using her voice as technology in combination with electronics like modular synthesisers. Born in Aberdeen, Maryland, Ayewa grew up in a public-housing project. She describes its architecture as design that ‘breeds violence’ (Beaumont-Thomas, 2017)—a violence that is reflected in her music:

I keep telling you, I keep saying b
But you don’t hear me because you’re here to kill me
Well let me finish my verse19

An advocate of Afrofuturism, Ayewa manages to sit uncomfortably with the spectres of violence, especially as concerns black women, and yet pushes into the future by creating her own medium, by making herself the medium. ‘A lot of my ancestors are speaking through me’, she says apropos ‘work that makes explicit reference to slave ships and lives lived in chains’ (Battaglia, 2018)—itself a hauntology of the ghosts of place through its coming back to, its address to the living through an engagement with the past. Elsewhere Ayewa declares: ‘I’m trying to study every place a black woman has been. I’m finding out it’s endless. There’s something before being “black” and we’re not taught that’ (Beaumont-Thomas, 2017). It is that something ‘before’ that Ayewa wrenches from the infra-world through her ‘searing, bracing, oftentimes wrenching minglings of distorted electronics with vocals that enlist whispered poetics and disquieting screams’ (Battaglia, 2018). It could be argued that her voice generates not only a technology, but a whole history of technologies and the ghosts they inhabit, including those of slave ships and the vocal revenants of bondswomen, forced into the passages of time. Her words, and her voice as technology, mark a hauntology of the theft of the body throughout the histories of colonialism and patriarchy as she ‘reimagines protest songs as radical electronic noise montages’, searing with incendiary lyrics. ‘It is concrete-heavy, abrasive, and generative’ (Pelly, 2016). In some ways, this requires Ayewa to take the position of a fragmented self who ‘comes to inhabit’ a multiplicity that decolonial theorist María Lugones calls a ‘coalitional infrapolitics’—a ‘multiple perception’ characteristic of ‘women-of-colour feminisms’ in its simultaneous ‘enactment of coloniality of gender and the resistant
response from a subaltern sense of self” (Lugones, 2012, pp. 71–72, 84, emphasis added).

Her contribution notwithstanding, Moor Mother remains a ‘western’ inclusion in the ‘women and technology’ cluster. Important to add to this genealogy are women from the so-called Global South. The Sun Xa Experiment is a welcome addition here. Referencing Ndikho Xaba and Sun Ra in the band’s name, and also sampling them in their music, the group—which was formed in 2014 by Buyisiwe Njoko, Blaq Faith, Ras Irie, OATH and Page—has expanded from its five original members to eight. They describe their goal as teaching ‘about the significance of preserving our history and also creating our own with the work we are doing through collaboration with elders who have played a role in our lives and our country’s [South Africa] existence from political views to music views’ (Grant, 2016). In this sense, they overlap with Moor Mother in their consideration of racialised pasts and other traditions that music and technology bring to the future conditioning of the world. Also noteworthy is Cedrik Fermont’s release of a two-CD compilation featuring electronic music in and from Africa. This compilation, which includes 32 artists and bands from no less than 24 African countries and the diaspora, features 14 women—a reminder that the work of memory is not merely the work of the past but also the work of the present, of inheritance and of generations.

As a final note, it may be necessary to re/think—amidst the compilation of this very partial spectrography of women in electronic and experimental music—what exactly ‘experimental’ is, as well as the specific aural qualities and ‘cultural constructions of sound’ (Caesar, 2020, p. 167) it references or is supposed to invoke. Musicologist and music critic Adam Harper opines that the phrase ‘experimental music’ became used ‘in the mid-twentieth-century to describe a range of ultra-modernist compositional techniques’ with ‘chance elements or improvisation built into it’, although in common parlance it took on a slightly different meaning, denoting a sonic experience that was ‘radically unconventional, pretty weird’ or even an ‘experiment with the very building blocks of musical beauty’ (Harper, 2015). Experimental music, moreover, does not have a single defining compositional characteristic; it includes a wide array of music and sonic experiences. For example, a typical noise performance setup might be ‘created from an interconnected assemblage of consumer electronics, often a group of small guitar effect pedals connected through a mixing board’ (Novak, 2013, p. 141). Other experimental music setups may incorporate
synthesisers and computers, and still others may include field recordings. The point is that the sounds and techniques vary enormously from one kind of ‘experimental’ setup to the next. The thread that brings together these diverse expressions is the core rejection of more institutionalised musical forms, values and institutions. Unfortunately, as is the case with many other kinds of artistic expression, experimental music became historically associated with musicians predominantly from the United States and parts of Europe. This does not, however, mean that experimental music belongs to or was solely created within European and North American cultures, as Cedrik Fermont and Dimitri della Faille convincingly argue in *Not your world music: Noise in South East Asia* (Fermont & della Faille, 2016). As such, ‘experimental music’ is itself a hauntological site; that is, it functions as a spectre which, in Derrida’s view, is a ‘deconstructive figure hovering between life and death, presence and absence’ by ‘making established certainties vacillate’ (Davis, 2005, p. 376). This, then, is the value of a spectrography: not the revelation of a new ‘truth’ but, rather, the *troubling* of existing notions attached to gendered and racialised erasure—the rendering ghostly of women and women of colour—in sonic contexts, where ‘troubling’ is used in Judith Butler’s sense to denote both the disturbing (troubling) negation of gendered (and racialised) subjects, as well as their problematisation (troubling) (Butler, 1990).

**Postscript**

Limbo: neither here nor there; neither dead nor alive. A haunting, then, a spectrography of the infra-world. A ruin points to the violence of symbolism, always ‘to the scene of ghost-producing violence’; hence, ruins are the ‘spectres that collapse time, rendering empire’s foundational past impossible to erase from the national present’ (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 653). Here, in the ruins, we ‘owe it to ourselves to make our own medium’ (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 650). We owe it to ghosts to make ourselves the medium, to make the journey through clairvoyance to the very heart of the violence of mutual implication. *To sense, to sit with, to attempt to speak to the ghost without an image, to listen to forgotten sounds—this is hauntology:*

Wrongs, righting the
Wrongs, writing the
Wrongs, wronging the

*This is the last entry for now, only a temporary stay. More entries wait to be written, and not always patiently.*

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Notes

1. http://syrphe.com/
2. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09tbfp6
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRKuJ-r-F-A
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGrN6PeliOU
5. It is worth noting here that Lisa Rovner’s new documentary, Sisters with Transistors—narrated by Laurie Anderson and focusing specifically on women in electronic and experimental music—was released in 2021.
6. https://www.thewire.co.uk/video/watch-a-short-film-about-laurie-spiegel
7. https://www.electronicbeats.net/the-feed/laurie-spiegel-interview/
8. https://feminatronic.com/
9. https://www.audiblewomen.com/
10. https://soundgirls.org/
11. https://herbeats.es/
12. http://hernoise.org
13. https://electronicgirlslabel.weebly.com/electronicgirls.html
14. Although typical, I am not arguing that the ‘sweet voice’ is the only form of womanly expression in Japanese culture.
15. White supremacy here does not refer to far-right or alt-right movements, or any other overt racialised political ideology. Rather, I use it here to denote structural racism; that is, the collective and institutionalised sociopolitical practices and processes deployed by the state apparatus and its associated mechanisms, such as the law and geographical placement of different races, to perpetuate racial discrimination regarding housing, income and employment, access to medical care, education, criminal justice, profiling, and so on.
16. https://fmsupreme.bandcamp.com/
17. https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/3kgnz9/mia-maya-arulpragasam-matangi-documentary-interview-2019
18. https://www.moormother.net/new-page
19. Lyrics from ‘In a Grave’.
20. For more information on Fermont, see Bernard van Isacker’s 2016 interview with Cedrik Fermont at https://www.side-line.com/interview-with-cedrik-fermont-c-drik-about-less-familiar-underground-scenes-in-the-world-why-am-i-one-of-the-few-africans-in-this-scene-2/
21. https://syrphe.bandcamp.com/album/alternate-african-reality-electronic-electroacoustic-and-experimental-music-from-africa-and-the-diaspora
22. Tuck and Ree (2013, p. 654).

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