D E M O C R A T I C C O M M U N I Q U É

Rhythm Politics: Militant Sound Investigation, Tactical Media, and Listening to Los Angeles' Public Housing Redevelopment of Aliso Village

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This article examines the politics of housing redevelopment and the opposition mounted by the sound collective Ultra-Red in collaboration with the Union de Vecinos (the union of neighbors) in the Boyle Heights district of Los Angeles as a form of tactical media. Through the production of field recordings made out the demolition and the everyday life of the neighborhood, Ultra-Red highlight the conflict between bureaucratic development initiatives and the opposition of the residents of Aliso. What emerges from these recordings is the tentative sounding out and exploration of the audible traces of housing rights: the rights of the city; the needs of community; both posited against the intertwined neoliberal structures of banking, for profit housing developers, city councils, and rental associations, as they work together to shift vulnerable populations out of their neighborhoods.

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In 1998, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) announced that they were going to demolish the East Los Angeles Boyle Heights housing projects, Aliso Village. City governors condemned the buildings as derelict. But according to the Urban Land Institute, a not-for-profit real estate and land usage education and research center, and many other observers, "it was not so much that the buildings were structurally unsound, as that uncontrollable drug gangs made them unsafe . . . [s]upposedly home to 11 active street gangs" (Urban Land Institute, n.d.). Using zoning and development by-laws and funding initiatives created by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI projects, the city structurally adjusted the space of Aliso, as part of the revitalization of the country's worst public housing developments. HOPE VI projects were implemented by the Clinton Administration's reaction against Republicans cries to defund public housing. Residents remember growing up in a difficult, but loving community with family, friends and neighbors and resent the perception and demonization of their neighborhood as structurally unsound, morally corrupt, and effectively derelict; the worst case of the American urban nightmare come true and evidenced by the decay and crime. Abstract questions, measurements, and statistics about the health and viability of communities are used to justify the destruction of homes based on deficiencies that may not actually exist or are exaggerated to justify demolition. The community is excluded from contributing input about the revitalization process or determining how money can be distributed for needed community initiatives like small business grants or infrastructure repairs.

This article examines the politics of housing redevelopment and the opposition mounted by the sound collective Ultra-Red in collaboration with the Union de Vecinos in the Boyle Heights district of Los Angeles as a form of sonic tactical media. Derived from avant-garde artistic practices of DADA and surrealism, the philosophy of everyday life of Michel de Certeau, and developed and refined into a loosely defined and unstructured political approach by the Critical Art Ensemble, tactical media is a loose set of actions rather than a prescription for resistance. At its basis, tactical media depend upon low-to-the-ground, or street, tactics, Do It Yourself (DIY) interventions and to criticize and oppose dominant media forms and narratives. This critique is performative but never settled. Rather than coalescing into a solid program for advocating and agitating a specific issue, tactical media is characterized by plasticity, experiment, and continuous developments that allow "spur of the moment" transitions. David Garcia (2017) writes that tactical media is "not to set out to describe or explain things but rather to do things. Instead of propositions it dealt in 'media acts', frequently taking the form of hoaxes, hacks and sometimes shocking and provocative media pranks" (Garcia, Dieter 2017). The overall goal of a tactical media intervention is to challenge "the existing semiotic regime" by using the tools of commercial media production in a way that redeploys and decenters meaning making. However, in a time of fake news and information saturation, tactical media has lost some of its progressive and activist edge and in some ways has itself been subverted by an alt-right form of tactical media that creates outrage, critiques mainstream media coverage, pranks and hoaxes public figures and whose connection to the truth is tenuous at best. The battle over truth has led to certain semiotic impasses where the effectiveness of a typical tactical media action is blunted by the constant bombardment of what seems like a number of hoaxed, fake, and subversive actions.

One possible way forward is to forge a tactical media that is rooted in sound studies that expands the lexicon of what a tactical media might entail and a new kind of sonic world that may emerge

as a way of understanding politics. The sound collective Ultra-Red provides a method for tactics rooted in sonic approaches and collaborative actions with communities wanting to fight back against media submission they have dubbed Militant Sound Investigation. The collaborative actions involved public art interventions, low-watt radio broadcasts, the production of radio documentaries, and the 2000 release of an album specific to Aliso called *Structural Adjustments* on the Mille Plateaux label. Three albums followed: a remix project called *Planned Austerity;* a follow up album that celebrated and mourned the demolition of Aliso called *Sustainable Developments;* and finally, *The Debt,* the new phase of the project dealing with Ballymun in 2003. *The Debt* brought together residents of Aliso and Ballymun to "compare and contrast experiences with regeneration of social housing" (Ultra-Red, n.d.). *The Debt* phase of the project involved five performances that included dialogues between residents of Ballymun and Pico Aliso; round tables; 9 weeks of radio broadcasts of interviews with residents; site recordings; and electronic music produced from the Ultra-red's visits in Ballymun. This culminated in "an evening of reflection and strategy in sound, all in keeping with Ultra-red's tradition of social housing performances that combine experimental electronics, video projection and community celebration" (Ultra-Red, n.d.). All of these actions subvert normal understandings around how music is consumed and produced to posit sound as a form of research that tactically gives voice as a counter to the neoliberal narratives that surround housing redevelopment and stock in the global order.

But what of a sonic tactical media? Numerous sound artists, most notably Negativland, but also acts like the Tape Beatles and John Oswald's plunderphonics, have used sound to collage, cut-up, subvert, and repurpose the sonic spectrum and challenge the very idea of how music and sound are produced and consumed that challenges the semiotic regime of sonic experience. This usually involves either resampling existing pieces of music, repurposing brand identity, or pirating material to mimic and brandjack well known artists, as Negativland's infamous U2 court case demonstrated. By attending to the sonic effects such as rhythm, delay, echo, and distortion, Ultra-Red developed a compelling sound based sonic epistemology that questions and challenges tactical media's typical approaches.

The Background to Aliso's Housing and Redevelopment

The media deploys stories about fresh starts, personal responsibility, and upward mobility helping to dispossess people from their homes, livelihoods, and access to a decent life on their own terms in the semiotic battle around housing redevelopment and poverty. Moral corruption and public safety narratives have long histories in framing discussions around development and poverty – associating need with blight, disease and the fear of unregulated economies of addiction and dealing, sex work, and theft. The *Los Angeles Times* demonstrates how narrative reinforces ideologies that serve the interests of redevelopment. Articles in the *Los Angeles Times*, such as "Christmas Comes Early to Housing Project" (Anonymous 1998) and "Reviving Pride in the Projects" (Gold 1999) frame narratives of rejuvenation where residents welcome the bulldozers that will tear down their homes and neighborhoods. News stories contrast supposed irreparable and dilapidated conditions with the development of new "two-story townhouses--a spacious, airy place with two bedrooms and two bathrooms-- [that] would fit in many suburban neighborhoods. Inside, the walls are a gleaming white. There's a shiny new oven and refrigerator in the kitchen, and a washer and dryer in a hallway closet" (Gold 1999). The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), the city, and the media deploy and mobilize well-

entrenched stories of decay to gain support for tearing down and re-developing an area that does not require such extreme structural adjustments. The *L.A. Times* omits information about the 50% housing reduction, which replaces 685 housing units with 269 mixed-use units. (Urban Land Institute, n.d.)

Counter-narratives speak to protest, displacement, and anger; that refuse the view that these homes are decrepit and that highlight the community over reckless development. Jack Burnett-Stuart, a Los Angeles architect, commented in an article for the *LA Forum for Architecture and Urban Design* (1999): "the buildings appear shabby, but not particularly foreboding." Rather than a "gang-dominated warzone," Burnett-Stuart (1999) found a vibrancy "typical of many poorer neighborhoods in the city: gardening, car repair, bathing in paddling pools" that contradicted the portrayal of the neighborhood by the media. Burnett-Stuart concluded that no matter how we think about Aliso "there is much more to the culture of Aliso Village than the gangs alone" (Burnett-Stuart 1999). Domestic narratives about an everyday life that most would recognize as their own conflicts with the narrative of active street gangs and intense urban crime. Like many people in neighborhoods, the residents have adapted their housing to create homes by gardening, pursuing hobbies, and utilizing the space they occupy by saturating it with living.

Exasperated, citizens formed the Union de Vecinos (Union of Neighbors) and commissioned an independent engineering study that confirmed that the buildings required little to no maintenance and that tear down was unnecessary. Jacqueline Leavitt questioned the rationality of demolition over revitalization: "Why, in the midst of a severe shortage of affordable housing, is Los Angeles demolishing badly needed public-housing units and replacing only two-thirds of them" (Leavitt 1998)? Improving the lives of people and their living conditions should be a priority, but the shape that assistance should take would be better implemented through the elimination of the structural problems that embed poverty into certain neighborhoods and that maintain racist and class systems of exclusion and division. HUD government funding on multi-year projects requires people to pack themselves for indeterminate amounts of time, to find temporary lodging, and to leave the homes and communities and relationships they have worked so hard to develop. Redevelopment becomes a method for remaking the neighborhood and attracting finance and business while shifting and destabilizing residents out of the neighborhood.

Sonic Tactics

From 1997-2005 the sound and art collective Ultra-Red developed two militant sound investigations in housing redevelopments in Ballymun, Dublin and Aliso Village (now Pueblo del Sol). Ultra-Red conducted the investigations in collaboration with the Union de Vecinos and members of the Women's Resource Center of Ballymun. The entire project is called *Structural Adjustments,* which puns on the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) of the World Bank and International Money Fund where loans and credit are leveraged for emerging nations if they adapt neoliberal policies, free markets, and privatization. This alliance with residents of public housing schemes was initiated to engage in an "inquiry into the impact of neoliberal economic policies on low-income residents" (Ultra-Red 2003). Ultra-Red embarked on a recording and analysis of the community's resistance to the neoliberal logic of demolition that their communities were undergoing through forced privatization of people's homes and neighborhoods.

Ultra-Red uses field recording to construct a tactical poetics of ambience that summon us to listen in on other experiences of the world and in Raley's words "to provoke and to reveal, to defamilarize and to critique" (Raley 2009, p. 7). Recording, composing, decomposing, and recomposing ambience actively re-signifies it to produce places where the embodied and emotional resonance of privatization, the market, and dispossession can be challenged with other modes of exchange, brushing up against neoliberalism's spaces, through listening, silence, understanding, and interaction. Ultra-Red construct maps of conceived spaces, possible spaces, or imagined spaces, while utilizing audio reproduction as a way of remembering and archiving constructive social antagonisms. Therefore, a sonic inscription of space, thick with neglected, modified, and everyday stories of family, communities, eating, washing, loving, envying, that make up the life of any human being. Sonic mappings recontextualize both the dominant narratives being deployed against people and reconfigure the way that we can understand these narratives. Field recording reveals the ambient or atmospheric construction of our sonic environments and resonates lived community spaces with meaningful explorations of the community's need. Ultra-Red writes that, "listening is a site for the organization of politics. In listening, we order desires in relation to need and so *transition to demand*" (Ultra-Red 2011). The transition occurs in the active composition and articulation that something is wrong and needs to be changed. Listening uncovers knowledges of community that form into pedagogy and understanding by listening and reflecting on what the sound of a community represents and does, even as listening possibly remains ephemeral and transitory.

Rhythmical Tactics

The idea of listening to the city as a site of sonic rhythm that is vital and active and affects people's bodies, thoughts, and actions, coheres with Henri Lefebvre's theory of rhythmanalysis. Rhythmanalysis provides an entrance for thinking tactical media as sonic force and provides a method for thinking the connections between sound, development, and activism together. It provides a further frame for thinking about Ultra-Red's practice of militant sound investigation and situates it within a progressive philosophy, via Lefebvre's Marxist approach to rhythm. For Lefebvre, the city is a rhythmic assemblage of lives being lived amidst technological, social and cultural movement in, through, and with time. Rhythms are not simply the sounds and organizational modes of space and time: rhythms (arrhythmias, polyrhythms, eurhythmia) dialectically bring together the mutual repetitive and circular structures of time and space (Lefebvre 2004, p. 8). Rhythms are productive and analytical actions that connect our corporeal experience to the built environment, symbiotically situating the city as a part of the circuit of our nervous systems and neurologically impacting the relational form between people and their environment. Further, the city is a product of human desire but has just as much impact on our imaginations, memories, feelings, and movements.

Cities provide capitalism with many of its resources, including labour, rent, and value. Proponents of neoliberalism and market solutions to inequality have had their greatest success in curtailing the power, legitimacy, and value of public and communal assets to the extent that neoliberalist policies "augment[s] the power of corporations vis-à-vis the state and … produces a democratic deficit because it transfers power from democratic citizens to corporations" (Hardt & Negri 2004). The state, which has long been the provider of public housing and social assistance, positions a condition of ineptness and irrelevance when providing for the well-being of its citizens through neoliberal policymaking. Strategizing to divest people of their rights and

to transfer public money into private holdings, narratives of individual responsibility are leveraged ideologically to focus blame on people for being poor, for being dependent on the 'nanny' state, and for being incapable of 'pulling themselves up by the bootstraps.' Transfers of money and rights are achieved undemocratically by suppressing, ignoring, or discrediting the voices of people who want to participate in the shaping of their lives. American public housing projects, built and managed by the visible hand of the state after the passing of the 1949 Housing Act, have colluded with private developers to transfer responsibility into private housing management companies through a strategy of running public housing inefficiently. Recent years have seen a massive shift away from providing, managing and enacting public housing policy that is communal, in that it provides shelter for a community, to policy, laws and financial certainty that collective rights are better conceptualized and administered as private commodities. This approach is governed by the larger argument that the market is the only place where value can be located.

Cities form crucial links between people and places and structure the networks that connect and create the conditions in which people, money, culture, flow and the urban formation attracts and absorbs people continuously. In their construction we witness the physical manifestations of state policies, corporate interests, and planning and design committees and the expressions of modern and postmodern modes of production and living. In their use, we see the interaction of people with each other and the desires of the lives unfolding and becoming and ending as we walk the streets, take shortcuts, drive, experience parks, worry about pollution and congestions. As a sound source, the city offers a cacophony of noises and arrangements of resonances that have influenced generations of musicians and artists giving rise to cultural expressions that use the experiences of the modern. Cities form combinations of movements that order the flow of sounds, encounter, and ambience make up the relations of our confrontations between the fixed spaces of the city and movements of our bodies. Hardt and Negri explore the concept of the metropolis in light of its biopolitical constitution, noting that the city, the sprawling slums, the metropolises of unending shanties, as well as cities of glass and order are "the first skeleton and spinal cord of the multitude. The built environment that supports its activity, and the social environment that constitutes a repository and skill set of affects, social relations, habits, desires, knowledges and social circuits" (Hardt & Negri 2011, p. 249). The city as a lived, thrumming, and active space is essential for understanding the role that sounds and resonance plays in constructing a theory of ambience.

The Public Space of Sonic Tactics

Pico Aliso is a redevelopment project of McCormack, Baron, Salazar (MBS). MBS was founded in 1973 by Richard Baron, a public interest and civil rights attorney representing public housing tenants in St. Louis, and Terrence "Terry" McCormack, former homebuilder and consultant to labor unions who were both interested in developing housing for elderly union members. MBS has since become the leading for-profit U.S. developer of mixed income housing projects, a multi-billion dollar company that has since 2010, been involved in a strategic partnership with the widely and allegedly corrupt Goldman Sachs for their "shared vision of rebuilding distressed communities" ("McCormack Barona Salazar and Goldman Sachs" n.d.). At first, it would seem ridiculous to critique a company for building affordable housing and for focusing on helping those who seem to need it most: yet the ideological implications of for-profit housing development reveals that what is at stake in the struggle over representation and meaning

between neoliberal policies and those they affect, particularly when tied to the infamous investment bank, Goldman Sachs. The new Pueblo del Sol consists of 377 rental apartments and 93 for-sale attached houses, replaced a 685-unit building, reducing housing by 215 units or displacing approximately, 1200 people**.** This at a time of an acute housing shortage in a city widely recognized as having the largest homelessness problem in America. The first phase of the rental units came online in December 2003 and since then, Pueblo del Sol has remained fully leased with a waiting list of over 2,000. The Boyle Heights area of LA, where Pueblo Del Sol is located, has a poverty rate of 33% and a home ownership rate of 11% (City Data, n.d.).

In their mission statement *Constitutive Utopias,* Ultra-Red write that "when one understands public space as the way in which tactics are deployed, their ambience so to speak, one discovers a wide range of practices with the potential to elaborate on material space. Furthermore, protest as a way of producing public space becomes less about speaking truth to power (a realist definition of social relations in space) than the affect of specific strategies: theatre, re-signification, deterritorialization, occupations —the ambience of counter-systemic spaces" (Ultra-Red 2000a). The constitution of contesting a space is not dependent upon "speaking," thereby implicating and entangling oneself in the definitional and dynamic of neoliberal power relations but in the use of creative and imaginative strategies that allow individuals, groups, collectives, to actually reshape, reimagine, and recontextualize space through the mobilization of affective strategies (Gregg & Seigworth 2010, p. 1). The narratives of neoliberalism crowd out voices, distort time, and reconfigure space through the clamor of noise and commotion of panics and anxieties about the world. It is important to listen to the noise. Engaging with space on a level that challenges or disrespects power creates new ways of relating to public and private spaces and produces new forms of living. These spatial interventions have long histories, both in avant-garde artistic practices and in the radical and political reassembling of everyday life along lines of justice. Frequently, the two can come together to articulate cultural and political reformation for more equality. Recognizing the ambience of radical encounters between art and politics, sound and organizing, disposes of the relational recognition required by speaking truth to power and replaces it with the imposition of a new ambience, or a new way of affectively experiencing space. In more poetical terms, space is where living is created and occurs, where people organize to make their spaces better, where the neighborhood reaches beyond its boundary and forms connections and associations with other communities and people who are then able to assert their rights over spatial organization and imagine and demand a city that respects communities, homes, and public spaces that are organized around justice.

Neoliberal narratives help dismantle public housing initiatives by presenting disaster stories that position public housing as a useless spaces of diminished potential (Goetz 2013). Formal descriptions of public housing problems give voice to the behavior of the residents and blame them for the decay because of their addiction, poverty, crime, negligence and laziness. Mismanagement and corporate malfeasance are absent. The ecology of poverty that characterizes public housing communities and traps its residents will find a cure in the medicine of redevelopment, which will generate health through upward mobility, personal choice, and the opportunity to escape finally the cycle of poverty. A discourse of public housing obsolescence vocalizes that the built environment, property and land use, and the institutional frameworks that first conceived the provision of public housing, are no longer sufficient means for subsidizing homes. Voice is an essential component of telling stories about the effects of dispossession,

acting as "a connecting term that interrupts neoliberalism's view of economics and economic life, challenges neoliberalism's claim that its view of politics as market functioning trumps all others, enables us to build an alternative view of politics that is at least partly oriented to valuing processes of voice, and includes within that view of politics a recognition of people's capacities for social cooperation based on voice" (Couldry 2010, p. 2). Voice can articulate exploitation and views that denigrate poverty as a personal fault rather than the social and economic organization of the world (Briante 2010). Couldry ties voice to the intimate reorganization of space and the normalized and embedding of neoliberalism into our daily lives: "[Neoliberalism] crowds out other rationalities… it shapes the organization of space. Some types of space become prioritized, others fall out of use and so stop being imagined; because voice is embodied, this matters hugely for the effectiveness of voice, since neoliberalism literally changes where we can and cannot speak and be heard" (Couldry 2010, p. 12). The neoliberal narrative frames the space of public housing through the language used to denigrate it and by deploying ideas that put the public against the private. A competing counter-narrative is required to contest the terms of the debate and to recuperate strong principles of the social and justice for those who live in the community. When put together, neoliberal discourse of housing does not just represent a falsehood but acts as a material force that physically displaces people and creates more vulnerability. Neoliberalism values spaces that are private, financialized, and commodified.

Tactical Ambience and Militant Sound

Field recordings construct tactical poetics of ambience that summons us to listen into an experience of the world that reconstructs the sonic immersion in which lives unfold. Ambience normally refers to the background of emotional structures of feeling that constructs moods and expressive responses that condition passive reactions to places, memories, history, intersubjective relations, and all the stuff that wraps and embeds us in the social and cultural tissue of our bodies, brains, and communities. Against the genre of Muzak[1] and its connection to placating the worker and stimulating consumerism, ambient music was to provide an escape or at least an obscuration of the frustrations and hectic pace of everyday life, a way of minimally interacting with the world, a soundtrack for relaxation and inner calm. But from a quantifiable perspective ambience forms a critical part of our collective material reality on par with and a part of the experience of the city: one need only stop and listen to discern the rhythms of the home or to step outside to detect and experience the tempos, textures, patterns and pulses that structure and define the quotidian arrangements of life that construct the encounter between ourselves and the world. Ambience frames the encounter between sound and space in active, reactive, and material ways that question and interrogate how conceived space is defined, constructed and remade and appropriated into lived space through everyday usage. Field recording reveals the ambient construction of our sonic environments and experience and resonates lived space with meaning.

Recording and listening to this ambience moves us radically beyond linear modes of analysis into active communicative methods that develop collaborative investigations of the sonic

[1] Muzak is a company known for producing ambient or "elevator music" is an unobtrusive but ubiquitous music that is often played in elevators, shopping centers or in restaurants. As of this writing, Muzak has rebranded itself as a "mood" media company deploying a whole range of affective products such as music, scent, and visuals (and weirdly but obviously, CCTV technology) to brand business atmospheres. See: http://www.muzak.com/ for more information.

construction of space. Ultra-Red calls this militant sound investigation, which "must collaborate across localities, identities, and disciplinary borders to formulate a science of struggle. Such a science, implicitly and finely tuned to affective logic, is an analysis of the conditions of desire as they inform (and exceed) the enunciation of demands. If the word science is over determined, then let us call for an 'acoustics of change'" (Ultra-Red 2011). Ultra-Red actively engages with the recording, listening through the initial silences to the needs, demands, and desires revealed in the recording. Listening reveals both a dialogical knowledge of the space that is formed into a pedagogical dissemination through listening to the sounds and voices and reflecting on what these sounds both mean and do. Militant sound investigation engages in a 'sound' investigation, both in terms of its object of analysis but also as a holistic way of understanding how injustice occurs and what we can learn in opposition to the discourses of power and neoliberalism. The relationship between dialogue and pedagogy constitutes a struggle which is a call for analysis and organization, a procedure for engagement and a process of listening that will reveal the desire that will turn in to the demand: "listening is a site for the organization of politics. In listening, we order desires in relation to need and so *transition to demand*" (Ultra-Red 2011). This transition occurs in the active composition of affect or the consciousness that something is wrong and needs to be changed.

Recording begins in the middle, when the microphone is switched on or when the record button is depressed and let go, when the meters indicate that the levels are set and that we are ready to begin. The microphone absorbs social space and listening confronts us with the multitude of social effects encountered in the recording. The microphone presents itself as an objective method of inquiry, while the person pointing the microphone is immersed in their social, ideological, and political positions as a subject. The microphone is promiscuous in its desire to capture all sounds, but the recorder is a biased by the listening subject whose ears follow the sounds they find the most compelling. Recording the confrontations and contradictions of lived space documents and archives the struggles over spatial justice. Ultra-Red writes that, "the microphone does not have a perspective on the site of struggle. It does not stand apart from the struggle. Rather, it is a site for the production of the conditions of struggle. Inquiry is conditioned by the collective organizing of demands. In a militant sound investigation, we take time to organize the social field to be recorded. Social field + organizing = soundscape. The organization of the social field demands that we listen in desire and that we listen beyond the echoes of our need" (Ultra-Red 2011).

It is also profoundly poetic, apprehending the sound of buildings, structures, natural forces, and the effects of their placement and arrangement while also revealing sound itself as structuring, building, and informing spatial understanding. The promiscuity of the microphone obscures the lines between the social, the personal, and political while revealing what is taken for granted, the unnoticed and unremarkable processes that operate in the gaps where ideology may enter and colonize the imagination.

The microphone and the process of recording are crucial concepts for understanding militant sound investigation and its relation to space. Peter Doyle wrestles with the problem of what the fabrication of sonic space might signify in popular music. (Doyle 2005). Drawing on the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Doyle argues that music is part of the continual process of making and unmaking space, or in Deleuze and Guattari's language: territorializing

and deterritorializing. Deleuze and Guattari's examples are linguistic and based on the idea that words are ways of doing things. Language is not a neutral way of communicating something, but is in Ronald Bogue's words implicated in "enforcing a social order by categorizing, organizing, structuring and coding the world" (Bogue 2005, p. 111). Meaning shifts in usage as contexts shift, as people play with language, as conventions are reinforced or subverted, as accents inflect the language differently, as class, gender and social roles restrict or expand meanings, and as media, courts, schools, and government interact with our ideas. Bogue wrote that when "language users subvert standard pronunciations, syntactic structures or meanings, they "deterritorialize" the language, in that they detach it from its clearly delineated, regularly gridded conventions, codes, labels and markers. Conversely, when users reinforce linguistic norms, they "territorialize" and "reterritorialize" the language" (Bogue 2005). This concept can be ported to composition, sound and music, where recording defines the territory and composition and processing the field recording deterritorializes it. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) Deleuze and Guattari define the function of deterritorialization as "the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory. It is the operation of the line of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 508). Lines of flight consist of ideas of possibility and becoming or the creation of something else (something new) through the fleeing what one has already become whether willingly or through force. Recording composes the gap between the collective desires of the inhabitants of public housing to subvert the 'business as usual' model of demolition and displacement.

The microphone as a technological object is well understood in terms of its operation, however, as a political and imaginational tool, it is been less explored. Expanding on Doyle's use of Deleuze and Guattari, we can argue that recording recovers a territory and makes us pay attention to what is under the surface which creates a minor history. The minor history forms a counter-explanation to the major history, exposing what has been forgotten, or deliberately left out of the official record; the people and events who have barely had an opportunity to speak and be listened to. We may also refer to this minor history as the arrival of a haunting or the reappearance and insistence to recognize what has been forgotten, an uncanny moment where what has been assumed and known suddenly spills over into unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory. Deterritorialization involves the critique and dissolution of power relations and opens the territory up to new possibilities of becoming something other, and the possibility of becoming something better. Territorialization operates as the ordered and official systemized organization of social space. It is the everyday usage of language, ideas, and culture that we can take for granted. Deterritorialization then takes apart these normalizations and creates something new out of them. As a metaphor that depends upon the idea of mapping and geographic space for its impact, we can apply this to the a sonic mapping of space, thick with stories that have been neglected, modified, and used for the purposes of dispossession. But there are also the everyday stories of family, communities, eating, washing, loving, envying, punishment, that make up the true life of any human being.

Militant sound investigation highlights these gaps, the force of sounds that go unheard, or spaces that are unconsciously experienced, the consistent sound of traffic, the cyclic hum of our public electrical systems, the never-ending noise of the world's mechanical, technical and biological movements. These sounds, so familiar that they are almost completely unconsciously experienced become extraordinarily unfamiliar when listened to outside of their particular context. Ultra-Red write that "even when we turn off the tendency to listen 'for' music (on its

behalf), the soundscape our consciousness collages, arrives at meaning through the same modalities of memory, repetition, juxtaposition, rhythm, harmonics and silence. Listening, we find there's a lot there: sub-sonic rumbles from the street, feet slapping on pavement, coughing, yelling, helicopters" (Ultra-Red 2000a). In other words, there is life being lived there and space in formation on the molecular everyday level. And there is power: surveilling, listening, and constructing the conditions and processes of the law, development, and displacement. Social space is made into lived space through people's engagement and use of that space that brings us into a proximal concern about the environmental use of the spaces we experience: how they are constructed and how ambience effects listening creates and composes new rhythmical understandings and empathies and discloses the denial of 'rights to the city.' In the listening we hear the life that goes on in public housing despite or in spite of, the negligence and abandonment of the tenants. It is in listening that we might begin to understand and hear another story.

Militant sound investigation emphasizes the necessity of listening in the exchange of information and communication between the voice and the ear. By "listening, we acknowledge each other's status as being capable of giving an account of ourselves and the world we share. A single act of listening can therefore be undermined by a wider pattern of action where reciprocity between the same parties is missing" (Couldry 2010, p. 146). The problem is how careful listening can happen within a public sphere seemingly dominated by the cacophonous plurality of people speaking, yelling, and demanding recognition to be heard. The practical voice that articulates good sense and realistic solutions to spatial injustices is drowned out, shouted down, or ignored. But this assumes a voice that is speaking to power. Instead of speaking truth to power it may be useful to listen to how sound strategizes the force of power to reconfigure narratives and to recontextualize conceived space. Ambience is part of the contested site where meaning is produced and argued over and where ideas are presented and consumed, but also challenged, rejected, transformed, and repurposed, passively registered and unthinkingly digested. Ambience is involved in the active resonance of contesting the arrangements of space.

Neoliberal accounts presume to know how the poor live and form a continuum with past narratives that steered the City of Los Angeles to clear the slums in the first place. Debates over people's health and welfare initiated public housing debates in the 1930s and 1940s that resulted in American public housing initiatives and the erection of Aliso Village in 1941. Briante (2010) traced the history of Los Angeles' fears about Boyle Heights slums in the 1920s and 1930s that hinged on disease, immorality and decrepitude, a presentation of an "epidemic model of social ills that would plague the city if left to grow unchecked in the slum" (Briante 2010, p. 131). Based on these stories the slums were cleared to build Aliso "necessitating the demolition of some 417 housing units in a practice that was a combination of ethnic prejudice and developer's boon" (Briante 2010, p. 131). In the 1990s the pathological narrative returns, highlighting the privilege of authorial voices of city officials, development companies, the L.A. media, and the support system of real estate and home owners' associations, and Business Improvement Associations, now steeped in neoliberal concepts of personal responsibility, the market, and the erosion of the state. The expertise of these institutions is deployed and incontrovertible: there is no need to listen to the voices of the people being effected by the redevelopment, the voices which insist that these are not obsolete spaces, but homes that are used and neighborhoods that are useful. Controlling what is said and paying careful attention to who can speak

neoliberalism's ideology represents and signifies the world as a utopia of markets and individual responsibility.

Conclusion: Pathologic Voices

Tactical media's future will both draw on its past, while also recognizing other avenues for development. Recording, decomposing, and recomposing the ambience of a space actively re-signifies it to produce counter-affective ambiences, places where the embodied and emotional resonance of privatization, the market and dispossession can be countered with a mode of exchange, a relationship, that can brush against neoliberalism's hegemony and detach, even if temporarily, from those forms and enact a just space in its encounter. Steve Goodman (2010) writes that, "as opposed to sound as text, the dimension explored here is that of sound as force. Sonic warfare then is the use of force, both seductive and violent, abstract and physical, via a range of acoustic machines (biotechnical, social, cultural, artistic, conceptual), to modulate the physical, affective, and libidinal dynamics of populations, of bodies, of crowds" (Goodman 2010, p. 10). These spaces may be utopian but they also may engage in sonic warfare to achieve their ends. The question remains how we might we practically conceive of the voice and the ear as a kind of tactical sonics contributing to countering dispossession and creating spatial justice? What role does sound play in countering the narratives of neoliberalism? How does sound contribute to asserting the right to the city and defining and articulating community? In challenging the territories between the quotidian and the artistic, Ultra-Red asked "if we understand organizing as the formal practices that build relationships out of which people compose an analysis of strategic actions, how might art contribute to and challenge those very processes? How might those processes already constitute aesthetic forms" (Ultra-Red 2000b). This is an essential question and that one brings us into the contestable and fraught realms of aesthetics and politics; a notorious space of disagreement and argument, but one that has solid precedent in articulating ways of challenging power that displace and ignore the desires of people to exist in the way that they want. We must listen to the stories that valorize the dispossessed and call attention to the vulnerable. Composing the field alludes to that which is coming to the surface and constructs a frame.

Sound, quite obviously, plays a fundamental role in speaking, listening and hearing and we have looked at the ways that power exists between different narratives around public housing space and the way that certain voices are privileged and neglected. Methodologically, Ultra-Red engaged in a tactical sonic mapping, a kind of ethnography, of contested spaces, people, and situations that are being exploited or used to produce conditions that do real damage to people's lives. Sonic mappings recontextualize both the dominant narratives being deployed against people and also reconfigure the way that we can understand these narratives, moving from an image-based economy of representations to a auditory-based sonic materialism. Sonic materialism recognizes the force that sound can have. These spaces are contested because they involve representations of people who are either unable to represent themselves effectively in the media landscape or who are marginalized in their representations: the urban poor, people with AIDS, migrants and immigrants, queer communities. Ultra-Red involves the community in an enunciative act of explanation to tell the stories of divergent narratives that recreate the ambient register of homes, communities, parks, neighborhoods and cities. As Militant Sound Investigation this produces an investigation rooted in "sound based research that directly engage the organizing and analyses of political struggles" (Ultra-Red 2000b). Through the investigation

of sound Ultra-Red are arguing that there is a sonic response to the organization of space that can creatively intervene and reconfigure how we understand space, community, relationships, and others to find a common ground of opposition against the dominant narratives. While recognizing that voice is important to the communicative matrix there is a deficit of listening. Listening itself needs to be privileged in the speaking/listening/feeling complex. The reception and comprehension of material communication can be used to build new ways of understanding and new ways of becoming, if even for just a moment. By speaking back to those who maintain the narrative of vulnerability, Ultra-Red, and others involved in resisting neoliberal fundamentalism, sound resistant notes that are capable of signaling defiance, rebellion, and non-cooperation to the sound of power. This is important, as it re-presents the spatial arrangements of stories that get told by people who have little or no knowledge of those experiences.

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