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## ***Like Electronic Techno Music: The Accelerating Rhythms of Collapsing Cryospheric Auralities***

**Abstract:** With its mutating cracks, bleeps, and booms, the contemporary cryosphere speaks in accelerating volumes. A number of contemporary artists transform these sounds of collapsing, disappearing ice into broadcastable frequencies. Rather than a remote distance beyond the reach of relevance, these artworks translate the effects of Antarctica’s melting ice into galvanizing sonic affects. These strange sonics make the pre-existing, myriad connections between ice shelves and human selves apparent. This essay surveys the work of artists Andrea Polli, Adrian Wood (in collaboration with glaciologist Grant MacDonald), Luftwerk, and Himali Singh Soin, in order to think through a phenomenon which I call ‘collapsing cryospheric auralities.’ More than purely doom-laden dictatics, these sonic artworks strive to propagate hope in equal measure: gestating new trajectories and other futures beyond the seemingly intractable impasses of the present.

**Keywords:** cryosphere; ice; sound art; auralities; ecopoetics.

In 1997 a mysterious ultra-low frequency sound was detected by the USA’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at Point Nemo. As the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility – the furthest point from land located in the Pacific – Point Nemo is one of the least inhabited places on Earth. Wild speculations swirled around the origin of what came to be known as the Bloop, with some ascribing the sound to secret military ops, while others deemed it the call of an as-yet-undiscovered species. In 2005 the provenance of the Bloop was finally identified as reverberations from the icequake of calving icebergs in Antarctica; a local cryo-collapse that thundered across transoceanic space as a sonic rupture.<sup>1</sup> Similar seismic activity has since been recorded at the Ross Ice Shelf and reported as “eerie singing.”<sup>2</sup> Reaching outwards

<sup>1</sup> National Ocean Service. “What is the Bloop?” NOAA.gov, <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/bloop.html>, acc. on February 5, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Griffin, “Eerie ‘singing’ sounds heard coming from the Antarctic ice shelf,” Independent.co.uk, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/ice-shelf-singing-strange-noises-explained-climate-change-global-warming-a8590321.html>, acc. on January 21, 2021.

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whilst plunging into the depths, these bloop and songs are characteristic of accelerating ecological decline and ice loss, what I will call ‘collapsing cryospheric auralities.’ Emblematic of planetary weirding, these melting sonics are icy materialities made creaturely, set loose, and brought close.

Many contemporary sound artists have mobilized recorded sound footage and sonification – or the translation of scientific data into sound – as a means of singing Earth’s sinking cryosphere to general audiences. On the artscience of ice and its narratology in her work, artist Andrea Polli contends “there really is a story that is being told by even the most abstract music”.<sup>3</sup> It is a story of accelerating collapse, of needed mitigation. Polli has also stated these eerie frozen-sounds are “so bizarre and otherworldly [...] like electronic techno music.”<sup>4</sup> Polli’s ecomusicological approach to the cryosphere is recorded in her album *Sonic Antarctica* (2009), and is echoed by Adrian Wood’s artwork *dripping, creaking, flowing* (2019). A collaboration with glaciologist Grant MacDonald, Wood’s piece simulates and riffs on Antarctic soundscapes in order to make perceptible “the human shaped nature of the landscape [...] because] it’s possible for art to move people from their position in a way that may not be possible through science.”<sup>5</sup> Inspired by the collapse of the Larsen-C ice shelf in 2017, collaborative Luftwerk’s sound installation *White Wanderer* (2017 - ongoing) mobilizes seismic recordings of calving Antarctic icebergs to sonically narrate ecological decline, thereby making cryospheric collapse immediately apprehendable for general audiences.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, poet and artist Himali Singh Soin’s sound piece *Antarctica was a queer rave before it got busted by colonial white farts* (2020) takes dominant imaginaries of the continent as a final frontier in need of conquest and flips it. Instead, polar ice becomes an unruly agent through which decolonial resistance and queer utopian visions can be, slipperingly, embraced. As we will see, throughout collapsing cryospheric auralities, the agency, materiality, and fictionality of Antarctica’s melting ice take center stage.

From deep Pacific bloop through to the orchestrations of contemporary art: the morphing auralities of ice reach greater amplitudes, becoming a swansong for the cryosphere. But that is not all. Surveying contemporary artists’ explorations of cryospheric auralities, this paper posits that icy soundscapes, both real and designed, are not the doomed laments they may seem. Refusing a drifting demise into silence, these strange sonics are anthems engendering new affective relations between Antarctic expanses, planetary-scale cryodynamics, and worldwide publics. Leveraging the eeriness, alterities, and eco-poetics of ice to form new affective entanglements, these sonic artworks galvanize mass action for the protection and preservation of the planet’s dwindling cryosphere.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Rejcek, “The Art of Sound,” *The Antarctic Sun: News about Antarctica – Sound Art*, <https://antarceticsun.usap.gov/features/1337/>, acc. on February 5, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> UChicagoarts, “Dripping, Creaking, Flowing: Narratives of Hydrological Change in Antarctica,” YouTube.com, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfTtTaewjQ&ab\\_channel=uchicagoarts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfTtTaewjQ&ab_channel=uchicagoarts), acc. on February 5, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Spirit of Space “White Wanderer – Luftwerk in collaboration with NRDC,” Vimeo.com, <https://vimeo.com/227948817>, acc. on May 21, 2021.

## Soundwaves are a Transporter: Andrea Polli

Takeoff procedures crackle at the launch of media artist Andrea Polli's album *Sonic Antarctica*. You hear human voices as they stain through the competing distortions of microphones, helicopter blades, and ambiguous sonic miscellanea. The relay of confirmation to request speed-up and overlap, building into the chorus of crewed flight. Hybrids of mechanical, organic, and environmental components turn to sonorous drones and weave into lulling resonances: a fuzzy, elusive syncopation. Echoes of cracking and interacting ice unfurl across the Taylor Glacier, as hydrological flows chew further, deeper. The crunch of traversed ice, and of ice traversing, become ubiquitous. The auralities of bodies in motion, with their scuttling steps and frozen breaths, become a sonic leitmotif providing a human scale of being and perception to the deep time of ice.

Composed of field recordings, interviews, and data from scientific instruments taken during Polli's National Science Foundation residency in 2007–8, *Sonic Antarctica* brings together acoustic ecologies from the shores of McMurdo Sound to the geographic South Pole. Over the course of the album katabatic winds (the Earth's fastest) howl, in conversation with musing climate scientists. Speaking in snippets, one scientist states the "intangible" importance of sensory experiences within the environments their instruments measure.<sup>7</sup> A necessary accompaniment to data, the body takes its measure too. Amongst the embodied sounds of sensing scientists chimes, the splutter of sped-up data. Seismometer recordings turn spectral and electric as they unearth invisible subsurface activity; strange sonics invoking the benevolent bleeps of retro science fiction's speculative technologies. These alien sonic sequences could be interstellar communiques, encrypted with the schematics and data of/from unknown worlds. In concert, these myriad sonics emphasize the sensual and immediate role Antarctic ice plays within our contemporary understandings of the world.

Due to its crucial importance for maintaining planetary environmental conditions, Polli has spoken of the need to center Antarctic ecologies within global debates on climate collapse, and advocates for polar education to become more widespread. This centering is at odds with how Antarctica has conventionally been configured within most cartographic imaginaries, where it is relegated to the planetary periphery. A case in point, the *Mercator Projection* (1569), as the predominant visual means of representing the Earth's surface composition, centers Europe and spirals out with increasing distortions to geological reality. Within these estranged and warped latitudes, Antarctica becomes a jagged set of white peaks, a skipping or doodled border bracketing the main drama of human history above.<sup>8</sup> Antarctica as an enframing

<sup>7</sup> Andrea Polli, "Sonic Antarctica," Gruenrekorder, [https://www.gruenrekorder.de/?page\\_id=342](https://www.gruenrekorder.de/?page_id=342), acc. on February 5, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> For more on imaginaries, cartography and Antarctica see Charne Lavery, "Southern Oceanicity," Listennotes.com. <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/the-wiser-podcast/charne-lavery-southern-fXQ5bCTcEpY/> acc. on January 21, 2021.

cradle of ice promotes perceptions of the continent as strange, distant and illegible. Even in alternative attempts to represent an undistorted Earth, such as Buckminster Fuller's *Dymaxion Map* (1943), Antarctica remains situated outside, seeming to drift forever alone and separate. Cartographic imaginaries situating Antarctica as distant and wreathed in unfathomable ice, have led the continent to be configured as "a challenge to representation".<sup>9</sup> In a resounding riposte, Polli fights the peripheralization of Antarctica with the affective proximities and intimacies of sound.

In *Sonic Antarctica*, translation and broadcasting of ice's increasing ephemerality fold the abstract, planetary scales of anthropocenic decline into the supposed remoteness of Antarctic expanses, turning the massive and the distant into an immediate sonic embrace. The crunch and slush of imperiled ice thus become a vehicle for forming more visceral connections between general audiences and polar extremity; where soundwaves forge affective bonds between jeopardized ice and distracted publics. Ecological resonances between bodies – of ice and of humans – which may remain spatially distant but are always already interconnected, are harmonized in *Sonic Antarctica's* ghostly soundscapes. Polli's sonic work amplifies how art is a connector, its soundwaves a transporter.

### To (Re)Collect the Sound

Sound and mapping continue to tap out a strange, dripping dance. Your cursor hovers over the silent screen, on which a satellite photo of Antarctica's McMurdo ice shelf rests. You move miles over the shelf in the seconds of a wandering digit. Yellow dots signal areas of interest; you travel between these points of color, disjunctive against the cool palette of grey and white. Alighting on one of these destinations, water ripples as wind rattles, creaking. Perhaps it's you wading through. At another spot, ice surrenders to a river's insistence in mounting volumes, flowing. But at another spot the ice remains, thinning there. So perhaps you tread gingerly above instead. You cast about the screen, looking for more markers. Incongruously, industrial sounds grind out from amongst the flows, echoes from the decommissioned Pegasus airstrip ring out, construction site reality passing into faulty myth.

The sound map *dripping, creaking, flowing* (2019 – ongoing) onomatopoeically performs its content through its reconstruction of Antarctic soundscapes.<sup>10</sup> Inverting Polli's remixed field recordings, *dripping's* similar sonic textures are simulations based upon the memories of Grant MacDonald, a glaciologist who has conducted research

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<sup>9</sup> Jennifer Fay, "Antarctica and Siegfried Kracauer's Cold Love," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 33, 3 (2011): 295.

<sup>10</sup> Adrian Wood. "Dripping, creaking, flowing," *drippingcreaking.stream*, <https://drippingcreaking.stream/>, acc. February 25, 2021.

in the region. In collaboration with artist Adrian Wood, *dripping* was created using quotidian materials such as crunched dog biscuits, poured sand, trodden salt, and the sampled cacophony of a construction site in Chicago, all layered together to mimic Antarctica's varying ecological conditions.<sup>11</sup> These concocted and scavenged sonic fragments were then embedded within a satellite image of the McMurdo ice shelf, to create a “parafictional sound map” of cryospheric reality.<sup>12</sup> This aural simulation collapses the false polarities of documentation and mimicry, organism and artifice, in order to make the “natureculture” environment of Antarctica speak.<sup>13</sup>

Remembered and imagined, *dripping's* sonic modes of fabulation are as much the storying of science – translating its findings into a generally relatable aural form – as it is a human story. The explicit artifice of this sonics emphasizes that Antarctica's ice is “a landscape entirely, if indirectly, shaped by human hands.”<sup>14</sup> The mutability and mutation of ice are broadcast as polyvocal simulations, belying the myth that Antarctica is too distant to have been formatively touched by humans' hands. The mediation of Antarctic ecologies through the sensorium of one glaciologist also fuses together scientific and sensual knowledge, instrumental and embodied modes of sensing. *dripping* translates human action into eco-sonic perception; a methodology of cause and effect which gives “people a way to connect emotionally to the changing landscape in Antarctica.”<sup>15</sup> These fusions demonstrate how “to think sonically is to think conjecturally about sound and culture [...] Sonic imaginations are necessarily plural, recursive, reflexive, driven to represent, refigure and redescribe.”<sup>16</sup> *dripping's* conjunctural sonic thinking demonstrates the vibrant ways in which seemingly disparate cultures and environments continuously interact over geophysical, imaginary, and affective realms of being.

In *dripping*, the memory of once frozen ice flows into a memorial for its accelerating demise, capturing the changing soundscape of Antarctica before it completely capsizes. In a reverse temporal maneuver, at times *dripping* could just as easily be interpreted as a simulated catalog of sonic ghosts from a long lost cryosphere, conjured by future humankind of advanced climate collapse. Juxtaposed with this hauntological and futural sorrow, MacDonald and Wood have also spoken of the intention to curate alternative cryospheric sound maps, sonic fictions charting the counter futures of what could optimistically be, rather than what desperately is. These alternative timelines correspond to and fan out from, different forms of human action in the present. If in *Sonic Antarctica* sound is a transporter, then, with *dripping's* intermingled pasts and futures, it is also a time machine.

<sup>11</sup> UChicagoArts, “Dripping, Creaking, Flowing: Narratives of Hydrological Change in Antarctica,” YouTube.com, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfTtTTaewjQ&ab\\_channel=uchicagoarts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfTtTTaewjQ&ab_channel=uchicagoarts), acc. on February 5, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Adrian Wood, “Dripping, creaking, flowing,” [Adrianwoodstudio.com](https://www.adrianwoodstudio.com/dripping-creaking), <https://www.adrianwoodstudio.com/dripping-creaking>, acc. on February 5, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> On the inseparability of nature and culture see Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Sterne, ed., *The Sound Studies Reader* (Routledge: London, 2012), 5.

## Wandering Ice

The distance moves towards you. It begins like a foghorn, sounding out the darkness, sounding out trouble, an alarm. Within the horn's continued blare of slight variation, the plunk and pluck of the submerged world courses, becoming a steady syncopation. The purr and roar of the wind is a faint but omnipresent percussion. The possibility of aeroplane drones above. Water and air in concert, in conflict. Other species of sound tune in and out, swooping across the din, aloof. The foghoring accelerates, giving way to the surfacing Kraken it once heralded. Bestly, it thunders out, alone, and is gone. Chirps arrive, echoing, sounds of descent. The submarine plunk remains, a steady, prevailing witness. These palimpsestic sounds are spectral anomalies, an annotation of planetary decline written with, in, and by the ice.

The Larsen Ice Shelf has been breaking apart over the last 30 years, with accelerating speed. A subsection of this Shelf, named Larsen B, collapsed into calving icebergs over the course of a month in 2002, a rate of disintegration and dispersal which exists at stark odds with the Shelf's previous stability over the last 10,000-years.<sup>17</sup> Larsen B's collapse destabilized the rest of Larsen, leading some of Larsen C to calve into one of the largest icebergs ever seen in 2017. Although the shattering of Larsen C was not directly captured, the seismic and hydroacoustic effects of similar scale icebergs have been recorded by glaciologist Douglas R. MacAyeal and his team.<sup>18</sup> MacAyeal has subsequently sped up these recordings to reveal a monstrous bestiary of sound.<sup>19</sup> Prompted by the dramatic collapse of Larsen C, and MacAyeal's otherworldly seismic records, Luftwerk (a collaboration between artists Petra Bachmaier & Sean Gallero) attempt to capture the momentousness of cryospheric collapse in their multi-sensory sound piece *White Wanderer* (2017– ongoing).<sup>20</sup> Initially, *White Wanderer* was exhibited at Chicago's 2 Riverfront Plaza where a crack – representing the rupture of Larsen C – was painted across the facade of the building. The accompanying sound piece was composed of the creaturely cacophonies of breaking the ice. The latest iteration of the project named *Requiem: A White Wanderer* (2020) comprises a collaboration with composer Katherine Young and a sound installation in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion. Broadcast as strange sonics through the streets of downtown Chicago, *Requiem* was designed to be either sought out or happened upon by unsuspecting pedestrians.

<sup>17</sup> Earth Observatory, "Larsen B," NASA, <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/world-of-change/LarsenB>, acc. on May 21, 2021. See also Eugene Domack, Diana Duran, Amy Leventer et al., "Stability of the Larsen B ice shelf on the Antarctic Peninsula during the Holocene epoch," *Nature* 436 (2005): 681–85.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas MacAyeal, Emilie Okal, Richard Aster J. N. Bassis, "Seismic and hydroacoustic tremor generated by colliding icebergs," *Journal of Geophysical Research Earth Surface* 113, F3 (2008).

<sup>19</sup> New Scientist, "Iceberg movements create eerie songs," Youtube.com, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Y2FLxYK80&ab\\_channel=NewScientist](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Y2FLxYK80&ab_channel=NewScientist), acc. on May 21, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Luftwerk, "White Wanderer," Luftwerk.net, <http://luftwerk.net/projects/white-wanderer/>, acc. on May 21, 2021.

Accompanying these (un)expected sonic encounters, Luftwerk installed Emily Dickinson's *There is a solitude*.<sup>21</sup> The poem, like the iceberged fate of Larsen C, is broken apart, scattered and displayed across a sequence of boards in the public realm. In plunging Dickinson's poem into current floes, her environmental and taxonomic understanding of solitude – where a sea's solitude is distinct from the solitude of death – becomes yet more refined. In *Requiem* Dickinson's diffractive configuration of solitude, as multiple and interacting, pits a frozen solitude that is disappearing against a new iceless solitude that looms ahead. Now in conversation with the fallen shelf, the poem locates a multiplicity of solitudes, from the cryospheric to the self, in a spanning sweep that entangles all in the ecopoetics of planetary weirding. In prescient accord with contemporary cryospheric auralities, in Dickinson's hands polar regions are not solely a site of alienation, but a realm in which a soul gains admittance to itself. More than a requiem for ice loss, Antarctica becomes a place where the self can be found, a space of mediation and connection. Rather than a distant numbness, ice becomes a place of feeling and identification.

Ambient sounds can become sonic ruptures when relocated. More than forging an emotional connection between self and shelves, Luftwerk's placement of collapsing cryospheric auralities in central Chicago contrasts dramatically with the ambient urban environment, resulting in alien phase shifts. Echoing the dislocations of ice, as it wanders outwards in transoceanic creaturely mobilities, so too does ice reach out to dislocate the everyday. Sound, as it curls around corners and bounds upstairs, is already defined by a certain level of disobedience and uncontrollability. In *Requiem*, the haphazard and hazardous wandering of ice becomes unleashed sound, sent out to assail the unsuspecting. The clashing sonic textures of icy and urban environments estrange the composition of the everyday, sensitizing listeners to the latent strangeness of the world as it is currently lived. In other words, the otherworldliness of the world resounds. If in *Sonic Antarctica* sound is a transporter, and in a *dripping...* it is a time machine, then in *White Wanderer* it is the interruption of a parallel dimension.

### Rhythmic Mythopoesis

Drums beat, your body set in motion. Freeze. A voice arrives, telling tales: histories, imaginaries, futurities fuse into s(hr)inking Antarctic parameters. The drums respond, humming back, rushing forward, an ambient pulse. Electronic Dance Music (EDM) rhythms fizz amongst stripped acoustic drum riffs. Oral tradition and spoken word are filtered through the memory of a dancefloor haze; a crucible where the ghosts of contorting bodies are brought into resonance and friction. These sweating, swaying bodies are folded into disobedient, melting bodies of ice, as they fractally shatter and oceanically scatter. EDM's lyrics of desire and longing become narratology of ice, with its countering agential

<sup>21</sup> Luftwerk, "Luftwerk: A White Wanderer," Vimeo.com, <https://vimeo.com/414285514>, acc. on May 21, 2021.

motilities. These are small movements. And yet, from the incremental comes the avalanche.

In the sound piece *Antarctica was a queer rave before it got busted by colonial white farts* (2020), artist and poet Himali Singh Soin “traces the history of conjecture” surrounding Antarctica.<sup>22</sup> As part of Soin’s ongoing work into the polar regions named *we are opposite like that* (2017–2022), *Antarctica was...* focuses upon the agency of ice as a force terrorizing would-be colonizers and emblemizing queer utopian potential.

Apsley Cherry-Garrard, as one of the colonial explorers Soin lampoons, was a member of Robert Falcon Scott’s ill-fated *Terra Nova* expedition and narrated the “infinite variety” of Antarctic ice in exceedingly phantasmagorical terms. He observed, “so great is the wish of the sea to freeze, and so cold is the air, that the wind has only to lull for one instant and the surface is covered with a thin film of ice, as though by magic.”<sup>23</sup> Repeatedly, Cherry-Garrard attributed a monstrous agency to the enveloping progress of ice, as he was unable to resist or evade its intractable, crushing persistence. Branded a “menace” with its erratic mobilities, he described Antarctica’s mutating coastline as not only fragmented and endlessly shifting, but also as meandering outwards.<sup>24</sup> This icy migration of the coastline creeps into the oceanic routes of maritime vehicles, where “they float nearly submerged though they have lost but little of their powers of evil.”<sup>25</sup> Ice, an ocean in suspension, now stalks the open seas. As it looms above and lurks below, ice recasts the Antarctic landscape as an ethereal terrain of monstrous jeopardy for those who seek to conquer it. Rendered dreadful due to its unmasterable nature, this creaturely ice becomes a source of decolonial resistance and alliance in *Antarctica was...*

With an acoustic drumbeat evoking the rave anthems of the 1990’s EDM scene – as improvised by Soin’s collaborator David Soin Tappeser – *Antarctica was...* plugs dance music’s exuberance and collective rapture into the plight of receding, endangered ice.<sup>26</sup> Weaving amongst Tappeser’s pared-back beats, Soin recites an oral history of Antarctica, charting its apocryphal imagining within pre-discovery thought as “monstrous otherlands” through to its present disastrous evanescence. Taking Cherry-Garrard et al.’s colonial imaginaries of Antarctica as a “savage underworld”, Soin redeploys the EDM undergrounds of queer raves in order to transmute “this same [colonial] imagination into a utopian desire [...] free from the normative conditioning of convention and straightness.”<sup>27</sup> Soin thus foregrounds moments of queer pleasure

<sup>22</sup> Himali Singh Soin, “We are opposite like that,” [himalisinghsoin.com](https://www.himalisinghsoin.com), <https://www.himalisinghsoin.com/we-are-opposite-like-that>, acc. on January 13, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World* (London: Vintage, 2010), 60.

<sup>24</sup> See: *ibid.*, 61.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>26</sup> Himali Singh Soin & David Soin Tappeser, “Antarctica was a queer rave before it got busted by colonial white farts,” [stage.tba21.org](https://www.stage.tba21.org), <https://www.stage.tba21.org/detail/antarctica-was-a-queer-rave-before-it-got-busted-by-colonial-white-farts-2020>, acc. on January 13, 2021.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



and resistance amongst the slippery ice; where human dreams and cryospheric fate are brought into resonance and proximity as different scales of the body that meet on the fantasy realm of the dancefloor. This frozen dancefloor is a site of utopian potential and individual rescue, queer becoming and subversive decolonial ecologies: as much melancholic as it is melodious and banging.

More than invoking a past now in abeyance, Soin is interested in the queer utopian futurity which can be gestated during current ecological peril. In his canonical work on queer utopianism, Jose Esteban Munoz is attentive to these world-building (as well as world-destroying) temporal opportunities:

Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present [...] Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.<sup>28</sup>

Refusing to capitulate to the doomy present of cryospheric loss, *Antarctica was...* reroutes queer desire, as a utopian modality, into experiments with alternative ways of being in the world. These are not illusions of planetary escape or a prelapsarian return to a pre-Anthropocene environment, but collaborations with a new iteration of nature-culture, a means of staying with the trouble.<sup>29</sup> It is a mutual becoming which recalibrates modes of planetary inhabitation through the sensualities and fabulations of sound. As such, *Antarctica was...* generates new myths of human, cryospheric, and planetary entanglements. If in *Sonic Antarctica* sound is a transporter, in a *dripping...* it is a time machine and in *White Wanderer*, it is broadcast from a parallel dimension, then in *Antarctica was...* it is a creature, wise, ailing, and on the prowl.

## Conclusion

What are the new perspectives from which to think, to feel the planet in biospheric decline? What are the aesthetics, affectivities, geophysical systems, materialities, and technologies needed for this evolving expression of Earth? We began with the Bloop, a sonic event unleashed across planetary scales as uncontrollable energy. Cryospheric collapse crashes into deep vibrations: the profoundly nonhuman calls out. These sounds become more voluminous as the eventual extinction of icy sonic textures accelerate, deafeningly. Untamed, entangled, and inseparable: to fathom these planetary dialogues demands novel forms of ecopoetics to be conceived of. Sonic ecopoetics of/for a damaged planet must be imbued with new modes of sensing, new sensitivities which grasp the sliding present whilst grasping towards livable futures.

We end with Polli, Wood, Luftwerk, and Soin; all demonstrate how abstract

<sup>28</sup> José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York University Press: New York, 2009, 1, italics original).

<sup>29</sup> See Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press: North Carolina, 2016).

scales of environmental mutation can be viscerally experienced through sound. Each of these artists experiments with spatiotemporal remixes as fabulatory modes; fictions that bring the dire reality of cryospheric collapse into legibility. As these new mythologies of the ice unfold in an enveloping embrace, so too do they displace conventional cartographic imaginaries relegating Antarctica to a distant outside, beyond the point of relevance. As Soin observes, the wandering, dispersing, and disappearing ices “aren’t irrelevant there’s, but manifestations of repressed here’s”.<sup>30</sup> Through hearing these “repressed heres”, the ice becomes a place of emotional resonance and identification, where once there was the only alienness. However, the alienness and alterity of Antarctic ice is maintained, its creatureliness unearthing the strangeness within ourselves, inducing generative alienations from the supposed solidity of the everyday. Outside of the untenable now, this mutual alienness opens apertures towards different futures, other worlds that could be brought into being. Whilst carrying the weight of sinking ice, these artworks place a light hand upon hope: buoyant.

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<sup>30</sup> Soin & Tappeser, “Antarctica was...”

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