

Syma Tariq - Partitioned Listening:

An exercise in sonic methodology and creative audio research, situated outside of the timelines of the burned and extant archives of British India, and the postcolonized aural archives everywhere. It approaches the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan as a sonic condition, in which listening is obligatory labour. Following Madhavi Menon:

If we are to break this endless cycle of ontologized partitions, then we need to think universally about what we may term partitions at all, refusing to make difference coherent, self-identical, or the basis for identity. Even as it acknowledges that differences abound, universalism does not gather them together as the foundation for partition. Instead, universalism is the realm in which the fact of social, cultural, religious, sexual difference does not take away from the reality that we are all different even from our “own” differences. As Alain Badiou suggests in his study of Saint Paul, ‘The universal is not the negation of particularity. It is the measured advance across a distance relative to perpetually subsisting particularity’. Particulars exist and they cannot be translated into norms or ontological identities. Universalism is a movement across partitions that does not privilege any one particular as a basis for ontology. Instead of dismissing partitions, it allows us to universalize partition as the condition within which we all labour.

Menon, Madhavi. “Universalism and Partition: A Queer Theory”, *Differences* 26, issue 1, (2015): 117-140.

Method-thinking:

Remixing and mashing up – sonic endeavours, but not only – interrupts and reimagines and re-inscribes new stories by, following Katherin McKittrick:

- inventing with found objects;
- breaking free of old associations;
- engendering new contexts from old histories;
- flipping the script;
- learning to speak in new forms;
- noticing how the sound of thought becomes legible;
- producing work at the edge of new meanings;
- taking an idea and folding it in on itself.

Reference for the method-thinking: McKittrick, Katherine. Dear Science and Other Stories. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2021. p.170

The fee for this contribution to RECON was donated to grassroots relief work in Sindh, a region of Pakistan that is still facing devastating impacts from the 2022 floods. For more information on this work and to donate to ongoing rebuilding work, please contact:

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