

Anastasia (A) Alevtin

Listening as—might

Anastasia (A) Alevtin is a theorist, researcher, artist and writer who works with quiet quotidian subversion of dominant Western politics and patterns of relating lived by non-binary, queercrip, and migratised communities. Curious to create fleeting transformative encounters, they write, sometimes perform what they write—with textures, textiles, friends, comrades, and, and, and. They wholeheartedly believe in independent publishing and communal reading. With the support of the Finnish Institute in the UK & Ireland, Art Promotion Centre Finland and Glasgow Seed Library, they are developing the project Dormancy, Reseeding, and Resistance. The project engages with communal gardening, seed-saving practices and grandmothering in the contexts of anti-ableism and food in/security, as lived specifically by chronically sick and other precarious bodies in Turku, Vantaa, and Glasgow.

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In the recent neoliberal politico-theoretical discourses, listening has become a buzzword alongside “relational,” “care,” and “togetherness.” Simultaneously, critical day-to-day practicing of these notions remains in urgent demand, specifically directed at those social groups that live in structural privilege which entitles them to shield themselves from all the intersectionally vulnerable, screaming, perpetually and violently silenced voices. In this context, (non-aural) listening principles *might* (still) need to be attended to. Relatedly, the following offering is a found poem that looks for some of these principles in the feminist new materialist and musicological work of Taru Leppänen, who has been striving to listen better, to listen well.¹

Listening—as laborious co-ing,
As kulttuurisidonnainen ja sukupuolittunut asia,
As hm, yes, of course, I am so sorry, if you need anything, I am afraid we cannot,
As noticing, that is, as a co-worlding, remaining open to the proliferating
becomings and relations rather than decoding or pinning down meanings,
As undoing audist notions of,
As väistämättä ruumiillinen kokemus, with all the senses,
As vibrating with a material medium rather than hearing with a hearing
ear,
As muodostaa ääni,
As orienting,
As allowing (musicking) bodies ... to become,
As embracing a productive uncertainty that leaves room for new imaginings,
As kuunnella keskittyneesti hiljaa paikallaan istuen musiikkia sulkemalla
kaiken muun pois aistiensa ulottuvilta, mutta myös

1 Here, better is not imagined in capitalist/neoliberal terms associated with progressivist linear development. Rather, it refers to a striving for a more ethical listening to bodies in their intersectional difference in the urgent contexts that the world has been and is currently living in.

As moving with a material event that a music/sound is, made with other
people's bodies, air, water, materials of built acoustic spaces, sound tech-
nologies, one's flesh, one's bones,
As osallistua äänitapahtumiin,
As making sounds,
As watching sounds,
As making sounds that look like, residing beyond the ear,
As singing,
As touching,
As thinking a sound as a thing,
As feeling tactile sensations,
As interacting, that is, mutually transforming,
As moving beyond clear distinctions between,
As un-concealing the multimodal processes of,
As vibrating with a sound/a voice/a sonorous body as a phenomenon that
animates and enhances the liveliness and agential capacities of matter,
As studying,
As listening critically in relation to,
As rehearsing, practising, providing, dancing,
As sounding toward a wider ontology of vibrational force,
As sensing between language and bodies, between voices, scores and phys-
ical locales, between fellow human sound-making and listening bodies,
and so forth, so forth, so forth, so forth and,
As undoing, historically, contextually

—might lead to a world buzzing with nurtured differences.

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And the many conversations I have held with Taru Leppänen over the years.