

Vagus
Anna Samsø & Andreas Stoubye
22.04.21 - 03.05.21
Four Boxes

Satellite-text:

... but how would you spell it?

The following text passages are excerpts from a study on onomatopoeia (words that phonetically resemble the sound that they describe) lead by the Chicago Institute of Binaural Sciences (CIBS) under the title 'Relational studies on limitations, possibilities and influences of consonants on the creation of novel onomatopoeia within the English language on the basis of rare and undocumented binaural experiences' co-authored by Prof. Dr. Herman Siebenmorgen and Prof. Fredric Zoltan Gabór (CIBS-press, 2012).

Part 1

(transcripts of the participants literal descriptions of extraordinary sound experiences)

Participant 1:

"The house was almost offensively dull in its appearance: Neat, even pedantically well-groomed lawn, grayish-brownish bricks, framed by its own and the neighbor's garage. A mailbox and a ceramic sign with the owner's name, supposedly to give a touch of humanity and liveliness to what I have come to think of as a place of absence of life. I probably would have never noticed or mentioned a site as mediocre in looks, if it wasn't for the stabbing sensation I felt whenever I passed by. The first time it happened, I didn't quite understand the cause of my unease. I was walking with headphones on, when a sudden pain shot through me, as if a thin metal thread was pushed violently through my ears. A mixture of sound and brutal touch, like an old television that's switched off with a sharp sound that tickles the eardrums but a thousand times worse. I walked on and blamed the headphones, and it disappeared after a second or two."

(...)

"A few days later I passed by the house again, and this time I wasn't wearing headphones. It was as if I could *hear* pain. White noise carving a tunnel from one ear to another. And I turned to the house and I sensed death. But I shook it off and walked on."

(...)

"I couldn't let it go. It bothered me that I was freaked out by the most unspectacular piece of property I could possibly think of. I asked a friend to join me for a walk. We got to the house: I heard the pain but kept my gaze focused on my friend's facial expressions. He kept talking uninterrupted as we passed. No sign of unsettlement. 'Did you just hear that?' I asked as we got out of the houses radius. 'Hear what?'. He had no clue."

(...)

"No one else I ever walked with on that route ever reacted to the sound and a feeling of alienation slowly began to settle in. One day, despite the discomfort between my ears, I stopped to study the yard in front of the house. The grass looked fresh and healthy, yet lifeless and when I compared it to the gardens around it I realized a strange absence of animals. The evening sun highlighted countless mosquito dances and bees and bugs and all sorts of creatures everywhere around, except for in this single front-yard. And I noticed something else: A small black box sitting under a well-trimmed bush, not a camera, but some sort of electronic device. I am usually not much of a trespasser, but my curiosity was simply too strong. I approached the box and the closer I got, the more painful the sound vibrated in my head. There was a sticker on one side, with some sort of rodent icon. A rat or a mouse. Next to it an image of a spider and what looked like a cockroach. I got even closer and finally read the products name: 'Supersonic Pest Repeller'. I wasn't supposed to hear that sound. I still don't understand why only I could."

Part II

The participants were asked to create an onomatopoeia using the 26 letters of the English alphabet to phonetically document the previously described sound.

Participant 1:

„Ffffffftppppsssss..."

(Text by Gisa Pantel)

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Part 1

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Participant 3:

"I wanted to find out what kind of sounds a Corythosaurus might have made as its mating call. The way that the dinosaur produced sound is intimately connected with the interior spaces and solids in its skull and so I used CT scan data in order to generate a digital replica of the skull. I used a 3D printer to create the nasal passages and crafted the rest of the skull out of clay"

(...)

"By blowing air in through the larynx of the replica, we can hear, for the first time in 65 million years, what the dinosaur might have sung to attract a mate."

Part II

The participants were asked to create an onomatopoeia using the 26 letters of the English alphabet to phonetically document the previously described sound.

Participant 3:

„Wfpfwfuhhhwpf“

(Text by Gisa Pantel)