

DOUBLE RAINBOW

Lying in bed one night, a 60-year-old woman began hearing music playing. When she woke it was still playing, and after some searching, she realised it wasn't coming from any kind of device or machine left inadvertently running in her home. The music got louder at certain times, and more complex, with multi-part harmonies and full orchestral consonance. So she consulted doctors and told them it sounded like a radio playing in the back of her head. She didn't know these songs; some of them were on repeat, sometimes up to a dozen times a day. The woman, it turned out was hearing-impaired and suffered from tinnitus. Doctors diagnosed this experience as simply forgotten musical memories, inadvertently recalled, otherwise known as aural hallucinations.

This medical report available online didn't suggest whether this woman felt trapped in the tunes or whether they freed her from the unremarkable diegetic noise of everyday life and facilitated permanent reverie. The report also didn't suggest if she could control this music in any way, or if these songs interrupted her sleep or distracted her in her work, or made

things like reading or watching a film really difficult. I wonder if she listened to other music on a real radio and if her head-music worked with it in harmony or against it in dissonance. She sounds like something straight out of Sacks of course, but this example of phantom song seems analogous to particular art-making states.

Naturally, if it doesn't find you or you can't summon it, swallow it. Assisted or not, the desire is to get lost, in a slightly unfamiliar place, where familiar or partially recalled objects, sounds and images are reshuffled, collaged, reconfigured and scrambled. Hands are making meaning via the subconscious' unstructured observation, absorption and chaotic curiosity for comparison. It's risky freedom. Constructing complex patterns is evidence of the search for possession, for connection with something that is just beyond. However, non-specific psychedelic and tribal-esque aesthetics seem to state: this is inaccessible meaning.

I like the privacy of hallucination. It's not a window of perception but a cordoned-off room that is only your own and can only be accessed by you. The trip-ee leaves no trace, except perhaps a story. In contrast, speaking in tongues is unusual in its outwardness, its performance. It finds voice or voices to reach beyond the body. Speaking in tongues symbolises a double-reality: the person possessed employs speech that is both familiar and strange. It is language, but reconfigured. Eliza Doolittle is a good illustration of a simultaneous occupation of two states, requiring her to use a double voice. *Schooled Tongue* and *Street Tongue*. The complication here is how to locate the marker of authenticity.

An "abstruser musing" is another method of loose hallucination, or occupying one state and reaching for another. Coleridge, the LSD-loving Romantic describes this as he ponders the stuff of stuffness, via the thin blue flame in the dying fire, in front of which he sits. This is not a sleep of reason producing monsters however; this is a waking meditation. Coleridge arouses abstractions and employs words and images to escape into the zone of rumination, seeking fresh eyes for the precious familiar, his sleeping son for example. A vision or hallucination is always a hinge to the known and seen that is collaged, warped or fractured. Intuitive play with materials and language act out the journey of hallucination. Being lost in thought is the work of the subconscious, piecing together image and language for sense-making. So could perhaps this be a kind of sub-hallucination? And what about vivid daydreams? Mutch seems equally interested in lost-ness and the markers of wandering, particularly via the shape of a rocky cairn or small totems of stones. Still and stable objects as reminders of being 'on track', finding things whilst lost. Is a thought-cairn a sculpture? Incidentally a cairn can't be a text, so this pile of stones is completely wonky. And other things that move, such as cinema and theatre, are more akin to hallucinations, since they employ multiple surfaces of reality. Mutch employs the certainty of the site (or gallery) to make an aperture for uncertainty and potentiality. But it's private and you can only partially come in.

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