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## Jupiter

S. Ayesha Hameed

*Drexciya presents Grava 4. Earth has finally discovered Utopia. (Drexciya Home Universe) Earth scientist discovered the home planet of Drexciya on 2-14-2002. Within moments Dr. Blowfin was given the orders to initiate the seven dimensional cloaking-spheres to hide the other three planets from earths view. The star chart is authentic; you will be able to find the star by using the coordinations on the star chart. The planet Drexciya can be found in the international star vault in Switzerland & recorded in the astronomical compendium. (your place in the cosmos, volume 6).<sup>1</sup>*

*The music is different here. The vibrations are different* said Sun Ra iconically in the opening scene of *Space is the Place* (1974). He is sitting in the lush outer space forest of another planet, perhaps even the gaseous Jupiter where he was born. Sun Ra and Black people from Planet Earth have set up a new colony, transporting themselves through musical vibrations, through “isotope teleportation” and “transreliquilisation”.<sup>2</sup>

These forms of space travel share a kind of synesthetic blurring, where musical vibrations turn into modes of transportation. Not only that, the index of transformative potential on the new planet resides in its vibrations. The pleasure in the natural beauty of this forest is measured in vibrations.

Transportation to Sun Ra’s new planet then is put into motion through blurring a threshold or through a moment of transubstantiation, and the alchemy of this crisscrossing provides the ‘fuel’ for such transportation. This ‘fuel’ scales up the refusal of an historical subjection onto an extraterrestrial plane. This is a simultaneously spatial, geographical, ideological, anti-colonial movement that, when plotted interstellarly, makes outer space the other possible world. And through this it calls attention to the possibilities of inhabiting extreme environments, of the threshold of what constitutes life and the possibility of life.

Sun Ra’s gesture of leaving political repression on Planet Earth for another world on ‘the other side of time’ in outer space is one political gesture that pulls into service the otherness of space and time. But the flip side of this coin is an insurgency that insists on staying put. In her 2016 Edward W. Said memorial lecture Naomi Klein<sup>3</sup> calls into comparison Said’s concept of *sumud* or staying put with those at the frontlines of climate disaster.

He helped to popularise the Arabic word *sumud* (‘to stay put, to hold on’): that steadfast refusal to leave one’s land despite the most desperate eviction attempts and even when surrounded by continuous danger. It’s a word most associated with places like Hebron and Gaza, but it could be applied equally today to residents of coastal Louisiana who have raised their homes up on stilts so that they don’t have to evacuate, or to Pacific Islanders whose slogan is ‘We are not drowning. We are fighting.’<sup>4</sup>

Klein extends this connection between climate change and displacement to the aridity

line is the border at which terrain becomes desert in North Africa and the Middle East areas getting less than 200 mm of water. She calls attention to Eyal Weizman's description of how this fault line of this zone has varied, and this variation in part follows the forced and internal displacement of people. Once established, drones now follow the threshold of this varying line.<sup>5</sup>

Both sumud and interstellar travel then share de- and re-territorialising impulses and these draw on the synaesthetic. Ryan Bishop describes aerial surveillance in the context of war as synaesthetic – operating on a politics of verticality that sonically plumbs what is unviewable. What is unseen can be made viewable through radio waves that are then turned to a visual map. “Depth can be accessed by sound, revealing the limitations of sight while also providing it with a synaesthetic and prosthetic extension. Sound will let us see where vision stops.”<sup>6</sup>

This synaesthesia can be worked against the grain of war as well. Lorenzo Pezzani and Charles Heller were able to determine that a boat full of migrants left adrift on the Mediterranean Sea in March 2011 were within sight of NATO ships deployed in the area. This was ascertained in part by using satellite-produced synthetic aperture radar (SAR) data - sonic, radar signals used to form composite images of the surface of the earth. When translated into an image a pixel of a ship appears to be eight times brighter than the sea surrounding it.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps a line can then be drawn transversally to connect the two sides of this coin. Where the threshold of possibility of life/inhabitation is connected to a tactic of synaesthesia shared by the choice of sumud, and the desire to plot a course to another possible world. A line of flight could be drawn to connect the desire to stay put on thresholds like the line of the zone of aridity, with the desire to synaesthetically travel to another possible world. This line of flight cuts through a history of death with the possibility of life. It slices across the knife's edge of the undead.

Both Mars and Europa (a satellite of Jupiter), contain the possibility of life. Recent experiments have shown that crops grown on Mars are safe to eat.<sup>8</sup> Europa could possibly have salt water on her surface. This opens up the possibility of the beginnings of life.<sup>9</sup> Located 800 million kilometres from the sun, it is a planet covered in water that through its distance from the sun has turned to ice at the surface. The crust of ice shields radiation from a watery ocean below that, through the tidal pull of Jupiter and the heat of underwater volcanic eruptions, keeps warm and in motion. Despite its distance from the earth it is considered by scientists to be one of the most viable planets for possible human inhabitation.

Like Earth, Europa has auroras, and these auroras are made of the same dusty material as auroral kilometric radiations (AKRs), radio waves projected into space. AKRs “are generated high above the Earth, by the same shaft of solar particles that then causes an aurora to light the sky beneath ... ESA's Cluster mission is showing scientists how to understand this emission and, in the future, search for alien worlds by listening for their chirps and whistles”<sup>10</sup>. Other studies look at what the acoustic variants are on Jupiter and Io, playing Bach in other frequencies, measuring the sound of waterfalls.<sup>11</sup>

Sun Ra hums before he talks about how the vibrations on Earth are different to that of his new planet. Is he maybe testing the vibrations now that they have landed on

Jupiter? The hum would sound different on this new planet's different atmosphere, and contain other possibilities, ecologies and actions. The material reality of this historical moment, of mass migration and forced displacement makes the case for thinking through the politics of departure and remaining, through synaesthetic fuels – the tools of blurring and code switching, dissimilitude and resistance.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Drexciya *Grava IV* (Clone Records 2002).

<sup>2</sup> *Space is the Place* d. John Coney 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Naomi Klein Vol. “Let Them Drown The Violence of Othering in a Warming World” *London Review of Books*. Vol 38 No. 11 · 2 June 2016 pp 11-14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ryan Bishop “Project 'Transparent Earth' and the Autoscropy of Aerial Targeting: The Visual Geopolitics of the Underground” *Theory Culture Society* 2011 28: 270, p.9.

<sup>7</sup> Lorenzo Pezzani “Between Mobility and Control: The Mediterranean at the Borders of Europe” in Antonio Petrov ed *New Geographies, 5: The Mediterranean*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2013, p.154.

<sup>8</sup> “You can eat vegetables from Mars, say scientists after crop experiment” *The Guardian Online* June 24 2016. Accessed June 26 2016  
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/jun/24/you-can-eat-vegetables-from-mars-say-scientists-after-crop-experim>

<sup>9</sup> Nola Taylor Redd “Jupiter's Icy Moon Europa: Best Bet for Alien Life?” *Space* August 22, 2014. Accessed June 26 2016  
<http://www.space.com/26905-jupiter-moon-europa-alien-life.html>

<sup>10</sup> Robert Mutel, Philippe Escoubet, “Cluster Listens To The Sounds Of Earth” *European Space Agency (ESA)* 27 June 2008. Accessed 25 June 2016.  
[http://www.esa.int/Our\\_Activities/Space\\_Science/Cluster/Cluster\\_listens\\_to\\_the\\_sounds\\_of\\_Earth/\(print\)](http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Science/Cluster/Cluster_listens_to_the_sounds_of_Earth/(print))

<sup>11</sup> See for example T.G Leighton and A Petculescu, “Sounds in space: The potential uses for acoustics in the exploration of other worlds” *Hydroacoustics Volume:11:225-238*, 2008, and T.G Leighton and A Petculescu. “Extraterrestrial music” in *Proceedings of the 1st EAA Congress on Sound and Vibration (EuroRegio 2010)*.