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Lockdown, Soundscapes, Dreams: A Diary

(July 25, 2020 - August 8, 2021)

Jorge de La Barre

Abstract

These selected entries are from a diary that I have been keeping since the beginning of the pandemic; they document the ways in which sounds have occupied my dreams, and my reflections about a new, perhaps quieter, perhaps sinister, soundscape experience.

This is an edited selection from a diary that I have been keeping since the beginning of the pandemic. The period covers one year of lockdown, which is also one year of uncertainty regarding the 2020 Olympic Games; between July 25, 2020 (one day after the initially scheduled opening date for the Tokyo Olympics), and August 8, 2021 (the official closing ceremony, when the torch was passed to Paris for the 2024 Games). These entries are documents of the ways in which sounds have occupied my dreams, and reflections about a new, perhaps quieter soundscape experience during the pandemic. I live in one of Rio de Janeiro's oldest neighborhoods, called Santa Teresa. It is located near the historical center, on a hill that connects various neighborhoods – Lapa, Glória, Catete, Catumbi, Rio Comprido, Laranjeiras, Cosme Velho (the train to Corcovado leaves from there) – and their various “communities” (favelas). Last but not least, Santa Teresa also connects to the National Forest of Tijuca, one of the biggest urban forests in the world. From my window, I see a green valley, lots of houses, and a few buildings (Fig. 1). It is, like all of Santa Teresa, essentially a residential area, right above the Lapa neighborhood. I hope the reader finds in these notes some insight about life during lockdown – a life informed, and documented by, sounds, in fact (my listening to the news and some programs on the radio hasn't changed much during the pandemic). At worst, they're only a record of the times that I have been living in for over a year now, listening to the sounds in my dreams, although they're not always necessarily the sounds of my dreams...



Fig. 1: Seen from the window: the valley, at Santa Teresa (Rio de Janeiro). Photograph: Jorge de La Barre.

25 July, 2020

The Day of Destruction

It is in fact the day *after* July 24. Yesterday, *The Day of Destruction* was streaming on the Japan Cuts website for a 24-hours only, the day which would have been the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games had it not been for their postponement due to the pandemic. We watched the one-hour movie twice. Powerful scenes, landscapes and soundscapes that Toshiaki Toyoda set out to “exorcise a society obsessed with the monstrosity of self-interest and greed” ([“The Day of Destruction...”](#)). The film begins, “7 years ago” (2013, then...); the first image is a cut finger in the snow, with safety pins planted in it. Something has been broken – could it be fixed? A guy enters a coal mine, and walks inside the dark tunnel. An oppressive roar gets louder and louder as he approaches – what is it? A living entity lies at the end of the tunnel, breathing heavily – a blob? Spreading some evil forces, an epidemic, perhaps. If all the good things came from nature, then didn’t the bad things also? Will man be able to prevent diseases, epidemics – with prayers, rituals; with self-mummification? No prayer could conjure the epidemic. After the tunnel scene, a rock song explodes; it conjures people to take control, to engage, to resist. The camera shows the urban fabric: Tokyo buildings, the Olympic stadium, and not a single soul. An empty desolation. Pure apathy, besides music’s call to take action. Rock, too, is a prayer: a prayer for change. But prayers won’t work, the film suggests... You can self-mummify, bury yourself in a coffin, go crazy inside your mind, try the precog dreams... Destiny will follow its course; you just lost your sister against the epidemic. There is no going back. On the day of destruction, it’s already too late, the damage has been done.

The Day of Destruction is a movie about ghosts, spirits, invisible things (an epidemic, a virus); nature and faith (the forest, wolves, shrines, shamans...); modernity and destruction (urban landscapes of desolation, Tokyo city, the Olympic stadium, people losing their mind); voice, destiny, and exorcism (the voice of rock screaming the truth, but nothing can be changed); and all things in-between boundaries (the city/the forest, the inside/the outside). Where are all the crooks, the politicians? They’re inside, protected, invisible – they’re the virus! Where are the crazies, the outcasts, left alone? They’re outside in the streets, in the forest. They’re not welcome; they don’t belong. As it turned its back on nature, humanity seems to have lost its soul. *The Day of Destruction* points at the failures of the powerful, in containing a pandemic, and the vanity in

hosting the Olympics – Olympics that didn't take place on July 24th as planned initially, as they are now postponed until 2021, unless they will be purely and simply cancelled...

26 July, 2020

The Optical Unconscious, and the Aural Unconscious

The unconscious was always about *projection*. In the pre-cinema age, the myths, the religious rituals, the arts, and imagination in general, all attempted to capture the instinctual unconscious. With cinema, the “optical unconscious” was invented, as Walter Benjamin has contended. The projection was literal, and physical, that is, onto a screen, right there for everyone to watch, and to see – a ready-made unconscious, so to speak. Cinema had become an extension of our dream life – like an awake dream.

There may be also an aural unconscious. Rock music could save the world, if only people would listen, and resist. In *The Day of Destruction*, sound and music work as an opposing force. Rock music, especially, opposes the Olympic epidemic – yet no one hears, and nothing can be changed: the damage is done. No shaman, no exorcist will save the world; it is already doomed, the Olympic epidemic is already there. After *The Day of Destruction*, I remembered watching another Japanese movie, during the 2007 Indie Lisboa festival: Shinji Aoyama's *Eri Eri Rema Sabakutani? (My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?)* (Fig. 2). The sounds were also an integral part of the narrative buildup. Interestingly, the movie was also about a mysterious epidemic, and only the sound of music could cure the contaminated people. In both Toyoda and Aoyama's sonic imagination, the Gods have deserted mankind, they are gone. Men are forsaken, and only music could help. In *The Day of Destruction*, rock calls for revolt (and no one hears). In *My God, My God*, the sounds, the music have replaced God. Not only can they heal the diseased, but they are in fact the only cure, and people get to learn how to heal, giving in to the music. Both movies seemed to play a very different take on the aural unconscious – quite opposite, in fact.

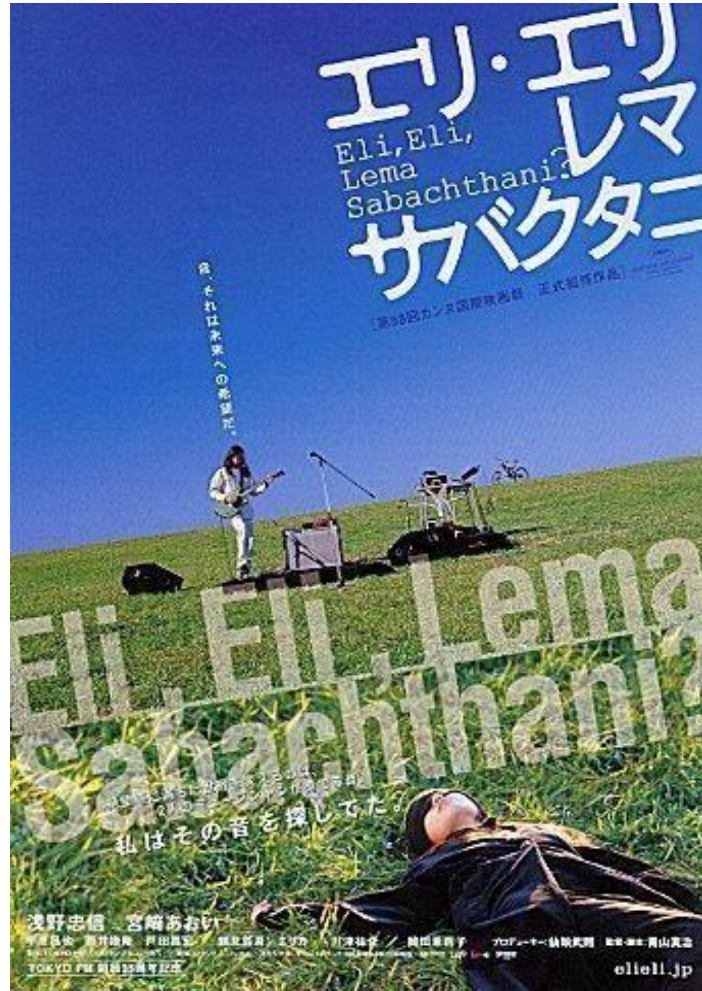


Fig. 2. Poster for Shinji Aoyama's *Eri Eri Rema Sabakutani? (My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?)*, 2005. Source: <https://www.filmaffinity.com/en/film661727.html>.

24 September, 2020

Greyhound Noise

Upon waking up, the dream memories are sometimes pretty vague. Then, they just fade away a little deeper, as I slip back into consciousness. Inside the dream, there was an image, a feel. There was lots of traffic; it was busy, jammed – lots of noise. I saw the back of a Greyhound bus, from the side of the street or road, somewhere in the US East Coast. The image is blurred anyway, I can hardly remember the location. Philadelphia? Baltimore? On the road? It doesn't matter so much. Now, the traffic feels like... Internet traffic: I'm teaching online... There is still a lot of noise, and I'm all alone, talking to mini-boxes with names in them,

and no faces; most boxes are empty. Some boxes may be listening, but they have no faces. Some faces behind the boxes may be distracted, doing other things as they're vaguely listening to my voice. I'm talking to a screen full of mini-boxes, and to no one in particular: who's out there, beyond/behind the boxes? There is no concentration, no feedback. And still, lots of noise – besides the silence of the screen. Are we getting used to this already? All the Pantanal, the Amazons may be burning out there in the "real world." Soon enough, there'll be only ashes left; the virtual space will be our only refuge. Nowhere else to go, no more Greyhounds!...

The Printer

I guess it was just a dream; it felt so real! I'm in the middle of the night sleeping and, all of a sudden, I hear Tania's printer upstairs – an old inkjet noise, aggressive and repetitive: it's printing! Something... Why on earth would anyone need to print anything in the middle of the night. I don't even know if Tania has a printer really – probably not. But I've been traumatized already, by her routine bricolage; her mini-rituals every day, of banging this and nailing that; all these cracks and sounds coming from upstairs; and her dog walking around; and she's dropping stuff on the floor – Bang! And now: the printer – inside of my dream! I may have to print stuff myself – but that's only tomorrow!

25 September, 2020

Covid Life

How this Covid life has been messing up our soundscapes, our dreams. Dreams get filled with new aural dimensions, so to speak. New sounds, new sensations keep coming up – now that time has sort of suspended. From barking dogs to Friday night parties, then Saturday, and Sunday night parties too – to gunshots. Police gunshots training, and the "real" gunshots fighting. The neighbors, of course – "my" Tania right upstairs is an interior designer: so much for bricolage from home! Her sonic presence is already a classic; her bricolage is part of my life now – my new, inevitable soundscape. Her dog's steps on the floor too – day and night!

13 December, 2020

Joyful Singing

There's been some singing and loud talking down in the valley, all night long, up until 5am or so. The sleep was always light, always alert. And so were the dreams, maybe, and the thoughts. Beautiful party noise out there: there is so much enthusiasm, in the middle of a raging pandemic! I heard no recorded music – just the singing, the melodies of the carefree, the enchanted folks down there. No beats, no drums, no percussions. A congregation of voices, rather – Evangelicals perhaps, gathering on a pre-Christmas party of some sorts. The singing, in such joy – God, or Jesus, in the air. I couldn't imagine them wearing masks – were they? Sometimes, the singing was eerie, beautifully unreal. Nothing compared with the local bands playing sometimes, pagode essentially, from the bar across the valley down there. Or also, the local DJs, their funk, R&B, techno, or Sertanejo. I'm still half-asleep, listening in, more because I cannot in fact, sleep. At some point, I'm amused with the sounds that I hear: a Portuguese version of "Starman" (David Bowie). There was also another cover before that one – I forgot which. I almost wish I'd record some of these songs also – the singing, the collective joy! I'm just too sleepy to get out of bed, pick the recorder (my smartphone...). Wanting or not, I'm hearing almost through my sleep, besides my sleeping, my sleepiness, with a smile on my face – it's magic! Touching it is, for the imagination: this collective chanting, and singing, and congregating – all night long. Around 5am, the chanting verve calms down; it leaves space already for the early birds, they're singing along, as the day breaks. I just realize, it is impossible to figure out what happened last night: who designed it?! Any posters on the walls in the streets down there? Any invite on the social networks: a private party, somewhere, down in the valley?! It is all the more fascinating to think of these joyful chantings as belonging to the night. And so they remain, in the night, to the night. They will never transpire into the daylight. As the day breaks, they already vanished, they're gone. It's now 5am, and all of a sudden, I wake up again, to complete silence. Complete human silence at least, since the birds now took over, they're singing nonstop, welcoming a new day. The dogs are barking too, sometimes. Soon enough, there will be cars, trucks, driving up and down the street. Then, the *bonde* – the streetcar. A new day rising up again, with its normal sounds, all identified.

23 December, 2020

Treasure Islands of Sound

The dream morphed into sound: I was doing sound installations, recording sounds – field sounds. The sound was a shield; there was a shield of sound, an encapsulation through sound: like a wall of sound. Somehow, the dream had morphed into sound. I kept coming back to the house of a friend called Bitter, in the desert. In the middle of nowhere, riding a horse with no name (I may have heard the song the day before). I was back from Burning Man maybe (never been there), and I was carrying some candies and chocolate in my backpack. To the house. Then off I'd go again, out in the field, to record more sounds. After a while, all the sound experimentations would come and clash with one another: they'd become bubbles. And I had to administer them, in order to avoid conflicts between sounds. This is exactly when the sound becomes a shield, or a wall: some sort of protection. This is also because the sound is so vulnerable: it may be at risk; it may be threatened. The sound itself can be invaded; it can be destroyed. It is in itself, a territory – so malleable, so flexible: here today, gone tomorrow. A sound is like a lounge: it can be created, designed. It may be an airport lounge, or a proper sound installation. I love the train stations in Japan: their soundscapes. There's always an announcement going on, some information. Stations in Japan are like palaces of sound design. I don't understand the language, so any sound becomes precious. Even silence, may be hiding secret sounds – and total silence is unheard of, anyway. On the platform, between trains, I can hear the soundscapes of fake birds singing – they sound so natural! This is nudge right here – or sound nudge made in sound. When silence may be "sound" as threat, the sound nudge makes the fake sounds sound real; the birds or crickets are playing the station, literally – occupying it: a sound occupation.

When the sound is at its highest volume; when all the sounds clash; when the shields are on, and nothing's gonna shut them down; when the walls of sounds erect: then you come back to silence, internally – it's the only way. It's a dream, and it's a luxury. How could anyone travel in sound, without coming back to silence? Silence is the secret poetry of music, and sound. If sound is chic, then silence is the treasure. The real treasure island besides the island of sound, is the sound of silence. From Jamaica, home to the heavy monster sound – the reggae sound clash; from the reggae sun splash to the heat of the sun. From ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. Hashish to hashish, and dub to dub. Everything comes back to

sound and silence; everything comes back to the silent chaos of silence. After all the noises have battled, after all sounds have clashed – all hell broke loose. And then, thereafter, there comes the silence. If silence is a place, then it is always a place to come back to – an origin. “Silence is Golden,” said Richard Foreman in one of his plays – was it *The Gods Are Pounding My Head?* “Silence is Golden” had become a Mantra. Something had morphed, and someone kept coming back to it, repeating it, always.

25 January, 2021

The Mediumship of the Listener

If there are “techniques of the observer” (Crary), then necessarily, there is also a “mediumship of the listener” (Toop). Both connect with the pragmatics of the aesthetical experience (looking, listening...) – both in subjectivity, and according to the objective qualities of the image, the sound... In any socio-historical context, the observer had developed techniques, and “ways of seeing” (Berger). Likewise, the listener has developed an “art of listening” (Back). His “receiving,” his mediumship is perhaps already a form of agency which lies in the creative process of interpretation and rendition. This chain of relationships can be thought of in terms of pragmatics. Could David Toop’s idea of “the mediumship of the listener” translate into Deleuze terms: the possibility of a “*devenir*” (becoming) listener, receiver?

You become the other. You travel places, spaces – in the imagination. You create worlds – possible worlds, possible futures. In “mediumship,” there is a strong connection with the imagination: utopia – their various potentialities, their various possible “*devenirs*.” The listener, the medium, literally puts himself in that position, where he becomes more than just himself. Much more than just himself, in fact: he becomes a world, a possible world, and gets to define the situation – for anyone to see, and consider. This expands McLuhan’s famous quote – “The medium is the message.” In our case, the medium/listener (Toop’s listener as a medium) becomes the medium/recipient (McLuhan’s medium as one of the mass media), and therefore becomes the message just the same – the carrier, the recipient. He may be “receiving” the message, speaking in tongues. “*Je est un autre*,” said Rimbaud. Both Rimbaud and the medium become one, and the other: *an(-)other*. It is in fact the idea that you will travel within sound – without the body, perhaps. You will occupy the terrain of

others, with, and within sound. And that terrain is both within (because you receive sound), and without (because you've restituted it).

There is synesthesia at work in the very idea of the mediumship of the listener. There is a movement: the listener is on board. He travels, goes places, feels. He "receives" the information, the voices, and he's a transmitter as well: he connects things and worlds. If there is a movement, then transformation is at work – a becoming. Perhaps unexpectedly, Toop meets Deleuze at the edge of sound. As in Lévi-Strauss', "The Sorcerer and His Magic," the listener has to believe, minimally, in his own mediumship so that it will indeed, operate.

Sonic Agency

As it seems/sounds, there is agency as well, in the listener's ears: it lies in his propension to signify sound, make sense of it. Listening is a performance: an act of being attentive, sonically-speaking. "Receiving" sound, as it is, is already an inescapable given (only the deaf...). Like there is a "pragmatics of taste" (Hennion), there is also an art, or a pragmatics of listening. Potentially, the mediumship of the listener allows also for a form of agency: a "sonic agency" (LaBelle). There is perhaps a connection, a possible transition – a plugging – between mediumship and agency. Sound agency may be the extension of the mediumship of the listener. A medium/receiver, the listener may also become an agent/transmitter, as the sound comes and goes within, and without him. If the listener is on board, then he is the connector: he becomes a sounding signifier, making sense of what's around him sonically-speaking, eventually restituting it accordingly – just by being present to the moment. Beyond the "simple" act of listening, these may be the pragmatics of "sounding" – that is, a sonic signifying or sonic agency. In order to perform this, all resources at hand/ear may be used: technological, imaged, imagined, imitated – the mimetics, the stimulated, the exaggerated, the overheard, and so on and so forth.

Pandemic Bubbles

What this pandemic has done to us: all the "One World" celebrations postponed, or cancelled. Postponed, the Tokyo Olympics; cancelled, Rio's Carnival... All the major events, the most cosmopolitan, have gone down... This pandemic has isolated us; we're now connecting from home, working remotely – that is, of course, if you're not working at the front. Most of us may have felt at some point, the pettiness of our little social networks, our little bubbles.

I just heard on the radio this afternoon that the rock band Flaming Lips was planning a concert in Oklahoma, where everyone in the audience would be in his or her little bubble equipped with earphones, to attend the show. Likewise, the musicians would perform and play their instruments from their own private bubbles, in total security regarding the sanitary precautions due to the pandemic. As it turns out, various cases of contamination were detected after some of the Flaming Lips bubble concerts, so that the bubble tour had to be postponed. Besides the pseudo bubble protection, the risk of contamination was still too high.

The World After?

In this extended/suspended time of lockdown due to the Covid-19, everything is taking longer than we would have liked or thought in the beginning. We're not even talking about "the world after" anymore... *or at least, not yet again – for now...* All notions of time have imploded or expanded, no matter what, beyond recognition. It is not so much that there is no longer a "world before," rather, we got tired of waiting for "the world after." We are stuck in a lock-down bubble for too long, and now that there is only the time of now, nothing else registers besides the number of people dying each day. We're stuck in a sinister present made of nothing but casualties and time has stopped, while at the same time we cannot wait for the time when "the world before" will finally come back – as "the world after." Strange times indeed – and a very strange sense of temporality... The eternal presence of the Covid-19 is taking too much time; too much of our precious time, and all social conventions have imploded; they have been put aside, and finally we realize, perhaps, we could actually live without them – beyond all expectations. Or could we?

All of us, from the back office – respect for the front runners! – we've been bound to stop and listen: listen to the sound of silence. I remember the French ethologist, neurologist, and writer Boris Cyrulnik, talking about resilience on the radio last year. In these times of confinement, we understand the importance of mindfulness, benevolence. In a certain way, we're forced to reinvent ourselves as mediums, to find the medium in ourselves. Our mediumship as listeners may become our guide. Which "bubble concerts" have we attended in there, which "One World" celebrations? How are we to tell our stories of resilience, resignation, silence, or voice?

Silence Is Golden

Silence is scary; it's threatening: trouble may be coming up. With music, sound, you feel relieved. Music takes care of you; it transports you. In silence, you may feel alone, left out, miserable. You can't stand the silence, just like you can't stand being alone. You can't stand yourself – or can you? You need external stimulation, always. Not to fall down inside yourself, not to fall within. With a little help from his mediumship, the listener is taken away from himself, momentarily; he becomes someone else; he reaches a place where to reach out from – anywhere out of this solipsistic, oneself world!

Noise = Threat?

On New Year's Day here down the valley, the party lasted for three days. Techno music, R&B, *pagode*, *forró* – you could hear them all. The music was on. Music was always a connector between people. Music, noise, sound, are more than what they sound. They signal a social gathering, a party; in this sense they have also become a threat, in Covid times, a possible indicator that some people may not be respecting the sanitary measures of social distancing. With the Covid-19, a new sound awareness seems to have associated social noise and sounds with the agglomeration of people, and therefore, with danger, risk, threat with regards to possible contamination. It is no longer "Silence = Death" (the slogan used by the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power – ACT UP) – pretty much the contrary.

13 February, 2021

No Carnival...

As I'm writing, total silence outside. Unusually silent in fact, for a Carnival Sunday at Largo do Curvelo, Santa Teresa. These days as it seems, most of the *barulho* (noise) is only taking place online, during "Live" events. They have boomed since the beginning of the pandemic. There are also "real" clandestine parties to be sure, and they have been happening down there too. Paradoxically, all was quiet the night before, a Carnival Saturday...

It's now Sunday morning, between 11am and noon. I can hear the breeze distinctively; the bus or the *bonde* (streetcar) as well, when they ride up or down the street. Distant sounds of a drill machine, occasionally. A

distant radio also, and the birds of course. Sometimes, a dog barking in the distance. Each sound, each noise sounds so distinct, and distant. As for now, I can almost feel the breeze in the tree leaves: a truly “hi-fi” experience, as the Canadian composer, writer, music educator, and environmentalist Raymond Murray Schafer coined it. In modern cities, “hi-fi” sounds had long been lost, Schafer claimed. It is rare when you get to hear them again – very “unheard” of... Are the people down the valley tired of playing music? Could silence be contagious? No one feels the need to shield him or herself sonically, behind his or her own sound.

Oh, but maybe I spoke too soon... There comes a radio out there again, not too far from here – close enough, in any case, that the breeze sounds are gone. Silence is over... It’s that song again, immediately identified by the *Shazam* app on my smartphone: “Cabeça voando” (“Flying Head”), heard over and over these days. The band – Barões da Pisadinha, a *dupla* (duo) of *fórró eletrônico* and *tecnobrega* – has been almost impossible to escape this year. It’s been playing for months on the radios, cars, and boomboxes all over the valley here in Santa Teresa, from Largo do Curvelo to Silvestre (and to be sure, many other places in Rio and across Brazil). It’s not playing too loud today, but it’s loud enough to end with the acoustic diversity around: the music “covers” all the rest. All other sounds are now gone, having disappeared from the ear. Raymond Schafer’s “hi-fi” sounds have now downsized to the routine, relatively unwanted “lo-fi” sounds that everyone gets, even in this mostly residential area.

Thinking also that, for a Carnival Sunday, the soundscape today is utterly unusual, almost abnormal... The “silence” I was listening to a few minutes ago was striking: the “hi-fi” quality of the birds singing, the breeze in the leaves, a distant radio playing... Normally, Santa Teresa’s major *bloco* (streetband) – the Bloco das Carmelitas, named after the Convent of the same name located nearby – would gather hundreds of *foliões* (revelers) right there on the street at Largo do Curvelo, getting ready to march up and down the hilly streets in a joyful mess...

16 February, 2021

Listening Plaza

I just woke up and a thought is in my mind – maybe it came back from a dream (I cannot remember). The thought is a street name, or rather, a plaza: *Largo do Ouvir* (Listening Plaza). There is in fact a *Rua do Ouvidor* (Ombudsman’s Street) in the historical *Centro* – one of Rio’s oldest streets. From *Rua do Ouvidor* to *Largo do Ouvir*, I guess something must have happened in my dream (I cannot remember). Literally speaking, *Largo do Ouvir* sounds like an invitation to mediumship: the mediumship of the listener. *Largo do Ouvir*, as it sounds, can also mean a large hearing, or ample listening. It is also quite poetical, and suggests a *concha acústica* (acoustic shell), when the sounds are so immersive, they sound like they’re heard from within. The first musical instrument in human history was a shell: it is 18 000 years old. Men had to blow in it, to make a sound. Men could also listen to it, obviously. A shell could be blown, or listened to, close to the ear. It had a sound of its own – the sound of the Ocean waves. But you could play the shell, and get a different sound.

As in the dream, *Largo do Ouvir* could be a place. It was in fact a dreamed place: a place within. A place for wide listening, for ample hearing. *Largo do Ouvir* could be a shell as well, then it would be a bandshell. As in a dream, a passerby was listening to a shell on *Rua do Ouvidor*. Then, he was transported to an imaginary *Largo do Ouvir*. It only took the ears of the beholder, to listen and receive. The ombudsman is a mediator; he is listening to the shell, so that he can play it back to the world. The shell is a medium, and the medium is a listener and a player as well.

Mardi-Gras Soundscapes

As I wake up, today is again very silent, besides the birds. They’re singing loud already, and they sing pretty much all through the day. What I’m hearing right now has a “hi-fi” density: the breeze in the trees; a distant Carnival music. A few cars driving up and down the street – one at a time! There is space between the sounds – which makes them all the more relevant. Silence only can reveal sound, and signify it. Do dogs like silence? They always start to bark *en masse*, at some point. One dog starts barking, then the whole valley is under a bark attack – it’s a chain reaction. More than silence, dogs need noise perhaps, to situate themselves.

The *bonde* just rode up the street, going up to Prazeres. It just made a stop at Largo do Curvelo, and will be leaving again shortly. The *bonde* in the opposite direction, going back to Largo da Carioca, has just gone down as well. There was a distant Carnival music, just for a minute or two; it has stopped now, already. A dog barks in the distance. Strangely, no birds are singing right now. There is still the breeze in the trees; another dog. With all the sounds so distant, everything sounds peaceful. There is indeed, time to think, time to reflect on the sounds heard, or listened to – and the difference between the two. A helicopter is flying over the valley. A few seconds, then it's silence again. Acoustically, a "normal" Mardi-Gras would be overwhelming – expectedly. Because of the Covid-19, Carnival was cancelled this year. In a silence like this one, there is no future, and there is no past; just a permanent present, an eternal, suspended time.

2 March, 2021

Ladrão! Ladrão!

I wake up around 5am with someone outside screaming in panic: "Ladrão! Ladrão!" (Thief! Thief!). One after the other, dogs start barking *en masse*: their typical chain reaction. God knows how many dogs live down there in the valley. As they're now barking all at once, the message is clear, something's wrong. A man screaming to the thief triggers a major barking support. Like most of the folks down there I guess, the watchdogs keep me awake for a while. Then, I can't sleep. I remembered some dreams that I had before the dogs. Then I started thinking again, then maybe I slept. The barking had stopped.

18 April, 2021

Listen Carefully / The Wind Does Not Hear

God did not make a noise without involving the Word.
Everything, like you, moans, or sings like me;
Everything speaks. And now, man, do you know why
Everything speaks? Listen carefully. It is that winds, waves, flames,
Trees, reeds, rocks, everything lives!
Everything is full of souls.

–Victor Hugo, *Les contemplations* (Livre VI), 1856

David Toop's idea of "the mediumship of the listener" is echoed here in a Victor Hugo poem, "What the Shadow Mouth Says" (my translation). Hugo listens to the wind, to the elements; he's giving in to an extended awareness of nature's voices and spirits. Hugo "receives" the sounds of nature, where "everything is full of souls." A certain panpsychism, a pan-consciousness arises. The mediumship of the listener transcends all sounds, words, and languages, as they are both and at the same time made by God, and some animistic, pantheistic forces, and reminiscent of Shintoism. Meanwhile, we get a different take on the mediumship of the listener here:

Said the straight man to the late man
Where have you been
I've been here and I've been there
And I've been in between
I talk to the wind
My words are all carried away
I talk to the wind
The wind does not hear
The wind cannot hear

—King Crimson, "I Talk to the Wind",
In the Court of the Crimson King (An Observation by King Crimson), 1969

In this famous King Crimson song, the "straight man" asks the "late man," "Where have you been." The medium is the late man; he is able to travel worlds, and in between worlds. A communication has been established between the living and the dead, and the late man answers, "I've been here and I've been there and I've been in between." "I talk to the wind," he says; yet, as we know, the wind only blows; it cannot hear. As a listener, the medium can only *receive* the sounds of nature, and feel its spirits. "Everything is full of souls," said Victor Hugo. For him, as for whomever may listen carefully, nature has already proved its unequivocal presence.

4 May, 2021

Sound of Metal

Last night, I couldn't sleep so well, after my first dose of AstraZeneca. I felt nauseous. Also, I watched Darius Marder's *Sound of Metal* (Fig. 3 and 4). We follow Ruben, a heavy metal drummer who slowly becomes deaf. Ruben has to go through the process of giving in, letting go. The movie is

immersive and so in tune, as it seems, with our times of lockdown, confinement, social distancing. The very last image is a silent image: like Ruben, we're looking at the sun up in the sky, behind a tree, and the reflections, and silence is all we hear; silence just like the soundtrack inside of Ruben's deaf ears, and he has given in. He has given up the buzzy, sophisticated devices that captured the sounds from outside, and translated them back inside so horribly. His world sounded so metallic. A *Metallic K.O.*; a *Metal Machine Music* – more than an *Aural Sculpture*. Ruben opted for the better, at the end. He gave way to listening in, to his inner sounds of silence. He had to reach forward to that particular wisdom. I heard the deaf don't consider their deafness a handicap – pretty much the contrary. Most definitely, there is wisdom in deafness.

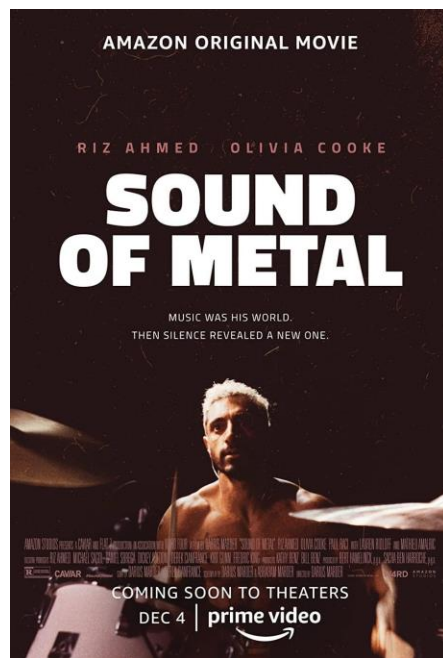


Fig 3. Poster for Darius Marder's *Sound of Metal*, 2019. Source:
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5363618/>



Fig. 4. Another poster for Darius Marder's *Sound of Metal*, 2019. Source:
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/110312203/Sound-of-Metal>

Note: as I am reviewing this paper and adding some photographs (on August 28th— see below: “Aftervoice”), I come across the Brazilian poster for Darius Marder's *Sound of Metal*. Interestingly (significantly, maybe?), the translation has been shortcut as *O som do silêncio* – a reminiscence of, to be sure, the inevitable song from Simon & Garfunkel in 1965, “The Sounds of Silence.” I also remember – almost prescient at this stage – *O som ao redor* (*Neighboring Sounds*), by Brazilian director Kleber Mendonça Filho – his first feature film, from 2012 (Fig. 5).

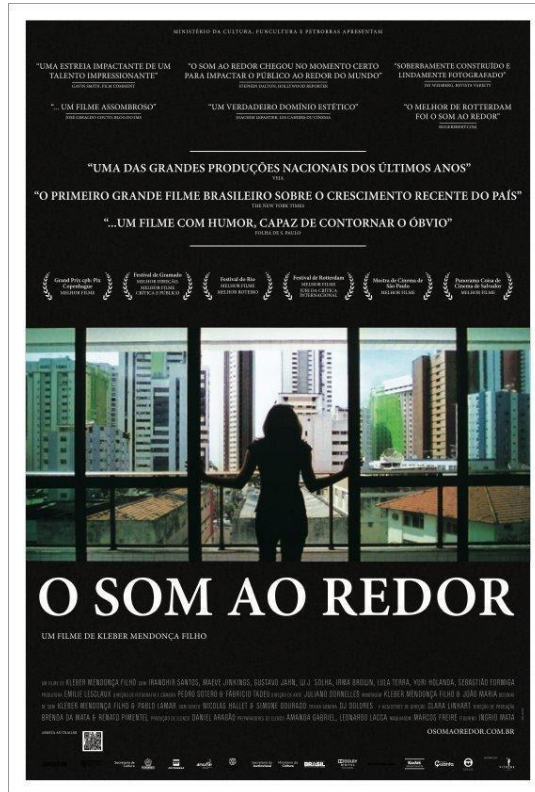


Fig. 5. Poster for Kleber Mendonça Filho's *O som ao redor* (*Neighboring Sounds*), 2012. Source: <https://www.adorocinema.com/filmes/filme-202700/>

23 May, 2021

What Exactly Is a Dream? And What Exactly Is a Creative Process?

I was listening to the singer and composer Piers Faccini interviewed last night on the radio. For him, the creative process goes exactly against the idealization of the artist as some kind of master of the universe, center of the world. On the contrary, it is about the “*devenir-monde*” (becoming-world), as Deleuze coined. Inspiration, creation arise precisely when you lose yourself, when you lose your sense of self, Piers Faccini explained. You lose your center, your centered self, and you become the other, you become the world. It’s like being in trance, he said: you’re no longer yourself. There was also the idea of a third term, and a third time. Time gets a bit more complicated, as it is no longer binary: there is imbalance. You don’t always get back on your feet – or at least, you need to re-adjust, to embrace the imbalance. There was safety in numbers, precisely because there were even numbers. Now, what about the odd numbers?

The number five is the first Pythagorean prime number – the addition of an even number and an odd number, or two plus three. In rhythm, the threes, the fives, the sevens, the nines – they are the odd ones, the ones meant to de-stabilize.

One more thing about trance as a fuel for creation: the idea of “receiving.” Other voices, other sounds, other languages – like when speaking in tongues. I’m thinking also, the connection with Toop’s idea of the mediumship of the listener. In trance you become a receiver, a recipient for other voices, which is the very condition for creativity – the source, the root of it, Piers Faccini contended. What is at play then, in the creative process? Perhaps, the alchemy of it could never be explained or accounted for: first, there is nothing, then there is something. whatever happened in between: isn’t it the most crucial, and cruel question ever? Precisely because it could never be answered properly – the reason always escapes. Here today, gone tomorrow...

1 June, 2021

Radio’s Day

Today, 1st of June 2021, the radio is 100 years old. In the 1940s, Orson Welles considered: “My big inventions were in radio and the theatre. Much more than in movies” (Heyer). The 1938 radio drama episode *The War of the Worlds* is famous: the listening audience entered in a panic when they heard that the Martians had invaded planet Earth. Then after that, Orson Welles had to explain to reporters that no one connected with the broadcast had any idea that it would cause panic – the medium is the message! The listener may be immersed by a voice on the radio, to the point that he’ll *really* believe that he is being taken from home, to a parallel reality – by the Martians, perhaps (it was in fact by the voice of Orson Welles himself!). By the time the movies killed the radio stars, people had already given in to the audiovisual illusion: they were actually *paying* to enter the movie theatre, in order to be tele-transported elsewhere – anywhere out of this world...

25 June, 2021

The Poetics of Reverie

One comforting thought these days is the anticipated memory of an ongoing paper that I've been wanting to write about sounds, and the mediumship of the listener. Gaston Bachelard has orchestrated the fine line between dream and poetry so beautifully. Uncontrolled, the dreamer "receives" poetry through his dreams (mediumship). As for the poet, he is a self-controlled dreamer. A master of the Word, he dreams again consciously – with, and through language (agency).

14 July, 2021

70,000 Heartbeats

The French contemporary artist Christian Boltanski passed away today, at 76 years old. I am listening to the radio report, an insightful perspective about his work. Boltanski embodied the struggle of art against oblivion, against disappearance, against death – sometimes with an ironic dimension. This struggle runs through all of his work, and is partly rooted in the Shoah, in his family's wounds. Indeed, he was deeply affected by the story of his father, a Jewish doctor of Russian origin, who remained hidden for a very long time, a year and a half, during the war. His installations are striking. One can even say, distressing, and it is necessary to experience, to immerse oneself in his installations, with these faces which won't leave you anymore; thousands of old photos of faces, often children's faces, found in family albums, with also rusted boxes, white bulbs. Boltanski fights against the disappearance of childhood, of life, and his work is also disturbing when he puts for example side by side executioners, Nazis, with victims. In the fall of 2019 in his retrospective at the Pompidou Center, he and the radio reporter stopped in front of one of his installations, very simple paintings, with two dates, Boltanski was as always all in black, facing his white lights.

"There is a work, which is in the exhibition, which are two dates, and between these two dates there is a small dash, and it is the birth and death of people who were close to me, my family or close friends, and I wanted to say that life is two dates with a dash in the middle, that is our life. And indeed, one can say that my whole life has been a failure, because since the beginning I tried to fight against disappearance and

death, and naturally it is totally impossible. You can't save anything, everything disappears, but you can protest against oblivion."

In Paris in 2010, Boltanski presented a poignant installation at the Grand Palais, it was a mountain of clothes that was grabbed by the claw of a crane. He also created a heart archive on the island of Teshima in Japan, with the heartbeats of 70,000 people, recorded for eternity. And his heart stopped, Christian Boltanski, 76 years old.

15 July, 2021

Memoria

Apichatpong Weerasethakul's last movie, *Memoria*, was competing at the Cannes Festival this year. As I heard about it on the radio today, it echoes another movie, seen earlier this year: *Sound of Metal*. And possibly also, a certain condition of sonic immersion that the lockdown due to the Covid-19 has in fact imposed on most of the world. A Scottish woman, specialized in orchid cultivation, is in Bogota to visit her hospitalized sister. The horticulturist, played by Tilda Swinton, begins a long wandering in Colombia, in search of a cure for her melancholy. At night, an oppressive noise prevents her from sleeping and obsesses her, to the point of asking Hernán, an electro musician, to try to reproduce it with his machines. "It's, hum, it's like a ramble, from the core of the earth." Slower, more contemplative than ever, Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Memoria* still holds this passion for the ghosts of the past; it is particularly demanding. *Memoria* is a long tropical hallucination, with a ghostly Tilda Swinton. Said the radio reporter, the sound work is impressive: *Memoria* is a work where silence is golden... (Fig. 6 and 7).

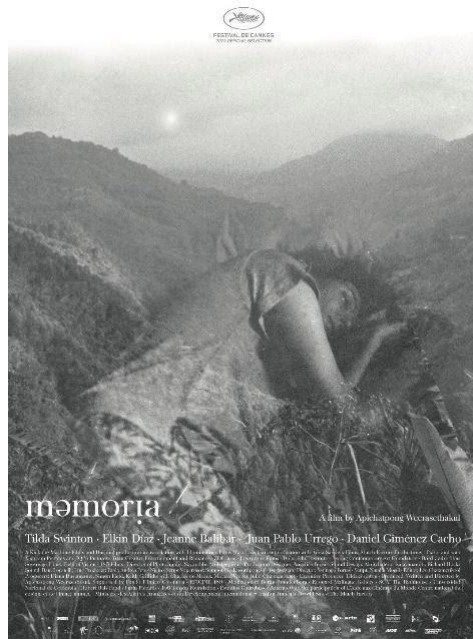


Fig. 6. Poster for Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Memoria*, 2021. Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/movies/comments/oaduky/official_poster_for_apichatpong_weerasethakuls/



Fig 7. Another poster for Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Memoria*, 2021. Source: <https://trakt.tv/movies/memoria-2021>

19 July, 2021

The Floating Ear

I came up with this expression, after the notion of “floating observation” (Pétonnet). The idea is, not to be obsessed by what you hear, or what you’re listening to, but to maintain a sort of audio awareness – a floating ear, or a floating listening. This floating ear is just hard to translate into wor(l)ds. A quick search on Google, and I come up with an article titled precisely [“The Floating Ear,”](#) where the author Samuel Hertz, discusses the works of experimental composer and sound artist Maryanne Amacher, and also Tomás Sareceno’s *Aerocene* project as commented by [Bronislaw Szerszynski](#).

22 July, 2021

Noise Annoys

Heard today on the French radio *France Inter*, a report on noise and its nuisances; it reminded me of a famous punk anthem from UK band Buzzcocks: “Noise Annoys” (Fig. 8). It is sometimes an insidious, unconscious pollution, the commentator said, which is much less talked about than air pollution for example; and yet it does a lot of damage: noise. With a figure that calls out: 156 billion euros is how much noise costs each year in France, according to a report published by the National Noise Council. Stress, depression, noise pollution leads to significant health expenses. Chair of the National Noise Council, Laurianne Rossi explained:

Today you have nearly 9 million French people who are exposed to noise thresholds above the authorized threshold, and who therefore see themselves exposed to real, serious health risks in relation to noise. It is against that, that we try to fight, and so we will find diseases such as sleep disturbance, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, diabetes, concentration disorders, mental health, and various other pathologies that we quantified. There is also a social cost, i.e., you have on the one hand a health cost, with medical prescriptions, treatments, hospitalization, sick leave, work stoppages, and then you have also a social cost which concerns the loss of productivity linked to a noisy environment, because obviously, a person exposed to noise will be less productive, so this has an impact on growth. It also has an impact on the real estate value of housing, because a house located next to an airport, for example, loses its value; we have also quantified that. And then also, the anti-noise measures which are costly, for example, an anti-noise wall costs money to the public power, we have integrated that cost.

Now that noise has decreased potentially, the pandemic moment could be one of understanding that, indeed, noise annoys. With relatively extended periods of lockdown, everyone has had the chance, in France, Brazil, or the US, to explore eventually, the deserted urban life when it is devoid of noise. Yet, sooner or later, noise comes back to its normal levels, that is, noise levels that are pretty unsustainable.

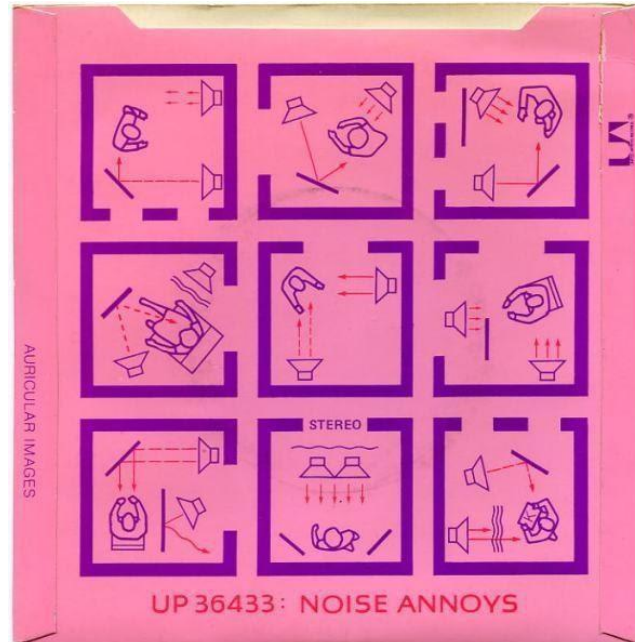


Fig. 8. Back cover of Buzzcocks' single "Noise Annoys / Love You More," by Malcolm Garrett, 1978.

Source : <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/377387643748586130/>

24 July, 2021

Go Seppuku Yourself 1: Launching

I come back to a year ago when this diary was initiated, remembering the 24 hours only streaming of *The Day of Destruction* to mark the film's theatrical release in Japan on July 24, which would have been the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games. And director Toshiaki Toyoda, set out to "exorcise a society obsessed with the monstrosity of self-interest and greed," as mentioned earlier ("[The Day of Destruction...](#)") (Fig. 9). Now one year later, completing Toyoda's politically urgent Resurrection Trilogy following *Wolf's Calling* (2019) and *The Day of Destruction* (2020), we follow, in the electrifying short *Go Seppuku Yourself*, set in the early Meiji period, a man tasked with assisting in the ritual suicide of a drifter ronin (a samurai who does not have a master to serve) who is wrongfully convicted for the crime of spreading a plague by poisoning a well. The samurai won't commit seppuku without condemning the corrupt powers that be (Fig. 10). The film was launched today in Kyoto, along with a book called [7.24 Movie War 2019-2021](#), which is a photographic record of Toyoda's filmmaking during the past three years (Fig. 11). *The Day of Destruction* was filmed right after the declaration of the state of emergency in 2020. In early

2021, when the state of emergency was declared again, Toyoda completed *Go Seppuku Yourself*, “hoping to break the cycle of hatred and empower those exposed, who have been exposed to the hatred” (Toyoda). There are obvious and intentional parallels in *The Day of Destruction* and *Go Seppuku Yourself*, between the evils of both the pandemic and the Olympic. In an interview during the shooting, Toyoda observed,

When I look at the world today, I often think, “If any of them lived in a different time, they should commit seppuku.” I yearn for the way of the samurai that existed a hundred years ago, when you took your own life to bear responsibility; when the tradition of honoring your words was considered a virtue. As we live in a time where foresight is difficult to gain, I wanted to explore the tradition of seppuku as a way for an individual to live an authentic life. What is the respectable way to live in a time of turmoil? I want to make a film about the virtue of leading a life with integrity. Cinema is a virtual image formed by light projected on a wall. And, there are things that can be only expressed through that virtual image. I am ready to say the following in the film, “All of them should commit seppuku.” Filmmaking always tests my determination. ([“Toyoda Films Announces...”](#)).

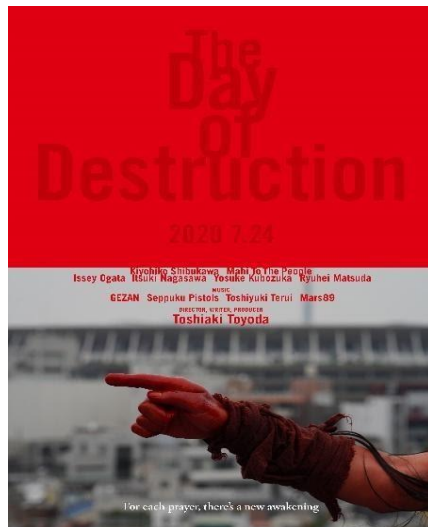


Fig. 9. Poster for Toshiaki Toyoda's *The Day of Destruction*, 2020. Source: <https://psychocinematography.com/2020/09/24/day-of-destruction-2020-review-camera-japan-festival-2020/>.



Fig. 10. Poster for Toshiaki Toyoda's *Go Seppuku Yourself*, 2021. Source: <https://thereelbits.com/2021/08/20/review-go-seppuku-yourself/>.

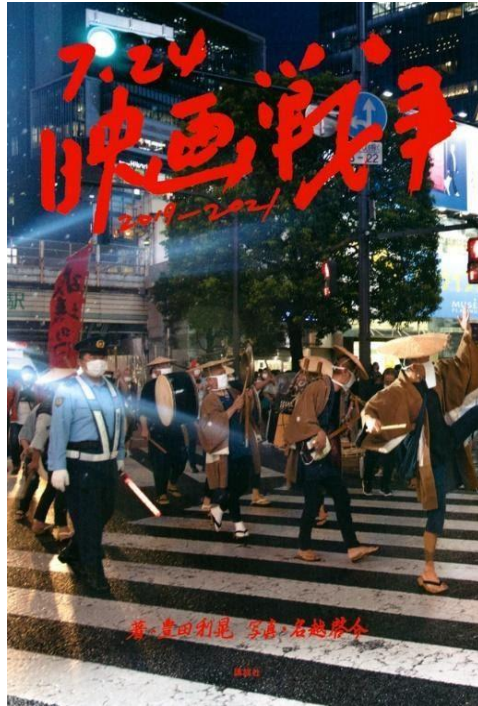


Fig. 11. Book cover of Toshiaki Toyoda's *7.24 Movie War 2019-2021*, with photographs by Keisuke Nagoshi, 2021. Source: <https://bookclub.kodansha.co.jp/product?item=0000348127>.

29 July, 2021

Go Seppuku Yourselfs 2: Interview

Excerpts from an interview with Toshiaki Toyoda on the day *Go Seppuku Yourselfs* was released in Kyoto (Japan), in an event when the screening was followed by live music:

–What kind of presence does the music of the band Seppuku Pistols have in this *Wolfs* series?

Toyoda: Both *Wolf's Calling* and *Go Seppuku Yourselfs* are historical dramas, but they are different from ordinary historical dramas. But I think the reason the audience can watch them with a sense of reality is because the music of the Seppuku Pistols is playing.

–Finally, do you have a message for the audience?

Toyoda: Right now, there are many factors that divide the world, such as the Olympics and the fear of the pandemic, but I would be happy if we could take that into consideration, have an imagination that we can share, and walk optimistically in the right direction in the new future. ([“Filmed three films from 2019 to 2021 in turmoil...”](#)).

Recolhimento (Recollection)

When the tail is also the tongue, and the tongue goes back to the tail, and all the sounds are manifestations of a closed circuit, that is somewhat open to the world... Not sure if this was a dream, but I woke up once again, and came up with this idea in my mind. I guess it's about the art of listening, the soundscapes, the sound diaries, the mediumship of the listener, and sonic agency. Or, what it does to the subject. And it is a yin/yang thing as well. What goes around comes around. Have we become wiser, with the listening of the world in times of lockdown due to the Covid-19? I would like to think that we have – there are some proofs out there. But there are proofs of the opposite as well. Anyway, the image was about *recolhimento* – recollection, self-communion. When the tail is also the tongue, and when the tongue goes back to the tail. And all the sound events around us are like the manifestations of this closed-circuit, while it is at the same time inevitably, inescapably open to the world.

30 July, 2021

Go Seppuku Yourselfs 3: A Note

A Samurai Seppuku,
Then challenges all the rich and powerful
Because of the pandemic, because of the Olympics.
They're contaminating the people, the poor and the needy.
They should therefore commit Seppuku as well.
Just as *He* is showing the way:
The way of the Samurai.
As the black sheep, he won't oppose;
Balance will be restored,
But they will have to do it also.
All of them, the ones in power!
So that a balance could be found again.

Ronin's been accused? The black sheep!
He's taking in the accusation, will go Seppuku.
Balance will be restored, He says.
But they should commit Seppuku as well,
All of them, the ones who did it.
They spread the pandemic, started the Olympics.
Both destructive in their global greed.

8 August, 2021

Resonance, At Last: Not Sinister!

If acceleration is the problem, then resonance may well be the solution.

–Hartmut Rosa, “In Lieu of a Foreword: Sociology and the Story of Anna and Hannah,” *Resonance. A Sociology of our Relationship to the World*. 2019.

So it is, I close this one-year long diary, covering a lockdown life in the middle of the pandemic, while the uncertain future of the Tokyo Olympics was finally unveiling (the closing ceremony today; now the torch goes to Paris for the 2024 Games). There were dreams and thoughts and sounds and songs. Songs pop in my mind at night, after I heard them on the radio during the day. Their eeriness is like a siren call; it keeps coming back, while I'm awake, or maybe, it woke me up in the first place. Recently, it has been “Coquelicot” (Laura Cahen, feat. Yael Naim), or “Les jolies choses” (Polo & Pan). Some time ago, it was “Reason to Believe” (Vagabon, feat. Courtney Barnett), or “I Know I'm Funny Haha” (Faye Webster). It is funny how songs can occupy your mind at night, like an echo: a certain resonance. Washboard sounds, high-pitched voices, downtempo; lo-fi folk feels ethereal, dreamy, atemporal.

Music exists because human beings are creatures that insist on wanting to have the best once again. All music, including elementary or primitive music, begins wholly under the auspices of rediscovery and repetition obsession. The specific allure of musical art, right up to its supreme structures and including its moments of evidentness, of being carried along, and of joyful astonishment, is linked to retrieving a sonorous presence we believed to be forgotten. When music is most like itself, it speaks to us as *musique retrouvée*.

After the ear's exodus into the outer world, everything revolves around the art of repairing the broken link to our first bonding. But we can only recover the essence of this incomparably intimate and entirely individual relationship later on in the public sphere where cultural groups listen to sounds together. The rule for this turn to the public and cultural sphere is that what began in enchantment should return in freedom. What we call nations, and later 'societies', are always sonorous constructions as well – I describe them elsewhere as the phonotope –, each of which solves the task by its own way of embedding its members' ears in a shared world of sound and noise. Public hearing is a means to offer substitutes to its members for the lost paradise of intimate audial perception. This allows an interpretation of the 'homeland effect' – because the word 'homeland' primarily evokes an acoustic impact that activates the obsessive liaison between ear, community and landscape. Recent generations of musical theorists have correctly interpreted what the localized and socialized ear routinely hears as bias in a typically local sound landscape, alias soundscape. There was an erroneous attempt to give this sound environment a direct musical meaning – I say erroneous, because at best the daily sound milieus show semimusical qualities, whereas authentic music only begins where the mere hearing of sounds ends. We can confirm this for ourselves by observing how the modern music industry, as a pure sound industry, spreads the plague behind the smokescreen of folk music and causes epidemics behind the smokescreen of pop music – things we can only regard as acoustic counterparts to Spanish flu, and against which no effective medicine has yet been found.

If we accept these conclusions, we realize immediately why the way to music is inseparably linked to reclaiming the individuality and intimacy of hearing. As we have noted, this restitution can only happen in a roundabout way through public sound events and at the level of technical methods. In this sense we can say that participation in civilization means being on the path to individuated music. This statement gives an idea of the scope of the adventure that the composers and musicians of European modernity embarked on when they set out to discover the new lands of audible structures.

Let us reaffirm what we have just stated: civilization, in the higher sense of the term, is the process during which opportunities for individualization are released, including those that promote an intimate atmosphere of listening for adult

members of a nation with a particular culture. This immediately reveals the tension that arises between the demands of individualized adult existence and its tendency towards intimacy. It is this tension that leads to music being described as demonic territory. Individualization includes musicalization. This involves the fact that individuals are increasingly able to tap into the conditions of music in terms of flow, reception and media, regardless of whether we understand them as pre-subjective or pre-objective, so that the entirely musicalized person, the ultimate educational product of European modernity, would also be the person who can handle work and conflict skilfully and, moreover, has the most profoundly developed freedom for regression. (Sloterdijk 2017: 6-7).

Because these considerations on depth acoustics are concerned with a kind of internal awareness that pre-exists the distinction between hearing music and hearing voices, we can also benefit from applying the remarks about the sonorous cogito to musical phenomena. It is music itself only in the self-hearing of the 'instrument', that is, of the subject, insofar as we now understand it as a sound-sensitive medium. Music is only in the hearing subject. Admittedly, this sentence is inseparable from its converse: the hearing subject is only in the music. Consequently, the subject can only be with itself when it has something that makes itself heard inside it – without sound there is no ear, without an Other there is no self. The subject is only conscious of itself as thinking and living to the extent that it is a medium vibrating throughout with sounds, voices, feelings and thoughts. This idea is not new, of course. On its way to classical modernity, philosophy has been struggling for over a century to dispel the idealistic delusions of Cartesianism and expel the chimeras of absolute subjectivity in favour of embodied intelligence. Existentiality instead of substantiality; resonance instead of autonomy; percussion instead of groundwork (Sloterdijk 2017 38).

Reflecting, in retrospect, on David Toop's *Sinister Resonance (The Mediumship of the Listener)*, and Brandon LaBelle's *Sonic Agency*, I come up with Hartmut Rosa's concept/theory of resonance. Since the listener is "receiving" and since sonic agency is already an extension of the very idea of mediumship (what do you "do" with the sounds around), why should resonance be "sinister?" Beyond reception in its purely psychoacoustic dimensions – or beneath it – resonance is already a form of connecting to the world; it is also, a "tuning of the world," as Schafer made clear. No reason to get excited or spooked, resonance sounds also

like aural clairvoyance: it is about giving in, acknowledging the world out there – and there is also, inevitably, a form of resilience. More should be said to link Toop’s mediumship of the listener with LaBelle’s sonic agency, now with Rosa’s resonance – one of the most generous and encompassing forms of conceiving the possible relationships between the social, material, spiritual world(s), and the subject(s). In the same vein, Peter Sloterdijk leaves us here with the will to further our sound investigations between the self and the world:

If one inquires as to the most elemental and interior layers of mental accessibility, one must also desire to know how to re-disarm a hearing sense that has become hard, careful and narrow. From a psychoacoustic perspective, the shift to intimate listening is always connected to a change of attitude from a one-dimensional alarm – and distance-oriented listening to a polymorphously moved floating listening. This change reverses the general tendency to move from a magical, proto-musical listening to one revolving around alarm and concern – or, to put it in more enlightened terms: from uncritical participation to critical awareness. Perhaps history itself is a titanic battle for the human ear in which nearby voices struggle with distant ones for privileged access to emotional movedness, the voices of the mighty with those of the counter-mighty. Using gestures claiming the right to move, power has always presented itself as truth; in the refusal to be moved, however, one sees a laboriously acquired strategic cunning which knows that the gullible ear also takes in lies (Sloterdijk 2011: 479-480).

Afterword (9 August, 2021): Sounds from the Valley

I remember last night, music from down the valley. A private party, maybe just a birthday, or someone just playing his music – louder than usual these days. It had started in the early afternoon: pagode, tecnobrega music, heard in the distance – a permanent sound mush. We went for a walk around 3pm, the music had been playing for a while. There was still music playing when we came home, a bit before 7pm. An early Sunday night feeling, somewhat nostalgic and cheesy: the romantic songs of Elymar Santos (the *Shazam* app on my smartphone identifies most of them). Later on, the music was livelier again – electro sounds, accelerated carioca funk – yet still in a distance. An unusual party, maybe. No buzz, no laughter or conversations. Someone may have felt just like playing music all day long, to conjure the isolation, or to call for it. A sound confinement after all: a different kind of resonance (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12. A sound confinement after all: a different kind of resonance. Photograph: Jorge de La Barre.

Aftervoice (28 August, 2021): Future Developments

Or is it: the sounds of... my voice itself... Even my voice – the sound coming from my throat – has changed. Teaching online takes a whole different energy. A different channel of the body, the voice, the breathing, and the ways of being in this world: in remote mode. In this whole remote world, my voice also has become darker – and deeper. Or so it feels: a certain resonance. I know this window view by heart. Here we go again.

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"Les jolies choses," *Cyclorama*. Artist: Polo & Pan. Record Label: Hamburger Records, Ekler'O'Shock, 2021.

Metal Machine Music. Artist: Lou Reed. Record Label: RCA Victor, 1975.

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