MAST

The Journal of Media Art Study and Theory

Special Issue:

Sound, Colonialism, and Power

Edited by Lauren Rosati
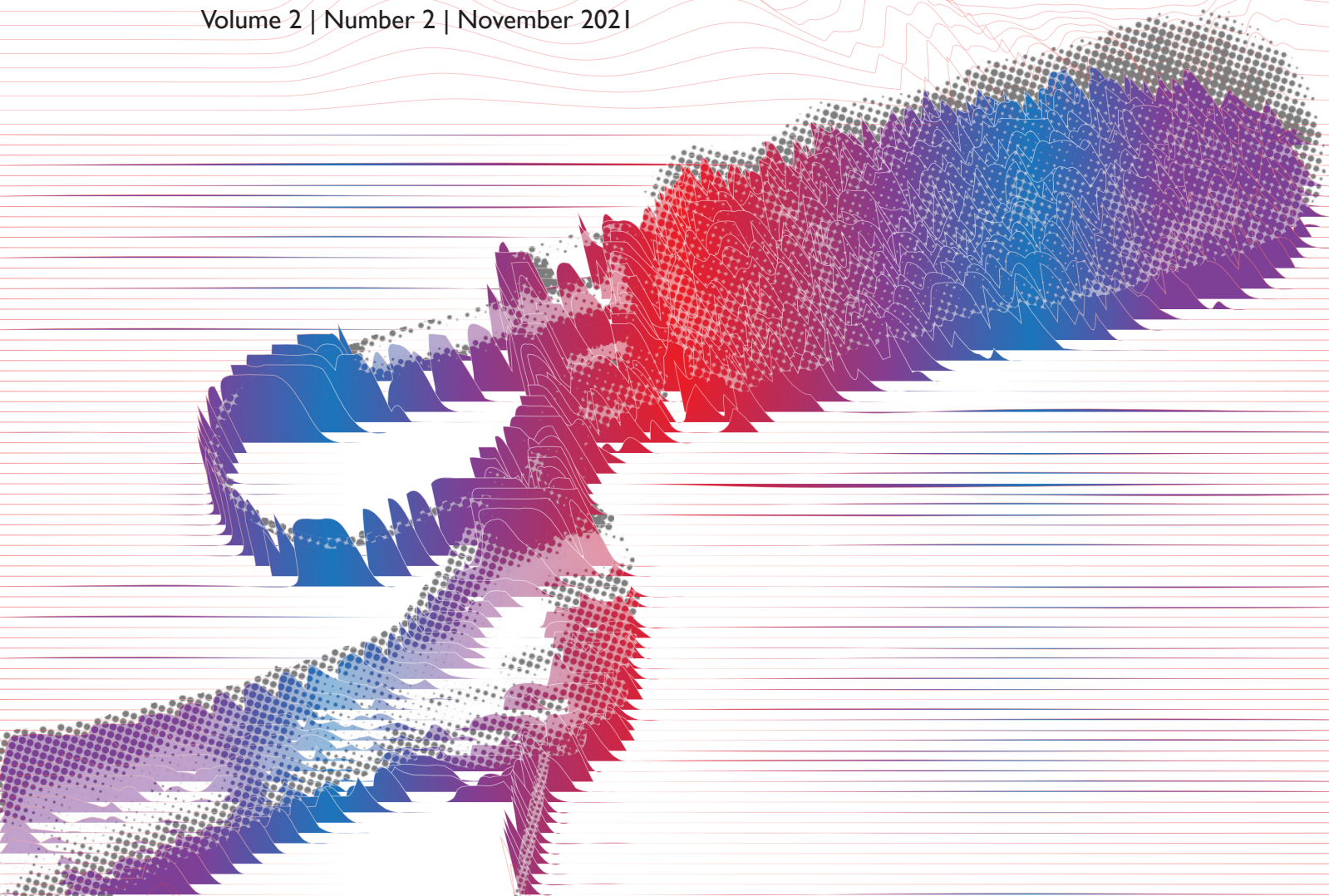
MAST

The Journal of Media Art Study and Theory

Editors

Maryam Muliaee (University of Colorado Boulder)

Mani Mehrvarz (University at Buffalo)

Author Benefits

- ✓ MAST is an open-access journal and provides free access to the full texts of all its contents immediately upon publication. No fees are charged to either readers or authors.

- ✓ MAST uses a double-blind peer-review process. The editors perform an initial review of all submissions and may reject papers that are clearly outside the scope of the journal. Accepted submissions within the scope will be sent for blind peer-review and will be reviewed by at least two internal/external reviewers.

- ✓ Published articles are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). Authors retain copyright and once published, they can post a copy of their articles in their websites and in an Institutional repository providing acknowledgment is given to MAST as the original source of publication.

- ✓ MAST is part of Radical Open Access Collective.

Twitter: twitter.com/MAST_NeMLA

Websites: mast-journal.org

Aims and Scope

MAST is an online, open-access, and double-blind peer-reviewed journal featuring interdisciplinary scholarship in the domain of media studies. *MAST* stands for "Media Art Study and Theory" and aims to publish innovative research, writing, and work by artists and scholars who present new methods, approaches, questions, and researches in the field of media studies in theory and practice. The journal is relevant to academics, artists, researchers, theorists, and art curators with an interest in artistic research, theory, and praxis of media, introducing works that demonstrate creative engagements with current debates in media studies. *MAST* is housed in and sponsored by NeMLA (The Northeast Modern Language Association) at the State University of New York at Buffalo. *MAST* issues are published digitally twice a year (Spring and Fall).

Contents

Special Issue: Sound, Colonialism, and Power

Introduction

"Civilizing" Noise:
An Introduction to the Special Issue on
Sound, Colonialism, and Power

Lauren Rosati
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

At the start of Ernst Karel and Veronika Kusumaryati's augmented sound film *Expedition Content* (2020), the photojournalist Eliot Elisofon talks about sunrise. He and an American crew—filmmaker Robert Gardner and recent Harvard graduates Sam Putnam and Michael C. Rockefeller—are preparing to document the Hubula people of Netherlands New Guinea (now West Papua) for the 1961 Harvard Peabody Expedition, an anthropological survey funded in part by the Dutch colonial government. Sharing a photograph with the members of his party as part of a demonstration of documentary techniques, he notes a peculiar optical phenomenon present in the image: the saturated blue of a pre-dawn sky, picked up by the sensitive lens of a camera but invisible to the human eye.

This crepuscular light—latent, diffuse, and technologically-mediated—provides an apt metaphor for the colonial power relations entrapped by the expedition's recording media. True, the reel-to-reel tape recorders, 16mm film cameras, still cameras, and note-taking supplies wielded by the crew document amicable conversations with Hubula people, elements of the Papuan sonic environment, and narrative accounts of tribal culture. But they also capture a series of uncomfortable encounters, laced with racist aggressions and tacit assumptions about the Hubula's behavior. Collected under the pretense of research and cultural preservation, the

sonic documents on which *Expedition Content* is based (thirty-seven hours of audio tape

recorded by Rockefeller) register overt as well as inherent tensions between the Western,

white, colonial officers and their non-Western, Black, Indigenous, colonized subjects. Sound

technologies like audio tape were frequently weaponized by ethnographers as tools for

extracting Indigenous speech or song, often without consent, a transgressive act that Stó:lō

music scholar Dylan Robinson has likened to "'pinning down' that which is alive, like the

wings of butterflies" (149). This violent metaphor recalls the physical brutality regularly

perpetrated against peoples on colonized lands, and specifically in West Papua: assaults

extended to acts of aural plunder. After all, a common device used for ethnographic field

recording is the "shotgun" microphone.

This special issue of *MAST: The Journal of Media Art Study and Theory* focuses on

sound as a vector of colonial power. It explores listening as a form of witness or surveillance to

sonic cultures, especially through the fields of ethnography and acoustic ecology, which

studies the mediated sonic relationship between humans and their environment. Listening as a

method of appropriation, rather than observation, is a central concern; Robinson has recently

called this "hungry listening" in specific reference to settler colonial forms of perception that

seek to "civilize" or "settle" Indigenous sounds (38–40). The journal issue also considers the

role of sound technologies and creative practices in perpetuating and reproducing colonial

power relations. Recording media, including reel-to-reel tape recorders and storage devices

such as shellac discs, are investigated as colonial documents, while creative techniques such as

field recording and sound mapping are examined as both preservative of the soundscapes they

catalogue and at the same potentially aimed toward a colonialist extraction or salvage of sonic

material.

In its concentration on "auditory significance," to use Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan's term for sound's ability to produce social and political meaning, this issue engages with media history and theory through a field that might be broadly termed sound studies, a capacious and interdisciplinary realm of study that analyzes sonic practices, institutions, technologies, and discourses (2).[1] At the risk of seeming overly expansive, it takes a syncretic approach to epistemological inquiry, unifying the theoretical silos of art history, art practice, ethnomusicology, and media history through this shared intellectual frame. It is guided by the important work of Robinson, whose book *Hungry Listening* significantly expands the field of Indigenous sound studies, and Gustavus Stadler, whose iconoclastic article "On Whiteness and Sound Studies" calls out the foundational and dominant whiteness of the field, both historically, in terms of the key figures celebrated as part of its canon, and intellectually, given the relative paucity of published writings on race, gender, and difference.

It also acknowledges the critical influence of those considered to be among the discipline's founders while recognizing the ideological critiques leveled against them. For example, the late composer and sound theorist R. Murray Schafer (1933–2021) of the World Soundscape Project produced an undeniably significant body of work, establishing the field of acoustic ecology and publishing numerous treatises such as *The Tuning of the* World (1977) that remain standard texts, but he has also been subject to scrutiny for his mixed relationship to Indigenous Canadians both in his writings and compositions. Robinson calls attention to the "racist timbre" of Schafer's 1961 essay "On the Limitations of Nationalism in Canadian Music," in which he writes about the "Eskimos"—using a now outdated and derogatory term—

---

[1] For more on sound studies, see Sterne, *The Sound Studies Reader*.

as "an astonishingly unmusical race" (1). Mitchell Akiyama, in an online series devoted to "Unsettling the World Soundscape Project," revisits *Soundscapes of Canada* (1974), a sweeping series of ten hour-long programs broadcast on the national radio network and produced in part by Schafer that excluded the rich sonic cultures of Canada's First Nations communities. The composer's attitudes and commitments seem to have evolved in later anti-colonialist texts that explicitly call for the inclusion of First Nations communities and Indigenous perspectives within considerations of Canadian musical culture.[2] Yet whether these earlier slights were intentional or the result of ignorance, it is important to recognize the marginalizing impact of Schafer's comments and projects in setting the tone for acoustic ecology and the writing of sonic art history, just as it is critical to examine, question, and critique the texts, theories, and voices upon which any discipline is founded.

This special issue on "Sound, Colonialism, and Power" holds these points in tension, bracketing the foundational authors of sound studies in order to take up Stadler's appeal to examine race and difference in the context of the discipline. It presents a collection of scholarly essays and artists' perspectives on Blackness, Indigeneity, disability, and otherness as they relate to broader issues around aurality, imperial authority, and (anti)colonialism. It is important to acknowledge the limits of this project's scope. The editor invited scholars, curators, artists, and practitioner-researchers to contribute art-based research, reflecting on the issue's theme through essays that center on a specific media artwork, whether modern or contemporary. This focus on media art necessarily delimited the range of perspectives and subjects proposed for the journal, precluding strictly historical investigations. As a single

---

[2] The editor thanks Eric Leonardson for a productive dialogue on Schafer's legacy, and for sharing Schafer's 1983 lecture "Canadian Culture: Colonial Culture" as one example of the composer's potentially redemptive texts.

special issue, this volume cannot claim to attempt a decolonization of sound studies or to redress the critical perspectives it has historically lacked. Rather, it counts as one in a growing constellation of texts pushing forward this important work. Aside from those mentioned above, these include Stadler's special issue of *Social Text* on "The Politics of Recorded Sound," which explores the networks of power that shape sound reproduction; Jennifer Stoever-Ackerman's theorization of the "sonic color-line" or the ways in which race is registered in and through diverse listening practices; the edited volume *Audible Empire: Music, Global Politics, Critique*, which examines European imperialism's effect on the auditory, including sound, music, and modes of hearing; and *Remapping Sound Studies*, edited by Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes, which reorients the field away from the North to examine sound in and through the Global South. The epistemological stakes of this journal issue are humble: not to decolonize media history and sound studies, but to agitate or "unsettle" these disciplines by examining blind spots, challenging assumptions, and confronting legacies of white supremacy and colonialism within the histories and theories of sonic cultures.

To this end, the editor invited potential authors to consider a series of questions related to the issue's theme. To what extent is media history and sound studies in particular shaped by Western ideals of empiricism and knowing? In what ways do sonic practices and methods of recording participate in colonial systems of oppression and domination? How should artists and scholars grapple with the whiteness of sound studies? What sounds have been left out of media history?

Contributing authors address these concerns through a wide range of topics, including Indigenous sound and listening, manifestations of settler colonialism in the built environment, museum collections, sound recordings in South Asia, Deafness and hearing culture, modernist

"primitivism," sound mapping, speech recognition efforts, and ethnographic field recording.

Common threads of inquiry emerge in the selected writings. Some attend to Indigeneity,

specifically to the legibility of Indigenous sounds to settler audiences. Others deal broadly with

sound and site, examining the ways that sound constructs knowledge about architectural

environments and the objects housed within them. Several engage with race and difference,

especially the appropriation or plunder of sounds from colonial and diasporic communities.

While some authors have an academic background in fields such as anthropology, art history,

communications, and sound studies, others are artists, composers, filmmakers, and musicians,

and some work fluidly between these disciplines.

Karel and Kusumaryati open the issue with an essay on their recent sound film

Expedition Content, which revisits the 1961 Harvard Peabody Expedition to document the

Hubula peoples of West Papua and draws primarily on audio tape recorded by Rockefeller

during the five-month trip. (Rockefeller would famously disappear later that year on another

visit to the region). Led by American filmmaker Robert Gardner, and funded in part by the

Dutch colonial government, the expedition was billed as a civilizing mission to demonstrate

the "backwardness" of the Hubula peoples to Dutch publics. The authors outline the funding

sources for the journey, introduce the expedition's personnel, and explain the socio-political

context of the venture, which occurred almost simultaneously with the seizure of West Papua

from Dutch control by Indonesia (working with the support of the United States). Focusing on

Rockefeller's audio tapes, they argue for the microphone as a mediating device that provoked a

"sonic encounter" between the Hubula and the expedition team, revealing the colonial

relationships that governed the terms of their meeting. Ultimately, the authors interrogate the

use of audiovisual technology in anthropological research and investigate the role that sound

recording plays in perpetuating colonial power structures.

Christopher T. Green continues this investigation of Indigenous sounds in his essay

"Sonic Refusal: Indigenous Belongings without Soundtrack," which closely examines the

multimedia installation *Fair Warning: A Sacred Place* (2019) by Tlingit/Unangax̂ artist

Nicholas Galanin. The work consists of photographs documenting empty display cases

typically housing Northwest Coast objects in the American Museum of Natural History in New

York, accompanied by an audio recording of a Native American Art sale at a major auction

house. The unsettling juxtaposition between the visual absence of Indigenous material culture

and the audible presence of their participation in a capitalist market is at the center of Green's

investigation. This becomes a lens through which to consider the multifaceted Indigenous

strategy of "refusal," a defiant withholding of cultural forms and knowledge and a method for

rejecting participation in settler structures. The author also levels a critique against museums,

which render silent and static Indigenous artworks and belongings that must often be activated

through sound or movement. Through his analysis, Green questions both the utility of these

cultural spaces for Indigenous objects and the cycles of colonial consumption in which they

participate.

Sadie Couture and Russell Gendron then introduce their anti-colonial cartography

project titled the Mayne Island Soundmap, a digital chart devoted to the sounds, songs, and

stories of a small community off the coast of British Columbia, Canada. Recordings captured

for the map aim to document the cycle of Indigenous inhabitants, European settlers, and

immigrant communities that have lived on the island and to challenge the notion of a

geographic "home" on land that was forcibly taken. Acknowledging the map itself as a

colonial construct intended to survey, name, and ultimately claim territory, the authors address

the limits of their project as well as their aim to subvert "settler perceptual orders." Through

the Mayne Island Soundmap, they explore the role of sound recording in preserving Indigenous

sovereignty.

In "Nothing to Hear, So to Speak: Spaces of Sound and Listening at 100 McCaul

Street," Angus Tarnawsky explores "the audible traces of colonization" in the buildings of The

Ontario College of Art and Design University, a campus situated on the ancestral and

traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe,

and the Huron-Wendat. Through a site-specific sound installation in the university's main

building, Tarnawsky calls attention to both the intentional and incidental noises produced

everyday within the university's halls, as well as the inescapable din of the built environment,

and invites listeners to consider its *absent* sounds, which are often ignored. The author uses

Robinson's theory of "listening otherwise" to understand the existence of perceptual biases and

to encourage auditors to reconfigure their subjective positions in order to adopt a "decolonial

sensibility."

Bhavisha Panchia provides an interpretative framework for another media artwork, her

audio collage *Imagine you are in a museum: What do you hear?*, commissioned for the 2020

contemporary art biennale Manifesta 13. Addressing the colonialist origins of museums, she

condemns the "extraction and silencing" of Indigenous art and ethnographic artifacts,

displaced from their original contexts as part of imperial conquests and then collected and

displayed by Western institutions. This practice extended, Panchia argues, to colonial

expositions, which frequently presented recordings and performances of music from various

territories. Through her audio work, Panchia invites listeners to consider the sounds of museum

objects and to attune to "systems of colonial modernity and its extractive and accumulative logic."

In "*Bamboula!*: Dada Performance as Sonic Blackface," Hilary Whitham Sánchez analyzes the simultaneous Dada poem "L'Amiral cherche un maison à louer (The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent)," written and performed in 1916 by Marcel Janco, Richard Hulsenbeck, and Tristan Tzara at Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire. Tzara retrospectively described the performance as a *bamboula*, using a Bantu word that refers to both a small African drum and the dance performed to its rhythms. His equation of the poetry recitation with *musique nègre*, Sánchez argues, instantiates the "central paradox of Dada performance," specifically its appropriation and subsequent mistranslation of cultural forms from sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific Islands. In her essay, Sánchez reconsiders Dada sound and performance practices through an anticolonial lens.

The British colonial plunder of South Asian songs and musical performances in the early twentieth century and the politics of ethnographic field recording are the subjects of Budhaditya Chattopadhyay's essay "Uncolonizing Early Sound Recordings." The author examines the commercial exploitation of Hindustani classical music by the London Gramophone and Typewriter Company—which sought to permanently fix and ultimately sell South Asian musical recordings to Western audiences—and details the resistance of singers and musicians to being "captured" on recording media. Technologies such as shellac discs are investigated as tools of colonial invasion and as inadequate methods for recording the improvisational, open-ended, and live sound practices of South Asia. Chattopadhyay questions whether such musical forms can, or should, be preserved.

Pedro J S Vieira de Oliveira details the present use of "accent recognition software" by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees to assess an immigrant's country of origin and charts the fascinating history of its origins in Prussian prisoner-of-war camps. Within these paradigms of "colonial listening," government officers aimed to evaluate a person's "home" for the purposes of research or asylum processing, using only the character and cadence of the voice, as well as speech content, as evidence. Instead, the author argues, these language assessment programs "complicate the boundaries between body, accent, citizenship, and belonging." This is both the subject and object of interrogation in the author's performance and radio art piece *A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence* (2019). Oliveira's media artwork explores the narrative elicitation of "home" through modes of speech and questions whether listening is a neutral act after all.

Finally, in their essay "A Map of a Sound as a Space: Christine Sun Kim's *(LISTEN)*," Charles Eppley revisits an East Village sound walk led in American Sign Language by artist Christine Sun Kim. While sound walks typically invite hearing participants to experience the acoustical environment of a particular place, Kim asked attendees to concentrate on "non-aural encounters with sound and listening through affect, memory, and other non-acoustical modes of perception like touch, taste, and smell." This project, Eppley explains, demonstrates Deaf culture's rich engagement with epistemologies of listening and highlights the audist and ableist roots of sonic art. Rejecting the perceived limitations of sound and listening, Eppley argues for the decolonization of sound studies to incorporate the listening practices of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, offering a potent condemnation of the social and intellectual power structures that create systemic inequities and barriers to inclusion.

Works Cited

Akiyama, Mitchell. "Unsettling the World Soundscape Project: Soundscapes of Canada and the

      Politics of Self-Recognition." *Sounding Out!,* 20 Aug. 2015, soundstudiesblog.com

      /2015/ 08/20/unsettling-the-world-soundscape-project-soundscapes-of-canada-and-the-

      politics-of-self-recognition. Accessed 21 Sep. 2021.

Radano, Ronald, and Tejumola Olaniyan. "Introduction: Hearing Empire—Imperial

      Listening." *Audible Empire: Music, Global Politics, Critique*, edited by Ronald Radano

      and Tejumola Olaniyan, Duke UP, 2016, pp. 1–22.

Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies.* U of

      Minnesota P, 2020.

Stadler, Gustavus. "On Whiteness and Sound Studies." *Sounding Out!, 6* Jul. 2015,

      soundstudiesblog.com/2015/07/06/on-whiteness-and-sound-studies. Accessed 13 Sep.

      2021.

---, editor. *The Politics of Recorded Sound*, special issue of *Social Text*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2010.

Steingo, Gavin, and Jim Sykes, editors. *Remapping Sound Studies*. Duke UP, 2019.

Sterne, Jonathan, editor. *The Sound Studies Reader*. Routledge, 2012.

Stoever-Ackerman, Jennifer. *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of*

      Listening. NYU P, 2016.

Dr. Lauren Rosati is Assistant Curator in the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art and the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Recent exhibitions include *Surrealism Beyond Borders* at The Met (2021), *Oliver Beer: Vessel Orchestra* at The Met Breuer (2019), and *Open Plan: Cecil Taylor* at the Whitney Museum

(2016), as well as large-scale programs devoted to John Giorno's Dial-a-Poem (Red Bull Arts, 2017), Albert Savinio's 1914 noise opera *Les chants de la mi-mort* (Issue Project Room, 2018), and the 50th anniversary of Experiments in Art and Technology (Issue Project Room, 2016). She has published articles in books, exhibition catalogues, journals, and online on the relation of modern and contemporary art to sound, performance, media, science, and technology. She is also co-editor of *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960-2010* with Mary Anne Staniszewski (The MIT Press, 2012). Rosati has lectured, organized conferences, and taught internationally on art, media, curatorial practice, and performance. She holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the City University of New York, Graduate Center, where she completed a dissertation on sound technologies and the interwar avant-garde.

Email: lauren.rosati@gmail.com.

Expedition Content and the Harvard Peabody Expedition to Netherlands New Guinea, 1961

Veronika Kusumaryati
Georgetown University

Ernst Karel
UC Berkeley

Expedition Content is a feature-length augmented sound work composed for the space of the

cinema. The piece, which occasionally uses the digital cinema projector in addition to

multichannel sound, is composed exclusively from the audio archives of the 1961 Harvard

Peabody Expedition to Netherlands New Guinea, the name of which implicates the Peabody

Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard in the ongoing colonial history of West

Papua.[1] Robert Gardner organized the expedition, primarily to make a film: the result, *Dead*

Birds, is often considered a landmark of ethnographic filmmaking.

Funded and supported by the Dutch government, the expedition took place at a critical

historical moment for the Hubula people of the Baliem Valley:[2] just a few years earlier,

---

[1] West Papua is a self-identifying term referring to Indonesia's easternmost and marginal provinces of Papua and West Papua. It occupies the western half of New Guinea Island. The Dutch colonized West Papua (thus "Netherlands New Guinea") from 1895 to 1962. The British, German, and Australians colonized the eastern part, which is now the independent state of Papua New Guinea. See Drooglever.

[2] Other Papuan tribes referred to the group living in the Baliem Valley as "Dani," a name that was also taken up by expedition members. This group now prefers to be called the "Hubula," which means "people from the valley."

American Christian missionaries and Dutch colonial officers took over Hubula territories and slowly "pacified" the population. No longer free to determine their own future, the Hubula began to become Dutch subjects. In the Kurulu area where filming took place, the colonial government and missionaries agreed to wait until the expedition was complete to enter. Soon after, in 1963, Indonesia took over the region and has occupied it ever since under harsh military rule that is tantamount to a campaign of genocide.

The peculiar moment of the expedition can be situated within a multiplicity of historical trajectories, all of which center around colonialism: of extractivism, the oppression and genocide that started during the Dutch period but intensified under Indonesian rule with the help of the US as an imperial power, the already archaic form of the anthropological expedition, and new modes of engaging with media in the development of approaches to visual anthropology and ethnographic film. How do the expedition's sound archives speak to its colonial and imperial contexts?

Listening to the recordings provides an opportunity to reflect on this important question, precisely because of the limits of audibility set by the audio archives themselves. Relationships are sonified through the microphone, connected by cable to a Nagra III tape recorder powered by D-cell batteries, and held in the hand of young Harvard graduate Michael Rockefeller, heir to the Standard Oil fortune. Listening to *Expedition Content* conjures more than colonial power relations, but by including in the composition those moments where the microphone was turned on the expedition members themselves—labeled in the archival record as "expedition content"—the work foregrounds for the listener the structures that enabled the piece to come into being. Here we elaborate on some of those structures, which are invoked and evoked through the experience of listening to the edited tapes.

The Expedition

As Robert Gardner later described it, the goal of the expedition was to carry out "a comprehensive study of a single community of Neolithic warrior farmers" (Gardner and Heider xv). The fantasy of stone age culture was important for the Dutch, who were under international pressure to decolonize their last colony. The fact that American anthropologists readily adopted this designation evidences Dutch success in persuading the US to be involved in its colonial project, and perhaps a shared ideology between these colonial and imperial actors. Jan Broekhuiyse, a young Dutch anthropologist who had already studied the Hubula intensively, was assigned by the government to act as a kind of chaperone for the expedition. He later wrote that "the Dutch government had a great interest in showing to the world the backward position of the New Guinea indigenous population" (1). The purpose was clear: to create an impression that Indigenous Papuans were not ready for self-determination, thus requiring Dutch patronage to be civilized and modern. In that context, the Dutch Adviser for Population Affairs Victor de Bruyn was given broad latitude to find American filmmakers suited to the task. He approached Gardner, who, eager for a project through which he could establish himself as a filmmaker, readily agreed to participate (Gardner and Warren 12–13).

Gardner's grandiose statement, in which he positioned the expedition for the historical record, recapitulates the arrogant delusion—widespread amongst anthropologists at the time—that a "comprehensive study" was possible. (Never mind the fact that Gardner's statement imagines a "single" community). Gardner was clearly inspired by salvage anthropology, thinking that Hubula cultures would disappear without the white men documenting them. This delusion was perhaps emboldened by the experimental audiovisual methods used for the expedition. This study would be not just textual but also visible and audible.

Anthropological expeditions had been a popular mode of scientific production since the early twentieth century, but in the late 1950s, they declined in popularity as an increasingly institutionalized discipline established the romantic figure of a lone anthropologist doing fieldwork. At Harvard, however, some anthropological expeditions continued to be carried out, including the notable example of the Marshall family's expeditions to the Kalahari starting in the early 1950s that produced a series of influential ethnographic films on the Ju/'hoansi. The Harvard Peabody Expedition to Netherlands New Guinea also followed in the footsteps of earlier anthropologists in Oceania who intensively used audiovisual technology for anthropological research.

In addition to his own filming, Gardner also assembled a team to cover still photography, audio, and two modes of writing: novelistic nonfiction and conventional ethnographic prose. In addition to *Dead Birds* (1964), products of the expedition include Peter Matthiessen's novel *Under the Mountain Wall* (1962), two books of photographs, and doctoral dissertations by anthropologists Karl Heider and Broekhuiyse, both members of the expedition team. Underscoring the colonial nature of the venture, the members of the expedition themselves were closely tied to brutal forms of international capitalism and represented great wealth and institutional support.[3] For example, while Gardner and John Marshall (whose own family wealth came from the military contractor Raytheon, co-founded by his father) were editing what became *The Hunters* and founding the Film Study Center in the basement of the Peabody Museum, Gardner's brother George Peabody Gardner served as chairman of the notorious United Fruit Company, on whose behalf the CIA deposed the democratically elected

---

[3] In addition to government and private sources, the expedition also received funding from the Peabody Museum, the Norman Foundation, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

government of Guatemala and installed a pro-business military dictatorship in 1954.[4]

(Speaking of the CIA, in the 1950s, Matthiessen had co-founded *The Paris Review* in part as a

cover for his main work as a CIA agent keeping an eye on leftist writers such as James

Baldwin).

Rockefeller, the audio recordist, had family history in the area: with Dutch partner

Shell, Standard Oil had drilled in West Papua since 1935. He had wanted to travel to West

Papua to extract art objects from the Asmat group for the Museum of Primitive Art in New

York, newly opened by his father Nelson and for which he was named as trustee.[5] He

approached Gardner, who later quipped that he "sensed a source of funding" (Gardner and

Warren 18).[6] Indeed the Rockefeller Foundation supported the expedition, using Standard Oil

money that also later positioned the elder Rockefeller to become Governor of New York and

later Vice President of the United States. Michael's special training in both photography and

audio recording for the expedition thus continued his family's extractivism in West Papua.

Eliot Elisofon, a *Life* magazine photographer who would later have the title of "research

associate in Primitive Art" at the Peabody Museum, led the expedition photography.

Broekhuiyse and Heider joined the crew as resident anthropologists.[7]

---

[4] The Gardners belong to the same family that funded the Peabody Museum in 1866.

[5] The museum aimed "to foster the understanding and enjoyment of the arts of Africa, Oceania, and the pre-Columbian Americas" (*Primitive Art Masterworks: An Exhibition* 9). The racist term "primitive art" was commonly associated with tribal and non-industrial societies of Africa and Oceania. See Torgovnick.

[6] See also Robert Gardner's letter to John Otis (Jo) Brew, then director of Peabody Museum, from May 15, 1960.

[7] Heider would publish several volumes on the Hubula, none of which were ever made available in Hubula or Indonesian languages (see Heider, *The Dugum Dani* [1970]; Heider, *The Dani of West Irian*). Broekhuiyse, in a remarkable text published shortly before his death in 2020, accused Gardner and Matthiessen of appropriating his research as their own without credit.

Listening through the Archives

Setting aside the substantial filmic and photographic record of the survey, its audio tapes provide a different way of entering into the encounter of the expedition without the imposition of the visual. *Expedition Content* likewise allows listeners to engage with the materiality of the tapes, with minimal words and visual interventions to guide the mind. The listener is left alone with the microphone and tape machine as a point of sonic encounter between the Hubula, Rockefeller, and the others on the expedition team.

Rockefeller's primary task was to acquire and catalogue sounds, an impulse reflected in his employment of taxonomic categories when organizing the tapes, such as "sounds of nature," "ceremonial sounds," and "occupational sounds." It is also evident in the controlled situations he created, for example, by paying people to perform vocal and instrumental music in one of the expedition's tents. Yet the 123 audio tapes reveal far more than what Rockefeller *thought* he was recording, in terms of the relationships that emerged through the ethnographic encounters.

The subjective experience of listening to the digitized analogue tapes far exceeds the actuality of the initial encounter. Together with any imagined visual referent we hear the grain of the tape, the recorder switching on and off, the wind on the microphone, and the handling of the cables. Although Rockefeller ostensibly recorded sound to accompany Gardner's film, in practice his work became somewhat autonomous: because Gardner's Arri camera itself was so loud, recordings made in its proximity would have been worthless. Instead, Rockefeller and his microphone sought out diverse sonic encounters, "collecting" sounds, extracting songs, and venturing into the sonic world of the Hubula. His audio recordings reveal a vast Hubula universe, to the extent that it intersected with the radius of the microphone and associated

apparatus. They are not bound by the visual, by the excessive display of racialized bodies that characterized *Dead Birds* and its colonial gaze (Fanon; Griffiths). This does not mean, however, that Rockefeller's microphone was devoid of power. Contrary to Gardner's film, which removes any presence of the expedition members, *Expedition Content* makes their presence explicit and audible: their vocal inflections, accents, and songs point not only to their class origin but also to the brutal history of American slavery, sexism, and racism against Black peoples contained within the history of their voices. In one scene, a woman and child ask Rockefeller to sing a song. He is caught off-guard—"me? I sing? Me? Me?"—but then starts to sing the first song that apparently came to mind: "Blue Tail Fly," a slavery-era blackface minstrel tune.[8]

An extended scene that may lead listeners to reevaluate what they've heard up to that point renders a secretly recorded birthday party for Matthiesen and Rockefeller. We hear various references to New York as the center of the expedition members' cultural world. For example, Matthiesen, affecting an accent that he associates with Black jazz musicians, shares with the others that white musicians Gerry Mulligan and David Brubeck "are just nowhere," and that "the new cats are Thelonious [Monk], Cannonball [Adderly], Oscar [Peterson], and Charlie Mingus." Later, continuing in what seems to be a crude imitation of African American vernacular, Rockefeller tells a racist joke about "Annie Lou up in Harlem." When the conversation turns to the Hubula people who are heard laughing and talking in the background, anti-Black hostility is expressed in a joking tone. Anthropological projects like this expedition seemed unable to overcome their imperial origin.

---

[8] First popular in the 1840s, "Jimmy Crack Corn (Blue Tail Fly)" regained popularity during the revival of American folk music in the 1950s.

The Subaltern Can Speak

Expedition Content includes Indigenous Hubula discourse about the white visitors. In a moment that comes near the end of the composition, Tukum—who plays the central character of the young boy "Pua" in *Dead Birds*—looks at a photograph as he says:

> *This is a man*
>
> *This one too, that one is white*
>
> *Wearing glasses*
>
> *The eyes, the eyes, the eyes, the eyes too*
>
> *Aji, be calm. Sit still.*
>
> *There is nothing in this part*
>
> *The big man is here*
>
> *This is the same*
>
> *This is the big man here*
>
> *One more, here!*
>
> *Look, another one*
>
> *He's holding a gun*
>
> *Ah a gun?*
>
> *That one is not*
>
> *Look at this one*
>
> *The one in front looks very arrogant.*

Beyond speech and song, the recordings also document the more-than-human world of bees, cicadas, and water, and the transforming Hubula world with the arrival of DC-3 airplanes and radio transmissions. Included in the composition is also a layer of institutional preservation of

the colonial record in the form of the voices of archivists transferring and cataloguing the tapes at the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music.[9] Missing from the recordings are the sounds, noted by Gardner in his journal, of occasional gunshots from visiting colonial officers, who had agreed not to interfere with filming but would transform life in the area soon after the expedition's end.

Veronika Kusumaryati and Hubula anthropologist Nicolaus Lokobal began to translate Rockefeller's tapes in 2015. When Lokobal passed away in 2017, Korneles Siep, a Hubula musician, continued the work. The sonic world reflected in the archival tapes radically diverged from Siep's more contemporary experience of West Papua; his nostalgia and trauma shaped many facets of the composition. *Expedition Content* directors Kusumaryati and Ernst Karel, both non-Black, were highly conscious that listening to the imperial archive in order to develop an institutional critique of visual anthropology, Harvard, or the Film Study Center ran the risk of re-enacting the colonial project itself, in asking the Hubula people to listen to a document of their pacification. Indeed, a screening of *Expedition Content* for a Papuan audience raised more questions than it answered. Young Papuans asked why Michael and the expedition team came in the first place. "What is so interesting about our lives, about our cultures? What makes them come? Is it our land? Our rich natural resources?" one audience member asked. Indeed, the crack has opened, but the horizon of decolonization is not anywhere near.

---

[9] The archives also include documentation of the tapes, including a chronological list, a tape journal, and a tape index organized by genre.

Works Cited

Broekhuiyse, Johan Theodorus. *De Harvard-Peabody Expeditie. Naar de Dani van de Baliem vallei.* Self-published, 2020.

Drooglever, P. J. *An Act of Free Choice: Decolonisation and the Right to Self-determination in West Papua.* Oneworld, 2009.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks.* 1952. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann, Grove Press, 1967.

Gardner, Robert, director. *Dead Birds.* 1964. Film Study Center, 2004.

---. "Letter to John Otis Brew," 15 May 1960. Box 2, Folder: N.G. 60's Misc Correspondence (Missionaries, etc), B Letters, 1960 May 15-1961 Feb 10, *Robert Gardner Collection, 1950–2008*, Harvard Film Archive.

Gardner, Robert, and Charles Warren. *Making Dead Birds: Chronicle of a Film.* Peabody Museum Press, 2007.

Gardner, Robert, and Karl G. Heider. G*ardens of War: Life and Death in the New Guinea Stone Age.* Deutsch, 1969.

Griffiths, Alison. *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, & Turn-of-the-century Visual Culture.* Columbia UP, 2002.

Heider, Karl G. *The Dani of West Irian: An Ethnographic Companion to the Film Dead Birds.* Warner Modular Publication, 1972.

---. *The Dugum Dani: A Papuan Culture in the West New Guinea Highlands*, 1966. Harvard University, PhD dissertation.

---. *The Dugum Dani: A Papuan Culture in the Highlands of West New Guinea.* 1970. Aldine Transaction, 2006.

Matthiessen, Peter. *Under the Mountain Wall*. Penguin, 1987.

Primitive Art Masterworks: An Exhibition. Jan. 1975–Aug. 1976, Museum of Primitive Art,

New York. American Federation of Arts, 1974.

Rockefeller, Michael Clark, and Kevin Bubriski. *Michael Rockefeller: New Guinea*

Photographs, 1961. Peabody Museum Press, 2006.

Torgovnick, Marianna. *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives*. U of Chicago P,

1990.

Veronika Kusumaryati is a political and media anthropologist working on the issues of colonialism in West Papua, a self-identifying term referring to Indonesia's provinces of Papua and West Papua. She holds a PhD in anthropology and film and visual studies from Harvard University. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University.
Email: vk293@georgetown.edu

Ernst Karel works in the area of reality-based audio, including sound recording, electroacoustic music, experimental nonfiction sound works for multichannel installation and performance, image-sound collaboration, and postproduction sound for nonfiction film, with an emphasis on observational cinema. Current and past institutional affiliations include the Sensory Ethnography Lab and Film Study Center at Harvard University, the Center for Experimental Ethnography at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Department of Film and Media at the University of California, Berkeley.
Email: ekarel@berkeley.edu

Sonic Refusal: Indigenous Belongings without Soundtrack

Christopher T. Green
Lake Forest College

For many Indigenous artists, refusal has become a key strategy for avoiding the co-optation by settler colonial audiences and institutions of sensitive or restricted elements of their work. In political and Indigenous studies, refusal often refers to the refusal to acknowledge settler colonial state sovereignty and authority, as well as the methodological refusal to inform on or divulge protected knowledge that throughout history has been expropriated in the service of regimes of power and control (Brown; Simpson, "Ethnographic Refusal"; Simpson, Mohawk Interruptus; McGranahan). In the visual arts, refusal can mean an unwillingness to illustrate, reproduce, demonstrate, or otherwise divulge restricted cultural forms, such as images of deceased ancestors or restricted ceremonial regalia, for outsider viewers. While such acts of refusal are coming to be more understood and respected, far less frequently considered in Indigenous arts and ethnographic records are sonic refusals—the unwillingness to sound or make audible protected or community-owned songs, performances, and aural elements. Contemporary and historic Indigenous cultural production is deeply intermedial in nature and frequently emphasizes multisensory experiences of visual forms alongside dance, song, and performance. It is thus essential to consider how aural as well as visual components in

intermedia practices are being withheld by Indigenous artists from consumption by outsider audiences.

Many significant Indigenous sound artists, musicians, and composers have come to wider attention in recent years, among them Raven Chacon, Laura Ortman, Tanya Tagaq, and Elisa Harkins. The photo-audio installation Fair Warning: A Sacred Place (2019) by Tlingit/Unangax̂ artist Nicholas Galanin offers a case study for intermedia Indigenous practices as a work which visualizes absence while refusing access to Alaska Native cultural soundscapes despite a continuously issuing audio component. The installation consists of a series of photographs that depict empty display cases from the dimly lit Northwest Coast Hall at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York. Galanin took the photographs while the museum was in preparations for the ongoing and long overdue renovation of the hall, first opened in 1899 and organized by the anthropologist Franz Boas into alcoves dedicated to individual cultures and their context rather than universal object types or forms, as was more common museological practice in the late-nineteenth century. This central organizing principle and its emphasis on the uniqueness of cultures has organized the hall since then, with some aesthetic and structural additions in the intervening decades, such as added totem poles and commissioned murals that replaced the windows of the darkened hall.[1] As a result of Galanin's timing, the illuminated display cases are shown emptied of their exhibits: faint discolored silhouettes and mounts are all that remain of the Northwest Coast Native masks, rattles, baskets, and other regalia and belongings that previously filled the gallery. Each photograph is subtitled after the display case it depicts, each of which retains its

---

[1] The renovations on the Northwest Coast Hall were begun in 2017 with the consultation of two dozen Native and non-Native experts, including Nuu-chah-nulth co-curator Haa'yuups (Ron Hamilton); the anticipated reopening of the hall is currently scheduled for spring 2022.

gallery label: Warfare, Basketry, Supernatural Spirits and Animals, and Prestige and Wealth.

The absence of Indigenous material culture leaves only the artifice of museum categorization

to focus on, and all its technologies of display.

An audio component accompanies the photographs, sourced from a June 2019 "Native

American Art" sale at Bonhams auction house. Over the course of the approximately two-hour

fifteen-minute recording, consisting of only a portion of the total auction proceedings, the

isolated feed of the auctioneers is heard as they collect bids on a procession of Indigenous art,

material culture, and sacred belongings. After announcing the lot numbers and titles, the

auctioneers rapidly run through ever-increasing dollar amounts and issue a "fair warning"

before dropping the gavel to close the sale with a sharp crack and the seemingly terminal

proclamation of "sold." When installed for the exhibition "Speculations on the Infrared" at the

Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York in 2021, four of the photographs surrounded an

audio cone positioned above a bench, inviting the viewer to sit and listen to the auction

recording while enveloped by the empty display cases (see fig. 1).[2] The pairing of the

Northwest Coast Hall's hollow displays and the audible auction transactions within the

installation speaks to the theft of ancestral belongings from Indigenous communities by

cultural institutions and private collectors alike. In the late nineteenth century, wrongly fearing

the disappearance of Indigenous peoples, many institutions engaged in what has been termed

"salvage anthropology": widespread efforts to collect and document cultural artifacts for

preservation in museums. Such collecting frequently resulted in cultural artifacts being taken

---

[2] *Fair Warning* has been exhibited twice in person, at the Harbourfront Center, Toronto, September 21 – January 5, 2020 and in "Speculations on the Infrared," curated by the author at the EFA Project Space, New York, January 30 – March 6, 2021. It appears in the Anchorage Museum's ongoing virtual exhibition "Created to Hold Power (Intellectual Property)," where the photo series can be scrolled through while the audio component plays over the visitor's browser: anchoragemuseum.org/created-to-hold-power.

from source communities without clan or tribal permission and the removal of sacred and culturally significant belongings from active use, whether through the looting of graves and seemingly "abandoned" (though in fact seasonal) village sites, or through acquisitions made by private individuals through coerced trade during this period of colonial hardship. Galanin implicates museums and commercial ventures alike in the continued cycle of cultural consumption, particularly as it relates to his own community. Included in the Bonhams sale, for example, was Lot 68, "An Early and Exceptional Tlingit Rattle" in the form of an oystercatcher, formerly from the Harvard Peabody Museum collection and collected from

Fig. 1. Nicholas Galanin, *Fair Warning: A Sacred Place*, 2019, photographic prints and audio, 44 x 64 in. each. Installation view of "Speculations on the Infrared," EFA Project Space, New York, 2021. Photograph courtesy of the artist and Peter Blum Gallery, New York. Exhibition Photography © EFA Project Space/Yann Chashanovski.

Sheet'ká Kwáan (Sitka, Alaska), home to Galanin and his clan, the L'uknax.ádi (Raven/Coho Salmon Clan). The audio and visual components mix public and private systems of cultural display (museum) and transaction (auction house) in a seeming dialectic between public and private ownership. Yet, as the mixing suggests, for Galanin's community and Indigenous peoples more broadly those systems represent present-day instantiations of the same history of salvage and removal.

"Galanin's installation," art historian Ian Bourland recently wrote of the work, is "immediately unsettling in its presentation of absence: 'artifacts' taken from their source communities and freely available for scrutiny in a state museum replaced by inert voids." Galanin takes advantage of the silence implied by the voids of the empty glass cases to heighten this disquieting effect: rather than allowing the viewer to contemplate the absence in silence, Fair Warning's audio imposes the non-diegetic forward march of the auction bids, sharply punctuated by the auction gavel. Yet, despite this manipulation of implied silence, the sonic context of the photographs is in reality quite different. The Northwest Coast Hall remained opened to the public for many months after the majority of the collections were removed, serving as a thoroughfare for visitors noisily passing through to other parts of the museum.

In addition to the bustle of visitors, most impactful for the hall's soundscape was, still at its center, the Digital Totem, a vertical interactive digital interface. Installed in 2016, the Digital Totem is a multimedia installation with two touch-screens from which visitors can navigate close-up views and details of thirty-five objects in the collection, zoom in on regions and landscapes of the Northwest Coast, read interviews with Indigenous collaborators including Tlingit ones, listen to local languages, and, per the museum, "create their own

Fig. 2. Nicholas Galanin, *Fair Warning: A Sacred Place - Basketry*, 2019, photographic print, 44 x 64 in. Photograph courtesy of the artist and Peter Blum Gallery, New York.

Northwest Coast soundscapes with recordings of natural features, animals, and local instruments." These latter recordings included raven cries, orca calls, waves crashing, and drums beating, among other environmental sounds intended to give context to the material culture and Indigenous lifeways of the Pacific Northwest. The effect while installed was to, through audience interaction, bring a vibrant soundscape into the gallery that had otherwise for over a century been a space of quiet reverence, mysterious and "magical" for many visitors (Jacknis). But rather than reflecting a facsimile soundscape of the Pacific Northwest, as a field recording might, the Digital Totem invited the public to construct an artificial, even fantastical, soundtrack to their experience. Indeed, even after the display cases in the hall were emptied for the renovation, the Digital Totem continued to project sounds and living Indigenous voices

detached from the belongings in the collection. The gallery was thus neither silent nor unoccupied, despite what Galanin's images imply and what some critics have interpreted them to suggest.

Fig. 3. Northwest Coast Hall with Digital Totem, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 20 Jun. 2017.

With its inclusion of community collaboration and Indigenous voices and testimony, the Digital Totem appears to hold something in common with recent digital repatriation efforts, that is, the return, through digital replication and transmission, of Indigenous knowledge, techniques, and belongings (Hollinger; Isaac). At its best, the Digital Totem is an effort to return some context and Indigenous perspectives to the reception and appreciation of the Northwest Coast Hall collections. But, as the scholars Emily Martin and Susan Harding have appraised, this effort is more of a simulation than a concrete return: "it seems a gesture more

virtual—literally and figuratively—than real" that "makes no gesture at all toward the sense of

reparations called for by NAGPRA [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act]

and the new kinds of museum-community relations emerging elsewhere" (Martin and Harding

9). Indeed, while the Digital Totem provided context and enlivened the sensorial experience of

the Northwest Coast Hall, particularly aurally, the inclusion of Northwest Coast voices and

sounds did not attempt to reciprocate in any way back to Indigenous communities as digital

repatriations purport to do. Thus, despite their apparent similarities, the Digital Totem is not an

example of digital repatriation so much as a digital addendum to the museum and its

accompanying technologies of display. Indeed, as anthropologist Heidi Geismar argues, the

digital display is not "a simple form of remediation and translation" of Indigenous values to a

New York public but rather emblematic of a complex process of "indexicality, mimesis and

materiality" that underscores how museum practices, processes, and cultural forms emerge

from a social web that exists between communities of origin, physical collections of material

belongings, and digital repositories of information (Geismar 20-2). The sounds and media

elements of the Digital Totem provided a soundtrack to the Northwest Coast Hall, one

produced through community collaboration, but it gave nothing in return to the source

communities. Further, when the hall was emptied of its collections, these simulated sounds

became an artificial context without even the objects or originals to purportedly contextualize.

    The Tlingit scholar, poet, and orator Nora Marks Dauenhauer has described how

visually-oriented Western museum display strategies are inappropriate for experiencing

Indigenous belongings, many of which must be activated by song and dance. For the Tlingit,

"History (the stories of covenants among people, animals, spirits, and the land), song and

dance, visual art, and the ritual use of an art object are inseparable" (Dauenhauer, "Tlingit

At.óow" 101). She describes the display of Tlingit visual art without the songs and "ritual process that confirms and reconfirms its mythic and spiritual context" in sonic terms: "Museum displays and books often do injustice to this traditional sense of totality and, therefore, can be disconcerting to Native people. […] Museum display and the description of objects in Western tradition is by nature more static and de-contextualized, at best, like a movie without a soundtrack" (Dauenhauer, "Tlingit At.óow" 101). The Digital Totem overlaid a soundscape in the Northwest Coast Hall that was in practice decontextualizing: the wrong songs, sounds, and voices accompany the belongings.

Many of the Tlingit belongings in the Northwest Coast collection have the status of at.óow: important emblems representing lineage, heritage, and the associated rights of Tlingit clans. The word at.óow means "our belongings" or "something that you own," and Dauenhauer describes it as a "fundamental concept [that] underlies all dimensions of Tlingit social structure, oral literature, iconography, and ceremonial life" (Dauenhauer, "Traditions and Concepts" 29). At.óow can be physical belongings and art objects that represent clan crests in visual forms, such as hats, tunics, regalia, or clan houses, but also include songs, music, dances, stories, names, spirits, and designs. The ritual display of at.óow is accompanied by the performance of appropriate songs and customary rhythmic oratory that acknowledges and welcomes the crests. Songs can themselves be considered at.óow and are strictly owned by clans or hiit (house groups). As an important means for communicating relationships between people, other-than-human beings, and ancestral lands, songs not only provide the "soundtrack" to Tlingit art but also play essential spiritual roles in effecting transitions in ancestral or communal context, such as the ku.éex', or potlatch, when mourning a death or celebrating a (re)birth (Thornton et al.). Song, dance, and material culture interact and form a relational set

of practices that feed and nourish ancestors during ku.éex' and ceremonial feasting, including

the gankas'íx'I or "fire dish" ritual and horn spoons intricately carved with clan stories and

crest figures (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 53; Victor-Howe). For the Tlingit, then, the

Northwest Coast Hall display decontextualizes the interconnection of all aspects of Tlingit

life—visual art, song, dance, kinship, material culture, and spirituality—including a sonic

rupture of Tlingit laws, ancestral relations, and world views.

Fig. 4. Sealaska Heritage Institute. "Tlingit Sheet'k'a K̲wáan Dancers (People of Sitka), Celebration 2018 | Sealaska Heritage." YouTube, 16 Jul. 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=_cVkyPguWJc. Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

Galanin is a keen sound artist and turns the absence of the Tlingit cultural soundtrack

into the juxtaposition that is at the heart of Fair Warning. When composing his photos for the

installation, he experienced the Northwest Coast Hall emptied of Indigenous belongings yet

still full of the sounds of museum visitors and the Digital Totem. As exhibited thus far in

public contemporary art settings distant from Lingít Aaní (Tlingit Land), the emptiness of the

photographed display cases is legible to an assumed non-Native art viewer as an absence. But
Galanin's audio component critically replaces the ambient Northwest Coast Hall soundscape
that is itself absent of the proprietary songs and sounds with which the at.óow and belongings
formerly in the cases should be accompanied and fed. Galanin's auction soundtrack is a
dubbing, but two steps removed from the Tlingit soundtrack. He excises the simulated sounds
of the Digital Totem and acoustically encodes Fair Warning with the language and rhythm of
colonial commodification. Rather than the cadence and drumbeat of Tlingit song and oratory,
he inserts the measured drone of the auction house and the beat of its gavel.

Fig. 5. Nicholas Galanin, *Fair Warning: A Sacred Place – Prestige and Wealth*, 2019, photographic print, 44 x 64 in.
Photograph courtesy of the artist and Peter Blum Gallery, New York.

Xwélméxw (Stó:lō) scholar Dylan Robinson's concept of "hungry listening" demonstrates how "settler colonial forms of perception" and "unmarked forms of listening" can hide epistemic and perceptual colonial violence from uncritically listening settlers (Robinson 2, 10). Fair Warning counters "hungry listening" by non-Tlingit audiences with a sonic refusal. Acknowledging the absence of a Tlingit soundtrack alongside the absence of the display cases, Galanin refuses to replace it with Tlingit song or simulated soundscapes and instead overwrites it with the capital hunger of the auctioneer. He thus refuses to feed the settler desire to hear an authentic Indigenous performance appropriate for the absent belongings, and simultaneously refutes the artificial soundtrack of the Digital Totem. Rather than feed the absent at.óow, ancestral relations in material form, with song and dance as Robinson notes of performances by some of his contemporaries, Galanin refuses to visualize those belongings and does not reveal any reciprocal act of sustenance for the audience (Robinson 92). The result, instead, is a feedback loop of consumption. Galanin feeds the sounds of consumption back to the hungry listener, forcing them to listen to colonial engorgement as a kind of consumption by proxy. And like a hungry person watching another eat, perhaps one becomes aware of one's own cravings and the hungry listening taking place. By activating the aural senses, Galanin puts the colonial collecting of Indigenous material belongings into conversation with sonic consumption, a relationship that has always existed, according to Robinson, certainly in the case of Tlingit ethnographers (Coray). Galanin replaces the cultural silence implied by the empty display cases with the sounds of capital consumption. But his refusal of hungry listening proposes different futurities for the ongoing lives of Indigenous belongings housed in museums, and the soundtracks that can and will feed them. The striking images of the empty museum hall suggest a potential future in which museum

storage rooms are emptied and the collections returned to Indigenous communities. There,

Galanin proposes, the belongings will be sung to and fed anew, existing in communities with

"the capacity to see without being seen, and the desire to exist without being fed upon."

Works Cited

American Museum of Natural History. *Digital Totem*. 2016. *American Museum of Natural*

      History, amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/northwest-coast/digital-totem. Accessed 11

      Oct. 2021.

Bourland, Ian. "Countering the Fetishization of Indigenous Art." *Frieze*, 15 Mar. 2021,

      frieze.com/article/countering-festishization-indigenous-art. Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

Brown, Michael F. *Who Owns Native Culture?* Harvard UP, 2003.

Coray, Craig. "Artifacts in Sound: A Century of Field Recordings of Alaska Natives." *The*

      Alaska Native Reader: History, Culture, Politics, edited by Maria S. T. Williams, Duke

      UP, 2009, pp. 294–305.

Dauenhauer, Nora Marks. "Tlingit At.óow Traditions and Concepts." *The Spirit Within:*

      Northwest Coast Native Art from the John H. Hauberg Collection. Seattle Art Museum,

      1995.

---. "Tlingit *At.óow*." *Celebration 2000: Restoring Balance Through Culture*, edited by Susan

      W. Fair and Rosita Worl, Sealaska Heritage Foundation, 2000, pp. 101–6.

Dauenhauer, Nora Marks, and Richard Dauenhauer, editors. *Haa Tuwunáagu Yís, for Healing*

      Our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory. U of Washington P, 1990.

Galanin, Nicholas. *Fair Warning: A Sacred Place*. 21 Sep. 2019–5 Jan. 2020, Harbourfront

    Centre, Toronto. *Harbourfont Centre*, harbourfrontcentre.com/visualarts/2019/fair-

    warning. Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

Geismar, Heidi. *Museum Object Lessons for the Digital Age*. UCL Press, 2018.

Hollinger, R. Eric, et al. "Tlingit-Smithsonian collaborations with 3D digitization of cultural

    objects." *Museum Anthropology Review*, vol. 7, no. 1–2, 2013, pp. 201.

Isaac, Gwyneira. "Perclusive Alliances: Digital 3-D, Museums and Reconciling of Culturally

    Diverse Knowledges." *Current Anthropology*, vol. 56, 2015, pp. 286–96,

    doi:10.1086/683296. Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

Jacknis, Ira. "'A Magic Place': The Northwest Coast Indian All at the American Museum of

    Natural History." *Coming to Shore: Northwest Coast Ethnology, Traditions, and*

    Visions, edited by Marie Mauzé, Michael E. Harkin, and Sergei Kan, U of Nebraska P,

    2004, pp. 221–50.

Martin, Emily, and Susan Harding. "*Anthropology Now* and Then in the American Museum of

    Natural History: An Alternative Museum." Anthropology Now, vol. 9, no. 2, 2017, pp.

    1–13.

McGranahan, Carole. "Theorizing Refusal: An Introduction." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 31,

    no. 3, 2016, pp. 319–25, doi:10.14506/ca31.3.01. Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. U of

    Minnesota P, 2020.

Simpson, Audra. "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship."

    Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue, no. 9, 2007, pp. 67–80,

    junctures.org/index.php/junctures/article/view/66/60. Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

---. *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Duke UP, 2014.

Thornton, Thomas F., et al. "A Song Remembered in Place: Tlingit Composer Mary Sheakley

      (Loo) and Huna Tlingits in Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska." *Journal of*

      Ethnobiology, vol. 39, no. 3, 2019, pp. 392–408, doi:10.2993/0278-0771-39.3.392.

      Accessed 11 Oct. 2021.

Victor-Howe, Anne-Marie. *Feeding the Ancestors: Tlingit Carved Horn Spoons*. Peabody

      Museum Press, 2007.

Christopher T. Green is Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History at Lake Forest College, where he specializes in modern and contemporary art, Native American art and material culture, and the global representation and display of Indigenous culture. His current research focuses on twentieth century Northwest Coast Native art and its interrelation with Euro-American modernism. He is co-authoring a forthcoming book on contemporary Tlingit art and editing a series of unpublished writings by the Tlingit artist Jim Schoppert. He holds a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center, CUNY and his research has been supported by the Dedalus Foundation, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Museum of the American Indian, the International Council for Canadian Studies, the Sealaska Heritage Institute, and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.
Email: cgreen@mx.lakeforest.edu.

Charting a Different World: Sound Mapping Together on Coast Salish Territories

Sadie Couture
McGill University

Russell Gendron
Independent Musician

> *Just on the other side of this little point they call Helen Point today, our name is XIXNEŚEN, for that place, it means the sacred track. But when the creator made these islands, they made them from our people; they were human at one time. He made them from our people. He threw them from W̱SÁNEĆ—where we live—he threw them from there and they landed in different parts of the straits, out at sea and they became those islands. . .*

> —J,SIN̲TEN/Dr. John Elliott, quoted in *Mayne Island Soundmap*

Fig. 1. Image from "XIXNEŚE N̲," a piece on the *Mayne Island Soundmap*.

Click here to listen to the story.

When European settlers first came to the West Coast of North America, they made maps. As they did so, they charted into being the world both as they understood it and as they wished it to be (Berland; Luckert). As Métis-Cree educator, curator, and filmmaker Kamala Todd writes, "in the rapacious rush to possess and settle the land, the European newcomers called the land empty, free for the taking . . . Appointing themselves authors of the 'new world,' the newcomers wrote Indigenous people out of the story, inscribing their own narratives onto the remade land" (8). Maps have often been central to these processes of dispossession (Blomley; Rose-Redwood et al.). However, different map-making traditions have always existed. Making maps differently can "challenge our relationships with the environment and the dominant culture," offering a change in perspective and a glimpse into a different way of being (Engel). It is in the context of these histories and cartographies that the *Mayne Island Soundmap* (*MISM*) was created.

SKȾAḴ or Mayne Island—nestled off the coast of what is known as British Columbia, Canada—has been traditionally used by a large number of Indigenous nations including the Lekwungen, Snaw-Naw-As, WESÁNEĆ, Scia-new, T'Sou-ke, Mlahat, Sc̓əwaθən Məsteyəxʷ, and the Hul'qumi'num Musitimuhw, including Stz'uminus, Cowichan, Halalt Lake Cowichan, Lyackson, and Penelakut. The ways in which these nations managed overlapping sovereignties is challenging for settler worldviews to understand and is a complex issue for local communities.[1] Mayne was claimed and named by European settlers in the nineteenth century, and Indigenous nations' access to and control over resources in this area was interrupted. Since

---

[1] We refer to these groups as Coast Salish in the title of this piece not to diminish their unique and individual characteristics but to reflect the ways in which many nations have used Mayne Island rather than just one.

then, Mayne has been a majority working-class settler community.[2] Around 1900, many

Japanese-Canadians came to the island until their forced resettlement and internment during

World War II (M. Elliot). Today, no permanent Indigenous community exists on the island;

there is a reserve with very few inhabitants, and individual Indigenous folks live amongst

settlers. The European-settler past and present is well represented in publications, the local

museum, in the lived experiences and memories of residents, and in how the island presents

itself to the world.

The *MISM* is a digital mapping project hosted on a website. Produced by Russell

Gendron and Sadie Couture (the authors of this essay), it features a visual depiction of the

island with thirteen sound pieces embedded in various locations (see fig. 2). Mayne is a special

place for Gendron, whose European-settler family's presence in the region extends from the

early 1900s to the present day. Couture, a casual visitor to Mayne and a scholar and artist of

European-settler descent, offered an outsider's view.[3] The *MISM* emerged from a desire to

look more closely at Gendron's settler roots and to interrogate notions of home and feelings of

belonging and ownership. It was also a deeply collaborative project: both Indigenous and non-

Indigenous people connected to Mayne, residents, historians, local artists, plants, animals, the

---

[2] SK̲ȾA̱K̲ is a SENĆOŦEN name shared with us by Elder John Elliot of the W̱JOȽEȽP people, which describes
what is roughly known as the area that includes Mayne Island, Active Pass and Galiano Island. Many nations have
traditionally used Mayne, and refer to Mayne on their own terms and in their own languages. There is no one
Indigenous name for the island or for specific places on the island. In the mid-nineteenth century, the island was
named after a British naval officer, Richard Charles Mayne (M. Elliot 2-3), and this name remains in broad use.
[3] Both Gendron and Couture were born and raised on unceded and occupied xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and
səlil̓wətaʔł territories.

land, and the water all shaped the map. Some volunteered while others were compensated for

their contributions.[4]

Fig. 2. The homepage for the online component of the *Mayne Island Soundmap.*

The *MISM* aims to complicate listeners' notions of place, history, and futurity through

audio-visual representations of space and time. Some pieces on the map directly address the

history of colonization and dispossession in the area while others center on different topics.

Visitors hear about the Indigenous past, present, and future of the island, about the Japanese-

Canadian islanders, about invasive deer, mental health challenges, folk musicians, and friendly

---

[4] J,SIN̲TEN/Dr. John Elliott, Joanna Weeks, Bill Weeks, Marie Weeks, Alan Weeks, John Aitken, Jenny Ritter, Emile Scott, Jon Schmidt, Miyuki Nagata, Kai Nagata, Jennifer Iredale, Claire Gendron, Paula Bucholz, Saoirse Soley, Eyvan Collins, the seals of Miner's Bay, Black Tail and Fallow deer, two ravens (and numerous other birds), the wind, and the water all generously shared their understanding of Mayne Island. Without them, the map would not be possible.

ghosts. The map offers a whisper of a small island community and the ways in which it has been entangled in power structures, big and small.

To map is to be political, and to map is to be hopeful. It is an attempt to make a place legible for oneself and for future visitors. The *MISM* was created in this spirit. It's an attempt to represent a place in a way that is already embodied and known to some, with the hopes that it will help others find their way. The map is also an invitation to question: Can we chart new territory in how we relate to one another and the land? Can we map ourselves a different world?

~

The *MISM* embraces some traditional Western mapping conventions while challenging others. Each sound piece has a symbolic home on the map chosen for specific reasons. Geographic location, desire, memory, and imagination all played into these placements. Pieces such as "Sweet Dreams" (about a haunted road and nightmares) and "The Joy of Cooking Fenison" (chronicling the introduction of an invasive species of deer) exist visually on the map in the areas where the stories take place. "Canoe Walk" (sounds of an afternoon paddle) and "Queen of Nanaimo" (an audio essay about a retired ferry) are placed in more approximate locations reflecting the movements of the vessels. "Chairs Weren't Made for Dancin'"—an improvised country song connected to a different island—is situated out in the ocean: a reminder that Mayne does not float alone on your screen or in the world. In other cases, the markers were placed deliberately to obscure; collaborators felt that it was not appropriate to share some information publicly (such as where an event took place), countering the "Western imperative for all knowledge to be accessible at all times" (Robinson 21). Standing out from the bunch is "Fumbling Towards Reconciliation," a conversation between an Indigenous resident on

Mayne, John Aitken (Coast Salish, Haida, and Scottish), and a non-Indigenous part-time

resident, Marie Weeks (British, Irish, and French). When Aitken was asked where the dialogue

might best be situated on the map, he suggested creating a braided, twisting ring around the

island to emphasize the flexible and encompassing nature of his work and his experiences.

We omitted place names as well as common landmarks like the Agricultural Hall, the

ferry terminal, and local businesses. Our map attempts to honor the land, the waters, and what

they have been through: various uses, claims of ownership, transfers of property, periods of

beautiful stewardship as well as eras of neglect and disrespect. Its visual simplicity also allows

room for, and draws attention to, an equally central tenet of the project: stories and sounds.

~

While sounds are no more inherently anti-colonial than images, the unfamiliar coupling of

cartography and audio challenges *MISM* visitors to reconsider their assumptions about place

and how to orient themselves in relation to it. The design of the media player does not allow

for skipping or scrubbing, forcing map visitors to slow down and listen as the pieces unfurl.

Sound as a medium also made sense for this specific community. On Mayne, music,

storytelling, history, and news happen in-person and out loud. The customary way of being

there is to be in conversation. Working with sound was a way to respect this aspect of the

island's operation, enforce a certain relationship to temporality, and offer a reorienting

opportunity to *MISM* visitors.

To achieve these goals, we leaned on existing and newly formed relationships. We

recorded audio across the island at different times and through different seasons, creating a

localized sound bank, with the goal to blend commanding sounds—generators, ferry horns,

television, tractor trailers, wind, birds—with quieter ones—water droplets, a gate's chime, a paddle in water, bon fires, scotch broom. Edited together, these soundscapes, interviews, music, and narrations make up the stories on the map. Just as some sounds are louder than others, the same is true for voices and opinions regarding what stories to share and which perspectives to relay.

Fig. 3. Image from "Granny," a piece on the *Mayne Island Sound Map*.

Click here to listen to the story.

As Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson has convincingly argued, listening is informed by one's social position and experiences (10). Settler forms of perception are often characterized by notions of extraction, possession, and ownership, states of being which fundamentally influence what we hear and how we hear (14). Robinson argues for "forms of listening otherwise" that challenge settler colonial perceptual regimes (15), listening which honors

relations between the listener and listened-to, and through which listeners "feel responsible to sound" (Robinson 15).

Especially on the West Coast of British Columbia, soundmaps, soundscapes, sound walks, and other forms of experimental sound art exist in the shadow of the World Soundscape Project and the work of R. Murray Schafer, Hildegard Westerkamp, and Barry Truax, among others. These artists and scholars fostered an interest in acoustic ecologies and sonic environments. In this tradition, sound recordings can both authentically represent place and highlight the extent to which contemporary sonic environments are "polluted" by non-natural or mechanized sounds (Akiyama 55; Thompson 88). Though these people and projects have been very influential, they have also been rightfully critiqued for assuming the whiteness and settlerness of their subjects and listeners (Akiyama; Jordan; Kelman; Robinson; Thompson). The *MISM* was created in conversation with these legacies of sound studies and the realities of living in a world dominated by settler perceptual orders in which sound work is and has been complicit. It embraces context-specific recordings that previous traditions popularized but veers away from attempting to create authentic, accurate, or transparent representations of place. With narration, first person accounts, and many layers of audio, the pieces included on the *MISM* are stories rather than sonic snapshots. They mark whiteness and settlerness when they are present, pay respect to the multitude of histories and communities connected to this place, allow competing and contrasting accounts to remain unresolved, and foreground both human and environmental concerns.

The Listening Post—a free standing, solar powered console and speaker accessible to the public year-round—also offers a way to listen otherwise. The post, located on the Mayne Island Museum Grounds (see fig. 4), is a way to access the *MISM* offline and in situ. By

pressing a button, listeners can hear a selection of snippets from the map. The post stands

alongside three new information panels describing current and traditional Indigenous

relationships to the island and region. These installations are some of the only additions to the

Museum in decades, and the post offers a way into the *MISM* for a community in which offline

interaction remains vitally important.

Fig. 4. The listening post on the grounds of the Mayne Island Museum. Photos by Sadie Couture.

~

Collaboration with both humans and non-humans in accordance with participatory

research methodologies were guiding principles in the creation of the *MISM*. Mayne artist

Jenny Ritter illustrated the project while local musician Emile Scott produced a full audio

story. Web designer Jon Schmidt helped bring our vision of the map to life. Others shared

stories, memories, songs, a place to record, a borrowed canoe, or a meal. Like life on Mayne,

the *MISM* offers a conversation, an ongoing discussion about our colonial inheritances, our stories, our varied pasts, and our possible futures.

Works Cited

Akiyama, Mitchell. "Transparent Listening: Soundscape Composition's Objects of Study."
    Racar: Revue D'art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review, vol. 35, no. 1, 2010, pp. 54–62.

---. "Unsettling the World Soundscape Project: Soundscapes of Canada and the Politics of Self-
    Recognition." *Sounding Out!*, 20 Aug. 2015,
    soundstudiesblog.com/2015/08/20/unsettling-the-world-soundscape-project-
    soundscapes-of-canada-and-the-politics-of-self-recognition. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

Berland, Jody. *North of Empire: Essays on the Cultural Technologies of Space*. Duke UP,
    2009.

Blomley, Nicholas. "Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey,
    and the Grid." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 93, no. 1,
    2003, pp. 121–141.

Elliot, Marie. *Mayne Island and the Outer Gulf Islands: A History*. Gulf Islands Press, 1984.

Engel, Jordan. "Decolonial Mapmaking: Reclaiming Indigenous Places and Knowledge."
    Landscape Magazine, vol. 4, no. 2, 2017, medium.com/langscape-magazine/decolonial-
    mapmaking-reclaiming-indigenous-places-and-knowledge-4779b7f8b81c. Accessed 17
    Sep. 2021.

Jordan, Randolph. "Unsettling the World Soundscape Project: The Bell Tower of False Creek, Vancouver." *Sounding Out!,* 3 Sep. 2015, soundstudiesblog.com/2015/09/03/unsettling-the-world-soundscape-project-the-bell-tower-of-false-creek-vancouver. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

Kelman, Ari. "Rethinking the Soundscape." *The Senses and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2010, pp. 212–34.

Luckert, Erika. "Drawing Lines." *In This Together: Fifteen Stories of Truth & Reconciliation*, edited by Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail, Brindle & Glass Publishing, 2016, pp. 35–44.

Mayne Island Soundmap. 2020. mayneislandsoundmap.com. Accessed 24 Jun. 2021.

Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. U of Minnesota P, 2020.

Rose-Redwood, Reuben, et al. "Decolonizing the Map: Recentering Indigenous Mappings." *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2020, pp. 151–162.

Thompson, Marie. *Beyond Unwanted Sound: Noise, Affect and Aesthetic Moralism*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Todd, Kamala. "Thoughts on Making Places: Hollywood North and the Indigenous City." *World Film Locations: Vancouver,* edited by Rachel Walls, Intellect, 2013, pp. 8–9.

Sadie Couture (she/her) is a digital media artist, producer, educator, and scholar based in Vancouver, BC/xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlil̓wətaʔɬ territories. Sadie is a PhD student in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University.

She works at the intersection of media history, sound studies, and feminist science and technology studies.

Email: sadie.couture@mail.mcgill.ca

Russell Gendron (he/him) is an independent musician, audio producer, and interdisciplinary artist based in Vancouver, BC/xʷməθkʷəẏəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliɬwətaʔɬ territories. Russell's band, Bill Jr. Jr., released their most recent record, *Homebody* in January 2021. Email: russellgendron@gmail.com

Nothing to Hear, So to Speak:
Spaces of Sounding and Listening at 100 McCaul Street
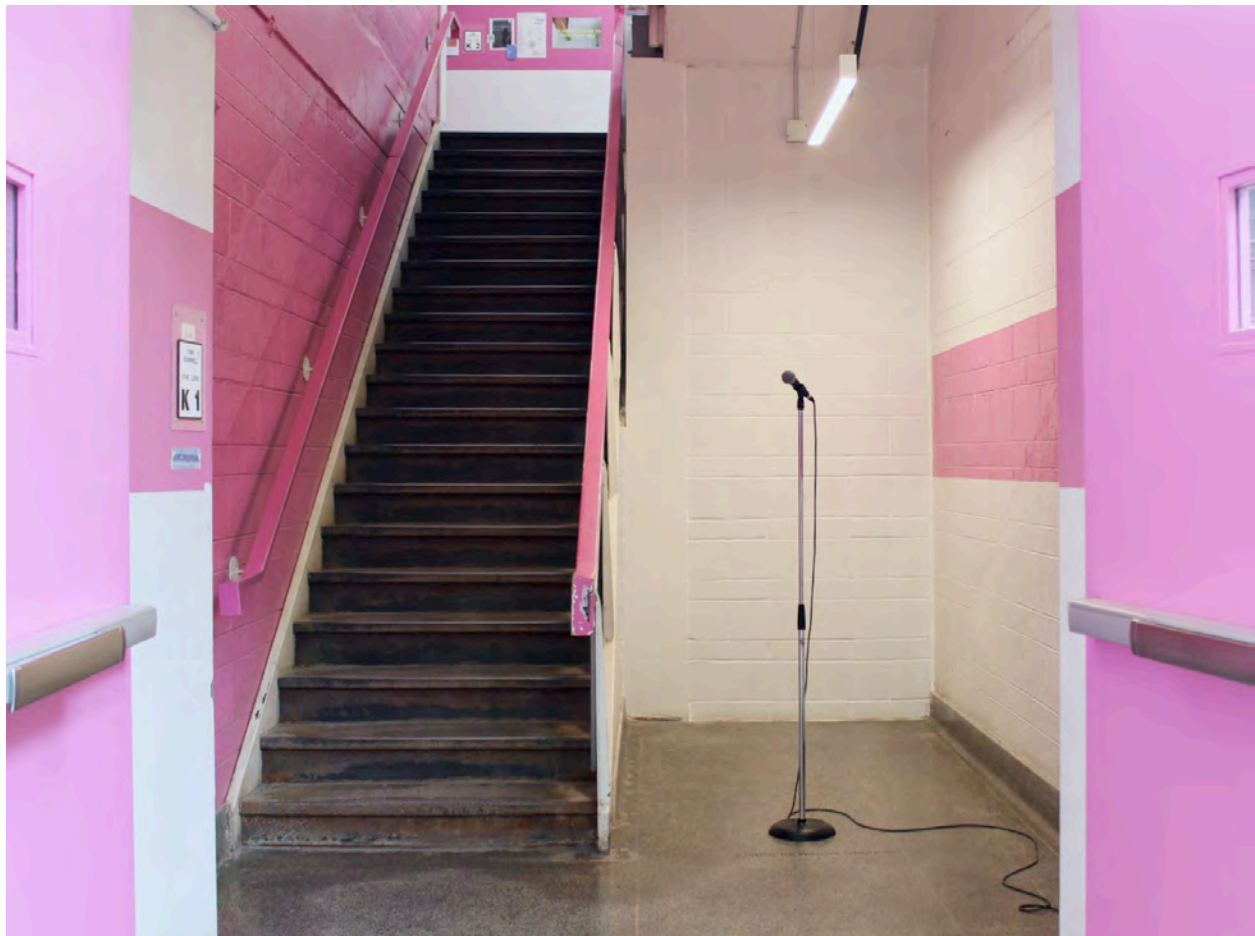
Angus Tarnawsky
Concordia University

Fig. 1. Pink stairwell at 100 McCaul Street (2020). Image courtesy of author.

Introduction

It's the second week of March 2020, and I'm listening to the faint rumble of a low frequency

hum while standing on the ground floor landing of a pedestrian stairwell. This enclosed space

is located at 100 McCaul Street in downtown Tkaronto (Toronto). It's one of three concrete-

walled stairwells in the main building of the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD).

While all three—color coded as pink, yellow, and green—are frequently traversed by students,

staff, and visitors, it's notable that voices are rarely heard in these spaces. That is not the case

today. There is a loudspeaker on a stand in front of me, and from it, two distinct voices

emerge. They begin to sing a melody in unison, although soon there is a pause, and for a

second or two, the hum recaptures my attention. Before long, a lone voice starts to sing as a

woman enters the stairwell and begins to listen. She departs once the singing descends into a

boisterous cacophony of laughter. As she opens the door to leave, I notice how the hum

increases in volume and reverberates throughout the stairwell.

The Hum

I witnessed this brief encounter while documenting *Nothing to Hear, So to Speak*, my site-

specific audio installation conceived to investigate how co-produced experiences of sounding

and listening can encourage transient audiences to consider multiple perspectives of space and

place. The work was realized using a pair of wireless vocal microphones and compact

loudspeakers. These devices broadcast the ad-hoc sonic contributions of students, staff, and

visitors across four transitional and acoustically separate spaces at 100 McCaul Street over the

course of one week. The first microphone was positioned on a stand in the pink stairwell (see

fig. 1). Its signal was transmitted to a loudspeaker in the yellow one (see fig. 2). A second

microphone was hung from an exposed ceiling pipe in the entrance foyer (see fig 3). Its signal

emerged from a loudspeaker in the green stairwell (see fig. 4). Printed instructions on the floor below each microphone explained where to listen.

Fig. 2. Still image from video documentation of *Nothing to Hear, So to Speak* showing yellow stairwell (2020). Image and video courtesy of author.

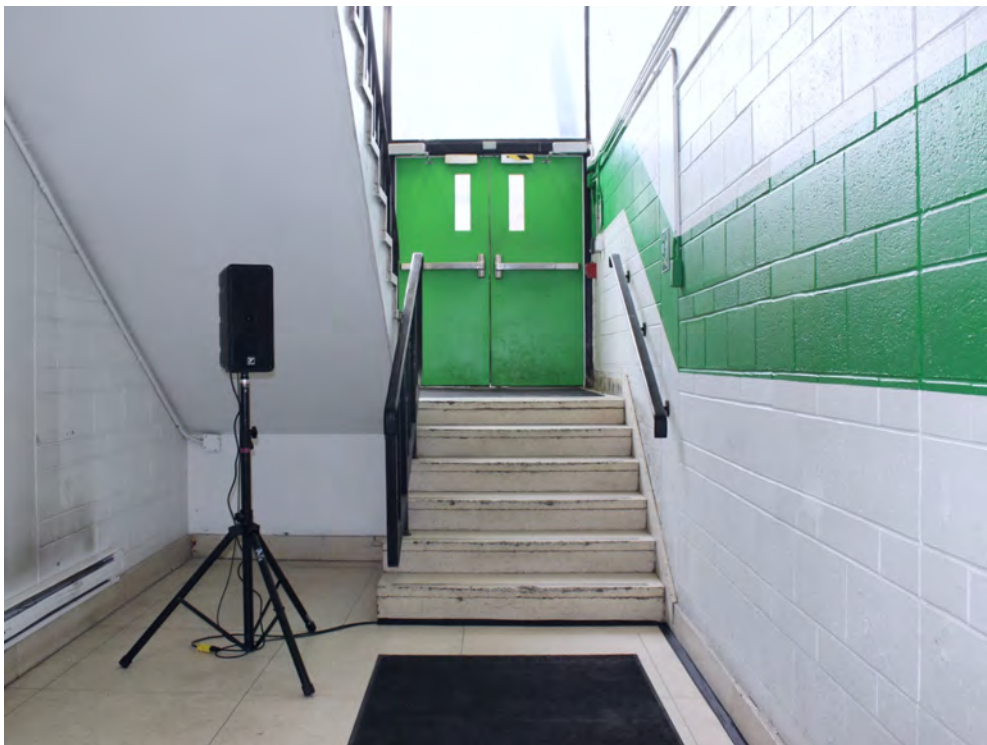Fig. 3. Entrance foyer at 100 McCaul Street (2020). Image courtesy of author.

Fig. 4. Green stairwell at 100 McCaul Street (2020). Image courtesy of author.

The project was developed to encourage social interaction and empower a diverse array of participants to sonically engage with urban transitional spaces. Yet, through its aim to enact new formations of listening as part of this process, it inadvertently drew attention to settler colonial modalities of perception. When observing the installation, instead of focusing on specific human-generated sounds (or an absence of them), I became absorbed by the machinic low frequency hum that permeates the transitional spaces of the building. While from one perspective, the hum is merely the sound of an HVAC system, from another, its sonic constitution embodies and exemplifies a dynamic and relational colonial system: a relic of settler colonial interventions in the built environment.

The hum might, in fact, be recognized as one of the pervasive factors of everyday life outlined by theorist Eve Tuck and artist C. Ree in their decolonial treatise *A Glossary of Haunting*. As thinkers and makers, they grapple with how to imaginatively recontextualize the obscured stories of spaces: ones that linger below the surface of seemingly normal circumstances. They call on artists to draw attention to these under-examined occurrences that, they argue, can foreground the persistent manifestations of colonialism and power that exist in the built environment. For Tuck and Ree, creatively reframing a mundane moment to become a meaningful one is vital within a settler colonial context, insofar that focused acts of intervention—as they describe it—can work to "unsettle our sense of space" (653). Although the hum fills the foyer with an almost material presence, it goes easily unnoticed. Put another way: it's not that the hum is hard to hear—it's that the hum is actively filtered out and ignored. Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson contends that such sounds might seem insignificant, but within a context of normalized ignorance, they can perhaps be understood as the audible trace of

colonization. For Robinson, these are the sounds of settler occupation that linger and haunt everyday spaces, whether we acknowledge them or not (75–76).

Like most—if not all—North American universities, OCAD is located on stolen Indigenous territories. The land surrender for 100 McCaul Street is covered by the contentious Toronto Purchase Treaty of 1805, involving the Mississaugas of the Credit and the British crown. Anthropologist Patrick Wolfe notes how settler colonialism is "premised on the elimination of native societies" and constitutes "a structure not an event" (2). In other words, colonial policies and post-colonial practices continue to suppress Indigenous communities in the present day. On the one hand, these points of suppression might be readily apparent, such as the very fact that a Western university is situated on Indigenous land and tends toward the instruction of Eurocentric narratives. On the other hand, settler colonialism emerges through less obvious channels, such as individual and collective states of perception: frames of being and knowing that are often difficult to locate objectively without lived experiences that can ground a subjective positionality.

In this sense, when employing listening to push back against the grain of normative assumptions, or "listening otherwise" as Robinson suggests, it may be possible to understand who occupies a space and—in certain circumstances—under what terms spaces find themselves occupied (15). From my position—as an artist and settler intent on listening to the resonance of collective actions in site-specific ways—it stands to reason that I must contribute to new forms of listening, not simply new sounds to listen to. While *Nothing to Hear, So to Speak* might appear to empower participants to simply make sounds, the perceptual formations that these amplifications encourage constitute a substantive contribution toward listening *otherwise.*

Acoustic Graffiti

A counterpoint to OCAD's subdued aesthetic of white corridor spaces is offered through the

assortment of hand-scrawled words, phrases, and drawings that cover the walls of the yellow

stairwell. The graffiti has been tolerated since there are no CCTV cameras present. In turn, the

contributors are granted anonymity. Along with the aural potential of the stairwell, the closed

nature of its construction means that most sounds made there—or broadcast into the space—

are contained acoustically. As a result, whoever makes sound has a certain freedom of

expression that is not self-evident in the more surveilled spaces at OCAD (for example, the

main entrance foyer). Unlike visual graffiti, augmenting a space with sound leaves no trace and

can further generate an affective and embodied connection to place. In one sense, *Nothing to*

Hear, So to Speak investigates this notion through voices, with the proposition that *acoustic*

graffiti, or ad-hoc and anonymous sonic contributions, might be a meaningful addition to

transitional spaces. This informal and unregulated re-sounding of a space could describe an

unrestricted range of agonistic or antagonistic conversations and/or interactions between

groups of people, amongst any number of other potential sonic encounters that work to

simultaneously engage acts of sounding with opportunities for listening.

How might sound installations use forms of acoustic graffiti to transgressively *unsettle*

the fixity of settler colonial perception and, in part, nudge everyday audiences toward pursuing

a decolonial sensibility in their awareness and actions? Could these insights nurture the

development of different political and affective spaces, as well as audiences? To some extent,

these questions align with Robinson's theorization of "critical listening positionality" (9). He

contends that it is necessary to understand how personal listening biases are formed and how

settler colonial positionalities "can be generally understood as particular assemblages of

unmarked structures of certainty that guide normative perception and may enact epistemic

violence" (10). Thus, it not only becomes vital to assess one's own position—that is: *how do I*

listen?—but also to work collectively to enact changes in larger "places, models, and structures

of how we listen" (72). In moving past these formations, Robinson proposes that precisely

defining one's subjectivity is fundamental, insofar as it will prompt questions that allow a

listener to "become better attuned to the particular filters of race, class, gender, and ability that

actively select and frame the moment of contact between listening body and listened-to sound"

(11). Robinson's theorization informs *Nothing to Hear, So to Speak*, which provided a platform

for expression to allow for the enhanced perceptual awareness of everyday sounds as well as

sounds no longer audible.

Conclusion

Nothing to Hear, So to Speak offers a moment of unsettling that while not directly aimed at

critiquing colonial structures, nonetheless touches on key areas of this agenda. It crucially

reinforces the necessity for further audio art works explicitly tackling settler colonialism. Such

projects should align with Gascia Ouzounian's theorization of "critical spatial sonic practices,"

or sound installations that reorient an artist's relationship to sound and space (106). Ouzounian

posits that artists who develop works that meaningfully engage the public and "account for

social and political geographies, as well as physical ones" (106) can, in turn, transform spaces

to effect powerful change. From this standpoint, it is crucially the people traveling through

spaces who hold a distinct power to reorient their social and political dynamics. Artists should

continue to work toward making literal and figurative space, through art and research, for

diverse contributions that create further opportunities for enacting decolonial processes. For

example, a future iteration of the project at 100 McCaul Street might seek the collaboration of

Indigenous students and staff at OCAD, and other community participants drawn from First Nation custodians of the land, to sonically or symbolically *cancel out* the hum in order to cleanse the space and reclaim the spatial imposition of the sound, as well as the energy it saps. Just as certain frequencies lay claim to soothe and heal, other frequencies—like the hum—may in fact not just remind but indeed place many individuals in bodily states of affective despair. In its existing form, *Nothing to Hear, So to Speak* offers up the smallest moments of everyday life as valuable opportunities to listen *otherwise.* Through this process, listening becomes a powerful way to chisel away at the colonial structures and systems that remain obscured in the built environment.

Works Cited

Ouzounian, Gascia. *Stereophonica: Sound and Space in Science, Technology, and the Arts.* MIT P, 2021.

Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies.* U of Minnesota P, 2020.

Tuck, Eve and C. Ree. "A Glossary of Haunting." *Handbook of Autoethnography,* edited by Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis, Routledge, 2016, pp. 639–58.

Wolfe, Patrick. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology.* Bloomsbury, 1999.

Angus Tarnawsky is an artist, musician, educator, researcher, and PhD student at Concordia University in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal). His doctoral research examines the social and political

dimensions of everyday listening practices. Central to this work is the creation and analysis of site-specific sound installations in a variety of locations throughout the built environment. He holds an MFA from OCAD University and a BMus from the University of Melbourne.

Email: angus.tarnawsky@concordia.ca

Imagine you're in a museum. What do you hear?

Bhavisha Panchia

Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa

Fig. 1. "Tracing Fractures – Across Listening, Movement, Restitution and Repair," Centre de la Vieille Charité, 12 Sep. 2020, Manifesta 13 Marseille, manifesta13.org/programmings/rencontres-tracing-fractures-across-listening-movement-restitution-and-repair/index.html. Accessed 8 Oct. 2021. © Françoise Beauguion / VOST COLLECTIF.

The audio collage *Imagine you're in a museum. What do you hear?* is a curatorial response to colonial histories and their impact on material heritage and culture in light of questions of extraction concerning land, resources, and sacred, cultural objects. It was commissioned for "Tracing Fractures: Across Listening, Movement, Restitution, and Repair," a program held in connection with the 2020 contemporary art biennial Manifesta 13 at Vieille Charité in Marseille (see fig. 1), where sound installations, readings, listenings, performances, and interventions addressing restitution and repair through art were presented within the courtyard of this historic site.[1] What was once a chapel and hospital to accommodate the destitute and the elderly, Vieille Charité is today a space for science and culture that houses the Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne and the Musée des Arts Africains, Océaniens, et Amérindiens.

The collage weaves together disparate musical tracks, extracts of interviews, speeches, and audio notes as listening provocations that speak to the affective resonances of dislocation and the dispossession of land, people, and (im)material culture. It was conceptualized in response to the site of Vieille Charité and the ethnographic collections it houses. Despite the low hum and silence that museums encourage, their collections voice a violent past. An extractive and accumulative logic is evidenced in the ethnographic objects housed by museums, as well as in their methods of display and storage. John Kannenberg's research into the sounds of museums is extended through the audio collage into an ideological inquiry of the sounds and silences perpetuated by museums built within the logics of coloniality.

---

[1] "Tracing Fractures: Across Listening, Movement, Restitution, and Repair" was conceived and curated by Nikola Hartl, Alya Sebti, and Jonas Tinius.

Museums are guardians who communicate for objects, directed by the pathology of Eurocentrism. As institutions they are symbols of power that speak with a voice filled with the grain of authority as they house, care for, and preserve their collections and archives. Considering forms of listening in relation to the paradigms of the colonial period raises questions about what has been lost in the museum's translation of cultural artifacts: what has been silenced? What are we unable to hear? As sociologist Rolando Vázquez crucially points out, the question of who speaks and who listens is critical for understanding the configuration and determination of the world around us, including the art we see and the music we listen to (44).

What voice does the (ethnological) museum speak with? How can we listen to the acoustic impossibilities of objects housed in these institutions? Who are we listening to as we move through the museum and encounter objects and archives? These questions are significant to the colonial pasts and epistemological futures of ethnographic objects. They also resonate with the Western intellectual lineages and histories of sound studies, which have thus far come to reinforce Western ideals of a white normative subject that is figured as the universal default frame of reference. Marie Thompson's formulation of "white aurality," together with Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes's "remapping" of sound studies, begin to unsettle the monolithic ear that has informed a large corpus of sound studies and, arguably, the history of sound in art and culture.

Imagine you're in a museum. What do you hear? is a response to European modernity's monopolization of representation in museums and archives. It opens with a field recording of the interior of the British Museum that slowly crossfades into a description of the intricately carved ivory hip pendant mask worn by the Oba of Benin during important ceremonies. The

mask was looted during the British expedition of 1897 and is currently held in storage in the

British Museum. In 1977, the organizers of the arts and culture festival FESTAC' 77 in Lagos,

Nigeria,[2] asked to borrow this sixteenth-century ivory mask for the duration of the festival.

Yet, the museum refused, citing concerns around the object's fragility.

Such power dynamics between imperial forces and colonial subjects are investigated in

the audio collage through late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century ethnographic field

recordings from Africa, which make evident the relation between European recordists and

those being recorded. The history of phonography in Africa is fundamentally linked to

colonialism, as European explorers left for expeditions with technical instruments for capturing

native peoples in their milieu and for mapping out the continent. This collection of data took

on visual form in maps, illustrations, and photographs, and also occurred through the medium

of audio recording (Sterne; Mhlambi). The phonograph in particular, as sound scholar Jonathan

Sterne puts it, "became a tool of embalming an already supposedly frozen native present for

the future" (319).

Following these expeditions, World Fairs marked periods of scientific, industrial, and

technological discovery and invention, undergirded by colonial expansion around the world.

The Paris Colonial Exposition of 1931 was a celebratory fête of international colonialism that

highlighted colonial conquests and territories. It brought the European public (approximately

eight million visitors over six months) into contact with France's imperial achievements. More

significantly, it was a site to propel propaganda for European nations at the helm of

civilization. In addition to the visual fanfare of dioramas, demonstrations, and performances,

---

[2] FESTAC' 77, the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, was a major international festival held in Lagos, Nigeria, from 15 January 1977 to 12 February 1977.

the Exposition featured colonial recordings of sounds from Bali, India, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Madagascar captured by Phillipe Stern, who worked at Musée de la Parole et du Geste de Paris of the University of Paris[3] and was responsible for the musicology section of the museum. A sample from the recording titled "Dahomey: Danse devant le fetiche," recorded by Stern and housed at the Center for Research in Ethnomusicology (CREM), is featured in the audio collage as an invocation of 'fetish' objects removed from their original contexts.[4] This acoustic signal from the past presented in CREM's online repository provides scant information regarding the recording. This lack of data makes it difficult to listen to such recordings today, as the auditor has little to no contextual understanding of the musicians and performers, who are ultimately unnamed and unacknowledged.

The 1931 Colonial Exposition also included presentations from countries such as the then-nascent Union of South Africa, which did not directly participate in the fair but instead presented a dossier of information on its history and economic, agricultural, and mineral resources. This document, written in French, aimed to demonstrate the state's progress since 1910 and, more importantly, to provoke capital investment for agricultural, mining, and industrial sectors and establish trade relations with Europe. It opens with an image of the Cape of Good Hope, the southernmost point in South Africa and a term used to engender optimism around the opening of the sea route to Asia. The excerpt included in the collage, taken from the French National Library archive, features a voice reading a list of minerals available in South Africa—gold, diamond, coal, iron, copper, arsenic, barium, chrome, cobalt, mercury, platinum,

---

[3] In 1931 the Musée de la Parole et du Geste was the only institution in France collecting and preserving sound archives.

[4] CREM houses sound archives that gather commercial recordings and over 48,000 field recordings of music and oral traditions from around the world dating from 1900 to the present.

and zinc—and is a stark reminder of the history of dispossession and extraction in the region, most notable in The Natives Land Act passed in 1913[5] that restricted Black African land ownership, and the continued struggle for land reparation and restitution taking place in South Africa today. Author Fiston Mwanza Mujila further explores the histories and legacies of colonialism and extraction in the opening lines of his novel *Tram 83*:

> In the beginning, was the stone, and the stone prompted ownership, and ownership a rush, and the rush brought an influx of men of diverse appearance who built railroads through the rock, forged a life of palm wine, and devised a system, a mixture of mining and trading. (1)

The impassioned voice of Mujila reading this passage is sounded in the collage and placed in conversation with tracks by Dane Belany, Healer Oran, Chino Amobi, Tiago Correia-Paulo, Lamin Fofana, and Speaker Music, whose musical expressions offer a poetic retort that critically work against the negation of Black expression and life.

Imagine you're in a museum. What do you hear? asks its audience to listen to these complex histories and to the voices of institutions that shape and control the circulation and meaning of cultural objects that have been displaced and dispossessed, including natural resources that have been extracted and accumulated. It draws upon the voices of archives, authors, documents, and musicians to speak back to these distant and recent histories, and to reveal the colonial mechanisms of control and the injuries of cultural heritage.

---

[5] The Natives Land Act of 1913 initially limited African land ownership to seven percent. It restricted Black people from buying or occupying land except as employees of a white person, allowing for majority white ownership of land. Thereafter, the apartheid government began the mass relocation of Black people to their homelands and to inadequately planned and serviced townships.

Works Cited

"Dahomey: Danse Devant Le Fetiche." *Exposition coloniale de Paris, 1931*, 1 May–30 Nov.

    1931. *CREM: Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie*, archives.crem-

    cnrs.fr/archives/items/CNRSMH_I_1932_001_045_02. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

L'Union de l'Afrique Du Sud: Exposition Coloniale Internationale, Paris 1931. L. Danel

    (Lille), 1931. *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/

    bpt6k6222408j. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

Hoffmann, Anette. "Introduction: Listening to Sound Archives." *Social Dynamics*, vol. 41, no.

    1, 2015, pp. 73–83.

Kannenberg, John. *Listening to Museums: Sounds as Objects of Culture and Curatorial Care*.

    1 June 2020. University of the Arts London, PhD Dissertation,

    johnkannenberg.com/home/phd. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021

Mhlambi, Thokozani. "Early Sound Recordings in Africa: Challenges for Future Scholarship."

    Herri, no. 4, Aug. 2020, herri.org.za/4/thokozani-mhlambi. Accessed 9 Oct 2021.

Mujila, Fiston Mwanza. *Tram 83*. Jacaranda Books, 2016.

Steingo, Gavin, and Jim Sykes, editors. "Introduction." *Remapping Sound Studies*, Duke UP,

    2019, pp. 1–36.

Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sonic Reproduction*. Duke UP, 2003.

Thompson, Marie. "Whiteness and the Ontological Turn in Sound Studies." *Parallax*, vol. 23,

    no. 3, 2017, pp. 266–82, doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2017.1339967.

Vázquez, Rolando. "Listening as Critique." *Buried in the Mix*, edited by Bhavisha Panchia,

    MEWO Kunsthalle, 2017, pp. 39-46.

Bhavisha Panchia is a curator and researcher of visual and audio culture, currently based in Johannesburg. Her work engages with artistic and cultural practices under shifting global conditions, focusing on anti/postcolonial discourses, imperial histories, and networks of production and circulation of (digital) media. She is the founder of Nothing to Commit Records, a label and publishing platform committed to expanding knowledge related to the intersection of contemporary art, literature, and music within and across the global South. Email: bhavisha.panchia@gmail.com

Bamboula!: Dada Performance as Sonic Blackface

Hilary Whitham Sánchez
The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art

In his 1920 memoir, *Zurich Chronicle* (*Chronique Zurichoise*), the Romanian Jewish poet and co-founder of the dada movement Tristan Tzara described the group's second public performance on February 26, 1916, at the Cabaret Voltaire: "The [audience's] appetite for the mixture of instinctive meditation and ferocious *bamboula* that we managed to present forced us to give it" (328). The French term *bamboula*—referring to both a small drum and the syncopated musical cadence developed by enslaved Africans trafficked to the Americas, analogous to the Afro-Cuban *clave*—was frequently used as a catch-all to refer to Afro-Caribbean religious rituals, sometimes conflated with Vodùn (*The Oxford Dictionary of Music*). Tzara's use of the term "bamboula" exemplifies how European stereotypes about African diasporic art forms foundational to modernist art were folded back into the language deployed to describe their own artistic interventions, suggesting how the dadaists' performance at the Cabaret Voltaire can be understood as a form of sonic blackface.

Art historical scholarship on the dadaists' interest in *arts nègres*—the term used to refer collectively to artistic forms from Africa and the Pacific Islands collected by Europeans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and subsequently contested by Francophone intellectuals of African descent (Hays Edwards)—has largely overlooked the role of sound and

music. Indeed, a focus on elements of performance ensembles pilfered or traded by colonial officers in West Africa and transformed into "sculpture" by dealers in Europe and the Americas such as Paul Guillaume and Marius de Zayas (Goldwater; Rubin; Shannon; Mileaf; van Hoesen; Grossman) risks reifying the ways in which African meanings were erased in favor of European formal interests. Relatedly, studies of dada performance have downplayed the historical context of colonialism—perhaps most notably in the recent traveling exhibition organized by the Museum Rietberg entitled *Dada Africa*—by focusing on the specificities of the group's engagements with the burgeoning field of ethnography, rather than the physical and epistemological violence that rendered such distorting accounts possible (Veit; Kauffman). This essay aims to undo conventional understandings of dada by examining the premiere of the first simultaneous poem, "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent *(L'Amiral cherche une maison à louer)*," through a Black feminist theoretical lens. I will identify the specific Afro-Atlantic musical sources for Tzara's innovation and then chart the material and ideological mechanisms by which the dadaists' use of Afro-Atlantic cultural forms has been obscured.

The poem, which premiered at the Cabaret Voltaire on February 26, 1916, consisted of Tzara and his colleagues Marcel Janco and Richard Huelsenbeck reading phrases aloud at the same time in multiple languages: French, English, and German, respectively. The Cabaret Voltaire's convener Hugo Ball articulated the overall effect of the trio's performance, recalling, "That is a contrapuntal recitative in which three or more voices speak, sing, whistle, etc., at the same time in such a way that the elegiac, humorous, or bizarre content of the piece is brought out by these combinations" (57). The words, overlapping one another, rendered the meaning of each phrase unintelligible to the listener, weaving an abstract aural tapestry.

The depiction of the lyrics in the group's first publication demonstrates how Tzara and Ball utilized Western musicological conventions to document and translate the ephemeral sonic dimensions of "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent" into a visual representation. The performance is rendered similarly to an orchestral score with the words of each speaker arranged in lines evocative of sheet music (Demos). Yet the illustration in the journal *Cabaret Voltaire* (see fig. 1) provides no clarification of the generalized terms "bamboula" and "contrapuntal" used by Tzara and Ball, respectively, to describe the cadence of "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent."

Fig.1 . "L'amiral cherche une maison à louer," *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1916. Cabaret Voltaire, edited by Hugo Ball. Zurich: 1916. International Dada Archive, Special Collections and Archives, University of Iowa Libraries.

Click here to listen to the recording of L'amiral.

The retrospective nature of both artists' accounts may have influenced their choice of terminology, particularly Tzara who was writing in 1920 shortly after having arrived in Paris amid *le tumulte noire* (Blake). As Tyler Stovall, Brett A. Berliner, and Petrine Archer-Shaw,

among others, have demonstrated, the white European public was increasingly enthralled by art

forms originating from the African continent and the American diasporas in wide circulation

following the conclusion of the First World War. This so-called *vogue nègre* was perceived as

pervasive, exemplified in the commentary of the anonymous correspondent of *Le Journal*

Amusant, writing in 1919, who observed that the whole world dances the *bamboula* and

identified "Cubisme, art nègre, jazz-band, bolchevisme" as being touched by it ("L'art nègre"

14). The *bamboula* thus grew to be associated with not just African sculptural forms and

Haitian Vodún but also American jazz music, contemporary European painting, and

international socialism; myriad new ideas in art and society thus became amalgamated into a

form of generalized blackness. How, then, can we understand Tzara's invocation of *bamboula*?

Was this merely an attempt to reframe the history of dada as more relevant to the Parisian

milieu?

Consider the source material for the poem itself. Janco's lines in English are, in fact,

derived from two ragtime songs: "I Love the Ladies," published in 1914 by the tin-pan alley

firm Waterson, Berlin and Snyder (Schwartz), and "Everybody's Doing It," released in 1911

by the influential composer and lyricist Irving Berlin. Both songs exemplify ragtime's main

distinguishing characteristic: its innovative use of continuing syncopation, or accenting the

offbeat notes. Developed by Black American pianists beginning in the mid-nineteenth century,

the right hand played the melodic embellishment over the left hand as it kept regular 2/4 time

(Waldo). This was deployed explicitly in Berlin's composition—"see that ragtime couple

there"—and selected by Tzara for Janco's contribution to the performance. The word ragtime

is a contraction of the phrase "ragged time," referring to music that essentially tore classical

European musical time to shreds. It also connotes its precursors, the cakewalk performances of

enslaved Africans satirizing white society as well as the blackface minstrelsy industry of the antebellum United States that popularized the adapted innovations of Black musicians (Lott).

Given the negligible presence of individuals of African descent in Zurich prior to the end of the First World War, it is entirely possible that Tzara never actually experienced a performance by musicians of African descent when he composed "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent." However, the wide circulation of sheet music enabled Europeans to perform ragtime compositions such as "Everybody's Doing It." Thus, Tzara's utilization of the term *bamboula* to refer to the first simultaneous poem was accurate insofar as the work incorporated direct citations of contemporaneous compositions derived from Afro-Atlantic musical forms. However, contemporary performances of the "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent" remain so cacophonous as to obscure the syncopation associated with ragtime.

Comparing the so-called "chantes nègres" that immediately followed the premiere performance of "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent" offers a possible explanation for Tzara's choice to hide ragtime within the simultaneous poem. As Ball recounted in his diaries, published in 1927 as *Flight Out of Time*:

> "Chante nègre (or funèbre) No. 1" was especially prepared and was performed as if in a Vehmic court in black cowls and with big and small exotic drums. The melodies for "Chante nègre II" were composed by our esteemed host, Mr. Jan Ephraim, who had been involved with African business for some time a while ago, and he was helping eagerly with the performance like an instructive and stimulating prima donna. (57–58)

Ephraim, the owner of the bar located at Spiegelgaße 1 where the group convened, was a merchant marine who had traveled to sub-Saharan Africa, marking him as the only member of

the dadaist circle of immediate friends to have visited the continent. While the details of

Ephraim's time in Africa remain undocumented and thus lost to historians, it is evident that

Ball and Huelsenbeck understood him as an authority on African culture. The dadaists' interest

in information about Afro-Atlantic cultures reflects the central paradox of the appropriation of

those cultures by European artists during the colonial period: the reliance on secondary

accounts by non-Black sources.

This practice is exemplified in Henry C. Rowland's short story "The Bamboula,"

published in the September 1904 edition of the New York City-based weekly magazine

Outlook. Rowland relates a fictional conversation between the narrator and a German botanist,

Dr. Leyland, aboard a ship anchored at harbor in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Sparked by the sound

of percussive instruments offshore, Dr. Leyland describes an encounter in which members of

the island's Black Creole elite, Dr. Fouchère and his wife, secretively eluded him in order to

participate in the *bamboula*. Ultimately, Rowland frames their participation as evidence of the

immutability of race: even the most white-assimilated people of African descent in the French

colonies cannot refrain from participating in Vodùn rituals.

Tzara's enfolding of ragtime lyrics and melodies within "The Admiral is Searching for

a House to Rent" can be understood as a self-conscious mimicry of the essential but often

downplayed role of so-called *arts nègres* in the development of European modernist art. Like

Rowland's story, Tzara's incorporation of the rhythms of popular ragtime—itself an

appropriated form of Black American music—into the simultaneous poem represents a thrice

removed form of racialized parody. The first simultaneous poem thus implicitly problematized

the notion of "the avant-garde," subsequently popularized by Peter Bürger, that falsely equates

European whiteness with innovation and simultaneously effaces the modernity of Black

makers who produced the works that artists of European descent appropriated. Furthermore, Tzara's trespass on the divisions between fine art and popular entertainment, academic study and colonial extraction, reveals the contours of these divisions and thus their ideological limitations. "The Admiral is Searching for a House to Rent" thus subtly identifies the fundamental imbalance in the rhetoric of "inspiration"—so slyly, in fact, as to be overlooked by contemporary critics as well as several generations of art and performance historians. Nevertheless, exhuming such gestures remains a prerequisite to understanding the impact of the early twentieth century's constructs on the artworks, actors, institutions, and discourses with which we grapple today.

Works Cited

Archer-Shaw, Petrine. *Negrophilia: Avant-garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s*. Thames & Hudson, 2000.

Ball, Hugo. *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*. Edited by John Elderfield, U of California P, 1999.

"bamboula." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*. Edited by Kennedy, Joyce, Michael Kennedy, and

Tim Rutherford-Johnson, Oxford UP, 2012. *Oxford Reference*, oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-716. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

Berlin, Irving. *Everybody's Doing It Now*. Ted Snyder Co., New York, 1911. Notated Music. *Library of Congress*, loc.gov/item/ihas.100004629. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

Blachère, Jean Claude. "L'Evolution des conceptions primitivistes de Tristan Tzara." *Le*

    Modèle nègre, Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1981, pp. 117–78.

Blake, Jody. *Le Tumulte Noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris,*

    1900–1930. Penn State UP, 1999.

Berliner, Brett A. *Ambivalent Desire: The Exotic Black Other in Jazz-Age France*. U of

    Massachusetts P, 2002.

Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. U of Minnesota P, 1984.

Demos, T.J. "Zurich Dada: The Aesthetics of Exile." *The Dada Seminars*, edited by Leah

    Dickerman, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, 2005, pp. 7–30.

Fanon, Franz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove Press, 2008.

Goldwater, Robert. *Primitivism in Modern Painting*. Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938.

Grossman, Wendy. *Man Ray, African Art, and the Modernist Lens*. International Art and

    Artists, 2009.

Hays Edwards, Brent. *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black*

    Internationalism. Harvard UP, 2003.

Kaufmann, Christian. "Dada Reads Ethnological Sources: From Knowledge of Foreign Art

    Worlds to Poetic Understanding." *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other*, edited by Ralf

    Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer and Esther Tisa Francini, Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016,

    pp. 96–103.

Landry, Timothy R. *Vodùn: Secrecy and the Search for Divine Power*. De Gruyter Publishing

    Contemporary Ethnography Series, U of Pennsylvania P, 2019.

"L'art nègre." *Journal Amusant*, no. 8, 28 Jun. 1919, p. 14.

Lemke, Sieglinde. *Primitivist Modernism: Black Culture and the Origins of Transatlantic Modernism*. Oxford UP, 1998.

Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. Oxford UP, 2013.

Mileaf, Janine. "Body to Politics: Surrealist Exhibition of the Tribal and the Modern at the Anti-Imperialist Exhibition and the Galerie Charles Ratton." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 40, 2001, pp. 239–55.

Rowland, Henry C. "The Bamboula." *Outlook*, 10 Sep. 1904, p. 133.

Rubin, William. *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*. Museum of Modern Art, 1984.

Schwartz, Jean, and Grant Clarke. *I Love the Ladies*. Waterson, Berlin & Snyder, New York, 1914. Notated Music. *Library of Congress*, loc.gov/item/ihas.100007939. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

Shannon, Helen M. *From "African Savages" to "Ancestral Legacy": Race and Cultural Nationalism in the American Modernist Reception of African Art*. 1999. Columbia University, PhD. Dissertation.

Stovall, Tyler. *Paris Noir: African Americans and the City of Light*. Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

Tzara, Tristan. "Chronique Zurichoise." 1920. *Tristan Tzara: Œuvres Complètes*, vol. 1, edited by Henri Béhar, Flammarion, 1975, pp. 561–567.

Van Hoesen, Bret. "Weimar Revisions of Germany's Colonial Past: The Photomontages of Hannah Höch and László Moholy-Nagy." *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, edited by Volker M. Langbehn, Routledge, 2010, pp. 197–219.

Veit, Walter E. "Dada Among the Missionaries: Sources of Tristan Tzara's 'Poèmes nègres.'" *Migration and Cultural Contact: Germany and Australia*, edited by Andrea Bandhauer and Maria Veber, Sydney UP, 2009, pp. 62–75.

Waldo, Terry. "Ragtime." *Encyclopedia of African American History 1896 to the Present*, edited by Paul Finkelman, Oxford UP, 2009. *Oxford Reference*, oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195167795.001.0001/acref-9780195167795-e-1012. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

Hilary Whitham Sánchez is an art historian specializing in twentieth-century Afro-Atlantic material cultures. She holds a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, and her work has been supported by The Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In parallel, she maintains an active practice working with living artists: in 2015, she co-founded the nationally recognized Incubation Series training program for artists and curators in the Philadelphia area, and her criticism has been published in *ArtMargins* and *Title* magazine.
Email: hwhitham@sas.upenn.edu

Uncolonizing Early Sound Recordings

Budhaditya Chattopadhyay
Independent Artist and Researcher

From the earliest days of sound recording, technology shared a fraught relationship with the pre-modern cultures of South Asia, and in particular with traditional music and sounds. Imperial companies and colonial ethnographers introduced the recording of sound in South Asia in the early 20th century. The recording of musical performances along with other forms of sound (i.e., speeches, comedy shows, theatre, and staged acts) within a studio setting that were then made available publicly as objects for reproduction and as products for sale had far-reaching social and sonic effects. Recording technologies altered the performance aesthetics of sound practices by limiting the duration and scope of improvisation and transformed modes of distribution by transmitting vocals, instrumental music, and local sounds as fixed objects to mass audiences for the first time. Yet there was resistance to recording the voices and sounds of colonized subjects in South Asia on the part of leading musicians and sound practitioners who, for a long time, refused to commit their improvisational sounds to shellac discs. What were the reasons for their protestation?

The advent of sound recording in India was engineered by London's Gramophone and Typewriter Company (GTC) in the early 1900s. Engineer Frederick William Gaisberg and local agent George Dillnutt produced the first recordings after 1902 (Kinnear xvii - xx). These were mostly made on three-minute long shellac discs, as South Asia had an abundance of raw

resin to produce such objects. Therefore, the intention of the imperial company headed by colonial ethnographers like Gaisberg was to exploit local resources for building a global business that would benefit colonial powers. Indeed, the period in which recording expeditions were made was also the peak of Britain's imperial expansion in South Asia and in many other regions of the Global South, through trade and the manipulation of new markets.

As early recordings emerged from the colonial mapping of auditory cultures for exploitation and consumption, with the ultimate goal of making profit, musical forms and intricate vocal renditions like Khayal[1] were adapted, rendered, or compromised to suit the requirements of studio recording, marketing, and sales abroad; in the Global South, no such market had previously existed. As a result, many hybrid and mutated forms emerged, such as Thumri[2] and Dadra,[3] which were flexible, recording-friendly, adapted versions of Khayal without the aural intricacy of free and temperamental improvisation that tended to transcend temporal and durational limitations. Practitioners of Dhrupad,[4] an ancient sonic form, fell way behind in the race for quick money, as they were least interested to transmute their aesthetics of performance. Those who adapted or conformed to GTC's business model and approach to the colonization of sound were most successful.

---

[1] Khayal is a major form of Hindustani classical music associated with poetic lyrics and sung words based in a raga. In Khayal, ragas are extensively ornamented, and the style calls for more technical virtuosity than intellectual rigour.

[2] Thumri is another vocal form in Hindustani classical music that is based on romantic literature. Thumri as a style is derived from Khayal in a shortened form.

[3] Dadra is a short and light classical vocal form in Hindustani classical music based on certain simpler rhythm cycles or tala.

[4] Dhrupad is one of the oldest forms of musical sound practice in India, and Alaap is its introduction, which is an elaborate and free-flowing introduction of the raga.While Dhrupad takes a few hours to present, Alaap takes more than an hour to establish the raga's mood through an intricate building of sound without rhythm accompaniment.

Among these recordings were songs by Gauharjan, a so-called *tawaif* (or courtesan) from Calcutta and an exponent of light classical vocal music, performing popular and abridged versions of ragas. Other early vocalists included Soshi Mukhi, Fanni Bala, Sila Bai, Hari Dasi, and N.C. Chakraborty (Farrell; Kinnear 89), among others. Missing in these recordings were many great voices of the times, including Dhrupad and Khayal singers like Fayaz Khan and Alladiya Khan, who regularly performed for hours on stage, as live performances were abundant in South Asia.

One may ask why serious Dhrupad musicians went unrecorded while an amateur singer like Gauharjan was celebrated as the first historic voice recorded in South Asia. The fact that Gauharjan was not a native Indian cannot be denied given the colonial-racial roots of early sound recording. Both her parents were Europeans, and British colonial officers could likely relate to her more easily because of that racial lineage. She also understood the economic potential of recorded sound as a commercial product, and, within a few years, her income from sound sales skyrocketed. While Gauharjan rode to fame as the prima donna of early sound recording in South Asia, Dhrupad and Khayal performers like Fayaz Khan and Alladiya Khan remained unknown beyond the region, as they were resistant to truncate their improvisations for the sake of adhering to the limits of recording technology; rather, they advocated for live performance over recorded discs. The historical importance of early sound recordings is thus drawn into question, as they registered only a narrow section of sound practices.

The shellac discs produced as sounding objects or commodities for sale as a result of colonial ethnographic expeditions were meant for expanding European markets in South Asia using local materials and exploitative labor. They aimed for maximizing gains and minimizing costs (Parthasarathi 199). There was little to no interest in the cultural practices and aesthetics

of local music, and colonial officers did not appreciate the sophistications that the traditional and pre-modern sound practices in South Asia possessed. For example, GTC's agent in Calcutta was John Watson Hawd, whose interest in Indian music appeared to be squarely focused on business. In June 1902, he wrote "The native music is to me worse than Turkish but as long as it suits them and sells well what do we care?" (Farrell 33). Gaisberg, for his part, noted in his travelogue, "We entered a new world of musical and artistic values . . . The very foundations of my musical training were undermined" (Lubinski and Steen 281). To colonialist sonic ethnographers, Asia was largely a continent to explore and plunder.

This tendency is reflected in the way local sounds were damaged and aesthetics threatened. Performers made unsolicited interruptions during recording expeditions to serve the technological dispositif of sound recording. For example, at the end of her sessions, Gauharjan would state her name. This high-pitched and flirtatious announcement, made toward the end of the recording to register the name of the performer, was common to early recordings of South Asian musical performances. The declaration of the singer seemed to epitomize a proclamation with a European egoism that went against the core essence of surrender to the nature of South Asian traditional sound practices such as Dhrupad. Within the edifice of the recording object on shellac discs, the recorded alter ego would haunt its content, structure, and style of presentation. It is no surprise that many devoted local musicians did not want to record their practices in order to resist the mutating invasion of early recordings.

At the turn of the twentieth century, South Asian sound practitioners found themselves at the cultural intersection of two worlds: the natural improvisational character of music from South Asia, and the modernist technological invasion of imperial recording companies and their business-driven ethnographic expeditions as part of the colonial exploitation of local

resources for profit. Nevertheless, recorded discs opened up a portal for transcultural interactions even though the power hierarchy was heavily unbalanced due to the predominant colonial structures of exploitation, undermining, and control. The early days of GTC's recording industry in South Asia indeed marked a new phase in the interface between South Asia and Europe. For the first time practitioners from the Global South entered the world of Western media in the form of shellac discs. But, as shown above, this exposure was more a commercial initiative than a cultural exchange. The recording industry's main purpose was to put in place a crude capitalistic system within a community of practitioners who were devoted to their craft of embodied sound through devotion to free improvisation.

Ragas, for example, reflected natural temporalities, with each one dedicated to a time of the day. What the recording industry brought to this spatio-temporally free-flowing and natural practice of sound was to transform an emergent auditory situation into a cultural mode of transmission and consumption in the form of shellac discs. In this view, early sound recording was a deeply damaging intrusion. Broadly drawing on Walter Benjamin's notions of the loss of art's "aura" through mechanical reproduction, and on Theodor Adorno's thoughts on aura in relation to the gramophone, one can develop a critical attitude toward recording technology since recorded sound objects "no longer possess their traditional reality" (Adorno 50). Following the castration of a live sound into a commercial object, one can contend that early sound recordings compromised the aura of sound in South Asia, reducing the elaborate, temporally open, and improvisational pre-modern sound practices into deliverable sound objects. This is why musicians, particularly more traditionally oriented Dhrupad musicians, resisted recording, as they feared that the dedicated search for integrity and true voice would be contaminated. This disruption of South Asian sonic worlds was initiated by colonizing

forces and was, in many cases, irreversible, as the changes to cultural forms like Khayal and Thumri, for example, were later accepted as normative.

While many South Asian sound practitioners were reluctant to face the phonograph, there was also an apocryphal apprehension that recording media would exorcise sound from an artist's voice. Musicians' concrete concerns were centered on the sudden public availability of their art and the limitations that recordings imposed on performance time. Over the course of the last century, these concerns have shaped both the practice and the content of post-colonial sounds. However, after India's independence in 1947, musicians gradually reclaimed reproduction technology through long-form recording of live performances as sonic traces, balancing adherence to customary structures with the compulsion to remain relevant. Currently, traditional sound practices like Dhrupad survive in a relatively appropriate form and format, through today's freer digital access and sharing, rather than being muffled by recording's dark beginning.

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor W. "The Curves of the Needle," translated by Thomas Y. Levin. *October*, vol. 55, Winter 1990, pp. 48–55.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, 1969, pp. 217–252.

Chattopadhyay, Budhaditya. *Sonic Perspectives from the Global South: Connecting Resonances*. Bloomsbury, 2022, forthcoming.

---. "Unrecord: Demodernising and/or Uncolonising Sound Objects." PRAKSIS, Oslo, 15

     September 2020.

---. "Unrecording Nature." *Sound, Art, and Climate Change*, edited by Petri Kuljuntausta,

     Helsinki, Frekvenssi Association, 2021, pp. 59–66.

Courtney, David. "Biography of Gauhar Jan." *Chandra & David Courtney's Homepage*,

     chandrakantha.com/biodata/gauhar_jan.html. Accessed 9 Oct. 2021.

Daniélou, Alain. *Music and the Power of Sound: The Influence of Tuning and Interval on

     Consciousness*. Inner Traditions, 1995.

Farrell, Gerry. "The Early Days of the Gramophone Industry in India: Historical, Social and

     Musical Perspectives." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, vol. 2, 1993, pp. 31–53.

Kinnear, Michael S. *The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings, 1899–1908*. New

     Delhi, Popular Prakashan, 1994.

Levin, Thomas Y. "For the Record: Adorno on Music in the Age of Its Technological

     Reproducibility." *October*, vol. 55, Winter 1990, pp. 23–47.

Lubinski, Christina, and Steen, Andreas. "Traveling Entrepreneurs, Traveling Sounds: The

     Early Gramophone Business in India and China." *Itinerario*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2017, pp.

     275–303.

Parthasarathi, Vibodh. "Articulating His Masters Voice: Reflections on the Ecology of Early

     Recorded Sound." *Communication, Anthropology and Sociology*, edited by Y. Singh,

     New Delhi, PHIPC, 2009, pp. 189–210.

Budhaditya Chattopadhyay is an artist, media practitioner, researcher, and writer.
Incorporating diverse media, creative technologies and research, Chattopadhyay produces

works for large-scale installation and live performance addressing contemporary issues of environment and ecology, migration, race and decoloniality. Chattopadhyay has received numerous residencies, fellowships, and international awards. His sound works have been widely exhibited, performed or presented across the globe, and released by Gruenrekorder (DE) and Touch (UK). Chattopadhyay has an expansive body of scholarly publications in the areas of media art history, theory and aesthetics, cinema and sound studies in leading peer-reviewed journals. He is the author of three books, *The Nomadic Listener* (2020), *The Auditory Setting* (2021), and *Between the Headphones* (2021). Chattopadhyay holds a PhD in Artistic Research and Sound Studies from the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University, and an MA in New Media from the Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University.
Email: mail@budhaditya.org

"…the table was set, and we were never dead": On the Persistence of Colonial Listening in Germany

Pedro J S Vieira de Oliveira
Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies

A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence (2019) is a sound piece that critically inquires upon the persistence of modern/colonial listening practices in the recording and assessment of language, and more specifically of accent. The work is part of a long-term artistic and academic research project oriented at the use of so-called "accent recognition software" (sometimes "dialect recognition") by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, hereafter BAMF) in asylum seeking processes of undocumented migrants since late 2017 (*Drucksache 19/190*). The introduction of automated evaluation, as of this writing exclusive to Germany, replaces other, similarly questionable sociolinguistic methods for determining the origins of people without papers—a common procedure for asylum processes both in the European Union and the UK.[1] The use of software

---

[1] The most common procedure for language tests in asylum cases is called Language Analysis for Determination of Origin (LADO), in which linguists and trained "native speaker experts" work with recordings from asylum hearings and interviews to produce an evaluation of the dialects spoken versus the applicant's claimed country of origin. For more information on LADO and its implications, see Nick and Cambier-Langeveld.

comes to aid and speed up decision-making processes that can—and often do—determine the course of one's life.

Similar attempts of tying "origin" to the voice can be found in the history of sound recording in Germany, in particular the efforts of the Prussian Phonographic Commission (Preussische Phonographische Kommission, hereafter PK). In the early twentieth century, the PK produced an extensive collection of language and accent/dialect recordings of prisoners of war in Germany, together with personal assessment files, phonetic transcriptions, and palatograms (Dögen 16). The PK, like the BAMF, was concerned with finding and assessing "scientific" links between language and origin, though each program pursued this work to different ends: research for the PK, asylum processing for the BAMF. Yet, stories about "home" emerge in both cases as constituents and assets to these historical and contemporary processes. Thus, modern/colonial forms of listening enact and reinforce displacement on the discursive level—home is always an elsewhere—while at the same time attempting to find said home (i.e., citizenship) in the voice on a purportedly "scientific" and analytical level.

Just as an interest in recording and evaluating accents or dialects is the impetus that drives both institutions, it is the persistence of finding home, both in the archives of the PK as well as in the elicitation cues of the BAMF, that sediments the discursive ground from which their stories might be connected. *A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence*, a performance and radio piece commissioned by the CTM Festival Berlin and Deutschlandfunk Kultur and produced by the author of this essay, probes these historical, spatial, and temporal connections. In what follows, I do not seek to merely provide an exegesis of this work but instead to extend an invitation to dwell on the questions that it leaves open, or merely rehearses.

By focusing its efforts on *listening*, as both a sense and set of techniques, sound art can reveal the persistence of modernity/coloniality in the migration industry's unstoppable desire to find "truth" in the body. Listening to the German dialect recognition apparatus—the software but also case workers, telephones, forms, the border regime, and the long history of dialect recording in Germany—a case can be made as to how the boundaries between the "objective" and "subjective" are not only contingent on but also reinforced by technologies within a juridical and economic infrastructure whose goal is, across a century, to sustain otherness. Yet, through works like *A Series…*, I argue that the performance of stories about home holds the potential not to find said home in the voice but rather to complicate the boundaries between body, accent, citizenship, and belonging, thus parting ways with the idea of home altogether.

Working With(in) the Gaps

First presented as a forty-five minute live performance at HAU2 Berlin on January 30, 2019, featuring electronics, spoken word and singing (see fig. 1), *A Series…* was later re-recorded in studio, edited, and mixed for radio broadcast; it premiered on May 31, 2019 as part of the *Klangkunst* program of Deutschlandfunk Kultur.[2] The piece was composed as a mixture of essay and theatre, with heavy use of poetic and historical narrative interspersed not only with archival recordings of the PK (available at the *Lautarchiv* of the Humboldt-University in Berlin) and short, freely available snippets from the speech database used by the BAMF to train its software, but also blues, freestyle hip-hop, and electroacoustic composition. Its narrative draws connections between the König Friedrich-August Kaserne, a former prisoner of

---

[2] *A Series…* features electronics and narration by the author and spoken word and singing by Enana Alassar, Lio D.I.C., and Mariana Bahia.

war camp in Chemnitz (1914–19), and the Ebersdorf field office of the BAMF, inaugurated in October 2005 and located near the abandoned camp buildings. By weaving in and out of both places and their practices, *A Series…* stays within the gaps of these temporally and spatially connected places, guided by one main concern: how the idea of home is elicited.

Fig. 1. Performance at HAU2 Berlin on January 30, 2019. Photo by the author.

In speech and language assessment, an "elicitation cue" is the device with which speakers allegedly produce speech without necessarily having to think of its semantic value. A key example might be the so-called "Harvard Sentences," designed to elicit variations of English speech with seemingly trivial phrases: e.g., "The harder he tried the less he got done"

or "Schools for ladies teach charm and grace" ("IEEE" 16–7). The supposed "neutrality" of elicitation cues stays at odds with sociolinguistic research methods, in which one finds an informed concern with provoking "natural" speech from speakers of a given language or dialect, which might approximate an unmediated prosody and articulation of "true" speech (Meyerhoff et al.). Nevertheless, to assume that the choice of elicitation cues is always already neutral, or at least consciously so, is only half the story.

The BAMF has been allegedly using "culturally appropriate" images as elicitation cues for their so-called accent recognition software since 2017. While it does not officially disclose the content of these images on the grounds of a "threat to national security" ("Bilder für sprachbiometrische Tests"), reports from anonymous sources maintain that the images are often of a family eating a meal at home or other social scenes. A 2018 photo published by the BAMF on Facebook, illustrating a (probably staged) dialect test, includes one such image that allegedly depicts *Bozkashe*, an Afghan ball game ("Automatische Dialekterkennung"). Images like these are often chosen because they are assumed to be cross-cultural, evoking a sense of a shared familiarity. It is by describing these images over the telephone in "free, natural speech" (BAMF, *Benutzerhandbuch "Sprachbiometrie"*) that the accent test is performed and a list of probabilities of a certain dialect being spoken is retrieved (see fig. 2).[3]

The PK, on the other hand, did not use images as elicitation cues but nevertheless resorted to methods that could be easily replicated by different prisoners, from written word or memory, to elicit a natural, informal speech that would then be assessed, described, transcribed, and "scientifically" evaluated. Linguists and phoneticians often requested

---

[3] I have written previously about the affective infrastructures of the "dialect test" and the telephone, in particular the evocative power of image and story into eliciting an accent. See "On the Endless Infrastructural Reach of a Phoneme."

prisoners of war to recount stories or religious texts; among European soldiers, the most

popular story conveyed was that of the "Prodigal Son," comprising almost one-sixth of all the

recordings. Non-Christian French and British colonial soldiers were often asked to recite parts

of the Quran or other religious texts, or to sing folk songs and tell tales specific to their

countries. While many European soldiers familiar with the "Prodigal Son" were Christian and

often able to recount the parable from memory, one finds in the PK archive two instances of

the story recorded by colonial soldiers: Gangaram, from Nepal, of Hindu religion and

imprisoned in Wünsdorf (PK271), and François Joachim-Arnould, from Martinique,

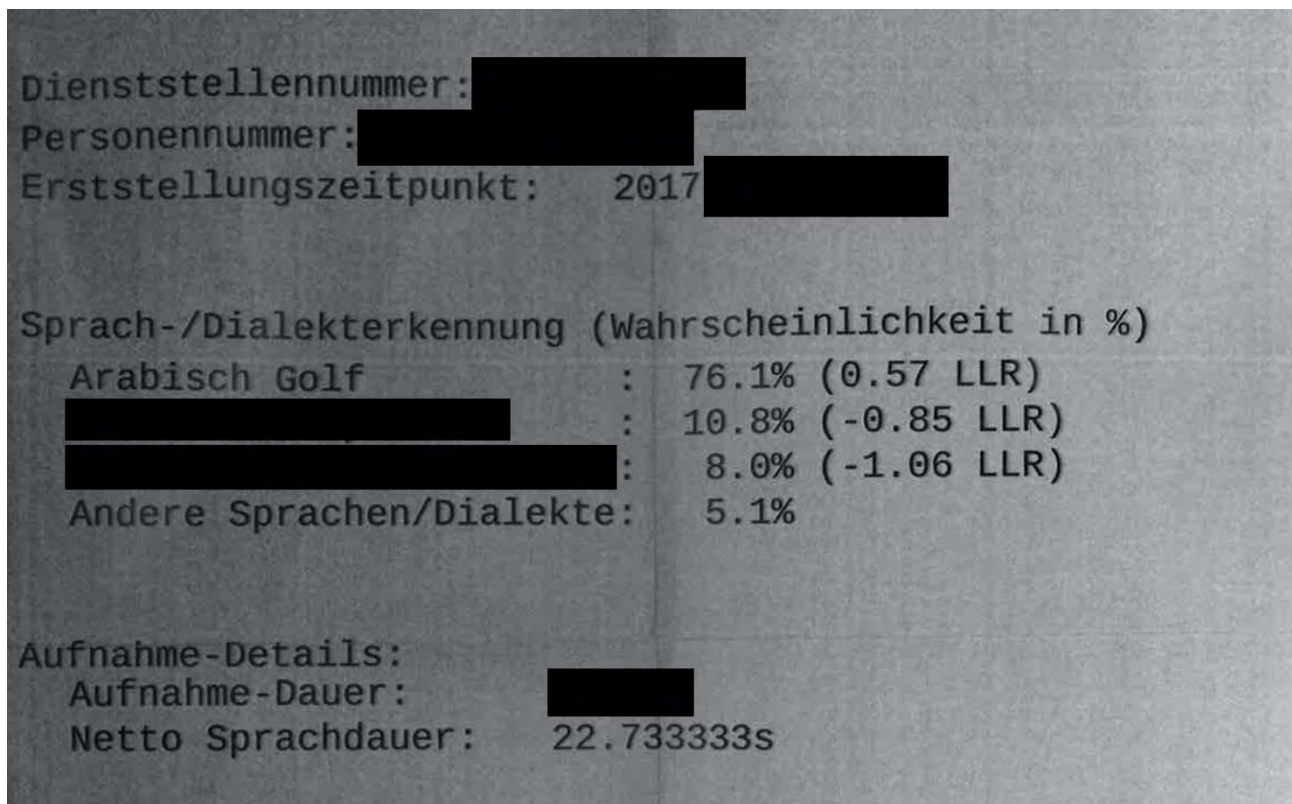imprisoned in Münster (PK744), religion unknown.

Fig. 2. Example (modified for privacy reasons) of a test result file. See appendix for English translation.

Finding "Home"

Much like depictions of family meals and ball games, the parable of the Prodigal Son manifests a feeling of home; yet it also provides a moral lesson of repentance, of finding unconditional acceptance and forgiveness by *returning* home, provided this home is always *elsewhere*. Frantz Fanon has brilliantly demonstrated how language underscores the "shift and split" in consciousness that takes place when a colonial subject returns home (9). He argued that the opening of a "rift" (19) between colonial othering and self-identification troubles the psyche of the colonized and turns "home" into an elusive concept, never fully realized, ever contradictory and ambiguous.

Such complexity is reflected in *A Series…*, in which none of the performers speak German as their native tongue, and yet all use different articulations, inflections, and pronunciations, mixing and mashing their own native languages, for a largely German audience.[4] The three singers begin by outlining key information from the test subjects' stories: where they took place, what was revealed, what was concealed. Later, they disconnect from this idea to fabulate and improvise freely on the Prodigal Son's motto—"he was lost but now he's found; he was dead, but now he lives again"—while also adding references to the accent test imagery (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Snippet from "A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence." Copyright by the author.

---

[4] For an English translation of the German voiceovers, see oliveira.work/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ASeriesofGaps-EN.pdf. Accessed 17 Jun. 2021.

Fig. 4. The grounds of the former König Friedrich-August Kaserne in October 2018. Photo by the author.

The complicated (and often violent) history of language recording—here as forced

labor for German linguists—is presented to the listener as inherently implicated in the

continuation of Germany's political project of borders, nationhood, and citizenship. The piece

carefully reintroduces Joachim-Arnould's recording, this time speaking over a computerized,

allegedly "neutral" German text-to-speech voice reading from a BAMF memorandum (see fig.

5). The simultaneity of these audio tracks reveals how both work as "nodes of state, social, and

cultural formation," extending their reach from the past to present and future engagements

(Campt 72).

Fig. 5. Snippet from "A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence." Copyright by the author.

Reintroduction and juxtaposition also seek to uncover how "scientific" listening is, in fact, *colonial* listening, whereby the PK and the BAMF partake in "a rich linguistic tradition of thinking difference as a problem located . . . in the relation between spoken and written language" (Ochoa Gautier 140). Both institutions sustain a modern/colonial desire for resolution, conclusion, and "objective truth" (Robinson). More importantly, their ethos relies on the belief that *listening*, as it were, can reveal said "truth," through separation, sequencing, assessment, and determination (Ferreira da Silva). Because of this, the connection they attempt to find between citizenship and voice is not a feature of the body, but rather remains "between the ear, the mechanics of articulation and the actual sound of pronunciation" (Ochoa Gautier 140). In other words, it is a question of *listening*—a listening that while presenting itself as "objective" remains, in fact, very much teleological.

A Series... articulates how "home" (i.e., citizenship and nationality) is ultimately contingent, while presenting ways in which it might be possible to complicate and refuse it altogether. By focusing on the idea of home as a prerequisite for storytelling, *A Series...* asks how and where home is defined but also, more importantly, *by whom*. It puts the audience in charge of determining how these institutional bodies attempt to listen to citizenship and why it

has been so for the past hundred years. To do so, it demands a situated, aesthetic, and relational listening (Vieira de Oliveira) to these voices—*now*.

Free-form improvisations in many tongues and the Creole recording of the Prodigal Son story are not merely retellings but rather refusals—a complete desacralization of the home that both the PK and the BAMF try to find. Through these documents, languages are made into "wild tongues" (Anzaldúa 75) and extricated from any idea of "citizenship" insofar as Arabic, Kurdish, Portuguese, Creole, German, and English seamlessly flow into one another, bold and overperformed. This creates a multi-lingual, multi-accented sound journey that connects both institutions in their desire to find "truth" in language and accent, an effort that constantly refuses, at the same time, to define people by the languages or accents they speak with.

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 3rd ed., Aunt Lute Books,
    2007.

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. "Automatische Dialekterkennung." *Facebook*, 31
    Aug. 2018, facebook.com/bamf.socialmedia/photos/a.359656124147288/
    1740749652704588/?type=1&theater. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

---. "Bilder Für Sprachbiometrische Tests." *FragDenStaat.De*, 13 May 2019,
    fragdenstaat.de/a/45794. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

---. *Drucksache 19/190: Einsatz von Akzenterkennungssoftware Durch Das Bundesamt Für
    Migration Und Flüchtlinge*. 8 Dec. 2017, dipbt.bundestag.de/extrakt/ba/WP19/2303/
    230303.html. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

---. *Integriertes Identitätsmanagement IDM-S: Benutzerhandbuch "Sprachbiometrie."* 2018,

fragdenstaat.de/anfrage/foliensatze-und-interpretationshilfen-zu-sprachanalyse.

Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Campt, Tina. *Listening to Images*. Duke UP, 2017.

Dögen, Wilhelm. *Unter fremden Völkern*. Otto Stollberg, 1925.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove Press, 2008.

Ferreira da Silva, Denise. "On Difference Without Separability." *"Incerteza Viva" (Living

Uncertainty): Catálogo Da 32a São Paulo Art Biennial*, 2016, pp. 57–65.

"IEEE Recommended Practice for Speech Quality Measurements." *IEEE No. 297-1969*, Jun.

1969, pp. 1–24, doi:10.1109/IEEESTD.1969.7405210. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Lautarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. *PK271*. Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 31

May 1916. Lautarchiv, PK271.

---. *PK744*. Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 21 Mar. 1917. Lautarchiv, PK744.Meyerhoff,

Miriam, et al. "Sociolinguistic Fieldwork." *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic

Fieldwork*, Nov. 2011, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199571888.013.0006. Accessed 10

Oct. 2021.

Nick, I. M., and T. Cambier-Langeveld, editors. *Forensic Linguistics: Asylum-seekers,

Refugees and Immigrants*. Vernon Press, 2018.

Ochoa Gautier, Ana María. *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century

Colombia*. Duke UP, 2014.

Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. U of

Minnesota P, 2020.

Vieira de Oliveira, Pedro J. S. "A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence." *Klangkunst*,

    Deutschlandfunk Kultur, 31 May 2019, deutschlandfunkkultur.de/hoerstueck-ueber-

    automatische-akzenterkennung-a-series-of.3685.de.html?dram:article_id=442750.

    Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

---. "Dealing with Disaster: Notes towards a Decolonizing, Aesthetico-Relational Sound Art."

    The Bloomsbury Handbook of Sound Art, edited by Sanne Krogh Groth and Holger

    Schulze, Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 71–88.

---. "On the Endless Infrastructural Reach of a Phoneme." *Transmediale Journal*, no. 3, Apr.

    2019, transmediale.de/content/on-the-endless-infrastructural-reach-of-a-phoneme.

    Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Appendix: English Translation of Figure 2

Office code:	(blacked out)
Personal code:	(blacked out)
Issue date:	2017-(blacked out)

Language/Dialect recognition (Probabilities in %)

Gulf Arabic:	76.1% (0.57 LLR)
(blacked out):	10.8% (-0.85 LLR)
(blacked out):	8.0% (-1.06 LLR)
Other Languages or Dialects:	5.1%

Recording details:

Duration of recording:	(blacked out)
Net Speech duration:	22.733333s

Pedro J S Vieira de Oliveira is a researcher, sound artist, and educator. His work advances a decolonizing inquiry of listening and the materiality of sound, with a specific focus on (sonic) racialized violence in the policing of border and urban spaces. He holds a PhD from the Universität der Künste Berlin and is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. He is also a founding member of the Decolonising Design platform. Email: pedro@oliveira.work

A Map of a Sound as a Space:
Christine Sun Kim's *(LISTEN)* (2016)

Charles Eppley
Independent Scholar

"Meet at 14th Street and Avenue C, 1:00 PM (rain or shine)." The instructions were provided

by email and social media, announcing an upcoming participatory public artwork by artist

Christine Sun Kim (*(LISTEN)*).[31] Over two days in October 2016, two dozen people followed

the call to coalesce on a nondescript intersection at the edge of Lower Manhattan near the East

River. Behind a bright blue gate loomed a Con Edison powerplant, which provides continuous

electricity to the city's five boroughs, omitting a soft static buzz. Kim greeted those who had

gathered that warm and breezy day with an inviting wave: "It's good to see everyone," she

signed in American Sign Language (ASL), transposed to spoken-English through an ASL

interpreter: "We're going to do a little bit of walking."

Kim detailed her close connection to both the intersection and neighborhood. Though

Con Edison was not the source of the infamous Northeast Blackout in 2003, its building

reminded the artist of her experience of the event, during which she was forced to navigate the

city in near-total darkness by foot. The building functioned as an architectural mnemonic

device that triggered a vital memory of Kim's life in the city, sparking a multisensory

---

[31] *(LISTEN)* was organized by Charles Eppley with Sam Hart and Kerry Santullo through Avant.org, a distributed platform for contemporary art and research.

experience of time and space. Kim created vivid mental images of her journey for the group, which included a mixture of Deaf, Hard of Hearing (HoH), and hearing people, complementing her story with descriptive textual captions displayed on an iPad (see figs. 1–3). As she explained, during her walk she encountered bars giving away free beer that could not be kept cool. Emergency vehicles cascaded spinning light across the deadened cityscape, illuminating its walls with a fragmented splash. Like others, Kim felt growing bodily discomfort as the temperature swelled in a thick August heat, tempered in part by a chilled and fragrant ale.

Fig. 1. Christine Sun Kim near the Con Edison plant during *(LISTEN)*. Reproduced by permission of Charles Eppley.

Fig. 2. Kim in front of Suen Dragon community garden during *(LISTEN)*. Reproduced by permission of Charles Eppley.

Fig. 3. Kim leading participants through the streets during *(LISTEN)*. Reproduced by permission of Charles Eppley.

Many Deaf and HoH people use captions to access information provided in spoken language (e.g., English) as well as musical and environmental sounds. Captions aim to provide complete, literal descriptions of any verbal or acoustical communication perceived by a hearing person in the same situation. In the absence of captioning, Deaf and HoH people are denied access to crucial information available to others. But captions are not always comprehensive and in practice are often undermined by missing speech or vague language (e.g., "tense music") that does not contain the multisensory and emotional nuance otherwise felt by hearing persons. As Kim describes in her article "The Sound of Non-Sounds," conventional captioning often fails to appreciate that "listening is an experience involving more than sound, [including] a variety of different sensory and emotional responses beyond sonic properties." While Kim's recounting of the 2003 blackout—one of many personal memories shared in *(LISTEN)*—was intensified through her use of poetic captions, these texts did not simply illustrate her narrative: the phrases intervened in captioning principles, in part by adopting poetic prose and by embracing multisensory perspectives that disregarded objective description, including "(the sound of darkness manifesting itself)" and "(the sound of temperature rising)" (see fig. 4).

As a young person, Kim was "taught to believe" that sound was "not a part of her life," as she explained in her 2015 Ted Talk "The Enchanting Music of Sign Language." Yet deafness contains a spectrum of acoustical and sonic experience, spanning those who *hear some* to those who *do not hear*, and those who have always been Deaf to those who experience gradual or sudden hearing loss. Regardless of one's individual cochlear ability, Deaf and HoH people experience sound both physiologically and socio-culturally, including physical vibrations and through the biased cultural values (and resulting barriers) that define and
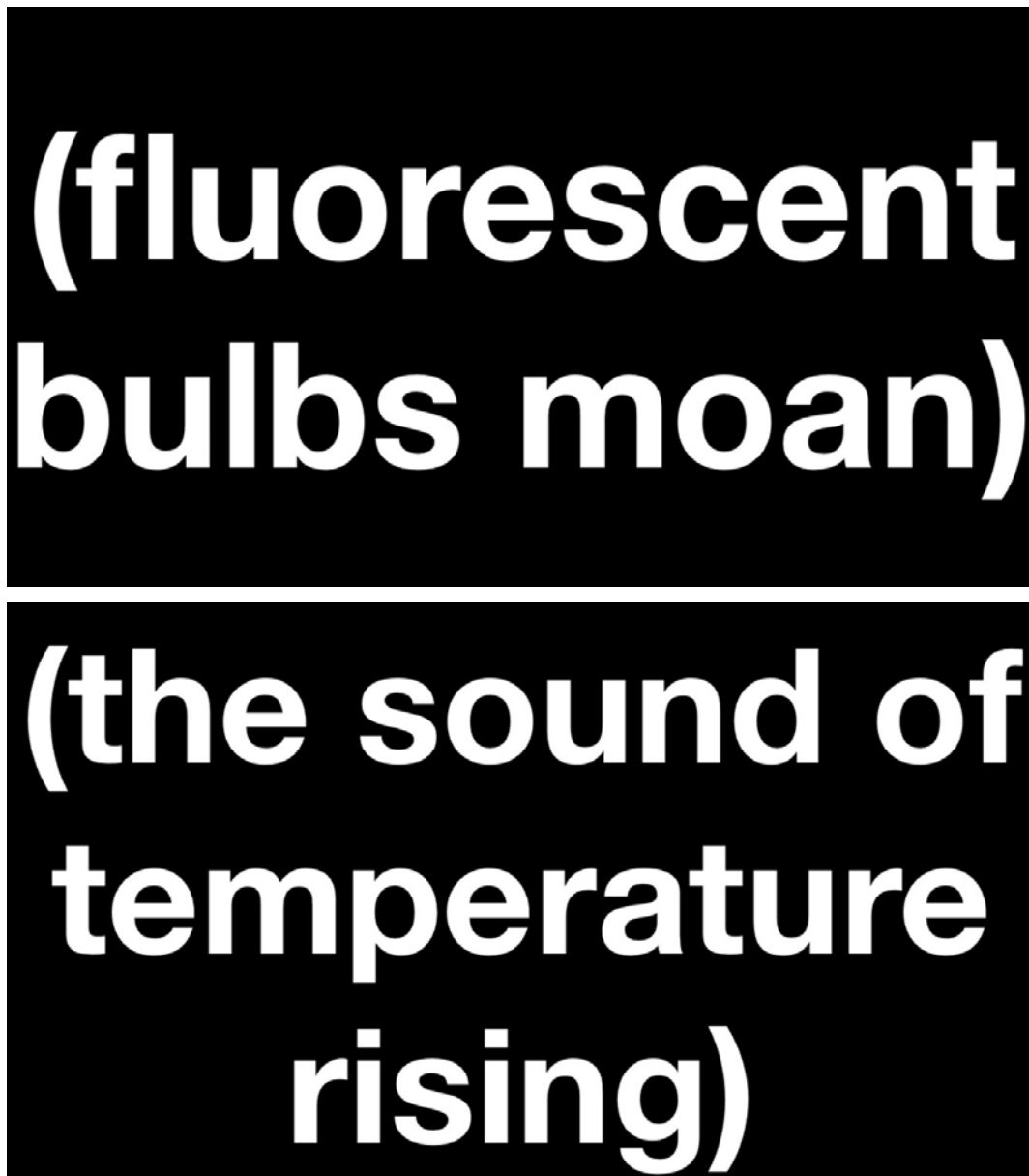
Fig. 4. Digital iPad captions used by Kim during *(LISTEN)*. Reproduced by permission of the artist.

enforce norms of sound-making and listening in public and private space. Despite cultural

presumptions that Deaf people live in a silent world, few are likely to consider sound, noise,

and the politics of listening as carefully as Deaf and HoH people, whose lives are

circumscribed by barriers to acoustical information. Kim's works, such as *(LISTEN)*, portray the complexity of Deaf life—and Deaf culture—in and beyond society's ableist sonic infrastructures and ideologies, envisioning encounters with listening through memory, affect, and non-acoustical perceptual modes that integrate sight, touch, taste, and smell. In this process, they activate sound as a category unbound from a single aesthetic or social modality and challenge ideologies that privilege certain ranges and abilities of hearing over others.

(LISTEN) subverts dominant histories and theories of sonic art that center the experiences and values of hearing people. Rethinking the soundscape as a site for social critique, this article critiques modes of soundwalking that perpetuate oppressive systems of power, especially those that naturalize and normalize hearing and/or interpret sonic environments as neutral spaces of perception and consumption. Engaging contemporary soundscape theory in a consideration of deafness, power, and control, this article frames *(LISTEN)* as a critical soundwalk, challenging the discursive and phenomenological barriers that constrain contemporary sonic art theory and history. These barriers, such as embracing socially-constructed values of normalcy in hearing, are identified by Christopher Kentz as reinforcing a broader "hearing line," theorized as an "invisible boundary separating deaf [sic] and hearing people" in society (18).[32]

Kim's *(LISTEN)* reinterpreted *Listen* (1966) by sonic artist Max Neuhaus (1939–2009), an early example of soundwalking (within colonialist trajectories of Western art and music).[33] In this practice, listeners move throughout a dynamic acoustical environment, or *soundscape*, in search of aesthetic meaning. A soundwalk aims to activate one's perception of

---

[32] "Deaf" is lowercase as appearing in quote. In this article, I use capitalized "Deaf" to connote its relationship to disability as a socio-political identity.
[33] *Listen* (1966) is fully considered in the author's PhD dissertation (Eppley).

sonic space, creating a sense of place in which active listening offers compelling acoustical information about spatial environments typically interpreted visually. Neuhaus realized *Listen* many times between 1966 and 1974. For the first iteration, he asked participants to join him at 14th Street and Avenue C in Manhattan, "where the street bisects a power plant," the same location as Kim (Neuhaus 63). Neuhaus—like Kim, who realized her version on the original's fiftieth anniversary—led them through the area to transform the sounds of the street into avant-garde environmental music.

Neuhaus's *Listen* represents a detachment of sound from conventional musical categories, and the formation of "sound art" as a discrete genre of "dematerialized" postwar art. But what mode of listening develops in this framework? Who is allowed to creatively engage and interpret the soundscape? What manner of soundwalking emerges from Neuhaus's epistemology of listening, where the local soundscape is acousmatically mediated as raw sonic material, detached from the community and observed from the outside?[34]

Rather than observing the soundscape and larger sensory environment from the outside-in, Kim deployed an inside-out perspective that emphasized a non-cochlear and multisensory approach to listening that centered community relationships using an expanded definition of sound. Developing a route (see fig. 5) based on her personal experiences and social position, Kim redefined the soundscape from a Deaf cultural position, inviting participants to consider: What does "temperature rising" sound like? How do we feel fluorescent lightbulbs "moan?" Which noises convey the concept, or event, of "darkness manifesting?" *(LISTEN)* foregrounded the many affordances that deafness and Deaf culture provide to sonic art practice

---

[34] In a 1990 reflection on *Listen* and soundwalking as a post-Cagean practice, Neuhaus described "passing through Puerto Rican street life" before returning to his artist studio (63), a phrasing that sets himself and his listeners as detached from their urban setting, which is then cast as an exotic and racialized place from a settler colonial vantage.

and scholarship, a paradigm that prioritizes cochlear perception over other modalities of

listening. And by enclosing Neuhaus's original title in a caption—*(LISTEN)*—Kim expanded

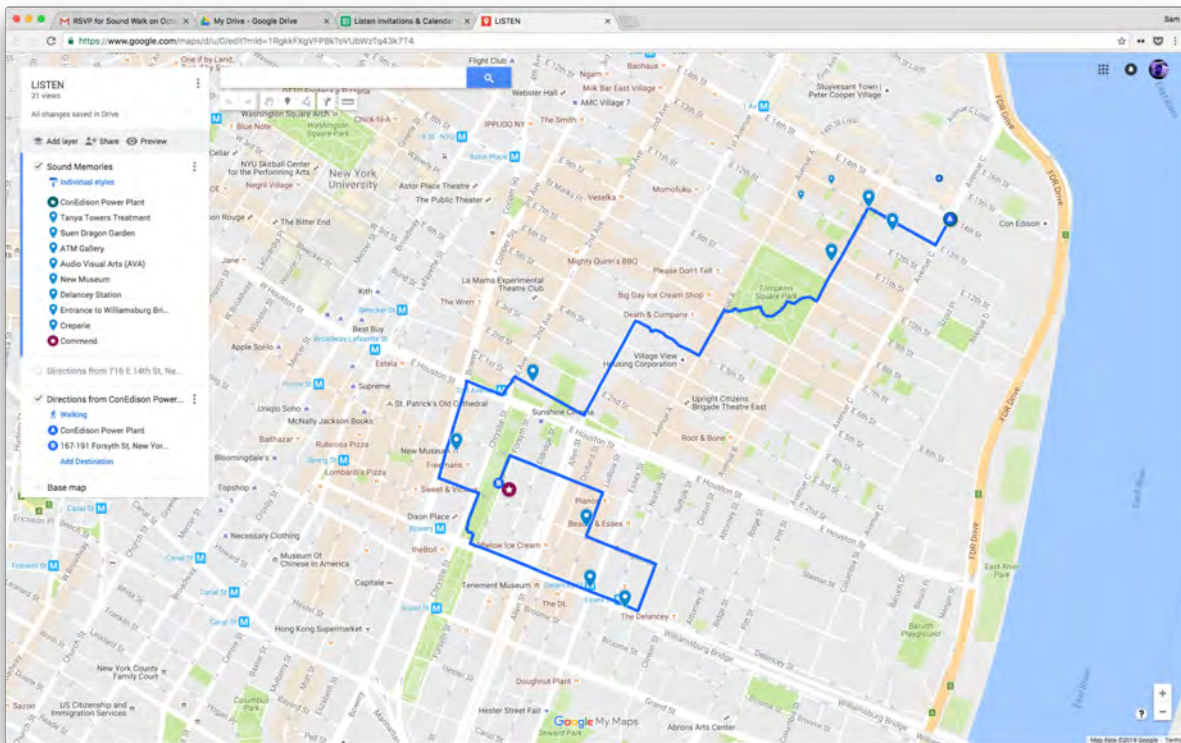the formal boundaries of soundwalking to include more than sound itself.

Fig. 5. Screenshot showing route of *(LISTEN)*. Reproduced by permission of Charles Eppley.

Following Con Edison, stops included the Suen Dragon community garden, where Kim

met a man who did not know ASL but with whom she communicated through facial

expression, touch, and body language. Later, she reflected on her career outside of two

galleries where she had formative encounters with sound as an artistic medium. By the New

Museum, she described the discriminatory experiences that she often endures as a Deaf artist

working in museums that do not prioritize accessibility, and a harrowing bike accident on the

Bowery. In the Delancey Street subway station, she described feeling train announcements

resonate in her winter coat pockets, the rumbling vibration of cars on the Williamsburg Bridge, and sweet and savory fragrances from a nearby creperie.

Early in *(LISTEN)*, Kim stopped at Tanya Towers, a residential facility providing housing and behavioral services to Deaf, HoH, and DeafBlind individuals (see fig. 6). Kim recounted how newly-implemented public policies reduced access to Deaf services and resources in the early 2000s: "I was working here during the blackout," Kim said, "and learned that mental illness is very real, and access to services is very tough… A lot of Deaf clubs [closed], and it was my first experience with gentrification." As the Deaf historian Jaipreet Virdi reminds us, deafness is "perceived as a problem in dire need of a solution" and situated in a "misunderstood [and] political body moving between and beyond borders" (31). In response, *(LISTEN)* reconceives soundwalking as a barrier-breaking practice oriented toward community-building and multisensory communication. This model contrasts the extractive acousmatic model represented by Neuhaus's *Listen*, where sounds are detached from not only their sources but also systems of power that organize society through a politics of listening, reinforcing the "hearing line." Kim has discussed her own experiences of exclusion, ranging from museums that do not pay for interpreters and captioning, to family members and friends who refuse to learn how to sign (Brown). The experience of being left out of conversation at a table full of hearing people, known as "dinner-table syndrome," is common for Deaf and HoH individuals. The experience contributes to what Kim calls a "Deaf rage" that manifests in response to not only social isolation but the many "lifelong consequences [of audism] that impact Deaf people's health, education, and employment" (Brown).

Listening can help make sense of the world around us, past and present, but it is not an objective or neutral process. Nina Sun Eidsheim argues that listening is a multisensory event

Fig. 6. "Deaf Persons Crossing" sign outside of Tanya Towers. Reproduced by permission of Charles Eppley.

used to "forge our relations to one another" (3-6). When we listen, we reinforce "a particular set of values" that mobilize hierarchies of race, gender, and disability (Eidsheim 3-6). To *decolonize* listening and deploy soundwalking as a tool for imagining alternatives to "dominant ideas about space and knowledge"—as argued by musicologist Allie Martin in the article "Hearing Change in the Chocolate City: Soundwalking as Black Feminist Method"—we must disempower inequity where it exists, including the audist and classist roots of soundscape practice and theory that prioritize hearing culture. How can soundwalking interrupt the "hearing line" to examine a politics of listening in contemporary art and within soundscape studies, a field being reexamined from critical social perspectives that reveal how sound and listening codify intersecting power dynamics of class, race, ethnicity, and gender?[35]

Philosopher Robin James argues that we must not essentialize sonic experiences that are deeply subjective, as sound is a "sociohistorically specific concept" (7). Further, Jonathan Sterne shows how soundscape studies itself "began from disability," arguing that disability simulations (crude generalizations of "blind, Deaf and wheelchair-based experiences") have played a misguided role in defining our dominant theories of sonic space (13). However, James suggests that sound and resonance are still useful for theorizing social practices designed "to avoid and/or oppose systemic relations of domination" (5-6). *(LISTEN)* exemplifies such a qualitative mode of listening in which sound is a subjective and unstable category that evades the regimes of auditory quantification. Whereas Neuhaus's *Listen* arguably concealed the artist's own social position through a process of detachment and normalized hearing, Kim's

---

[35] For example, Rebecca Lentjes has written extensively on the gendered soundscape of anti-choice protests at U.S. abortion clinics, coining the term "sonic patriarchy" to describe the methods of gendered domination through noise and forced listening. See Lentjes et al., "The Ripping Apart of Silence"; Lentjes, "The Sonic Politics of the US Abortion Wars."

work foregrounds her own phenomenological subjectivity and social embeddedness. Rather than objectifying the soundscape as a neutral resource, *(LISTEN)* reimagines soundwalking as an empathetic practice for interpersonal connection and community building, beyond individual hearing abilities. Subverting dominant logics of the soundscape, Kim advocates for the moral imperative to control one's own narrative in a society designed for others: "Hearing people have the privilege to be misunderstood, but I can't afford to be misunderstood, [because] that equals lost opportunities, a loss of my rights" (Brown).

Carla Rice, Susan D. Dion, and Eliza Chandler argue that it is essential to reckon with the legacies of colonization in the visual arts through disability. Working from this proposition, this article argues that such a reckoning extends beyond the perceptual domain of vision.[36] Centering Deaf culture and disability studies helps us to understand how sonic artworks embody and act on a politics of listening (whether or not artists intend to do so) to serve techno-social cultures that reinforce and/or dismantle systems of oppression. We must thus cultivate space for Deaf, HoH and DeafBlind people to convey, theorize, and model their own experiences of sound. Furthermore, it is an ethical historical imperative, especially in light of Deaf and HoH erasure, to avoid reproduce a "hearing line" in our interpretations of the sonic. If we desire to decolonize sonic art and sound studies—i.e., to ascertain and counteract its many harms by yielding power to those who have been harmed—then we need to actively acknowledge and disempower the widespread inequities that comprise our scholarship, including by shedding ableist ideologies that impose limited epistemologies of listening defined by hearing culture and enforced by hearing people.

---

[36] For example, the DeafBlind poet John Lee Clark has written about how museum touch tours can enforce a visual hegemony that privileges sight over touch.

Works Cited

Brown, Kate. "I Want to Be Able to Maintain My Clear Voice." *Artnet News*, 15 Dec. 2020, news.artnet.com/art-world/christine-sun-kim-profile-1931118. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Clark, John Lee. "Tactile Art." *Poetry Foundation*, 1 Oct. 2019, poetryfoundation.org/ poetrymagazine/articles/150914/tactile-art. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Eidsheim, Nina Sun. *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice*. Duke UP, 2015.

Eppley, Charles. *Soundsites: Max Neuhaus, Site-Specificity, and the Materiality of Sound as Place*. 2017. Stony Brook University, PhD dissertation.

James, Robin. *The Sonic Episteme: Acoustic Resonance, Neoliberalism, and Biopolitics*. Duke UP, 2019.

Kentz, Christopher. *Writing Deafness: The Hearing Line in Nineteenth Century American Literature*. U of North Carolina P, 2007.

Kim, Christine Sun. "The Enchanting Music of Sign Language." *Youtube*, uploaded by TED, 19 Nov. 2015, youtube.com/watch?v=2Euof4PnjDk. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

---. *(LISTEN)*. 29–30 October 2016, East Village, New York City. Soundwalk and iPad performance.

---. "(LISTEN)." *Avant.org*, 29 Oct. 2016, avant.org/event/listen. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

---. "The Sound of Non-Sounds." *Christine Sun Kim*, 1 Jul. 2021, christinesunkim.com/work/the-sound-of-non-sounds. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Lentjes, Rebecca, et al. "The Ripping Apart of Silence: Sonic Patriarchy and Anti-Abortion Harassment." *Resonance*, vol. 1, no. 4, 2020, pp. 422–42.

Lentjes, Rebecca. "The Sonic Politics of the US Abortion Wars." *American Music*, vol. 39, no.

> 3, 2021, pp. 301–24.

Martin, Allie. "Hearing Change in the Chocolate City: Soundwalking as Black Feminist

> Method." *Sounding Out!*, 5 Aug. 2019, soundstudiesblog.com/2019/08/05/hearing-

> change-in-the-chocolate-city-soundwalking-as-black-feminist-method. Accessed 10

> Oct. 2021.

Neuhaus, Max. "Listen." *Sound by Artists*, edited by Dan Lander and Micah Lexier,

> Blackwood Gallery, 1990, pp. 63–7.

Rice, Carla, Susan D. Dion, and Eliza Chandler. "Decolonizing Disability Through Activist

> Art." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2021, dsq-

> sds.org/article/view/7130/5944. Accessed 10 Oct. 2021.

Sterne, Jonathan. *Diminished Faculties: A Political Phenomenology of Impairment*. Duke UP,

> 2021.

Virdi, Jaipreet. *Hearing Happiness: Deafness Cures in History*. U of Chicago P, 2020.

Charles Eppley received their PhD in art history at Stony Brook University in 2017. They are a hearing person with a non-visual disability. Most recently, they were Research Strategist in the Poetic Justice group at MIT Media Lab and Visiting Assistant Professor of Modern & Contemporary Art at Oberlin College, where they taught courses on sonic art and accessibility. They held research positions in Experiments in Art & Technology at Nokia Bell Labs, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, and are working on a book manuscript on Max Neuhaus, sonic art, and the politics of listening. They regularly do image and sound description access work in the disability arts community.
Email: charleseppley@gmail.com