

Audible evidence: on listening to places

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When Chuck Kleinhans playfully chided Visible Evidence participants in 2005 for “avoiding thinking actively about audio documentary,” he tossed out the following gambit. Not only does audio documentary share many of the same issues and practices of visual documentary, he claims; it also, in some cases, does things better than visual media. His interest, he continues, is in the new worlds of audio production and transmission that have developed in opposition to traditional broadcasting and that serve as alternatives to the Federal Communications Commission’s crushing effect on diversity and local markets. He notes,

“In short, new media changes are in the process of creating a different terrain, one that is amenable to alternative and independent audio.”[1]

What are those things Kleinhans hints at that audio does better than visual media? In the case of **Ghetto Life 101**, for example, the inconspicuous nature of the recording equipment, its ease of use, and its relatively low cost allowed teenagers LeAlan Jones and Loyd Newman to create a compelling, imaginative, and intimate exploration of their Chicago neighborhood — the “view from inside,” Kleinhans calls it (notwithstanding, I would add, the considerable shaping power of producer Dave Isay’s hand in the project). In the case of *Practicing Emptiness*, a Soundprint documentary about women who sell themselves to men, audio alone works best precisely, Kleinhans argues, “because we DON’T see the faces and the narrators blend together” and thus we’re more likely to critique “a general social condition based in the conditions of patriarchy” than to identify with, or become sidetracked by, individual testimonies.[2]

It’s important to be reminded of these and other virtues of audio, particularly within so visually dominated a genre as documentary. Here I take up take up Kleinhans’s invitation to think more carefully about audio documentary, and particularly to ask whether and how audio does things *differently* than visual media. Does one apprehend the world differently through the ear rather than the eye, and if so, how and toward what end? What, in other words, is to be gained by focusing on sound as a subject of investigation? Sound is evidence indeed, but evidence of what? And how might a habit of listening deeply to what Don Ihde calls “the noise and voice of the environment, of the surrounding lifeworld” lead to new forms of documentary expression and alternative habits of perception?[3]

I come to these questions from an interest in both place and documentary, and specifically from efforts to forge an audio documentary practice in upstate New York, where I direct a landscape studies program. By place I mean something far more than coordinates on a map, a point I will return to. Place, to borrow from philosopher Edward Casey, is where things gather, by which he means things “animate and inanimate” — experiences, histories, languages, memories, expectations and disappointments.[4] Landscape, to parse the issue further, refers to the tangible, physical features of earth dreamed over, modified, shaped by and shaping humans. It’s in this material sense that anthropologists speak of landscape as a “meaningful crystallization of place,” a precipitate of social, economic, political, and environmental processes. [5]

My attraction to audio stems in part from the qualities Kleinhans describes: its flexibility, intimacy, and new technologies for broadcast and transmission. But it also stems from sound's extraordinarily haunting properties. Brandon LaBelle opens his Introduction to *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* with a rollicking inventory of sound's effects:

“Sound is intrinsically and unignorablely relational: it emanates, propagates, communicates, vibrates, and agitates; it leaves a body and enters others; it binds and unhinges, harmonizes and traumatizes; it sends the body moving, the mind dreaming, the air oscillating. It seemingly eludes definition, while having profound effect.”

Or, as Steven Connor reminds us, sound is

“intensely corporeal — sound literally moves, shakes, and touches us — and mysteriously immaterial.”

Sound registers throughout the body, even in potentially disfiguring ways, while remaining evanescent, temporal, apprehended as it decays. [6] And it's this duality to which audio documentary might attend more self-consciously.

The questions, then, which I pursue and offer for discussion are these: How do places speak, and how might attention to hearing produce compelling, site-specific work? In trying to listen to places and, moreover, in trying to represent them, I've been drawn to different disciplinary conversations. In this piece I briefly outline Steven Connor's suggestive investigations of sound as something both related to but different from vision, and explore how attention to sound and place studies might reinvigorate documentary practice. I end with a brief foray into an immensely provocative piece by sound/ installation artist Janet Cardiff, made possible by the newly emergent (wireless) technologies Kleinhans references.

Part I: What is auditory experience?

How do we hear the voice of the world in which we participate? In trying to answer this question, Steven Connor turns to a phenomenology of hearing, not to sever it from the other senses, but to foreground sound's fluid, even synaesthetic relation with all modalities of sensing, particularly with the haptic. We hear with our teeth. This startling argument is both literal (think of deaf Beethoven, a stick clenched in his teeth, conducting the vibrations of the keyboard to his mouth; think of Edison, teeth to wooden gramophone, “listening” to fugitive overtones otherwise lost to the ear) and polemical, a way to disrupt a discourse that has privileged the eye over other ways of knowing and sensing, a way to explore an embodied sensing that does not translate so easily into “understanding.” [7]

Connor is the Academic Director of the London Consortium and Professor of Modern Literature and Theory at Birbeck, University of London. His work on sound, influenced by phenomenology and cultural studies, is particularly refreshing for its challenge to an omnioptic discourse that identifies the modern self with emerging “technologies of the eye” since the Renaissance; that conflates knowing with seeing; and that has privileged vision — a distancing, severing “meta-sense” that identifies, measures, fixates, and controls — at the expense of other ways of apprehending the world. [8] Arguing instead that the senses are

“multiply related,” that an “apparently predominating sense is in face being shadowed and interpreted by other, apparently dormant senses,” Connor pushes us to understand the complex and variable “synaesthetic spillings and minglings” the more we concentrate on one sense over another. [9] Nor are such slippages and minglings between the senses of the same kind. Connor pursues differences, for example, between what he calls the “sight-sound” relation and the “sound-touch” relation. The “sight-sound relation,” he suggests, is “largely indexical.”

“The evidence of sight often acts to interpret, fix, limit, and complete the evidence of sound.” [10]

Elsewhere, in pursuing this idea, Connor refers to Rick Altman’s discussion of the role of sound in cinema, whereby an enigmatic, unlocatable sound remains deeply troubling (“marked by doubt and menace”) until sound is synched with source and brought into the realm of the eye. Altman calls this the *sound hermeneutic*,

“Whereby the sound asks where? And the image responds *here!* [11]

By way of contrast the sound-touch relation, he suggests, is mimetic. To hear is to vibrate, with touch doubling or performing sound, feeling it rather than commanding it. [12] Sound in this “sense” is a tactile, physical apprehension located bodily. Wetness, dryness, shape, volume, depth, tightness, looseness, heat, weight — all of these sensations may be delivered through sound. More of a membrane than an ocular point, the listening self is surrounded at all times by sound coming from all sides, moving on and through the body, taken up and completed in radically differing ways by other senses.

Calling sound “intensity without specificity,” something aligned more with feeling than understanding, Connor reminds us of sound’s curious “immaterial corporeality.” Altman’s description of sound as “something that sets matter in motion” reminds us of how sound is produced. A vibrating object (the plucked string of a violin or the vocal folds stretched across the larynx, responding to a flow of air expelled from the lungs) sends air molecules in rapidly moving waves of pressure toward a funneling ear, where they are amplified, directed toward a tympanic membrane, transformed into fluid waves, and ultimately transformed into nerve impulses. [13] Moreover, as Altman reminds us, sound is never singular. The whine of the car passing under my window just now also involves rubber in contact with dry, heavily salted pavement, the muting effects of snow piled along the roadside, the conducting properties of wood-frame houses in the neighborhood, the window panes that rattle in response. Connor writes,

“How something sounds is literally contingent, depending upon what touches or comes into contact with it to generate the sound. We hear, as it were, the event of the thing, not the thing itself.” [14]

Despite hearing the event and not the thing itself, we nevertheless persist in returning sound to its object, thinking of it

“as owned by and emanating essentially from its source, rather than being an accidentally discharge from it.” [15]

With this impulse, Connor argues that an Aristotelian quality of soul is ascribed even to inanimate things. This habit, I would add by way of example, is why Richard Lerman's work is so haunting, his Fence-Border pieces in particular. A filmmaker turned sound artist, Lerman makes field recordings that produce "a sonic sense of place." He attaches piezo discs — small contact microphones — to such found objects as glass, window screens, and bridges as well as to grass and cactus needles, as if to bring all things into audibility, into an animating and animate "voice." Over the years he's attached these small devices to wire fences: at the U.S./Mexico border, at internment camps in California, concentration camps in Germany and Poland, at sites of the disappeared in Argentina, or, as in the sample here, on a barbed-wire fence at Lonquen, Isla de Maipu, Chile, which marks where fifteen *campesinos* were murdered by government authorities.

[Play sample now. [Click here.](#)]

"For me, these fences witnessed events," Lerman claims, thus humanizing the fence by alluding to its "eyes," its powers of "witness." "In "sounding" the fences, in making them "speak," Lerman claims to hope that

"some of what this place/fence has witnessed comes through." [16]

In response to such work, Connor might point out, as he does in another context,

"Precisely because of its default condition of disembodiment, sound may be apt to be thought of in terms of how it clings or stays in contact with what begets it." [17]

Historically, the figure of the telephone gets at this relation between sound and the compensatory illusion of bodily presence. When it first emerged, the telephone, Connor explains, seemed to collapse distance and separation by tying together sounding bodies in real time through the umbilical-like wire between them. Even once imagined as a sort of stethoscope, capable of medical diagnosis, the telephone enabled

"the interior of one body . . . transmitted, almost without mediation, to the inner ear of the listener."

One was both penetrated by the "vocal body of the other," yet "at a distance from it." [18] The experience was not so much that of sound vibrations translated into electrical discharges and back into movement at the other end of the wire as it was the illusion of presence, the voice "stretched out" along the wire, with an attendant remapping of our sense of space and distance. The illusion of bodily presence was only intensified with the advent of the radio, and it continues to be intensified with wireless technologies and their abilities to remap space and distance. (I'll confess that when I listened as a child to Miss Patti Page belting out the "Tennessee Waltz" from the white, Bakelite radio on my nightstand, I had no doubt at all that the miniaturized singer was inside that box. How she got in there was far less problematic to me than the possibility that she wasn't.) It's precisely sound's "capacity to disintegrate and reconfigure space" that Connor suggests is "perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of auditory experience." [20]

I'm afraid I've sorely truncated an elegant and nuanced investigation on Connor's part, so let him have the last word:

"Certainly, the idea of the auditory self provides a way of positing and beginning to experience a subjectivity organized around the principles of openness, responsiveness and acknowledgment of the world rather than violent alienation from it. The auditory self discovers itself in the midst of the world and the manner of its inherence in it, not least because the act of hearing seems to take place in and through the body. The auditory self is an attentive rather than an investigatory self, which takes part in the world rather than taking aim at it. For this reason, the auditory self has been an important part of phenomenology's attempt to redescribe subjectivity in terms of its embodiedness. 'My "self,"' declares Don Ihde, the most enthusiastic of audiophile philosophers, 'is a correlate of the World, and its way of *being-in* that World is a way filled with voice and language. Moreover, this being in the midst of World is such that it permeates the most hidden recesses of my self.'" [21]

As if in recoil from a "rationalized, commodified world," the acoustic experience is framed as

"a principle of rapturous exorbitance, as what goes beyond, or may not be encompassed in the regimes of sight and demonstrability."

This point will be particularly important to remember in the coming discussion of Janet Cardiff. [22]

Part II: On soundscape and place studies

Perhaps no group has spurred on the developing field of sound studies so much as the World Soundscape Project (now the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology) that began in the early 1970s at Simon Fraser University, and which gave us the concept of *soundscape*. For R. Murray Schafer, a Canadian composer who helped found the WSP in 1969, soundscape refers to the total acoustic environment in which one is immersed, a "total field of sound wherever we are." Brandon LaBelle describes it this way:

"From mountaintops to city streets, lakesides to sidewalks, glaciers to small villages, the soundscape is that which exists and of which we are a part, as noisemakers, as listeners, as participants. It locates us within an aurality that is extremely proximate — under our feet and at our fingertips — while expanding out to engage the radically distant and far away . . . The soundscape is all sounds that flow and get carried along in the full body of the sound spectrum, from above and below audibility, as pure energy, molecular movement, in fractions of sonority..." [23]

Largely made up of composers, the WSP and its acolytes have aimed at documenting, interpreting, and preserving various soundscapes, exploring their function as signifying and meaningful systems, as well as gauges of environmental health, and creating from their elements musical compositions that attempt sonically to represent the experience of particular geographies. Unlike the pioneers of *musique concrete*, who sought to sever sound from source and context, soundscape composers focus on the experience of the emplaced body. [24] These expressive pieces oscillate between sound as concrete reference and sound as

meaningful, sonorous, if ambiguous and over-determined, symbols of place and time, mediated by both technology and sensibility.

Steve Peters, for example, over the course of twelve months made 24 hours of recordings in the eastern foothills of the Monzano Mountains southeast of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The 24-hour cycle is thus stretched out and embedded within the organizing cycle of the year. Using small contact microphones (Peters calls them “the sonic equivalent to microscopes”) and other magical devices of recording and amplification, he captured such events as wind whistling through cholla cactus; the shrieking of harvesting ants; the calls and flights of nighthawks, jays, and other beings; stalks of grass blowing fitfully against a wire fence; a passing train — aural evidence of the sentient world. Peters eventually edited down each hour of the 24 to about five minutes and compressed the whole into 74-minutes of CD time, referencing two diurnal cycles. Deliberately “nonmusical,” Peters’ work stands as aural evidence of space and time — traces of daily, seasonal, and yearly cycles. [25]

Of singular importance is his attitude toward such work. As LaBelle notes about the work of acoustic ecology more generally, the work recuperates a dream of “harmonic plenitude” between self and world, but does so by virtue of alienation from what one most longs for. Peters calls his recordings “crude artifacts,” made to “encourage others to slow down, be quiet, and listen deeply to the voices of whatever places they may visit or inhabit.” He has also composed poems from his recordings and etched these onto benches distributed throughout the landscape at the various sites of his listening experiments.

“This project is a record of some of those events etched into plastic or paper and stone, an admittedly crazy but sincere attempt to insert them into one collective memoir,”

he says, describing a project less about “documentation” and more about “memorialization.” Running throughout this work is a river of melancholy, as though proper, deep, ecstatic listening might make us continuous with all time, space, and being:

“It is my hope that they [the benches] can act as bridges across time and consciousness, that someone sitting on them might have an experience similar to mine. ... The act of listening [is] the real work.” [26]

The work also presumes an alienated, modern listener who needs to be restored to sonorous plenitude.

Thanks to acoustic ecologists, we have an expanding vocabulary for talking about sound — as something “information rich,” defining communities spatially (by how far the sound travels, the dominant institutions and bodies contributing to the sound) and temporally (through daily, seasonal cycles and rituals). Thanks to them we now talk about *keynotes*, a musical term referring to the fundamental tonality, or tonal center, to which all other pitches within an environment are related, a sort of drone that functions at a low level, like an electrical hum. Thanks to them we pay closer attention to *sound signals*, or noises that stand out from the ambient background, the figure emerging from ground. Usually designed to convey information, sound signals — like whistles, bells, sirens, horns — are any sound that conveys useful information to the listener, from doors closing to an unexpected footfall to the police bull horn or crack of a rifle. We refer now to *soundmarks*, a term derived from

landmarks, which refers to the capacity for certain, repeatable sounds to result in strong associations built up over the years, associations often personal and deep seated as well as collective, triggers for memory that reanimate the past. Because of their work, we now think of sound's ability to convey an image of what we might call the environmental character of a place. Barry Truax explains,

“The sound arriving at the ear is the analogue of the current state of the physical environment because as the [sound] wave travels, it is charged by each interaction with the environment” — “by topography, the presence or absence of vegetation, prevailing winds and climate, or, if indoors, the reverberant quality of the space. . .” [27]

For these reasons and multiple others (which time prevents me from exploring here), one has much to learn from acoustic ecologists. And yet, despite my indebtedness to and reliance on their work, I find it radically incomplete as a model for audio documentary work on place. Missing, for one thing, is a sustained acknowledgment of the role of stories in producing places, the role of narrative in literally conjuring place into being — *place*, “where things gather.” And so I turn to recent work in cultural geography and anthropology (particularly as informed by literary criticism) for additional approaches.

While acoustic ecology is invested deeply in the real, in notions of place as literal ground, some geographers dare to claim, as Patricia Price does in *Dry Land*, that there is no such thing as “*place qua place*.” For Price and for many others working this vein (including myself), place is a

“layered, shifting reality that is constituted, lived, and contested, in part, through narrative.”

Calling place “a processual, polyvocal, always-becoming entity,” Price notes that

“the same physical site may be dreamed, ignored, appropriated, or simply lived differently by different individuals or groups simultaneously.”

It is “the narratives about people’s places in places [that] continuously materialize the entity we call place,” she claims, a materialization fraught with “conflicts, silences, exclusions,” in which tales are told and retold in ever shifting modes, by differently placed speakers and in ways that destabilize any unitary concept of *what is*. Place, in other words, serves as the *mise en scene* for unfolding acts of conquest and struggle, bondage and freedom, for struggles over what to remember and how, for efforts to forget, and always for an ongoing, tangled, sometimes brutally competing set of narratives about naming and belonging, exclusion and identity. [28]

Few works resist unitary notions about places and how to represent them as intelligently and passionately as Kathleen Stewart’s *A Space on the Side of the Road*, by her own description a “nervous, overstuffed, insistent” account of the coal-mining region of western West Virginia. The “space” in her title refers to the ruined hills and hollers, a space simultaneously emptied out and in-filled by a dense, polyvocal fabulation of memory and desire, which Stewart tracks through the stories, the endlessly proliferating performances, the tellings and retellings of the people who remain. “Space” also refers, among other things, to Stewart’s efforts to open up a new space for representation and cultural critique, a space for the excesses, or “something

more,” of the human voice, and a narrative space that resists the totalizing gesture of unitary explanation, the short-circuiting impulse to get to the “gist of things” or the “quick conclusion.” In Stewart’s hands,

“These [West Virginian] hills — at once occupied, encompassed, exploited, betrayed, and deserted — become a place where the effects of capitalism and modernization pile up on the landscape as the detritus of history, and where the story of 'America' grows dense and unforgettable in re-membered ruins and pieced-together fragments.” [29]

To walk the landscape is to traverse a vast mnemonic field, where history’s effects litter the hills and hollers in tangible if enigmatic traces: the open mouths of the abandoned mines, the junked cars and refuse, the crumbling chimneys, the burned-out vacant lot where Johnny Millsap burned to death, the exposed electric wire that so blasted the body of nine-year-old Buddy Hall it blew a hole through his left his foot. In such luminous fragments and ruins — luminous because of the image that flares up in the moment of re-membering — the past returns in emblems of loss, specters of unrealized possibilities. Thus are landscapes “overstuffed with semiotic significance,” swollen and over-filled with traces of past events to be conjured, remembered, told and retold, a space pregnant with past longings and expectations,

“icons of the things that happen and the people they happen to.” [30]

Earlier, I mentioned landscape as a “meaningful crystallization of place.” It’s also, I suggest, the mediating figure between the two notions of place I’ve attempted to trace here. Its acoustic events, or soundscape, literally orient listeners in time and space, while its physical features serve not only as the backdrop for stories but as stimuli that generate infinitely more stories. [31] For how the field recordings of acoustic ecology and the densely textured, narrated social imaginary of ethnography might work together to produce not only a heightened experience of place but, I suggest, a new form of documentary practice, I turn to a work by Janet Cardiff: *Her Long Black Hair*, a 45-minute audio walk with photographs. The piece was commissioned by New York City’s Public Art Fund, a non-profit organization that sponsors contemporary art projects for the City’s public spaces and neighborhoods. It was developed expressly for Central Park, a two-and-one-half-mile by one-half-mile green space located in the center of Manhattan and arguably the most important public space in the United States. I don’t know that anyone would try to argue for Cardiff as a documentary artist. Nevertheless, the stunning success and the palpable limitations of her Central Park work have something to say to those of us looking for new documentary forms.

Central Park was designed with spectacle in mind. Envisioned in 1857 as a pastoral retreat from the crowded city, it was sculpted as alternative public space out of some 700 acres of largely swampy ground and engineered to embody in three dimensions what 19th century Romantic landscape painting portrayed in two. To do so, City Fathers had first to take possession of the land by eminent domain and drive out some 1,600 German, Irish, and free African-Americans who had built communities there. Laborers dynamited rocky outcrops, drained swamps, and pulled in by horse cart over 500,000 cubic feet of soil from nearby New Jersey. They sunk roads to minimize the disturbance from cross-town traffic, built artificial lakes spanned by graceful bridges, and “choreographed a sequence of prospects and vistas” for the enjoyment of park visitors. Sinuous pathways curved through the park, their uses

determined by social class: a carriage circuit and bridal path for the wealthy, a footpath for the workers and the poor. Not only was the habit of promenading what David Scobey calls “a public ceremony of class affiliation and social responsibility”; it was profoundly tied to the ideological aims of park design: to exercise, as Central Park designer Frederick Law Olmsted wrote,

“a distinctly harmonizing and refining influence upon the most unfortunate and the most lawless classes of the city — an influence favorable to courtesy, self control and temperance.”

The shaping of urban space in general and Central Park in particular, in other words, was yet another element in exercising class discipline over “an unruly democratic polity” deeply fractured along class lines, as Scobey and others have argued. Today Central Park’s 58 miles of pathways throughout 843 acres accommodate some 25 million visitors each year. [33]

It took nearly six years for Cardiff and curator Tom Eccles to settle on Central Park as the appropriate site for Cardiff’s sound piece. *Her Long Black Hair* opened in the summer of 2004, marked only by a kiosk at the park entrance at 59th Street and 6th Avenue known as Artists Gate, where knowing pedestrians could exchange an i.d. for a set of headphones attached to a Discman and, guided by Cardiff’s voice in the headset, follow a flight of steps that drop away from the cacophonous city streets and down into the park below. Cardiff takes the listener along a meandering route, through a variety of settings and spaces, which ostensibly retraces the journey of a mysterious woman in red, with long black hair. At different points along the journey, Cardiff asks the listener to pull out a series of photographs of the woman, framed against different park scenes, and to match these with the current setting. While the device of pondering the photographs grants the journey momentum (Who is she? What has happened to her? Has some crime been committed?), it acts more as a heuristic to enable something else to happen. That “something else” is a powerful encounter with the landscape that forces you to exist in two “places” at once: the literal ambience of Central Park and the deeply interior “headspace” created by Cardiff’s sound script, in which ghostly, aural fragments of past events darkly color, and sometimes coincide with, what you actually see and hear outside the headset.

During the preceding year, Cardiff traced and retraced the route repeatedly, in all seasons and at all times of the day and night, making binaural recordings of different features of the soundscape (thunderstorms, cell-phone users, brass marching bands, a flock of Canadian geese, for instance). These were then rigorously edited and layered into a script composed of instructions, narrative and narrative fragments, historical references, music, and dream-like interjections.

"Sfx horns honking, siren goes by, wet streets."

"It’s just after a rain. The streets are still wet. But I think it’s stopped for a while. It’s loud here, isn’t it. When you’re in a city like New York you have to think of all the sounds like a symphony otherwise you go a bit crazy."

"Sfx horns honking, siren goes by. Collage of whistles, honking, accordion, horse."

"I have some photographs to show you. Take out the first one. No. 1 it says on the top right. It was 1965. Almost 40 years ago. Line up the image to the scene in front of us. It's taken from where we're sitting now. The tree is in blossom. Look at the [T]rump building back then. . . and the women's hats. They're all wearing them."

"Sound of marching band next to you. Then applause."

"Put the picture away. (thunder) I hope it doesn't rain again because I want you to walk with me, to show you some other photos. Get up. Go to the right. Try to walk to the sound of my footsteps so we can stay together. Walk past the statue. . . ."

"Horse goes by to left, whinnying."

"And then down the stairs...all the way to the bottom. There's a woman below talking on a cell phone."

"people come up talking all around you." [34]

The binaural recordings produce an intense, uncanny sensation of three-dimensional space apprehended through the ear. You duck at the sound of thunder overhead, glance in the direction of the accordion, whirl to search out the appearance of the marching band. As you descend into the park, people may or may not be mimicking what you hear in the headphones. You twist to avoid them just the same. Because the soundtrack is so carefully calibrated to what the walker *might* encounter along different portions of the route, one strains to locate visually what one hears. Eye and ear are in startling contest. When the two don't meet, when the eye is unable to locate and legitimize the voice, one is tossed between a palpable experience of time past and ongoing loss. Then there is the shock when virtual and real coincide:

"Keep walking past the children's zoo, through the next tunnel...Go past an ice cream stand on the left[,] then there's a fork in the road here." [35]

Calling this a powerful remaking of public space is an understatement. The effect is to unsettle any naturalized notion of time and sequence, to hear aural traces of the past in the present, and to focus on time as a deeply interiorized, layered, and subjective thing — even while you're surrounded by evidence of its objective effects: the suffocating July heat will turn cold, the throngs of tourists will empty the park, the warm, green ponds will eventually ice over.

Obviously, there is much to discuss here, including the particular effects of binaural recording and the mediating effects of technology more generally. Moreover, despite a formidable ability to reshape our awareness of space (and time) through sound, Cardiff, in my view, touches too lightly, too secondarily, on the social and political dimensions of the site we traverse. But in lieu of a longer discussion, my point is more simply this. The technological revolution to which Kleinhans alludes might be tapped (through downloadable pieces suitable for iPod and other devices) for more immersive, site-specific work, whose success — like Cardiff's piece — will depend upon dis-location, upon troubling the relation between seeing and hearing, and upon inviting new modalities of sensing and understanding.

By shattering the habitual Cardiff stimulates a state of hyperaware presence, inward reverie, and on-going critique. Aren't these laudable goals for audio documentary?

1. All quotations are from the published version of Kleinhans's 2005 Montreal address. See Chuck Kleinhans, "Audio Documentary" A Polemical Introduction for the Visual Studies Crowd." www.ejumpcut.org
2. *ibid.*
3. See Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976).
4. Edward S. Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena," in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996) 24. Casey is quoted in Patricia Price, *Dry Places: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) 12.
5. There is an enormous amount of literature in the last ten years on the concept of landscape. To simplify the discussion I am in this instance resorting to Price for her distilled notion of landscape as both physical terrain and framework for constructing identity. See *Dry Places*, 13.
6. Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2006) vii. Brandon LaBelle studied under Steven Connor and Allen S. Weiss at the London Consortium. See Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth: Touching Hearing," *Hearing Cultures*, ed. Veit Erlmann (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 157.
7. "Edison's Teeth," 168. For an exploration of the contest between hearing and seeing, see Steven Connor, "Sound and the Self," *Hearing History: A Reader*, ed. Mark Smith (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004) 61.
8. "Sound and Self," *passim*.
9. "Edison's Teeth," 153.
10. "Edison's Teeth," 154.
11. "Sound and Self," 61.
12. "Edison's Teeth," 154.
13. "Something that sets matter in motion" comes from Rick Altman, "Material Heterogeneity of Recorded Sound," *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, ed. Rick Altman (New York: Routledge, 1992) 17.
14. "Edison's Teeth," 157.
15. "Edison's Teeth."
16. Lerman's comments on his work may be found at his website: <http://www.west.asu.edu/rlerman/>. Discussion of the Fence-Border pieces ("For me, these fences witnessed events...") occurs in an interview with Lerman: <http://www.seattleweekly.com/arts/0613/lermanqa.php>. Sound clip comes from Richard Lerman, *Within Earreach: Sonic Journeys* (Artifact Recordings, 1994).
17. "Edison's Teeth," 157.
18. "Sound and Self," 56.
20. "Sound and Self," 58.
21. "Sound and Self," 65.
22. "Sound and Self," 64.
23. For more about the World Soundscape Project, go to www.sfu.ca/~truax/wsp. For more about the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, see

<http://interact.uoregon.edu/medialit/wfae/home/index.html>.

R. Murray Schaefer is generally credited with coining the term soundscape, which he has defined many times over the years. See his landmark volume, the *Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Destiny Books, 1977), originally published as *The Tuning of the World* (Knopf, 1977). Brandon LaBelle's definition may be found in *Background Noise*, 202.

24. LaBelle offers a particularly sensitive critique of the acoustic ecology project in *Background Noise*, 195-218.
25. All quotations and descriptions come from Steve Peters, *Here-ings: A Sonic Geohistory* (La Alameda Press, 2002). For more about Peters, see: <http://steve-peters.blogspot.com/>.
26. "Here-ings."
27. For this section on vocabulary, I have ruthlessly raided Barry Traux's excellent chapter, "The Acoustic Community" in his seminal work, *Acoustic Communication* (Ablex Publishing, 2003).
28. Acknowledging the enormous (and enormously unwieldy) body of work on place and place studies, Price nevertheless does a fine job of compressing some of the most recently influential literature on the subject into a short but highly useful chapter, "Place Visions," in *Dry Place* cited earlier. All quotations come from this chapter.
29. All quotations from Kathleen Stewart, *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an 'Other' America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).
30. *A Space on the Side of the Road*, 38.
31. For an insightful elaboration of this idea, see Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton, *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories* (John Wiley & Sons, 1998).
32. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, *Her Long Black Hair*, audio walk with photographs, 46 minutes. Curated by Tom Eccles for the Public Art Fund, Central Park, New York, USA. (2004).
33. All quotations from David Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Temple University, 2006).
34. Portions of the script may be found in Mirjam Schaub, *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book* (Verlag Der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, Book and CD version, 2006). See p. 52.
35. Janet Cardiff, 58.

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