

PETER SZENDY

*THE AESTHETICS OF
ESPIONAGE*

ALL EARS

Translated by Roland Végső

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESS)) NEW YORK)) 2017

Discipline and Listen

Before the Wiretap

Spies listen. Of course, they also look in order to keep watch over things. But an important part of their activities involves listening. As Chia Lin, one of the commentators of *The Art of War*, writes: "An army without secret agents is exactly like a man without eyes or ears."¹

Spies, therefore, are usually listening. They are, above all, attentive listeners to what is afoot. They are hearing devices deployed to capture what is coming or what is hiding, or what is secretly coming. Espionage, thus, appears to be one of the oldest known practices of listening to the world or of the auscultation of the world.

At the same time, however, isn't there an urge toward spying in every listening? Does not listening always participate in a work of *intelligence*, as one says in English?

If it should turn out to be the case that listening and espionage inextricably implicated each other in their respective histories, it would become difficult to keep count of, to determine the number of, or to circumscribe the actions and passions of spies, these remarkable listeners, in the Bible or elsewhere.

Even without raising possible issues of translation, it should be clear that, no matter how thorough it might be, a mere survey of the literal occurrences of the terms that designate and reveal them in plain sight ("spy," "secret agent," "rat" or "snitch," "sycophant," "informer," "snoop," "spook," etc.) would not suffice to flush out all the moles with "big ears" hiding in the tunnels of all the different texts and archives. Could we go as far as thinking, for example, that the very first listeners, Adam and Eve, were not far from adopting the role of spies when, after having sinned by tasting the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," they hide and seem to listen anxiously for the "sound" of the footsteps (or the voice, according to some other versions) of the Eternal who walks in the garden at the fall of night? (Gen. 3:8).² The first human listening—Edenic or Adamic audition—is in any case, using Roland Barthes's words from an essay that we will have to reread here, oriented "to certain indices."³

I can, of course, only dream and speculate about these first fantastic and phantasmatic ears. However, an intelligence operation with the code name *écoute* properly conducted through etymological networks provides me with a whole number of other reasons for speculation.⁴

In 1694, the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* gave the following definition for the verb *escouter*: "to hear with attention, to lend an ear in order to hear." Strangely enough, however, the noun *escoute* does not refer to the simple and neutral action corresponding to this verb. It means: "place from which one listens *without being seen*" (emphasis added). Listening, in its French history at least, must have first meant the posts and outposts where one hides in order to catch what is being said. Or, by way of an adjectival apposition, it must have named the ones who practice auditory surveillance: In fact, the same dictionary mentions that a *sœur escoute* is "the nun given as an assistant to someone who goes

to the parlor in order to hear [*escouter*] what is being said in the conversation."

These old related meanings, that undeniably turn listening into an affair of spies, have maintained themselves in their ramifications until much later to the exclusion of all others. The article on "Listening" in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* laconically states only the following: "This is what they call in architecture the latticed galleries in public schools where people retire *who do not want to be seen*." And the big *Larousse* of the mid-nineteenth century, after citing the previous definition by the Academy, indicates still other similar usages that appear to bring listening even closer to an activity of intelligence:

A closed place in a convent, from which one can follow the service without seeing or being seen.

Military. Small mineshaft from which one can hear if the enemy miner is working or advancing. // Guards placed in these tunnels to follow the progress of the enemy's work.

Without a doubt, in its French etymology, listening must have first been an affair of moles.

Overhearing and Diaphony

Sur écoute: as they say it in French, written as two separate words, of someone—a politician, a criminal, an undesirable or too nosy journalist—who is put under surveillance, who is being spied upon. *Mettre* or *placer sur écoute* means to have someone's phone tapped.

But, written as one word, the neologism *surécoute* could be understood as an intensification of listening, as its hyperbolic form, taken to incandescence, to its most extreme and most

active point. In short, *surécoute* as a synonym for auditory hyperesthesia, a superlative super-listening.⁵

Furthermore, *surécoute* appears to be a literal calque of the wonderful English expression *overhearing*.⁶

To *overhear*: an activity that many of Shakespeare's characters, for example, indulge in. They spy on each other. They open their ears to hear something far or close that is always at the distance of a secret.⁷ In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Oberon declares that he is invisible and that he will "overhear" a conversation (2.1.561). But it is in *Hamlet* above all that we are invited to a grand staging of overhearing as a form of auditory indiscretion.

The motif is announced by the first words of the ghost: "Mark me," he tells Hamlet before revealing to him that "the whole ear of Denmark/Is by a forged process of my death/Rankly abused" (1.5.773-75). The father's ghost—who, by the way, died because of the poison that was poured "in the porches of [his] ears"—demands to be heard by his son. This means that he wants to be literally marked or remarked: "Mark me" (1.5.734). The same verb, the same verbal mark will designate later the way Polonius intends to survey Hamlet's behavior in Ophelia's presence: He tells the queen and the king to "mark the encounter" (2.2.1266). It is as "lawful espials," "seeing, [yet] unseen," that they prepare to overhear the conversation of the unhappy lovers (3.1.1719-20).

But since the exchange did not produce any convincing clues, Polonius proposes that this time, after the play within the play, Hamlet should be left alone with his mother so that he will reveal himself to her: "POLONIUS: And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear/Of all their conference" (3.1.1876). Meanwhile, during the play that the actors put on at Hamlet's demand, the latter charges Horatio with surveying the reactions of the usurper who killed his father: "Observe mine

uncle" (3.2.1959). Thus, we who are watching the play within the play (whose title is *The Mousetrap*) are also about to see a spectator (Horatio) in the process of spying on another character, the king. The *mise en abyme* of observation matches here the structure of narrative framing: the surveillance of the royal audience member trapped by this theater within the theater is preceded by the encounter between Hamlet and Ophelia (themselves surveyed by Polonius and the king), and is followed by the conversation between Hamlet and the queen (which is also being overheard).

In fact, Polonius tells the king who has lost his composure while witnessing the representation of his crime:

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; . . .
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. . . . (3.3.2307-13)

Listening "of vantage," listening by redoubling the listening of another, also means (as the English version suggests) to hear more and better: its additional *advantage* is that it is in a position "of vantage." At the same time, it also means to hear *in advance*, like a spy who positions himself at the outpost or the advance-guard of what is happening in order to *prevent* what is coming. In this sense, according to an apparent paradox, overhearing, as an excessive listening that adds itself by way of a surfeit, concerns also immediately a *prehearing*: As in the case of the spies of Jericho, we are dealing with an auditory prevention of what is happening.

In short, *Hamlet* could be inscribed into the infinite collection of spy stories. That is to say, stories about *moles*, according

to the name given to the ghost when he descends under the stage to repeat in the form of an echo the words of his son. "Ghost cries under the stage," the stage directions state right before Hamlet, emphasizing the ubiquity of the paternal specter ("Hic et ubique?"), addresses him in the following terms: "Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast? / A worthy pioneer!" (1.5.915-16). The ghost, like the other characters of *Hamlet*, appears to be a watchman in the underground tunnels of the text: Just like a listening guard (as it was defined by the *Larousse* dictionary in the nineteenth century), he is a pioneer, a soldier who is digging in order to overhear what is going on.

Several opera characters also participate in the act of overhearing.

This is what Monostatos does in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* when he hides himself in order to hear what the Queen of the Night and her daughter, Pamina, talk about (II, 8): "Ha! We must overhear [*belauschen*] that from a distance." This is what Cherubino does in *The Marriage of Figaro* when he finds himself obliged to retire behind a chair so that he will not be seen by the Count and, therefore, witnesses the scene when the latter tries to seduce Susanna (I, 6).

I will lend an attentive ear to these spying characters, these overhearers, who present themselves to us, the audience, who in turn listen to them during the performance of the opera. I will try to capture what the music gives us to understand of their listening: namely, of their actions or passions as listeners, but also of their places or positions within the work when they are listening. So much so that, just as in *Hamlet* and the situation described by Du Mu, once again there will be a surfeit of ears, a surplus of the web of listening.

Overhearing, then, appears to name or evoke a certain proliferating polyphony of listening: multiple *lines of listening*—in the sense of telephone lines—that are connected, redouble

themselves, interfere with each other, and sometimes get blurred. The English word *overhearing* does share this technical or technological connotation: In the field of telecommunication, it designates what in French is called *diaphonie*, namely a defect in transmission caused by the transfer of a signal, channel, or a line onto another. A superposition of voices, the interference of another, secondary line with the primary one. When we hear strange voices from another conversation over the phone or when some alien music interferes with a recording.

Listening, overhearing, interference, diaphony: In this linguistic Babel, in this maze of archives where I am searching for the word, the watchword, the keyword in order to name what promises to be a campaign of intelligence concerning the patent or latent relations between listening and power, I find myself at a crossroads where several paths open up which I will follow one after the other like a detective. Or sometimes simultaneously, dispatching several agents at the same time.

In its properly musical history, the word *diaphonia*, after having been assigned the meaning of "dissonance" by ancient Greek theoreticians (in opposition to *symphonia* as "consonance"), had been used in medieval treatises since the ninth century as a synonym for "polyphony." On the one hand, therefore, following this path, trying to hear in *overhearing* something like an *auditory diaphony*, our task would be to examine what a dissonant listening could be. Not the hearing of a dissonance, of a musical object awaiting some resolution in consonance, but a listening that is itself affected by *diaphonia*. That is to say, listening according to (at least) two "voices," redoubled and split in the hollow of my ears.

On the other hand, translating *overhearing* as *surécoute*, our task would be to lend an ear to the multiple resonances

of this invented word in the silent ambiguity of its written form. A blank space, a pause, an interruption in its transmission could always separate its prefix from its root or base. But when we say of someone that he is *sur écoute*, in two words, this expression usually implies the interposition of a technological apparatus for the purposes of interception and, often, recording. *Être (mis) sur écoute* does not simply mean being listened to in secret with “naked ears,” as Polonius, Monostatos, or Cherubino does. Overhearing as *surécoute* is inseparable from the presence of tele-technologies of listening that not only allow for a potentially infinite distance between listener and the one being listened to but are also most often tied to a phonographic archiving instrument.

These are the two traits that James Joyce brought together in one of the main characters of *Finnegans Wake*: Earwicker. The name itself functions as a kind of smashup of “wicked,” “earwig,” and “earwiggling.” Joyce writes: “Earwicker, that patternmind, that paradigmatic ear, receptoretentive as his of Dionysius.”⁸ Earwicker, as we can see, is equipped with a faculty of reception *and* retention thanks to which he can compile a “long list . . . of all abusive names he was called.”⁹ Earwicker the spy could, then, serve as an emblem of this overhearing in which reception from a distance is also immediately a form of archival retention.

A Small History of Big Ears (Toward the Panacousticon)

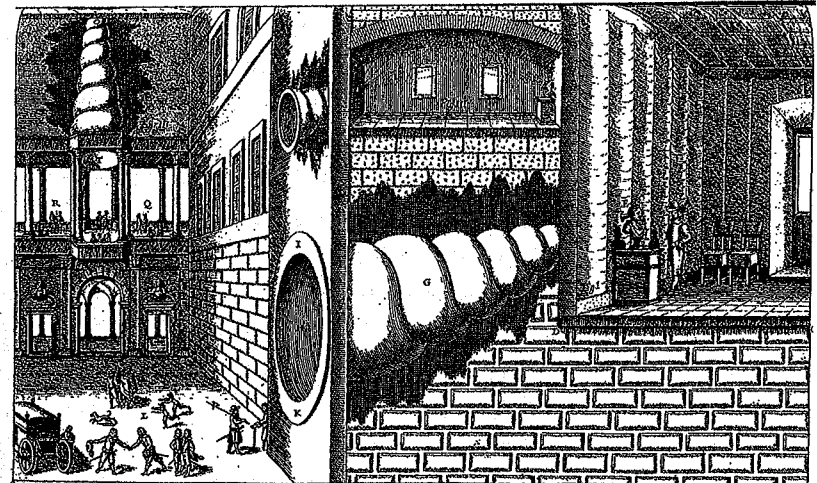
Earwicker’s history would be a long one, a vast genealogy whose long branches reach into the present. I recall here only a few of its singular moments.

First of all, as Joyce himself suggests with his passing reference to Dionysus, there is an ancient “big ear” known as “The Ear of Dionysus” described by many travelers who had visited Syracuse.¹⁰ Around 1780, in his travel journals from Sic-

ily, Swinburne speaks of “a groove or a channel, which served, as is supposed, to collect the sounds that rose from the speakers below, and to convey them to a pipe in a small double cell above, where they were heard with the greatest distinctness.”¹¹ Having carefully examined this space, Swinburne has no doubt about its purpose: It has been “constructed intentionally for a prison, and a listening place.”¹²

A century before Swinburne, the Jesuit father Athanasius Kircher, in his *Musurgia universalis*, mentions Dionysus the Tyrant’s mythical grotto as the first example of what he calls “echotechtonics” (an architecture of echoes) used for the purposes of auditory surveillance.¹³ He also describes artificially constructed versions: no longer natural crevices but palaces and all kinds of buildings.¹⁴

In these buildings where speech and its secret capture are constructed simultaneously, conforming to the French etymology, the rooms or chambers devoted to *overhearing* would certainly deserve the name *écoutes*. We should mention that



(*Musurgia universalis*, t. II, p. 305)

they are located above, at a height. The spying ears dwell in the attic or the eaves (hence the English term “eavesdropping”). We are reminded of the strange and gripping story by Italo Calvino, “A King Listens,” in which architectural vocabulary and the physiological description of the ear are deliberately blended: “The palace is all whorls, lobes: it is a great ear, whose anatomy and architecture trade names and functions: pavilions, ducts, shell, labyrinths. You are crouched at the bottom, in the innermost zone of the palace-ear, of your own ear; the palace is the ear of the king.”¹⁵ A list from which no doubt nothing is missing in order to complete this *architect-aural* vocabulary but the “oval window” through which the “vestibule” communicates with the middle ear.

These architectural devices, grottos, and palaces are in a certain sense the precursors in the acoustic domain of the apparatuses of surveillance that Michel Foucault called *panoptic*, borrowing a term from Jeremy Bentham’s plan for an *Inspection-House* in 1787.¹⁶

Regardless of its exact function (prison, hospital, corrections house, or even school), the building conceived according to Bentham’s plans must allow for the total and incessant visibility of its occupants: “Ideal perfection” would be achieved if “each person” could be “under the eyes” of his or her observer(s) “during every instant of time.”¹⁷ Since such a condition cannot be realized in practice, Bentham proposes that we make sure that every inmate, “seeing reason to believe as much, and not being able to satisfy himself to the contrary,” should at least imagine (“conceive”) that he is the object of uninterrupted vigilance.

Bentham’s panoptic plan, as it is presented in the second letter for the scenario of a penitentiary, consists of a circular building: the position of the observer occupies its center, while the prison cells are located on the circumference sepa-

rated from each other by the radii of the circle. In order to make sure that none of the prisoners isolated in this manner from the others will know for sure if he is in fact being watched or not, the overall plan is carefully supplemented by an apparatus that Foucault described in the following way:

In order to make the presence or absence of the inspector unverifiable, so that the prisoners, in their cells, cannot even see a shadow, Bentham envisaged not only venetian blinds on the windows of the central observation hall, but, on the inside, partitions that intersected the hall at right angles and, in order to pass from one quarter to the other, not doors but zig-zag openings; for the slightest noise, a gleam of light, a brightness in a half-opened door would betray the presence of the guardian. The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen.¹⁸

What matters for me here is that this visual architecture, this all-seeing machine, goes hand in hand with the possibility (that Bentham envisages without truly developing) of an apparatus that we could call *panacoustic*. On two separate occasions, in the tenth and the twenty-first letters, Bentham evokes the voice and the ear. The first time around, we are dealing with the transmission of voice as an instance of authority:

To save the troublesome exertion of voice that might otherwise be necessary, and to prevent one prisoner from knowing that the inspector was occupied by another prisoner at a distance, a small tin tube might reach from each cell to the inspector’s lodge. . . . By means of this implement, the slightest whisper of the one might be heard by

the other. . . . With regard to instruction, . . . in all cases where directions, given verbally and at a distance, are sufficient, these tubes will be found of use. They will save, on the one hand, the exertion of voice it would require, on the part of the instructor, to communicate instruction to the workmen without quitting his central station in the lodge; and, on the other, the confusion which would ensue if different instructors or persons in the lodge were calling to the cells at the same time. And, in the case of hospitals, the quiet that may be insured by this little contrivance, trifling as it may seem at first sight, affords an additional advantage.¹⁹

What Bentham imagines here as an addition or a supplementary accessory to his Panopticon is a simultaneously pandirectional and selective megaphone of sorts: a Panacousticon that facilitates communication and transmission between observer and observed in the context of efficiently organized labor.

The second time, however, when hearing is evoked (in the final letter devoted to schools), Bentham is trying to distinguish the principle of the Panopticon from that of the ancient and outdated "ear of Dionysus":

I hope no critic of more learning than candour will do an inspection-house so much injustice as to compare it to *Dionysius' ear*. The object of that contrivance was to know what prisoners said without their suspecting any such thing. The object of the inspection principle is directly the reverse: it is to make them not only *suspect*, but be *assured*, that whatever they do is known, even though that should not be the case. Detection is the object of the first: *prevention*, that of the latter. In the former case the ruling person is a spy; in the latter he is a monitor. The object of the first

was to pry into the secret recesses of the heart; the latter, confining its attention to *overt acts*, leaves thoughts and fancies to their proper *ordinary*, the court *above*.²⁰

This way, the Panopticon with its potential panacoustic supplement is simultaneously more and less than the ear of Dionysus: more, because here surveillance is potentially permanent; less, because it is seemingly not aimed at the intimate secrets of its occupants.

Bentham's Panopticon as well as his Panacousticon, however, appear to be inscribed in the history of espionage, if we consider the fact that, paradoxically, the word used to distinguish them from spying (namely, the term "monitor") has turned out to be astonishingly premonitory, if I may say so. In English as well as in French, a *monitor* is of course primarily an instructor, a guide, or a trainer. But with time the word has also come to designate, due to our technological development, a surveillance device or an information system (for example, a "cardiac monitor" or a "control monitor"). It is not unthinkable that, in modern espionage, access to latent secrets becomes indistinguishable from the observation of patent actions like the ones that Bentham described. So much so that the distinction between spy and monitor becomes fragile if not impossible.

Foucault noticed the possibility of a panacoustic extension of Bentham's plan and commented on it in a footnote: "In his first version of the *Panopticon*, Bentham had also imagined an acoustic surveillance, operated by means of pipes leading from the cells to the central tower. In the *Postscript*, he abandoned the idea, perhaps because he could not introduce into it the principle of dissymmetry and prevent the prisoners from hearing the inspector as well as the inspector hearing them."²¹ Foucault, however, overlooks the fact that with these

steel pipes Bentham was not aiming for surveillance but rather for communication between the different orders. On the one hand, it is of course undeniable that Bentham would have had trouble trying to acoustically insulate these pipes and render them one-directional the way he could have done for the visual sunbeams by means of venetian blinds and partitions. On the other hand, however, as Kircher's engravings also demonstrate, the power of the propagation and infiltration of sound has never prevented the development of an "echotechtonics" of listening.

What, then, is at stake in the difference between hearing and seeing with regard to the necessary dissymmetry implied by intelligence understood as the acquisition or detection of a secret in general?

Before lending an ear to what the Orpheus myth could give us to understand of a certain impossible reversion, reversibility, or reciprocity, I will restrict myself here to two remarks, two clues:

1. For Bentham's plan, the problematic horizon of surveillance—whether it is auditory or visual—consists of the loopback of the apparatus over itself. It is, in fact, important for Bentham that the prisoners should be protected by their own permanent visibility, that is to say, by general transparency. So the Panopticon is conceived in such a way that the agents of surveillance are themselves put under surveillance through the inclusion of every potential visitor in the system of inspections. It is as if the necessity of a structural dissymmetry in the circulation of looks and gazes (and listening) infinitely deferred closure, the dream of a closed circuit, by incessantly injecting a surplus of eyes (and ears): in the end, what Bentham calls the "grand com-

mittee of the public" could be nothing but the *différance* of and in reciprocal pansurveillance.²²

2. I cannot help but think here of what Freud defined, alongside the so-called "primal scene" (which is essentially of a visual or scopic nature), as a "phantasy of listening."²³ Discussing a patient who regularly believed to have heard a noise when she was in bed with her lover (she imagined that she was under surveillance or being overheard), Freud comments: "Such noises are on the contrary an indispensable part of the phantasy of listening, and they reproduce *either* the sounds which betray parental intercourse *or* those by which the listening child fears to betray itself."²⁴ *Either/or*: The phantasy of listening threatens in both directions. Its danger radiates from two sides: toward the scene of discovery but also toward the listener. This slight dissymmetry with regard to seeing, that is to say, this lesser protection of listening as the secret place of spying, could it have something to do with a significant lexical lacuna: namely, that the word *voyeur* appears to have no auditory equivalent?

Mastery and Metrics in Figaro

In May 1786, one year before the publication of Bentham's plans for an *Inspection-House*, the Viennese court opera staged the premiere of *The Marriage of Figaro*. But the opera became truly successful only after it was performed in Prague in December. Mozart, by the way, alluded to this success the following year in *Don Giovanni*, when Leporello, listening to the musicians play Figaro's famous aria (*Non più andrai*), exclaims: "I know this piece only too well."

Don Giovanni, as I have tried to show elsewhere, is a great opera about the ear: We listen to characters who themselves

listen and, thereby, represent us other listeners on the stage and embody for us *types* of hearing.²⁵ This is also true for *The Marriage of Figaro*, where everyone regularly lends an ear. But unlike in *Don Giovanni*, which opposes to each other two attitudes of listening (the distracted Don Juan does not want to listen to the Commendatore and the law of his “structural” or total listening), we witness here an infinite series of variations on the same single situation: that of overhearing.

In act 1, in the recitative of the fourth scene, Susanna and Marcellina listen to each other and secretly observe each other (Marcellina: “I’ll pretend not to see her”; Susanna: “She is talking about me”). In the sixth scene, Cherubino hides behind a chair when the Count arrives and hears all of his words addressed to Susanna. In the seventh scene, not wanting to be seen by Basilio, this time it is the Count who hides behind the same chair, while Cherubino (who managed to jump unobserved to the other side of the chair) is covered by Susanna with a dress: This way there will be now *two* of them who overhear her conversation with Basilio. In the end, the Count emerges from his hiding place and reveals himself for a *terzetto*, at the conclusion of which he accidentally lifts the robe and discovers Cherubino. Hence the following exchange: “Count (to Susanna): ‘My God! Then he heard everything I was saying to you!’ Cherubino: ‘I tried as hard as I could not to hear!’”

In short, in *The Marriage of Figaro*, everyone is spying on everyone else, thereby forming a network of receivers and auditory relays whose complexity defies analysis. The madness of this day (“la folle journée,” according to the subtitle of Beaumarchais’s play that inspired Mozart’s librettist, Da Ponte) might be primarily the result of a general embroilment in overhearing. This is exactly where the political content of the opera is concentrated: in its ceaselessly varied

exposure of listening as overhearing, which is to say, as a will to mastery.

Many have commented on the supposed tempering of the (pre)revolutionary content of Beaumarchais’s play as it was adapted by Da Ponte for Mozart. In fact, the *Mémoires* of the Italian librettist have no doubt contributed to the belief in this attenuation in response to Joseph II’s censorship, especially passages such as the following, which relates his conversation with the emperor:

In conversation with me one day in this connection, [Mozart] asked me whether I could easily make an opera from a comedy by Beaumarchais—*Le Mariage de Figaro*. I liked the suggestion very much, and promised him to write one. But there was a very great difficulty to overcome. A few days previous, the Emperor had forbidden the company at the German theater to perform that comedy, which was too licentious, he thought, for a self-respecting audience. How then propose it to him for an opera? . . . I set to work, accordingly, and as fast as I wrote the words, Mozart set them to music. In six weeks everything was in order. . . . Seizing that opportunity, I went, without saying a word to a living person, to offer *Figaro* to the Emperor:

“What?” he said. . . . “This *Mariage de Figaro*—I have just forbidden the German troupe to use it!”

“Yes, Sire,” I rejoined, “but I was writing an opera, and not a comedy. I had to omit many scenes and to cut others quite considerably. I have omitted or cut anything that might offend good taste or public decency at a performance over which the Sovereign Majesty might preside.”²⁶

It is true that Da Ponte’s version eliminates several of the scenes that were the most subversive in relation to the social

order of the Ancien Régime. For instance, in the third scene of act 5, in which Napoleon later claimed to have heard “the whole Revolution,” Figaro declares the following: “You think that because you are a great lord you are a great genius! Nobility, wealth, rank, high positions, such things make a man proud. But what did you ever do to earn them? Chose your parents carefully, that’s all.”²⁷ Even if such retorts did in fact disappear from the opera, the latter nevertheless does contain additions in relation to the theatrical piece, among which a *dance lesson* given by Figaro should not be underestimated when it comes to the reversal of values. This cavatina (act 1, scene 2) not only attributes to Figaro a speech that comes fairly close to being an insult to the Count, but above all it also employs a code of choreographic figures that, more so than words, destabilizes established hierarchies.

We listen to Figaro as he is alone in the nuptial chamber rearranging it. He appears to be dreaming of revenge against his master, whose intentions with Susanna are now known to him. The cavatina opens with the famous aria *Se vuol ballare*: “If you would dance, my pretty Count, / I’ll play the tune on my little guitar. / If you will come to my dancing school / I’ll gladly teach you the capriole.” Figaro’s words are accompanied here by the rhythm of a minuet: a dance of noble and ceremonial nature, that a thinker like Johann Georg Sulzer, in the same period, incidentally associated with “assemblages of persons who distinguish themselves by a fine manner of living.”²⁸ But before too long the minuet turns into a contredanse that culminates with Figaro swearing to “turn all of [the Count’s] schemes inside out” (*tutte le macchine rovescierò*).

Mozart is playing here in a consistent manner with, on the one hand, the code of court dances inherited from the baroque, such the minuet and, on the other hand, the contredanse, which, imported from England toward the end of the seventeenth century, occupied a singular position in the cho-

reographic landscape before the French Revolution. Unlike the minuet, the contredanse does not have a fixed rhythmic structure. It subverts earlier customs by presenting itself as what we could call “a dance without dance,” indifferent to the codes characteristic of the Ancien Régime.²⁹ The contredanse, which is practiced in *dance halls* rather than at the court or in salons, is not the typical expression of singular individuals: It is essentially a dance of *groups* that does not put the emphasis on the steps and movements linked to some coded affect but rather on the *figures* through which the couples are brought together and separated from each other in the midst of a large gathering.³⁰

The *Encyclopédie méthodique*, published by Étienne Framéry in 1791, clearly recognized this revolutionary social dimension that contredanse ended up acquiring: In the entry devoted to it, Framéry derives its name from the English expression “country dance” and recalls that the number of participants is not fixed. As a result, he writes, this dance breaks with the “amour-propre” that motivated the old minuet, a dance performed theatrically by a couple for an audience, in order to express on the contrary “a sentiment of joy” that increases in proportion to the number of dancers and needs no audience at all.

These are the implications of the cavatina in which Figaro, in a sort of waking dream, leads his master from the dignified nobility of the minuet toward the excessive revolutionary contredanse of the masses.

But the subversive dimension of Mozartian writing does not limit itself to this generic manipulation of dance codes. Against the background of this choreographic feature, what carries the political resonances of the opera over to the tiniest details of its musical texture is the inscription of *mastery* into *measure* and *metrics*.

Thus, immediately after the overture, Figaro and Susanna's duettino (act 1, scene 1) stages a genuine operation of musical geometry. Figaro opens this first duet by singing *misurando* (according to the instructions of the score). Of course, it is his nuptial chamber that he surveys by measuring its space step by step, with movements of increasing amplitude. He counts: "Five . . . ten . . . twenty . . . thirty . . . thirty-six . . . forty-three," and the dimensions that he measures grow right in front of our eyes until they coincide with those of the room. While he is singing his measurements (*cinque, dieci, venti, . . .*), his vocal line, in the increasing intervals that it describes, transposes and literally follows the ascending progression of numbers. Listening to the opening of *The Marriage of Figaro*, we hear a sonorous space open up and delimit itself. It is this space that Figaro surveys and exposes step by step with his voice.

Based on this measurement, the musical plot begins to unfold with the recitative that follows. "What are you measuring, my dearest Figaro?" Susanna asks. And she peremptorily tells him that she won't stay in this room lent to them by the Count. In order to understand Susanna's mistrust, we have to first listen to the second duettino that follows almost immediately.

Figaro sings first. He insists that the location of the room, *situated between the Count and Countess's rooms*, is most practical: "If perchance Madame / should call you at night / ding ding: in two steps / from here you'd be there. / And then when the time comes / that my master wants me, / dong dong: in three bounds / I am ready to serve him." *Due passi, tre salti*. As we can see, this second duet is also introduced by reference to *steps* and *bounds* that cover a certain space. Musically, Figaro's vocal line is delimited in its amplitude by these *markers*, the sounds of the Countess's or the Count's bells (*ding ding, dong dong*, sung high and low, respectively). To put it

differently, the same way that the rooms of the masters frame the servants' nuptial chamber, in this passage these bells provide the *frame* for Figaro's song, its lower and upper limits.

These are the same vocal markers that Susanna takes up in the next part of the duet in order to turn them into the frontiers of a musical space into which she can introduce her doubts: "Likewise some morning / the dear little Count, / ding ding: may send you / some three miles away, / ding, ding, dong dong: the devil may / send him to my door, / and behold, in three bounds . . ." In an admirable variation on Figaro's previous couplets (playing with a marvelous subtlety on the displacements and dissymmetries of sharp feminine bell sounds in relation to those of a masculine and grave threat), Susanna turns these physical as well as sonorous spaces into something uncertain and troubling: The proximity of a few steps could hide the distance of miles, and the comfortable bounds of the servant become the diabolical leaps of the master.

It is the following recitative that drives this point home: After having told Figaro to listen and keep quiet, Susanna informs him that the Count intends to take advantage of his "feudal right" with her in spite of the fact that he had already abolished this right. This threat that hovers over the servant couple is so much more imminent since their room is located between the rooms of the masters, exactly like their vocal space is circumscribed by the sounds of the bells that they must heed.

The space—both musical and theatrical—occupied by the servants is, thus, potentially a space of auditory tele-surveillance. If they can easily hear the bells, then the masters can also hear, perceive, or overhear them.³¹

As we can see (or hear), Mozart appears to have displaced the political content of Beaumarchais's play *to the interior of the music*. As such, it is inside the auditory spaces of the work that musical *measure* recasts the relations of *mastery*.

The Ages of Fear

Figaro, Susanna, the Count, the Countess, Cherubino. . . . All of them listen. All of them overhear. While listening to them, in my turn, I ask myself: What is the age of their ears, this age that appears to be simultaneously so close yet so distant from those of Bentham's inspectors?

Cherubino is a young page, while the Count appears to be an old rogue. But the age of the characters, as narrated to us by the libretto, is of little consequence. I would rather situate them, the bearers of these fictive ears that are nevertheless so present to mine, I would like to inscribe them into an archaeological stratigraphy, into a genealogy of listening beginning with what Nietzsche described as "the longest human age there has ever been," that of the fright of the hiding prey.³²

The age of fear—the first age of listening, its long childhood. Its primitive stratum that, far from fading away, will be simply covered over by other subsequently deposited layers that can't prevent it from reemerging later. Thus, Nietzsche's claim that music is "an art of night and twilight" could be understood as saying that music retains something of this archaic fear despite the different stratifications that come between them.³³

This fright, this primary terror should not be attributed to the passivity of the primitive ear as Adorno tended to believe.³⁴ To put it differently, it is not because the ear does not have lids that it is reduced to being merely a simple exposure, a pure panicky opening to everything that happens to it: This archaic listening, the archi-listening, if it exists, cannot be either a zero degree or a threat from which a more sophisticated listening would have to protect itself in order to be able to construct itself. To the contrary, it is even possible that fear is in a sense the very power of all listening worthy of

the name inasmuch as it is already (at least potentially) over-hearing.

If Figaro, Susanna, and the others are distinguished listeners, if their ears embody in an exemplary fashion this hyperbolic intensity of listening sustained and woven by the most extreme attention, it is exactly because the age of fear lives on or survives in them. Following Nietzsche, we could say that the extent of the development of their listening is measured by the degree of fear that dwells in them and haunts them.

Roland Barthes seems to share the same position in his 1976 essay titled "Listening." The text primarily presents itself as an attempt at otological dating that tries to establish distinctions among the different ears that succeeded each other throughout the ages: "Along the scale of living beings . . . and throughout human history, listening's object . . . varies or has varied. Therefore, simplifying to the extreme, we shall propose three types of listening."³⁵ The chronological character of this typology is absolutely clear, even though a later type never annuls nor simply replaces an earlier form. We have to uncover here the stratification of successive forms of listening:

According to the first, a living being orients its hearing . . . to certain *indices*; on this level nothing distinguishes animal from man: the wolf listens for a (possible) noise of its prey, the hare for a (possible) noise of its hunter, the child and the lover for the approaching footsteps which might be the mother's or the beloved's. This first listening might be called an *alert*. The second is a *deciphering*, what the ear tries to intercept are certain *signs*. Here, no doubt, begins the human: I listen the way I read, i.e., according to certain codes.³⁶

If Barthes's first listening is quite close to Nietzsche's age of fear, if it resembles an archaic overhearing ("alert" implies watchfulness), the second listening is a form of decryption. As far as the third kind is concerned ("whose approach is entirely modern," as Barthes writes, also adding that this "does not mean that it supplants the other two"), it seems to bring about a spiraling return to the origins, unless it is simply the breakthrough of the primitive stratum toward the secondary layer. Indeed, this third listening "does not aim at—or await—certain determined, classified signs":

First of all, whereas for centuries listening could be defined as an intentional act of audition (to listen is to *want* to hear, in all conscience), today it is granted the power (and virtually the function) of playing over unknown spaces: . . . There is a disintegration of the Law which prescribes direct, unique listening; by definition, listening was *applied*; today we ask listening to *release*; we thereby return, but at another loop of the historical spiral to the conception of a *panic* listening.³⁷

In three steps, in three movements, Barthes's otology, his discourse on the genealogy of the ear, comes to resemble a *spiral of fear*.

Following Barthes, I am thus tempted to think that the ears of Figaro, Susanna, and the others are also carried away by a helicoid movement in this stratified succession where the panic of the first listening turns and returns.

When Barthes speaks in the first place of grasping "the function of listening" by the notion of territory, when he suggests that it is simultaneously "defensive and predatory" because of its inscription into a "space of security," Figaro and Susanna are already present.³⁸ I find them with their ears devoted to the "capture of the fleeting index," to the "bewil-

dered expectation of the irregular noise which will disturb our aural comfort, the security of the house."³⁹

From this listening "on the alert," this archaic overhearing, Barthes's oto-archaeology moves to another kind "linked . . . to a hermeneutics" that aims to decode "what is obscure, blurred, or mute." This passage, evolution, or leap takes place through the invention of rhythm: "By rhythm . . . listening ceases to be a purely supervisory activity" in order to pose its object in the form of a "sign," in order to enter the symbolic order.⁴⁰ Figaro and Susanna, the Count and the Countess are themselves big children who, beyond the obsessive fear of their reciprocal surveillance, all represent themselves in their comings and goings, separation and closeness (*fort-da*) according to the codes of a rhythmical game: a dance or a choreography. It is through dancing their songs or by singing their dances that they measure or take measure of what they *signify* for each other. By becoming a minuet, a march, or a contredanse, the Count's walks, his steps, his movements cease to be simply threats of interruption and inscribe themselves into a system of signs that need to be interpreted and decrypted.

Finally, the characters of *Figaro* could be considered the contemporaries of the third age of the ear as it was described by Barthes (this "modern listening [that] no longer quite resembles what has here been called *listening to indices* and *listening to signs*"), at least to the degree that their roles, their positions as listeners tend to lose all their fixity.⁴¹ Trying to describe what he believes to be possible to identify as a third kind of listening, Barthes writes: "There is no longer, on one side, someone who speaks, gives himself away, confesses, and, on the other, someone who listens, keeps silent, judges, and sanctions."⁴² On the contrary, everyone listens and is listened to by turns and even at the same time.

Nevertheless, to draw the conclusion based on this that "a free listening" (that is to say, "a listening which circulates,

which permutates, which disaggregates, by its mobility, the fixed network of the rules of speech") would announce itself here is not a step I am prepared to make.⁴³ Neither in the company of the protagonists of *Figaro*, nor anywhere else. Despite all the arduous work that Mozart performs to undermine the hierarchies of the Ancien Régime, there is nothing in *Figaro's* treatment of listening that would authorize us to envision the coming of the age of this liberated intersubjectivity that Barthes seems to talk about.⁴⁴ There is nothing that would allow us to imagine the latter as anything but a naïve utopia. In order to grasp *Figaro's*, *Susanna's*, and the others' ears, Barthes's triple stratigraphy remains, without a doubt, insufficient. It remains so even if it manages to crack open the perspective of a listening that "compels the subject to renounce his 'inwardness,'" and in many ways opens up the path toward a deconstruction of the classic auditory apparatus.⁴⁵

Perhaps we should turn here to what Deleuze, in one of his final texts, laconically identified as a possible extension of Foucault's analysis of surveillance.⁴⁶ Whereas Barthes seems to have postulated the horizon of an emancipation toward which the "dispersion" and the "shimmering" of listening disengaged from its traditional "modes" ("those of the believer, the disciple, and the patient") could or should converge,⁴⁷ Deleuze proposes to analyze the breakdown of the "sites of confinement" as a new regime of surveillance, as the transformation of "disciplinary societies" into "control societies":

Foucault associated *disciplinary societies* with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; they reach their apogee at the beginning of the twentieth century. They operate by organizing major sites of confinement. . . . But Foucault also knew how short-lived this model was. . . . But discipline would in its turn begin to break down as new forces

moved slowly into place, then made rapid advances after the Second World War: we were no longer in disciplinary societies, we were leaving them behind. . . . *Control societies* are taking over from disciplinary societies.⁴⁸

These "sites of confinement" or "interiors," as Deleuze enumerates them further on ("prisons, hospitals, factories, schools, the family"), form a list that recalls, on the one hand, Barthes's "old modes of listening" and, on the other hand, the fields of application that Bentham imagined for his panoptic and panacoustic project. With the "general breakdown" amid the "death throes" of these institutions, a web of new spaces opens up that Deleuze calls "controls": "Confinements are *molds*, different moldings, while controls are a *modulation*, like a self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next, or like a sieve whose mesh varies from one point to another."⁴⁹

While the surveillance of disciplinary interiors implied the conformation of the individual as part of the masses in reference to a stable point or a center, controls operate through incessant and infinite adjustments between a web and what it captures. Perhaps a recent film provides the most compelling image of this situation: in *Enemy of the State* (directed by Tony Scott), we see as it were the mobile grid of the hunting net, the incessant transformation of the network that, through observation satellites, permanently maps the movements of the fugitive. It is as if the map adapted to every change of the territory.

Are we still talking about *Figaro*, *Susanna*, and the others? Perhaps. We'll see.

When *Figaro's* or *Susanna's* melodic line is temporarily framed by the sounds of the Count's or the Countess's virtual bells, isn't that as if they found themselves for a while in the

field of a control monitor? Or even better: as if their singing movements were performed within the bandwidth of a microphone that, by capturing them, also determines their possible range? In the musical world of *Figaro*, the omnipresence of reciprocal overhearing appears to have as a consequence that, at every moment, reception (as a kind of recording *avant la lettre*) defines the possible registers of vocal movements.

But the frames of this microphonics, which weaves the musical texture according to bandwidths, displace themselves from one moment to another. They dislocate and readjust themselves following the flux and establish its positions that are, therefore, essentially *fluctuating*. This is why, beyond the plot and the theatrical apparatus that represent the *disciplinary* space of the nuptial chamber of the servants framed by those of the masters, musical space dissolves characters into a series of melodic or rhythmic parameters that reciprocally modulate each other and turns them into a flux of data articulated by instable relations of *control*.⁵⁰

No doubt, it is time to forget Figaro, Susanna, and the others. To forget them, however, means to let them become music, to allow them to lose their traits and their individual silhouettes, and to dissolve them in the rhythmic or melodic texture of the flux that, carrying them, ceaselessly constitutes and destitutes them. What are they if not floating points or lines of flotation that compose, in the space of a few measures, a possible listening in the form of control or reciprocal overhearing? A listening at work in the work, a listening (in the primary sense of the French *écoute* as a “place from which one listens without being seen”) inscribed in and prescribed by this architecture of notes, like a sort of bubble or an enclave in which the auditory equivalent of a *point of view* would stabilize and establish itself even if only for a brief moment.

These points or places that anticipate the listener that I am—that precede me and inscribe me in advance into the work when I overhear its characters who themselves listen—are to a certain degree similar to what the history of perspective construed as the place of the spectator or the position of the subject. Such an analogy, however, risks freezing the music into a tableau that presents itself according to stable lines of flight. How can we think, then, what we are tempted to call *points of listening*, if such things exist at all?⁵¹ Following Bentham, should we conceive them based on the panoptic model of a *turning perspective*, a panoramic movement that could be that of a surveillance camera?⁵² Or, rather, should we imagine them, following Deleuze, as a network or a web of perpetually modulated sensors with variable resolutions?

Telelistening and Telesurveillance

It appears that in the writings of the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler we can see for the first time the outlines of what would become the dominant model for listening to classical music in the twentieth century: *structural listening*, to use Adorno's expression.⁵³

This ideal, which also involves a practice of musical interpretation, is what Furtwängler calls, in a number of his texts, *Fernhören*. The latter is often translated as “distant hearing,” although it would be more appropriate and more economical to translate it into French as *téléécoute*, as “telelistening.”

But what are we talking about?

Furtwängler explains himself in an essay on Bach that appeared in 1951:

Here concentration on the moment linked with an unheard-of expansiveness is the immediate fulfillment of the moment

coupled with the truly sovereign view that encompasses the whole. With its alert feeling for what is close and far at the same time, with its unconstrained fulfillment of the here and now and a perpetual underground alert feeling [*unterirdisch-wachen Gefühl*] for the structure, the flow of the whole, with its "close experience" [*Nah-Erleben*] as well as its "distant hearing" [*Fernhören*], Bach's music offers us an example of biological and natural power like nothing else in music.⁵⁴

To whom or to what does Furtwängler attribute this listening at a distance, this telelistening that he describes in terms of panoptic surveillance (as a "truly sovereign view that encompasses the whole")? To *music itself*, to Bach's music, since that is what the possessive construction of the last sentence obviously refers to ("with . . . its 'distant hearing,' Bach's music"). Hence, in the listening of music that is in question here, we must hear not only the objective but, and this is what really counts for me, also a subjective genitive: Even before being listened to by someone, even before becoming an object of an empirical listening, music itself listens and even listens to itself, according to its distant listening, this telelistening that would be *its own*.⁵⁵ Thus, discussing the listening of this music, Furtwängler is essentially saying that it is listened to at a distance and it telelistens to *itself*. This means that a kind of listening or overhearing must already be at play in it, even before some determinate listener would lend it an ear.

Furtwängler borrowed the idea or ideal of this *Fernhören*, which is opposed to the simple succession of musical moments the same way that the underground structure is opposed to the sonic surface (or like the totality is opposed to the detail), from the theoretical works of the musicologist Heinrich Schenker. He explicitly acknowledged this debt in an homage to Schenker written in 1947:

What Schenker places at the center of all his observations is the concept of *long-range hearing* [*Fernhören*] in music. . . . Long-range hearing, i.e. hearing applied over great spans to fundamental relationships that often spread across many pages, characterizes for Schenker great classical German music. This is the reason Schenker began again and again with this classical music, referred to it again and again, and never grew tired of demonstrating its organic superiority [*ihre organische Überlegenheit*] to what is considered music today. . . . In fact, the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements of which music is ultimately composed are remarkably more simple in a Beethoven symphony than in a jazz composition. The decisive difference lies in only one thing: in jazz, *long-range hearing* is absent [*im Jazz fehlt das Fernhören*]. The intricacies exist for the moment in which they sound. The totality runs its course like a path through a dense jungle, where from right and left even new nuances, rhythms, creeping growths of all kinds approach us; then suddenly it is at an end and we simply step out of the jungle into the open again. In a Beethoven symphony, on the other hand, the first measure refers to the fifth, eighth, twentieth, thirtieth, even to measures up to the final cadence; and so it goes throughout the whole composition. The individual measure is simple, but the relationship among the measures, among the themes—the hundredfold correspondences and variations, intensifications and diminutions that are the result of this most ingenious *long-range hearing*—produces a mass of complications which, correctly comprehended, surpasses all that jazz has to offer, in the same way that a living organism, as a product of nature, infinitely surpasses every man-made machine in inner complexity. And herein lies the central point of Schenkerian perceptions: they are biological in nature and will make a place for themselves more and

more as we learn to apply the perceptions of modern biology everywhere they must be applied, and that is, above all, in art.⁵⁶

I considered it necessary to quote this text at length because it has a lot to say about what we could call a *politics of listening*. It is pointless, I believe, to point out the implications of what a reference to the biology of art could have had in 1947 (not to mention the metaphor of the “jungle” of jazz worthy of even worse discourses on “degenerate music”).⁵⁷ What strikes me in this text that for the first time elevates telelistening to the level of a guiding concept (which, in many respects, Adorno merely paraphrased when he spoke about “structural listening”) is that it blurs the distinction between Barthes’s first and second forms of listening. Cultivated musical listening, which is in fact a deciphering of signs and codes, appears to be—as the example of the primitive jazz jungle shows—always on the point of plunging back into the age of fear: the primitive level of alert overhearing and the surveillance at a distance between the predator and the prey. And if the “great classical music” appears to be sheltered and protected from this fear, it is perhaps only to the degree that it internalizes the threat, to the degree that it turns the distance involved in listening into its *internal* affair. The fear masters itself in and by the organic panacoustics of telelistening.

Between the superficial details that I was supposed to capture from one moment to the other and the totality of the structure that I would have to survey (which means to keep an eye on it by having an eye for the whole), what place would this idea or vision of musical listening reserve for me? Where within the work does it situate or localize the listener that I am?

In the diary that he kept between the years 1927 and 1942, Furtwängler recorded the following few sentences: “*For the reproductive artist: Every work carries within it its own ‘distance,’ from which one must consider it. To discover this distance and act accordingly is the principal duty of the performer.*”⁵⁸ If, *mutatis mutandis*, we were to replace the performer or player with the listener, this distance that Furtwängler speaks about would become, *for listening as well*, an internal affair: It is according to the distance prescribed by the work and inscribed in it, it is according to this internal distance that displaces the work from itself in itself that I am supposed to interpret, decrypt, or decode it (in short, to hear and understand it according to Barthes’s second form of listening). Moreover, Furtwängler appears to say that this distance is one (he uses the singular form of the word) and measurable (the performer should find it). So much so that, without necessarily reducing it to a fixed point, following the example of visual perspective, Furtwängler nevertheless appears to postulate a line or a stable space for this displacement from which I can consider the work. Or even better: from which, in a sense, it considers itself, through me, by telelistening to itself at a distance from itself.

To put it differently, like Bentham’s panoptic plans, the system of self-surveillance in the work seems to want to close in on itself: The one who listens and controls, like the one who watches and inspects, will find himself under surveillance by the structure of an apparatus that functions as a *closed circuit*. In other words, like the Panopticon that integrates all of its potential visitors into its own operations, the musical work according to Furtwängler appears to inscribe in advance, to catch and capture in advance in the grid of its web everything that happens and is to come, assigning it a place and a displacement that is immediately measured. This is why, in the

end, according to Furtwängler's ideal of telelistening *the work overhears itself* in and through the place of the listener that it situates at the right distance.

However, this is not the case for jazz because, as Furtwängler suggests, it lacks the structure of telelistening. It lacks the notion of a work precisely in the sense of a closed apparatus or a closed circuit. Does this mean that in relation to the collective improvisation that constitutes jazz the listener that I am would no longer have an assignable place? That there would no longer be a stable position that I could (be made to) take up? To put it differently: What happens to my listening in jazz? What does it become in this primitive jungle where my ears find themselves assailed from all sides?

I am tempted to grant some relevance to Furtwängler's extended metaphors despite their ominous character during a time when the fascist and national socialist condemnations of jazz have barely been silenced.⁵⁹ In its unheard-of and unprecedented emergence, in its tracing of tracks and paths, improvisation resembles a hunt and the improvisator a hunter. As Julio Cortázar put it so nicely in a short story inspired by Charlie Parker, during improvisation the soloist pursued "what was trying to escape him while he was chasing it."⁶⁰ Hence, for the listener that I am, for me who follows and pursues the pursuer tracking its fugitive musical prey, does not listening to jazz resemble primitive overhearing, the perked-up ears on alert eagerly watching for the clues and traces that emerge in the course of the chase?⁶¹ In short, it seems that there where the work and the horizon of its telelistening are absent (where the cohesive relations are missing that, inscribed in the *closure* of the work, would allow us to hear its structure independently from the jungle of details), there is no panoptic or panacoustic apparatus that could assign me a reassuring point of listening. As the one following it, to a

certain degree, I myself am also dragged into the musical hunt played by the improviser.

It is, therefore, tempting to imagine that I am a kind of spy or secret voyeur. That I can hear the cries and calls of the hounds in their chase, which I can enjoy with a mixture of fear and impunity. A secret enjoyment that some musicians were capable of turning into the primary object of their art—like Robin Rimbaud, a British DJ, who, using a long-range radio receiver, hijacks, mixes, and remixes conversations that he captures in midair on cell phones. This artist, who chose for his pseudonym the name of his acoustic spying device (he signs his albums as *Scanner*), describes his own music as "voyeuristic" and describes it by deliberately using cinematic analogies: "I think that scanning sounds is similar to mapping a city. The opening scene of Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* gives us a quite correct representation of my work: the camera flies over the city and, as it covers the space, we hear people's conversations."⁶²

The image of this mobile point from which the auditory map of what can be heard unfolds is quite seductive. Furthermore, it appears to lend itself especially well to giving an account of an ear attentive to the flood of an improvisation that ceaselessly composes and recomposes itself, like a scenery that unfolds for a bird's-eye view or like a territory that discloses itself only to the degree that one explores it.

But relying too much on this image would risk abusing the cinematographic analogy, since nothing whatsoever suggests that listening would organize itself around a *point of view*—even if it is mobile, even if it is in movement or in flight.

We have to ask if there is or if there could be, similarly to this point of view, something like a *point of listening*. This is the question that Michel Chion raises in his examination of representations of listening in cinema.⁶³ He shows that what is

conventionally called "primary identification" does not exist for listening as it is carried over to the screen. This means that, even if the eyes of the spectator always adopt the point of view of the camera, this is not true for the ears of the listener:

Even when the microphone is visible onscreen . . . , nothing especially makes us hear *through* that microphone. . . . Sometimes we even get a strangely contradictory effect between seeing the mic and hearing what we hear, which does not seem to be coming from that one visible source. This feeling is even clearer on set for TV, where . . . it's hard to accept that we are hearing "through" these little cylinders stuck on their lapels and sweaters.⁶⁴

However, it does not follow from Chion's analysis that there is no such thing as a point of listening in cinema or elsewhere. Rather, contrary to the point of view, this point of listening is not structurally and stably inscribed in or given by the very apparatus of representation.

A Secret Conversation

Francis Ford Coppola masterfully staged the implications of this difference in his 1974 film, *The Conversation*, a great cinematic classic of surveillance that was shot in the context of the Watergate scandal.

The protagonist is Harry Caul (played by Gene Hackman), a private detective of sorts who specializes in auditory surveillance. In the epilogue of the film, after returning to his apartment, Harry begins to play his tenor saxophone. He improvises to a jazz record that he plays on his phonograph. In this way he adds his own part to that of the saxophone

player who is already featured on the record. All of a sudden, as he is absorbed in this dreamy polylogue with these ghostly musicians, he receives a phone call. He turns down the volume on the record player, gets up, and picks up the phone: "Hello," he repeats twice, slowly with suspicion, but there is no response. We can hear only an indistinct noise at the other end of the line. Harry, visibly troubled, returns to his seat and begins to play along with the record that is still turning, as the camera lingers for a moment on the telephone. But in a few moments, Harry receives a second call. This time around, he lets it ring a bit longer before he picks it up again (meanwhile the record stops running). "Hello," he says, as we hear the sound of a tape rewinding. "Hello?" The voice of a man responds in a threatening tone: "We know that you know, Mr. Caul. For your own sake, do not get involved any further. We'll be listening to you." As if the threat had an immediate performative effect, Harry then hears a recording of his own improvisation that he had just played with the record.

Thus, Harry knows that from this moment on he himself—who spent his life listening to others—is being listened to. We, then, see him dismantle his apartment room by room, methodically and professionally, with a certain contented despair: He goes over everything with a fine-tooth comb, from the wallpaper to the flooring, board by board . . . But it is no use: Exhausted, not having found the microphone whose presence he suspected, Harry sits down wearily in the midst of the debris of his apartment and begins to play his saxophone.

Was it a coincidence that he could not find that cursed microphone? Is it possible that this experienced sleuth, this professional mole, was once in his life outsmarted and proven to be incompetent and incapable?

We have every reason to believe that the answer to this question is no, that it is not his fault at all, since the microphone remains for him *structurally* out of reach.

Why?

In a remarkable study devoted to surveillance in cinema, Thomas Levin has proposed a clever hypothesis to explain why Harry, despite all his efforts, could not under any circumstance find the device that surveyed him. The device remains impossible to find within the field of this scene, because it can be located in a displaced form in the movements of the camera itself:

But it is right “there” in the film’s final sequence, an extended high-angle shot, that slowly surveys the extent of the futile damage. Beginning in an empty corner, it pans slowly and methodically to the left until it captures the broken, saxophone-playing man, and then continues on past him until, having hit another corner, it suddenly and somewhat jerkily reverses itself and pans back, and then back again.⁶⁵

The *form* of this shot, Levin concludes, its mechanical movement that consists of panoramic shots in opposing directions, plays the role of the surveillance device that Harry was desperately looking for. Its location is in another space, in another dimension, which is not that of the (diegetic) story but that of the technique of narration:

But where “is” this thing located? It can’t be “in” his apartment since the veteran expert would have long since discovered it: indeed Harry will never find the surveillant device because it resides in a space that is epistemologically unavailable to him within the diegesis: surveillance has become *the condition of the narration itself*. In other words,

the locus of surveillance has thus shifted, imperceptibly but decidedly, away from the space of the story, to the very condition of possibility of that story. Surveillance here has become the formal signature of the film’s narration.⁶⁶

Levin’s analysis certainly illuminates the visual structure of this scene by situating it in a fascinating history of surveillance in cinema. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the spying device that motivates Harry’s auto-perquisition in his own apartment is not a camera but a microphone. To put it differently, even if we consider that Harry is in fact filmed from the *point of view* of a surveillance camera (that he cannot by definition find because it is the very device that makes him exist as a character in the film), we have not yet said anything about the ungraspable and nonlocalizable nature of the *point of listening* that escapes him.

So I turn around, rewind the tape, and I replay the beginning of the scene.

When after his return home he begins to play his saxophone to relax, Harry does not yet know that he is under surveillance. He listens distractedly to the record that he uses as a background for his own improvisation, which adds a countersong to this recording. For the spectator as well as the listener, there is here what Michel Chion called “embedded listening.”⁶⁷ Not unlike the operatic scenes that present to us, who listen to them, characters who are themselves listening.

But when a few moments later Harry hears through the telephone a recording of what he has just improvised over his record, when he therefore understands that he himself is being listened to, this shocking surprise at the end of the film freezes the blood in our veins; this horrible fall hurls the still reassuring and controllable figure of embedding into a truly bottomless abyss. The point is no longer simply that the

musician spy finds himself spied upon. Harry now listens to himself on the telephone as having been recorded while he was himself listening to the record. He, therefore, is listening to himself as himself being part of this spectral space of phonography, this layered thickness in which he is now taken up and included. The realization that he is an object of listening is as if Harry were sinking and descending into the phonogram that accompanied him, as if his phrases from a moment ago had been swallowed up by the ghostly archive. Under the cover of the auditory surveillance whose object he has become, the listening of Harry (his listening but also mine, who is listening to him) appears to plunge or fall even further into the depths of sound.

So what happens here to the forms of listening that were hurled into this bottomless abyss?

Just like in *Figaro*, I find myself before a general embroilment in overhearing that I will try to describe as best as I can.

As I watch and listen to the film, I hear that Harry is being listened to as he is listening to the record that accompanies him. Or rather, I hear Harry who hears over the phone that he is being listened to, that he is being archived, as he is listening to the phonogram. Even before he begins to search the walls and the floor to find the possible microphone, he had been already expected, heard, spied upon by this watchful recording that now seems to swallow him up. But, along with Harry, I myself am swallowed by this descent into the abyss where sound appears to hollow itself out by *absorbing listening*: The same way that Harry is now included among the ghostly musicians of the record, I could also be listened to as I am listening to him, *seized* by this hidden auditory gramophony.

The result (a striking or, more precisely, a *seizing* effect) is a complete loss of anchoring. As if the distinction between surface and depth had become impossible to find, as if there

were no longer a waterline for my ears. The masterly use of the soundtrack brings this out even further: While I see Harry sitting in the middle of the debris, as if through the lens of a surveillance camera, I hear the bifurcated or divided superimposition of his improvisations with the saxophone over one of the recurrent motifs of the film played on the piano. Nothing brings together, nothing harmonizes these two musical themes that, although simultaneous, remain strangers to each other, incommensurable, caught between an inside and an outside: between what Harry plays as a character *within* the story and the melody played on the piano that, in a certain sense, voices a narrative agency *outside* the story.

In the schism of this divided soundtrack, my listening trembles and loses its foothold: As I follow Harry simultaneously listening and being listened to, I am not seeing a substitute for myself, a representation that would consequently confirm my position of listening as a stable place. Contrary to what the movement of the camera shows, the *diegetic dissonance* of the two melodies (which do not *see eye to eye*) make me understand that “the place of the king” does not exist for me as a listener: My position is not a “truly sovereign view that encompasses the whole,” as Furtwängler put it.⁶⁸ On the contrary, I am in an almost unbearable instable in-between—I vacillate.

This position that is, therefore, not one, that floats between an inside and outside rather than being *posed* somewhere, this place without place is similar to what becomes of Harry at the end of the film, namely a *double agent*. He works for and against the company that is employing him as a detective: He spies on its behalf; he records private conversations for them; but while doing all this, he discovers some criminal activities that he was not supposed to know about.⁶⁹ Similarly, in a certain sense my own listening is working for the

subject that I am, the subject who sees and oversees and aims for a panacoustic mastery from the distance of an external sovereignty outside of the music or outside of the plot. But my listening also works with the characters that I follow precisely *against* this subject, since it exposes me to what surprises and destitutes me in my superior position in order to engulf me in sound.

In short, what *The Conversation* whispers to me is that, in relation to music or sound, there is no stable or stabilized point of listening fixed in a panacoustic edifice. There are only moving strata, only the sand in which we sink into the depths—even if it is true that the illusion of a Panacousticon is always ready to reemerge, as Furtwängler's telelistening shows. This is the *image* that is created when an alert listening is congealed into a "view that encompasses the whole." And the exclusion of jazz is one of its symptoms.

Underground Passage: The Mole in Its Burrow

Often, when I am all ears, on the alert, carefully lending an ear, I tell myself that *I am a listening*.¹ As if, while I am listening and give myself over to listening, I belonged to it: I am the listening that I am performing, and perhaps I am nothing but this listening, since my whole existence, every fiber of my being seems to converge in this single, unique, absorbing action or passion: opening my ears.

But this apparent gathering of myself in the most acute auditory attention should not conceal another possible figure for what I am when I am a listening, another figure that is more underground, more archaic, and more deeply burrowed. A *listener*, according to the archaic meaning of the French word *une écoute* that I managed to flush out in our old dictionaries, is a guard stationed in a mining tunnel charged with monitoring the progression, the development of the enemy miner's work.

Which is to say that when I am a listening, I am also and perhaps above all a mole.

Kafka's unfinished short story "The Burrow" gives voice to exactly such a mole.² Of course, there is nothing in Kafka's text that would allow us to determine precisely what kind of

Entrance: *The Spies of Jericho*

1. See "Les grandes oreilles de Tony Blair: La polémique sur les écoutes visant Kofi Annan," *Libération*, February 28–29, 2004.
2. Duncan Campbell, *Surveillance électronique planétaire* (Paris: Allia, 2001).
3. H. Keith Melton, *The Ultimate Spy Book* (New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1996).
4. *Ibid.*, no page number.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 18.
8. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 145–46.
9. *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
10. [Translator's note: The semantic ambiguity of the French expression *s'écouter* will be very important for Szendy's argument. The most common usage refers to the way something should be listened to. But the reflexive pronoun opens up other possibilities as well: On the one hand, in a particular context it could mean that several people *listen to each other*; on the other hand, it can also mean that someone is *listening to himself or herself*.]
11. In this sense, the *double agent* would be a figure of what Jacques Derrida calls *autoimmunity* (in "Faith and Knowledge" as well as in *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*). In a different context and in different terms, the saxophonist Wayne Shorter seems to be speaking of the same self-protection against the force of sound, inasmuch as it is in advance listened to and anticipated in improvisation, when he declares: "sound is something that you have to fight against. It is *your own enemy*." See François-René Simon, "Le Monde selon Wayne," *Jazz Magazine* 544 (January 2004), emphasis added. See Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason," in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 42–101; and Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

12. Quoted by Jean Lévi in his commentary on *The Art of War*. See Sun Tzu, *L'Art de la guerre*, trans. Jean Lévi (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2000), 295, emphasis added.

Discipline and Listen

1. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 149.
2. This is what my friend Gil Anidjar (who by the way devoted a few beautiful pages to listening to spectral voices in Jewish mysticism) whispered to me one day, not without some malice. See Gil Anidjar, "Our Place in al-Andalus": *Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab Jewish Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
3. Roland Barthes, "Listening," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 245.
4. For these etymologies of the French word *écoute*, I will also refer to Jean Lauxerois's article "À bon entendeur': Petite note sur l'écoute structurelle," *Circuit* 14, no. 1 (2003): 87–102.
5. Freud defines this auditory hyperesthesia as "an oversensitiveness to noise—a symptom which is undoubtedly to be explained by the innate intimate relationship between auditory impressions and fright." Sigmund Freud, "On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description 'Anxiety Neurosis,'" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1962), 3:92.
6. [Translator's note: In the rest of the text, the expression *surécoute* (in all its forms) will be consistently translated as "overhearing." Since in the rest of the book the English term "overhearing" will appear only when it is a translation of *surécoute*, the reader will always be able to hear in the background the counterpoint of Szendy's neologism.]
7. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines "overhear" as "hear as eavesdropper or as unperceived or unintentional listener."
8. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Penguin, 1976), 70.
9. *Ibid.*, 71.

10. *Lorecchio di Dionigi*, as it is called in Italian, is a sort of cave (an old quarry located in the *Parco Archeologico* of Syracuse) whose popular name appears to have come from Caravaggio who, when he visited it in 1586, compared its entrance to a human ear. See Dörte Zbikowski, "The Listening Ear: Phenomena of Acoustic Surveillance," in *CTRL [Space]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ed. Thomas Levin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 37.
11. Henry Swinburne, *Travels in the Two Sicilies, in the Years 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780* (London: T. Cadell & P. Elmsky, 1790), 105.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis* (Rome, 1650), 2:291.
14. Dörte Zbikowski mentions other examples of what she calls "whispering galleries": St. Paul's Cathedral in London; the old Hall of Representatives of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.; and the Agrigento Cathedral in Sicily. Deploring the lack of reliable sources on this subject, she also cites a source according to which Catherine de' Medici supposedly had installed a similar listening device in the walls of the Louvre at the time of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. She suggests that the expression "the walls have ears" might have had its origins here. See Zbikowski, "Listening Ear," 38, 41.
15. Italo Calvino, *Under the Jaguar Sun*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1990), 38.
16. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995). The full title of Bentham's plans, published in the form of letters, is the following: *Panopticon; or, The inspection-house: containing the idea of a new principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment, in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection*.
17. Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings* (New York: Verso, 2011), 34.
18. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201–2. See also the French version of Bentham's work translated by Étienne Dumont under the title *Mémoire sur un nouveau principe pour construire des maisons d'inspection, et nommément des maisons de force* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2002), 12–13. The original version was read to the National Assembly and was published with an introductory letter by the author in 1791.
19. Bentham, *Panopticon Writings*, 36–37.
20. *Ibid.*, 94.
21. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 317.
22. See Bentham's sixth letter as well as Dumont's French version: "One of the great collateral advantages of this plan is that it places the deputy inspectors, the subalterns of all kinds, under the same inspection as the prisoners: nothing can pass among them that is not seen by the chief inspector. In ordinary prisons, a prisoner hurt by his guards has no means to appeal to the humanity of his superiors. If he is ignored or oppressed, he must suffer. But in the Panopticon, the eye of the master is everywhere. There is no subaltern tyranny possible here, no secret humiliations. . . . Furthermore, the curious public, travellers, the friends and parents of the prisoners, the acquaintances of the inspector and other prison officers who, all motivated by different reasons, will come to increase the force of the salutary principle of surveillance and will inspect the chiefs like the chiefs inspect all their subordinates. This grand committee of the public will perfect all the establishments that will be submitted to its vigilance and penetrating inspection." Dumont, *Mémoire sur un nouveau principe*, 14–16.
23. Sigmund Freud, "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psycho-Analytic Theory of the Disease," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1961), 14:269.
24. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
25. Peter Szendy, *Listen: A History of Our Ears*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).
26. Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Memoirs*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott (New York: New York Review of Books, 2000), 129–30.
27. Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Figaro Trilogy: The Barber of Seville, The Marriage of Figaro, The Guilty Mother*, trans. David Coward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 192.
28. Quoted by Wye Jamison Allanbrook in his remarkable study *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, on which I rely heavily here. See Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 33.
29. Allanbrook speaks of a "revolution of the danceless dance" underlining that "the middle class as we think of it today, the bourgeoisie, does not have its own [choreographic] expression until the advent of the contredanse." *Ibid.*, 60, 69.

30. "The audience in the court of Louis XIV watched individual performances, each straining to the utmost to perform the correct expressive gestures of their dance. The audience in a dance hall (most not in actuality spectators, but participants restively waiting their turn) witnessed a mass of gay but obedient dancers following the leader about the room, points in an abstract human geometry." *Ibid.*, 62.
31. In certain passages, the overhearing of one character by others is also inscribed in the rhythmical structures of the work. Thus, during the second duettino, when Figaro evokes the proximity of the masters ("in two steps," "in three bounds"), his song adopts the light cadence of a contredanse. But his imitation of the bells interrupts and turns this contredanse into a march, more threatening due to its clearly marked steps. Moreover, the beat of this march is *contracted* into three measures (instead of the usually expected four) according to a constriction that literally gives us to hear the proximity evoked by the words of the song (*due passi, tre salti*).
32. "The ear, the organ of fear, could have evolved as greatly as it has only in the night and twilight of obscure caves and woods, in accordance with the mode of life of the age of fear" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clarke and Brian Leiter [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 253, translation modified).
33. *Ibid.*
34. See, in particular, the following passage in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* devoted to the "anthropological difference between ear and eye," where Adorno seems to fix vision and hearing in an opposition that is physiological in nature: "The ear is passive. The eye is covered by a lid and must be opened; the ear is open and must not so much turn its attention toward stimuli as seek protection from them." Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 51.
35. Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: California University Press, 1991), 245.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, 258.
38. *Ibid.*, 247.
39. *Ibid.*, 247, 248.
40. *Ibid.*, 248, 249. "The best legend which accounts for the birth of language is the Freudian story of the child who mimes his mother's absence and presence as a game during which he throws away and pulls back a spool attached to a thread: he thereby creates the first symbolic game, but he also creates rhythm. Let us imagine this child listening for noises which can tell him of the mother's desired return: he is in the first stage of listening, that of indices; but when he stops directly supervising the appearance of the index and begins miming its regular return himself, he is making the awaited index into a sign: he shifts to the second stage of listening, which is that of meaning: what is listened for is no longer the *possible* (the prey, the threat, the object of desire which occurs without warning), it is the *secret*: that which, concealed in reality, can reach human consciousness only through a code, which serves simultaneously to encipher and to decipher that reality." *Ibid.*, 249.
41. *Ibid.*, 258.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, 259.
44. According to Barthes, the third listening is "supposed to develop in an inter-subjective space where 'I am listening' also means 'listen to me.'" *Ibid.*, 246.
45. We should try to understand the significance of Barthes's expression "by deconstructing itself, listening is externalized" beyond what the final lines of the essay propose in terms of a decidedly binary logic of liberation: "Freedom of listening is as necessary as freedom of speech. . . . [Listening] is finally like a little theater on whose stage those two modern deities, one bad and one good, confront each other: power and desire." *Ibid.*, 259-60.
46. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Societies of Control," in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 177-82.
47. Barthes, *Responsibility of Forms*, 259.
48. Deleuze, "Postscript on Societies of Control," 177-78.
49. *Ibid.*, 178-179.
50. Borrowing Gilbert Simondon's vocabulary, Deleuze calls these relations "metastable." According to Deleuze, in disciplinary societies "power both amasses and individuates, that is, it fashions those over whom it's exerted into a body of people and molds the individuality

of each member of that body." In societies of control, in contrast, "Individuals become 'dividuals,' and masses become samples, data": What tends to replace "individual or numbered bodies" is "'dividual' matter to be controlled." Ibid., 179–80, 182.

51. [Translator's note: The French expression *point d'écoute* is sometimes translated into English as "point of audition." At least this is the common translation of Michel Chion's definition of the term. In order to distinguish Szendy's understanding of the term from Chion's, I consistently translate it as "point of listening." See Michel Chion, *Film, a Sound Art*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 485–86.]
52. In the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of film and video, the verb *to pan* (an abbreviation of "panorama") designates a horizontal movement of the camera, that is to say, of the point of view. We must also note here that Bentham's panoptic plan and the invention of Panorama (by the English Robert Barker) are contemporary events that both occurred in 1787. The acoustic equivalent in the techniques of stereo- or quadriphonic spatialization of a recording is obtained through an apparatus called the *panpot* (an abbreviation of "panoramic potentiometer") that allows the creation of the illusion that the source of the sound moves in a circle within the auditory field.
53. See Adorno's *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* as well as my critical reading of it in *Listen: A History of Our Ears*.
54. Wilhelm Furtwängler, "Bach," in *Furtwängler on Music*, trans. Ronald Taylor (Hants: Scolar Press, 1991), 27–28, translation modified. [Translator's note: The available English translation distorts the original to a degree that renders it all but useless in the present context. See also "Bach," in Wilhelm Furtwängler, *Ton und Wort: Aufsätze und Vorträge, 1918 bis 1954* (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1958), 215.]
55. [Translator's note: The French expression *la musique (s')écoute elle-même* is rich with ambiguity. First, it implies that "music itself listens" (*la musique écoute*). At the same time, it also implies that this primary listening of music (which is a listening carried out by music) is nevertheless still a listening to music: "Music is listened to" (*la musique s'écoute*). Finally, as a third step, we have to introduce the self-reflexive dimension: This music that simultaneously listens and is listened to actually listens to itself (*la musique (s')écoute elle-même*).]
56. Wilhelm Furtwängler, "Heinrich Schenker: A Contemporary Problem," *Sonus* 6, no. 1 (1985): 4–5.
57. The exhibition *Entartete Musik* ("Degenerate Music")—organized by Hans Severus Ziegler, the director of the Weimar National Theater—took place in Düsseldorf in 1938 to celebrate the first "musical festival of the Reich." See Albrecht Dümmling and Peter Girth, *Entartete Musik: Eine kommentierte Rekonstruktion* (Düsseldorf: Der Kleine Verlag, 1988). I will not go into the question of Furtwängler's position during the Second World War: He has been sufficiently criticized for having stayed in Germany. In fact, he himself tried to explain this by claiming that, every time he had the chance, he tried to defend Jewish musicians, and this way, he attempted to embody what he considered to be the most courageous form of resistance, an internal resistance.
58. Wilhelm Furtwängler, *Notebooks, 1924–1954*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (New York: Quartet Books, 1989), 139, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added.
59. Luca Cerchiari, *Jazz e fascismo* (Palermo: L'Epos, 2003).
60. Julio Cortázar, "Pursuer," in *Blow-Up and Other Stories*, trans. Paul Blackburn (New York: Collier, 1963), 196.
61. Since the era of bebop, quite a number of jazz compositions (that are not standards borrowed from Broadway or love songs) have evoked the chase: "Chasing the Train," by John Coltrane; "Chasing the Bird," by Charlie Parker; James Carter's album titled *Chasing the Gipsy*, which is an homage to Django Reinhardt, who himself often played the song "Chasing Shadows" under the French title "Mirages."
62. Robin Rimbaud, "Scanner: Cartographier les villes," in *Sonic Process: Une nouvelle géographie des sons*, ed. Christophe Kihm (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2002), 240–45. This secret enjoyment inevitably evokes in me a childhood game that repeats something from Freud's primal scene of the fantasy of listening: I specifically recall the pleasure that I took in recording with a small tape recorder family conversations and disputes in Budapest, as well as the bouts of laughter when I insatiably replayed the tape.
63. Chion, *Film, a Sound Art*, 291.
64. Ibid., 293–94.
65. Thomas Levin, "Rhetoric of the Temporal Index: Surveillant Narration and the Cinema of 'Real Time,'" in *CTRL [Space]: Rhetorics of*

Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother, ed. Thomas Levin, Ursula Frohne, and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 582.

66. *Ibid.*, 583.
67. Embedded listening “refers to those situations where a character in a film listens . . . , thus foregrounding the spectator’s own experience in the movie theater.” Chion, *Film, a Sound Art*, 476. As for me, in *Listen: A History of Our Ears*, I spoke of “listening to listening” (99–128).
68. Michel Foucault described with these words (“the place of the king”) the structure of the perspective in his analysis of Velasquez’s *Meninas*: “The occupier of that ambiguous place in which the painter and the sovereign alternate, in a never-ending flicker, as it were, is the spectator.” Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 335–36.
69. This is the reason why he is simultaneously listening and listened to, an ambiguity that evokes the fantasy of Freudian listening.

Underground Passage: The Mole in Its Burrow

1. [Translator’s note: Szendy is playing here on the semantic ambiguity of the word *écoute*. He is trying to put to use several meanings of the term based on his earlier etymological inquiries: (1) the archaic meaning of *une écoute* is something like a “listening guard”; (2) at the same time, however, *l’écoute* designates listening itself (and in the case of *une écoute*, a specific form of listening); (3) finally, it is also used to designate auditory surveillance. In the rest of the chapter, these three meanings (listener/listening/surveillance) will be preserved by translating the term as “listening,” “listener,” “listening guard,” or “auditory surveillance” depending on the context.]
2. Franz Kafka, “The Burrow,” in *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1972), 325–59.
3. As a synonym of *Bau*, the word *Werk* appears in the text: for example, when the narrator discusses this “complete work of small zig-zags” [*ein volles kleines Zickzackwerk*] that was the first part of the construction, the “debut work” [*Erstlingswerk*] of its architect or animal author. See *ibid.*, 331, 332. Translations modified.
4. *Ibid.*, 326.

5. [Translator’s note: Szendy’s neologism *taupologie* is a pun that combines “topology” with the French word for “mole” (*une taupe*). Hence the translation, *topmology*, or “top-mole-ogy.”]
6. Kafka, “Burrow,” 333–34.
7. *Ibid.*, 326.
8. Umberto Eco, “L’Anopticon,” in *Il secondo diario minimo* (Milan: Bompiani, 1992), 176.
9. Kafka, “Burrow,” 327.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 343.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, 343–44.
14. “I merely disfigure the walls of my burrow, scratching hastily here and there without taking time to fill up the holes again.” *Ibid.*, 348.
15. [Translator’s note: The French saying “L’imagination est la folle du logis” literally means that the imagination is the madwoman of the house. In a more general sense, it denotes the inferiority of the imagination in relation to other faculties of the mind. In this context, however, *logis* also works as a translation of the German *Bau*.]
16. “I intend now to alter my methods. I shall dig a wide and carefully constructed trench in the direction of the noise and not cease from digging until, independent of all theories, I find the real cause of the noise. Then I shall eradicate it, if that is within my power, and if it is not, at least I shall know the truth. That truth will bring me either peace or despair, but whether the one or the other, it will be beyond doubt or question.” Kafka, “Burrow,” 348.
17. *Ibid.*, 345.

In the Footsteps of Orpheus

1. [Translator’s note: the French word *limier*, just like the English “sleuth,” designates both a detective and a bloodhound.]
2. Sophocles, *Les Limiers*, ed. and trans. Paul Masqueray (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1934). The Greek title *Ichneutae* designates “humans or animals who follow the path of a trace” or, according to another translation proposed by Reinach, “trackers.” [Translator’s note: For a recent English translation, see *Sophocles II: Ajax, The Women of*