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Part II

Memory, sound and occupation

Introduction to Part II

Jeremy E. Taylor

Part II of *Sonic Histories of Occupation* is entitled ‘Memory, sound and occupation.’ The three chapters included here address the role of sound in reconciling communities to shared histories of conflict, colonialism and/or occupation, using methodologies that engage with Indigenous knowledge systems, ethnography and community-based research.

In each case, the notion of ‘occupation’ is interpreted quite differently. Magowan, Donaghey and McNelis, for instance, note the controversies inherent in the application of the word ‘occupation’ to the Northern Ireland context. Instead, they stress the potential for new technologies such as StoryMap for the ‘retelling of occupation as a productive and emergent presence rather than simply rewriting history in two-dimensional terms.’ In contrast, Sliwoski draws on the burgeoning research on military bases as sites of Cold War ‘occupation’ in his chapter on the US naval base in Subic Bay in the Philippines and the neighbouring Olongapo City. For Sliwoski, sound remains one of the untouched topics in such scholarship, despite (as he shows) the constant references to sound in the accounts of Americans and local Filipinos who lived in Subic Bay and/or Olongapo during the time of the base’s operations. Hatfield’s final chapter in this part – in keeping with a growing body of research on Indigenous peoples in Taiwan – understands ‘occupation’ as a recurring situation for the Cepo’ Pangcah (sometimes referred to as ‘Amis People’), having been subject to Han Chinese

settler colonialism, Japanese colonial control, the arrival of the Nationalist Chinese authorities on Taiwan after 1945 and the continuing presence of private corporations eager to open up Taiwan's Pacific coast to international tourism.

Despite these very different interpretations and uses of the notion of 'occupation', all chapters seek to explore either how sound is deployed as a means of responding to past trauma or how the memory of conflict, invasion or occupation is itself endowed with sonic qualities. For Magowan, Donaghey and McNelis, 'the ambiguity of sound is particularly potent for enabling sonic memories from the past to be connected with, yet simultaneously displaced by and/or resonant with the sonic present'; sound, in other words, offers a means through which the memory of a difficult past and a divided society (or, indeed, divided memories of a shared past) can be managed. For Sliwoski, 'the naval occupation of Philippine land . . . was structured around a military-sonic domesticity', yet such domesticity endowed memory of the base with a 'false polarity' which Sliwoski calls the 'loud town, quiet base' narrative. Occupation has the means, in other words, to change the ways in which we remember the sounds of the past. Hatfield shows how learning to listen to both the Cepo' Pangcah and their country – itself a repository of sounds endowed with memories of invasion and occupation – might help in 'decolonizing' the academic study of sound and occupation.

Part II thus offers new strategies for interpreting sound and the memory of historical conflicts, and for using sound itself as a means of addressing difficult or 'occupied' memories. In this way, these chapters address a number of this volume's core questions, including what the study of auditory environments in different geographic and temporal contexts might contribute to a better understanding of 'occupation', and how the study of the sonic histories of occupation and colonialism might contribute to the development of new research methodologies in sound studies and history.