

CHAPTER 8



MUSIC AT THE EDGE

American Torture and African Trance

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Music has a thirst for destruction, every kind of destruction, extinction, break-age, dislocation. Is that not its potential 'fascism'?

—Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

At the limit, there are only intermezzi.

—Roland Barthes, 'Rasch'

Somewhere on the plains of Africa roughly one million years ago, according to Gary Tomlinson's (2015) extremely long history of music, our hominin ancestors began to synchronize muscles and minds, to entrain bodies and souls, to keep time together.¹ Within this proto-human capacity for keeping time, the beginnings of musical experience were taking shape and, within this making of music, perhaps the very terms of ritual and social existence, of being-with-others. Contrary to Steven Pinker's (1997: 534) relegation of music to mere 'auditory cheesecake', making music together may well be the Ur-ritual where the being-with of human comportment was forged. Fiddler crabs synchronize their waves for enhancing display, fireflies synchronize their bioluminescent flashing, but we are the only species that keeps time together to an external beat (McNeil 1995; Merker 2000).² Different from fireflies and fiddler crabs 'who can't help it', we *want* to entrain (Wilson and Cook 2016: 1654).

A million years later and music is virtually everywhere, whether you want to hear it or not. In fact, music is hard to get away from – ambient tracks at a supermarket, hotel or restaurant; a commercial jingle on television or the

radio; background music in a film; listening to music while driving, washing the dishes, doing homework, or walking down the street. One could extend the list ad infinitum. With this ubiquity of music, however, we musically entrain with each other less and less. Musical experiences are often thin, mundane, barely noticeable, more sonic wallpaper than transcendent risk, more a matter of passively listening to music than making music together. Even when we listen together at, for example, a rock concert, we tend to transfer our subjective experience of isolated listening (think earbud culture) to a kind of isolated listening with others, what Michael Bull (2000: 192) calls ‘accompanied solitude’. Taken to the extreme, there is now the recent phenomenon of ‘silent disco’, with people dancing in a shared space, but not dancing together because each person is wearing headphones listening to their own music from different DJs.



Figure 8.1. Silent Disco at the Edinburgh Festival. Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic licence.

Yet, in the right circumstances, at the right time, musical experience can still be profound, have ontological weight, become a mode of being-in-the-world, a sharing of time with others in immediacy in ways that only music can do. And wherever we find this kind of musical being, this kind of sharing of *durée*, we invariably encounter ritual. Ethnographic examples abound – chanting the world into being by a Navajo healer while drawing a sandpainting meant to attract the Holy People to help to heal the patient, those whom Navajos refer to as the ‘one-sung-over’; dancing your disease in a Tumbuka temple in northern Malawi to heat the spirits through drum-specific rhythms in order to enter a divinatory trance of great diagnostic power; singing *bhajans* with your fellow congregants at a neighbourhood temple on a Wednesday evening in Chennai; riding to the upper and lower worlds through the sounds of a frame drum that is your horse, the beater your whip; or, in one of the most exotic of ethnographic settings, sitting quietly in the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam being transported to a different way of experiencing the flow of time while listening intently to a performance of a Bach unaccompanied cello suite. All these musical experiences, in their specificity, have the ontological weight to transform being-in-the-world to a way of being-musical.

Such musical experiences stand out from everyday life like a rock in a Zen sand garden, as Victor Turner (1986: 35) so aptly put it in his turn to an anthropology of experience. Here he was drawing on Wilhelm Dilthey’s notion of *Erlebnis*, something lived through, bounded, marked off from the movement of everyday life. Lived experience has a beginning and an end, a structural nexus immediately given before distinctions between subject and object. Dilthey uses a musical metaphor to make the point: ‘Lived experiences are related to each other like motifs in the andante of a symphony: they are unfolded (explication) and what has been unfolded is then recapitulated or taken together (implication). Here music expresses the form of a rich lived experience’ (Dilthey 1985: 227). This does not mean that there is a conscious synthesis of past experiences, but rather this sedimentation, this weight, manifests itself in immediacy in its entirety: ‘There is no duality of lived experience and music, no double world, no carry-over from one into the other. Genius involves simply living in the tonal sphere as though this sphere alone existed’ (Dilthey 1977: 140). Although Dilthey is referring to the genius of a composer such as Bach or Mozart, it is equally applicable to the musical events mentioned here. Far from a subjective aesthetic experience as often portrayed, living in the tonal sphere, a form of musical *Erlebnis*, itself has power, has agency to draw us out of ourselves and into its realm. And when music does this, it is already becoming ritual, even at a solo cello concert in Amsterdam.

In this power to make us musical, however, there is also a danger. The affordances of musical experience, its capacity to become our mode of being-in-the-world, its fascistic power, can be turned against us into an aversive sonic attack over which we have no control, to bend our social arc into an unbounded intermezzo, a liminality without end. When this happens, when musical experience becomes never-ending, unrelenting, unpredictable, we have entered the realm of music torture, a relatively recent innovation in that dark art that was ushered into the world in full force at the beginning of the twenty-first century.³ Music became part of a regime of ‘enhanced interrogation’ (the George W. Bush administration’s euphemism for torture) inflicted upon detainees in the ‘Global War on Terror’, itself a war without end. Turner’s *communitas*, with all of its attendant modes of being-with, was inverted into a solitary musical existence, with no future, no past.

This chapter brings this tortured musical existence into close contact with a musical way of being that is, in many respects, its ontological inversion, namely the ride of the divine horsemen of the Guinea Coast of West Africa, the aboriginal home of that world religion of the Black Atlantic called Vodun, which is something I have been researching for the past thirty years.⁴ Here musical experience is a way of being that is ecstatic in Heidegger’s ek-istential etymological reading of Dasein, ‘standing out from’ in the projective ek-stases of time (Heidegger [1927] 1996: 302 ff.; see also Krell 2015).⁵ And in this ecstatic time, deity and devotee find each other in the sound of the drum, the turn of the dance.

Intermezzo

Two musical moments on the edge. First, at a black site in Thailand, Abu Zubaydah, the first high-value detainee in the Global War on Terror, is placed inside a confinement box with a floor area of less than three feet square, all the while music – from death metal to children’s songs – blasting unpredictably, unrelentingly. Not only in the box, but day and night Zubaydah was subjected to a musical assault that was inescapable, nailing him to an existential hell, an intermezzo with no beginning, no end. Second, Ama, an elderly fishmonger, regularly gets possessed by the mother of a pantheon of deities from northern Ghana. At shrine celebrations, she is no longer herself but a dancing god being praised by drum and song. As long as the mother is there, Ama is away, and when the god is ready to leave, Ama will return to take up her everyday life as mother, wife, daughter, fishmonger. She accrues no particular cultural or social capital from being one of the wives of the gods, other than she is assumed to be a morally upright person or the gods

would not ride her. Possession is a rite of passage that continually folds back on itself, structurally ending where it started. Instead of a transformation of status, this is a trance-formation that returns to itself, a different kind of intermezzo, a different kind of liminality.

African Trance and American Torture

For the Vodou shrines of the Guinea Coast, musical experiences are energy producing, life-affirming, a musical *communitas* at the time of their happening, a being-with-others through the sacrifice of the one possessed. In detention cells, whether in Thailand or Guantánamo Bay, musical experience is an anti-ritual ritual that is life-diminishing, isolating, sacrificial, though not a sacrifice of the sacred kind. Whether the sacrifice is for the instantiation in the world of one of the many vodou, or on the altar of empire, neither detainees nor devotees have a say in the matter. This is obvious for those who are tortured, but it is also true for those possessed – one may choose to join a Vodou order but one does not choose to become ridden by the gods. It happens in a blink of the eye. Suddenly you are no longer yourself, but one of a pantheon of deities who have spread throughout the Black Atlantic, including the island of Cuba, where Vodou in the form of Santería holds strong, and the US detention facility at Guantánamo Bay is located – a geographical closeness that is worlds apart. In US detention sites scattered across the globe, prisoners were routinely bombarded with music for days, often weeks on end.⁶

How then do we investigate, do research, on such opaque experiences? What do we do with people who, in one instance, are not there at all, are profoundly away, possessed by a god or spirit; and in the other, are so unrelentingly there that they may never see the light of day to tell their story, though more and more of these testimonies are coming to light.⁷ In the former case, at least we can do ethnography; in the latter, participant observation is not exactly an option. What we are left with, however, is a rapidly expanding archive told by those who were tortured, and those who did the torturing, the witnessing of victim and perpetrator, detailed in declassified bureaucratic reports sent up the chain of command, and now in the legal briefs of lawsuits working their way through the federal courts. But first and foremost, it is etched in the body-subjects of all of those who endured what became known as no-touch torture, what Alfred McCoy (2007: 8) cites as the first true innovation in torture techniques in the last three centuries.

How did music become weaponized as part of the Global War on Terror? By what path did it become a force multiplier individualized into an instru-

ment of torture in the detention cells of Guantánamo, Bagram, Abu Ghraib, and black sites scattered across the globe? Its beginnings stretch back into the early years of the Cold War (McCoy 2012); its end, unfortunately, has not been written. To draw the genealogy of this weaponization – its interlacing movements and moments that congealed into a hardened practice; its trajectory into the silent corridors of official and unofficial government policies; its progression from inoculation to pathogen, from defence to offense;⁸ its migration from the many to the few;⁹ its evolution from noise to metal¹⁰ – is to trace the spaces in between the reports, testimonies, documents, hearings, condemnations and dismissals that are now part of the public record, a body of material analysed and parsed by numerous human rights organizations, government committees, journalists and academics.¹¹ And while much has been said, much remains to be told about the musical experience of this fugitive territory. But first to more settled terrain, a Vodou order of the Guinea Coast, where musical experience is a ‘being-with’ that has the power to manifest a pantheon of northern gods.

Being-Away

In the 1920s, ritual entrepreneurs brought deities from northern Ghana to the shores of the Guinea Coast, specifically to the Bight of Benin.¹² The negative effects of British colonialism were coming to their full fruition in the Volta Region during this period; the economy was in a shambles; and Africans who had been conscripted to serve in the First World War had come home with new horizons and expectations. The older vodou did not seem to be doing the needed work, and so, as often happens in Africa, people sought the power of strangers and their gods to deal with the problems at hand.¹³ Called Brekete, among other names (here christened after the northern drum that calls the gods, hence the importance of music), this pantheon was quickly incorporated within the wider Vodou world.¹⁴

As with other vodou, these northern gods ride their devotees on a regular basis, especially when shrines gather to celebrate and the gods come to dance with their ‘children’. Seized by their capacity to be captured, it is not they who dance but Bangle the soldier; or Wango, god of the waters and roads; or Kunde the hunter, the father, always dressed in red; or Tseryia, his wife, always dressed in white, benevolent, though lethal if crossed (see figures 8.2 and 8.3). Old women who can barely walk are suddenly transformed into twirling, dancing gods whose virtuosic feats are confirmations of their unconcealed presence.

The complete ‘being-away’ of spirit possession, its amnesic happening, is made manifest in this testimony from Ama, the elderly fishmonger men-



Figure 8.2. Possession by Kunde, the father and hunter of the Brekete pantheon. © Elise Ridenour



Figure 8.3. Possession by Tseriya, the mother of the Brekete pantheon. © Elise Ridenour

tioned earlier, when she became possessed during a cow sacrifice for the gods:

I was sitting with the other *adehawo* [shrine members], singing *brekete* songs when out of the corner of my eye I saw a bright light coming from inside the shrine. I turned toward the light, and standing in the doorway of the shrine was a woman with long flowing hair dressed all in white; it was Tseryia. She looked at me and began to dance, twirling as she came toward me. I felt a tremendous joy and stood up to greet her, and that was the last thing I remembered until I found myself sitting in the back of the shrine exhausted.¹⁵

The deities and devotees of Vodou have developed techniques over hundreds of years to mine the vital forces of musical experience for ritual purposes. Here ritual technology creates and reveals musical worlds that are energy producers, enhancers of the vital force at the heart of this Black Atlantic religion.¹⁶ Hot music here produces a cold fusion (see Friedson 2009, chap. 5), where more energy is generated than is put in. And it is through this musical energy that the vodou find their way into the world, an intense being-musical, a musical entrainment of being-with-others, thus ritual. For the gods to be there in their totality, however, someone must always be leaving, way beyond our experience of such ways of not being-there.

This extreme letting go of the tension of consciousness, however, is not some archaic remnant frozen in a distant African past, but rather a universal possibility, a psychobiological capacity of human comportment (Bourguignon 1968; Cohen 2008). This is not to say that all cultures have forms of trance where one's being-there is superseded by another entity: some cultures promote such states, while others suppress it, usually labelling it as pathological, or the work of the devil, or some other malevolent entity.

We all, however, do experience modes of being-away as part of everyday life. It may be as mundane as daydreaming, of being bodily emplaced while lost in a reverie about bygone times or future plans. We may do rather complex tasks, such as driving a car, with our thoughts and awareness far away from the road and steering wheel, only to be instantly pulled back when the car in front suddenly brakes; or we are surprised to find ourselves pulling up onto the driveway of our home, and wonder exactly how we got there. And these days there are the more extreme cases of DWA (driving while on Ambien [a sleep tablet]), which leads some people to, among other things, drive their cars while asleep.

There is a rhythm to it all, pointing to a cognitive flexibility in our lives that probably had strong evolutionary benefit, though perhaps not for DWA. Research suggests there may be something like a ninety-minute cycle during waking hours analogous to REM sleep cycles when we are more apt to experience 'stimulus-independent thought' (Singer 1975: 734). Yet this

flexibility of being-away is something we ultimately have no control over at the precise moment of its happening. We may think we can control such things. After all, for the most part, you decide when you want to escape into some memory when bored, or take a nap, or go to bed. However, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962: 189–90) points out, when we go to bed we assume the posture of someone who is sleeping before sleep ultimately visits us on its own accord. And I would make the same case for daydreaming. We may want to be away in numerous circumstances, but when we are actually displaced while embodied, it is something that is not a result of a conscious decision. Trying to make yourself think of something else to take you away from a situation often does the exact opposite. You may indeed succeed in thinking of something else, but this present-at-hand thinking is still rooted in being-there (i.e. being aware in a kind of apperception that you are thinking of something else), and is ontologically different from the kind of everyday mind wandering I am discussing here. You may prepare yourself for daydreaming, but, as with sleep, it comes of its own free will, has a certain agency, an autonomy that has a resonance with episodes of spirit possession.

As I argue in *Remains of Ritual* (2009), I am not suggesting that possession trance is somehow an extreme form of daydreaming or some kind of sleep-walking, but by realizing that we can do complex tasks while being-away brings us somewhat closer to an understanding of how someone entranced can be there and away at the same time, can dance, divine, bestow blessings. It is precisely because the vodu are there in the fullest sense of the term – no remainder, no surplus, no unconscious – that possession can transpire. Being-there in the mode of possessing is an unconcealing of the divine in a world of finitude. For the one possessed, on the other hand, to dance is to dream of nothing. For someone caught in the snare of being identified as an enemy combatant in the Global War on Terror, sleep, let alone dreaming, is only a remote possibility, as people go days on end with neither. Loud music is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that detainees stay awake.

Being-There

In a series of CIA cables released in 2017,¹⁷ describing in clinical detail the interrogation of the first documented victim of new torture techniques deployed by the US government post 9/11, we gain witness to what happened to Abu Zubaydah (born Zayn al-Abidin Muhammad Husayn), a kind of patient zero.¹⁸ He was the first to have the full panoply of ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ applied in a systematic and calculated manner. It was taken as an article of faith by the intelligence community and the upper administration that he was one of Osama bin Laden’s top lieutenants, and, therefore,

had information about future attacks, which they needed to extract by whatever means necessary.¹⁹

In 2002, when he was captured in Pakistan, Abu Zubaydah was considered the United States' first 'high-value' detainee and was quickly sent off to one of the CIA's black sites in Thailand.²⁰ Shortly after arriving, the CIA sent two psychologists, James Mitchell and John 'Bruce' Jessen, who had been involved with Survival-Evasion-Resistance-Escape (SERE) training at Fairchild Airforce Base in Spokane, Washington, to interrogate Zubaydah. According to official accounts, SERE was initially designed and implemented after the Korean War as a programme of inoculation, a way to prepare those most vulnerable to capture (e.g. air force pilots) to better resist harsh interrogation by exposing them to some of the techniques they might encounter.

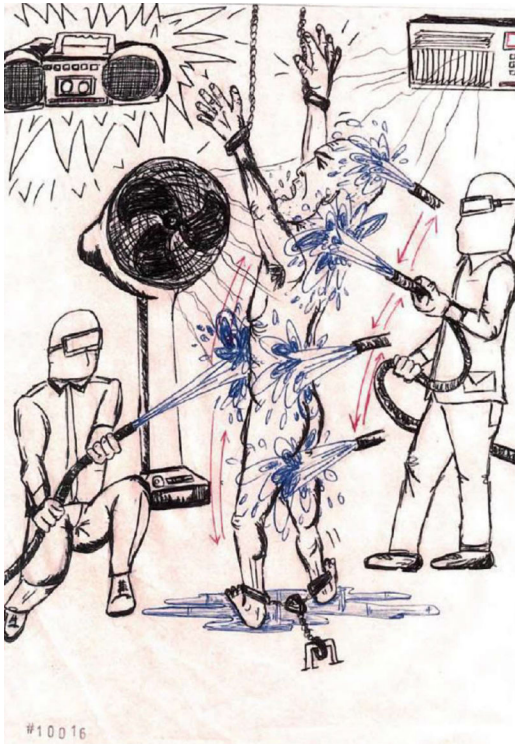


Figure 8.4. Sacrificed to the music while being doused with cold water. Drawing by Abu Zubaydah depicting multisensory torture. © Abu Zubaydah. Drawings by Abu Zubaydah can be found in *American Torturers: FBI and CIA Abuses at Dark Sites and Guantanamo* (Denbeaux, Mark; Jess Ghannam; and Abu Zubaydah. 2023).

Essentially, they reverse engineered the programme to use as an interrogation regime on Abu Zubaydah.²¹

But what Mitchell and Jessen devised for Zubaydah went way beyond what was done to soldiers at Fairchild. According to the lawsuit, they based their programme design on Martin Seligman's (1972) experimental work in the 1960s on 'learned helplessness'. Dogs who were unpredictably given electric shocks, with no means of avoiding them, soon gave up trying to escape even when they could.²² According to Seligman, they had been conditioned, had learned to be helpless. Working off of Seligman's theory, Mitchell and Jessen believed that, among other techniques (see below), sustained 'monopolization of perception' (Biderman 1957) – sensory deprivation as well as sensory overload – would regress 'resistant' prisoners to an infantile state totally dependent upon the interrogators, compliant to their every wish, including freely giving any actionable intelligence they might have. For Abu Zubaydah, learned helplessness became futility at all levels of existence, as detailed in the CIA cables, which documented pretty much every step of the process, because, beyond wanting to get intelligence, he was being treated as a test case, a medical experiment to find out what happens to a human being when subjected to extreme stress for prolonged periods of time.²³

Bombarded with ear-splitting loud music,²⁴ stripped naked, grabbed by a collar around his neck and repeatedly slammed against a wall, he was waterboarded eighty-three times over a fifteen-day period, sometimes three or four episodes within an hour.

After suffering these bouts of literally life and death, he was put into a small wooden box, measuring less than three feet square (Salim vs. Mitchell 2015: 23). I quote from one of the cables:

[A]t 1742 hrs, subject was unstrapped from the board and the neck collar was removed. Pointing to the small box, the interrogator said, 'you know what to do'. Subject got off the table, sat on the floor, and scooted into the small box. At 1743 hours, prior to closing the door, the interrogators said that when they came back, they would pick up where they left off.²⁵

Less than three feet square, not even from the tip of your nose to the end of an outstretched arm – hard to imagine projecting oneself into that space; unimaginable being there after being waterboarded multiple times in the past hour, all the while being blasted with music that is haptic in its reach. Abu Zubaydah's account of what happened to him, not surprisingly, is quite different:

It was so painful. As soon as they locked me up inside the box I tried my best to sit up, but in vain, for the box was too short. I felt I was going to explode from

bending my legs and my back, and from being unable to spread them even for short instants. The very strong pain made me scream unconsciously. As to my back, it was playing solo the guitar of pain but with no chords, for I couldn't feel any chords, or nerves or even bones. The tone of the music was dissonant.²⁶

Stuffed inside what his torturers called the 'music box', Abu Zubaydah literally became an instrument of torture, specifically a musical instrument, a guitar of pain. Verging on the poetic, the musical imagery is striking, even more so when read in the context of a legal brief. One can only interpret this as a reflection of what he had gone through, how he had become the music.

Take away waterboarding, walling, and stress positions, and leave only the music, then how can this be torture? How can being forced to listen to music, no matter how much one might hate the particular kind of music being played, no matter how much it might offend one's cultural sensibilities, regardless of how long it goes on, or how loud it might be (except for levels that literally kill the ear), really be considered as such? Fingernails pulled out, electric shocks to genitals? Absolutely. Waterboarding? Every-

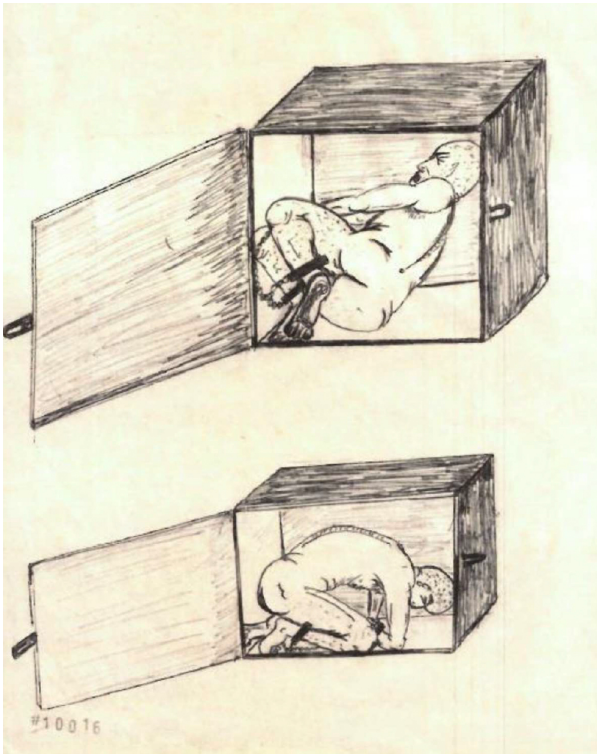


Figure 8.5. Inside the small confinement box. © Abu Zubaydah

one agrees, save for a few notable exceptions. But music? How can music be torture? Isn't this overstating the case, undermining sanctions against 'real' torture, a physical reality that inflicts pain on the body through the direct actions of another human being?

Popular Western conceptions of music as merely entertainment, aesthetic uplift, or as background accompaniment to other activities, when projected upon considerations of music as torture relegates it to a lightness of being incapable of anchoring such extremes. Music torture is often treated as a joke, or some kind of gruesome parlour game, people coming up with song lists that would 'torture' anyone forced to listen to such annoying music (Cusick 2006). Even Darius Rejali (2009), whose comprehensive study of torture and democracy offers a penetrating analysis, cannot resist the trivializing of music: 'If playing Barney, Metallica, or Eminem loudly was a form of SD [sensory deprivation] experimentation, then Amnesty International should be looking for torture victims in the American suburbs. There will be lots of them' (ibid.: 379).

Yet more than one detainee *and* interrogator have cited music as one of the most devastating forms of no-touch torture. As one CIA operative put it, after a session of loud music and strobe lights they come out 'completely fried' (Jones 2008). Ruhai Ahmed, one of the Tipton Three, a British national who was caught up in the war on terror and incarcerated at Guantánamo from 2003 to 2007, was subjected to this technology of sensory bombardment multiple times. He speaks directly to the power of aversive musical experience:

Once you accept that you're going to go into the interrogation room and be beaten up, it's fine. You can prepare yourself mentally. But when you're being psychologically tortured, you can't. . . . [Music] makes you feel like you are going mad. You lose the plot and it's very scary to think that you might go crazy because of the loud noise, because after a while you don't hear the lyrics, all you hear is heavy banging, that's all you hear. You can't concentrate on the drums or what the person said. All you hear is this loud shouting, and loud banging. It just sounds like metal is clashing against metal. (Reprieve 2008)

It seems that music has a unique ability to prevent mind wandering, to escape into a daydream of better places, better times, to get away from the excruciating pain of stress positions. Albert Biderman, in his research on communist interrogation of air force personnel during the Korean War, states that the manipulation of perception 'fixes perception on [the] immediate predicament' (Biderman 1957: 619), exactly the point I am making here in regards to the manipulation of the acoustical realm through music. Musical experience here does not take you away, but just the opposite, it literally does not let you leave, even in your own head.

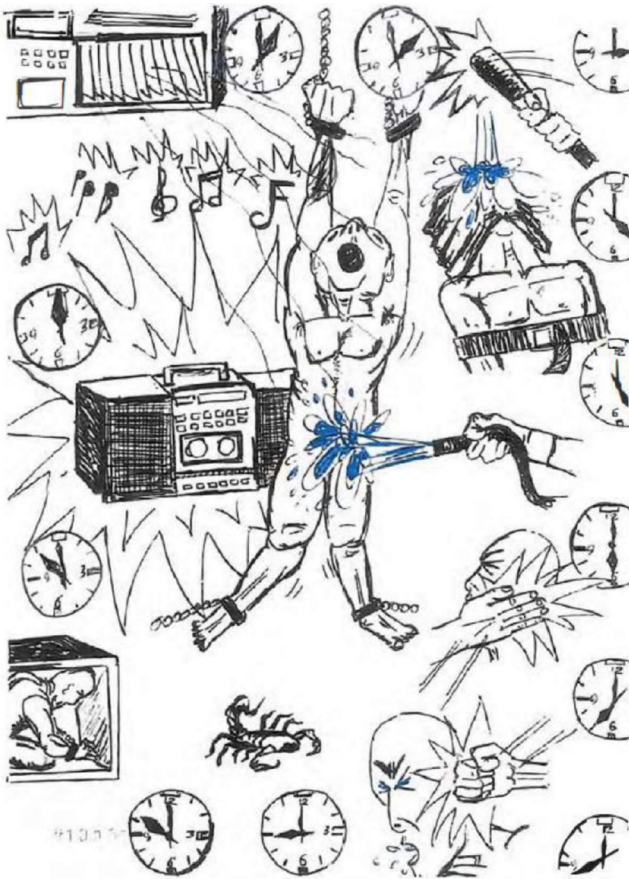


Figure 8.6. Abu Zubaydah drawing, 'The Vortex', representing the full panoply of torture techniques. © Abu Zubaydah

The Weight of Heavy Metal

Between bouts of waterboarding and interrogation, Abu Zubaydah was shackled naked to a small metal chair tilted at a 45-degree angle, head covered by a burlap hood, in a freezing cell, with a fifteen-minute tape loop playing non-stop for days at a time (ICRC 2007: 28). Short shackling to a leaning chair, along with hooding and non-stop loud music, were the same techniques used by the Israeli General Security Service (GSS) during the detention and interrogation of Palestinians. According to the Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, '[r]egular shabeh entails shackling the detainee's hands and legs to a small chair, angled to slant forward so that the

detainee cannot sit in a stable position. The interrogatee's head is covered with an often filthy sack, and loud music is played non-stop through loudspeakers' (see Figure 8.7) (B'Tselem 1998). One can only speculate that given the close ties between the two agencies, and the CIA's immediate concern with applying maximum pressure to this new crop of 'Islamic enemy combatants', they turned to the GSS for guidance.

Although many different kinds of music were played, heavy metal, especially the subgenre death metal, was a favourite choice. In particular, the band Deicide's 'Fuck Your God' is mentioned in more than one account. While the title of the song was known to those who were doing the torturing, though not necessarily the lyrics, the ones on the receiving end probably did not have a clue as to what the song was about. It is the timbre of the screamed and growled vocals that is meant to invoke heaviness, dark power, here the satanic, which overwhelms lyrical content, the semantic message.²⁷ Zubaydah, of course, did get the message, just not in the form of lyrics. The message being sent came in the form of vocals that were indexes of aggression, something discernible across cultural boundaries.²⁸ Combined with



Figure 8.7. Shabeh positional torture. © B'Tselem

distorted guitars playing at extremely fast speeds, supported by drummers playing ‘blast beats’ at over 200 bpm (Roddy 2007: 11), the aggressive nature of the music is universally unmistakable, its effect inescapable. The perception of it, of course, was, for those involved, at polar opposites, which raises the question of what kind of stance (Berger 2009) does the one tortured take to such music. Does he actually have any agency to take a stance? What intentionality is left when you are no longer able to form an intention beyond the intentionality of simply being-there? The weight of sonic torture is so heavy that it intrudes upon musical ways of being before textual exegesis is possible, an inherent violence embodied within sound.

In addition to death metal, thrown into the mix were such artists and groups as Eminem, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Prince, Marilyn Manson, Bee Gees, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Queen, Drowning Pool, to name just a few, and included selections specifically referred to as ‘futility songs’, such as the Meow Mix jingle and the Sesame Street theme song. But the futility song that has received by far the most attention and reaction from people being told about this aversive musical practice is Barney the Purple Dinosaur’s ‘I Love You’. The almost universal response from those in the know (i.e. American enculturated listeners) is ‘If I was forced to listen to Barney’s theme song, I would confess to anything’. Its cloying melody, based on the children’s counting song ‘This Old Man’, seems to especially grate on the sensibilities of adult listeners. And that is precisely why it was used. In the confines of the asymmetrical torture dyad, the one pushing the play button projected onto the one being forced to listen his own distaste for the music, coupled with the cruel irony of the lyrics, which may be lost on the one being tortured, who may not even understand English, but most assuredly not on the one doing the torturing. The playlist of no-touch torture reflects a warrior mentality – ‘War itself is heavy metal’²⁹ – and an irony of asymmetrical power that can turn a children’s song into an instrument of torture.³⁰

Regardless of the genre, in one sense they were all songs of futility because there was absolutely nothing you could do about the random nature of their application. One minute it might be Metallica’s ‘Enter Sandman’ and the next Barney’s ‘I Love You’. Sometimes different tracks and genres were played at the same time (Sharrock 2010: 166). What you were hearing was totally out of your control, the sonic embodiment of learned helplessness. You could not outstrip music’s capacity to capture the ontological present.

Being-musical, whether life-enhancing, or life-diminishing, is always reaching out into the social surround. But here the social surround thins, disappears in the darkness of being hooded, in the isolating self-inflicted pain

of stress positions, in the sheer loudness of music that occupies every crack and crevice. Technology is heavily implicated in all of this. It was a low trade-craft approach to music torture – there was no official playlist handed down from above – enabled by the portability of music machines with their now immense storage capacity and loudspeakers that could generate the desired volume. Music became a complex weapon system, a web of significance sonically realized, specifically designed to harm.

How does the sheer dynamic force of music achieve the objectives of no-touch torture, which in Zubaydah's case, of course, also involved physical abuse? Michael Heller's work on loudness gets at some of this in his notion of 'listener collapse' (Heller 2015: 44–46). As he hears it, listener collapse involves a double move: '[Extreme] loudness foregrounds sound's identity as a physical presence, while at the same time dissolving selfhood through the approach toward physical pain' (ibid.: 52). Cusick (2006, 2013a) also hears the loudness of music as a means of disrupting and destroying subjectivity. And this is exactly where an ontomusicology intervenes.³¹ I argue that, in fact, it does the exact opposite: listener collapse nails presence, removes absence and the ability to get away from the pain, removes the capacity to go inside oneself for relief, to meander, to get lost in a daydream of other places and better times, to escape. The mettle of the real impinges on the soul of the tortured.

This raises the whole question of whether it is just the sheer loudness of the music, the debilitating acoustical energy, that does the damage, or is there something about the structure of the music itself that is a major contributing factor to its devastating effect. This moves us to an aspect of musical torture that, for the most part, has been overlooked in the scholarship on this subject, namely temporality.

A Time of Torture

An essential component of the no-touch torture regime is the manipulation and disruption of the temporal environment. Procedures are meant to intensify shock, insecurity and psychological stress. As detailed in the CIA manual, *KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation* (1963: 76–77), one of the main objectives is to disrupt the subject's sense of time. This applies from the moment the target is captured, which should ideally be done in the early morning hours when 'a person's resistance, physiologically as well as psychologically, is at its lowest' (ibid.: 85). One minute asleep in your bed, the next hooded, thrown into a waiting Humvee, driven around in circles until arriving at a detention site; it is shock and awe at the local level. Any kind

of routine was to be avoided at all costs. Interrogations happened at random intervals, cells admitted no natural light, sounds of the outside world were masked, essentially there were no markers to situate yourself within a temporal world. Whatever circumstances landed you in one of the detention facilities, your separation from your previous life was instantaneous and complete. You were no longer in control of your destiny. Like an initiand in a classic African circumcision school, someone else controlled the essentials of your life; but here there was no one to share your experience, your ordeal, nor was there any implicit understanding that you were in a liminal period of transition from one stage to another. This was a rite of passage with no exit, no aggregation.

In these situations, music, the temporal art par excellence, is unpredictable and unrelenting, which is a time dimension that is part of the program of futility. You never knew when or what was coming next. There might be ten minutes of silence, followed by twenty hours of non-stop acoustical assault. The random nature of this sonic assault contributes to this inability of being-away. In studies on stimulus-independent thought, it seems to be extremely difficult to reduce mind wandering in experimental settings except when stimulus is random: 'Only extreme irregularity in presentation of signals can dramatically cut down reports of the occurrence of task-irrelevant thought' (Drucker 1969, quoted in Singer 1975: 733). In other words, the unpredictable nature of music in these settings would tend to obviate the ability to escape aversive circumstances through daydreaming, turning inward, being-away. As Ruhai Ahmed describes after being subjected to such musical assault:

Later on they introduced the music. It just became even worse because before you could actually concentrate on something to try and make yourself focus on some other thing in your life that you did before and take the pain away. . . . You can think about your girlfriend, you can think about your family. You know you can block this out. But once they introduced the music torture, you couldn't think because music was so loud in your ears all you could hear is banging (Retrieved 15 June 2019 from https://youtu.be/_EuIIAiFWQc; <https://youtube/mn6xQPvsjJk>).

He goes on in a later interview to speak of music as a 'black ecstasy', an inversion of his experience of disco clubs in England: 'When you go to a concert or a club, you're looking for loud music and flashing lights. You want to be transported into ecstasy. We experienced exactly the same thing, except that it was turned on its head. You could call it black ecstasy' (Rapp 2010). Music at the moment of its happening can directly take over one's sense of the flow of time, can force its time to become your time, its *durée* your passage. There

is no escaping its omnipresence. And this omnipresence removes the past, freezes the future, with nowhere to escape, not even within your own head, leaving you with nothing but the bare bulb of the present.

One possible way music does this is through the phenomenon of musical entrainment. As Clayton, Sager and Will (2005: 14) state, 'Music, as an external oscillator entraining our internal oscillators, has the potential to affect not only our sense of time but also our sense of being in the world'.³² While not necessarily a direct causal relationship, there may be a kind of neural resonance at work, with brain oscillations entraining to external rhythmic stimulus (Wilson and Cook 2016: 1649). If so, then how different is the pulse of African trance and that of American torture? One is suffused with the rhythm of the crossroads (Friedson 2009: Chap. 5), the other with satanic blast beats.

In heavy metal, rhythmic practice is 'stiff' (Berger 1999: 59), often a straight up and down series of fast beats. Blasting, as this rhythmic practice is called, which in its classic form alternates kick-drum strikes (usually played simultaneously with ride or hi-hat cymbal) and snare drum hits (Roddy 2007: 11), fill up rhythmic space leaving no alternative – the beat is heavy, and meant to be so. Death metal drummers often employ a more intense version of blast beats (Purcell 2003: 23), using a double-kick pedal to also play the bass drum on the snare strikes.

All rhythmic space is taken up; it ties you to the moment, unable to escape the weighted time of heavy metal.

This is quite different from the well-ventilated rhythmic practices of a Vodou shrine, which always invites other parts to contribute to the spaces created in-between polyrhythms. I have argued elsewhere that in much ritual African rhythmic practice, there are always at least two different kinds of beat going on, something I, following Ruth Brandel (1959), have termed the African hemiola, where six pulses can be grouped into three two-pulse beats, or two three-pulse beats.³³ It is not three beats against two, or two beats against three as a hemiola is often described by Western music theorists; in much African ritual music both are simultaneously available for a musical rhythmic sophistication that has been developed over hundreds of years. In *Remains of Ritual* (2009), I argue that this creates a phenomenological shifting conducive to a cognitive and bodily flexibility that is a powerful site of West African multiplicity. Master drummers play around with it, dancers embody it, and ritual participants embrace it in that undertheorized form of body concussion called clapping.

The temporality of musical experience, its *durée*, has the uncanny ability, in both no-touch torture and shrine rituals, to bite into the very realm of existence, not in order to dissolve it, but to become it. In both instances, musi-

cal repetition is extreme, creating a kind of hyper entrainment, but with very different outcomes. In musical torture, entrainment is totally asymmetrical, imposed from above as it were, the density of time delimiting possibilities within each period of its unpredictable occurrence. For the ride of divine horsemen, on the other hand, there is a mutual tuning-in process (Schutz 1951), a social entrainment of being-with-others that is a musical plane of multiplicity, a musical *communitas*. Within this sphere of making music together, this manifold repetition of multiplicity folds back on itself in a kind of stacking effect, creating weighted hollows, productive absences that form into a well-ventilated musical experience full of potential.

The ritual gathering at a Brekete shrine is a musical gathering, a *logos* (λόγος) in Heidegger's (2000) etymological/ontological reading of the term. For Heidegger, *logos* is a gathering of Being into unconcealment, which seems particularly apropos when people are dancing with their gods, being embraced by them through musical experience, and through such experience reaching out into the social surround of being-with-others. Given the sacrifice of the one possessed, such a musical gathering brings these divine horsemen and their adherents into the sounded light of the world, where people can dance with their gods. Inside the music box, on the other hand, it is a dark gathering within oneself, totally isolated, locked within a world where all contact is suspended, perception totally manipulated, enchained to an isolating music with no hope of release. Flesh and bone are vibrated to their core in this ontological hell.³⁴ We human beings are supposed to be flexible, both there and away in a continual flux of give and take with each other. When this being is reduced to the narrow chinks of the cavern of the present, all hope expires, and the gods indeed have fled.³⁵

This is a nomadic site, a desert of sound, of flashing light, of night temperatures cast in a smooth space. You, and very specifically you, a haecceity, have entered a ritual initiation not of your own free will, an initiation into learned helplessness, a liminality without end. You are the sacrifice. And who are you being sacrificed to? According to *New York Times* columnist Jane Mayer in her book *The Dark Side*, the CIA interrogators 'planned to become Zubayda's [sic] 'God'' (2009:333). They held his life in their hands; as a result of waterboarding, they literally brought him back from the dead more than once. And, more directly to the point here, by the time they got through with him, they had transformed him into a one-eyed guitar of pain.

One of the last pictures we have of him was taken in 2006 when he was transferred to the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay. When he was captured in 2002, he had both eyes, four years later, only one (see Figure 8.8). What happened to his left eye has never received an official explanation.³⁶ As of this writing, he remains a prisoner at Guantánamo Bay. His case is still pending in front of a US military tribunal.



Figure 8.8. Abu Zubaydah before capture in 2002 and after four years in US custody.

Conclusion: Being-With

Is the aversive musical experience I have been detailing here an aberration, something attributable to a few bad actors? Or are our ways of consuming music somehow implicated in its use for torture? While there might not be a direct connection, there is, nonetheless, a resonance at work that is suggestive. We now have a tremendous amount of mediated music readily available to us on demand thanks to the viral proliferation of listening devices of all kinds, shapes and sizes. According to the latest iteration of the Apple watch, you can carry a million songs on your wrist.

This state of affairs, where moveable music can accompany us wherever we go, has resulted in an inversion. Walking down the street plugged into our own private soundtrack for living has cut us off from others. We are statistically no longer pulled out of ourselves into musically being-with others, collectively absorbed into music's auratic glow, to appropriate Walter Benjamin's terminology; rather the music is now in us, absorbed in a masturbatory denial of risk assuaged by nostalgia. Musical experience becomes a kind of anti-ritual, an aesthetic pleasure that goes nowhere. And where can this nowhere lead? In a literally bone-chilling report in the *New York Times*



Figure 8.9. Start them young.

(Kirkpatrick and Gall 2018), as the Saudi forensic doctor was getting ready to use a bone saw to cut up the body of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi Arabian Consulate in Turkey, he advised everyone to don headphones, as he was doing, and listen to music.

If music is the herald of the future that Jacques Attali (2011) claims, then its weaponization adumbrates a troubling one. Worrying signs are on the horizon. A former president of the United States openly endorses torture (the euphemisms have been discarded), Guantánamo remains open, and new forms of technology, such as directional speakers, can tailor a sonic beam to make music and words seem like they are coming from inside your head.³⁷ What kind of sonic torture would that afford?

Perhaps we need to find new ways of doing old things. Instead of listening to music through ever-smaller personal audio devices that isolate us into a private soundtrack for living, we need to, once again, start making music together as is still done in the Vodun shrines of the Black Atlantic. We need to embrace the gift of being-with-others, of a musical way of being-in-the-world, hence the significance of making music together, one of the most human things we do. Music is that rare experience that has the potential to lead

us forward into new rituals of becoming thus belonging, of being-with, of being-musical.

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NOTES

1. This chapter is a revised and expanded version of my previously (2019) published work: 'The Unbearable Weight of Music: The Intermezzo', *Anthropology Today* 35(5): 11–15; and 'The Music Box: Songs of Futility in a Time of Torture', *Ethnomusicology* 63(2): 222–46.
2. Emphasis here is on the 'together'. While there is evidence from recent research (Merchant and Honing 2014; Patel 2014; Wilson and Cook 2016; Honing et al. 2018) that in limited contexts other animals have the capability to entrain to an external beat, it is not usual, it takes a fair amount of training, and, most importantly, other species do not do this together. While other animals may entrain to a beat, it seems that only humans keep time together. According to a recent review article on the evolutionary origins of beat perception, it turns out that audiomotor entrainment – that is, moving in time to an external beat – is 'potentially the most biologically unusual feature of human rhythmic behavior' (Kotz, Ravignani and Fitch 2018: 897). In this article, they further state that 'it is clear in humans that engagement in rhythmic group activity is a human universal and can lead to enhanced social bonding' (ibid.: 906), which adds weight to my claim here, as does the fact that much of the neural activity during beat entrainment happens in the basal ganglia, which speaks to its ancient provenance (Large et al. 2015; Ravignani and Madison 2017).
3. See Greenberg and Dratel 2005; Cusick 2006, 2008, 2013a, 2013b, 2014; Sifton 2006; Worthington 2007, 2009; McCoy 2007, 2012; Fletcher and Stover 2009; Pieslak 2009; Cusick and Joseph 2011; Grüny 2012; Szendy 2012; Grant 2013, 2014.
4. The term 'divine Horsemen' comes from Maya Deren's work (1953) on 'Vodoun' in Haiti, referencing a widely held metaphor across the Black Atlantic that those possessed are like horses ridden by the gods. I am using the term 'Black Atlantic' in Robert Farris Thompson's sense as a 'philosophic stream' (Thompson 1983: xiii) informed by a set of aesthetic parameters, here a religious complex that is, in part, danced, which extends from the West Coast of Africa to the shores of the 'new world'. This is different from Paul Gilroy's (2007) emphasis on the Black Atlantic as a site of 'modernity and double consciousness', as the subtitle to his book makes clear. Religious denominations of the Black Atlantic, which also includes Santeria and Candomblé (Matory 2005), among others, all have four defining features: a pantheon of spirit-gods (for Santeria and Candomblé they are called *orishas*) who possess material manifestation of those deities in some physical form, often called

‘fetishes’ by practitioners (see Friedson 2009: 86 for a discussion of this term), blood sacrifices to ‘feed’ the deities, at least some of whom hailed from Africa, and divinatory practices. The World Council of Churches declared Vodú a world religion in 1983 (Fleurant 2007: 237), and I am following their lead in using the word Vodú as an all-encompassing term to refer to different denominations found throughout the Black Atlantic. In this chapter, I am using the convention that when referring to the religion, ‘Vodú’ is capitalized; when referencing the deities themselves, it is in lower case.

5. This is distinct from Rouget’s (1985) parsing of the term as a solitary form of altered states of consciousness – Mohammed in the cave the paradigm example – which he contrasts with the more active sociality of trance.
6. This weaponization of music extended from detention cells and interrogation rooms to the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, where LRADs (Long Range Acoustic Devices) blasted death metal *and* Barney the Dinosaur’s ‘I Love You’ at insurgent positions, which in turn often blasted back *nasheeds* and Qur’anic chants using the low-tech but still effective loudspeakers of mosques.
7. See The Guantánamo Testimonials Project, Center for the Study of Human Rights in the Americas, University of California Davis; retrieved 15 June 2019 from <http://humanrights.ucdavis.edu/projects/the-guantanamo-testimonials-project/index>. See also Begg and Brittain 2006; Slahi 2015.
8. ‘Enhanced interrogation techniques’ were developed from the military’s SERE (Survival-Evasion-Resistance-Escape) programme, which was originally part of defensive training for personnel who were at high risk of capture.
9. Although Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRADs) were not, to my knowledge, used in interrogation, the rationale behind music as weapon, in one sense, moved from the battlefield to the interrogation room.
10. One of the first reported instances of music used in modern torture regimes was the CIA interrogation of KGB operative Yuri Nosenko, who defected to the United States in 1964. Worried that he was a double agent, the CIA subjected him to ‘hostile interrogation’ (‘Family Jewels’ Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities 1975: MORI DocID: 1451843, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB222/>), which included a starvation diet, being dosed with LSD and other mind-altering drugs, and forcing him to listen to music through headphones for twenty-three hours a day (Finley 2008: 62).
11. See US Congress, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence 2014; The Torture Data Base (ACLU), https://www.thetorturedatabase.org/search/apachesolr_search?filters=tds_ck_field_doc_release_date%3A%5B2016-06-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%20TO%202016-07-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%5D&release_date_from=06%2F01%2F2016&release_date_to=06%2F30%2F2016&advsearch=1; Reprieve (<http://www.reprieve.org.uk/topic/Guantánamo-bay/>); Human Rights Watch (<https://www.hrw.org/>); ‘No Blood, No Foul’: Soldiers’ Accounts of Detainee Abuse in Iraq’ (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/07/22/no-blood-no-foul/soldiers-accounts-detainee-abuse-iraq>); Central Intelligence Agency Inspector General Special Review, *Counterterrorism Detention and Interrogation Activities* (September 2001 – October 2003); American Psychological Association Report to the Special Committee of the Board of Director of the American Psychological Association Independent Review Relating to APA Ethics Guidelines, National Security Interrogations, and

- Torture 2015; and Salim v. Mitchell (<https://www.aclu.org/cases/salim-v-mitchell-lawsuit-against-psychologists-behind-cia-torture-program>). Also: Worthington 2007, 2009; US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General 2008; Mayer 2009; Soufan and Freedman 2011.
12. A distinction is made by some southern Ewe speakers between vodu and *trɔ* (referring to northern gods), which I am not following here (see Friedson 2009: 23). This terminology, however, is rather loose, with people often using 'vodu' as a generic term.
 13. See Shack and Skinner 1979 on strangers in Africa. See Friedson on the power of foreign spirits in *vimbuza* trance (1996), and for a discussion of the ethos of the stranger among Ewe speakers of Ghana (2009).
 14. See Werbner 1979 on the transformation of deities from exotic to an 'indigenous mode' (663).
 15. This is an edited version. The full quote can be found in *Remains of Ritual* as the epigraph to the 'Coda' (Friedson 2009: 181).
 16. See Thompson 1983 and Senghor 1974 on the vitality of African-based religious praxis.
 17. These declassified CIA documents are part of evidentiary findings in the lawsuit Salim v. Mitchell (<https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/salim-v-mitchell-complaint>). See also <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/us/politics/cia-torture.html?emc=eta1#whats-next>. In August of 2017, Mitchell and Jessen agreed to settle the lawsuit, the first time a lawsuit has been settled that involved CIA torture (<https://www.aclu.org/cases/salim-v-mitchell-lawsuit-against-psychologists-behind-cia-torture-program>).
 18. In the early eighteenth century in France, the recipient of judicial torture was referred to as the 'patient' (Foucault 1977: 40).
 19. Abu Zubaydah's status within Al-Qaeda continues to be contested. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence states that '[t]he CIA later concluded that Abu Zubaydah was not a member of al-Qa'ida' (2014: 409). However, others, including upper-level Bush administration officials along with James Mitchell (Mitchell and Harlow 2016) still claim he was a senior figure.
 20. See Hickman and Kiriakou (2016) for an eyewitness account of Abu Zubaydah's capture.
 21. See Hickman and Kiriakou (2017: 94); Soufan and Freedman 2011; Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report: Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program (declassified version 2014). Mitchell, in his book, *Enhanced Interrogation: Inside the Minds and Motives of the Islamic Terrorists Trying to Destroy America* (2016), denies reverse engineering the SERE protocol for enhanced interrogation. Loud music is cited in the US Senate Committee on Armed Services Report (2008: 3) as one of the standard techniques used in SERE training, which was directly adopted as an 'enhanced interrogation technique'.
 22. The use of dogs in behavioral research has a long history, most notably Pavlov's groundbreaking work on conditioned reflexes and the manipulation of behavior (1927).
 23. According to Bloche (2017), detailed monitoring, record keeping and clinical evaluation of 'enhanced interrogation' methods on detainees constituted medical ex-

- perimentation on human subjects without their consent, something outlawed in numerous international conventions and treaties. This has particular relevance to Abu Zubaydah's case, given that he was patient zero.
24. Loud music is mentioned sixteen times in the 82-page brief from the lawsuit *Salim v Mitchell*, filed on 13 October 2015. Retrieved 15 June 2019 from <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/salim-v-mitchell-complaint>.
 25. *Salims v. Mitchell* – United States Bates Stamp #001953, 20 December 2016. Retrieved 15 February 2024 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/us/politics/cia-torture.html?emc=eta1#whats-next>.
 26. Statement from Abu Zubaydah, February 2008, document marked Tracking #7B, p. 6, *Salim v. Mitchell* 2016.
 27. One of the stylistic features of death metal, a genre of extreme metal according to Kahn-Harris (2007), is the general inability to decipher lyrics. He cites this unintelligibility as a marker: 'Extreme metal takes vocal distortion further than heavy metal by abandoning practically all elements of melody in the voice. Instead, vocals are screamed or growled in ways that generally make lyrics impossible to decipher without the aid of a lyric sheet' (2007: 32). Harris Berger, however, argues that aficionados, in fact, pride themselves in being able to 'hear' the words (personal communication).
 28. See Mehr et al. (2018: 356) on hostile vocalizations by humans and the cross-cultural understanding of such vocalizations as acoustic universals. The article, however, mainly focuses on the recognition of lullabies, healing and dance songs across cultures. See also Arnal et al. 2015 on the universal features, especially the 'roughness', of the human scream.
 29. Quoted from the documentary *Soundtrack of War* (Gittoes 2005).
 30. See the documentary *Songs of War: Music as a Weapon* (2012).
 31. Although Cusick gets close to an ontomusicological understanding in her idea of a 'second, vibration-centered framework' (Cusick 2013a: 278), she still holds on to a subjective metaphysics, though one that is nuanced through (following Jean-Luc Nancy 2007) a re-sounding vibrational touch, always already in touch with other subjectivities, but this still starts from a fundamental understanding of how isolated minds get in touch with each other.
 32. See also Merker, Madison and Eckerdal 2009; Phillips-Silver, Aktipis and Bryant 2010; Trost and Vuilleumier 2013.
 33. See A.M. Jones (1959) on the ubiquity of 3:2 rhythmic praxis in African music.
 34. Cusick also makes this point, of bodies literally forced to 'vibrate sympathetically to their enemies' tunes' (2013a: 276). See also Goodman 2012 on 'vibrational ontology'.
 35. The phrase 'the gods have fled' comes from Hölderlin by way of Heidegger (1971: 89).
 36. See US Congress, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (2014: 112) and the US Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General (2008: 325). See also 'How Did Abu Zubaydah Lose His Eye', *New Yorker*, 9 June 2015, retrieved 15 June 2019 from <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-did-abu-zubaydah-lose-his-eye>.
 37. Woody Norris, who invented the LRAD system, has developed a new speaker technology he calls HyperSonic Sound (HSS) (<http://hypersound.com/pro/prod-ucts/>), which can make the sound, to quote Norris, 'feel like it's inside your skull' (https://www.ted.com/talks/woody_norris_invents_amazing_things, retrieved 16

February 2024). Another type of directional speakers, called Audio Spotlight (<https://www.holosonics.com/>), can pinpoint the sound directly to your ears.

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