

## **Paper Title: VERTICALITY AND POWER. LISTEN!**

### **Abstract (150 Words):**

Although hearing is three-dimensional (horizontal, vertical and distance), we can find it useful to consider solely the vertical axis when analysing how sound is perceived.

The human physiognomy determines human locomotion: we walk, we do not fly. Semiotically, the horizontal component of the anthroposphere provokes the highly symbolic use of the vertical dimension, which is then often employed for the representation of power. While visual analogies are widespread this article investigates an acoustic example of the close relationship between verticality and power.

The subject of the analysis is the sound event depicted in the historical photograph 'Soviet soldiers on the roof of the Berlin Reichstag at the beginning of May 1945'. This particular image allows for analysis across multiple disciplines that include the acoustic, the political and the psychological dimensions of hearing in a methodological use of categories.

**KEYWORDS:** Cultural Meaning of Sounds, Verticality and Power, Public Space, Auditory History

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## **VERTICALITY AND POWER. LISTEN!**

Hearing is measured by distance, simultaneously horizontal and vertical. Focusing on vertical hearing alone thus proves to be a theoretical construct. What purpose does the separation of spatial dimensions serve? What characteristics, if any, do vertical auditory impressions possess?

The human physiognomy determines human locomotion: we walk, we do not fly, thus in the lowlands the anthroposphere is the horizontal space and we are conditioned accordingly. Another important aspect is the absence of predators from above. Against this background, the position of our ears on the left and right sides of our heads appears optimal.

But it is precisely the unnaturalness of the vertical dimension in humans' living space that makes it all the more suitable as a space for the imagination to which strong symbolism is assigned. We imagine flying and falling vertically, and imagine social and religious hierarchies and showplaces of power in the same way.

The close relationship between verticality and power becomes visible in the picture composition of paintings with Christian motives. The world is strictly arranged into above and below. Also in the field of architecture more examples of the symbolic meaning of the vertical dimension, with regards to the staging and representation of power, become apparent. While visual analogies are widespread and in discussion this article is about one of the far less known and far less discussed acoustic examples.

Everyday reality lends itself as a general field of study for this topic. The specific object of analysis is the depicted sound event in the historical photography 'Soviet soldiers on the roof of the Reichstag at the beginning of May 1945'. The photograph shows the soldiers shooting or re-enacting the moment of shooting victory salvos into the sky. By means of a set of categories, developed by the author, the physical dimension as well as the semiotic dimension of the depicted (contingently mimed) sound event is studied. This methodological approach allows for analysis across multiple disciplines; including the acoustic, the political and the psychological dimensions of hearing. In conclusion, the question is raised as to whether a *consistent representativeness* between

the physical nature and semiotics of the sound event is verifiable. Thereby another symbolic layer of the analysed sound event can be unfolded.

## METHODS

Vertical hearing is not only a capability most people are not aware of in day-to-day life, it is also underrepresented in the sound studies literature. Accordingly we concern ourselves here with a unique, qualitatively focused study of vertical hearing. This is carried out historico-culturally, from the perspective of the historical anthropology of sound, investigating the relationship between people and sounds; the research question could be: ‘How do sounds and sound environments affect human individuals?’ (Ulrich, 2009, p. 8) The historical anthropology of sound takes a phenomenological approach and addresses the various manifestations of subjective and individually received sound perception (see Ulrich, 2009, p. 10). Taking into account the infinite complexities of reality, the analysis of vertical hearing presented here is to incorporate the political and psychological dimension of hearing as well as audio-physical aspects. The approach is thus interdisciplinary, and is oriented around the research of the French research institute CRESSON (Centre for Research on Sonic Space & Urban Environment)<sup>1</sup> in Grenoble. Launched in 1979, CRESSON is known for its research into the area where architecture, sociology and sound overlap. As the main focuses of this investigation are placed differently, a considered methodological approach is called for. The analysis is carried out using a system of categories, developed by the author. This format takes into account the sound event itself and the sound event as heard, in both its physical and its semiotic dimensions.

<p><i>Category I:</i> <i>Physical nature<sup>2</sup> of the sound event itself</i></p>	<p><i>Category II:</i> <i>Physical nature<sup>2</sup> of the sound event as heard</i></p> <p><i>II.I Constituting parameters</i> <i>II.II Individual physical perception</i></p>
<p><i>Category III:</i> <i>Semiotics of the sound event itself</i></p>	<p><i>Category IV:</i> <i>Semiotics of the sound event as heard</i></p> <p><i>IV.I Cultural forming</i> <i>IV.II Individual semiotic perspektivity</i></p>

Table 1 System of Categories

Conceptually *the sound event itself* suggests that it is understood in the sense of an objective occurrence. Constructed as a dichotomy, *the sound event as heard* encompasses the subjective auditory perception of the objective occurrence and is a counterpart to it. This distinction between the two dimensions – the objective occurrence and the subjective perception of situations - proves useful for the analysis. Nevertheless it is emphasised that a precise division is hardly verifiable, as all human experience and spoken accounts of events occur through the channels of human perception.

The four categories cover the following topics:

### *Category I: Physical nature of the sound event itself*

Category I focuses on acoustic space, that is the dispersion of concretely defined sonic events in a concretely defined space. In category I insights from the field of acoustics and the terminology of

acoustic engineering are employed.

### *Category II: Physical nature of the sound event as heard*

#### *II.I Constituting parameters*

Category II.I focuses on auditory space, in contrast to acoustic space. The perceived, physical aspects of sound events are comprehended across individual parameters. This category draws upon insights from the fields of psychoacoustics and psychology. Furthermore, results of CRESSON research come to the fore.

#### *II.II Individual physical perception*

In historical studies where the author was neither eyewitness nor has significant primary accounts from individuals at hand, no assertions can be made in this regard.

### *Category III: Semiotics of the sound event itself*

Sound events can be accidental by-products of an action or can be produced intentionally. Category III deals with the possibility of messages and codes that the initiator intends to communicate through the production of sound events. To this end, a historico-cultural analysis on the background of the historical context will be carried out.

### *Category IV: Semiotics of the sound event as heard*

#### *IV.I Cultural forming*

Category IV.I focuses on sound events in relation to cultural semiotics; how meanings are formed and perceived by the listener. The auditory hermeneutics will be investigated from a historico-cultural perspective. In this way auditorily perceived messages and codes can be analysed.

#### *IV.II Individual semiotic perspectivity*

In historical studies where the author was neither eyewitness nor has significant primary accounts from individuals at hand, no assertions can be made in this regard.

These four categories form the methodical foundation of the analysis of an example case. In conclusion, the question will be raised as to whether a *consistent representativeness* between the physical nature and semiotics of the sound event itself and the sound event as heard is verifiable. According to Holger Schulze (2000) the analysis of *consistent representativeness* informs us of a 'regularity and consistency in the usage of statements and surface structures of coherence and cohesion' (p. 24). While this balance is relevant for the present investigation of vertical hearing, it is in relation to the sound itself that the extent to which the audible part of the event under analysis must have been staged becomes clear. Further conclusions are drawn in reference to the sound as heard, namely as to whether messages embodied in a sound event could possibly have been decoded by the listener.

## THE BERLIN REICHSTAG AS PLACE FOR THE SPECIFIC OBJECT OF ANALYSIS

A symbolically loaded place both promotes and provokes symbolically loaded actions. Therefore the Berlin Reichstag plays an important role in the analysis as the location of the depicted sound event in the historical photograph 'Soviet soldiers on the roof of the Reichstag at the beginning of May 1945'. The Berlin Reichstag is a building deeply rooted in the collective memory of the

German population.

‘The Reichstag building stands as a symbol for Germany's history. In its first phase it served as parliament in a constitutional monarchy. It was in the Reichstag that the social democrat Philipp Scheidemann proclaimed the first democratic republic on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1918. It was here, in 1933, that the same republic was gambled away and then symbolically foundered in the Reichstag fire. The Second World War came to an end for Germany after the significant storming of the building by Soviet troops. For a long time the wall and barbed wire that separated Germany ran right alongside it. The reunification on the night of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1990 was also celebrated at the Reichstag building. And today the Reichstag is again the seat of the German parliament, the Bundestag.’ (“Reichstag. Geschichte und Mythen,” 2011)

The Berlin Reichstag bears witness to the changeable last 115 years of German history. The analysis within this paper is centered upon the year 1945, shortly after the end of the Second World War. It paints a very interesting picture for interpretation in the vertical dimension, particularly in the context of triumph and defeat.

## VERTICALITY AND POWER

An essential foundation in this exercise is an introductory account of the area of conflict of the vertical dimension which becomes apparent in the relationship between verticality and power. More precisely, the striking overlaps between usage structures within the vertical dimension and the representation of power will be analysed. Within the visual realm the subject matter seems to be known and discussed. In the following paragraphs a short insight into this topic will be given by means of various examples from this visual realm.

‘Vertical’ in the sense of upright, perpendicular and orthogonal is anything positioned at a right angle to the earth's surface, or the geocentre. (see Lindner, 2009, p.8) As early as the times of ancient Babylon skywards-reaching constructions were erected, so-called ziggurats. One of these high and wide temple complexes, situated in Babel, later became the model for the mysterious construction of the tower of Babel.

The vertical reference appears conspicuously in Christian mythology:

‘In the medieval imagination the world was strictly arranged into above and below, and on the stage of mysteries the three realms of heaven, earth and hell were depicted lying one on top of the other. People strived for ascension to God and feared the fall into perdition. Where ascension appeared in literature and the visual arts it was often in the Christian sense, whereby Christ was depicted rising up to heaven and God with his hand reaching out to him, ready to pull him aloft’. (Lindner, 2009, pp. 8-9)

This exemplifies the fundamental tendency of executive powers to take space and portion it out for their own ends. Bourdieu (1991) reminds us that ‘the control of space is one of the most direct manifestations of power’ and ‘thus the manipulation of the spatial arrangement of groups has always served the manipulation of the groups themselves.’ (p. 30) In the Christian-mythological context the space above is explicitly assigned to God or representations of God, whereas the space below is assigned to human beings. This division of space is found again in architecture: church buildings are vertically aligned. Before the age of high-rises they towered above everything around them. On the inside, the preacher, pulpit and organ are elevated through their position on the choir loft. They act as messengers of God's word and their voices sound out above the worshippers. Spatial elevation as a symbol of closeness to God is also employed in the staging of secular power:

‘In courtly culture from the Renaissance to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the main steps of castles and palaces play a central role in acts of state: The person at the top of them is the closest to God. State acts carried out on the steps of the Doge's Palace in 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice are the first example of steps being deliberately used to serve a political function. Here

events are consciously staged along the vertical and the groups arranged in a sharply ascending order.[...] Another example of steps used to represent authority in courtly ceremonial is the Grand Escalier des Ambassadeurs in Versailles. The number of steps an individual walked up towards another expressed the hierarchy of relationships during state receptions and thus became an instrument of power.' (Lindner, 2009, pp. 18-19)

During secularisation the structure of the world was narrowed down to one earthly dimension. It is now humans themselves who set themselves apart from their own kind. Both architectural and technological developments have created a new framework of possibilities for space requirements and arrangements in the vertical dimension. Take on the one hand the example of high rises. Hajo Eickhoff (1997) writes: 'The high rise is an expression of the will to appropriate. It is a rocket and a phallus, an attestor of the right angle and of artificiality.' (p. 228) Within high rises, modern hierarchies become manifest. The highest floors have the best views. For private purposes these are often reconstructed as penthouse apartments, or in company buildings they serve as executive suites. Also the aeroplane, the helicopter, rockets and space ships serve to elevate people vertically. Such technological aids form the basis of a new understanding of mobility: a kind of human power over nature. With regard to the power of humans over humans, it was the production of jet planes and bombers that has made area-wide destruction of entire cities and swathes of land possible from above. The destruction motif is also illustrative of the introduction to the current analysis of the example case of 1945 in Berlin. After the Germans had dropped bombs on several cities e.g. Coventry and Plymouth in Great Britain, Berlin was also finally bombed from above. During this 'Battle of Berlin' (21<sup>st</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1945)<sup>3</sup>, several ordnances also hit the centrally situated Berlin Reichstag. Only a few days after 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1945 a black and white photograph taken on the roof of the Reichstag appeared.

## ANALYSIS: TRIUMPH (1945)



Photograph 1 'Soviet soldiers on the roof of the Berlin Reichstag at the beginning of May 1945'

In the following reference is made to the photograph 'Sowjetische Soldaten auf dem Reichstagsgebäude Anfang Mai 1945' ('Soviet soldiers on the roof of the Reichstag at the beginning of May 1945'). A group of Soviet soldiers can be seen on the edge of the seemingly destroyed roof, either in front of the rider statues on the east front of the Reichstag building or in front of the large statue 'Germania zu Pferd' above the pediment on the west front. It is not possible to tell from this photograph exactly where the troops or indeed the photographer were standing. The soldiers are strong young men in full uniform. They stand securely with their legs hip-width apart, and their clothing appears clean and fresh. One soldier is waving a flag in the air and the others are each holding a gun or a machine gun. With arms raised they aim their weapons towards the sky, looking upwards, towards the imaginary target. The skyline of Berlin can be clearly seen in the background.

What can be said of vertical hearing in this situation? Firstly a problem arises which is innate to any historical study of hearing within everyday reality, the problem of deficient sources. In 1945 mobile technology for the recording of audio was neither as well developed nor as widespread as it is today. Apart from live recordings of historical speeches hardly any sound recordings are available from this time, including from the situation under analysis here. With regard to the picture source

and the historical context alone, two well-founded assumptions about the photograph on the roof of the Reichstag building can be formulated.

1. The action shown in the photograph was acoustically manifested, the soldiers did actually shoot into the sky.
2. The action shown in the photograph was not acoustically manifested. In this case the scene is an auditory gesture; a re-enactment, a recollection of a past situation which happened only a few days or perhaps a few hours previously on the Reichstag building. There is proof that at the beginning of May 1945 Soviet troops climbed onto the roof of the Reichstag more than once to carry out victory rituals.<sup>4</sup>

As there is no certainty surrounding the event documented in the photograph, both possibilities will be incorporated into the analysis. Firstly the physical nature of the sound event itself, i.e. shots from the weapons depicted, will be more closely defined and described. Research has shown that most of the pistol and rifle models used by the Red Army in the Second World War were developed by Fedor Vasilievich Tokarev.

‘Fedor Tokarev developed a wide range of weapons - from automatic carbine MT (1925) to TT-30 pistol (1930) and the SVT-40 (1940). Tokarev's pistols and rifles were used in the Red Army against fascists during World War II. The TT-33 was the basic service weapon of Soviet officers during the Great Patriotic War (WWII). TT 25 [stands for] Tula-Tokarev, or Tulskiy Tokarev, i.e. Tokarev from Tula.’ (“The official Fedor Tokarev Guns and Rifles Website”, 2011)

The machine guns discernable in the photograph appear similar to the Soviet Kalashnikov (AK-47), an automatic continuous fire weapon that was, however, developed for the first time in 1947 by Mikhail Timofejevich Kalashnikov. The development of machine guns in the Soviet Union initially lagged in comparison to that of other countries. One model, the PPD-40 (Pistolet-Pulemet Degtyareva) was put forward, which was produced between 1935 and 1941, though only 80,000 guns were consigned. The weapons in the photograph could be machine guns of the type PPD-40 or could also be MP44 assault rifles seized from the German Wehrmacht, which then served in 1947 as a template for the development of the Soviet Kalashnikov (AK-47). How do shots from the weapons mentioned sound? Audio recordings of the original model Tokarev TT-33 (“Ytykg. Tokarev TT-33 pistol”, 2009), the PPS-43 (Soviet submachine gun) as a follow-up model of the PPD-40 (“rmt3786. Full Auto PPS-43”, 2008) and the assault rifle MP44 (German submachine gun, later called StG44) (“RZM. StG44 Sturmgewehr in action”, 2009) were audibly analysed by the author. All three models produce a short, loud impulse with a very sharp attack. A single shot, regardless of whether shot from a pistol or a submachine gun, is hardly more than 150ms long. With regards to the volume, current tables of sound pressure levels record a gun shot at a distance of 1 meter at 140dB (“Lärmskala (Noise Scale). *Elektronik Kompendium*”, 2011) which corresponds to 200 Pa (“Tontechnik-Rechner (Calculator for Acoustic Engineering). *sengpielaudio*”, 2011). That level lies above the pain threshold and sounds of such an intensity are widely considered ‘damaging to hearing’. If one compares the frequency spectrums of the two weapon types, pistol and machine gun, it can be ascertained that while all shots tend to be wide-banded, the characteristic frequencies for a pistol shot lie in the high-mid range frequency band, whereas a shot from a machine gun shows up rather in the low-mid range frequency band. In addition, upon firing the machine gun produces a pressure wave of sub frequencies. Furthermore, the temporal duration of several shots from one weapon can be specified. A shot can be fired from a TT33 pistol – and also from comparable pistols – around every 500ms. Due to the built-in mechanism that must be operated manually, a certain minimum time lag between two shots is apparent. In comparison, machine guns heralded a new era in the technology of war given the continuous fire systems referred to above. Recognisable by their typical rattle, they dispense a number of shots in a very short time.

In the following section the diffusion of the sound events on the roof of the Reichstag will be

analysed. As previously mentioned, a single shot is an extremely short signal. The time span of several seconds after impulse often associated with gunfire appears only due to reflection or echo in the space concerned. On the roof of the Reichstag this fact played an essential role. In absolute free field there is no echo, only the direct sound. However, free field conditions are only found naturally when, for example, reflections off the ground do not come into play, as with fresh snow on a field or with some sound-absorbent ground surfaces (foliage, dry sand etc.). Such free field conditions were certainly not present on the stone roof of the Reichstag. It definitely reflected the loud impulses of the pistol or machine gun shots, as would have the walls of ruined buildings nearby. The resulting echo lengthens the acoustic duration of the shot. Who below, around the Reichstag, could have heard such shots on that day or in the days before? It would have been passers-by still present in the area after the end of the fighting. In support of their likely presence is that fact that directly after the end of the war a highly frequented black market had established itself around the destroyed Reichstag building. (see "Pries, Black Market [Photograph]," , 2008)

In the following discussion the physical nature of the sound as heard is of interest. Due to the characteristics of shots – impulses with extreme volume – and their echo, it can be assumed that shots on the Reichstag roof were heard clearly by passers-by present below. However, passers-by without visual contact to the event, and that was surely most of them, would not have been able to locate the shots precisely. Based on the knowledge that auditory space is less differentiated than acoustic space, psychoacoustics is concerned with the question of where the auditory event appears in relation to the position of the sound source. In this respect it proves much more difficult to localise acoustic events on the vertical plane than acoustic events on the horizontal plane. The physiognomy of the human body, specifically the two horizontally aligned ears, is the reason for this. Researchers in the field of psychoacoustics have experimentally confirmed that depending on the type of audible signal the margin of uncertainty in localising in the horizontal dimension amounts to an average of up to 2 degrees (e.g. 1,6° King and Lair 1930, >1° Schmidt et. al. 1953, 0,9° Gardner 1968, 1,5° Blauert 1970b cited in Blauert, 1974, p. 31). If the position of the acoustic event moves by less than 1 degree in relation to the auditory position, the change can no longer be perceived. In comparison, the margin of uncertainty in the vertical was recorded between 9 and 22 degrees, ten times this amount (Damaske and Wagener 1969 cited in Blauert, 1974, p. 36). Most of the passers-by under the Reichstag will therefore not have localised the shots on the roof precisely, but rather as coming simply from somewhere UP ABOVE.

The third section of the analysis focuses on the semiotics of the sound event itself, which is to be investigated from a historico-cultural perspective. In his book *What is Cultural History?* Peter Burke (2005) writes: 'As a common foundation for cultural historians one could point to the interest in the symbolical and its significance. Both conscious and unconscious symbols can be found everywhere, from art to everyday life [...]' (p. 10). The fundamental assertion of any kind of hermeneutics is the historical connectedness of all thought, interpretation and comprehension. The historical photograph, which comes across as a Soviet government propaganda picture, will again be referred to in order to interpret the concrete semiotic dimension of the sound event itself in the example situation. Much speaks against it being a snapshot. The picture detail seems consciously chosen: the soldiers are wearing conspicuously clean uniforms, they are posing, the foreground and background are coherently related. This clearly shows how reported history can be staged. Alone the intentional taking of a group photograph is an act of staging. If shots were fired, then the action of shooting which produced the auditory event was staged. If shots were not fired, the photographing of a re-enacted past action of shooting proves to be doubly staged, and the purely symbolic character of the situation is revealed. Attention can now be turned to the symbolism of the sound events in connection with their position in space. What function do shots fired upwards on the roof of the Reichstag serve? Clearly neither an object, animal nor person is intended to be hit. Therefore, even the function of the action producing sound shows itself to be purely symbolic. Salvos are a ritual found in many cultures since the invention of firearms.<sup>5</sup> An investigation into the topic of salvos lies out of the scope of this current analysis, however shots on the roof of the



Reichstag in May 1945 are nonetheless clearly to be understood as gestures of victory; a victory despite or indeed because of the unimaginable figure of 20,900,000 dead on the Soviet side alone. (see "Putzger Weltatlas," 1969)

For the analysis of the specific historical example given, and in regard to the relationship between verticality and power the *choice of the concrete place* to fire the shots will be investigated rather than the action itself. It turns out to be a highly symbolic place on a furthermore highly symbolic building. The choice of the Reichstag brings to the fore the whole dramatic art of the war. Shortly before the photograph on the roof was taken, the Reichstag had been seized by Soviet troops. This seizure was not directed merely at another significant building in Berlin or even tangibly at the obstetrics clinic previously situated within the Reichstag, but rather solely at the site of an earlier political occurrence, the site of the Reichstag fire. This event, in 1933, had as its consequence the Reichstag Fire Decree, which was a decisive step in the establishment of the national socialist dictatorship. The Reichstag Fire Decree essentially invalidated basic rights set out in the Weimar constitution and cleared the way for the persecution of the NSDAP's political opponents by the police and the SA. The seizure of the Reichstag in 1945 was therefore equated with victory over National Socialism, and victory over Hitler. It is also presented this way in the historiography of the German Bundestag (2008):

‘The Soviet Union apportioned the prominent building great significance as the symbol of the beginning of the Nazi dictatorship. Soviet propaganda in particular presented the Reichstag as a military target and the political end point in the final phase of the Second World War.’ (p. 35)

In the final Battle of Berlin the Soviet military even addressed grenades in the so-called ‘Stalin-Organ’ (literally ‘Stalin's organ’ - the German nickname then given to Soviet Katyusha rocket launchers). The words ‘for the Reichstag’ were written on them. (see Cullen, 1986, p. 391) After the successful liberation of Nazi-occupied areas of Europe, the seizure of the Reichstag signalled the military defeat of National Socialism in the land from which the war had come. Victory celebrations were staged at the site of this victory.

Finally, is there a reason why the highest possible point of the Berlin Reichstag, the roof, was chosen as the place from which to fire the shots? Aspects of space perception prove illuminating as an approach to the symbolism of the 'above', for instance the way in which the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard applies such aspects to the phenomenology of different parts of a house in his *Poetics of Space*. ‘The vertical channel is assured through the polarity of cellar and attic. The characteristics of this polarity are so dramatic that they form to a certain extent two very different axes for a phenomenology of imagiteness.’ (Bachelard, 1987, p. 43) For Bachelard, the cellar is the dark nature of the house, the roof is the light place. He writes that when it comes to the roof, all thoughts are clear. The experience of the primary symbolism of space is also a theme of Thomas Fuchs's research from the field of phenomenological psychopathology, a fundamental discipline of psychiatry. Fuchs investigates *Stimmungsraum* (emotional space) and assigns it a central anthropological significance. While moods and feelings comprehend the human condition 'from the inside out', atmospheres describe ‘[...] holistic spatial phenomena of expression, which are dispersed across the surrounding area indeterminately and diffusely. [...] Atmospheric qualities therefore seem typically attractive or aversive’ (Fuchs, 2000, p. 58). Up on the roof of a house it is airy, one's gaze can wander, one stands above all things and also above all other people below. One always climbs onto the roof upwards. Whoever makes it onto the roof of a house has navigated the entirety of it's height. Nothing remains closed off or hidden, nobody obstructs one's path. Flags are hung on the roof of symbolic buildings so that they are better visible, but clearly visibility is not the only reason for this. A group photograph on the roof of a symbolic building is done to represent the power of those photographed; a flag on the roof of this symbolic building represents the power of what the flag stands for. The choice of the Reichstag roof as the place for the Soviet soldiers' multiply documented victory rituals represents the historical turning point and change of power that had just

taken place. People passing below served as addressees for the staging of these rituals. A victory celebration on the roof does not only benefit the self-perception of the soldiers as victors, but also facilitates the perception of the victors by others. Anyone firing salvos from the roof of a house can be heard below – surely a part of the staging.

The last section of the analysis focuses on the semiotics of the sound event as heard. Thereby an investigation into the culturally formed experience of this situation by all those present seems profitable. An approach to the multi-layered nature of the message heard will be set out using a depiction of the situational context from a psychological perspective. According to Margarete Imhof (2003), in a psychology of listening:

‘[...] Information from different sources is processed virtually simultaneously, namely a) the acoustic message (linguistic, paralinguistic or non-verbal) b) visual stimuli [...] c) Information about the information source (for instance about the speaker) and d) the social conditions of the listener situation (e.g. Who is speaking to whom and with what justification? What is the goal of the interaction?); this newly received information has to be linked with previous knowledge, for example with prior knowledge in the area being referred to.’ (pp. 11-12)

Of particular interest here is a prior knowledge of the area of reference and the social conditions of the listening situation. In reference to prior knowledge it is widely reported that by the end of the war shots were no rarity, so a recognition effect was a permanent given. The aspect of recollections brought to the fore concretely by a sound or a sonic context is characterised in the book *Sonic Experience* by Jean-Francois Augoyard und Henry Torgue (Eds., 2005) as ‘Anamnesis’ and is defined there as follows:

‘An effect of reminiscence in which a past situation or atmosphere is brought back to the listener’s consciousness, provoked by a particular signal or sonic context. Anamnesis, a semiotic effect, is the often involuntarily revival of memory caused by listening and the evocative power of sounds.’ (p. 21)

It is thus the listener alone who creates this effect: ‘The effect is not based on the sound or on its meaning. It is rather the listener who gives it an anamnestic value.’ (Augoyard & Torgue, Eds., 2005, p. 21) The recollections brought to life through the shots are not limited to sounds. ‘Not only is this sound remembered, but all the other sensorial and affective components also cross the threshold of consciousness.’ (Augoyard & Torgue, Eds., 2005, p. 22) Anamnesis is an often involuntary game with levels of time, an associative amalgamation of past and present. Even where recollections were individual and therefore different, their cultural formation and the role of collective memory is displayed: all passers-by must have had recollections of the war. In this respect the chapter ‘Sociology and Everyday Culture’ in Augoyard and Torgue (2005) is illuminating: ‘Although it is essentially subjective, anamnesis also has an archetypal dimension, There are many shared backgrounds over which individual perceptions are laid.’ (p. 23) Finally the social conditions of the listening situation as specified by Margarete Imhof should be touched upon. Who is speaking to whom and with what justification? What is the goal of the interaction? The audible message of the victory celebration on the Reichstag roof proves to be a message with various meanings, depending on whether the person listening belonged to a victorious nation or the defeated nation. Soviet soldiers on the black market around the Reichstag building heard the shots from above and surely interpreted them as the joyful message of like-minded comrades celebrating, whereas the same sound event would most probably have given German listeners cause for concern. Revenge attacks on the German population carried out by the Soviet army were no exception after the end of the war. The semiotics of the sound as heard was thus dependent on a specific social condition: a person's origin.

## CONSIDERING CONSISTENT REPRESENTATIVENESS

Salvos are not an accidental tonal by-product of shooting; their sound - physically present and symbolically loaded - is the very aim of the action. As salvos are therefore fundamentally intentionally produced, we can speak of a consistent representativeness between the physical nature and the semiotics of the sound event itself.

As a victory ritual, the situation under analysis was purposefully staged in the vertical dimension. Even if no shots were fired, the auditory gesture, which is a mere re-enactment of the action that evoked sound, displays an even greater degree of vertical staging. This gives us a sense of how reported history can be highly staged.

A consistent representativeness is also identifiable in the comparison between the physical nature and semiotics of what was heard by passers-by. From below, the acoustically vehement shots were not only physically audible, but, owing to the historical context, the message they were carrying would have been clear. The interpretations of these shots, however, would have been varied. A victory ritual can only meet with acceptance from the so-called victors. A victory ritual by Soviet soldiers will have come across to the so-called losers of the Second World War as positively threatening.

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## NOTES

- 1 CRESSON. <http://www.cresson.archi.fr/>
- 2 Nature in the sense of the Greek theological, philosophical, and scientific term *Physis* (φύσις).
- 3 The data on the exact dates of the Battle of Berlin vary. The dates used came from the image brochure *Einblicke. Ein Rundgang durchs Parlamentsviertel*, published by the German Parliament (Bundestag). As published November 2008.
- 4 cf. e.g. 'Rotarmisten hissen die sowjetische Fahne auf dem Reichstag. Berlin, 30. April 1945. ('Soldiers in the Red Army are waving the Soviet flag on the Reichstag. Berlin, April 30, 1945.')[Photograph]'. DHM, Berlin F 51/2697. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/objekte/pict/ba007659/index.html>
- 5 cf. e.g. Yemen: 'Firing guns for celebrations has been a tradition passed on from father to son for generations, said Abdullah Hassan.' Retrieved February 2, 2011, from [http://www.minnpost.com/globalpost/2009/11/17/13502/the\\_yemeni\\_tradition\\_of\\_firing\\_automatic\\_weapons\\_at\\_weddings\\_succumbs\\_to\\_public\\_safety](http://www.minnpost.com/globalpost/2009/11/17/13502/the_yemeni_tradition_of_firing_automatic_weapons_at_weddings_succumbs_to_public_safety)

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## TABLE

Table 1 System of Categories by Anke Eckardt

## PHOTOGRAPH

Photograph 1 ‘Sowjetische Soldaten auf dem Reichstagsgebäude Anfang Mai 1945 (‘Soviet soldiers on the roof of the Berlin Reichstag at the beginning of May 1945’). Retrieved February 2, 2011, from [http://www.bundestag.de/blickpunkt/104\\_Spezial/0803/0803010.htm](http://www.bundestag.de/blickpunkt/104_Spezial/0803/0803010.htm)

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