

j . k o t t i n g

A M I L L I O N L E A V E S . song commentary

I am sitting in a room... writing my thoughts into sound instead of words.

I am thinking about sound, memory, materiality, and duration. I am thinking about blurring everything that is material and immaterial through sound because sound spans both. I can express ideas through sound in the form of music. Music is my metaphor for the relationship between body and place.

I hear wind and birds outside my room. But I am beginning to hear something else... it's a deep resonance of place.

Walls can speak, all the surfaces and depths of place can speak. Highly reverberant places entice us to make sounds which bounce and resound. The echoes carry with them some of the tone of the place itself. I am standing at the edge of a cliff, earth under my feet and a wide, reverberant space in front of me, above me, and below me.

My toes are stretching out, touching only air. They are aching to leap into the realm of virtual and infinitesimal possibility. It is not so much a choice as a moment in which all geographers are similarly poised. The individual geographer is located at the crux of what geography was and what it is becoming. Though we have discourse, geographers need no words to tell the story of this moment.

Places send out vibrations all the time, warped echoes of whatever sound they receive. The vibrations tremble your body, every organ and nerve. Sound is a physical thing. It's material when it's inside you. That is how sound negotiates the relationship between the body and place.

Sound is also just a force that pushes material things together and apart. Therefore, it's also immaterial. The issue of real world boundaries appears in the study of sound just as it appears in the study of geography. The space between the tangible and intangible is fuzzy, but does require that a tension between material and immaterial be negotiated – Much like the tension I'm exploring here between analog and digital.

As you listen to this organized sound I have composed, I want you to know the way in which non-textual music is an apparatus for meaning – a way to explore the interactions between bodies and places in regard to time by using sound ... because through sound, music is the "realization of actions set in motion."

In music, through compression and expansion, manipulating sound waves can express the way we think about time. In life, there are moments of intensity that happen through a slowing down or speeding up of our perception of time.

Just as there are infinite possibilities between two morphed sounds, there are infinite possibilities in a geographic study that enters the feedback between material and immaterial spaces. In this vibrational space, there is potential for extended temporal and spatial presence... a slow unwinding of perception into memory, so that duration and emergence of sound contribute to an experiential whole.

