



RESONANCE OF RUIN: EXPLORATIONS IN TEXTURE AND SOUND

Mitzi Beesemer

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This is a **Sad sam** designed by Stephen Czarnota in the 60s for the British company Sylvac based in Stoke-on-Trent (a small city close to the highway between Birmingham and Liverpool) . Some people refer to them as long faced dogs. My father calls him **Droopy**. It was a gift from him. I found a listing in which it is called a daddy dog.

I found a picture on tumblr where someone refers to it as:

“this fucking image makes me want to die. I can't explain it but they're sending me evil telepathic messages.”



It looks slightly different from the ones I have.
mine do not feel demonic to me.

I have three, they stand high on top of the cupboard as watch dogs.
They make me feel safe.
I look at them often in time of need.



This is a **porcelain boot**.

I found it in a second hand shop in Maastricht.

I thought it was a candle holder.

It is not.

I looked for similar boots online and they all said it was a planter.

One listing said the porcelain boot will bring me prosperity.

It spoke to me.

it spoke to me so much that I decided to collect more porcelain shoes:

I found this one:



**I placed it in front of a mirror
next to a dead rose.**

And this one:



**I Placed it inside a
cupboard next to an iPad.**

Why do I keep searching for these shoes?
I have a collection named: “eBay porcelain shoe listings” on my laptop.
I hope it will help me find out why they fit me so well.

Laura U. Marks writes in her book: *Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, about **the textural and material presence of the image. It suggests a closeness, an almost touch or feeling with the eyes, blurring the details but strengthening the sensory connection with the image.**

The book argues that media are inherently multisensory, even media like film, video and music. Marks investigates how these media can evoke the senses of touch, taste and smell and discusses this idea in relation to the body.

“The body is an archive of sensory memories and experiences.”

According to her, **interacting** with the media **through bodily senses gives** viewers **access** to this archive, where personal and collective histories are stored.

**Is this what makes my collection of
porcelain shoes and sad sams so
compelling to me?**

for blue suede shoes:

When I worked in a care center for dementia patients, a partner of one of the patients would come in every week.

They would sit together and listen to Blue suede shoes from Elvis.

The patient and the partner would listen and smile together.

The rest of the week she was silent and alone in the corner of the cafeteria.

According to an article by McDermott, Orrell & Ridder, "The effects of music go beyond the reduction of behavioral and psychological symptoms. Individual preference of music is preserved throughout the process of dementia. Sustaining musical and interpersonal connectedness would help value who the person is."

**"Blue suede shoes" was one of the last ways to connect to who she was.
or wanted to be.**

I found this Casette in a box.



It was a bit broken but could
still be played.

I played it and to my
surprise someone had taped
it over.

I listened to it.
The first song is:

Fernando.
“And I'm not ashamed to
say”
“The stars were bright,
Fernando”

It reminds me of painkillers.

In the room of my mind they appear simultaneously.

somehow.

They belong together.



"Objects are encrypted; they hold their secrets tightly, hidden behind a veneer of the observable". This "encryption" implies that objects possess depths that are felt rather than clearly seen or measured."

Writes Timothy Morton. He delves into the philosophical depths of how objects interact in his book *'Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality.'* Morton proposes a theory in which objects are never fully accessible or transparent.

Morton touches on object-oriented ontology: this is an ontology in which objects are viewed as living entities with intrinsic qualities that go beyond superficial appearances. The resonance of objects would communicate some of the essence of their source according to Morton. For example,"

the sound produced when a saw cuts through wood is not just sound, but a constructed event that conveys the interaction between saw-blade and wood."

If I look at the cassette through the eyes of Morton it should belong with **my cassette player**.

Not to play it in the normal manner.
But to press the button halfway.
If I slide my finger between 50 and
100 percent.

It will show me how they interact.
it will show me,

"The Rift."

"(Greek, chōrismos)"

"between a thing and its appearance."

**"a certain mystery between the thing
and its appearance.**

**unspeakability, enclosure,
withdrawal, secrecy."**

Like the girl on tumblr that wanted to
die after seeing a picture of three sad
Sams.



Timothy Morton writes:

"things are encrypted. But the difference between
standard encryption and the encryption of objects is
that this is an unbreakable encryption."

"Nature loves to hide"

("Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ")

(Heraclitus).

**"It can be attended to, attuned to, in different ways
that bring out strange hidden properties of that
object. In this sense playing an instrument is like
doing phenomenology. You are attending to the
inner structure of the object, allowing yourself to be
taken over by it.**

When you tune or play you are

making another object." According to Morton the
tuning is the birth of another object: "a tune, a
reading, an interpretation."

similar to Sampling.

Good examples of people who use sampling are Dean Blunt, J Dilla, Burial and Boards of Canada.

Michael J. Fennessey writes in his thesis “Beginning in the 20th century, the formal quality of the musical commodity shifts from an emphasis on performance to an emphasis on recording, and this shift constitutes the proliferation of recorded sound which can be stored in collections.”

Or used in a sonic collage as talked about in the thesis: *Analysis of Sampling Techniques by J Dilla in Donuts* written by Zachary Diaz.

Byung Chul Han writes about the collector in his book: *'Nonthings, Upheaval in The Lifeworld'*.

According to him” the collector of Walter Benjamin (in the book: *On Collectors and Collecting*) is interested not so much in the use or exchange value of things as in their history and physiognomy. In his hands, the age, landscape, craft, and previous owners of the thing crystallize into a 'Magic encyclopedia whose quintessence is **the fate of his object**'. The true collector is the opposite of the consumer; collectors are

interpreters of fate', 'physiognomists of the world of objects (Dingwelt). As soon as a collector holds [things] in his hands, he seems to be seeing through them into their distant past as though inspired.”

As if you are being found by the object instead. **Like a spirit inside the object waiting till finally someone is seduced to bring it inside.**

I felt this way when I walked into a shop close to my house.

Inside the shop there are three corridors with floor-to-ceiling cupboards. All filled to the top with small objects. Each cupboard is rented by a different anonymous person to sell the objects they were once seduced by but are no longer.

It is there that I found this:



**A music box piano.
It was yellowed and when you wind it up, you will
hear everything creak inside.
It made me feel nostalgic.**

it reminded me of a time where I would listen to my
ballerina music box, completed by my ladybug
jewelry collection inside. I would listen to it in my
pink room and fantasize about being a dancer.

My fantasy of what that dance life would look like, hovered over me well into my teenage years. the closer I came to it the more that life felt like a dream of something that belonged to the past or to only belong in fantasy.

Something you can play on repeat, like a self fabricated TikTok stuck in your mind.

A way to time travel to a past that is not really your own.

Like a shadow of a looping dream.

Like hauntology.

Mark Fisher talks about this redreaming of the past in his book *Ghosts Of My Life Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*. He does this through analyzing Burial's album **Untrue**.

Burial is a British electronic music producer from South London.

Fisher writes: "Burial's *Untrue* is a re-dreaming of the past, a condensation of relics of abandoned genres into an oneiric montage. His sound is a work of mourning rather than of melancholia, because he still longs for the lost object, still refuses to abandon the hope that it will return."

In a rare interview, in the December 2007 issue of *The Wire*, Burial told Mark Fisher:

"A lot of those old tunes I put on at night and I hear something in the tune that makes me feel sad... 'A few of my favorite producers and DJs are dead now too – and I hear this hope in all those old tracks, trying to unite the UK.'"

Music journalist Simon Reynolds writes in his longform article for Pitchfork in October, 2017: 'Untrue': "The word captures something about the insubstantiality of sound, its quality of dream or mirage: the way it conjures up tantalizing visions of a more perfect existence, out of reach and unattainable."

This unattainability can be felt through my
music box piano, it connects me to
memories of a life I never ended up having.

But to me, unlike the way Mark Fisher
writes about Burial, it is not depressing. To
me it feels like a fantasy and not like a
mirage cloaked as a real experience. It is
not something I mourn because it is still
here.

Just like the past is something you carry in
your body (archive).

It might be a bit warped because just like
objects, memories will age, fade and take
on a different form.

Thus it can become a very distant longing that feels similar to the nostalgia in *Music has the right
to children* by *Boards of Canada*.

Boards of Canada are a Scottish electronic music duo consisting of the brothers Michael Sandison and
Marcus Eoin.

In his article for Pitchfork in april 2018 Simon Reynolds writes: “Boards of Canada used a mixture
of analogue and digital techniques to give their music a wavering, mottled quality redolent of
formats like film, vinyl and magnetic tape that are susceptible to decay and distortion with the
passage of time. Listening to tracks like ‘*Wildlife Analysis*’ or ‘The Color of the Fire’, you can’t help
but think of yellowing photographs in the family album, blotchy and washed- out Super 8 films, or
the drop-out-addled sound of favorite cassettes left too long on the car dashboard.”

Simon Reynolds proceeds in his article about Burial: “A multitude of tracks sampled by burial
featured the word ‘dream’, often with an undertone suggesting that they knew deep down that it
was all just a dream,

Or as Burial says in his interview for The Wire:

“Sometimes you get that feeling **like a ghost touched your heart**, like someone walks with you.’
It felt very dream-like to me.”

A ghost touching your heart.

It resonates with the way Timothy Morton talks about “objects waiting for a new use.”

“There are more drastic cases of a ghostly half-life.. Objects that clutter attics, kept perhaps as heirlooms but never seen, even by those who inherit them. Underlying all these is an inherent property of all objects whatsoever: objects are already ghosts of themselves, because of the Rift between appearance and essence. On this view, death, birth and continuity are happening “simultaneously.”

“An object just is a “black hole” with a fading photograph of itself on its surface.”

‘(Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005), 95, 184).

When I look at my music box piano I see a dwindling idea of what it is supposed to mean similar to how Boards of Canada feeds into the feeling of the fading photograph. The sound of the creaking wheels inside the object makes it feel like it is dissolving, like a half-ghost of what it was meant to be.

Trish Keenan from the band Broadcast puts this really well into words in her interview for The Wire in October 2009:

"I think the evocation of memory in our music could be seen as the residue of imaginary time travel. You can either go forward or back. You go back in order to change something in the now, to redesign the course of events for personal reasons. When you go back to a previous musical time you're trying to recall a memory that never happened to you, that is not stored, so it would make sense that you hear a fuzzy dissolving sense of time and place as you call it. When you make music in backwards time travel it's a shadowy or faint impression as though you're looking back through two clouded lenses, one is the time travel portal the other is a false recollection process. In a way, when I go back to my own memories I feel as if that's not me either, when I think about myself as 13 or 20 I feel a disconnection from that person. It's the same with dreams. When you recall the events it never really happened to the waking you, but to the dreaming you. Memories are waking dreams and dreams are sleeping memories, when you make music inspired by this process you begin to break down conventional form in the same way that dreams and memories never start at the beginning or finish at the end. It seems to me that the past is always happening now, all previous events have positioned us here philosophically, geographically, and in the present we are always in memory..."

The interview gives me a strange feeling after listening to the recently released (05-2024) 'spell blanket': A collection of songs and sketches drawn from Trish Keenan's extensive archive of 4-track tapes and MiniDiscs. The recordings lay the groundwork for what would have been Broadcast's fifth album, offering a window into Trish and James' creative process during the post-Tender Buttons period from 2006-2009. Trish Keenan died in January 2011 of pneumonia, shortly after she had contracted swine flu while completing a tour of Australia with Broadcast.

" Like a ghost touched your heart."

When I think of her collection of 4 track tapes and MiniDiscs I think of those objects that clutter attics and are kept as heirlooms.

In the last chapter of the book '*Nonthings: Upheaval in the Lifeworld*,' Byung Chul Han talks about the Jukebox.

“Early one evening in the autumn of 2017, I was riding my bicycle through the Schöneberg area of Berlin when there was a sudden, heavy downpour. Cycling too fast down the slightly sloping Crellestraße, I skidded and was thrown to the ground. As I slowly got to my feet, not without difficulty, I found that I was in front of a shop selling jukeboxes. Having been familiar with jukeboxes from literature and films, I was curious, and I entered the shop. The elderly owners seemed a little surprised by my visit. Apparently, it was rare for someone to end up in their shop. I felt somewhat as though I were in a dream. Among the shop’s many old objects and props, I somewhat felt as if I had fallen out of time. It was probably also my painful fall that had made my perception hover. The fall created a rift in time; I time traveled into the *world of things*.”

Stepping into a dream

feels very important to what I search for.

Real things/ objects bring me there much more easily than digital objects. Digital objects are far away from reality so you would think they would bring more dreamlike qualities. But to me they often feel like smooth, embellished reflections of what a dream should feel like. It reduces the human experience to just information and makes it hard to connect with in a bodily manner. Byung Chul Han speaks on this in his book and names these objects 'nonthings'.

My relationship with digital objects is a bit strange.

I am addicted to looking for objects in every sense.

A lot of online platforms offer the possibility to 'save' someone's post/ object and put them in collections, it is something I spend a lot of my time doing.

It started when I was very young, I decided that I need to to save pictures of women I wished to look like.

then it became their house,

then it became pictures of their life.

Then I decided it needed to be something that could never look like me or my experience.

So it became bugs and spiders.

Now it's porcelain boots.

It doesn't feel as satisfying as finding a 'real' object most of the time.

It is a very short satisfaction.

Yet it is something I can't stop myself from doing.

Someone who is really good at finding a way to bridge this gap between the digital and the physical experience is the person behind the instagram page *@crisis.acting*.

On the page you can find a plethora of (most of the time) low quality videos taken out of context and shown in a carousel post.

It often shows an extreme weather environment, a party or people dancing, a religious site or ritual, a strange machine, a liminal space, a concert, something with fire or an extreme sport, a parade or festival, shadows of war or extreme violence, a funny animal, an unreal looking place in nature.

Every time I scroll through them it makes me dream in a similar way as when I walk through the shop with the high cupboards full of objects by anonymous vendors. It's giving just enough or exactly the right amount to convey a fantasy, to create a feeling of mysticism, transcendence.

Transcendence and mysticism

Is what I search for in my objects.

Something that touches me.
Something that makes me
dream.

Director and screenwriter Paul Schrader writes about transcendence in film by analyzing three directors—Yasujiro Ozu, Robert Bresson, and Carl Dreyer. He posits a common dramatic language used by these artists from divergent cultures. In his book *“Transcendental Style in Film”*, he poses the transcendental style as an expression of a spiritual state by means of austere camerawork, acting devoid of self-consciousness, and editing that avoids editorial comment. Schrader asserts the existence of the Transcendent, defined as a metaphysical agency that is “Wholly Other.” Although the Transcendent cannot be analyzed, he further argues, one can “describe the immanent and the manner in which it is transcended”. His focus therefore shifts to the realm of immanent acts and artifacts “which express the Transcendent in human reflection; man-made, man-organized, or man-selected works which are more expressive of the Wholly Other than of their individual creators, works such as the Byzantine ikons or Zen gardens”

Paul Schrader’s idea of transcendence is much more austere than mine but I agree with him that an element of mundanity can give it more mystery.

Rian Phin, a fashion theorist that and cultural critic speaks on this through the concept of
the mysterious mundane
in one of her youtube videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5VyeYSqVpE>

“do you know those pictures on tumblr that are kind of unsettling to look at but are also really enchanting. And it feels like you want to go down a rabbit hole the moment you see one, of surreal dream-like images, of people just doing really normal things to the point that it’s so mundane that it feels familiar to you, you’ve never seen these pictures and you’re pretty sure you’ve never seen them but you are kind of like, haven’t I?

And haven’t I been in some of these pictures? where it feels like when you are looking at the pictures on a digital camera after a pool party with your friends.. And you’re like aw that’s so cute, that’s so fun, but these are people you’ve never seen before in circumstances you’ve never seen before. You see these people in Russia in 2006 just standing outside on what looks like cctv. And you’re like I’ve never been in Russia but there is something so familiar and like weird about this picture that I like and don’t understand. It feels familiar but also like something I’ve never seen before so

I need to keep seeing more pictures of it.”

“I need to keep seeing more pictures of it,”

is exactly the kind of feeling I get when I make my collections. I need to hear or see it a thousand times through different angles to try to understand what it is about the thing that touches me so much.

When I look at my collection of objects they seem so random and mundane. Yet to me
they seem almost like relics for a ritual. Like a tool to find transcendence.

Timothy Morton suggests that our reality is made up of countless unique objects that cannot be fully comprehended. This reality is boundless, rich in complexity, playful, and captivating, while also being anarchic with occasional instances of order. It is both frustrating and filled with illusions and oddities. Objects in this reality are direct and without hidden dimensions, which paradoxically makes them strange: they are conspicuously present, yet their mere existence is miraculous.

there is a transcendental crack between appearing and knowing.”

I tend to place myself in this crack.

Mark Fisher writes in his *'Ghosts of my life'*:

“In 1982, I taped ‘Ghosts’ from the radio and chain-listened to it: pressing play, rewinding the cassette, repeating. ‘Ghosts’ is a record which, even now, compels you to keep replaying it. Partly, that’s because of the way the record teems with detail: you never feel you’ve fully grasped it all.”

It resonates with my idea of a ritualistic search for an answer to the question:

why does it feel so familiar and so strange?

This is how I approach my objects.
I amplify their inner structure, resonance
and texture through the contact
microphones hoping to find an answer.

I hold the handle of the music box piano. I
move it back and forth and back and forth I
listen to it creak. I amplify it. I allow it to
be a repetition of itself, just a little bit
different every time.

I attune it into a new object with a blurry
photograph of the ghost it came from on
its face.

an interpretation.
a birth of another.

sad Sam
droopy
daddy dog
Stoke-on-Trent
telepathic
not demonic
watch dogs

three
porcelain boots
it is not
listing
it spoke to me
dead rose
iPad
presence
body archive
Prosperity

care
smile
alone
silent
cafeteria
who she was
Fernando
painkillers
they belong together
exist together

never fully accessible
never transparent
beyond superficial
encrypted

behind a veneer
The rift
Between
A memory
Ballerina
A ghost
Ladybug
My collection

The age
Landscape
Previous owners
As if
A spirit
Waiting to
Floor to ceiling
Anonymous
It is there
Abandoned

Pink room
Teenage
Makes me
Untrue

Out of reach
To children
Mottled
Wavering
Blotchy
On the car dashboard

That feeling
Like a ghost touched your heart
Clutter
heirlooms
Shadowy
Backwards
Sleeping

Tender
Window
Lens
Digital
Jewellery
Between saw blade and wood.

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