

Spiritual Attunement

*Pentecostal Radio in the Soundscape of a Favela
in Rio de Janeiro*

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Music is not in visible space, but it besieges, undermines and displaces that space, so that soon these overdressed listeners who take on a judicial air and exchange remarks or smiles, unaware that the floor is trembling beneath their feet are like a ship's crew on the surface of a tempestuous sea. The two spaces are distinguishable only against the background of a common world, and can compete with each other only because they both lay claim to total being.

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*

Religious affirmation of presence, whether in hearing and being heard or in seeing and being seen, need to be taken seriously on their own terms, but, at the same time, the acknowledgement of that intersubjective framing is not intended to free such experiences from the contextual densities of culture and power.

—Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion,
and the American Enlightenment*

One Saturday morning at the beginning of my fieldwork on the appeal of Pentecostal media in a favela in Rio de Janeiro,¹ I was helping Pastor Abrahão of the Assembléia de Deus (Assemblies of God) with construction work outside the church.² The pastor was improving the church building with the help of Bernardo and Paulo, two congregants. The radio was on inside the church. The volume was quite low, but the background music provided an audible rhythm that eased the work. Nobody seemed to hear the lyrics. At a certain moment, however, one of the men

noticed that the rhythm was that of funk music, popular Brazilian dance music mostly played at dances in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.³ It was only at that moment that we became aware of the style of music that was being aired. I had assumed it was a Christian broadcaster and, apparently, so had the others. The pastor stopped working and ordered us to change the frequency and find a Christian radio channel. When I asked him why, he replied: “That is the *radio comunitario* [community radio] transmitting from CIEP [Centros Integrados de Educação Pública, or Public Education Center].⁴ They play only *baile* [dance] funk music that has a lot of *palavrão* [profanity] about drugs and prostitution.” Such music should not be heard, particularly not in a church, according to Abrahão. “What if people were to hear such music coming from our church?” he exclaimed. Bernardo quickly found the Christian radio station, El Shadai (93 FM), that was very popular among people who attended the Assembléia de Deus in the favela.⁵ I was a bit surprised that the community radio was regarded so critically. It broadcast a variety of programs in which different music genres were aired. However, that was exactly the problem for many *evangélicos* (evangelicals). There had been a gospel program on the community radio but according to several people it had disappeared because it had to share the same air space with radio programs that featured funk or *pagode* music.⁶ Gilberto, one of the inhabitants, later explained to me that listening to gospel on a radio that broadcast funk afterward was not right: “The light does not combine with the darkness, that is why they play only gospel on El Shadai.”

Pentecostal Media in Brazil

Among a wide variety of scholars,⁷ it is accepted that the rising popularity of Pentecostal⁸ churches in Brazil since the mid-eighties has to be understood in relation to their appropriation of modern mass media and the country’s pressing socioeconomic inequality.⁹ While the Pentecostal churches expanded rapidly, the number of adherents of the Roman Catholic Church declined. According to a number of academics, the reason for the appeal of Pentecostalism is the fact that, unlike the Catholic Church, the Pentecostal churches in many instances offer direct spiritual interventions in situations of relative poverty and violence.¹⁰

The growth of Pentecostal churches in Brazil largely corresponds to their success in the rest of Latin America and in most other parts of the world. In Latin America, Pentecostal groups have grown substantially since the eighties,¹¹ and, in various parts of Africa, Pentecostalism has become one of the most popular types of Christianity.¹² Indeed, as several authors have noted, the spread of Pentecostalism runs markedly parallel to other well-known forms of cultural globalization.¹³

Brazilian Pentecostal churches have become increasingly present in the public domain; the globally operating Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) has become especially visible (and audible) in Brazil. According to its own silver jubilee publication in 2003, it has 6,500 churches in Brazil and a total of 8 million members in more than seventy countries worldwide. Over the last twenty years, it has built many huge “cathedrals” throughout the country and has bought one of the six national public television broadcast networks, Rede Record, which consists of thirty broadcast stations. Apart from this, it has a professional Internet site, its own publishing house, and a record company. It publishes the weekly newspaper *Folha Universal* (Universal Paper), which it claims has a circulation of one and a half million per week, and it owns several radio stations that broadcast twenty-four hours a day.

Strikingly, the Igreja Universal and many of the more conservative Pentecostal churches, such as the Assembléia de Deus, have broken with the Pentecostal reluctance to interfere with “worldly politics,” and the Brazilian elections of the last fifteen years have demonstrated that their electoral base was quite solid.¹⁴ In their broadcasts and journals the Pentecostal representatives present utopist visions of a better society, based on Christian values. They offer concrete practices such as church services, collective prayer, and exorcism of evil spirits, which, according to the representatives counter the socioeconomic and personal problems that haunt a large portion of the Brazilian population. In combination with these practices, the mediatized images of charismatic, trustworthy evangelical politicians (men of God) who answer to a “Higher Authority” than man have created new political profiles for politicians in Brazil.¹⁵

As a result of the growing constituency of Pentecostal politicians in Brazil, many authors have focused on the institutional developments within the Pentecostal churches in relation to the newly acquired media channels and political projects. Analysis is mostly centered on the content of the mass media, on the religious doctrines and practices, and on the political endeavors of pastors and other church leaders.¹⁶ One of the central, recurring questions is how this mass mediatized political involvement relates to the presumed and often prescribed separation between church and state within a nation that grants freedom of religious practice,¹⁷ a question that is equally pertinent in many other countries where religious movements have become part and parcel of the public sphere.¹⁸

While this article largely rests on the work of the authors cited, I will analyze not so much the direct implication of media in political movements but rather the specific modalities whereby Pentecostal media, especially electroacoustic media, are integrated in the everyday life of the urban environments where Pentecostalism has become so popular: the favelas of the Brazilian metropolis.¹⁹ Additionally, following recent literature on

the nexus of religion, technology, and bodily dispositions, I will explore some of the more intricate transformations that the use of electroacoustic technology brings about.²⁰ To do so, this article focuses on two distinct, yet dialectically related, dimensions of sound. The first dimension is characterized by the materiality of sound, its appearance as an extension of material and social boundaries. The second is characterized by its immateriality, its manifestation as an immediate presence that defies boundaries.

The first section of this paper examines the everyday life of sound in the favela, its relation to the landscape and the ways in which it is employed to mark off space and to express identity and alterity. Pentecostal broadcasts acquire their meaning against the background of sound and music that is defined as “worldly” instead of godly. The cacophony of samba, funk, and gospel in the dense urban space of the favela reflects the power struggles that are going on and the position that Pentecostal groups try to maintain. Music and noise are important tools in the formation and maintenance of boundaries between different social groups, and one of the reasons that people are inclined to listen to evangelical radio and to play gospel music is that it signals their “sanctified” position in the harsh and complex social conditions of the favela.

The second section of this paper takes a closer look at what it means to encode religious experience in sound, inculcating what Charles Hirschkind has called a “moral attunement,” which in my case refers to the belief that evangelical radio-listening instills Christian virtues.²¹ Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida, who has argued that there exists an elective affinity between Christianity and televisual technology, I argue that radio, too, may produce an experience of “real presence,” which Derrida understands to be one of the results of the evangelical use of television. To many evangelicals, electroacoustic technology, such as radio, is considered an important means to be in touch with God. This emotionally charged experience subjectively confirms the *status aparte* of the persons who adhere to the Pentecostal churches and, as such, authenticates the social distinctions they make between them and the other favela inhabitants.

The Soundscape of the Favela: *Musica do Mundo versus Musica Evangélica*

Pentecostal broadcasts are aimed at people living in relative poverty, many of whom live in the favelas of the large Brazilian cities. A variety of scholars have described the day-to-day lifeworld of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, and their work has contributed to a broadening of the one-dimensional characterization of these places as bounded communities of *favelados*.²² Favelas are heterogeneous places, with internal forms of order, government, and sociability that are interwoven with supralocal struc-

tures and institutions, as scholars such as Marcus Alvito, Alba Zaluar, Desmond Arias, and Donna Goldstein have demonstrated.²³ In general, favela inhabitants earn significantly lower incomes than those living in other urban spaces, while they have had to deal with the presence of heavily armed drug gangs, police brutality, a dearth of decent infrastructure, and a lack of social welfare policy and implementation. Yet, it is especially in and around these areas that Pentecostal churches have flourished.²⁴

Moving away from the focus on poverty, crime, and dysfunction and its relations to religious institutions, this article draws on the burgeoning literature that questions the privileging of visual culture in scholarly work to examine in technical and ethnographic detail the social life of sound and soundscapes.²⁵ In the words of Steven Feld: “Ethnographic and cultural-geographic work on senses of place has been dominated by the visualism deeply rooted in the European concept of landscape.”²⁶ This one-sided dimension of the representation of place is remarkable because one would expect that “the overwhelmingly multisensory character of perceptual experience of place should lead to some expectation for a multisensory conceptualization of place.”²⁷ As I will explore in more detail further on in this article, the soundscape of the favela acquires its unique qualities in relation to its architecture, which consists of small houses, with porous walls, built on top of each other.²⁸

Sound systems form an important part of the daily life of the people who live in the favela.²⁹ Despite the difficult economic circumstances of many families, I encountered hardly a household that did not have a radio or sound system (*som*), and in most of the houses in the favela I heard music throughout the day. During the day, many people who worked in and around the house tended to listen to music from disc or from the radio: the women who were cleaning their houses or were sewing clothes; the men who were working in construction in the favela. In the bars and little stores in the favela, the radio was almost invariably turned on. The presence of all these electroacoustic devices meant that, besides the amplified music of the funk and *pagode* that dominated the soundscape at particular times, there were countless other sounds present in the soundscape.

Gospel music was present both inside and outside evangelical churches in the favela. Inside, *louvores* (hymns) were accompanied by a range of musical forms, from a recorded tape or a single synthesizer to large bands of (semi)professional musicians, depending on the size and wealth of the church. Music is central to emotional participation in most of the church services, bringing about the reception of the Holy Spirit manifest in the shaking, dancing, and speaking in tongues of adherents. As I was often invited to play drums in two churches in the favela, I witnessed how the interaction between musicians and other members would lead to an exalted state of being. The repetition of chords and lyrics, the increased

tempo and loudness, set the tone and environment for the word of God to be preached with the right fervor to move the people in the church. When the pastor began preaching in the right emotional style that characterizes most Pentecostal sermons, people would reply with *aleluiahas*. Were these different performances to combine and reinforce each other properly, most people would be satisfied with the service. If the music was very good, the service would *pega fogo* (be set on fire), they said.

Yet, all this pleasure must be understood against the background of the strict (discursive) separation between *musica do mundo* (music of the world) and *musica evangélica* (evangelical music) that many people in the churches try to safeguard. Read, for example, the words of the pastor-musician Ronaldo Bezerra on the Web site of the evangelical radio station Melodia. Bezerra responds to three often-posed questions:

Can we enjoy secular music [*música secular*]? Does God concern himself with the question? Is it a sin to enjoy secular music? To answer these three questions quickly: 1) You can enjoy [*curtir*] secular music. You can also throw yourself in front of a truck. You can even go to hell should you want to (there is more to life besides “can or cannot”). 2) Certainly God concerns Himself with the question. 3) No, it is not a sin to enjoy secular music. But it is also not a sin to cross the street with your eyes closed. It is only not very smart. . . . The Bible says: All things are lawful to me—but not everything is beneficial. All things are lawful to me—but I will not be controlled by anything (1 Cor 6:12). As far as I am concerned music is one of these things. Enjoying secular music itself won’t take anyone to hell. However, it will not bring anyone closer to the Lord. On the contrary, depending on the music, it could even freeze us spiritually.³⁰

This last example illustrates a preoccupation I heard over and over again during my fieldwork—the fear of a possible contamination of Christian lifestyle as the result of listening to the wrong music. During many a weekend in the favela the “worldly” sound of samba and *pagode* echoed through the night and dominated the soundscape. Yet, the sound of funk definitively won every contest in terms of loudness.³¹ The music of the *baile* funk was played so loudly that no one could hide from it, literally. Mostly on Fridays the trucks of the Big Mix, organizer of *baile* funk parties, would arrive to set up two walls of approximately eight-by-four meters of professional loudspeakers on one of the few public squares. Around midnight the first sounds would thunder through the favela. When I asked the older inhabitants what they thought about the music and its loudness, many of them just sighed: “Estamos acostumado” (We are accustomed to it).³²

The funk parties were a thrilling experience, particularly because during the festivities armed men of the local drug gang mounted the dance

floor and moved through the dancing mass with their firearms in full view. Songs that praised the power of the *comando vermelho* enforced the feeling that they were parading.³³ The songs that accompanied their entrance were met with cheers and people sang along. In general, the lyrics of these songs talk about the status of the singers as *bandidos*, life in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, and the power of the *traficantes* (traffickers). Many of the funk lyrics are a reflection of the violent living conditions experienced by the young people who are involved in the *tráfico* (drug trade) in the favelas, as well as a demonstration of the territorial power of the *tráfico*.

The *bailes* were quite popular among the young people in the favela. Young male friends of mine cleaned their Nike tennis shoes, put on their hippest clothes, and set out to watch the girls dancing. The girls, who were generally scantily clad in tank tops—showing their bellies (*barriga de fora*)—and hot pants, likewise were looking at the boys. The fat beats were truly intoxicating. The *bailes* were not merely fun, they were also a means of communicating that the favela was in the hands of the *comando vermelho*. The enormously loud music could be heard well beyond the confines of the favela and demonstrated that the *traficantes* had the power to defy the police and the other drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro. Quite apart from entertainment value, the parties also implied business. On many Friday nights the police were suspiciously absent from the vicinity of the squares where the *bailes* were held, and many inhabitants suspected they were paid to stay away from these events.

The people who attended Pentecostal churches strongly disapproved of the *baile* funk parties, not least because in their opinion the lyrics of the music contained *palavrão*—profanity about sex, drugs, and violence. For most of them going to a *baile* was generally associated with the *caminho errado*—literally, the “wrong way” that leads one astray from God.³⁴ Like the funk parties, the *pagodes* and samba parties were also spoken of with contempt, and many people who attended the Pentecostal churches would not like to have been seen near such a party.³⁵ To most *evangélicos* it was very clear that one should not listen to ordinary funk music on one’s sound system because it was so narrowly bounded up with moral transgressions and violence. Yet, there are a number of other explications why sound and musical preference are such important elements of social identification in the favela.

Sound, Architecture, and Social Differentiation

During my observations of and conversations with people who attended the evangelical churches, I witnessed people who reacted to the gospel music that was audible in the public domain of the favela with delight. Yet, the same people often expressed alarm, disgust, or other negative

comments. By and large, people commented on the dangers of contamination of the *musica evangélica* by the *musica do mundo*, or the dangers of contamination of evangelical space by music of the world. In other words, most people expressed their worries about the disappearance or transgression of boundaries between what they considered the divine and the worldly realms.³⁶ These fears were heavily related to the different social groups that divided the dense space of the favela and the sounds they produced.

Sound, in relation to the (human) capacity for hearing, produces quite unique possibilities for signaling the presence of individuals and groups in the vicinity of auditors, when the view upon them is obstructed for whatever reason. Furthermore, sound has the unique capacity to traverse space in a centrifugal movement, to fill it, to occupy it, while at any given point an auditor can feel enveloped by it as it reverberates against the solid materials of the built environment. These qualities denote the Janus-faced character of sound in relation to territory. On the one hand, its material dimension can appear to be an extension of material and social boundaries. On the other hand, its immaterial dimension can appear to transgress these boundaries fluently.

My focus on the soundscape in this article is strongly related to the architecture of the favela and its sociocultural characteristics. The favela is made up of small houses built on top of each other, narrow alleys, and small flights of concrete stairs. The houses are poorly insulated and often inhabited by many people. Social life in the favela is therefore ineluctably characterized by proximity and the need for (dis)sociation. This has several consequences for the formation and consolidation of social groups at particular moments in time. Inescapably, people live close to each other, are related to or know each other's families well. Inhabitants are often dependent on the solidarity of neighbors but also fear their gossip. Most people take great care with whom they are involved or seen in public. Many social categories are employed to pass moral judgments on certain people, and it therefore matters enormously with what groups one could be identified.³⁷

Sound is an important instrument of identification of social categories, especially in a place characterized by proximity. People are very much aware of what they and others listen to because they are often confronted with the sounds of others. Though by no means can the significance of sound be taken at face value, the particular boundary-crossing capabilities of sound indicate its unique ability to designate and identify the presence of certain groups and activities. Yet, it also means the soundscape is a site of power and conflict. One can, for example, also literally defend oneself by erecting a wall of sound in response. Jacques Attali highlights the dia-

lectual relation between sound and power; according to him, sound—and music, in particular—is “is a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality, it is what links a power center to its subjects, and thus, more generally, it is an attribute of power in all its forms.”³⁸

In the favela, musical style was central to the definition of group identity and social distinction.³⁹ People described each other as *sambista*, *pagodeiro*, and *funkeiro*, depending on their preference and affiliation.⁴⁰ Likewise, evangélicos and people from the northeast of Brazil were often recognized by the music they played and listened to.⁴¹ In general, *style* can be defined as “the forming form”⁴² or, as Charles Keil and Steven Feld argue, “a deeply satisfying distillation of the way a very well integrated human group likes to do things.”⁴³ In their work on the experience of musical participation and mediation, Keil and Feld argue that “the presence of [music] style indicates a strong community, an intense sociability that has been given shape through time, an assertion of control over collective feelings so powerful that any expressive innovator in the community will necessarily put his or her content in that shaping continuum and no other.”⁴⁴

The peculiar relation between sound and identity also emerges from the particular material, tactile qualities of sound itself. As several scholars have argued, (musical) sound is like touch, in that it reaches out and creates a sensate, physical experience of connection.⁴⁵ As Daniel Putman has written: “The way that music refers to something is the same way that touch refers to something—immediate, nonconceptual, frequently imprecise, often emotionally powerful, definitively informative.”⁴⁶ And it is this intense, immediate, personal experience of music—and not just its sociological expression of group identity—that helps explain why music is experienced as deeply personal as well as social by *evangélicos* in Brazil. For *evangélicos* in the favela, music is an important means of social identification that provides them with a strong sense of belonging and, at the same time, separates them from the irreligious world to which they are opposed but within which they live every day. It is because *evangélicos* identify such a sharp separation between sacred and profane, *musica evangélica* and *musica do mundo*, and at the same time are unable to fully separate the two in their everyday lives that the policing of these boundaries becomes so intense.

Spiritual Attunement

Much has been written by Brazilian scholars of Pentecostalism about the transition from “living in the world” to being *crente* (a believer), in which the change in modes of conduct and dress and regular participation in church life are inward and outward signs of a new social identity.⁴⁷ This literature reveals how being Pentecostal is not just a matter of belief, but

of regulating everyday habits and practices: no drinking or smoking, no cursing and swearing, no illicit sexual affairs, no idolatry, and so on. In other words, apart from the explicit sacred activities like going to a service, one has to be aware not to perpetrate those mundane practices, which are considered sinful or could lead to a possible contamination of a Christian lifestyle. According to John Burdick, for many *evangélicos* the consequences of the distinction between mundane and Christian lifestyles can be observed in the activities in leisure time.⁴⁸ The normative differences between godly and mundane lifestyles stimulate people to fill the few free hours they have with activities that bring them closer to the Lord: helping in church activities, listening to gospel music, or reading the Bible. Talking about the *crentes* in the favela Santa Marta in Rio de Janeiro, Clara Mafra describes how leisure practices and media consumption are regulated by an ideal of sanctification, an ideal that can only be produced by a “rigid control over the music that is heard, the TV programs that are permitted, [and] the written message that one reads.”⁴⁹

Various people in the favela of my research explained that their conversion was accompanied by a sudden dislike of *pagode* and funk. Pertinently, they also often related their disliking of such music to the lifestyle of the people who participated in the *baile* funk and the *pagodes*, whose sexual behavior and love of beer and *cachaça* were often associated with demonic influences.⁵⁰ Expressing love for gospel carried an implicit religious/moral statement about life in the favela and hence also often meant expressing aversion to the wrong, mundane lifestyle. The *status aparte* proclaimed by many of the *evangélicos* was precarious. As church leaders and cocongregants would often state: “Crente tem que ser diferente” (The believer has to be different). The only way they could claim a certain “sanctified” position in the environment of the favela was to truly demonstrate that they practiced what they preached. This largely meant no partying at the *baile* funk, no smoking, no drinking, but also no deliberate listening to funk or *pagode* music. This regulation of mass media practices through normative statements by church leaders and social control of cocongregants is simultaneously an effort to ensure that people become and stay “sanctified,” as it is part of identity politics.

Radio and music is an integral part of this dynamic. The training to be attentive to the kind of music one plays and listens to is part and parcel of the identity politics. In the dense social spaces of the favela, social control over music/radio listening is exercised by friends and relatives but also by nonevangelical neighbors who question the sanctity of their fellow inhabitants. The significance and potential of specific sounds in relation to the self and to the others is crucial to listening performances that sustain one’s evangelical identity in the favela.⁵¹ The following fragment from an interview with Franck, a young man, demonstrates the considerations and

worries of many *evangélicos* concerning radio use and their self-disciplining media performances that stem from it. Franck explained to me that he loved radio but listened to only one broadcaster, the evangelical radio station 93 FM (El Shadai). When I asked him if he ever listened to other music, he replied:

Never to other music, only gospel, gospel, gospel. When I did not belong to the church, I liked *pagode* and samba very much, I danced the samba [samba] a lot, but then I did not belong to the church.

Why don't you listen to pagode anymore?

It doesn't edify me, no. Today, if you were to listen to the music of today, if you could hear rap or funk, if you would see the lyrics, these are things. I think a child should not hear the things they hear today. In the past the raps and the funk were like this for example: [starts singing] "I went to the corner of the school where everything began, I was looking at her . . ." you know, that was how it went and nothing more. Today, I can't even tell you. You hear the *pagode* and the funk of today. They only talk about garbage. Let's see if I remember one of them, no I don't want to sing it, no. You know when you hear it all the time you record [*grava*] it. The music is so indecent, I think it shouldn't be sung. Rap is really absurd, it is a load of garbage that only leads people to prostitute themselves. When that music is heard people prostitute themselves faster, understand. I do not agree, I would rather not listen to it. As I told you, either you grant space to God or you grant space to the devil. That music doesn't take you to God. It doesn't make it to the throne of God. That's why I can't listen to that music. I prefer to listen to the *louvores*. It is difficult, you know why. If I were to arrive at work for example and I put *pagode* on, my colleagues who do not belong to the church would come in and hear that music, they would say: "Are you listening to this music, aren't you a *crente*?" I can't give them an opening to talk like that, they will judge you. Because a *crente* can't look at women, a *crente* can't listen to *musica do mundo*, a *crente* can't dance, a *crente* can't go to a *baile*, he really can't, so when we give them the smallest opening people will take advantage of it: "Oh that *crente* there is listening to *pagode*." We would lose that authority, that thing of the Christians. We have to be cautious.

Who is judging you?

The *impíos*, *ímpios* are the people who have not accepted Jesus. They can do it, but we can't. They judge. So afterward, when we want to talk about God they say: "You are talking about God to me? You are no *crente*, you don't belong to the church, you were dancing there."

But that must be difficult here in the favela. There are always people from the church or impíos in the vicinity?

That is why you have to be very careful.

How do you do that?

You have to make the separation. Grant space only to God. Try to do the good things, the things that please God. You understand, you should never again listen to worldly music. Don't put it on the radio. Surely we do hear worldly music, music that is not from the church, that isn't gospel. We hear it the moment we step out of the *Assembléia de Deus*. But not on my radio that is playing. I won't put it on. I am not singing it either. I won't arrive at home and put on a *pagode*, a samba, or a rap. I would never tune into a mundane radio channel on my radio. That is music that praises the devil. The music on my radio pleases God. It brings the word to my brothers, the pastor gives a word that educates, I want to improve every day and every moment in order to make sure that people won't see my failures and accuse me afterward when I pass by with my folders saying to the people that God loves them. They will attack me: "How can you say 'God loves you,' when you are doing that?" They say that. It is better to be cautious. We are different.⁵²

The dynamic that becomes obvious in this quote resembles to a certain extent Hirschkind's elaborate description of sermon-listening in Egypt (as my emphasis on "moral attunement" has already indicated). Among my informants, the idea was widespread that listening to Pentecostal radio or music would instill certain Christian virtues, enabling them, to use Hirschkind's wording, to "live more piously and avoid moral transgressions."⁵³ Yet, unlike Hirschkind's informants, my informants did not recognize particular and elaborate bodily dispositions and emotional states in or during the actual act (performance) of listening. Certainly there were all kinds of emotional states described; however, there were no widespread instructions about, or techniques for, *how* to listen in order to experience sermons correctly, as Hirschkind has described with his informants. For my informants, moral *attunement* was literally related to the *tuning* of the radio to an evangelical broadcaster, so as to demonstrate that one led a virtuous life. In the remainder of this article, I will explore another important reason that evangelicals feel compelled to tune into evangelical radio stations.

The Elective Affinity between Radio and Pentecostalism

I was drawn to evangelical radio when I discovered that *evangélicos* in the favela often understood radio as an instrument that put them in touch with God, so as to achieve a divine state of being. For example, Rodrigo, one of my friends from the *Assembléia de Deus*, understood listening to

the radio as part of the search for the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴ When I asked Rodrigo how this search proceeded exactly, he said the following:

I began to fast. I began to separate myself. *Sanctification*, from saint [*santo*], means separated; *to sanctify* means to separate; *sanctification* means separation. I began to separate myself, fornication I already no longer indulged in, you know, Jesus had already liberated me. I said from now on only when I am married. That was already determined, that particular desire was taken from me. Then I began to search for the Holy Spirit, fasting, praying, reading the Bible. Early in the morning I woke up to pray. Sometimes I went to sleep very late because I was praying, listening to the word of God on the radio. I made a promise to God, I will only stop fasting after I am married, I kept searching. One week before I was married I received the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵

An interesting aspect of this quote is that he mentions radio as an instrument to separate himself, in the religious sense of the word. He describes radio as an essential part of his search for the Holy Spirit and his effort to be in touch with the word of God. Such emphasis on the spiritual qualities of radio is not by chance, as I will argue below. Several other authors have described the particularities of radio listening. David Hendy, for example, has argued that the lack of images in radio listening provides for a sense of greater emotional experience than is often the case with television watching (and listening).⁵⁶ Similarly, Kate Lacey argues that radio listening enhances an experience of intimacy.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, we should not forget that what may be experienced by some as a very intimate experience with the word (or sound) of God, others experience as an intrusion in their private space. Furthermore, the emphasis on separation in the religious sense also points to the quality of radio as an electroacoustic instrument that may help to separate someone in the physical sense of the word. Electroacoustic devices can also create a sense of intimacy because they block other sounds in the environment; they can create a wall of sound that separates someone physically. Seemingly paradoxically, this feeling of intimacy (and separation) is achieved by means of an inherently public medium.

While various people have been struck by the sense of intimacy and emotional attachment that radio listening enforces, few people have attempted to link this particular quality of radio and electroacoustic technology to Pentecostalism. Jacques Derrida suggested there is an elective affinity between Christianity and mass media.⁵⁸ Derrida argues that, in contrast to Judaism or Islam, the merger between Christianity and televisual technologies produces the “real presence” of something that is otherwise mostly spoken about. The televised Eucharist and the televised miracles, “the thing itself, the event takes place in front of a camera . . .

the thing actually takes place ‘live’ as a religious event, *as* a sacred event. In other religions religion is *spoken about*, but the sacred event itself does not take place in the very flesh of those who present themselves before the camera.”⁵⁹ Derrida argues that the intersection of Christian movements and televisual media demonstrates a particular connection between faith and knowledge that hitherto was not as obvious:

There is no need any more to believe, one can see. But seeing is always organized by a technical (mediatic and mediatizing) structure that supposes the appeal to faith. The simulation of “live” transmission which has you to believe what you cannot manage to believe: that you are before “the thing itself”; you are there, at the Gulf War; there are reporters there, with their cameras, who transmit to you live without intervention without technical interposition. . . . Now one knows very well—and this is the most rudimentary knowledge concerning what television is in reality—that *there is never anything live*. All of that is *produced* [*monté*] in a fraction of a second, in studios where one can instantaneously frame, efface, reconstruct, manipulate [*truquer*]. The presumption remains, and with it, the common prejudice, the structural credulity that television, by contrast with printed newspapers and radio, allows you to *see* the thing itself, *to see what touches* with the Evangelical dimension; one can almost put one’s finger on the wound, touching; you can touch; that’s coming one day; we’ll be able not only to see but to touch. Belief is both suspended in the name of intuition and of knowledge, and (at the same time, naturally) reinforced. . . . There is no need to believe; one believes; no effort is necessary because no doubt is possible. . . . This is the argumentative strategy that is actually used in all the milieus of proselytism, of conversion, of appeals to particular, determinate religions. . . . Believe me immediately because there is no need to believe blindly, since certitude is there in the immediacy of the senses.⁶⁰

If the promise of touch and of nonmediation (“real presence”) lies at the root of this elective affinity between Christianity and the mass media, consequently radio and other electroacoustic technologies deserve more attention than is given in many studies about Pentecostalism in Brazil.⁶¹ While it is clear that vision has a particular place in the historical discernments between faith and knowledge in modern society—and it is this discernment that Derrida is trying to unravel for us here—I would like to argue that electroacoustic technology used by Pentecostals also produces experiences of nonmediation and touch that verify the “real presence” of the divine for the listeners. One therefore wonders if Derrida’s argument would be very different if he was asked to talk about evangelical radio. For many people who attend Pentecostal churches, recorded music is considered an important means of being in touch with God. Take, for example, the words of Gilberto:

God talks to you by means of *louvor*. It is *louvor* that is giving you the word of God. You feel the power of God through *louvor*. God talks to you on these CDs, I brought this one by Cassiane. It is a blessing. It has the power of God as well, there is a *louvor* on this one in which God talks to you profoundly. The more you listen to these CDs, the more you want to get closer to God.⁶²

The seemingly equipment-free reproduction of reality and the visceral experience of sound—both features of electroacoustic technology—link up remarkably well with features of Pentecostalism in Brazil and the experiences of the people I worked with.⁶³ This is partly related to the common notion in Brazilian Pentecostalism that the Holy Spirit can be transmitted through radio and television waves or, in fact, is often thought to have the same shape. In television and radio broadcasts, the pastors of the Igreja Universal invite the audience to place a cup of water near the radio or on the television. Through the instrument of the *oração forte*—powerful prayer—the water obtains the curative powers of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the program, the audience is invited to drink the water together with the pastor and receive God’s blessing. Leonildo Silveiro Campos states: “In the IURD [Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus] they believe that the temple [of the Igreja Universal] radiates [*irradia*] a ‘vital fluid’ channeled through hertzian waves in the direction of radio or television receivers, materialized in the cup of water.”⁶⁴ Another example can be seen in the performance of Pastor Ouriel de Jesus, who preached at a *congresso de jovens* (youth congress) of the Assembléia de Deus, which was broadcast on 7 July 2002 in the program *Christo o Vencedor* (Christ the Victorious). While the pastor preached to the crowd, he asked them to raise their hands as if they were an airwave reception dish (*antena parabólica*). The reference to the *antena parabólica* suggests that the Holy Spirit can be transmitted in the same way radio and television waves are.

These examples indicate that the appropriation of modern mass media by religious organizations transforms the ways in which people relate to each other and to the divine in unprecedented ways, as others have also argued forcefully.⁶⁵ In relation to the social life in the favela, the junctions between electroacoustic technology and Pentecostalism allow for new conceptualizations of community and the position of *evangélicos*. For reasons explained above, playing and listening to gospel is an experience and expression of evangelical identity in the favela. Yet, gospel was also perceived to have the power to reach the “unconverted” and change their lives profoundly. Take, for example, what the locally famous gospel singer/musician Leonardo told me during an interview:

What matters to me is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit for me, I love it. I love it when God talks with us and the Holy Spirit is transmitted to the

people. For me, this is what the Holy Spirit is. I feel the Holy Spirit in my life and I can transmit the Holy Spirit to the people who are listening. It is my heart's wish. I don't want it just for me, I want the people to feel the good things that I feel.

Are you saying that the Holy Spirit uses music?

Music, that is it. *Louvor* is the instrument—in the church we call it *louvor*—sing and everybody sings. *Louvor* is something that flows, so when people *louva* the Lord Jesus the Holy Spirit comes automatically, you feel that joy and you transmit that to other people. And the people become glorified, become sane, and even people who are ill, physically ill, spiritually ill, feel cured through the *louvor*, people are cured through the *louvor*. For example, those who are on the verge of doing something stupid, who want to commit suicide, who want to leave their family, who want to leave everything behind or do bad things. Normally when those people listen to *louvor* that is dedicated to Lord Jesus, that *louvor* makes them feel different, the opposite of what they felt. Those people open their heart and let it flow, and nothing bad happens.⁶⁶

Not only does he attribute spiritual power to music dedicated to Jesus, the imagination and experience of the Holy Spirit that reaches people through space by means of (amplified) *louvor* also allows for the idea of the spiritual occupation of space by means of gospel music. This sheds more light on the importance of evangelical music in the soundscape of the favela and on the event with which I opened this article. In contrast to funk music, which has a bad, demonic influence over people, *louvor* can heal the people of the community and assure that all those who are sanctified remain so. Pastor Abrahão, who ordered us to change the radio station, was not only aware of the potential dangers of losing its “sanctified” position in the daily struggles of the favela, but he was also aware of the divine power of evangelical radio as opposed to its demonic counterparts.

Conclusion

To understand why evangelical radio is such an attractive medium for the inhabitants of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro—and the politicians who are audible on them—one should not listen exclusively to the content of the broadcasts. Through the discussion of the evangelical radio broadcasts in the context of the favela of my research, it becomes obvious that the broadcasts should be understood in relation to the soundscape and the architecture of the favela and in relation to the specific affinities between radio and Pentecostalism in Brazil. It is often through sounds that people feel touched by the Holy Spirit and in close contact with God. In the dense space of the favela, this quality of evangelical radio to touch people

is dialectically related to the sounds of other social groups and the moral transgressions that evangelicals are concerned with. Being seen or heard listening to the wrong kinds of music or radio programs means running the risk of being identified as someone who is not really “of God,” but who is “of the World,” and so the same as those he or she would try to convert. To many *evangélicos* it is of great importance to maintain the boundaries between them and the “unconverted” not only because of their feelings of belonging to those who will be saved, but also because social life in the favela is wrought with the tensions brought by the drug trade. The violent conditions in the dense urban spaces of the favelas often put great emphasis on questions of belonging and social identification.

Notes

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1. *Favela* can be translated as shantytown. For reasons I explain in my dissertation, I chose to stick with the Portuguese word; see Martijn Oosterbaan, “Divine Mediations: Pentecostalism, Politics, and Mass Media in a Favela in Rio de Janeiro” (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2006).

2. The Brazilian Assemblies of God was founded by two Swedish Baptists who came to Brazil from Chicago in 1911. The church is independent of the North American Assemblies of God.

3. Brazilian funk (*carioca*) differs from its North American counterpart. It mostly consists of electronic dance music that bears some similarities to hip-hop.

4. The CIEP is a common type of building in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

5. El Shadai is a popular evangelical radio station in Rio de Janeiro; it nowadays operates under the name 93 FM.

6. *Pagode* is a style of popular music that has its roots in samba music.

7. See, for example, Patricia Birman and David Lehmann, “Religion and the Media in a Battle for Ideological Hegemony: The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Globo in Brazil,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 18 (1999): 145–64; Flávio Cesar Conrado, “Política e mídia: A Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus nas Eleições” (“Politics and Media: The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in the Elections”), *Religião e Sociedade (Religion and Society)* 21 (2001): 85–111; André Corten, “Transnationalised Religious Needs and Political Delegitimation in Latin America,” in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (London: Hurst, 2001); Alexandre Fonseca, “Lideranças evangélicas na mídia: Trajetórias na política e na sociedade civil” (“Evangelical Leadership in the Media: Trajectories in Politics and in Civil Society”), *Religião e Sociedade (Religion and Society)* 19 (1998): 85–111;

Regina Novaes, “Crenças religiosas e convicções políticas: Fronteiras e passagens” (“Religious Beliefs and Political Convictions: Frontiers and Passages”), in *Política e cultura: Século XXI (Politics and Culture: Twenty-First Century)*, ed. Luis Carlos Fridman (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2002); Ari Pedro Oro, “A política da Igreja Universal e seus reflexos nos campos religioso e político Brasileiros” (“The Politics of the Universal Church and Its Effects on the Brazilian Religious and Political Fields”), *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais (Brazilian Review of the Social Sciences)* 18 (2003): 53–69.

8. Most Protestant/evangelical churches in Brazil can be described as Pentecostal. In the words of Paul Freston: “Pentecostalism arose in the early twentieth century as a movement within Protestantism which stressed the contemporary nature of phenomena from the New Testament such as ‘speaking in tongues’, prophecy, divine healing and expulsion of demons. This enthusiastic and highly supernaturalistic version of Protestantism has been adopted only by a minority of Protestants in the developed West, but in the Third World it has often become the predominant form.” Paul Freston, “Evangelical Protestantism and Democratization in Contemporary Latin America and Asia,” *Democratization* 11 (2004): 23–24. For an overview of the discussion concerning the global spread of this type of Christianity, see Joel Robbins, “The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 117–43.

9. Despite a relatively stable economic growth and an increase in spending on social programs during the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002) and Lula Ignacio da Silva (2003–), the income inequality in Brazil is still relatively large. According to the World Bank, Brazil has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. The richest 20 percent of the population share an income that is equal to thirty-three times the corresponding share of the poorest 20 percent. See World Bank Report No. 24487-BR, “Brazil Inequality and Economic Development,” Volume 1: Policy Report, October 2003 (a joint report by Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada and Brazil Country Management Unit, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Sector Unit, Latin America and the Caribbean Region). For a discussion on the spending on social programs, see Anthony Hall, “From *Fome Zero* to *Bolsa Família*: Social Policies and Poverty Alleviation under Lula,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38 (2006): 689–709.

10. See, for example, Alberto Antoniazzi, “A Igreja Católica face a expansão do Pentecostalismo” (“The Catholic Church Facing the Pentecostal Expansion”), in *Nem Anjos nem Demônios (Neither Angels nor Demons)*, ed. Alberto Antoniazzi et al. (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1994); Patricia Birman and Marcia Pereira Leite, “Whatever Happened to What Used to Be the Largest Catholic Country in the World?” *Daedalus* 129 (2000): 271–91; Leonildo Silveira Campos, *Teatro, templo e mercado: Organização e marketing de um empreendimento neopentecostal (Theater, Temple and Market: Organization and Marketing of a Neopentecostal Enterprise)* (Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1997); David Lehman, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformation and Popular Culture in Brazil and Latin America* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); Cecília Loreto Mariz, *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); Maria Lúcia Montes, “As Figuras do sagrado: Entre o público e o privado” (“Figures of the Sacred: Between the Public and the Private”), in *História da vida privada no Brasil 4 (History of Private Life in Brazil 4)*, ed. Lilian Schwarz (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998).

11. See, for example, Barbara Boudewijnse, André Droogers, and Frans Kamsteeg, eds., *More Than Opium: An Anthropological Approach to Latin American and Caribbean Pentecostal Praxis* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1998); Virginia Garrard-

Burnett and David Stoll, eds., *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993); David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

12. See Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost*; or Birgit Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 447–74.

13. See André Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success," in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost*, 41–62; David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Meyer, "Christianity in Africa"; Karla Poewe, ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Robbins, "Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity."

14. Freston, "Evangelical Protestantism"; Oro, "A política da Igreja Universal."

15. See Patricia Birman, "Future in the Mirror: The Media, Evangelicals, and Politics in Rio de Janeiro," in *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 52–73; Corten, "Transnationalised Religious Needs," in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost*; Martijn Oosterbaan, "Mass Mediating the Spiritual Battle: Pentecostal Appropriations of Mass Mediated Violence in Rio de Janeiro," *Material Religion* 1 (2005): 358–85.

16. See Conrado, "Política e mídia"; Fonseca, "Lideranças evangélicas na mídia"; Luís Mauro Sá Martino, "Mercado político e capital religioso" ("Political Market and Religious Capital"), in *Comunicação na polis: Ensaio sobre mídia e política (Communication in the Polis: Essays about Media and Politics)*, ed. Clóvis de Barros Filho (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002).

17. See Birman, "Future in the Mirror"; Eric W. Kramer, "Law and the Image of a Nation: Religious Conflict and Religious Freedom in a Brazilian Criminal Case," *Journal of the American Bar Foundation* 26 (2001): 35–62; Clara Mafra, *Na Posse da Palavra: Religião, Conversão e Liberdade Pessoal em dois Contextos Nacionais (In Possession of the Word: Religion, Conversion and Personal Liberty in Two National Contexts)* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2002); Kenneth P. Serbin, "The Catholic Church, Religious Pluralism, and Democracy in Brazil," in *Democratic Brazil: Actors, Institutions, and Processes*, ed. Peter R. Kingstone and Timothy J. Power (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

18. See Meyer and Moors, *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*.

19. Following Arjun Appadurai's call to write "thick description with a difference," this article attempts to combine insights from anthropology and religious/media studies. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 55. Such an approach is not new. Anthropologists such as Lila Abu-Lughod, Faye Ginsburg, Birgit Meyer, and Mattijs van de Port have done and/or advocated ethnographic research in relation to mass media. See, for example, Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds., *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Birgit Meyer, "'Praise the Lord . . .': Popular Cinema and Pentecostalist Style in Ghana's New Public Sphere," *American Ethnologist* 31 (2004): 92–110; Mattijs van de Port, "Visualizing the Sacred: Televisual Styles and the Religious Imagination in Bahian Candomblé," *American Ethnologist* 33 (2006): 444–61. Since many adherents of the Pentecostal churches in Rio de Janeiro live in favelas, I chose to live in one for almost a year. Besides anthropological research methods, such

as participant observation and semistructured interviewing, I analyzed the form and content of the mass media with which people engaged.

20. See, for instance, Birgit Meyer, "Religious Sensations: Why Media, Aesthetics, and Power Matter in the Study of Contemporary Religion" (inaugural lecture, VU University Amsterdam, 2006); Jeremy Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 22 (2005): 137–63; Hent de Vries, "In Media Res: Global Religion, Public Spheres, and the Task of Contemporary Religious Studies," in *Religion and Media*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); and Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth: Touching Hearing," in *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity*, ed. Veit Erlmann (Oxford: Berg, 2004); and also the other contributions to this issue.

21. See Charles Hirschkind, "The Ethics of Cassette-Sermon Audition in Contemporary Egypt," *American Ethnologist* 28 (2001): 624.

22. The inhabitants of the favelas are often pejoratively called *favelados*.

23. Marcus Alvito, *As Cores de Acari, uma Favela Carioca (The Colors of Acari, a Favela Carioca)* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getulio Vargas, 2001); Alba Zaluar and Marcus Alvito, eds., *Um Século de Favela (A Century of Favela)* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getulio Vargas, 1998); Enrique Desmond Arias, *Drugs and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: Trafficking, Social Networks, and Public Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Donna Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

24. Extensive research done in Rio de Janeiro in 1994 showed that of all the people who frequented Protestant/Pentecostal churches in Rio de Janeiro, those who attended the Pentecostal churches Assembléia de Deus and the Igreja Universal generally earned the lowest incomes in the city. Both of them attracted around 62 percent of people whose families generally earned only twice the minimum income and who had jobs with the lowest incomes, for example, domestic workers. See Rubem César Fernandes et al., *Novo nascimento: Os evangélicos em casa, na igreja e na política (Born-again: The Evangelicals at Home, in the Church, and in Politics)* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad, 1998).

25. R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny, 1994).

26. Steven Feld, "Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea," in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), 94.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Besides Steven Feld's urge to include sound in the description of place, we might follow authors such as Veit Erlmann, Steven Connor, and Charles Hirschkind, who all strive to pay more attention to sound and the faculty of hearing/listening in the constitution of modern subjectivity.

29. Most of the sound systems I encountered consisted of a radio, a CD, and a double audiotape player. They often occupied a central place in the living rooms of the inhabitants.

30. Ronaldo Bezerra, "Discernimento: É pecado ouvir música secular?" ("Opinion: Is It a Sin to Listen to Secular Music?"), Rede Melodia (Melody Network), 27 October 2006, www.melodia.com.br/pages/dinamico.php?id_canal=65&id_texto=3093&acao=materia.

31. This is not a recent phenomenon. Livio Sansone, who did research in the favela in 1991, writes: "In this community it seemed that funk music had, as it were, saturated the soundscape, and that musical genres other than funk had a hard time

finding their way into public spaces.” See Livio Sansone, “Não-trabalho, consumo e identidade negra: uma comparação entre Rio e Salvador” (“No-Work, Consumption and Black Identity: A Comparison between Rio and Salvador”), in *Raça como Retórica (Race as Rhetoric)*, ed. Yvonne Maggie and Claudia Barcellos Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001). During my research, more than ten years later, funk was still very present; however, *pagode*, samba, and gospel did also find their way in the public spaces quite easily.

32. In general, people showed diverse reactions to the parties; some complained, damned, or accepted, while others simply enjoyed the parties very much. However, by and large, everyone acknowledged the powerful presence of the sound of the funk music.

33. The *comando vermelho* (red command) is one of the three drug-trading factions that operate in Rio de Janeiro.

34. The first time I went to take a look at a *baile*, I went directly against the advice of one of my friends of the Assembléia de Deus. The woman warned me that if I attended the *baile* funk, people of the church would begin to doubt my spiritual state of mind and would no longer let me participate in the church services.

35. The oppositions between *evangélicos* and *funkeiros* or *pagodeiros* should be seen as attempts to demarcate clear lines between moral and immoral behavior from the perspective of the people who attend Pentecostal churches. This does not necessarily mean people never went to the parties before or after their conversion. Many of the young people who later converted to either Assembléia de Deus or Igreja Universal, including some pastors, had been to the *bailes*, and some of the “converted” still went once in a while.

36. The often-made distinction between *musica evangélica* and *musica do mundo* does not imply that people no longer listen to *pagode* music. Distinctions between *musica evangélica* and *musica do mundo* are contingent and therefore change continuously.

37. It should become clear in my discussion on music and identification that I am aware of the potential pitfalls of the identity concept. Anthropologists have sometimes tended to presume fixed identities, where, in fact, people used quite flexible, or plainly different, categories of social identification. Nevertheless, as Peter Geschiere and Birgit Meyer have also argued, globalization processes have often spurred both flux and closure of cultural identities, as people themselves search for the maintenance or creation of social boundaries. See Peter Geschiere and Birgit Meyer, “Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure,” *Development and Change* 29 (2000): 601–15.

38. See Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 6. Though Attali often equates sound with noise in order to stress the violence of sound and hence the unique capabilities of sound to “interrupt a transmission, to disconnect, to kill” (26), I would like to maintain distinctions between sound, noise, and music. Noise I understand as “sound out of place,” following Peter Bailey’s reformulation of Mary Douglas’s definition of dirt as “matter out of place.” See Peter Bailey, “Breaking the Sound Barrier: A Historian Listens to Noise,” *Body and Society* 2 (1996): 50; and Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 2002 [1966]), 44. Sound is, to my mind, not endowed with an intrinsic value, and defining some sounds as noise is, therefore, as a sociopolitical act.

39. This concurs with the work of scholars who have argued that the reproduction of musical styles can be crucial to identity politics and the creation and maintenance of boundaries between groups. See, for example, Charles Keil and Ste-

ven Feld, *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Martin Stokes, introduction to *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

40. See also Sansone, “Não-trabalho, consumo e identidade negra.”

41. I am aware that there is a vast field of (ethno)musicology, but unfortunately there is no room to discuss the specific relations between music and culture at this point. My thoughts here are particularly inspired by the work of Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), and John Blacking, *A Commonsense View of All Music: Reflections on Percy Grainger’s Contribution to Ethnomusicology and Music Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

42. Michel Maffesoli, *The Contemplation of the World: Figures of Community Style* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 5.

43. Keil and Feld, *Music Grooves*, 202.

44. Ibid.

45. See, for example, Daniel A. Putman, “Music and the Metaphor of Touch,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 44 (1985): 59–66; Steven Connor, “Edison’s Teeth.”

46. Putman, “Music and the Metaphor of Touch,” 60.

47. See Regina Novaes, *Os Escolhidos de Deus: Pentecostais, Trabalhadores e Cidadania (God’s Chosen People: Pentecostals, Workers, and Citizenship)* (Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1985); John Burdick, *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil’s Religious Arena* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Clara Mafra, *Os Evangélicos (The Evangelicals)* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2001).

48. Burdick, *Looking for God in Brazil*, 83.

49. Clara Mafra, “Drogas e símbolos: Redes de solidariedade em contextos de Violência” (“Drugs and Symbols: Solidarity Networks in Contexts of Violence”), in *Um Século de Favela (A Century of Favela)*, ed. Alba Zaluar and Marcus Alvito (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1998), 288.

50. *Cachaça* is liquor made from sugar cane.

51. Consequently, listening to radio, CD, and tape entails a continuous reassertion of a social identity that is much less fixed than presumed. This also has several repercussions for discussions on conversion and proselytic media. If conversion is understood as an assertion of a Pentecostal identity through particular (self-disciplining) performances, rather than a clear break between past and present, tuning in to certain radio stations is not the outcome of, but integral to, conversion.

52. This interview with Franck, a young inhabitant of the favela where I conducted research, took place and was recorded by me on 28 September 2002 in Rio de Janeiro.

53. Hirschkind, “Ethics of Cassette–Sermon Audition,” 627.

54. For people who attend the Assembléia de Deus, the wish to and expectation of being baptized by the Holy Spirit often follows the acceptance of Jesus and baptism in water. Since not all people experience such a baptism immediately or shortly after their decision to accept Jesus and join a congregation, people often feel they need to make an extra effort to live life according to biblical norms.

55. This interview with Rodrigo, a young inhabitant of the favela where I conducted my research, took place and was recorded by me on 28 December 2002 in Rio de Janeiro.

56. See David Hendy, *Radio in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000). The placing of emphasis on the ear in this paper is not to say that electroacoustic

media do not invoke other senses; on the contrary, our senses are firmly entangled with one another. Following Hirschkind's discussion of Collingwood's ideas on synesthetic experience, "in listening to music or poetry people enjoy imaginary experiences completely outside the realm of sound, such as visual, tactile, kinesthetic and olfactory." See Robin George Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1938]), cited in Hirschkind, "Ethics of Cassette-Sermon Audition," 628. The insights of Laura Marks, who argues that visual media such as film spur memory of multisensory experience—for example, touch and smell—may also confirm the synesthetic approach to sound. See Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

57. Kate Lacey, "Towards a Periodization of Listening: Radio and Modern Life," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 3 (2000): 279–88.

58. Jacques Derrida, "Above All, No Journalists!" in *Religion and Media*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber, trans. Samuel Weber (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 56–93.

59. *Ibid.*, 58. Emphasis in the original.

60. *Ibid.*, 64.

61. Several writers who discuss "religion and/as media" (Stolow 2005) have suggested paying close attention to the complex relation between the production of (religious) truth, mass media, and the senses in different religious communities. See, for example, Charles Hirschkind, "Hearing Modernity: Egypt, Islam, and the Pious Ear," in *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity*, ed. Veit Erlmann (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Meyer, "Religious Sensations"; Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Stolow, "Religion and/as Media."

62. This interview with Gilberto, a young inhabitant of the favela where I conducted my research, took place and was recorded by me on 8 August 2002 in Rio de Janeiro.

63. While I focus on radio and music in this article, it is worth mentioning that many of the spiritual encounters—negative and positive—of *evangélicos* are acoustic. In their conversations and testimonies, people often tell of the voice of the devil and the voice of God who has spoken to them. Even if people did not hear a voice, they often say that God was trying to speak (*fala*) to them directly in such and such event. Arguably there is also an elective affinity between the Pentecostal discourse, the character of the Pentecostal speech, and electroacoustic technologies. The experience of nearness and intimacy that radio listening produces links up well with a style of Pentecostal language that is often employed to address individuals who are confronted with personal problems. See Oosterbaan, "Divine Mediations."

64. Leonildo S. Campos, "A Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, um Empreendimento Religioso Atual e seus Modos de Expansão (Brasil, África e Europa)" ("The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, a Current Religious Enterprise and Its Modes of Expansion [Brazil, Africa, and Europe]"), *Lusotopie* (1999): 361.

65. See Meyer, "Religious Sensations"; Stolow, "Religion and/as Media"; de Vries, "In Media Res," in de Vries and Weber, *Religion and Media*.

66. This interview with Leonardo, an inhabitant of the favela where I conducted my research, took place and was recorded by me on 5 January 2003 in Rio de Janeiro.



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