Tùn Resùn: Walking in the Sounding Forest

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Abstract: *This paper is based on interviews and conversations conducted while walking through the 'Klangwald', a 'sounding forest' in the Swiss mountains that features various musical instruments. While our initial intent was to reflect on hearing and listening to all the sounds of the forestscape, our walking conversations revealed a much more holistic sensory experience, and we began to ask the broader question of what it means to sensorially be in and move through the forest. Drawing on anthropology of the senses (Le Breton 2017 [2006]) and expanding on Tim Ingold's work on movement, knowledge, description, and being in the world (2011), we propose a 'sensory walking ethnography'. By walking alongside people as we interview them, the conversation – like the walking itself – becomes an experiential and sensorial process rather than a purely linguistic and semantic one. Thus, we explore not only people's perceptions of the forest environment but also a methodology for investigating that perception. Accompanying interviewees as they articulated what they were sensing – particularly in the liminal spaces and concepts between within and outside of the forest, sound and silence, and constancy and change – provided a deeper understanding of how people relate to, experience, and perceive their lived environment.*

Introduction

Located on the southern slope of an alpine valley in Switzerland at an elevation of 1,600 meters, *tùn resùn* – 'Klangwald' or 'sounding forest' – was created by the mountain farmers of Lohn two decades ago to attract more visitors for their newly built restaurant. The trail leads through a forest of larch and spruce trees and is outfitted with various musical instruments such as litho- and xylophones and other sounding items, including windchimes made of cow rib bones and a stack of different-sized cowbells. Visitors are encouraged to engage with their surroundings by making and listening to all the sounds in the forest, including those that are not human made.

Tùn resùn, the name of the trail in the local language of Romansh, is literally translated as 'resonating sound'.[3] It reflects the sounds of the locals' lives with the forest and represents how they hear *tùn resùn* (Fig. 1). Our initial intent was to take up this focus on hearing and listening in our research, in order to add an often-neglected sonic element to the small body of existing work on anthropology on foot.[4] For example, in *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* edited by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, a variety of walking behaviours are considered, but the sense of hearing and the act of listening to the sonic environment are largely absent. Where sound is mentioned, it is often reduced to verbal sound: the 'listening' in Katrín Lund's chapter, "Listen to the Sound of Time", refers to listening to a story – a narrative text – rather than to sounds (the sound of bells is mentioned, but only as part of the background description). In the introduction, Ingold and Vergunst argue that ethnographers do much of their work on foot, but do not contemplate the walking itself. We would add to this that anthropologists and ethnomusicologists

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3 The Romansh word *tùn* means 'sound'; *resùn* means 'echo', Lia Rumantscha 1993.
4 See for example Ingold 2010; Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Legat 2008.

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do much of their work through talking and being in a sounding environment, but often do not contemplate those environmental sounds themselves. We therefore intended to pick up where Ingold and Vergunst left off, to foreground not only the act of walking itself, but also its sonic context. This would include not just the sounds of the surrounding forest, but also the sounds of the walking itself – footsteps, breath, clothing – and therefore of humans' sonic presence in the forest.

Fig. 1: Bell tree with wind harp in background, Photograph by Helena Simonett 2023.[5]

Being *in* the forest is, in many ways, an ideal setting for this type of work on sound and hearing. In comparison to looking at a panorama, which one is outside of and separate from, it is immersive, much as hearing is. It is also a space where vision is limited. Being in the forest may thus be understood as a way of 'being *in* rather than *on* the world'; being an *in*habitant rather than an *ex*habitant.[6] This feeling of 'being in the world' rather than 'looking at the world' surfaced at the very beginning of our work, expressed by the first participant in the pilot study, and the idea persisted throughout our interviews even though we never explicitly asked our interlocutors to describe their feelings of the world as being here (Fig. 2).

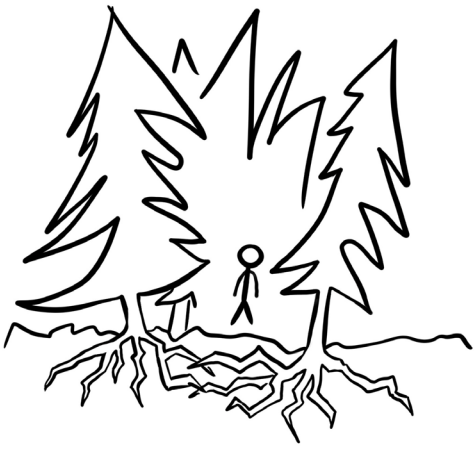

Fig. 2: 'The inhabitant of the tree-world', adapted from Ingold's drawings of the inhabitant vs. exhabitant of the world.

5 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0AVWe0IYKAs [29.02.2024]. Notice the bells of the cows that forage in the woods. They can also be heard in the last video, see footnote 38.

6 Ingold 2011: 120.

While we will indeed consider sound, hearing and listening, our paper is a very different paper than was anticipated at the outset, both in terms of methodology and in terms of content. Those expectations and their evolution will also be part of our discussion. The paper is thus divided into sections devoted to each element: first, a consideration of form and methodology, in which we propose a sensory anthropology of walking; second, a more content-focussed section based around excerpts from our conversations and what they reveal about experiencing the forest, both sonically and otherwise; and finally, a return to methodology, integrating content into method to expand our initial ideas into a sensory ethnography of walking.

Method and Theory

Why walking with people? Walking as a method has been theorized in anthropology,[7] as well as in the social sciences. While Margarethe Kusenbach has stressed the advantages of the 'go-along' technique over traditional ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interviewing, Penelope Kinney has highlighted how walking creates better conversation flow.[8] The method of discursive walking thus offers a rich and immersive experience that goes beyond traditional forms of conversation or analysis. Fasting and Høyem's work expanded the focus from the walking conversation itself to take into account context and surrounding landscape as the subject of their walking interviews.[9] Yet these perspectives are all focussed on the method of walking while interviewing (foregrounding the interviewing), rather than interviewing while walking (foregrounding the walking), and none deal specifically with sound. Ethnomusicologist Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum's recent article on walking as a method does address sound and the senses, working from the premise that "Walking is a full bodily experience".[10] Aduonum maintains that "[b]ecause all our five [*sic*] senses reinforce each other to provide the intricate ordered and emotion-charged world in which we live […] it is critical to pay attention to our senses and those of the people we walk with or meet along the way".[11] She argues for walking as a crucial part of fieldwork methodology that has been absent from previous discussions of methodology. Expanding on these approaches, in particular Ingold's work on movement, knowledge, description, and being in the world,[12] and integrating work on sensory ethnography,[13] we propose a sensory anthropology of walking.

Our method consisted of walking conversations with people who often spend time outdoors walking and in forests, many of whom know the Klangwald intimately. There were seven women and two men, two of whom were residents, three long-time visitors, and four guests in the village. We casually invited them to participate and walked with each person for about an hour.[14] We accompanied them, with recording devices, and always took the same route. As we walked together, the interlocutors were invited to talk about what they sensed, and to pause when they felt they needed time to either savour the place or try to verbalize their sensations, compare this forest to others they had experienced, or recall memories. Pausing also offered an opportunity to focus on the senses in a different way – in the absence of walking sounds

7 Ingold 2010; Ingold and Vergunst 2008. See also Legat 2008.
8 Kinney 2017. For other work in social sciences, see Anderson 2004; Edensor 2008, 2010; Kusenbach 2003; Middleton 2010; Oppezzo and Schwartz 2014; Wherton et al. 2019; Wunderlich 2008.
9 Fasting and Høyem 2022.
10 Aduonum 2021: 240.
11 Aduonum 2021: 224. The debate concerning the number of human senses has been a subject of contention. While traditionally, the five senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch – have been widely acknowledged, other senses such as movement (vestibular sense) and bodily position (proprioception) are increasingly considered as well, and it is often these senses that are foregrounded when walking in a forest environment.
12 Ingold 2011.
13 See, for example, Pink 2009.
14 The interview quotes are not attributed individually, but rather, presented as a collage. All interviews were conducted on fair-weather days in the snow-free months between spring and the end of summer 2022. We express our gratitude to our interlocutors for accompanying us through the forest.

and the sensory attention needed for movement and navigation. We only asked questions to follow up on something they said during the conversations.

Accompanying interlocutors as they articulate what they are sensing provides a deeper understanding of how they relate to, experience, perceive, and interpret their lived environment. Place and the individual are intricately intertwined and mutually constitutive. By being there together and trying to hear the things they described, we could understand what they were referring to much better than if they reported on it afterwards, especially if they used different descriptors than we ourselves might have chosen. Accompanying them during their experience also allowed us to observe non-verbal communication, whether designed to convey something to us (such as pointing) or not (such as turning to look in the direction of a sound or brushing their fingertips over grasses on the edge of the trail).

Previous work on the anthropology of walking supports our own observations, from Tim Edensor's assertion that narrative alone cannot capture the embodied experience of the walker[15] to Ingold and Vergunst's foregrounding of the real-time aspect of walking and their argument that the parallels between walking and talking makes for an ideal marriage of the two.[16] Being mobile affords a different engagement with spaces,[17] and there is an acknowledged potential of walking interviews for exploring the link between self and place[18] and interviewees' understanding of place.[19] Kinney argues that, from a purely functional perspective, talking flows more easily while walking because interviewees have natural pausing spots in which to think (e.g. navigating obstacles or crossing a road) rather than building in unnatural pauses common to stationary interviews. Her work recognizes that "[t]he walking interview provides the researcher with an opportunity to observe and not just hear an account".[20]

By walking alongside people as we talked with them, the conversation – like the walking itself – became an experiential and sensorial process rather than a purely linguistic and semantic one. We found that being present with people in real time as they describe their experiences offers an immediacy that is not possible in a decontextualized interview. We believe that exploring an ecological approach to perception might avoid some of the pitfalls inherent in a purely linguistic or semiotic perspective so common in disciplines concerned with sound.

Walking Conversations

Sound, Hearing, and Listening

Despite the forest's framing as a 'sound trail', most people we walked with chose not to play the instruments along the way; those who did made carefully considered choices about which ones to play, based on how they perceived them to fit into the forest soundscape as well as on the tactile feel of the instrument. However, sounds certainly received attention along the trail. One person noted "there's a tomtit" and his wife added "wee-wit" in imitation of the bird. The same couple mentioned the funny sound of walking on dry pinecones, noticed that "[t]he wind is loud in the larches and pines", and commented extensively on different water sounds:

— It's different than the Platera [creek next to their house in the village], which is much more even because it's steeper and has more water.
— Here it gurgles [pointing to a specific spot].
— The murmur of the brook, for me, is Lohn [village].
— The splishing sounds almost like summer rain – strong rain.
— Water splashing on stones sounds different.

15 Edensor 2008.
16 Ingold and Vergunst 2008.
17 Moles 2008.
18 Evans and Jones 2011.
19 Jones et al. 2008.
20 Kinney 2017.

The sounds of mobile elements, such as the chirping of birds and the buzzing of insects, or the rumbling of vehicles passing by on the adjacent road, tended to draw special attention. This heightened awareness could be attributed to their movement as they traverse the comparatively more constant sonic atmosphere of the forest itself. Moreover, people's nuanced and ecological understanding of sound, which takes into account its relational and experiential dimensions, underscores Ingold's critique of the soundscape concept which tends to reduce sound to a mere object of analysis, akin to the study of visual landscapes or images.[21]

Instead of being viewed merely as a soundscape, the sonic environment of the forest may be better understood and conceptualized as an atmosphere. Musicologist Friedlind Riedel has argued that "atmosphere directs attention to the ways in which a rhythm or sound translates itself into the environment, and in doing so, modulates a situation in its entirety and pulls all bodies within reach into a relation".[22] The term encapsulates the intricate interplay and entanglement of various entities, whether human or nonhuman, within the surrounding context.[23]

As various of our interlocutors pointed out, sound is immersive, locating the listener *in* rather than *on* the world. In *Sensing the World*, anthropologist David Le Breton captures the unique aspect of the sense of hearing: "Sound possesses the virtue of being able to interrupt the existing temporality and instantly create a new ambiance delineating and unifying an event's manifestations. A change in sound demarcates and transforms the atmosphere of a place".[24] Furthermore, building upon Riedel's proposition, it is emphasized that sounds (and music) are not merely objects within the world, but rather they serve as modes of experiencing and engaging with the world.[25] Sounds (and music) have a unique capacity to facilitate atmospheric relations and afford particular experiences.

From Hearing to Holistic Sensory Experience

Hearing and listening do indeed have certain characteristics and possibilities, which were very much foregrounded by the 'auditory turn'. By highlighting the significance of sound and listening as essential components of human experience, the auditory turn challenged the visual bias that had dominated many fields of inquiry, particularly in the humanities.[26]

Nonetheless, the newfound emphasis on the sense of hearing inadvertently resulted in further dividing the overall sensory experience. The issue with such dichotomization and hierarchization of auditory and visual perception arises from the longstanding history of dualistic thinking in Western philosophical and scientific discourses.[27] Singling out sound just reinforces this false dichotomy. It also gives an incomplete picture because sensory experience does not occur as isolated senses, but rather is integrated. As Ingold posits, "the environment that we experience, know and move around in is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it".[28]

Our initial focus on hearing was largely a product of our discipline and of the context within which this work began: a project titled "Seeking Birdscapes: Contemporary Listening and Recording Practices in Ornithology and Environmental Sound Art".[29] With the project's clearly defined focus on sound and sonic

21 See his essay titled "Four Objections to the Concept of Soundscape", Ingold 2011: 136–139.
22 Riedel 2021: 29.
23 Riedel and Torvinen 2021.
24 Le Breton 2017 (2006): 83.
25 Riedel 2021: 4.
26 One important precursor to the auditory turn was the rise of sound studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Schafer 1994 [1977]). Sound studies gained traction in the 1990s and early 2000s, drawing attention to the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of sound. The exploration of auditory phenomena is evident in various interconnected disciplines, including anthropology, ethnomusicology, musicology, and phenomenology (see Allen and Dawe 2015; Bull and Back 2003; Born 2013; Ihde 1976; Steintrager and Chow 2019).
27 See Simonett 2014.
28 Ingold 2011: 136.
29 The project "Seeking Birdscapes: Contemporary Listening and Recording Practices in Ornithology and Environmental Sound Art" (2019–2023) was sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation (#182813).

relationships between humans and birds, it is unsurprising that the first of questions we asked people centred on sound. However, over the course of our fieldwork in the Klangwald, we became aware that this approach was likely way too narrow and might perhaps even be a trap of sorts: asking only about the acoustic relationship yields answers that single out hearing. By contrast, without prompts, people did not only focus on the sonic (even if they knew about our project). Our intention is thus not to make a new hierarchy where hearing takes the place of vision to supersede other senses, but rather to argue that all the senses are entangled with each other to make what – in visual terms – would be referred to as the 'big picture', and all the more so in the context of moving and walking. While considerations of sound certainly remain important, our walking conversations revealed a much more holistic sensory experience, and we began broadening our scope from the purely auditory to be more generally interested in what it means to sensorially be in and move through the forest.

Our Klangwald conversations revealed just how inextricable all the senses were, especially when engaged in the act of walking. People touched plants or tree bark as they passed by, or they were bent down to touch the moist moss on the forest floor; one mentioned seeking big rocks or surface roots to step on and feel in the palm of her foot "like a little massage"; a few spoke of the feel of the sun on their backs when stepping out of the tree cover into a more open part of the trail. While some descriptions were about just one sense, more often they were about multiple senses at the same time:

— Walking on rocks I'm aware of the sound, but also of proprioception – I'm focusing on not slipping, while also feeling the size and shape of individual large rocks under my feet.
— The buzzing of insects plus the sun plus the grass smell feels like summer.
— I really like waterfalls. It's constant noise that drowns out other noise. And it's pleasant. And it's usually shady and it's usually cool.

Moving into the forest, the path narrows and angles downwards. There are surface roots to navigate, forcing one to pay close visual attention to foot placement, balance, and proprioception. Attention to the ground was not only visual but also auditory, leading people to hear *into* the earth – the hollow sound between the dense roots. One person commented: "Walking over the roots is a very hollow sound. Surface roots sound very different" (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Photograph by Helena Simonett 2023.

Shortly after entering the forest there is a stream. People consistently paused at that spot as well as at another water crossing later along the trail. Most stooped to feel the coolness of the flowing water. Footing across the damp rocks needed careful visual and proprioceptive attention (Fig. 4–6). The smell – of freshness, of mud, of shade-growing plants and mushrooms – was uppermost in people's minds. Although a number of people talked about the different burbling and gurgling sounds, most only mentioned hearing the water once they had talked about other senses.

Fig. 4–6: Photographs by Helena Simonett 2022.[30]

Walking was simultaneously heard as sounds and felt as surface textures. One person noted: "Stepping on this soil here feels great because of the water – there's moss and grass and it's soft. It's not hard and sharp and dry" and when asked whether it sounded different, he replied: "Oh yeah. You hear crunching but it's when you step on something, not the constant crunch crunch crunch. And you're constantly changing the texture that you're walking on – sometimes it's mud, sometimes it's grass, sometimes it's soil like this, sometimes it's rock" (Fig. 7 and 8).

Fig. 7 and 8: Photographs by Helena Simonett 2022.

Walking on different surfaces was also accompanied by different smells, and the sense of smell was primary for many interlocutors. One commented: "It smells like pine needles. Not like grass. It smells different because it's pine needles… It also smells different when we walk [crushing dried pine needles and cones]". The people who reached out to touch and brush the foliage as they moved often brought their hands to their noses to smell the grasses and plants. Thus, the forest experience spirals and weaves from one sense to another and back in a non-linear and non-hierarchical manner. A number

30 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/qvCrGzw8PLQ [29.02.2024].

of people even said this explicitly: "You can't isolate one sense, perception is holistic. And in terms of walking there's different ground. It would be awful if you did nothing but listen to the forest. Forests are made of far more than just birds!" One long-time resident even proposed that "[m]aybe there should be a new station on the sound trail about general perceptions, not just sound. For example, touch. If it said 'Sinneswahrnehmung' ['sensory perception'] instead of 'Klangwald' people would go through very differently".

Hearing in any environment is not just hearing because the other senses are still there and active. Moreover, not only can the senses not be disentangled and isolated, but it was also the act of walking itself that revealed these sensory connections. Moving and walking in the forest may also serve to foreground senses other than vision because the eyes are already busy with the act of walking itself, as portrayed by one interlocutor:

> I feel like when I'm walking, I have to be looking at where I'm walking just because of not falling over. For me, seeing the woods is from being still, because my eyes can't do both of those things at the same time. Like just now, I thought to myself, 'maybe I should look at some things' but then realized 'oh I can't do that when I'm walking'.

In *Sensing the World*, Le Breton maintains:

> 'I sense therefore I am' is another way of saying that the human condition is not only spiritual or mental, but first and foremost, embodied. An anthropology of the senses implies being immersed in the world, being within, not in front of it, and allowing sensuality to inform one's writing and analysis. The body is a profusion of sensory experience. It is absorbed in the movement of the world and mingles with it through all its senses.[31]

Walking along with our interviewees allowed us to observe first-hand their experience of integrating different senses, in a way that would likely not have been conveyed through a purely verbal exchange. The foregrounding of sensory experience as we encountered all these aspects of walking ethnography lead us in the direction of sensory ethnography, described by anthropologist Sarah Pink as a "way of doing ethnography that takes as its starting point the multisensoriality of experience, perception, knowing and practice" and "accounts for how this multisensoriality is integral both to the lives of people who participate in our research *and* to how we ethnographers practice our craft".[32] Later on, Pink argues that if knowing is rooted in practice, then "to 'know' as others do, we need to engage in practices with them".[33] Walking interviews, where we could observe people's interactions with their surroundings, was precisely this type of engagement *with*, and helped bring us closer to 'knowing as others do'.

Over the course of our interviews and theorizing, our method therefore came to rest at the nexus of walking anthropology and sensory ethnography, not just a sonic, but a sensory walking ethnography.

Analysis, Reflection, and Interpretation

The interaction and inextricability of the senses was essential to two themes that arose while we walked: 'liminality, transition, and threshold' and 'sound and silence'. These came up unprompted throughout and also in the responses to a few questions we asked at the conclusion of the walks, such as:

— How would you describe the experience of moving into the forest and moving out of the forest?
— Was walking with us a different experience than when you walk alone, and if so, how?
— We've talked a lot about 'natural sounds' – what makes a sound 'natural'?

31 Le Breton 2017 [2006]: 1.
32 Pink 2009: 1.
33 Pink 2009: 34.

Liminality, Transition, and Threshold

The descriptive language used by many interviewees implies a sense of entering and exiting the forest – 'being *in* the forest'; 'going *into* the forest' – and therefore crossing a threshold of sorts. It was very clear to people when they were in and when they were not in the woods. One commented that "approaching the water feels like approaching a little private place, like going into something. Not like a little hole, but it feels like going into something". Another stated definitively "now we're leaving the Wald". One response to the question "How is it to step out of the forest?" was:

> I feel like in my brain I started to step out of the forest when we got down there. I feel like there's a direction, so then my brain sometimes goes ahead. Maybe because I saw the village or the mountain. Maybe that or maybe because it was already along the road. Or because it was a gradual because you started to be 'out of the forest' maybe […] there's a line. There's a feeling like you're going into something. It's not secret, but smaller and quieter and private in a way – although not literally, of course, because it's public land. And stepping out there feels like opening and a breath somehow. Open and light. That's partly just a fact of what I see, but those things feel very different.

In our walking interviews, this act of 'entering the forest' was very much sensorily defined. Within the forest, the smell changes from the warmth, resin, and larch needles of more open areas to the damp, moist smell in the darker and cooler areas. Outside the forest the scents of hay and diesel reigned: "It smells different in the forest. Outside the forest, in the village, it smells like cut hay; in the forest, it doesn't". One person used the evocative term 'Waldduft' – 'forest scent' – to describe the forest smell. In the forest, sounds were muted, the trees blocking sound from outside and the constancy of the flowing water or wind muting other sounds. One participant commented: "I like going into the forest because it's cooler, it's shaded, it smells nicer. It's more sheltered". Someone else felt the opposite, immediately mentioning the enjoyable feeling of the sun on her back when stepping out of the tree cover in contrast to the darker cooler feeling within the forest. A third person compared different parts of the forest, saying: "This side definitely has that more whooshing wind. It feels much more on the edge here than where the water is. Here you're only sort of in the forest". The forest's threshold was thus as much a sensory as a physical material one.

From the Edges to the Centre

In counterpoint to the edges of a space is its centre. Crossing a threshold and entering into a space – moving towards its centre – implies a certain immersion based on physical distance from the edges. But like the threshold, the centre – being in the forest – can also be defined in sensory terms:

> This spot here feels really quiet. It feels like even the wind is quiet. If there are no other people in here, it's sheltered on all sides. There's the water over there but it's muted. If I'm focused, I can hear a vehicle, but it seems in the distance. It feels very like 'oh it's somewhere else' even though it's not much further away than when we're over there, even though it's not really further away.

It is the distinction between being in and being on the world, theorized by Ingold and mentioned by our very first pilot participant, with which we began above, in the context of listening, hearing, and sound. It is Le Breton's "being immersed in the world, being within, not in front of it".[34]

Sound and Silence

A second theme that flowed through multiple conversations was that of sound and silence. Although at first glance this seems to foreground the sense of hearing, it in fact highlights the fallacy of isolating individual senses. Sound and silence are, on the surface, about the sense of hearing, but the forest reveals them to be about so much more. Being in the forest was described as quiet, sometimes even as silent. But that silence

34 Le Breton 2017 [2006]: 1.

and quiet was not only – or not even – about the decibel level or the actual sense of hearing. This was expressed by English speaking interviewees as well as German speakers, but is perhaps best demonstrated by German, where the word 'ruhig' has the double meaning of 'quiet' and 'calm'. Likewise, 'Stille' means both 'silence' and 'tranquility'. Probing beyond people's initial responses revealed this conflation of the sonic with the overall sensory perception: "It is calming for me but not always quiet."[35] When asked if she considers the loudness of the stream as 'Stille' (silence, calm), one person said "yes, because it's grounding and gives you peace". She continued: "Stille isn't always external quiet, but internal, for oneself".[36]

There was also a sense in which noise, when constant such as the stream, came to be experienced as a type of silence, and natural sounds, even if on the louder side (not *ruhig*), were still felt as calming (*beruhigend*):

> — There's something calming about seeing the water going. It's kind of similar to looking up through the trees – not like the pine trees here but deciduous trees that dance a bit. So relaxing – constant but different. Water flowing feels like that – constant but different. Mesmerizing.
> — Sounds were really even and faded in and out. Getting closer to the waterfall, getting further away from the waterfall. The forest has a constant noise that's interrupted by other noises that are random but quickly just turns into the noise that's there, even when it's birds or it doesn't have a pattern.
> — After a while of being in the forest sounds from outside faded away, receded […] at a certain point the balance shifts of what you're hearing outside or inside. It felt a little bit like that there. And then I feel like to fit with that new feeling I get a little bit quieter or slower.

Silence and quiet (*Ruhe*) were also intimately connected to movement: "The world isn't quiet [*ruhig*] at all because everything moves – plants, trees". This connection between sound and movement extended to human movement. One person said, "When I'm walking there are always sounds", referring to her own sounds in addition to those around her. This individual found the sound of some instruments pleasant enough but said she wouldn't play them herself because "I find the Wald has enough noises [from our walking]".

The 'silence' of the forest was thus more about a sense of internal quiet and peace derived from the surroundings than from sound: a holistic sensory and emotional experience expressed as a sonic one by condensing it into a word associated with the sense of hearing. Indeed, the German word for feeling or 'vibe' or 'mood' is also sound-related: 'Stimmung' ('Stimme' means 'voice'). Thus, linguistically, sound serves as a stand-in for sensory experience overall.

The Klangwald's sound-based name and the presence of the instruments also influence how many people experience it, whether (selectively) playing instruments or being prompted to think about sound where they might otherwise not have done so. We found that the instruments, when played by others, made one aware of *other people's* sonic presence in the forest, and in response, one's own presence became more noticeable (although one's own sounds – walking, breathing, etc. – were audible all along). When asked how the walk might have felt different without the instruments to engage with, one person said: "There wouldn't have been the same purpose. It would have been just being in the woods to experience the woods. The absence of those things would have probably allowed me to think more about the actual woods part. […] Knowing there's another thing, you want to go see the next thing". We have thus come full circle to the sonic, not in the way we first anticipated but rather in a way that highlights how hearing and listening are inextricably bound to the other senses, and how the idea of sound (through the understanding of silence) often refers to something beyond that which we hear.

Conclusion: Walking, Sounding, Sensing, Talking

We had initially hoped to expand Ingold and Vergunst's 'anthropology of walking' to focus on and include the sonic context of walking and the acts of hearing and listening to it. As we walked, we found that it was

35 "Es ist beruhigend für mich, aber nicht immer ruhig".
36 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/76W2DS83JZQ [29.02.2024].

necessary to broaden our scope to include all the senses. Thus, rather than advocating for a sonic walking ethnography, we instead propose a sensory walking ethnography.

Putting words to knowing and sensing and then conveying them to another individual is an enormous challenge in studying ecological perception. Walking alongside people as they encountered the forest did not eradicate the semiotic and linguistic challenges, but it did allow us to move just a little closer to their experience by witnessing in real time a different perspective than our own. In a way, our methodology occupies the liminal spaces between the experiential and semantic, just as the experience itself does. Indeed, one participant noticed and reflected on the difficulty of verbalizing this type of sensory experience:

> While we were talking, I noticed the feet noises and rustling etc. but really didn't pay attention to it. I would've also ignored quiet bird noise. It's kind of magical it does that. When I'm talking and thinking then I'm a little bit out of that magical 'being-in-the-forest' feeling. I don't know if I would have ignored it or moved at that same pace if it was just me alone. Talking and being are different ways of knowing – even though I'm very verbal, it's different to be verbal to someone else. So even if I have an internal monologue, it's different.

Moving through the forest – and the world – each sense provides a partial perspective on a complex whole that is perceptible through the coordinated use of multiple senses, integrated differently by each individual. In Le Breton's words:

> Perception is not conterminous with the objective world but a form of interpretation. Every individual navigates a sensory universe tied to a personal history born of his or her education. Walking in the same forest, different individuals are sensitive to different stimuli. […] [A] thousand forests in one, a thousand realities in a single mystery that remains hidden and yields its secrets only in fragments. There is no true forest, only a multitude of perceptions based on one's perspectives, expectations, and social and cultural affiliations.[37]

Walking ethnography became both our method (in that we were doing ethnography while walking) and our content (in that walking was the means through which people sensed the forest *while walking*). Walking means sensing in a very specific way whereby the walking itself becomes a means of sensing and knowing, and walking ethnography as a method allows us to sense *with* people.[38]

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37 Le Breton 2017 [2006]: 1–2.

38 Walking "with *other* persons" opens yet another perspective of sensing the world: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9rZHB9Zbo8 [29.02.2024]. See also Markus Wild's philosophical reflections on perceiving the environment differently when walking with his companion dog Titus (Wild und Hunderich 2018).

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