

Evelyn, resonant and sharp in her mezzo-soprano harmony of briskness and warmth. Sebastian, a soundscape of crescendos in his open, inviting tone, words following thoughts, climbing and descending, always gathering strength for a higher peak. Luisa, the voice of a listener and a storyteller, with a quick, lithe and rich tone, and a confident hesitation that allows others' voices to rest with hers. Ming, both tentative and booming, a hyper masculine and well-rounded baritone, at times undercut by breathless reticence. Elsie, their child's voice vibrating in low shy clarity, reminded me of the subtle presence of a single glass marble rolling, swerving and throwing sparks of light. Kathleen, the voice of a speaker and a witness, combining coloratura of expression with matter-of-factness of punctuation. Myna, her tone paused and deeply rooted, balancing arresting sobriety with an undertone of flashing curiosity.

Staying on the upper floor, my first experience of the large house as a sound world was constructed immediately on a vertical axis. The quieter working areas on the upper floor, except when music was played in the main hall with its fireplace and exposed wooden ceiling beams, resonated immediately with the often silent landscape one could see outside through the windows. The lower floor was taken over by the bustle of cooking shared meals, people walking in and out, often in small groups, gathering close to the entrance, and the intersticed play of children and house pets. The basement remained mysterious and hard to grasp – the silk-screening studio, the showers and the storage areas were unpredictable in their sonic configurations, especially when they were filtered by the more stable patterns of the busier ground floor.

This was my experience of the house as a sonotope, a term borrowed from urban planning. As made clearer by the Greek etymological root of *topos* as meaning “place”, a sonotope is a nexus of different intersecting layers of sound - produced by natural phenomena (like weather, for example), animal or human activity - experienced from a given listening point.