Meredith C. Ward

**Senior Lecturer, Director of the Film and Media Studies Program
The Johns Hopkins University**

The sounds of lockdown

**Virtual connection, online listening,
and the emotional weight of COVID-19**

Abstract

Modes of listening tell us a great deal about how Americans are coping with the feelings of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking online listening culture in which amateur music remixers repurpose known pop songs to produce an effect of loneliness in virtual public spaces, this essay traces the movement of online sound subcultures from late 2010s YouTube into the modes of listening, employed by a much larger viewership on lockdown during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020. Analyzing the act of listening to empty public spaces online since the inception of a particular family of memes that ran from 2017-2018, the essay showcases how that music subculture prefigured a wider response to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Covering the psychological response to pandemic, its manifestations in phenomena, such as grief over the loss of public space as mediated by EarthCam, #StayHomeSounds, and the quieting of neighborhoods and cities, this essay shows how the range of modes in our listening network is evolving at this time. It also responds to how the social and emotional needs that arise during lockdown are met in forms of virtuality we have crafted to connect us to the wider world. Moreover, it emphasizes that virtuality crept into our connection with public space earlier than the pandemic – and that playing with the notion of nostalgia recreationally through online media before the pandemic made us better equipped to handle the pandemic's isolation, when it came. Showcasing how alienation is at the root of both experiences, it also hypothesizes that mediated communion permits us both to engage with the inevitable loneliness and an ability to deal with it as time goes on.

Keywords:
YouTube, listening, nostalgia, online community, music subculture, urban noise, sound simulation, loneliness, COVID-19, quarantine.

On March 23, with the COVID-19 pandemic taking hold, my home state of Maryland's Governor Larry Hogan issued a government order that closed all non-essential businesses (Wenger & Wood, 2020). Residents could leave their homes only to buy food or seek medical care. In May 2020, after more than a month on lockdown, my husband realized that he had left something in one of our cars parked out on the street in our urban neighborhood. As he was crossing the yard, he was struck by something. No cars passed, playing music loud enough to wake the baby sleeping inside our house. There was no rumble of trucks on nearby streets. He heard two sounds. These were "birds and sirens".

Nostalgia and empty spaces

This essay reflects on the subject of longing within the practices of coping with the COVID-19 pandemic's lockdowns of public space. Within specific online communities during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, listening came to the fore as a primary way of coping with the pandemic. The analysis here is done primarily on the basis of specific empirical observations from YouTube and EarthCam, but the essay builds largely upon the theoretical framework of nostalgia and longing as this animates certain concerns in popular media, drawing upon the application of Mike Nawas and Jerome Platt's notion of nostalgia as "dread of the future" (Nawas, M., & Platt, J., 1965). Utilizing both the clinical definitions of nostalgia and the cultural analyses that stem from them regarding online practices, it analyzes how nostalgia is mobilized within viewing and listening communities to lighten the burden of isolation and address the emotional weight of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially as regards its relationship to empty public space.

Data used in the service of this argument is drawn directly from YouTube comments and videos as well as EarthCam footage, and statements by the company's CEO. Evidence coming from YouTube comments has all the drawbacks that such data must necessarily involve. Being anonymous, comments cannot immediately be traced back to empirical persons with identifiable age, gender, racial, or national characteristics. We must, then, go from the data that is available about YouTube users: 81% of the polled 15-25-year-olds use YouTube, according to most recent research. 71% of the 26-35-year-old age bracket does, followed by 67% among those 36-45, 66% among those aged 46-55, and a mere 58% for those over 56 years of age (Cooper, 2019). We cannot, then, state with certainty that any individual user is of a certain age, race, or national category, but we can assume that it is statistically more likely that they are under 25 than over 56. Beyond that, they cannot be ascertained beyond the users' self-description. The majority of the comments quoted here do account for the user's age bracket in the comment itself: that self-description is assumed to be more true than false. YouTubers are more likely to be from the United States (15% of all YouTube traffic) than any other nationality.[1] EarthCam use is even harder to pin down. Data is not available because it is not publicly shared. All data used within this article appears as publicly published evidence from its own website or as part of an article that uses personal correspondence with the founder/CEO of EarthCam, Brian Cury. Some data that suggests a rise in use of surveillance media is provided through market research for such media, including security footage companies, entertainment, video conferencing, and live events (Grand View Research, 2020). Virtual tourism is not a market that is assessed by major firms, yet. And so, relevant data is drawn from the company's self-assessment and is assumed to be the most accurate information available at the time of writing.

Nostalgic listening to public spaces online became an increasingly common practice in America during lockdown. A look at these modes of listening can illustrate the ways the sounds of public space in 2020 – and the online means by which users listened to them – reflected Americans' longing for forbidden public space that emerged under the uniquely stressful life experience of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Americans' experience of the public was mediated in a way that reveals that it was an extension from previous practice, though one that few would recognize. From March 2020 through the present, different parts of the United States have been under lockdown (Wu, Smith, Khurana, Siemaszko, DeJesus-Banos, 2020). A group of online music memes that appeared on YouTube in the late 2010s and gained new force during the lockdown, I argue, serves as a way of understanding lockdown and, vice versa, lockdown helps us to understand what these memes were already saying about our listening culture.

The way we watch public space and the specific family of memes I study here are connected by a pervasive sense of loss that was present in our listening culture even before the pandemic began. Nostalgia, Mike Nawas and Jerome Platt argue, is not so much about the relationship of the self to the past as to an uncertain future. Quoting psychologist Charles A. Zwingman, in the 1960s they asserted the importance of redefining nostalgia as "the individual's response to change/or ... anticipated change ... by a symbolic return to, or reinstatement of, those features of [the] past ... which are perceived as having (had) the greatest gratification value" (Nawas & Platt, 1965). While in the psychological literature, such assessments referred only to individuals on a personal level, sociologists such as Fred Davis have applied the productive notion of nostalgia to the object of culture. The media cultures outlined in this essay maintain a nostalgic approach to the past. With the lockdowns in the United States, Americans were confined to their homes. Their access to a wider world arose from a range of digital devices. These included smartphones, televisions, tablets, and computers. These media devices, and the encounters they permitted, gave users a virtual sense of the sounds of the world that was going on without them: what physical public space sounded like in their absence.

With this came nostalgia. Sean Gammon and Gregory Ramshaw write "nostalgia – in its many forms – appears to be the leisure of choice for many in the UK and USA during the lockdown, perhaps precisely because it offers a palliative tonic in times of crisis" (Gammon & Ramshaw, 2020). Nostalgic activities boomed among many people during lockdown as they were faced with increased leisure time. These activities included, but were not limited to, watching replays of famous sports matches from history, old movies, and rebroadcasts of old music concerts. As the authors note, there is both comfort and anxiety here: "the lockdown appears to have spawned a significant interest in the past; where young and old reflect on, and vicariously escape to, more predictable times; when friends could meet up, holidays

taken, and events attended. Yet the pervasive manner in which nostalgia has been embraced by individuals, families, [and] media [...] all point toward a collective anxiety". The pleasure of the familiar coexists with the anxiety over the uncertainty of the future.

David Kessler, who worked with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross on *On Grief and Grieving*, says of COVID-19: "The loss of normalcy; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection ... we're grieving. Collectively. We are not used to this kind of collective grief in the air" (Berinato, 2020). But where had we experienced this strange, amorphous sense of loss of public space before? Where so many things happen this year: on the Internet. We have been doing dry runs of these emotional encounters – of experiencing public spaces that are empty of people – for some time. We have been looking at – and listening to – the sounds of empty public spaces virtually. This happened on YouTube.

Listening to no one: Music and melancholy

In some subcultures of YouTube, practices predated the lockdown that also prefigured it. 2016 saw the birth of a meme that would come to have a strange relationship to the pandemic of 2020. On December 2, 2016, Childish Gambino released his new album, *Awaken,* on the Glassnote label. The fourth single was "Redbone". Filled with bass and synthesized organ, the song sampled "I'd Rather Be With You" by Bootsy Collins' Bootsy's Rubber Band (Pearce, 2016). On May 14, 2017, Twitter user @chloestixx posted a meme that used Gambino's single (Know Your Meme, 2020). It plays "Redbone" with a reduced frequency range. The effect was referred to as "What 'Redbone' Would Sound Like While You're Making Out in the Bathroom of A House Party". The meme went viral rapidly and was immediately taken up, with offerings that included "What Redbone Would Sound Like If It Was Played in a Manhole" (EvinEdits, 2017), and "What Redbone Would Sound Like if Your Parents Were Arguing Outside the Bathroom" (Llama Comma, 2017). By June 2017, even Gambino himself had acknowledged the meme, taking a moment to role-play the scenario while playing it at the Governors Ball (Platon, 2020).

By late May, the meme had transformed into a family of submemes. While many of the early versions of the meme played the scenario for laughs, later ones created a melancholy space, mining the potential for sadness that always existed within the meme. New versions emphasized that one was listening in on something to which one was not invited. These included videos in which captions informed the listener that it was her neighbor's music being heard through the wall or her older sibling's music being played down the hall in his own bedroom (Robert, 2018).

These were memes about isolation. Prolific YouTube artist allyson m., who works within the subgenre, remixes singles as if they were being played to an empty arena

or theater. Like sporting events and concerts around the world right now, M's remix of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" echoes out into an empty space (M, 2020). Jia Tolentino of *The New Yorker* found one such edit in the winter of 2018. Tolentino found herself clicking a link she found on Twitter that carried her to a video of Toto's "Africa" that had been remixed by prolific YouTube empty-spaces musical remixer, Cecil Robert. In this case, the concept of the meme was also changed: instead of making out at a party, the listener was in an abandoned 1980s-era shopping mall. She writes: "Like most people, I have an irrationally strong reaction to 'Africa' to begin with" (Tolentino, 2018). However, she adds, the experience was utterly transformed by the new spatialization of the song. She writes that "In my 3 am mood, the YouTube edit … was almost too affecting to bear; it sounded like longing and consolation together, extended into emptiness, a shot of warmth coming out of a void" (Tolentino, 2018). The meme offered both comfort and a panacea.

Tolentino, writing in 2018, analyzes the meme more broadly in terms of our cultural scenario. She states: "Our lives increasingly play out in virtual spaces … this quality is why the little shadow world of music that Robert, allyson m., and others inhabit is so appealing to me." The aim, she states, is "trying to reintroduce a sense of physical space into a listening environment of digital isolation: conjuring the sort of scenario in which, say, you're down the hall from your older sibling who loves the Beach Boys, or in a place where, for a change, someone else controls the music – in a crowd, or at a mall, or in a pounding bathroom – someplace where you've taken the chance of being lonely in public" (Tolentino, 2018).

Storytelling, inspired by these memes and done in the comments section of the videos, predominantly tells stories of moments passed and time wasted. The affect shared in these stories creates a bridge between the present and the past and steps in to create a feeling of community that can heal the breach between the two. A tour-de-force example from user sofiamoon, posted on the "Africa'" video, takes the scenario further, with its short narrative that takes place at a mall in the mid-1980s. She writes: "The shopping centre is one of your favourite places to be, especially in the evening; it becomes so quiet and calm and the only thing you can hear is the music playing softly from the speakers" (sofiamoon, 2017). Listening to the song, moon asserts, "You stand in the middle of the shopping centre, thinking about time. You feel like it's flowing through your fingers like sand. The year is 1985 and you have endless opportunities in front of you and you can't help but think of all the ones you've missed. 'Africa' by Toto starts playing and it feels like the best song you've ever heard" (sofiamoon, 2017). User forrestgump contributes another story on a Mac DeMarco song video, stating, "The clouds are out, you're in the house … You turn the song on and it plays throughout the hallways as you dance around each layer of the house. You stop dancing to realize, 'It still won't matter.' You begin to cry as the song ends" (forrestgump, 2017). Fewer scenarios sound more familiar to a
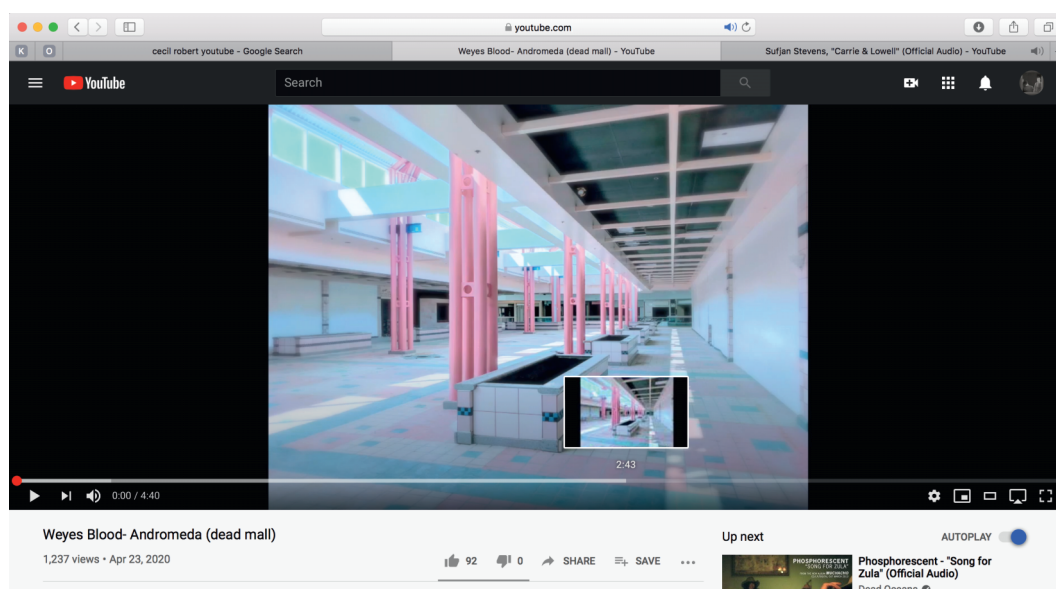
Figure 1: Image from a YouTube video meme with an abandoned mall. Raspberries and Rum. (2020, April 23). Weyes Blood - Andromeda (dead mall). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PCWqoyILzA

COVID-era reader than that of finding moments of solace, meaning, and melancholy alone in one's home only to break down suddenly, feeling that "nothing matters".

At times, the environments in which the memes occur appear apocalyptic: empty and destroyed, the malls mysteriously are without people, but they still echo with the open-air, reduced frequency sounds of pop songs such as Foster the People's "Pumped Up Kicks" (Robert, 2018) or Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" (Robert, 2018). The photographs that serve as visual fodder for these memes are often taken from the online collection of photographer Seph Lawless who had a fascination with these "dead malls" (Lawless, 2020). The rubber handrails for unused escalators curl like leviathans across now-open-air atriums. Leafless trees stand in pools of light streaming down from the skylights: without access to water, they have dried on the spot. The oddest example of a mall that is frequently used for these memes is the New World shopping center in Bangkok, Thailand. The never-completed open-air structure, which is currently filled with water and home to over 3,000 fish, serves as a bizarre tourist destination (Byrnes, 2015). These memes are about loss – real or imagined – and they give users these malls and theaters as playgrounds on which to experience and understand their loss.

Generation Z YouTube users (defined as those currently aged between 8 and 23 years) (Dimock, 2019) experience a largely imagined relationship to the past that appears in these memes. Many younger commenters, building on one another's comments, say that they experience the meme via "anemoia". The term was coined by John Koenig in his online fictionary (mock dictionary), The Dictionary of

Obscure Sorrows, where it is defined as "nostalgia for a time you've never known" (Koenig, 2020). This results in what one user calls Generation Z's "fake memory syndrome" (SSJaye, 2019). "I've only been in a mall 3 times, why do I have the feels" asks user Space Corpse (Space Corpse, 2020). "It feels like I've been there, years ago, but I haven't" writes user colinmccleansworth (colinmccleansworth, 2019). "ANEMOIAAAAA" writes one in response (Overrated Username, 2019). "**A N E M O I A**" writes another (Stezan!e, 2020). "This reminds me of my youth in the 80s", one writes. "[The] Only problem's [*sic*] that I was born in the late 90s" (emily, 2019). A commenter states: "This feels like some distant, beautiful, calm but yet melancholic memory of something I never experienced" (S, 2020). Some reference past lives. Many evidently wish to use the imagined past as an escape from the frightening and confusing present under COVID-19: "This video … transports me to a world that existed long ago, a world full of hope and discovery. It delivers me from the world of today where there is no hope or anything to look forward to" (Steve Tyrell, 2020). Another reads: "I wanna [*sic*] just travel to this reality and getaway [*sic*] from this depressing and brutal one. I wanna see my friends again, I wanna go outside" (Weeb Otaku, 2020). For their part, Xennial and Generation X project an equal amount of emotional content and nostalgia onto a photo of an empty mall. Older users lament the present they've left for the younger users. Sarah Hunter writes "To all the kids under 20: I'm sorry you'll never experience the joy of growing up in the '80s and 90's. Our parents thought it would be like that forever, so they didn't fight for it. And now we've left you with this", she writes, making Toto's "Africa" and an abandoned mall a surprising emblem of epic loss (Sarah Hunter, 2020). The melancholic scenarios of empty streets, arenas, concert halls, and shopping malls left to decay without us were a niche exercise in sadness until recently. These scenarios moved from liminal to real, however, in the spring of 2020 – when the streets around the world began to empty (CNN, 2020). While these memes had taught their small, devoted fan bases how to navigate loneliness with their listening practice, many more Americans would learn it this year when they were kept inside. As they did when they watched videos by Cecil Robert of abandoned and stilled public spaces, with "Africa" playing over them, for pleasure and comfort, they began to take that approach to the world outside our unwillingly closed doors. They began to watch public space as if they were watching these memes.

The sounds of cities

As lockdown began, users on YouTube began to comment that the memes resembled the world outside (see, e.g., Supercars of SoCal, 2020; Gong, 2020; Dyo, 2020; WXLTR_P_CK_LS, 2020; Valencia, 2020; Vlogs, 2020; Blumajdi, 2020). And some Internet users began to directly mimic the online practice that was used by previous

users to engage those memes. Surveillance media website EarthCam allows its users to look at, and listen to, the real world in ways very similar to those memes. Live video was immediately available in real time, of multiple famous and less-famous locations in cities around the world, allowing users to listen to them and to observe their life without people present to animate them (Jarratt, 2020; EarthCam, 2020). Users listened in on these spaces, with the same degraded audio quality that marks the memes. Looking at and listening to empty public spaces became a peculiar kind of hobby during quarantine, and "webcam tourism" became a practice known to marketers and EarthCam executives alike (Jarratt, 2020). EarthCam founder and CEO Brian Cury estimates that the site's traffic was "70 times" its standard amount for the season in spring 2020, showcasing new viewing habits emerging among users during COVID (Basch, 2020). EarthCam's reach was already impressive, pre-COVID. It ranks among the top 1% of websites on the internet, with seven million visitors per month (Crunchbase, 2020). New York's empty streets in particular became a massive tourist attraction. "Times Square is always one of our more popular locations", he states, but "it's really up there right now. People seem to be obsessed with seeing that there's nobody to see in the cities. They just can't believe it." (Basch, 2020). EarthCam footage from the peak of New York's spike in COVID-19 cases showcases an empty Times Square with an LED billboard, flashing safety information and promising an eventual return to normalcy, and no one had any way of knowing whether that was true (EarthCam, 2020).
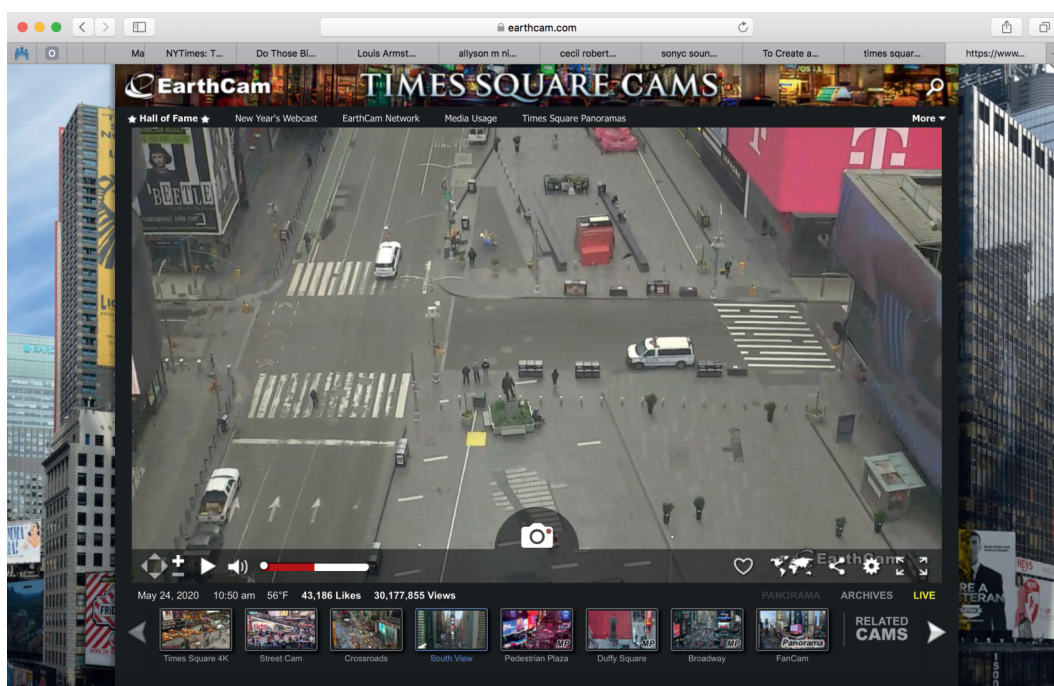

Figure 2: Image of an abandoned New York Times Square. Earthcam. (2020, May 24). Screenshot taken by the author from live footage.

New York City has multiple EarthCam webcams running all the time, capturing Times Square, Columbus Circle, Fifth Avenue, Mulberry Street (Little Italy), and the High Line pedestrian walk (EarthCam, 2020). These offerings give users the opportunity to hear the sounds that they cannot access during lockdown. One often hears a soundtrack reminiscent of the memes. An empty Mulberry Street has James Taylor's "How Sweet It is (To Be Loved By You)" playing plaintively from the open doors of a restaurant to no one (EarthCam, 2020). An empty Columbus Circle has cars circling its roundabout, but no pedestrian traffic as the strains of early 2000s R&B play nearby, coming to users with the reduced frequency that happens in open air (EarthCam, 2020). EarthCam tourism arose, as David Jarratt notes, in large part, to show people not only the places they would like to visit when the pandemic ends, or fantasy trips, but also the places where they used to go (Jarratt, 2020). In a study conducted by Jarratt of EarthCam users who used it for leisure during COVID-19, "Nostalgia" was among the words most often used to describe the practice by participants. Many revisited places they went to in life before the pandemic, to check in and see what they looked and sounded like under lockdown. "City views and city centres" constituted the third most popular virtual destination (Jarratt, 2020, p. 7). Commentators remark upon the prevalence of birdsong in these recordings (Bui & Badger, 2020). Some additional opportunities to listen in on an empty world include the Silent Cities project, in which a group of European scientists aim to document the "rare soundscapes now emerging as bustling urban centers lose all of their bustling" (Eichler, 2020) as well as the crowdsourced #StayHomeSounds project from the website *Cities and Memory*, which collects the recorded soundscapes of everyday people all over the world under quarantine. Entries range from a mother reading a bedtime story to the sounds of abandoned city squares (#StayHomeSounds, 2020). As Quoctrung Bui and Emily Badger of *The New York Times* put it, "we're suddenly nostalgic for noises that once annoyed us". Arline Bronzaft, an environmental psychologist who studies noise pollution in New York City, states that "People have said they miss the sounds of New York City ... They miss the honking horns, the crowds. And they would probably be the first people who were critical of those sounds. But it's not that they miss them. They miss their lives." (Bronzaft quoted in Bui & Badger, 2020). As Jarratt writes, "Technology has given us a more efficient way in which to visit our past and perhaps [...] there may be a nostalgic appeal in the experience of visiting places familiar to us via webcam in lockdown, before returning to a restricted present" (Jarratt, 2020, p. 4). The restricted present has caused these new coping methods to arise. But they are mere extensions of preexisting ones that already served users. While some internet users were "dissociating" – using Cecil Robert's meme – others were, however, mobilizing resistance to the present using the structures of a different set of viral memes, and the sounds of public space. Two things made Americans leave their houses during this time. These were Black Lives

Matter and the 2020 presidential election. Personal and public protest that emphasized connection and futurity became the antipode of solitary, nostalgic confinement in America.

A different soundscape for lockdown

As Fred Davis puts it: "many radical and liberal critics ... carp at collective manifestations of nostalgia ... for turning people's heads away from the 'important issues of the day' and incapacitating them for the sustained political action" of changing their democracy (Davis, 1979, as cited in Olick et al., 2011). Fundamentally against white supremacy, BlackLivesMatter has been a movement in the United States since at least 2016. However, George Floyd's killing at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer three months into the pandemic, following a history of other killings of men and women of color by American police, galvanized a highly intense season of protest activity within the movement. On June 6 alone, half a million people marched in almost 550 locations across the U.S. Between Floyd's killing and early July 2020, anywhere from 15 to 26 million people protested (depending upon the reports), with more than 200 million protests occurring each day of that time period (Buchanan et al., 2020). Black

Lives Matter has been one of the most prolific and engaging protest movements in U.S. history, drawing more protestors than almost any other movement (Buchanan, Bui & Patel, 2020). In cities across America, common chants sounded on city streets. They circulated simultaneously online in videos, creating another form of pandemic-era sound culture (see, e.g., Vanity Fair, 2020). Samples of protest chants appeared on hip-hop clip websites, serving as material to be included in songs (ccmixter.org, 2020). Chants included "No justice! No peace!" amended to include the third line, "No racist police!" "Say his name!" for George Floyd and "Say her name!" for Breonna Taylor became common chants in cities all over America, and these sounds animated previously emptied city streets and squares. Some doctors at reputable institutions all over America referred to racism as another of America's pandemics and, so, did not condemn protestors for gathering despite COVID regulations (Ducharme, 2020; Johns Hopkins Medicine Twitter, 2020). The music culture of the Black Lives Matter movement provides a strong contrast to the nostalgic online listening practice of this article. The role of music as the expression of both culture and dissent appears in work by scholars who draw upon the role of both protest chants and music (see Gershon, 2017; Johnson & King, 2020; Orejeula & Shonekan, 2018). However, music in Black Lives Matter protests has yet to be analyzed as contiguous with other online sound culture or seen in the light of the COVID pandemic. Music became a large part of the sounds of street protest as protestors began to utilize hip hop at protests. In Brooklyn, a crowd began chanting

the chorus of Ludacris' 2009 single "Move B****h" at police officers that had penned it in (Sacher, 2020). A crowd danced the Electric Slide to Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" in front of the White House in Washington, D.C. (Steptoe, 2020). Songs played a role in protest as they were sung, chanted, and played at demonstrations throughout the summer and fall. Videos circulated on the Internet of protestors marching in cities all over the U.S. while singing Brooklyn rapper Pop Smoke's 2019 single "Dior," making it a temporary song of the movement (Wilson, 2020). "Dior" – never intended to be a protest song – speaks with anger about the prison system and was repurposed by fans. Pitchfork Media refers to the song doing "what all great protest songs should: unifying and energizing" (Pierre, 2020). Protests have spontaneously produced grassroots singing of local rappers' songs beyond Smoke. Bay area protestors chanted Mac Dre's "Feeling Myself", and Houston-area protests played rap group Screwed Up Click, which featured Floyd himself. Floyd's verse from "Sittin' on Top of the World" as "Big Floyd" was heard at protests (Chang, 2020), not to mention the profusion of music being recorded that is inspired by the protest movement and

Figure 3: Retweet of Mother Jones story on post-election celebrations. Schwartz, M. [@mollyfication]. (2020, November 7). Brooklyn just became a giant dance party [Retweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/ mollyfication?lang=en

often samples protest sounds: Atlanta-based rapper Lil' Baby's "The Bigger Picture", DaBaby's "Rockstar", Juicy J's "Hella F—kin' Trauma", H.E.R.'s "I Can't Breathe", YG's "FTP", among others (Spanos & Grant, 2020). These videos circulate online. Social media was not divorced from this, but rather a part of it. As Jane Hu notes in *The New Yorker*, "Three months of quarantine taught us to live online, so it's perhaps unsurprising that it was what we saw online that sent us back onto the streets" (Hu, 2020). As Hu puts it, "the long revolutionary summer of 2020" was organized largely by action that occurred online. In the words of Deva Woodly, Professor of Politics at the New School in New York, "This movement has mastered what social media is *good* for" (Hu, 2020). This provides us with a model of engagement and future thinking via social listening media, rather than detachment and nostalgia.

Seen by many as a referendum on the current administration's handling of the COVID-19 epidemic and racial justice in America together, the U.S. election marked massive voter turnout and the single most common time Americans left their houses during the pandemic. It was also the slowest election result to be called by the press in recent American history. Three days after Election Day, Americans continued to refresh news feeds on cellphones and as the results trickled in. Many Americans' attention remained glued to their television screens. Then, at 11:30am four days after Election Day, the Associated Press announced the winner, signaling an incoming administration for Democrat Joe Biden. Many Americans in urban centers detailed on social media that they first heard the news that Associated Press had "called" the election, due to urban noise (Drash et al., 2020; Larson, 2020; Steadman, 2020). The election results were heralded by exclamations, cheers, and the ringing of cowbells out of windows and off of balconies. Drivers sounded their cars horns in a cacophony responded to by those lining the city streets. Drums were heard on the streets of the upper east side and upper west side of New York, and a funk band played from the flatbed of a slow-moving pickup truck as an impromptu and informal parade marched down Connecticut Avenue in Washington D.C. Celebrants marched, chanting and singing, to "take back the White House" (Steadman, 2020; Fox9 KMSP, 2020). In Brooklyn, crowds danced to "FDT" ("F—-Donald Trump") by YG and Nipsey Hussle (Larson, 2020). Crowds outside the Philadelphia Convention Center danced to Beyoncé's "Run the World (Girls)" as the last votes were counted (McLean, 2020). On the two-block Black Lives Matter Plaza (newly minted by Mayor Muriel Bowser on June 5 of this year), which runs in front of the White House in Washington DC, crowds danced to salsa music (Steadman, 2020). Outside the Third Precinct Building of the Minneapolis police, a group performed a tribal dance with drums (Fox 9 KMSP; Steadman, 2020). The streets of Atlanta – a city that was famously key to Biden's win in the state of Georgia – crowds danced and sang at the intersection of 10th and Piedmont (Steadman, 2020; Drash et al., 2020). In the urban centers that fueled the Democrat's win, the sounds of the public were ringing.

In December 2020, the virus is not over yet. Americans are hunkering down for a long winter waiting for the vaccine to the virus – recently approved by the FDA – to be distributed. This will eventually enable the full return to public spaces. The lockdowns are still occurring – now in new places, such as the Mid- and Southwest, which were not previously affected by the spring 2020 outbreaks. Until then, the sounds of culture will continue to be heard online. The isolation of the memes from the 2010s taps full force into our aural culture of today. The election results do not end the need for protest. Rather, they spark a new era of them. But for a period of time this month, in celebration of change, the streets were full of songs and people. The celebrations remind Americans that public spaces will be theirs once again before too long – and that nostalgia for a time when they were populated will soon be obsolete.

References

Bakare, L. (2020, March 31). "Art Project Captures Sounds of Cities During Coronavirus Outbreak." *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/31/art-project-captures-sound-of-cities-during-coronavirus-outbreak

Bakare, L. (2020, March 20). "Musicians Head Online as COVID-19 Puts Live Shows on Pause." *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/mar/20/musicians-head-online-as-covid-19-puts-live-shows-on-pause

Basch, M. (2020, April 11). "Webcams on Empty Streets, Travel Destinations Offer Virtual Escape During Pandemic." *WTOP.com.* https://wtop.com/tech/2020/04/webcams-on-empty-streets-travel-destinations-offer-virtual-escape-during-pandemic/

Batcho, K., & Luna, K. "Speaking of Psychology: Does Nostalgia Have a Psychological Purpose." (Transcript). *American Psychological Association.* https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/nostalgia

Berinato, S. (2020, March 23). "That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief." *Harvard Business Review.* https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief

Buchanan, L., Bui, Q., & Patel, J. (2020, July 3). "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History." *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html

Bugos, C. (2020, July 16). "This Website Highlights Views Outside Windows Across the World." *Smithsonian Magazine.* https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/window-swap-180975334/

Bui, Q., & Badger, E. (2020, May 22). "The Coronavirus Quieted City Noise. Listen to What's Left." *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/22/upshot/coronavirus-quiet-city-noise.html

Byrnes, M. (2015, January 16). "Removing Fish From a Surreal Abandoned Shopping Mall." *Bloomberg City Lab.* https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-16/removing-fish-from-a-surreal-abandoned-shopping-mall

Chang, Alisa. (2020, July 10). "Black Lives Matter Protestors March to Rap Songs by Local Heroes." NPR's *All Things Considered.* https://www.npr.org/2020/07/10/889842715/black-lives-matter-protesters-march-to-rap-songs-by-local-heroes

Cities and Memory. "Open Call: Send Us Your #StayHomeSounds From the Global Lockdown." *Cities and Memory.* https://citiesandmemory.com/2020/03/open-call-stay-home-sounds-global-lockdown/

Cities and Memory. "Sounds of the COVID-19 Lockdown." *Cities and Memory.* https://citiesandmemory.com/covid19-sounds/

Clement, J. (2018, November 8). "Daily YouTube Usage in the United States as of August 2018, by Ethnicity." *Statista.* https://www.statista.com/statistics/945932/daily-frequency-usage-youtube-usa-ethnicity/

CNN. (2020, June 29). "Photos: The Coronavirus is Leaving Empty Spaces Everywhere." CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/world/gallery/coronavirus-empty-spaces/index.html

Cole, S. (2017, August 25). "Songs Edited to Sound Like They're Playing in Another Room are Inexplicably Emotional." *Vice.* https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/neeqwx/songs-edited-to-sound-like-theyre-playing-in-another-room-are-inexplicably-emotional

Colindres, L. (2018, March 28). "'Song Playing from Another Room' is the Meme That Will Make You Feel Things." *The Daily Dot.* https://www.dailydot.com/unclick/listening-to-song-other-room-youtube-meme/

Comma, L. (2017, May 24). "What Redbone Would Sound Like if Your Parents Were Arguing Outside the Bathroom." YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrGurI40tZA

Crunchbase. (2020). EarthCam. https://www.crunchbase.com/organization/earthcam

Dan, A. (2020, June 1). "Will Marketers Revert to Nostalgia in the Coming Hard Times," *Forbes.*https://www.forbes.com/sites/avidan/2020/06/01/will-marketers-revert-to-nostalgia-in-the-coming-hard-times/?sh=51b1510655e7

Davis, F. (2011). "From Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia." In: Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Daniel Levy (Eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader* (pp. 446-451). Oxford University Press.

Dimock, M. (2019, January 12). "Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins." Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/

Dinges, G. (2020, May 18). "Once the Coronavirus Pandemic Subsides, Will Music Lovers Pick Streaming Over In-Person Concerts?" *USA Today.* https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2020/05/18/are-virtual-concerts-viable-after-coronavirus-pandemic-subsides/3096662001/

Drash, W., Eldridge, E., & Rose, S. (2020, November 7). "Celebrations Erupt in Atlanta at News of Biden Victory." *GA Today.* https://www.gpb.org/news/2020/11/07/celebrations-erupt-in-atlanta-at-news-of-biden-victory

Ducharme, J. (2020, June 10). "'Protest is a Profound Public Health Intervention.' Why So Many Doctors are Supporting Protests in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic." *TIME.* https://time.com/5848212/doctors-supporting-protests/

EarthCam. https://www.earthcam.com.

Earthcam. (2020, May 24). Screenshot taken by the author from live footage.

EarthCam footage recorded by the author. Taken June 9, 2020, at 4:45 pm. https://www.earthcam.com/usa/newyork/columbuscircle/?cam=columbus_circle

EarthCam footage recorded by the author. Taken June 9, 2020, at 8:30 pm. https://www.earthcam.com/usa/newyork/littleitaly/?cam=littleitaly

Eichler, J. (2020, April 9). "In Our Empty Public Spaces, Listening to the Great Diminuendo." *The Boston Globe.* https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/04/09/arts/our-empty-public-spaces-listening-great-diminuendo/

Elks, S. (2020, April 1). "From Birdsong to Cheers, Sound Map Shows How Coronavirus is Changing Cities." Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-sounds/from-birdsong-to-cheers-sound-map-shows-how-coronavirus-is-changing-cities-idUSL8N2BP5N0

EvinEdits. (2017, June 2). "What Redbone Would Sound Like It If Was Played in a Manhole." YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2610OUDC9w

Fowers, A., and Wan, W. (2020, May 26). "A Third of Americans Now Show Signs of Clinical Anxiety and Depression, Census Bureau Finds Amid Coronavirus Pandemic." *The Washington Post.*

Fox 9 KMSP. (2020, November 7). Dancing in the Streets: Minneapolis Residents Celebrate After Joe Biden's Projected Win." Video. https://www.fox9.com/video/868712

Frank, A. (2020, April 8). "How 'Quarantine Concerts' are Keeping Live Music Alive as Venues Remain Closed: Live Music is Now More Intimate Than Ever, Thanks to Social Media." *Vox.* https://www.vox.com/culture/2020/4/8/21188670/coronavirus-quarantine-virtual-concerts-livestream-instagramas

Gammon, S., & Ramshaw, G. (2020) "Distancing from the Present: Nostalgia and Leisure in Lockdown." *Leisure Sciences.* DOI: 10.1080/01490400.2020.1773993

Gershon, W.S. (2018). "Sound Art, Social Justice: Black Lives Matter." *Sound Curriculum: Sonic Studies in Educational Theory, Method, and Practice.* Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781315533131

Gordinier, J. (2020, July 25). "The Real Reason I Miss Restaurants Has Nothing to Do With Food." *Esquire.* https://www.esquire.com/food-drink/restaurants/a33404520/restaurants-pandemic-loss/

Grand View Research. (May 2020). "Webcams Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report by Product (USB, Wireless) By Technology (Analog, Digital), By Distribution Channel, By End Use, By Region, and Segment Forecasts, 2020-2027." https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/webcams-market

Hu, Jane. (2020, August 3). "The Second Act of Social-Media Activism." *The New Yorker.* https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-second-act-of-social-media-activism

Hypocritical. (2017, June 7). "What Redbone Would Sound Like if Redbone Was Playing Redbone." YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBRFw83BvxQ

Issue Project Room. "Isolated Field Recordings Series." https://issueprojectroom.org/program/isolated-field-recordings-series

Jarratt, D. (2020). "An Exploration of Webcam-Travel: Connecting to a Place and Nature Through Webcams During the COVID-19 Lockdown of 2020." *Tourism and Hospitality Research.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358420963370

Jennings, R. (2020, May 7). "Stuck in 2020, Pretending It's 2014." *Vox.* https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/5/7/21247938/tumblr-aesthetic-2014-nostalgia-tiktok-indie-pop

Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2020, June 5). Twitter account. https://twitter.com/hopkinsmedicine/status/1269026307632922625?lang=en

Johnson, M. & King, M. (2020). "Editorial: Sound and Performance." *Canadian Theatre Review*, 184, 5-9. DOI: 10.3138/ctr.184.001

Know Your Meme. "Redbone", meme entry, *KnowYourMeme*.com. https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/redbone

Lanzoni, W., & Almond, K. (2020, May 1). "With Cities on Lockdown, Animals are Finding More Room to Roam." CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/01/world/gallery/animals-coronavirus-trnd/index.html

Larson, S. (2020, November 8). "The Biden Block Party Begins in New York City." *The New Yorker.* https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-local-correspondents/the-biden-block-party-begins-in-new-york-city

Lawless, S. "A Haunting Look Inside America's Creepiest Abandoned Malls." Seph Lawless.com. https://sephlawless.com/inside-creepiest-abandoned-malls/

Lowry, B. (2020, April 19). "'Together at Home' Illustrates TV's Power to Connect Us, Rare as That Is These Days." CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/19/entertainment/tv-together-at-home/index.html

M.,A. "Nirvana 'Smells Like Teen Spirit (Acapella + Empty Theatre + 3D." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5Ur1X68WlM&feature=youtu.be

Macdonald, H. (2020, April 15). "Animals are Rewilding Our Cities. On YouTube, At Least." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/magazine/quarantine-animal-videos-coronavirus.html

McLean, C. (2020, November 7). "Sights and Sounds: Philly Dances Its Way to Deciding the Election." *Philly Influencer*. http://phillyinfluencer.com/2020/11/sights-and-sounds-philly-dances-it-way-into-deciding-the-election/

Metropolitan Opera. (2020, April 25). "At-Home Gala." https://www.metopera.org/season/at-home-gala/. The Metropolitan Opera homepage.

Nawas, M.M. & Platt, J. (1965). "A Future-Oriented Theory of Nostalgia." *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 21, 51-7.

NYPL Staff. (2020, April 1). "Missing Sounds of New York: An Auditory Love Letter to New Yorkers." https://www.nypl.org/blog/2020/05/01/missing-sounds-of-new-york

Orejuela, F. & Shonekan, S. (2018). *Black Lives Matter and Music: Protest, Intervention, Reflection*. Indiana University Press. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2019.1654121

Pearce, S. (2016, November 18). "Redbone", single review. https://pitchfork.com/reviews/tracks/18617-childish-gambino-redbone/

Pentreath, R. (2020, July 22). "The Best Classical Music and Opera Online Streams Available." Classic FM. https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/live-streamed-classical-music-concerts-coronavirus/

Perkins, E. (2020, May 1). "The Sound of Silence: Noise apps like Noisli and Soundsnap can bring the background sounds of a busy coffee shop, restaurant, or Paris cafe to wherever you're sheltering in place." *Eater*. https://www.eater.com/2020/5/1/21242733/restaurant-sounds-app-coronavirus

Pierre, A. (2020, June 9). "Pop Smoke's 'Dior' is A Radical Addition to the Protest Music Canon." *Pitchfork*. https://www.pitchfork.com/thepitch/pop-smoke-dior-protest-music

Platon, A. (2017, June 4). "Childish Gambino Performed His Only Show This Year at Governors Ball and It Was Epic AF." *Billboard*. https://www.billboard.com/index.php/articles/columns/hip-hop/7817589/childish-gambino-governors-ball-2017

Randall, C. (2020, April 9). "Why Going Outside is Good for Your Health, Especially Right Now." *Forbes.com*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/cassidyrandall/2020/04/09/why-going-outside-is-good-for-your-health-especially-right-now/#f26e6ee2de9f

Raspberries and Rum. (2020, April 23). Weyes Blood - Andromeda (dead mall). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PCWqoyILzA

Robert, C. (2018, January 15). "The Cranberries, 'Linger' (Playing From Another Room)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKu_nIA_-GY]

Robert, C. (2018, February 8). "Foster the People - Pumped Up Kicks (playing in an empty shopping center)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkqdVIfgt6k

Robert, C. (2018, May 2). "Louis Armstrong: What a Wonderful World (playing in an empty shopping center)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hmluxs94UnQ

Robert, C. (2017, September 14). "Toto 'Africa' (playing in an empty shopping center)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

Ryzik, M. (2020, May 7). "It's Showtime! Press Play to Hear the NYC That Used To Be." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/07/arts/music/new-york-sounds-album.html

Sacher, A. (2020, June 3). "Protestors Chant Ludacris' 'Move Bitch' at NYPD Blocking Crowd From Exiting Manhattan Bridge." *Brooklyn Vegan*. https://www.brooklynvegan.com/protesters-chant-ludacris-move-bitch-at-nypd-blocking-crowd-from-exiting-manhattan-bridge/

Sengupta, A. (2020, April 17). "Missing Office During Coronavirus Lockdown? These Websites Bring Familiar Office Sound to the House." *Gadgets*. https://gadgets.ndtv.com/internet/news/office-sound-effects-coronavirus-pandemic-lockdown-work-from-home-2213607

Smith, L. (2020, April 14). "Admit It, You Miss Your Noisy Office. This Tool Re-Creates All Your Cow-orkers' Annoying Sounds." *Fast Company.* https://www.fastcompany.com/90489877/admit-it-you-miss-your-noisy-office-this-tool-recreates-all-your-coworkers-annoying-sounds

SONYC website. https://wp.nyu.edu/sonyc/.

Sommer, L. (2020, July 20). "Whales Get A Break as Pandemic Creates Quieter Oceans." *NPR.* https://www.npr.org/2020/07/20/891854646/whales-get-a-break-as-pandemic-creates-quieter-oceans

Spanos, B., & Grant, S. (2016, July 13). "Songs of Black Lives Matter: 22 Protest Anthems." *Rolling Stone.* https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/songs-of-black-lives-matter-22-new-protest-anthems-15256/beyonce-feat-kendrick-lamar-freedom-33813/

StayHomeSounds. (2020, May 1). "StayHomeSounds Volume 1 Released Today." https://citiesand-memory.com/2020/05/stayhomesounds-volume-1-released-today/

Steadman, O. (2020, November 7). "People Cheered, Honked, And Stomped On Cheetos In The Streets After Biden Won The Election." *Buzzfeed News.* https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/otillias-teadman/biden-win-election-2020-celebrations

Steptoe, T. (2020, June 26). "Hip-Hop is the Soundtrack to Black Lives Matter Protests, Continuing a Tradition That Goes Back to the Blues." *The Chicago Reporter.* https://www.chicagoreporter.com/hip-hop-is-the-soundtrack-to-black-lives-matter-protests-continuing-a-tradition-that-dates-back-to-the-blues/

Schwartz, M. [@mollyfication]. (2020, November 7). Brooklyn just became a giant dance party [Retweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/mollyfication?lang=en

Theisen, L. (2018, February 23). "These Weird Muffled Versions of Old Songs Are Really Doing It For me." *Deadspin.* https://theconcourse.deadspin.com/these-weird-muffled-versions-of-old-songs-are-really-do-1823278813

Tolentino, J. (2018, March 15). "The Overwhelming Emotion of Hearing Toto's 'Africa' Remixed to Sound Like It's Playing in an Empty Shopping Mall." *The New Yorker.* https://www.newyorker.com/culture/rabbit-holes/the-overwhelming-emotion-of-hearing-totos-africa-remixed-to-sound-like-its-playing-in-an-empty-mall

Urra, S. (2020, June 23). "Barcelona Opera House Reopens With Concert for 2,292 Plants." https://english.elpais.com/spanish_news/2020-06-23/barcelona-opera-house-reopens-with-a-con-cert-for-2292-plants.html

Vanity Fair. (2020, August 24). "Voices from the Black Lives Matter Protests (A Short Film)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS2MG2k9BlM

Weir, K. (2020, April 1). "Grief and COVID-19: Mourning Our Bygone Lives." American Psychological Association. HTTPS://www.apa.org/news/apa/2020/04/grief-covid-19

Wenger, Y., & Wood, P. (2020, March 30). "Gov. Hogan Issues Stay-at-Home Order for Maryland to Stop Spread of the Coronavirus." *The Baltimore Sun.* https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavi-rus/bs-md-stay-at-home-hogan-covid-19-20200330-pmid22rvirdwbppx4xpgjadoim-story.html

Wilson, J. (2020, June 23). "The Many Sounds of Black Lives Matter." *The New Republic.* https://newrepublic.com/article/158255/many-sounds-black-lives-matter

Wu, J., Smith, S., Khurana, M., Siemaszko, C., & DeJesus-Banos, B. (2020, March 25, updated April 29). "Stay-at-Home Orders Across the Country: What Each State is Doing (or Not Doing) Amid Widespread Coronavirus Lockdowns." https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/here-are-stay-home-orders-across-country-n1168736

Yee, L. (2020, May 6). "Virtual Concerts and Broadway Shows to Watch During Lockdown." *The Wrap.* https://www.thewrap.com/how-to-watch-concerts-and-broadway-shows-during-the-corona-virus-shutdown/

YouTube user Berenice Valencia. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user colinmccleansworth. (2019). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user Dyo. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user Elizabeth Blumajdi. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user emily. (2019). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user forrestgump. (2017). Re: *Mac DeMarco – My Kind of Woman (playing slowly from another room).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aPB0VTgU4M

YouTube user Itreallydobelikethatsometimes. (2017). Re: *Mac DeMarco – My Kind of Woman (playing slowly from another room).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aPB0VTgU4M

YouTube user Jeffrey Gong. (2020). Re: *Nirvana - Smells Like Teen Spirit (Acapella + Empty Theater + 3D).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5Ur1X68WlM

YouTube user Overrated Username. (2019). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user Sarah Hunter. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user sofiamoon. (2017). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user SSJaye. (2019). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user Steve Tyrell. (2020). Re: *Nirvana - Smells Like Teen Spirit (Acapella + Empty Theater + 3D).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5Ur1X68WlM

YouTube user stezan!e. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user Supercars of SoCal. (2020). Re: *Nirvana - Smells Like Teen Spirit (Acapella + Empty Theater + 3D).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5Ur1X68WlM

YouTube user Weeb Otaku. (2020). (2020). Re: *Nirvana - Smells Like Teen Spirit (Acapella + Empty Theater + 3D).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5Ur1X68WlM

YouTube user WXLTR_P_CK_LS. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

YouTube user Savannah Vlogs. (2020). Re: *Toto – Africa (playing in an empty shopping centre).* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D__6hwqjZAs

Notes

1   Within the U.S., racial demographics vary in terms of frequency of YouTube use. According to Staista, in 2018, 64% of Asian-Americans used YouTube every day. In contrast, 60% of Latino-Americans did; 57% of African Americans did, and only 42% of Non-Latino Whites did. The average YouTube user, then, is more likely to be a person of color in America. The immediate example of this subculture, however, lacks any markers that permit us to identify the racial backgrounds of respondents, except when users self-describe in this regard (see, e.g., Clement, J. 2018).