

Itinerarios Sonoros – Curriculum Guide
Episode Name—“Soundscapes,” by Priya Parrotta

Description—This curriculum guide was designed to accompany “Soundscapes,” the second episode in the Itinerarios Sonoros podcast. Its primary purpose is to guide students (ages 15 and over) through the process of questioning anthropocentrism (the exclusive focus on humans which is a persistent feature of contemporary life), and opening up to the insights, vibrancy, and power of the natural¹ world—particularly in the Caribbean. In the course of this program, students will learn how the natural environments of Caribbean islands nourish personal growth, cultural awareness, and ultimately, each student’s capacity to fight for the sustainability which we all require.

Objectives—By the end of this program, students should be able to:

- Know the definitions of “anthropocentrism,” “climate change,” and “disaster capitalism”
- Understand and consider how listening to the sounds of nature can help to cultivate creativity and artistic expression
- Apprehend how natural disasters transform the soundscapes of daily life, and thus convey new perspectives on humanity’s relationship to nature
- Understand more deeply the diversity of musical genres that exist on the world’s islands, and their connections to coastal ecologies
- Comprehend the importance of solidarity between the world’s islands, and the geopolitics which make such solidarity necessary
- Convey with nuance the diverse reasons why music can serve as a powerful aid to environmental activism
- Apply their learning to a final project (a individual or collaborative podcast on listening to the natural environment of their choice)

Part 1: Describe & Analyze

Listening Exercise #1

Before

- ✓ Look up the definition of **anthropocentrism**

Listen

- ✓ *Becoming a Musician by the Sea*, min. 13:47 – 15:00

¹ A note on the word “natural” – “Nature” is a word and a concept that is currently subject to much debate in fields such as human geography and ethnomusicology. Many scholars consider the term to be devoid of nuance, given the fact that most of humanity does not live in pristine wilderness; on the contrary, most of our lives are completely defined by the choices that humans have made to manipulate and control other forms of life. However, I consider words such as “nature” and “natural” very important, and I use them throughout this guide to convey forms of life besides humans. Despite the claims of critics, this life continues to exist, and now more than ever, it demands our attention and respect.

Listening Exercise #2

Before

- ✓ (If the students have not lived through a hurricane) Look up the wind speed of category 4 and 5 hurricanes; also find images/videos and sound recordings
- ✓ (If the students have lived through a hurricane) Describe what the storm sounded like, and how the soundscape made you feel

Listen

- ✓ “Listening to Huracán María,” min. 3:23 – 6:10

Listening Exercise #3

Before

- ✓ Look up the definition of **disaster capitalism**

Listen

- ✓ “After María – Politics and Song,” min 6:41 – 8:50

Listening Exercise #4

Before

- ✓ Look up the definition of the words **geopolitics** and **climate solidarity**

Listen

- ✓ “Music, Islands and Climate Solidarity,” min. 9:23 – 13:42

Part 2: Interpret

Listening Exercise #1

Homework

- ✓ Spend 1 hour listening to water in several forms (rain, waves, a stream), outdoors if possible; keep a journal of your experience
- ✓ Search for articles on water and creativity, as well as water and healing

In Class

- ✓ Discuss the listening experience—what can be learned by listening to water, and how water can be used creatively

Listening Exercise #2

Homework

- ✓ Listen to the soundscape diary again, and list the ways in which the speaker sees human life differently during the storm

In Class

- ✓ Return to the concept of anthropocentrism, and discuss how natural disasters alter daily life, and what might be learned from those experiences

Listening Exercise #3

Homework

- ✓ Find an article or video of music being used for positive change in the aftermath of Hurricane María; find a similar example on another island in the Caribbean, Pacific or Indian Ocean

In Class

- ✓ Discuss the results of the students' investigation and consider—How does one's relationship to the natural world change in the aftermath of a disaster? Can music help to restore the positive connections to nature which we discussed in Listening Exercise #1? Explain why or why not.

Listening Exercise #4

Homework

- ✓ Look up more information on the shankha, or caracola, or conch shell. Imagine that people from the Caribbean, Pacific, and the Indian Ocean were to gather together to play this instrument. What might this collaboration sound like?

In Class

- ✓ Discuss: Can music defy politics? Why or why not?
- ✓ Discuss: How can listening to the music of nature help us to become environmentalists?

Part 3: Connections

Students will make connections between this podcast episode and their own experiences by producing a podcast of their own as their **final project**. This can be done individually or collaboratively. Students will take the theme of anthropocentrism and embark in an investigation of a natural environment that means something to them. They will seek to answer a variety of questions, including:

- ✓ What does this natural environment sound like, and how does it make one feel?
- ✓ Has music or poetry been composed, inspired by this type of ecosystem?
- ✓ Politically *and* culturally, what are the threats to this ecosystem?
- ✓ How can this podcast help to shift people's consciousness, to foster careful listening, and more sensitivity to the dynamics of environmental change?