

# A Noise-Some Existence



By Sidney Secular

It would appear there is a conspiracy, as it were, against silence in the world—a movement to make irritating noise the norm—either for someone’s entertainment, for some unnecessarily noisy and obtrusive commercial purpose, or as a way to simply be annoying or be noticed. The noisome perpetrators intrude on the natural order and on the natural right to privacy and silence to which the rest of us are entitled. If the Founders lived a generation or two later, and America was founded during the early Industrial Revolution, they probably would have been annoyed enough by the noise to enshrine rights to privacy and quietude in the Bill of Rights or in Amendments to the Constitution.

Silence is normally the natural state of nature, with exceptions which usually add to nature’s allure such as birds or crickets chirping, waves breaking on the shore, or water tumbling over a waterfall. Loud, annoying noises in nature are infrequent and short-lived such as thunder thundering, an avalanche advancing, or winds announcing the arrival of a cold front in Winter.

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, unnatural loud noise came into its own, became acceptable as part and parcel of a supposedly advanced civilization, was almost welcomed as a price of “progress”, and seemed as inevitable as the rising of tomorrow’s sun. However, it has become another tool in the toolbox of insensitives, malcontents and malevolents to employ to annoy, or as an incidental adjunct of the activities of self-absorbed egoists and those who lack a conscience or sense

of caring. The spread of urbanization meant crowding people closer together where those out to annoy with noise have an easier time of it and where otherwise tolerable noise becomes intolerable because of the crowding and the easier intrusion into people's personal spaces. Noisome noise has become part of the modern proclivity to deprive us of our privacy among insensitive architects and builders who are insensitive to people's needs and who are just in it for the money. Road drone, car and truck horns, squealing tires, ambulance/police/fire vehicle sirens became part of the urban experience. Sometimes horns and sirens are employed indiscriminately and as a weird way to attract attention. Taxi drivers play their intercom radios and regular radios together in a cacophony that taxes the eardrums of passengers.

Noise sometimes becomes a concomitant of various ways to entertain ourselves or gain attention. Rock concerts would not attract sufficient partisans without the "music" amplified to ear splitting levels. Show-offs play their pop music loud enough to pop eardrums and the blasting bass of boom boxes playing "base" music is utilized as a means to garner attention. Years of listening to the Rolling Stones can make us stone deaf, and perhaps stone deaf to any remonstrations against loud noise—especially if we are also stoned on weed while tuned in to the tone deaf music..

Gratuitous noise, even at lower volumes can be just as grating to those grossed out and made especially sensitive to the growing gross noise levels. Being put on hold for long periods when telephoning a store or lodging a consumer complaint while there are many before you in the queue can make you grit your teeth while the same repetitive on-hold music or jingle repeats ad-nauseum. Do you notice that they don't change the recording for years while they assault your ears and there's no way to talk to to anyone about it? When you shop in a clothing store that caters to the juvenile set, and most do, you have to try to think while distracted by a rapper or rock

star churning out juvenile junk. It's especially distracting and off-putting to those who don't enjoy retail shopping in the first place.

Then again(and again) we are forced to be privy to the private cell-phone conversations of the multitudes around us who are tuned out to whatever is going on around them to the point where they nearly bump into you or come close to being run over as they cross the street. The participants in these seemingly endless, engrossing conversations turn up their speaking volumes to assure their being heard above the sound of the herd around them. Their phones become mega phones or loudspeakers to these loud speakers.

When you go into a house, more likely than not, a radio or TV is going non-stop although the resident stopped listening to it long ago, or it is just the thing to do. They are tuned in to the constant propaganda that keeps them towing the establishment line and the non-stop big pharma ads that keeps them wasting their money on a thousand contrived maladies. You are expected to carry on conversations without having the volume lowered. Then again, at work they play their radios without any concern as to whether it bothers others in nearby cubicles or offices. Unnatural noise has been integrated into the everyday experience of these people to the point where it becomes normal and to where they can't make do without it.

The scientific research on the connections between obnoxious noise and human health are clearly established and should be the subject of a separate article.

In a study conducted by Texas A&M University published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, it was shown that human related noise can drive away pollinators(bees, bats, and moths) and animals that disperse seeds(birds and foxes). One forested area that had been noisy for 15 years had only one-fourth to one-seventh as many seedlings as comparable quiet forested areas.

Let us have a National Day of Silence when we consciously cut out unnecessary noises or lower them to sane levels. This would be a good way to bring attention to the problem. We already have days dedicated to celebrating everything else including every silliness under the sun.

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