AudioTextual: Modernism, Sound Recordings, and Networks of Reception

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Abstract

Recent studies of the relationship between literary modernism and mass culture have focused on print and periodical forms as evidence of modernism's deep and complex engagement with both its narrow circle of initiates and a wider audience. But print was not the only mode in which its audience received and reacted to these difficult works of literature: authors often recorded readings in their own voices years or even decades later, and these recordings offered new opportunities for listeners to engage with the materials. *AudioTextual* aims to reorient the conversation around literary modernism towards this often heard but little discussed audio archive by examining how Anglo-American modernists engaged with new devices for sound recording and the threats and opportunities these media offered for community, the page, and the embodied voice. The project at once shows the still unrecognized extent of the modernist encounter with new technologies of sound and listens closely to audio recordings of modernist works as they form a network of modernist distribution and reception that transcends accounts limited by genre and nation. My work examines sound recording and Anglo-American literary modernism through re-readings of key texts and close listenings of recordings by James Joyce, Langston Hughes, Virginia Woolf, and amateur readers of the same. By re-reading classic audible moments from modernist works in light of how these recordings reached and were consumed by audiences, the project argues for literary modernism as a sounded, social phenomenon that continues to echo to this day.

Acknowledgements

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This work has benefited from a number of other voices over the years. Sean Latham and an anonymous reviewer at the *James Joyce Quarterly* provided valuable

feedback on material that would develop into an article from the first chapter. Though, at the time of this writing, this article has not yet been published, the *James Joyce Quarterly* is considered the organ of first publication for the material that will eventually come to be published in their pages as "The Joycean Record: Listening Patterns and Sound Coteries." The *James Joyce Quarterly* also retains copyright of this contribution.

Victor Luftig gave insightful comments on material from my master's thesis that I would eventually incorporate into my first and third chapters. Eric Rochester has been endlessly giving of his time in helping to develop the digital project that I describe in chapter three. The British Library and the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library provided access to rare materials used throughout the project. All of my students have, in one way or another, found their way into my work here, and I am especially grateful to those who, along with me, participated in moving conversations during the Culture of London program with Karen Chase, Clare Kinney, Jon Readey, and Margaret Rennix. I am especially grateful to the Raven Society, the Society of Fellows, and the Scholars' Lab for the research and fellowship support they have provided.

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Audiotextual Criticism / Audiotextual Modernism

On several occasions throughout his life, T.S. Eliot found himself faced with a microphone as he prepared to record readings of *The Waste Land* in his own voice. The poem, notorious now for its thorny manuscript history, undergoes a new transformation in the instant that Eliot reads it aloud. What, moments before, had existed as print in hand or as verse in mind becomes something more as Eliot interprets the poem into a spoken performance that gets captured as reproducible sound. The content of this recording cannot be said to be exclusively audible: the origins of the event are in a printed text, after all, and it now exists as data inscribed in a particular format. Even clearer is that the artifact in question cannot be described fully in print terms: one can conceive of a newcomer experiencing *The Waste Land* for the first time by hearing this recording only to find the printed poem that gave rise to it at a later date. The artifact created in such instants, when print meets sound, possesses both an audible present and a textual past. It exists in both forms at once.

The study before you reframes such transmedia events as central to our understanding of literary modernism. *AudioTextual* examines how Anglo-American modernists engaged with new devices for sound recording and the threats and opportunities these media offered for audience, page, and the embodied voice. The project at once shows the still-unrecognized extent of the modernist encounter with new technologies of sound and listens closely to audio recordings of modernist works as they form a network of distribution and reception exceeding narratives limited by genre and

nation. By rereading classic audible moments from modernist works in light of these sound recordings, the project argues for greater dialogue between literary modernism and its audio incarnations that unfold over the course of decades and that consistently re-evaluate the terms and provocations of the original print works.

AudioTextual examines Anglo-American literary modernism through re-readings of key texts and close listenings of recordings by James Joyce, Langston Hughes, and Virginia Woolf, as well as those by readers and composers working with modernist materials. Critics until now have examined the phenomenon of literary sound recordings, especially in relation to extant readings by poets, but the field has yet to take conclusive account of this archive. In making a transgeneric argument, I extend Charles Bernstein's concept of "close listening," which he introduces to discuss poetic texts and performance, as a meaningful approach to modernism and literary audio artifacts more generally.[1] I argue that attention to the extensions of and contradictions in meaning offered by sound recording illuminates the changing roles of the voice and of technology in the modern text, as machines increasingly come to stand in for voices and to structure relationships among groups of people. In turn, the juxtaposition of sounded prose and poetry suggests that the graphic experiments of modernism cannot be realized in audible form as a "straight reading": the printed page may already contain traces of techniques associated with audible performance.

Media studies treatments of modernism have addressed sound recording in two very different veins. In the first, critics such as John Picker and Sebastian Knowles draw

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[1] See Bernstein, *Close Listening*.

heavily on Walter Benjamin to argue that the gramophone caused a crisis in artists' understanding of the value of their artwork: the gramophone was synonymous with death.[2] In the second vein, Derek Furr argues that sound technologies allowed artists to immortalize their voice and work.[3] *AudioTextual* aims for a fuller account of recording that hopes to reconcile these diverging paths by linking discussions of the gramophone and the live performance with conversations about the MP3 and the iPad application. In doing so, I expose listening patterns that engage lovingly with audio materials as lived, social products as well as a culture of media experimentation that turns sound devices into disruptive technologies for aesthetic experiment.

AudioTextual listens to later recordings as interpretive interventions with afterlives of their own that can offer as yet unheard insight into modernist works. By moving beyond recordings by authors as foundational audio texts to include those contributions made by readers and composers, I uncover new objects of study and new networks of distribution. My dissertation blends critical methodologies, listening to texts and reading recordings, to fit the shape of a period that similarly mixes media forms. *AudioTextual* listens closely to modernism throughout the century, reimagining its architects, its audiences, and its sound.

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[2] See Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*; Knowles, "Death by Gramophone"; and Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."
[3] See Furr, *Recorded Poetry and Poetic Reception from Edna Millay to the Circle of Robert Lowell*.

Diverse materials call for diverse approaches. The cultural objects that I discuss in this study press against disciplinary boundaries; literary studies may account for a Woolf novel, but a film score based upon *Mrs. Dalloway* requires other expertise, other critical configurations. The clearest methodological home for this work is in the emergent field of sound studies, itself a mongrel form of study that situates itself at the crossroads of a number of disciplines: literary studies, cultural studies, musicology, history, and physics, among many others.[4] In this dissertation, I bring similarly diverse methods to bear on the objects under my study: a close listening may appear alongside a close reading, or a sociological study of a particular composition may be followed by a computational analysis of punctuation. The combination allows for a fuller mode of address for a literary and cultural phenomenon that transcends any one format. Books that engage in sound studies frequently begin by focusing on the distinctions between the visual and the audible.[5] In some cases, the discussion goes so far as to claim that we must move beyond print, which has held dominion over critical studies for far too long.[6] I do not aim to rehearse such discussions here. These histories are persuasive and exemplary, providing compelling arguments for the study of sound as an object in its own right, but they also produce a new kind of tyranny: by demonizing the graphic, they create a dichotomy that

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[4] For an extensive introduction to the field, see "Sonic Imaginations" in Sterne, *The Sound Studies Reader*.

[5] For an exemplary introduction into the philosophical and theoretical distinctions between the two, see Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*; for a useful primer on the state of sound studies as it pertains to literature, see chapter one of Graham, *The Great American Songbooks*; for a historical overview of the binary as it pertains to modernism, see the introduction to Halliday, *Sonic Modernity*.

[6] For examples of such opening critiques, see chapter one of Goodale, *Sonic Persuasion*; "Hello!" in Sterne, *The Audible Past*; and chapter one of Attali, *Noise*.

Jonathan Sterne describes in *The Audible Past* as the "audiovisual litany," a tendency towards easy thinking that all too readily opposes sight and sound and idealizes the latter. To focus on the audible alone, even in the service of bringing it to the surface as a legitimate form of study, leads to incomplete work. Doing so often presupposes sound to mean one thing: vibrations in the air as heard and perceived by an individual. Just as sight can be theorized and broken apart to mean many things for many people, hearing cannot be understood as a monolithic category. For a complete study, the binary between sight and sound must be surpassed. Vision must join with hearing. In the case of the works under discussion here, audio must join text.

Sound studies is a rapidly emerging field, and works of literary criticism have increasingly attended to the ways in which text becomes entangled in audio production during the modernist period. Among these new studies, approaches to sound can be settled roughly into three broad categories: sound as historical context, sound as heard voice of a silently read text, or sound as the actual, vocalized performance of a literary document. Picker, for example, admirably incorporates new historicist approaches into his study of Victorian soundscapes, and Austin Graham reads modernist novels and poetry as musical playlists through their dense webs of musical allusion.[7] These texts most often consider sound as context for text, as part of an aggregated body of historical information that informs literary study. The phonograph may appear as scientific evidence for a reading, as an object to be close read, or as critical metaphor, but the page cannot make noise on its own. Some critics take these approaches a step further,

[7] See Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*; and Graham, *The Great American Songbooks*.

suggesting that texts themselves can actually be heard: Garrett Stewart argues, for example, that we hear actual voices when we read.[8] For Stewart, sound is not metaphor: it happens in the mind when we mentally activate the inherent qualities of the page. In the final critical vein, scholars like Lesley Wheeler and Meta DuEwa Jones push literary criticism in the direction of performance studies.[9] In discussions that tend to favor poetry readings, text can become sound as it is realized in the bodies and gestures of diverse performers. Even as I identify three trajectories in criticism of literary sound, it should be noted that no one study occupies any one space; even these exemplary scholars, at times, draw upon the categories outside the one with which I have associated them. Graham's discussion of musical allusions suggests that texts may come to sound unto themselves as works of music, and Wheeler's work on performance studies claims that there is evidence that a silently read poem may be heard in the mind. At best, the lines between the categories I describe are written in water, and they should serve only to identify broad concerns and characteristics rather than hard and fast allegiances.

My dissertation attempts to move methodically across these different categories, from sound history as context and critical metaphor for close reading to actual performances of texts and back again. The question of whether or not texts on the page can be heard is altogether more slippery. If we define sound in terms of physics, as compressed waves in the air, then texts surely remain silent. If we define it as a perceived experience of hearing by a listener, then they just might make noise. At times, I treat literary texts as akin to the score for a piece of music: certain sound traces exist encoded

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[8] See Stewart, *Reading Voices*.
[9] See Wheeler, *Voicing American Poetry*; and Jones, *The Muse is Music*.

within them, metaphorical or otherwise, and at any time a performer may realize these elements in a sound event. At others, sound is purely metaphorical or historical context meant to illuminate a particular analysis. No two texts sound in the same way. While no theory will easily account for the soundings of all texts, we can offer a name for the methodology that approaches objects with a foot on each side of the divide described by Sterne, as well as a new description for those very objects. In the face of an audiovisual divide, I propose a new sense of literary sound recordings that embraces both the audio and the textual. I propose that we listen as we read and that we establish a form of criticism suitable for such a practice. This dissertation exists at the intersection of literary and sound studies and offers an approach as well as a descriptor: *audiotextual*.

Audiotextual criticism offers a new mode for considering the relationships among literary sound recordings, the contexts in which we find them, and the sources from which they originate. Textual critics provide a helpful background for understanding how texts relate to their sources and contexts when they distinguish between two related elements of scholarly editing: texts and works. A text, in a bibliographical sense, is a particular arrangement of words and marks of punctuation, while "a work, at each point in its life, is an ineluctable entity" (Tanselle, *A Rationale* 13–14). To give an example, the work *Ulysses* is what connects the very distinct texts of the 1934 Random House and the 1984 Gabler editions of *Ulysses*. As a work moves through the world and a variety of contexts, it manifests as new texts. As texts, literary sound recordings lead double lives. In many cases, they begin their histories as print artifacts, as ink on a page, long before they are etched on a record or recorded as an MP3. When we write about them, we

represent them in print by way of quotation, transcribing the textual content that in many cases predates the audible recording. But their primary mode of ingestion is as sound objects, as heard events. The meaning remains, but the artifact becomes a new object that will be received as sound waves instead of ink. To return to bibliography, the work remains, but this new audiotext looks altogether different from the print materials that gave rise to it.

Audiotextual gives a name to this dual nature. A play upon audiovisual, audiotextual describes a hybrid object that has both audible and textual components. The prototypical example of an audiotextual object might be a sound recording of a poet reading a poem that was previously published in print. Jason Camlot has recently used the term "audiotextual criticism" to describe "bibliographical and textual scholarship in relation to a corpus of audio recordings that documents a reading series" (Camlot and Mitchell 6).[10] Drawing upon Jerome McGann's historicist approach to textual criticism,[11] Camlot's invocation of the term describes close attention to the physical aspects, media formats, and material conditions that make up sound materials, as well as the social histories of such objects. Even as I draw upon similar methods and interests in the material characteristics of sound recording, my dissertation expands Camlot's use of audiotextual to include both a methodology and to describe a textual condition. In my dissertation, audiotextual describes a critical and analytical commitment to both the printed past and the audible future of the modernist materials in question. I argue for a

[10] For an introduction to Camlot's approach by way of case study, see Camlot and Mitchell, "The Poetry series."
[11] See McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*.

more expansive understanding of audiotextuality that sees the material concerns of Camlot as deeply bound up in the original texts themselves. For even though sound recording is the focus of discussion, I see audiotextuality as a quality that a text can have unto itself, long before it is recorded. As I argue in my second chapter on Hughes, in particular, a print text can engage deeply in the process of auditory production even if it never sounds on the page. Such a conception is fairly easy to graft onto an understanding of poetry, where acoustic elements of verse have long been understood to be integral parts of poetic architecture, but even print prose can contain trace sonic markers: *Finnegans Wake* depends upon phonetic punning even on the page, and interpreting the text requires an understanding of the text as a sonic event, even if it is never actually read aloud. My audiotextual criticism accounts for the broad spectrum of engagement with sound, from the page to the recording and back again.

The tendency in analyzing literary audio recordings has been to describe them as they relate to the original print artifact, with extensive reference to the original printed material. While close readings do form an important part of my methodology, close listenings are equally important as a companion approach for considering the hybrid nature of my materials. When recordings are described as sound objects, critics tend to favor those made by the authors themselves: Eliot reading *The Waste Land* or Joyce reading *Ulysses*. Such longstanding interests in the cult of the authorial voice suggest bias towards the print origins of literary sound materials: we pursue and give ear to recordings by authors because we are interested in what they might say about the text itself, and we assume them to have a privileged relationship with their origin. If we take seriously the

idea that a literary audio recording is only partially informed by its print beginnings, then we must consider that any speaker, not just the author, can activate this relationship with the print artifact. A recording of Joyce reading from "Aeolus" stands in one relationship to *Ulysses*, but an amateur reading made on LibriVox stands in another, no less generative relationship to the print text. The resultant sound recording is no more impoverished for being made by a voice other than the author's, and the connection to the print text remains. An audiotextual approach considers author-voiced objects, but it places them alongside a wider array of non-author materials and argues that these diverse objects can offer new perspectives and new contexts for our understanding of literary modernism.

A literary audio recording can be considered in purely sonic terms, as a collection of phonemes, silences, and noise.[12] Virginia Woolf's voice is no less her own if we cannot make out what she says. If audiotextual objects need not explicitly invoke their print origins in language for the relationship to exist, then audiotextual objects may include non-verbal works of art. Sound studies as a field is known for a similar diversity of interests: "Sound studies names a set of shared intellectual aspirations; not a discrete set of objects, methods or the space between them" (Sterne, "Sonic Imaginations" 4). This dissertation embraces that variety and takes up many objects: listening practices, sound collecting habits, film scores, jazz, blues, and classical music. At every step,

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[12] Reversing a voice recording is a quick and easy way to defamiliarize the auditory materials and begin to discuss them in purely sonic terms. See a previous blog post of mine on "The Devil in the Recording" at <http://bmw9t.github.io/blog/2015/01/12/deformance-talk/> for information on the process and why the procedure might be especially useful for modernist studies.

however, these diverse methods and objects are directed towards the main object of my study, literary modernism.

The authors and works under discussion here were chosen because they are especially well suited to the form of sounded critique I undertake, and each has its own distinctive audible afterlife. Drawing on such later echoes across disparate media forms honors the connections among them and treats audiotextual modernism as a living force. G. Thomas Tanselle describes the lives of non-textual objects in similarly evolving terms: "But all works, whether constructed of words or not, have had histories that—if fully told—would reveal stages of growth and change, reflecting not only their creators' intentions but also the effects of their passage to the public and through time. All works, in other words, have textual histories" ("The Textual Criticism" 1). As it is embedded in sound production, audiotextual modernism must be considered in such social terms, as much shaped in its reception as by its creators. Audio production has always been a collaborative activity: "Any medium of sound reproduction is an apparatus, a network—a whole set of relations, practices, people, and technologies. The very possibility of sound reproduction emerges from the character and connectedness of the medium" (Sterne, *The Audible Past* 225). Technologies of sound production require collaboration among a wide variety of people: authors and artists, engineers and technicians, composers and performers. The voice implies a social relation; the media, a network. Audiotextual modernism is a phenomenon taking place to this very day, and any discussion of it must account for its readers as well as its authors, its supporters as well as its detractors.

By tracing the social histories and audio afterlives of audiotextual modernism, I call for a reconsideration of modernism's reach as we know it. Modernist studies has long looked to media studies to account for the period as a social phenomenon, but critics tend to favor print materials as the grounds for discussing the social life of modernism. Lawrence Rainey has argued for modernism's entanglement in systems of patronage and commodification, while Mark Morrisson depicts a modernism deeply interested in the new opportunities for circulation offered by the mass market.[13] Strong digital work from such projects as The Modernist Archives Publication Project (MAPP) and the Modernist Journals Project (MJP) continues to provide access to new materials helpful for tracing out modernism's printed networks.[14] MAPP comes close to equating modernist networks with their print histories in its mission to model book history theories of literary production and reception: "Bringing together disparate archival holdings, MAPP will capture the synchronic and diachronic processes of textual production, dissemination, and reception from the author's initial solicitation or submission to the publishing house, through editorial and production processes, to dust jackets and book design, readership and reviews, and catalogued sales figures" (Wilson et al. 224).[15] The MJP's provocative tagline, "modernism began in the magazines," may ring true, and book historians may

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[13] See Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*; and Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*.
[14] See The Modernist Archives Publication Project at <http://www.modernistarchives.com/>. See the Modernist Journals Project at <http://www.modjourn.org>.
[15] MAPP borders on religious devotion to the printed aspect of the scholarly enterprise in their plans to produce "a navigable floor plan of the original [Hogarth] Press's layout, images of the equipment and details about the staff working in each room" (Wilson et al. 225).

have recently investigated the circulation of book trade networks.[16] But we must not forget that modernism never circulated only as print, but also as gramophone record, live performance, MP3, and more.

Literary modernists possess sounded afterlives that touch and are touched by many people and institutions, but the networks of audiotextual modernism are in many ways more difficult to trace than their print corollaries. Print connections leave print traces: publishing records, letters, journals, and more. In contrast, audiotextual events are often fleeting: the metadata used to record live poetry readings, for example, struggles to account for the experiences of the audience in the room or the physical dimensions of the room itself.[17] If not momentary, watershed moments of audiotextual modernism remain poorly documented: thirty copies were made of Joyce's famous recording of "Aeolus," for example, but, as I discuss in my first chapter, I can account for the subsequent ownership of less than one third of that number based on archival evidence. Recent digital work attempting to push against the veil of the unknown frequently takes on the feel of forensic science, as scholars use new technologies to discover hitherto unnoticed or undocumented characteristics of extant sound recordings.[18] While I do discuss what Rainey might call the institutions of audiotextual modernism, the record companies and

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[16] See Fraser and Hammond, *Books Without Borders*.
[17] See Camlot and Mitchell, "The Poetry series"; and Filreis, "Notes on Paraphonotextuality."
[18] See, in particular, Rettberg, "Hearing the Audience"; Mustazza, "The Noise is the Content"; and the entire work by High Performance Sound Technologies for Access and Scholarship (HiPSTAS), a research collective out of the University of Texas at Austin. HiPSTAS's main body of work consists of adapting Adaptive Recognition with Layered Optimization (ARLO) software, originally meant for analyzing birdcalls, to perform distant reading of large collections of sound recordings.

jazz halls that gave it voice, I am equally interested in attending to the roles played by loose collectives, amateurs, and individual composers in keeping the period sounding throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Helen Southworth suggests that "network study underscores the collaborative nature of modernism" (17), and audiotextual modernism can contribute to this conversation by re-evaluating modernist coteries in light of what Mark Goble has framed as a new erotics of connection fostered by new media technologies during the period.[19] In the dissertation that follows, I bring sociologies of sound reception and production to bear on modernism, whose participants and spaces come to look altogether different: the publishing house becomes the dance hall, the print coterie becomes the listening collective, and the experimental page becomes the broken gramophone record. Instead of firmly established networks traceable in print, the audiotextual modernism I examine here is loosely associated, often far-flung, and frequently a culture of remix and recreation.

Audiotextual modernism also requires a reframing of the temporal boundaries of modernism. Our understanding of modernism has rightfully expanded in recent decades beyond easy definitions to account for many different modernities at numerous points in time and in a variety of places.[20] An audiotextual understanding of modernism builds upon this work by embracing the already elastic temporality of audio recording. Our experience of sound depends on its ability to move forwards in time. As I discuss in chapter one, Edison was fascinated by the potential uses of the phonograph to record the voices of those long dead, for the machine to recreate the past in the present. To record

[19] See Goble, *Beautiful Circuits*.
[20] See Friedman, "Planetarity" and *Planetary Modernisms*.

sound is to record time: we describe pitch in terms of the number of vibrations per second, and audio editors chart intensity over time as waveforms. As Jacques Attali has argued, the proliferation of sound materials has led consumers to stockpile more recordings than they could ever experience in their lifetimes;[21] contemporary media players often quantify music collections in terms of the hours or days of continuous listening necessary to play through them just once. To study audiotextuality is to read and listen across time. Print publication occurs in one context, sound recording in another, and critics should be vigilant against collapsing the two. *The Waste Land* appears in 1922, but Eliot records the poem in 1935, 1947, and 1955. "The Weary Blues" appears in *Opportunity* in 1925, but Hughes records the poem with Charles Mingus in 1958. An audiotextual understanding of a single work is one that considers a history of such events rather than a single occurrence. Focusing on non-author contributions means that the life of a modernist work is no longer bound to the physical life of the author, and accordingly audiotextual modernism continues to unfold in the present: just a few weeks prior to this writing, an unabridged recording of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* was set to music and released on the Internet under the name *Waywords and Meansigns*.[22] To produce an audiotextual reading of a particular text means to give attention both to print origins as well as later audible creations by author and amateurs alike. It requires tracing the sound of modernism from its print and audible beginnings to its later echoes. Audiotextual modernism cannot settle easily into one moment in time: it vibrates across decades and beyond borders.

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[21] See Attali, *Noise*.
[22] See *Waywords and Meansigns* at <http://www.waywordsandmeansigns.com/>.

My dissertation consists of three chapters, this introduction, and a conclusion, all of which argue for literary modernism as a sounded, social phenomenon that continues to this day. My primary subject is the recording, what it meant for modernists and how it was used by them. Thinking of ourselves as literary scholars of audiotextuality requires that we rethink old objects of study in new contexts and in connection with new sound artifacts. I listen closely to recordings made by modernists as well as those where modernist texts themselves become like audio clips echoing throughout the century. My examinations of audiotextual modernism, in each case, begin with the print texts themselves, with both their inherent sonic qualities as well as the ways in which they frame the encounter with technologies of sound reproduction. I follow these early audiotextual moments later into the century while constantly referring later soundings back to their origins. The result is a modernism still resonating today, in many sensory dimensions for many diverse sets of people.

The first chapter places James Joyce alongside sociologies of record collecting and reception as a means of rethinking *Ulysses*'s engagement with sound recording technology as an ongoing, lived, and social practice. Modernist authors famously gathered in a series of small coteries, intellectual clusters centered on the production and reception of their creations, but this chapter uncovers a new history of *Ulysses* as both participant in and subject of sound communities emerging during the twentieth century, as an object that coordinates networked sound production and reception. From Joyce's web of friends and collaborators to the coterie that gathers around the production of the

2007 LibriVox recording of *Ulysses*, I suggest that group listening enabled by sound technology has always been vital to the life of Joyce's text.

The second chapter reunites the often-separated blues and jazz phases of Hughes's career to argue that his poetry crafts a space for the needs and social consciousness of his African-American audiences by joining the graphic medium of print with performance practices associated with live music. To do so, I reread the trajectory of Hughes's musical poetry through key collections, *The Weary Blues*, *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, and *Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz*, in relation to Hughes's recording with Charles Mingus and Leonard Feather as well as to his participation in the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival with Muddy Waters. Hughes's poetics is simultaneously printed and audible, and I argue that it is precisely his poetry's audiotextual ability to join composition with improvisation that allows it to link together the diverse needs and concerns of his listeners and readers alike.

In chapter three, I argue that Woolf registers the dangers of sound production, which does not always offer new connections and communities but can also control and marginalize, forcing non-normative sounds to conform to dominant narratives. For this chapter, I adapt computational tools designed for the processing of natural language to analyze Woolf's irregular use of the quotation mark as the site in which her interests in heard sound and print text intersect. Digital text analysis usually ignores punctuation marks as extraneous data, but the tool I am currently developing with the Scholars' Lab at the University of Virginia Library will make these overlooked elements the subjects of statistical analysis to map shifts from external, societal speech in Woolf's career to the

internal sounds of the self in distress. I argue that Woolf twists the quotation mark like she does the gramophones in her texts, breaking each in the service of developing a new kind of radical listening that can attend to silenced and unrecorded voices.

In the conclusion of the dissertation, I turn briefly towards considerations of the digital as offering new and best opportunities for engaging in audiotextual objects and criticism. As this is a study of sound and its effects, I frequently make reference to specific recordings, all of which can be found on a hidden page of my professional website at <http://www.bmw9t.github.io/diss>. I treat these references as I would any other citation, but because sound unfolds in time, they might best be studied by reading the relevant description, listening, and then repeating both activities. As a rule, I do not include excerpts of musical notation; no training in music is required to follow the argument. As I imagine my audience largely comprises literary scholars, whenever music theory is employed, I attempt to make it palatable for non-specialists by relying primarily on descriptions of the sonic effects to advance my argument. After all, the dissertation argues as forcefully about text as it does about sound. It serves both as argument for and case study in this approach to modernist literature and its audio archive. It is a challenge to listen to texts, to read recordings, and to think audiotextually.

The Joycean Record: Listening Patterns and Sound Coteries

From 1914 to 1922, just as *Ulysses* gathered the ephemera and sounds of everyday life, people around the world took advantage of advances in sound recording technology and began to collect sound recordings at an unprecedented rate. This chapter places James Joyce's *Ulysses* and recordings of it in this unexplored sociology of record collecting by triangulating three events: the 1922 publication of *Ulysses*, the founding of *The Gramophone* record collecting journal by Compton Mackenzie in 1923, and Joyce's 1924 gramophone recording of "Aeolus." While record collectors stereotypically hoard their artifacts in isolation, in practice they often form communities around these cultural materials. Early twentieth-century record collecting journals facilitated the group consumption of audio artifacts, and I argue that *Ulysses* similarly coordinates networked sound collecting and listening both as text and as recording. Placing Joyce in this context allows us to discover diverse forms of community gathered around the Joycean record, some physically located and gathered around a single object, others far-flung and given to clashing modes of reception.

Joyce was a lover of sound: he was an accomplished singer, he owned a gramophone, and he was known to recommend recordings to his friends.[1] Fascinated by a proposed project by his friend, composer George Antheil, to produce an "electric opera" that took the "Cyclops" episode as libretto, Joyce was ultimately disappointed when the

[1] See Joyce's letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, dictated to Lucia Joyce, 25 March 1925. For critical examinations of Joyce's relations to music, see the work of Bowen and Knowles.

work failed to come to fruition.[2] Despite his noted interest in music, Joyce's extant spoken word recordings of his writings have only begun to receive close attention in recent years. Recent critical studies of Joyce's extant spoken word recordings tend to focus on the recordings themselves: Eric D. Smith has examined the intersection of the technological and the human in the recording of "Aeolus," and Adrian Curtin has listened closely to the recordings of both "Aeolus" and "Anna Livia Plurabelle" as audiotexts.[3] I build upon this persuasive work by moving beyond the individual recordings to place them in relation to new patterns of listening and audio production emerging during the early decades of the twentieth century. This chapter will broadly discuss two types of Joycean "sound coteries" produced by these practices: listening coteries, those groups primarily geared towards the reception of audio artifacts, and recording coteries, those communities that gather to produce new sound objects.

The gramophone and modernist literature have long been close companions in critical narratives, but tracing the practices of sound coteries can offer a new conception of Joyce's engagement with sound technology. Sebastian Knowles's pioneering work has rightfully pointed out the gramophone's consistent use as a figure for modernist anxiety over artistic vitality and cultural death in the face of mechanical reproduction. In this formulation, the gramophone frequently serves as trope for literal death and attenuated voices, and any sense of a vital, live recorded performance fades in the distance with the proliferation of copies. Knowles's argument for "death by gramophone" is powerful and

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[2] See Ellmann, *James Joyce* 559.

[3] See Smith, "How a Great Daily Organ is Turned Out"; Curtin, "Hearing Joyce Speak." For another discussion of the "Aeolus" recording, see Keane, "Quotation Marks, the Gramophone Record, and the Language of the Outlaw."

persuasive, but this chapter listens closely to the various sound coteries constituted within and around Joyce's *Ulysses* to suggest that this same technology also offers an alternative, ritualized mode of listening characterized by live, social listenings and communities. Focusing on Joyce in relation to the phenomenon of sound collecting places him and his recordings in a broader context by discussing their distribution, re-recording, and legacy into the twenty-first century. Beginning with the contemporary scene, the sounds of *Ulysses* and Joyce's recording of "Aeolus," the chapter concludes by examining LibriVox's 2007 recording of *Ulysses* as emblematic of the social phenomenon of audio recording in which Joyce and his reader-listeners participate. Listening to such later soundings allows us to uncover an alternative history of Joyce's relations with sound recording technology, one where social practices of group listening and creation continue to inform *Ulysses* to this day. The gramophone may sound of death for Joyce and other modernists, but the machine also offers occasions for gathering, listening, and living together.

Sound Thinking: *Ulysses* as Audio Archive

Novice Corner: An Elementary Handbook of the Gramophone, an edited compilation distributed by *The Gramophone* in 1928, advises that new record collectors "cultivate the reasoned enthusiasm of the book collector" ("Buying Records" 37). The document suggests that novice collectors may feel overwhelmed by their zeal for their new hobby and the proliferation of possible purchases, while the book collector offers an

equally enthusiastic model that exercises more restraint through deep knowledge of the field. We can take the link between the two practices a step further: collecting has always been integral to fiction. Books are collected, and they collect things themselves; through the accumulation of details and description, they construct a fictional world. *Ulysses* obsesses over such acts of collecting. With the Cyclopean insistence that Joyce name every book on Bloom's bookshelves, *Ulysses* gathers details about the world around it. Joyce's own writing practice, emulated by Stephen, of making notes on numerous quantities of paper scraps to be processed at a later date suggests a hoarder's personality.[4] *Ulysses* collects, in particular, the evidence of minds in process. The modernist moment has often been framed as a deepened focus on the interiority of consciousness, and the thoughts of Stephen, Bloom, and Molly can be difficult to follow because of their freely associative nature. *Ulysses* offers a conception of the mind that is increasingly noisy and audible: the move is often framed in terms of a mind that sounds and an ear that hears. In many cases, characters actually seem to hear their own thoughts. Rhyme and phonetic play frequently structure both narrative and the processes of narrated thought in *Ulysses*. The text treats the workings of the mind as an activity of sound archiving. With the sounds of the mind, in particular, and the noise of everyday life, in general, *Ulysses* offers physical and graphic representations of fictional sound events on the page. In doing so, the novel suggests that even a print text can act as a sound archive. Even before it is

[4] As recent synoptic editions by Hans Walter Gabler, Finn Fordham, and Sam Slote indicate, Joyce often wrote by accretion, gathering details and expanding outwards from the middle of paragraphs as a way of developing his world.

recorded on record, tape, or MP3, *Ulysses* acts as a sound repository, a kind of sound object to be collected, cherished, and redistributed.

Perhaps because, as Walter Benjamin points out in "The Storyteller," novels tend to be read silently and alone, critical discussions of the audible in fiction often focus on explicating musical allusions and explicit references to sound events. Zack Bowen's seminal *Musical Allusions in the Works of James Joyce*, for example, reads much like a musical collection, cataloging as it does approximately seven hundred musical allusions by Bowen's count. Such accounts readily parse *Ulysses* as an archive of sounds, but we can push further and probe deeper by paying attention to how the body interfaces with the reading process. Recent explorations of audiobook history by Matthew Rubery and Jason Camlot have begun to open the study of sound in fiction by examining the history of the talking book in the twentieth century as deeply embedded in the legacy of Victorian recitation and memorization manuals.[5] Since their early days, talking books have been bound up with speaking bodies and performances. Such embodied performances and recordings are the subject of this volume and this chapter, but it is worth pausing over the legacy of the written text as an auditory device. Modernists take to the microphone and record their text not out of impulse, but as the realization of longstanding experiments in the capacity of the written word to press against the bounds of the page. While explicit references to sound events do serve as notable examples of a collecting impulse in the text, we can look to other, subtler evidence for the accumulation of sonic details.

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[5] See Rubery, *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*; and Camlot, "The Three Minute Victorian Novel."

The spoken word gives meaning and shape to the narrative of *Ulysses*, and the novel depends upon sound even as it exists in print. The transformation of the phrase "throw it away" into a tip to bet on the horse Throwaway, for example, suggests that words can carry productive meaning beyond their content. Sounds can prove generative as well, as chance audible associations can create unseen connections. "Sirens" structures itself around such phonic devices, when homonymic play like "A husky fifenote blew. Blew. Blue bloom is on the" drives the narrative (*Ulysses* 256, Audio Example 1). The transformation of the syllable "blue" takes the narrative from a musical overture through Bloom, his sadness, and an associated musical allusion. Sound binds the narrative together, and the thought patterns that link the ideas make little sense without reference to the phonetics that guide them. In gathering sounds and shaping its narrative through them, *Ulysses* begs to exist *as* sound. The "Mkgnao!" of Bloom's cat transcribes a real world sound event whose primary meaning is not semantic but, instead, audible. "Mkgnao" acts as a sound inscription: its unusual collection of consonants asks the reader to hear it. Roman Jakobson offers an analogous effect when he describes poeticity, "when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and inner form, acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality" (378). Throwaway, phonic punnings in "Sirens," the cry of a cat: in these instants the phonic texture of a word becomes at least as important as the signified. Moments like these suggest that modern novels may have encoded within their very form, on the print page itself, trace markings of audible culture. Even as it remains often unsounded by

people in the world outside, the novel continues to hum regardless: it plays back a certain kind of sound if we will only lend it ear. Instead of sound appearing in the mouth of a vocalizer after the fact, perhaps sound is already present in the text, and the reader only actualizes these inherent potential meanings.

Ulysses is not structured exclusively around such sound events,[6] of course, and they fade in and out of prominence depending on the particular episode under discussion. Explicit moments like the cry of a cat or the sonic play of "Sirens" offer evidence of sound events that burst to the surface of the reading experience, but the general texture of the text itself may be audible. The narrative of *Ulysses* is, of course, highly psychologized, focused through the thoughts of a collection of characters. Galen Strawson writes in "The Self" of his distaste for William James's stream of consciousness metaphor, arguing that "it fails to take adequate account of the fact that trains of thought are constantly broken by detours—by blows—fissures—white noise" (17). Strawson speaks metaphorically, using noise as a model of interference that inhibits and resists the standard conception of flow provided by James. But, for Joyce, consciousness itself is frequently a sound event. Take Stephen's musings in "Scylla and Charybdis":

> What the hell are you driving at?
>
> I know. Shut up. Blast you! I have reasons.
>
> *Amplius. Adhuc. Iterum. Postea.*

[6] For such a text, we might turn instead to *Finnegans Wake*, where the text appears to be stitched together foremost through phonetic punning. This text is outside the scope of this study, however, because it does not share the same rich social history of recordings and listenings.

Are you condemned to do this? (207, Audio Example 2)

The self-address is a particular form of Joycean stream of consciousness that casts itself most readily in the terms of the audible. Stephen asks himself a question and answers his own internal voice. When Stephen engages dialogically with his own thoughts, he seems to hear himself. He quarrels within his own mind, suggesting that the plane of consciousness is not dulcet but cacophonous. For Joyce, even if only to the person thinking, mental processes are audible.

Joyce suggests that certain forms of narrated thought are more closely attuned to the world of sound than others. On occasion, characters actually seem to hear their own thoughts in terms of their sound qualities. Consider Bloom's encounter with a prostitute in "Sirens:" "I feel so lonely. Wet night in the lane. Horn. Who had the? Heehaw. Shesaw" (290, Audio Example 3). The first person pronoun places the reader in Bloom's consciousness as he reflects on a past encounter with the woman. "Heehaw" suggests the braying of an ass and the presence of the audible within his own consciousness. "Shesaw" seems to play on the auditory components of thought itself, as rhyme links the two ideas. Bloom's past bestial actions connect with an internal commentary on the actions of the woman via an auditory bridge. A similar effect occurs when Bloom meditates on the sounds of the world: "snakes hissss. There's music everywhere. Ruttledge's door: ee creaking" (Joyce 282, Audio Example 4). These sounds only occur in the space of Bloom's mind. By extending hiss into "hissss," Bloom meditates on the actual sound of the word rather than on any linguistic content. He works in reverse with "ee," preparing for the entrance of the actual word by way of phonic metonymy. These

thoughts are so inextricably bound up with the system of phonics that enables their function that they could be considered sounds themselves, sounds that only Bloom hears. To return to Jakobson, the sounds of the narrated thoughts become at least as important as their signified content: the words foreground the sounded component of the narrative and enable the narrative to develop further through this audible system.

Moments such as these do not just occur in passing. They offer evidence of a broad underlying approach to psychologized narrative that depends upon its use of sound. The most famous example of sound recording in *Ulysses* is, of course, the gramophone in "Hades":

> Besides how could you remember everybody? Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house. After dinner on a Sunday. Put on poor old greatgrandfather Kraahraark! Hellohellohello amawfullyglad kraark awfullygladaseeagain hellohello amawf krpthsth. Remind you of the voice like the photograph reminds you of the face. Otherwise you couldn't remember the face after fifteen years, say.
>
> (Joyce 114, Audio Example 5)

Here Bloom thinks of the gramophone as a magical device that can offer an incomplete but nonetheless comforting echo of a loved one's voice after death, and similar sound technologies inform discussions of psychological sound more generally. Sigmund Freud's own description of the psychoanalytical process urges the psychoanalyst to practice what Kate Flint has called "aural alertness" (192): "[the psychoanalyst] must adjust himself to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting

microphone" (Freud 115–6). If the psychoanalyst's role is to receive sound, the patient's task is to produce an uninterrupted, voluble monologue. The telephone offers Freud a convenient metaphor for describing a listening practice that can capture all sounds and hear indiscriminately.

Friedrich Kittler picks up on this point with his argument that the gramophone makes audible the voice of the unconscious. Much like Freud's formulation, Kittler's sense of the gramophone is that it is a passive recipient for recorded sound; it replays all sounded utterances, intended or unintended, without differentiation. Kittler suggests that the umms, clicks, and random vocal white noise that we all make as a part of speaking represent a kind of audible unconsciousness. For Bloom, the gramophone pulls forgotten memories back to the surface. In a reading informed by Kittler and Freud, "Hellohellohello amawfullyglad kraark awfullygladaseeagain hellohello amawf krpthsth" may be read as corrupted by the noise in the gramophone, but it could also be understood as a metaphoric extension of the same psychological experiments in which the narrative always engages (Joyce, *Ulysses* 114). The moment joins the sonic bumps, cracks, and fissures of the recording with a memory of a loved one, suggesting a noisy portrayal of psychologized narration. Memories, especially those of sensory details, can be difficult to resurrect, and recovering them can be an imprecise process. This fact is all the more salient when a gramophone is the device used for preserving the memory. Particularly at this point in the history of sound recording, the material corruption of the voice is at least as prominent as the recovered artifact. Accordingly, the machine draws to the surface not just the intended memory, but also the stuff of the subconscious. One way of

understanding modernist psychologized narration might be to consider it as narrative in which noise becomes at least as prominent as signal. Freud and Kittler closely associated sound technologies with thought patterns, and stream of consciousness itself may be understood in the context of such mechanisms for sound reproduction. If large portions of psychologized narration become audible, then *Ulysses* itself becomes a kind of sound archiving. The novel collects the sounds of the mind.

For Freud, Kittler, and Joyce, sound technologies offer glimpses into the mind, into otherwise silent events that might still be heard. The gramophone has primarily served as a critical metaphor thus far, but the very origins of Edison's invention of the phonograph find themselves in just such questions of making heard the unheard. In an early description of the practical uses of the phonograph, Edison speculated on the device's ability to record even those sounds that remained imperceptible:

> we are now able to register all sorts of sound and all articulate utterance—even to the lightest shades and variations of the voice—in lines or dots which are an absolute equivalent for the emission of the voice—in lines or dots which are an absolute equivalent for the emission of sound by the lips; so that, through this contrivance, we can cause these lines and dots to give forth again the sound of the voice, of music, and all other sounds recorded by them, whether audible or *inaudible*. (4)

Edison had a special interest in expanding the range of perceptible sounds: he developed hearing problems at an early age that persisted throughout his life. Though his narrative of the origins of his hearing difficulties changed over time, he was clear on their

progressive nature: “First there was earache, then a slight difficulty in hearing, finally a deafness that was to become permanent and worse as he grew older” (Clark 13). Edison’s overwhelming interest, then, was in amplifying those sounds that diminished from the realm of perception. He constantly fought to push back against the veil of the inaudible, and he imagined the phonograph as instrumental in fighting this battle. The sound technology offered a means of expanding the scope of the human senses, of ensuring that no sound escaped the listener.

The history of the audiobook has always been entwined with the lives of disabled peoples and with similar attempts to translate the unheard into the heard. As Jonathan Sterne recounts, Alexander Graham Bell experimented with the phonautograph, a device that used a detached human ear and stylus to collect sounds and write them onto a piece of smoked glass, with the aim of assisting the education of the deaf:

> Alexander Graham Bell had been a major advocate in the Americas for visible speech, a method of elocution designed by his father, Melville Bell. Visible speech was an attempt at a purely phonetic alphabet: “invariable marks for every appreciable variety of vocal and articulate sound…with a natural analogy and consistency that would explain to the eye their organic relations.” In other words, visible speech was a set of signs for sounds. The idea was that, if speakers followed the written instructions perfectly, they would be able to reproduce the sounds so notated perfectly. Following his father’s lead, Alexander Graham Bell had hoped to demonstrate the utility of visible speech for training the deaf and mute to speak. (*The Audible Past* 36–7)

The very design of the gramophone suggests early devices meant to aid hearing: “The first dedicated hearing aid firm, Frederick Rein of London, began to manufacture ear trumpets, hearing fans, and conversation tubes in 1800. Trumpets and tubes ‘amplified’ by collecting and concentrating sound waves that would otherwise disperse” (Mills 26). For both the ear trumpet and the gramophone, the shape of a trumpet bell suggests the amplification of otherwise small and indistinct sounds. In his early description of possible uses for the phonograph, Edison theorizes the possibility of “phonographic books, which would speak to blind people without effort on their part” (8). Edison’s suggestion would later prove prescient: “The first recordings of unabridged novels were made in Britain and the United States in the 1930s. The need for recorded literature in both countries arose in response to soldiers returning from the first World War with eye injuries and to others with vision impairments who were unable to read Braille” (Rubery, “Introduction: Tallking Books” 5). The American Foundation for the Blind and the Library of Congress Books for the Adult Blind Project carried on in this same vein, aiming to extend the literary experience to those whose physical impairments made them unable to experience texts in a printed mode. Efforts such as these rely on the idea that the unseen could be made visible by appealing to other senses: unseen text might be replaced or supplemented by the heard word. The barriers among the written, spoken, and thought word are porous rather than fixed. The long and complex contributions by disabled persons to the fields of sound reproduction and recording and to the history of audiobooks suggest that there is no one way to experience a text, to read it, or to listen to it. What may be a collection of words for one person may be a sound archive for another.

Recent speculation about the phenomenon of subvocalization that occurs during purportedly silent reading further suggests that sound might not need to be heard by another in order for it to exist. As Lesley Wheeler points out, "this seemingly mental activity involves multiple regions of the body, and not only through the visual processing of written language: muscles in the tongue, lips, and larynx may move, sometimes almost imperceptibly" (24). Even as she acknowledges the inconclusive scientific findings on the subject, Wheeler ultimately concludes that "sound and voice exist, not in closed poetry collections, but in the act of reading silently" (27). She speaks specifically of poetry, but we could usefully extend this idea into the realm of narrative fiction. Here, I build upon Garrett Stewart's work in *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext,* where he suggests that silent reading actually involves an inaudible voice that is silenced before it ever reaches vocalization. The consciousnesses of Stephen, Bloom, and Molly become audible during the act of reading; they become voices in the mind of the reader. They exist as floating sound bites arrayed within an external consciousness necessary to bind them together and infuse them with new auditory life. But the text does not need a reader to activate it; the sound of the phonotext is one that exists regardless of an embodied reader.

Within his densely packed text, Joyce reorganizes the barriers between speech, writing, and thought. For Bloom, Stephen, and Molly, clear divisions between the three categories are untenable. To write yes is to think it; to think yes is to say it. Before Joyce even takes to the microphone, the Joycean record takes into itself the barely perceptible sounds of thought. He teaches us to listen in a new mode, to hear writing as sound.

Ulysses collects the thought processes of everyday living in all their noisy audibility, and the text obsesses over just such acts of accumulation. Joyce famously meant for *Ulysses* to be a full account of Dublin: "a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book" (Budgen 67–8). Joyce thought that these collecting practices made *Ulysses* a visual snapshot of Dublin, but we can also view these hoarding practices in audible terms. *Ulysses* structures itself as a sound collection, and it offers reading as a listening experience. Joyce builds the city outwards from the sound of the mind to include all the noises of the everyday.[7] Joyce might be considered as much a collector of records as scraps of paper, of sounds as much as words. But the nature of sound collections and of sounding objects was changing during the years of the novel's composition, as new technologies took hold and objects began to sound in new ways. *Ulysses* writes back to 1904, describing a particular understanding of listening and sound objects unique to the world of the gramophone. Such a world existed for the author, but not for the historical setting of the novel.

"Sirens" and Gramophonic Listening Patterns

Joyce's writings have always been associated with group listening and performance. In one early example on December 7th 1921, Valery Larbaud gave a conference on Joyce at La Maison des Amis des Livres with two hundred and fifty

[7] The record manifests most fully in "Circe," where the sounds of the city come to speak for themselves in all their riotous cacophony. Objects each speak their own particular language in the scene, baying, jingling, and cuckooing, to name a few.

attendees. At the event, American actor Jimmy Light read aloud part of "Sirens," and he took special care to reproduce its musicality: "Even the night before the séance Sylvia Beach heard the young man repeating with Joyce, 'Bald Pat was a waiter hard of hearing…', as he labored to attain the proper rhythm" (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 522).[8] For Light, Joyce shapes the performance as the ultimate source of its sound and text, and the encounter will manifest as a physical event with a speaking body. The audience, a group of people listening to a reading of Joyce's text, serves as an early glimpse of the sound coteries that this chapter will examine. Even as Light attempts to honor the sound of Joyce's words, however, the event also gestures towards the way in which bodies were beginning to fade from view as the focus of such sound gatherings during the early twentieth century. Light may have been the center of the reading, but, much like Bloom in "Sirens," Joyce was hidden from the crowd at Larbaud's conference: he sat behind a screen as his own words were spoken aloud by his devoted followers. Similarly, the body fades from view as the center of listening events around the turn of the century. New sounding objects begin to take its place. Twentieth-century listeners begin, increasingly, to focus their interest towards recordings.

Written over the course of seven years between 1914 and 1922, *Ulysses* was born into a world saturated with discs and the machines needed to play them. Austin Graham contends in *The Great American Songbooks* that the revolution in access to musical materials in turn-of-the-century America led to unprecedented circulation of musical materials: "In 1901, a so-called golden era of sound recording was under way, with

[8] For a fuller account of the event, see Ellmann, *James Joyce* 499-523.

record sales increasing steadily for two decades and radio broadcasting holding sway long after that" (61). But *Ulysses* is set in 1904, when the boom in recordings around the world was still nascent. *Phonotrader* began its run in that very year, but the mass of record collecting manuals and journals with which this chapter concerns itself would not take shape until the early 1920s. Gramophones and phonographs certainly existed in Ireland during the time in which the novel is set, but their presence in the country would not increase sharply until 1927 due to the publicity campaign of Justus O'Byrne DeWitt.[9] While the international gramophone market was gathering steam in 1904, around the world it would need the next two decades to come into its own and to generate the listening cultures that would make record collecting publications necessary.

Perhaps this historical wrinkle is why the gramophone makes very few actual appearances in the novel, but the machine's influence is everywhere: *Ulysses* writes back to a largely pre-gramophonic era from the standpoint of a society where the gramophone was already very much a part of cultural currency. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin describes how "one of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand which would be fully satisfied only later. The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form" (686). Such commentaries on the prophetic nature of art are not new in the realm of sound studies: Jacques Attali writes in *Noise* that dissonance in relation to harmonic systems offers glimpses of political dissent and revolution. Benjamin

[9] See O'Connell, *The Golden Age of Irish Music* 233-6.

and Attali each suggest that art can look to the political and aesthetic future, and, similarly, *Ulysses* offers a similar glimpse into patterns of listening that its historical setting could not have known in the same way.

A mere week before the recording of the "Aeolus" reading, Joyce actually intended to use part of "Sirens." In many ways, Joyce's initial plan makes more sense, as Bloom's world in "Sirens" is conducted and mediated through the audible. Joycean criticism in the century following the novel's publication has cemented the association, spilling ample amounts of ink, in particular, over the exact nature of Joyce's designation of *fuga per canonem* as the episode's technique. The schema that Joyce gave to Stuart Gilbert identifies the ear as the organ of the episode, and the world of the Ormond Hotel conducts and composes itself through hearing.[10] The very name of the hotel suggests the link between sound and meaning: "or" puns phonically on ear and aural, while "mond" recalls the French "monde" for world. The Ormond Hotel, then, is an ear-world, and phonic play shapes and structures the episode from its opening moments.[11]

The beginning of "Sirens" establishes the soundscape with a series of leitmotifs. Sonic fragments come to stand in for the characters and the drama to come. "Jingle jingle jaunted jingling" refers to "jinglejaunty Blazes boy," who will set the quoits of Bloom's marital bed jingling in his absence as he consummates the affair with Molly (*Ulysses* 256, 263). Wagnerian leitmotifs traditionally function as a means of elevating the status of music in the context of an operatic performance. No longer subordinated to the language

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[10] See Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey*.

[11] I am grateful to Greg Winston for first pointing out this possible etymology to me at the 2012 meeting of the International James Joyce Symposium.

of a scene, the leitmotifs of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* are capable of dramatizing the action of a play without any narrative or linguistic content to supplement them. Melodies and tonalities come to be associated with a particular set of characters, allowing musical content to conjure up strong connections with the narrative even in isolation. With its opening series of leitmotifs, "Sirens" comes to read as what Graham refers to as a literary soundtrack, a text so saturated with song references that it reads more like a late twentieth-century playlist than as an allusive print artifact. In addition to the volume of musical references in the episode, "Sirens" collects a series of musical sound bites into its own soundtrack.

Melodic patterns can only be recognized over time. Structural associations like the leitmotif require repetition in order to establish themselves in the ears of a listener, and the leitmotifs at the beginning of "Sirens" signify little until they are surrounded by their full narrative context. "Sirens" takes this necessity for repetition and amplifies it, placing the Wagnerian leitmotif in the mechanism of modernist repetition. The opening moments of the episode establish the architecture of the events to come, but they also include other, disruptive repetitions: "Bronze by gold herd the hoofirons, steelyrining imperthnthn thnthnthn" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 256). Innumerable repetitions fill the episode: from words or phrases repeated verbatim to phonic punnings such as "Blew. Blue bloom is on the" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 256). The moments can be read as the episode's ludic attitude towards the sound of language, but they also suggest the material difficulties of sound reproduction from physical materials. The signal is not disrupted by outside noise; signal here *becomes* noise as repetition diminishes meaning.

Such disruptions in meaning through the materiality of repetition share a strong historical connection with the gramophone and the skipping of a record needle. When the gramophone does appear in *Ulysses*, Joyce obsesses over the materiality of the instrument and of the sound it reproduces. In "Hades," the message of the grandfather's voice gets absorbed in the noise generated by the act of producing this sound: "Kraahraark!" and "kopthsth" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 114). In "Circe," the machine cuts off Elijah's speech: "(*Drowning his voice*) Whorusalaminyourhighhohhhh…(*The disc rasps gratingly against the needle*)" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 508). The Circean gramophone intones a religious song, "The Holy City," that loses its meaning against the noise of the gramophone's screech. While the gramophones in *Ulysses* never explicitly skip, the moments of gramophone noise consistently undercut the technology's apparent mystical abilities by bringing it back down to real-world materiality. The gramophone in "Hades" may be able to raise the dead, but it can only do so as a comical, noise-ridden parody of those formerly lively voices. Speaking of the Circean gramophone, Zack Bowen notes that

> "The Holy City," in detailing the transformation of Jerusalem, deals on a metaphoric level with the metamorphosis of the New Bloomusalem, the amalgamation of Bloom's and Stephen's worlds as well as the salvation of the city of Dublin through the exhortations of Ben Bloom, Elijah, A.E., and the high priest and smith forging the Uncreated Conscience of his Race, Stephen Dedalus. (276)

Rather than leading a chorus of voices in "The Holy City," the malfunctioning gramophone here takes miraculous transformations to the level of Circean parody,

suggesting the limits of such moments to bring about real and lasting change. Picker writes of the skipping gramophone needle as emblematic of a strain of despair in modernism over the future of the human voice in the face of the machine: "The needle-skip (or stick), with its connotations of immobility and hollow repetition, recurs in the work of those who were themselves discomforted by the successor to the cylinder phonograph, the more insidious gramophone" (140). Isolated from the larger structure of a musical piece, moments of isolated repetition produced by a skipping gramophone needle very quickly lose meaning. Bloom's watch stops ticking at just the moment when Molly is meant to meet with Boylan, but Bloom is doomed to hear again and again the sounds of the quoits of his marital bed jingling. The audible world of "Sirens" threatens to trap Bloom and the reader in a system where sounds only repeat and never cohere into a satisfying melody, a situation especially connected to the material conditions of a gramophonic world.

The strong associations between "Sirens," music, and the ear can make it easy to forget that the gramophone never appears in the episode at all. Nonetheless, "Sirens" offers the first significant glimpse of a model for the sound communities that follow *Ulysses* to the present day. The episode brings a gramophonic sensibility to a traditional pub scene, blurring the lines between Victorian patterns of live performance and modernist practices of listening informed by mechanical reproduction. From one angle, the events at the Ormond Hotel appear to recall an era of performance by live, physical bodies: the centerpiece of the episode is the performance by Father Cowley, Simon

Dedalus, and Ben Dollard. The performance's imperfections mark its immediacy to the listener:

> Mr Dedalus laid his pipe to rest beside the tuningfork and, sitting, touched the obedient keys.
>
> —No, Simon, Father Cowley turned. Play it in the original. One flat.
>
> The keys, obedient, rose higher, told, faltered, confessed, confused.
>
> (Joyce, *Ulysses* 271–272)

Simon begins playing the song in a different key, and Father Cowley asks him to play it in the original key of F major. In recording, the change would be worked out ahead of time, and the conversation would not usually be heard on a record. Joyce confirms the performed nature of the moment soon thereafter: "Up stage strode Father Cowley" (*Ulysses* 272). The space of the Ormond hotel transforms into an amateur concert hall filled with acting bodies, and Bloom identifies the performers based on the sounds that they produce: "Wonder who's playing. Nice touch. Must be Cowley" (*Ulysses* 270). Simon Dedalus says of Ben Dollard, "Sure, you'd burst the tympanum of her ear, man, […] with an organ like yours" (*Ulysses* 270), likening Dollard's aggressively virile singing to sexual violation. Dollard represents the voice at its most embodied, nearly bursting out of his clothes with his overpowering masculinity. Bodies, visceral and human, stand at the center of this performance.

Despite the emphasis in the passage on the embodied nature of the human voice, Bloom spends a large portion of the episode with Richie Goulding, separated by a partition from the rest of the bar patrons. Bloom hears but largely does not see the

performers: the sounds are embodied but disconnected from those very organs that produce them. Even as the world of the Ormond Hotel defines itself by live music, the performances are, in a sense, schizophonic, a term that R. Murray Schafer coined to describe "the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction" (90). In an older age before sound reproduction, sounds were joined with the instruments that produced them: a trumpet's sound would only be produced by a trumpet, and a singer's voice could only be produced by a singer. As Schafer and Pierre Schaeffer have noted, the alarming disconnect of sound and source created a sense of panic and despair for many authors and listeners during the early decades of the twentieth century. New technologies meant that works of art could be duplicated again and again, shattering a sound artifact's sense of a Benjaminian aura, of existing in a particular time and at a particular place. Technologies like the telephone or the gramophone detach sound from source and allow it to be packaged and distributed around the world: "Vocal sound, for instance, is no longer tied to a hole in the head but is free to issue from anywhere in the landscape. In the same instant it may issue from millions of holes in millions of public and private places around the world" (Schafer 90). We can use the schizophonic sound as a metaphor for Bloom's situation, when the barest of links exist between the sounds Bloom hears and the bodies that make them. He has to infer the presence of the performers: he only experiences their performance in audible terms, and he cannot see the mouths of the singers from behind the screen. Cowley's touch, Dollard's imposing presence: Bloom cannot actually see these physical creators of music.

Not fully embodied and not fully disconnected from their sources, the sounds of the Ormond Hotel exist between the pre-electro-industrial past and the gramophonic future.

Critics such as John Picker and Sebastian Knowles draw heavily on Walter Benjamin to argue that this ability of the gramophone to unlink sound from source caused a crisis in artists' understanding of the value of their artwork.[12] In this formulation, the proliferation of recordings may increase access to musical works, but it also eats away at the lived vitality of a cultural artifact. The reading suggests that, for modernist authors, the gramophone was synonymous with the death of the artwork as they knew it at the end of the nineteenth century. Edison's own initial plans for the gramophone dealt with death quite literally, expressing a wish to memorialize the voices of the dead: "The 'Family Record'—a registry of sayings, reminiscences, etc., by members of a family, in their own voices, and of the last words of dying persons" (8). In one sense, Joyce slides comfortably into this Benjaminian narrative of modernist sound recording and its association with bodily and cultural death. In "Hades," Bloom conceives of using the gramophone for just this purpose, to commemorate the voices of the dead: "Besides how could you remember everybody? Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house" (*Ulysses* 114). Knowles fixes on just this link between death and the gramophone in his argument that the device comes to stand in for a nexus of fears about artistic vitality and mortality for a wide variety of modernist authors and texts. In the face of a mechanized process for production and

[12] See Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*; and Knowles, "Death by Gramophone."

reproduction of sounds, the argument suggests, modernists seem to yearn for an era of performances by powerful, live voices.

Vital though this thread of analysis may be, the history of sound recording throughout the twentieth century is also a narrative of lived social relations, and recovering the practices of listeners can offer an alternative narrative for Joyce's engagement with sound media. Even if the Ormond Hotel does not showcase a gramophone as such, in it Joyce looks forward to the listening patterns that the machine would popularize in the decades following 1904. "Sirens" reflects, in particular, on the hypnotic effect of sounding objects which take up sounds not their own. The threat of the Homeric Sirens comes from their alluring sound: "crying beauty to bewitch men coasting by […] the Seirênês will sing his mind away on their sweet meadow lolling" (Fitzgerald 12.48–54). But the Sirens of *Ulysses* find themselves bewitched by the supernatural power of objects to produce sounds. The barmaids hold a shell to their ears, which, through a trick of acoustics, appears to carry the sound of the ocean into a place in which it would not normally exist. Such acousmatic splits between sounds and their origins are closely associated with the most widely distributed of gramophonic images, *Dog Looking at and Listening to a Phonograph*, a painting by Francis Barraud (see fig.1). In the famous image from which the recording company *His Master's Voice* would later receive its name, a dog named Nipper marvels at the mechanically reproduced voice of his owner.

Fig. 1. Barraud, Francis. *Dog Looking at and Listening to a Phonograph*. 1898. Oil on canvas.

John Picker suggests of the image that "in the wake of the phonograph, can it be that the dog's—and, by extension, *our*—master has become Voice?" (142–3). The Ulyssean shell functions as a proto-gramophone in a similar mode, carrying as it does the mastering sounds of far-flung locations and contexts. As the bar patrons gather around the shell, they enact the same wonder at objects' abilities to produce sounds not their own. Gramophonic objects possess the power to transfix and hypnotize; the new, mechanical Sirens of the twentieth century tempt even the Homeric Sirens of old. "Sirens" looks towards the hypnotic dangers of unrestrained submission to gramophonic objects, but the very power of such objects to transfix groups of people also points towards alternative and unexplored modes of listening that the gramophone would later popularize. The singers and listeners of the Ormond Hotel form a small community around the production

and, in their case, reluctant reception of sounds. As the patrons lean in close around a shell to catch the sounds of the distant ocean, they model the shape of a new kind of relation with sound artifacts epitomized by the gramophone society, a sound coterie gathered around the production and ritualized listening of such sound objects.

The Gramophone and the Listening Coterie

As the patrons of the Ormond Hotel gather around a gramophonic shell, they orient themselves around a listening experience enabled by the developing music recording industry. Authors like Joyce insert themselves into this emergent system of consumption and production when they put their voices down on record. Vocalized and redistributed many times over, the Joycean record comes to offer telephonic hookups between many individuals and groups at the same time that it teems with its own sounds. Numerous such networks, communities, and coteries have built up around Joyce's own text as a sound object, and Sylvia Beach offers glimpses of one of the earliest such groups. In the stark terms with which Sylvia Beach describes the 1924 recording process for "Aeolus," she begins to offer an early social view for the lives of Joyce's sounded text: "The *Ulysses* record was not at all a commercial venture. I handed over most of the thirty copies to Joyce for distribution among his family and friends, and sold none until, years later, when I was hard up, I did set and get a stiff price for one or two I had left" (173). At the insistence of the recording's supervisor, Piero Coppola, who claimed there was no market for anything but music at the time, Beach paid for the recording at

personal cost. Eric D. Smith concludes, rightfully, from the circumstances that the "act was motivated neither by profit nor by a desire for wider exposure through the new medium" (455). Beach's description confirms the financial details of the arrangement, but it also speaks of distribution and connection along an already extant network. Joyce's recording continues to circulate among an audience even when it fails to reach a wider network of listeners through commercial outlets: he shares the community among friends and family. As Mark Morrisson contends, modernist engagements with the mass market were never one-sided: the market offered opportunities for authors to reach a wider circulation and to engage with public discourse.[13] Morrisson's work primarily examines modernism's relationship with print and periodical culture, but I take his work as suggestive for the similar opportunities it offers for re-evaluating the narrative of sound recording. The lived experience of consuming sound recordings offers an alternative conception of modernist engagement with the gramophone that pushes against a narrative of moribund artistic vitality. As the patrons of the Ormond Hotel listen to a gramophonic shell, as Joyce circulates his records among friends and family, they form small communities that the developing music recording industry would make increasingly vital to the practices of collecting and consuming audio recordings.

The market for sound recordings exploded in the early years of the century, and, during this time, Thomas Edison and Emile Berliner battled over what would be the preferred format for the nascent music recording industry. The tension between wax cylinders and discs meant, above all else, that prospective listeners enjoyed

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[13] See *The Public Face of Modernism*.

unprecedented access to cultural materials. Berliner's method for disc recording, especially, emphasized a centralized recording apparatus that could quickly mass-produce duplicates on a large scale.[14] The growing access to, and mass market for, records presented a set of needs for enthusiasts: the sudden influx of a number of competitors into the gramophone manufacturing market meant that a variety of different types of technology became potential purchases, and the rapidly expanding collection of extant recordings meant that a newcomer to the field could feel uncertain how to determine quality and value. A number of publications arose to meet these needs. Some, like *The Phonotrader* that began its run in 1904, acted as trade publications promoting new hardware in intense professional detail, a testimonial to the developing market for gramophone products as well as to the technological complexity of new machinery. Other publications, such as *The Phonograph Monthly Review*, beginning in 1926, and *The Gramophone*, beginning in 1923, acted as more general guides for the amateur collector. *Novice Corner: An Elementary Handbook of the Gramophone*, a 1928 supplement published by *The Gramophone*, clearly states this ambition:

> *The Gramophone* was started in 1923 by an amateur for amateurs like himself. He wanted to get a straight answer to questions just as his readers did, and wanted to collect useful information from all over the world about gramophones and records from other amateurs who had no axe to grind. This has been the *raison d'être* and the settled policy of the magazine ever since the first number. ("Introductory" 3)

[14] See Osborne, *Vinyl: a History of the Analogue Record*.

Hobbyist recording publications proliferated throughout the twentieth century, and the distinction between them and trade publications persists to this day. Through album reviews, record lists, editorials, and technical introductions, these publications aimed to lower the barrier for entry into the ranks of the initiated record collector. The journals worked to convert newcomers into community members and to facilitate the consumption of sound recordings.

Of the hobbyist recording publications, *The Gramophone*, from its first publication in 1923, stands out for the length of its run and the size of its ambition as a general guide for the amateur collector. The goals for Mackenzie's magazine are notable from his first editorial. Even as he notes that the publication may not continue at all unless sufficient readership can be mustered, Mackenzie writes: "Our policy will be to encourage the recording companies to build up for generations to come a great library of good music" ("Editorial" 1). Framed on either side by the Italian phrases "Io Sono Il Prologo!" and "Andiam! Incominiciate!" Mackenzie seems to open not just the issue, but also a new, legitimated age in the history of gramophone collecting.

Above all, *The Gramophone* is notable for its efforts to create and coalesce a community of gramophone listeners. For its initial run and long into its existence, *The Gramophone* focuses on small-scale coteries formed around a shared love of the format. If a community always defines itself in relation to outsiders, Mackenzie's first editorial envisions the community created by *The Gramophone* in these terms: "We shall have nothing to do with Wireless in these columns." The journal, instead, gathers a readership comprised of numerous local groups. In its first four issues alone, *The Gramophone*

received and published reports from fifteen gramophone or phonograph societies in a wide variety of locations in the United Kingdom.[15] Society reports generally included concert programs and a list of various records that were brought to the meetings and played for participants to enjoy together.

While gramophone and phonograph societies represent concerted local efforts formed around shared listening experiences, *The Gramophone* offers a shared space wherein the groups can coalesce, forming a kind of organizing mouthpiece for these disparate local groups. In its first issue, *The Gramophone* ran an article by Wm. J. Rogers on "How to Start a Gramophone Society" that describes the importance of such groups: "The gramophone has lingered too long under the shadow of contempt and public ridicule, and the establishment of gramophone societies is the first step towards raising our instrument in the estimation of the public and awarding to it its rightful pace amongst musical instruments" (10). The gramophone society offered a place where collectors could come together in the service of advancing their chosen fetish object. The societies form communities unto themselves: "It would seem to me on reviewing the past that several things are essential in founding a society. The first is, of course, enthusiasm. The second is effective advertising–making yourself known, ringing all the bells in the neighborhood" (10). Rogers suggests that prospective society members make noise in order to attract the attention of potential members, but "ringing all the bells in the neighborhood" also calls to mind the bells of a church tower, the sonic center of a town.

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[15] Brixton, South East London, Glasgow and District, Tyneside, South London, Sheffield, North London, Liverpool and District, City of Leeds, Edinburgh, Fulham, West London, City of London, and Richmond and District.

As Schafer describes, “The church bell is a centripetal sound; it attracts and unifies the community in a social sense, just as it draws man and God together. At times in the past it took on a centrifugal force as well, when it served to frighten away evil spirits” (53). Ringing the bells becomes a call to community, and James’s suggestion reflects the sense in which the gramophone societies create local communities unto themselves based around a collective sonic experience. The gramophone community widens, then, beyond the immediate group of passionate followers to enrich the lives of all the surrounding citizens. *The Gramophone* and the records that it covers act as conduits for linking up the various local efforts into a coherent community whose members consistently engage with each other through the pages of its flagship publication.

As indicated by *The Gramophone* and its associated listening coteries, sound consumption frequently occurs in a social context. In his sociological study of contemporary record collectors, Roy Shuker interviews a range of record collectors as a means of debunking what he identifies as the central stereotype of record collectors: “Both book and film portray record collectors as obsessive males, whose passion for collecting is often a substitute for ‘real’ social relationships, and who exhibit a ‘train spotting’ mentality toward popular music” (311). Shuker’s collection of subjects proves to be multifaceted, however, and a number of his interviewees describe just how collecting facilitates a sense of companionship, connection, and belonging:

> Those who regarded collecting as a strongly pro-social activity downplayed the obsessive aspect, and regarded their fellow collectors as generally “nice people and supportive of other collectors in their areas. Some are very friendly and long

> term associations develop" (Gary). "Through the music I have also been able to forge some of my closest friendships and relationships. This has served to accentuate my bonding with the genre" (Albert B). Record collecting, as many respondents observed, provided a way to meet people and develop relationships based on common interests: "a grand field to express choice and desire, a way to stay connected to personal past" (Craig M). (326)

According to Shuker's interviewee Allen, even when individuals collect obsessively "usually they are connected to a group or 'scene' of serious music-makers or other collectors" (326). No object is produced or received in isolation, and any engagement with media implies a series of social relations. Just as no one image of the record collector can hold, no one understanding of the gramophone can serve to fully describe its resonance for modernist authors. The record might imply the death of a certain kind of cultural experience, but it also consistently brought together families, friends, and lovers over the past century.

It is important to recognize the historical situatedness of these differing examples. *The Gramophone* began its run over eighty years before Shuker's study of record collectors, and the sociohistorical climate of record collecting changed vastly during that time. During the 1920s, *The Gramophone* documented and catered to the rapidly emerging music recording industry. Shuker's record collectors, in contrast, participate in a niche practice associated with nostalgic longing, as vinyl records no longer represent the dominant musical format at the turn of the twenty-first century. In each case, however, record collecting proves capable of establishing connections among people

even as the practice itself appears to draw collectors into themselves. Even seemingly isolated activities and their practitioners take part in a wider social network.

Mackenzie, in a 1923 editorial in *The Gramophone*, begins to sketch out a scheme for bringing together music lovers on a larger scale beyond the pages of his publication "in a society which will aim at achieving for gramophone music what such societies as the Medici have done for the reproduction of paintings and for the printed book" ("Editorial" 63). Mackenzie's efforts eventually culminated in 1926 with the National Gramophonic Society, a group of subscribers who pooled their subscription fees in order to commission new recordings of chamber music. Unlike the earlier gramophone and phonograph societies, the National Gramophonic Society created as well as consumed. The smaller societies formed physical coteries around listening, but the National Gramophonic Society formed a network based around creating new recordings. The foreword to their 1930 *List of Recorded Chamber Music* further states the group's intention to "[make] every effort not to duplicate works issued by the Recording Companies, nor to compete in any way with commercial products" (3). The National Gramophonic Society aimed to establish an alternate system of patronage for recorded music, a separate system of connection and circulation from the marketplace. *The Gramophone*, the National Gramophonic Society, and its related societies all point towards a new kind of collectivity: these sound coteries all coalesced around the production and reception of sound artifacts with as much fervor as the avant-garde coteries of literary modernism gathered around text and visual art.

As suggested by Coppola's comments on the "Aeolus" recording, spoken word recordings in particular existed virtually outside of the mainstream commercial recording industry in 1924. *The Gramophone* ran for over forty years before it first published a catalogue devoted to spoken word recordings, *The Gramophone Spoken Word and Miscellaneous Catalogue,* which appeared in 1964. In it, Harley Usill, founder of the prominent British spoken word recording company Argo Records, describes how spoken word recordings were regarded as "the kiss of death" commercially for the first fifty years of the century. In this context, we can recast Joyce's recording of "Aeolus" not as a failed commercial venture but, rather, as a separate kind of recording effort entirely, one meant to circulate differently and aimed at a different audience: the group of family, friends, and close associates that already made up Joyce's inner circle. Joyce's letters confirm the existence of just such a web of relations, as he circulates copies of the recording to Sylvia Beach, Adrienne Monnier, Harriet Shaw Weaver, and the Pounds. Like the listening societies described in *The Gramophone*, Joyce imagines his friends gathering and listening to his piece: "If you ever put on my disk I would be much obliged if you or Miss Marsden would note the points of the Irish brogue in it, chiefly on the consonants. I asked Mrs Pound to do so but she may forget it. This would be very useful to me though I did not speak in my natural voice" ("To Harriet Shaw Weaver"). Joyce's description to Weaver suggests how he performs his national identity in the reading, perhaps adopting an exceptionally Irish persona for his audience of English, French, and American listeners. His letter also suggests alienation from the artifice of recording and a consciousness of its reception. Joyce ultimately chose the John F. Taylor speech from

"Aeolus" for the recording date with Coppola, "the only passage that could be lifted out of *Ulysses*, he said, and the only one that was 'declamatory' and therefore suitable for recital" (Beach 171). The passage was declamatory, suitable for recital, but it was also suitable for an audience and for reception. The lack of an expressed ambition to circulate the material commercially does not necessarily indicate a similar lack of understanding about audience reception or participation in the recording. The artifact still finds a small coterie of listeners who engage with it.

Sound coteries like these can help us to reframe the typical model for listening in *Ulysses*, often characterized by emotional torment. In a climactic moment in "Sirens," Bloom thinks of "Love's Old Sweet Song," the song connected most forcefully to Molly's planned meeting with Boylan: "Bloom unwound slowly the elastic band of his packet. Love's old sweet *sonnez la* gold. Bloom wound a skein round four forkfingers, stretched it, relaxed, and wound it round his troubled double, fourfold, in octave, gyved them fast" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 274). Bloom's lashing mimes an event from *The Odyssey*, when Odysseus's crew ties him to the mast to allow him to hear the Sirens' deadly song. Listening here is a painful but altogether necessary act that dramatizes the difficult line that Bloom walks between acceptance and denial of his wife's impending adultery throughout the day. Bloom cannot help listening, which exceeds his own emotional control. Odysseus stuffs his crew's ears with wax to protect them from the Sirens' song, an unnatural way out of the dilemma that Schafer identifies: "The sense of hearing cannot be closed off at will. There are no earlids" (11). Bloom cannot help listening, though, and the sound exceeds his own emotional control. Simon Dedalus's remark about Ben

Dollard's vocal performance is worth reiterating: "Sure, you'd burst the tympanum of her ear, man […] with an organ like yours" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 270). In this instance, too, sound invades and violates the body, despite the wish of the listener. The text threatens to do the same for the reader: rhyme and anaphora double the text in upon itself repeatedly, lashing together the moment in its own kind of musical poetic binding.

The Joycean record is very often one of pain and loss, but the gramophone societies offer an alternative model for communal, ritualized listenings. Listening can be a painful, life-threatening act, but, in the right set of circumstances, it can offer new possibilities for forging and reforging relations. As described in the pages of *The Gramophone*, members gathered to share their favorite records with each other. The sheer mechanics of the moment evoke a kind of ritual as multiple gramophone users would be required to make the same motions in order to play a record: place a record on the turntable, place the stylus on the disc, and activate the machine. The listeners choose to be at the events, often electing to pay membership fees for the ability to do so. Within this context, it becomes possible to seek out an alternative scene of listening in *Ulysses*. Joyce frames the use of the gramophone in "Hades" as a choice: "After dinner on a Sunday. Put on poor old greatgrandfather" (*Ulysses* 114). This ritualized form of listening offers a controlled set of circumstances wherein the family comes together around a shared phenomenological experience. Just as gathering around the table over supper offers a means of establishing a kind of community, the gramophone's memory of great grandfather's voice allows for the reconstitution of a listening collective that no longer exists.

Bloom's journey through *Ulysses* could be recast as a search for his own set of controlled listening circumstances. Molly's sound is out of his control: her impending betrayal with Boylan is consistently described in musical terms as a sounded affair conducted through the guise of a rehearsal. In the final moments of the novel, Bloom turns to the idea of Molly giving Stephen music lessons as a possible way forward after the day's events. The arrangement offers an acceptable form of listening: the uncontrollable jangling quoits that signify Bloom's cuckolding, instead, give way to the sounds of Bloom's own plans. As *The Gramophone* suggests, modernist engagement with the marketplace cannot be reduced to a narrative of cultural decline and malaise. Instead, the listening coterie offers a way to reconceive listening within *Ulysses* as a practice that involves life as well as death, groups as well as individuals, control as well as wild repetition.

Joyce's decision to record John F. Taylor's speech from "Aeolus" heightens the stakes of listening coteries for *Ulysses*. Joyce's selection of the text explicitly associates the genre of recording with both speechmaking and reception. As Smith points out, the speech was not itself recorded in real life. Instead, the speech only exists in the memory of those who attended its recital. Smith interprets this as a radical gesture by Joyce to unseat the primacy of the author, who is reduced to a simulacrum with no evident original. Without any recording device to secure the permanence of the impromptu speech, the ephemeral moment does indeed die as soon as it issues from Taylor's lips. But the moment—and Joyce's decision to record it—also elevates the importance of the listener and the audience, who become the bearers of the speech's legacy. Joyce initially

collects the speech on record, but that recorded memory passes on to the listeners, whose minds become like gramophone records, buzzing with the synapses and etched with the grooves that carry the memory of the speech. Taylor's speech relies on the listeners to participate in the act of collecting, to preserve the audible moment; the speech relies on the listening coterie to give it new life. When *Ulysses* comes to circulate in the world as an audible cultural object in its own right, it continues to offer opportunities for listeners to connect through its sound. These sound coteries give the text new life, preserving it for subsequent generations.

LibriVox and the Recording Coterie

> Listener be warned!
> —Hugh McGuire, "About that *Ulysses* Recording"[16]

As the subsequent century unfolds, advances in sound technology meant that more people could record more easily than ever before. The resultant communities suggest that any sound recording offers not just life for a text but an after-life as well. The nature of this audible existence is hotly contested: not all groups hear in the same way. As a cultural artifact in the real world, over the next century *Ulysses* itself has become traded with the same obsessive fervor as any recorded object and with terms that are just as tense. Joyceana proliferates, and an entire industry of academic criticism has built up

[16] Throughout this chapter, quotations from the LibriVox website are taken verbatim. As is often the case with Internet publications, some of these quotations use irregular capitalizations, spellings, or grammatical constructions.

around unpacking the meanings of Joyce's text. Joyce famously inspires zealously devoted followers and fiercely fought litigation over the value of his printed word, but the 2007 LibriVox recording of the text demonstrates the contested nature of the heard Joycean word, what it should sound like, and who is allowed to give it voice. Just as the listening coteries of the 1920s gathered around gramophone records, the sound of Joyce's novel itself becomes the central sound object of focus for a vast coterie that gathers around the recording of his text.

The avowed purpose of LibriVox, an online library that provides free audio recordings of public domain texts, is to "record all the books in the public domain" ("LibriVox"). LibriVox's motto sounds remarkably similar to the hoarding impulse expressed by a number of record collectors: "The extreme examples of collectors here are just that, an extreme; for example the nineteenth-century biblio-manic Thomas Phillipps, whose stated ambition was 'to have one copy of every book in the world'" (Shuker 318). The LibriVox crew imagine themselves as collectors of our printed history, the stewards of its transition into an audible state. The LibriVox recording of *Ulysses* shows how varied the methods for achieving the goal of complete recording coverage may be.

The *Ulysses* LibriVox recording, one of the first made by the organization, is also one of very few that departs from the organization's usual protocol: it does not provide a straight, unadorned reading of its source text. Some of the modifications are mere indulgences; others approach literary interpretation and experimental adaptation. For an author with as devoted a following as James Joyce, these incursions border on sacrileges in the eyes and ears of his faithful readers. The recording is a riotous affair chronicled by

the still extant LibriVox forums wherein the project was coordinated and executed, and this forum thread is a fascinating study in the reception of Joyce as a living force by a community that runs the gamut from committed amateurs to learned Joyceans. The LibriVox *Ulysses* creates a mass listenership, a digital recording coterie of far-flung individuals, many of whom never meet face to face, but who nonetheless gather around the act of recording the Joycean audiobook. The LibriVox volunteers subvert and distort the three most treasured tenants of the Joycean religion—text, place, and date; *Ulysses*, Dublin, and June 16th, 1904—and substitute in their own sacred practices: reading and listening together, anywhere and at any time.

In an explanatory caveat entitled "About that *Ulysses* Recording," Hugh McGuire, founder of LibriVox and lead coordinator of the *Ulysses* audiobook project, warns the reader of the exploratory aesthetic taken by the volunteers. Instead of a clean reading of *Ulysses*, McGuire notes, the volunteer readers make a number of additions: "pub-like background noise was encouraged, as well as creative group readings; and no editing was required, so in places there may be some accidental variation from the original text" ("Ulysses by James Joyce"). The novel approach taken by the LibriVox volunteers inevitably encountered fierce opposition from those listeners who viewed Joyce as a cultural artifact meant to be revered rather than adapted: "The recorders of chapter one have been called: fools, jerks, jocks, idiots, criminals and worse; the recording has been called: an insult to Joyce, an insult to listeners, an insult to literature, a travesty, a hoax, a bad joke, and embarrassing, among other things" (McGuire, "About That Ulysses Recording"). The detractors' faith in the primacy of an original text is familiar to any

devotee of high culture: volunteers should respect the sanctity of *Ulysses* as a discrete entity. Any changes to the source text defile the original. Instead, McGuire suggests that the audio recording be thought of as a different text entirely. The recording coterie produces a new sound object, one that is linked with, but not reducible to, its relationship with the print *Ulysses*.

The criticisms brand the LibriVox readers as criminals because of their departure from Joyce's perceived intentions in the work, but any given text holds manifold meanings. The aesthetic differences between the recording of "Penelope" by Marcella Riordan and that done by the LibriVox readers illustrate how different interpretations can yield wildly different readings. In the Linati schema, Joyce famously listed the time for the episode as infinity, and Molly's form makes the same symbol as she lies on her side in bed at the novel's end (Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey*). Molly's body is central to the episode, and Riordan's highly sensual reading brings Molly's thoughts close to the lived experience of a sexual body. In moments such as "yes I said yes I will Yes," the text works itself to a feverish pitch through moments of such rhythmic repetition and ecstatic prose (Audio Example 6). This moment has been read as an orgasmic one, where Molly actually begins to masturbate as she reflects back on Bloom's marriage proposal. We can think about the ecstatic sexuality of the prose as breaking through the barrier between print and sound. After all, Molly *says* "Yes." Riordan's recording underscores this physicality as a reading seated in the body and in a body that vocalizes itself. Riordan's recording also normalizes Joyce's prose by bringing it closer to everyday patterns of speech. The print episode exists almost entirely in Molly's mind, and Joyce all but

eliminates punctuation from the episode in a move that illustrates the frenetic energy of her thoughts. Speaking Molly's thoughts actually helps to organize them. On the page and devoid of punctuation, the phrases bleed into one another, famously difficult to parse. But we get by without punctuation on a regular basis, as we listen to one another and organize speech into discrete units of meaning based on syntactic conventions. A straight reading of the episode like that given by Riordan simply intuits many of those vanished grammatical markings (Audio Example 7). Listeners cannot help but infer pauses and the cadences of speech when they hear it, creating the aural approximation of punctuation as though these grammatical markers were encoded into the very sound of the language itself. But the gesture exposes the limits of an audio adaptation of a print text: verbal pauses approximate the syntactic function of punctuation but completely lack the associated graphic code. Even when a recording is "faithful" to the source text, it creates an entirely new media object. As Linda Hutcheon has written, "just as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation" (16). The shift in media always necessitates a change in form as well as content.

LibriVox's "Penelope" recording is the group's most experimental, but the reading still maintains a firm root in the text itself. The experimental aesthetics of the LibriVox recording more closely approximate Joyce's own ecstatic prose style than Riordan's reading, but, in doing so, the readers also distance the performance from Molly's body. The recording consists of several recorded readers' voices, each track overlaid and slightly out of sync:

> Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the *City Arms* hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting for that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he thought had a great leg of and she never left us a farthing.
>
> (Joyce, *Ulysses* 738, Audio Example 8)

The voices—some male, some female—fade in and out of prominence as they trade the role of lead reader. Some voices exist entirely in a single channel, while others pan across the left and right channels to create a haunting sense of voices in motion. The resultant audio-collage of reading voices fashions an echo chamber in which Molly Bloom's textual voice multiplies several times over, relentlessly moving forward and yet never comfortably fitting in one single time. The LibriVox recording chooses to stress mind over body, thought over sexuality. Molly's mind races in bed, and the proliferation of heard voices on the LibriVox record conveys this sense of uncontrollable consciousness that ventures into the infinite.

The angry responses to the LibriVox *Ulysses* indicate an understanding of an audiobook as a documentary text whose goal is to convey an honest and readable clean text. But audiobooks do not only serve as copies of print texts, and the coteries that produce them may or may not aim to authentically reproduce their source texts. The audiobook has a long history that is only now being recovered by such scholars as Jonathan Sterne, Matthew Rubery, and Jason Camlot: from the form's origins in Dickens's live literary performances to Thomas Edison's stated intentions that wax

cylinders be used to preserve the voices of celebrities and loved ones, a strong ontological understanding of the audiobook is as a documentary mode. D.E. Wittkower begins the work of noting the significant phenomenological differences between audiobook listening and traditional reading: the audiobook "is a temporal object of experience," "is spoken," "has a speaker," "is started, stopped, and restarted," and "forms a context of physical and social experience" (217). Wittkower's list and subsequent discussion rightfully focus on how the experience of reading an audiobook differs from reading a text. But audiobooks do not only serve as copies of print texts. Wittkower's list should include at least two more principles. First, the audiobook may or may not aim to authentically reproduce its source text. Second, regardless of its aim, the audiobook produces its own unique text that is not reducible to its relation with the source. Audiobooks may serve as editions of a print document, but documentary editing is only one interpretative framework through which we can read audiobooks. We can also think of audiobooks as adaptations that recreate and reinvent their source text even as they attempt to revisit it. As Hutcheon has written of the relationship between adaptations and their sources, "to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative" (xv). As audiotextual artifacts, audiobooks participate both in a printed past and an audible future. Neither text nor sound in isolation can fully account for the audiobook: both should be examined in concert as overlapping elements of the same artifact. Riordan's reading is no more or less valid than LibriVox's experimental recording, and value judgments can offer us little in the way of critical

discovery. Both aesthetic approaches are rooted in the text: Molly has both a body and a mind.

Far from being criminal, then, the LibriVox recording is an aesthetically honest and deeply interesting act of literary adaptation, amateur literary interpretation on a global scale and in a communal setting. The LibriVox recording shapes a new text even as it provides an adaptation of the source. McGuire describes the late night recording session in Montreal that led to the LibriVox version of "Telemachus":

> so I spent all day yesterday recovering from my Dec 7 Ulysses reading. I'll have some pics up soon, and some audio too - unedited. we ate Irish stew, drank lots of guinness, had a fiddler, drank lots of jameson, and chapter 1 went fairly well. after we finished chapter 1, and the jameson, we drank a bottle of scotch, and decided to read chapter 7 as well. that one went, ahem, less well, as we removed all restrictions for bad behaviour, and things quickly descended into chaos, all committed to the memory of mp3, which will go directly into the secret LibriVox vault, not released for public consumption: 96 minutes of mostly unintelligible shouts and whispers, free jazz improv fiddling and various other noises ... but good fun nonetheless. (McGuire, "Forum Post December 9, 2005, 9:31 PM")

Ulysses exists here, surely, but McGuire also describes the production of two new texts: the adaptation that eventually finds its way into the LibriVox version of "Telemachus" as well as a third, more radically different recording that remains unreleased. The position of the LibriVox community as regards the quality of their recordings has always been additive: they welcome new versions of texts as supplements rather than as replacements.

As of this writing, LibriVox is developing another, clean version of *Ulysses* with at least some of the same participants, but McGuire suggests that the group will not stop there: "There is some rumbling within the LibriVox community about trying to produce a new audio version of Ulysses every two years" (McGuire, "Ulysses by James Joyce").[17] Each of these recordings will produce a new and unique text that is not reducible to its relationship with a print artifact. Joyce's own creative process was similarly one of evolution: with failing eyesight and an energetic mind, he consistently and radically revised his own manuscripts from proof to proof. These efforts resulted in several texts, all of which compete for primacy as the authoritative *Ulysses*, resulting in a recent vogue in genetic criticism among Joycean manuscript studies.[18] Scholars could usefully collate this growing mass of audio recordings in the same fashion as a means of developing an understanding of the social legacy of the text for readers. Most importantly for this study, by continually re-recording the text, the coterie that forms around this act would continually reconstitute itself.

McGuire set a key recording date for the LibriVox *Ulysses* on December 7th in Montreal, a time and a place that feel particularly un-Joycean. Patrick T. Kinkade and Michael A. Katovich argue that "cult films are documents elevated to sacred status in a secular context" (203); cult followings of cultural objects create a type of secularized religion with their own practices and rituals. Joyce inspires an analogous form of cultural devotion. In addition to the sacred text itself, the Joycean faithful famously celebrate June 16th as a kind of holy day, and Bloomsday efforts by such organizations as the Rosenbach

[17] At this rate, LibriVox is far behind schedule.
[18] See the work of Sam Slote, Hans Walter Gabler, and Finn Fordham.

Museum in Philadelphia and the James Joyce Centre in Dublin have solidified these patterns of behavior. Recent digital efforts, such as *JoyceWays* and *Inside Joyce's Dublin*, map Dublin and solidify the connections between Joyce's text and its particular geographic location. LibriVox surely subscribes to the Joycean faith: "i like to think (in my crazy sort of way) of our recordings as little prayers offered up to the writers of these texts" (McGuire, "Forum Post July 12, 2006, 6:57 A.M."). But the various processes of the LibriVox recording simultaneously subvert the Joyce religion even as they subscribe to it. McGuire and the LibriVox team initially offered "bonus points if you record in Dublin" ("Forum Post November 8, 2005, 10:08 P.M."). In reality, the project led to a number of other geographic convergences, with LibriVox friends and strangers journeying to a series of centralized locations—New York City, Montreal, and Tokyo—to record together. June 16th, Bloomsday, commemorates both the date on which *Ulysses* was set and the date on which Joyce first "stepped out" with Nora. Originally, McGuire and company aimed to complete their recording in time to coincide with Bloomsday in 2006.[19] Equally important, however, was December 7th, which emerged as a key date in their process when a number of recordings all took place in different parts of the world. Instead of a religion based on text, place, or date, their practice makes sacred the very act of reading *Ulysses* together.

[19] As the weeks and months passed and the realities of the process set in, the estimated date of completion quietly changed from Bloomsday 2006 to Bloomsday 2007. In the waning days of the process, the group continued to honor the Joycean faithful—towards the end of the process Miette suggested a marathon reading of *Ulysses* in New York City. In a moment of literary serendipity, McGuire's own birthday is June 16.

The LibriVox audio recording and the processes that led to its creation become the self-conscious rituals around which a community of listeners forms. The special rules McGuire provided for the *Ulysses* recording reveal their populist aims: as a reader, you were "encouraged to get others to help you record your chapter," received "more extra points for getting several people to record with you in a pub," and could "square those points if those other people are strangers" ("About That Ulysses Recording"). LibriVox takes *Ulysses* into the world and finds a new audience for it. McGuire stresses this sense of community in his justification for the unusual nature of the recording:

> Our focus though has always been on the readers, the volunteers, the people making recordings – they are our true constituents; that the rest of the world gets a library of free audiobooks has always seemed to me to be a wonderful fringe benefit of our true work, which is helping people make and give away recordings of texts they love. ("About That Ulysses Recording")

Declan Kiberd suggests in *Ulysses and Us* that *Ulysses* was always meant for a mass readership, despite its reputation. The LibriVox *Ulysses* suggests that the text was also meant for and conducive to a mass listenership. As McGuire notes in the forum: "[Joyce] wanted the academics to argue for years - as they have - but he also wanted to catch the variety of human experience on the page...which we, god bless us, send out to the airwaves every day" ("Forum Post November 2, 2006 , 6:40 P.M."). McGuire and company do not treasure a single text, nor do they profane it; they give voice to a new iteration of Joycean interpretation that reaches a wider community of listeners. Far from leading to the death of *Ulysses*, the LibriVox recordings create a new sounded Joyce that

continues to reach people to this day. Hutcheon notes that adaptations fill a work of art with new life: "An adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep that prior work alive, giving it an afterlife it would never have had otherwise" (176). While the gramophone might hold sinister connotations for authors writing in the early days of the twentieth century, sound technologies have also offered new opportunities for listeners to recreate and adapt Joyce, to make him sound anew. Joyce may have prophesized academics arguing over his works throughout the ages, but a whole group of dedicated amateur reader-listeners fills out the discussion. In *Ulysses* and out of it, from the beginnings of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, audible objects have provided listeners with entrancing common experiences and spaces around which to gather. These groups and the sound rituals that they enact are as critical to narratives of modernist engagement with sound media as the technologies of sound themselves.

Life Through Listening

One narrative of modernism frames itself around similar small groups. The coteries that gather in London, in Paris, and in New York all form part of the story of modernism as a phenomenon crafted under the pressure of urban centers and in small collectives of friends, families, and lovers. Bloomsbury, Stein's Salon, the Harlem Renaissance writers: the creative energy of these small groups of collaborators and

competitors often coalesced around the print texts and visual objects of creativity that their members created with frenetic energy. The sound coterie suggests new webs of relations among modernists, new coteries, and new opportunities to reflect on the systems of relations that we already know. These various listening and recording communities should not be glossed as uniform in shape or aim. The listening coteries of the 1920s offer strong evidence of local connections formed around cultural materials, while the National Gramophonic Society framed itself more around producing than listening in its aim to break away from the mainstream marketplace. While Joyce's recording of "Aeolus" offers evidence that he participated in a similar networked listening community, his record's distribution does not create a new community: it traces his already extant system of collaborators. And while arguments over privileged listenings do occur in the pages of *The Gramophone*, LibriVox's digital recording coterie is uniquely primed for clashing discussions about proper recording of the text. This set of sound coteries, while diverse, can nonetheless offer a frame for the listening patterns informing the Joycean gramophone, which comes to sound as more than the echo of the past or the hollow memory of departed loved ones. The playback device creates a space for ritualized listening experiences and the communities that form around them. In the face of death by gramophone, Joyce suggests another possible path—life by, through, and with group listening.

Hughes's Audiences: Blues, Jazz, and the Performed Poem

In the final moments of "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," Langston Hughes calls for black artists to take pride in African-American music as a source of inspirational material: "Let the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing the Blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand" (36). For Hughes, jazz and blues music were of a piece, both uttered in the same breath as parts of an authentic body of black music. In the chapter that follows, I trace two interwoven threads that bind together these musical forms. The first explores the ways in which Hughes's blues and jazz poetries engage in common practices of formulating and elaborating the relationship between black musical performers and their many audiences, some black and some white. In particular, I trace the shift from an aesthetics of synecdochic lyric expression, in which the speaker's experiences stand in for a larger body of societal ills, to one in which deliberately obscure aesthetic practices signify violent racial politics and growing disdain for white audiences. The second narrative concerns poetry's ability to act as the site for and recording vessel of the "liveness" of a blues and jazz poetics. I argue that the poem as a recording technology recreates the physical spaces of the jazz performance at the same time that it incorporates the performance practices of live musical events. In each case, the poem creates these effects by developing a world that is simultaneously audible and printed, a world that is audiotextual. To draw the chapter's two narratives together: Hughes

develops a poetics that imbues the printed poem with the social import, contradictions, and racial tensions that take shape in live performances.

Taking Hughes's own statements on his work as touchstones, a healthy tradition of interdisciplinary study has built up around Hughes's poetry and music. This critical work has been strong and persuasive, but it has also divided Hughes into two separate objects of study: the Hughes who wrote blues poems and the Hughes who wrote jazz poems. Critics have systematized and complicated Hughes's ambivalent relationship to the blues,[1] and the political valences of bebop offer useful guiding points for Hughes's jazz poetry.[2] Splitting the conversation in such a way allows for deep explorations of Hughes's corpus in relation to a particular style of music, but the approach also limits comparative discussions of Hughes's work with blues and jazz. Music history encourages us to think of the two forms comparatively: the blues is essential to any history or practice of jazz music. The two genres are bound together and cannot exist without one another. Considered separately, Hughes's interests in blues and jazz might appear merely to articulate shifting interests in particular forms of African-American musical culture. Together, they can reveal a longstanding interest in the capacity of these forms to reflect on the social position of the poet and performer in relation to his audience. Bebop and blues each possess complicated social and political positions, but the two forms share common through lines. As Hughes's musical poetry draws on each, it consistently acts as

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[1] See Tracy, "To the Tune of those Weary Blues" and *Langston Hughes & the Blues*; and Chinitz, "Literacy and Authenticity."

[2] See Chinitz, "Rejuvenation through Joy"; Farrell, Jr. and Johnson, "Poetic Interpretation of Urban Black Folk Culture"; and Lenz, "The Riffs, Runs, Breaks, and Distortions of the Music of a Community in Transition."

a troubled and often ambivalent intermediary between the self and the community, between the poem and the reader, and between the performer and the audience.

This chapter attempts to reunite Hughes's blues and jazz poetry and to place them against one another so as to reveal larger trends in Hughes's performed sense of musical community. In doing so, I take seriously Matthew Hofer's assertion that our understanding of Hughes's work is more meaningful without "artificial 'punctuation'" that neatly divides his career into distinct phases (4). While Hofer refers to Hughes's career writ large, this chapter argues that the same tendency and limitations have occurred when discussing Hughes's relationships to American popular music forms. While the main jazz genre under discussion in this chapter is bebop, I also place Hughes's early jazz poetry against his later bebop experiments as a means of contextualizing the emergent sub-genre and Hughes's engagements with it as natural extensions of his early work with the blues.

With respect to both blues and jazz poetry, I refer to those poems that explicitly portray particular musicians, audiences, and events, as well as those poems that purport to approximate the formal characteristics of each type of music. Even as I aim to bring jazz and blues together, to discuss them as part of a unified musical project, I recognize that the aesthetic practices of Hughes's blues poetry and those of his jazz poetry, like the musical genres themselves, prove radically different. While necessarily reductive, some schematics help at the outset with the understanding that specific musical reference points will later clarify them. In blues music and poetry, an individual presents a narrative of suffering that is frequently sentimentalized, simplistic, and verbal. Bebop music and

poetry, in contrast, present highly complex and fragmentary aesthetics of montage in which instrumental music or scat singing replaces the coherent human voice. In each of these different musical forms, however, we can trace overlapping concerns with the individual, the community, and narrative, all of which intersect in performance. Each form positions itself in relation to an audience. Even in his later bebop-infused poetry, Hughes remains deeply committed to the sociopolitical power of art-making inherent to the blues. Hughes's blues poetry creates a new social space where unspeakable personal atrocities are made visible and audible. Hughes's big band poetry turns these social spaces physical, as the space of the dance hall becomes the site of racial encounter and confrontation. His bebop-influenced poetry carries this encounter to its conclusion by appropriating bebop's fragmentary and exclusionary aesthetics to refuse the power of testimony to narrate past experiences to a hostile audience. Even when writing in this later mode, Hughes's poetry critiques bebop's aggressive and exclusionary edge to register the dangers of racial and cultural politics founded on exclusion. In doing so, Hughes's use of bebop and his use of the blues do not appear as separate and distinct aspects of his career, but as divergent approaches to the common problem of art's relation to society.

By examining the means by which Hughes's poetry participates in the performance techniques of live blues and jazz music, I suggest that improvisation and composition, sound and print, meet audiotextually to articulate the complicated social dimensions of his poetry. Hughes produced a vast array of recorded material, far too much to be examined in the course of this chapter. While I gesture towards this material

briefly, I primarily examine Hughes's collaborations with Mingus and Waters as incisive points of entry into Hughes's vast recorded catalogue. By drawing upon these collaborations, I link discussions of Hughes's texts as proto-sound recordings themselves with their later manifestations as sound artifacts. These choices have been made for the issues they raise and the arguments that they bring into focus. Mingus's well-noted use of collective improvisation knots together racial politics, print composition, and audible improvisation, while the Newport Jazz Festival and Muddy Waters's performance demonstrates a shift from blues collective experience towards a bebop aesthetics of hostility and exclusion. These collaborators are points against which one can triangulate Hughes; different recordings would bring different topics and different points of entry. They all, however, create a sense of Hughes as a poet deeply engaged in the audiotextuality of his works, a poet whose recordings constitute and reconstitute racially encoded audiences within and around themselves.

Blues, the Self, Narrative

The blues is many things, but it is perhaps first thought of as a musical form. The connections between Hughes's poetry and the blues have been well established in this regard by David Chinitz, Edward Waldron, Patricia Johnson, and Walter Farrell, Jr., all of whom elucidate the specific poetic techniques that Hughes uses to approximate the

nuances of vocal performance unavailable in print.[3] In addition to the self-identifying titles of such poems as "The Weary Blues" and "Po' Boy Blues," these critics argue for Hughes's connection to the form by way of his typographical representation of the *AAB* blues form, his use of black vernacular, and the deliberate invocation of blues tropes. These features have been persuasively identified and elaborated, and it is not my purpose here to reiterate this connection. Instead, I focus on the ways in which Hughes's blues is also a type of sociopolitical posture that articulates the needs and experiences of an individual both in the music generally and in Hughes's poetry in particular. Hughes uses blues music to examine the means by which the experiences of an individual performer engage with and inform larger social issues, and this line of thinking forms the foundation of Hughes's later experiments with other African-American musical forms.

The blues, at its core, is a form that describes a conflict, most often between an individual and an uncaring partner or world. In "Down Hearted Blues," one of blues matriarch Bessie Smith's most famous recordings, Smith sings of a lover's dilemma (Audio Example 1):

> Gee, but it's hard to love someone
> When that someone don't love you
> I'm so disgusted, heartbroken, too
> I've got those down hearted blues (1–4)

Smith's narrative of heartbreak describes her own conflicts with the world, with a lover, and with herself, all of which are typical blues fare. Just as there are two lovers, there are

[3] See Chinitz, "Literacy and Authenticity"; Waldron, "The Blues Poetry of Langston Hughes"; Farrell, Jr. and Johnson, "How Langston Hughes Used the Blues."

also only two instruments in the recording. The stripped down arrangement reflects the problem of relation. Sometimes the piano playing perfectly mirrors the rhythms of the singer, as it does on "Gee but it's hard" and "I'm so disgusted." The piano frequently departs from the singer's melodic material, however, as in the second halves of each of these lines when it plays more complicated patterns during the gaps in the singer's voice. The call and response motion is typical of the blues, and such an accompaniment pattern would be typical across a range of songs. But the combination of the two here suggests the unfolding friction between personalities, sometimes at odds with one another. The music itself suggests self and other.

The text of the song raises another conflict as it puts the speaker in tension with the blues as an idea, as a thing as well as a musical form. As is common for the genre, the blues is a condition as well as a type of music. The song begins with an abstract generalization, but it quickly narrows to focus on the singer's particular situation. "Those down hearted blues" are something common to any tale of heartbreak, and they apply in this situation as much as any other. The song contains two distinct "down hearted blues": one, the subject of the song and the other, its title, something from which the speaker suffers as well as that which she performs. The idea of the blues within the song can evolve: over the course of the lyric, the speaker moves from resignation to an uneasy sense of determination, from "It seems that trouble's going to follow me to my grave" to "but the day you quit me honey, it's coming home to you" (B. Smith 11–17). In the space of the song, the power dynamic between the two lovers has also changed. "Down Hearted Blues" expresses a particular relationship between two people, and it also enacts the

changing relationship between them. The blues narrates the past at the same time that it shapes a new narrative in the present, and the changing nature of the blues becomes linked with the changing dynamic between the two people.

If the friction between self and other is thematic in the blues, it is also practical and historical: our records of many archetypal early performers exist precisely because of a troubled relationship between insider and outsider. The blues is, at its core, a folk oral tradition. The first blues musicians to be recorded were professional singers like Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, though, and it was only later, once their records proved popular, that efforts were made to record rural folk musicians as music producers sought out new potential products. Professional blues singers depended on the record industry to distribute their work on a larger scale than oral practice could allow.[4] The increasing circulation of blues records actually began to influence the repertoire of blues musicians: increased exposure meant that a song was more likely to be learned and performed regularly. While a large number of folk blues musicians did exist, Tracy notes that Hughes's own preferences for the blues explicitly drew upon the back catalogue of professional recorded performers. Though Hughes's earliest recollections of the blues describe encounters with folk street performers, when he later had to write on the blues, his "lists consist always of recorded blues singers, and when Hughes was not aided by an assistant editor or writer, include primarily vaudeville or sophisticated blues singers" (*Langston Hughes & the Blues* 119). Hughes's own preferences were for blues musicians who found their way into the record industry, for those singers who made a professional

[4] See Tracy, *Langston Hughes and the Blues*; Keil, *Urban Blues*; and Harrison, *Black Pearls*.

living through the commodification and circulation of their craft within the music industry.

Hughes's relationship with his own blues subjects is just such a mediated one, self-consciously colored by perspective, distance, and difference. In "The Weary Blues," Hughes's early foray into the form, the speaker enjoys a blues singer playing piano:

> Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
> Rocking back and forth to a mellow crone,
> I heard a Negro play.
> Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
> By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
> He did a lazy sway…
> He did a lazy sway…
> To the tune o' those Weary Blues. (1–8)

"I heard a Negro play," particularly with its capitalized direct object, suggests that the speaker both essentializes the singer and distances himself from him. The speaker must travel to hear the performance, "down on Lenox Avenue," conveying both literal and metaphorical distance from the street associated with the heart of the Harlem Renaissance. At the same time that he constructs distance from the blues subject, however, the speaker also participates in the very blues practices that he observes; the repetition of "He did a lazy sway" and subsequent concluding line of the tercet possess the *AAB* form of a blues stanza. If the performer sways "to the tune o' those Weary Blues," so too does the speaker move to the rhythms of the poem of the same name. The

speaker exists simultaneously close to and distant from the musical culture he aims to describe. While we cannot claim that the speaker of "The Weary Blues" is Hughes, the figure in the poem does serve as a useful representative for noting the poet's own relationship with his source material. Never quite the consummate insider, Hughes often appears to exist on the margins of the very community that he claims to represent. Steven C. Tracy frames this positionality as a question of audience as well as of perspective: "In his blues poems, he attempted to speak like one audience (the folk) and interpret to another (the black middle class) […] he was creating a middle ground that presented his audience with an enlightened professional poet's version of the unpretentious folk" (*Langston Hughes & the Blues* 47). Through his careful literary framing and rhetorical position, Hughes offers "The Weary Blues" as what Jahan Ramazani has called "a blues for the blues, the poet mourning his professional distance from the oral, proletarian, vernacular culture that he memorializes" (145). Through his very treatment of the blues as an object of study, he adopts a socially ambivalent position even as he embraces the song form. Even as he aims to draw faithfully upon a swath of oral African-American culture, Hughes consistently positions himself as a figure just on the outside of those experiences. He is insider as well as outsider, practitioner as well as archivist.

Hughes documents the blues, but, as a form, the blues catalogs the experiences of a particular kind of person: the storyteller. Blues performers provide narrative testimonies of their own experiences, and the form chronicles the way in which such stories move from the mind and heart of one person to the ears and consciousnesses of many in the process of their telling. The blues offers an audible record of personal experiences, events

that almost always traumatize, disrupt, and devastate the individual. “Morning After” describes a distinct event in a single speaker’s life:

> I was so sick last night I
>
> Didn’t hardly know my mind.
>
> So sick last night I
>
> Didn’t know my mind.
>
> I drunk some bad licker that
>
> Almost made me blind. (Hughes 1–6)

The singer of the poem articulates a specific event in a personal history, but this intimate moment disrupts his understanding of his own personhood. The speaker drinks himself into oblivion, the binge fragmenting his sense of self and leaving his mind strange and unknown. The self-alienating act also subdues his senses, leaving him “blind.” The diction and syntax of the moment further de-individualize the speaker: the “I” so insisted on in the poem could be anyone, defined as he is by such a sparse sequence of narrative events. Each sentence of the stanza gives as little as possible in the way of subjects: the single word “I.” The “I” as subject fades temporarily out of existence entirely in the second sentence, which contains an echo of the first: (I was) “so sick last night / I didn’t know my mind.” Even when the “I” re-emerges in line five, the subject is all predicates, offering past events but no real sense of the speaker existing throughout time at these various moments. At the same time that the poem articulates the experience of a discrete person, this thinking and feeling self disintegrates under the pressure of its own trauma.

The blues as a form can be considered the process by which individual experience transforms into something else: a collective story.

Critics remain split on the sociopolitical resonances of this aspect of Hughes's blues poetry or of the blues more generally, largely due to the question of how such narratives of personal experience can interact with and influence collective consciousness. After all, "Morning After" contains no defiant posture of social rebellion. As Tracy puts it, "the most pertinent question is whether the fact of a black man complaining of social status, situation, lifestyle, or complaining against social institutions, constitutes social protest" ("To the Tune" 93). Hughes appears to follow this line of thought in "Songs Called the Blues," when he says that "The spirituals are group songs, but the Blues are songs you sing alone" (213). The blues, Hughes seems to suggest, connects to the deep troubles and concerns of a single person. In contrast to spirituals that would be sung together, the solitary anxieties of a blues performer must be experienced and performed in the same way: alone. Amiri Baraka, then LeRoi Jones, makes a similar point in *Blues People*, noting that "blues was a music that arose from the needs of a group, although it was assumed that each man had his *own* blues and that he would sing them," but he goes on to describe how the music has also been the means by which African Americans have positioned themselves in relation to and influenced an often-hostile white American culture (82). In a kind of synecdoche, the unique experiences of any one blues singer link with the larger ills of a body of listeners: one's own personal blues express the blues of an audience in similar socioeconomic

circumstances. Even when the blues might seem the most individuated, such experiences are never felt alone: the call of the individual is met with the response of the collective.

The question remains whether or not music unto itself can constitute meaningful social action. In a later essay, Baraka would take a forceful stance to suggest that the answer is yes: "Whether African Song, Work Song, Spiritual, Hollers, Blues, Jazz, Gospel, etc., no matter the genre, the ideas contained in Afro-American art, in the main, oppose slavery and desire freedom. *Ideas do not require lyrics!* Sound carries ideas, that's why you get sad at one song, happy with another" ("Black Music" 107). Here, Baraka finds African-American music to be inherently political, regardless of its lyrical content or its use in the world. The sound itself is one of social change. In this sentiment, Baraka joins with Jacques Attali, who suggests that the resolution of dissonance into harmony rehearses the sound of political dissidence in the face of oppression.[5] According to Attali, these expressions of harmonic friction are prophetic mutations of future social orders. When the blues singer's voice moves to a new harmonic realm in the *B* section of the form, the musician sings into the future. As Baraka would have it, the singer also helps to create that world in the present: "Art is shaped by the world, but it also helps, in dialectical fashion, to shape the world" ("Black Music" 109). In these terms, musical expression alone can have real social effects simply by virtue of being heard. It acts upon the ears of the audience.

When Hughes incorporates the power of the blues into his poetry, he continues to meditate on whether or not the narrative presented by the blues as song constitutes a

[5] See Attali, *Noise*.

politically charged action. Elsewhere, Hughes describes the power of the blues singer to act as a point of intersection for group and individual, to make personal narrative universal:

> the blues have something that goes beyond race or sectional limits, that appeals to the ear and heart of people everywhere—otherwise, how could it be that in a Tokio restaurant one night I heard a Louis Armstrong record of the *St. Louis Blues* played over and over for a crowd of Japanese diners there? You don't have to understand the words to know the meaning of the Blues, or to feel their sadness, or to hope their hopes.
>
> ("Songs Called the Blues" 215)

While Hughes does nod towards the limitations of verbal narrative to translate across languages, he suggests that the larger narrative structures of the blues—hope, sadness—do translate. Even if the specifics get lost, the blues conveys the general tenor of individual hardship across a social space. Hughes fixates on the sound of the blues as the means by which it transcends language, but it is worth noting that print lyrics would not parse in the same way: printed language would require an actual translation in order for the narrative of lament to be felt. Sound can convey feeling and can act as the link between private experiences and a wider group of listeners. Hughes makes a similar move in the last couplet of "Morning After," when the speaker wakes up and laments his snoring partner: "You jest a little bit o' woman but you / Sound like a great big crowd" (17–18). Perceived in the right way, the sound of a single person can become the sounds of a larger group of people. Individual noise can become the sound of a crowd. Personal

expression intersects with a broader group through the action of listening. The challenge before Hughes, as I will come to argue, is to make that same sound of the blues legible even on the page, to convey the same political dimensions of live performance even in print.

For Hughes, the space of the poetic blues narrative mediates between self and other in the same way that the blues singer's voice interfaces between private experience and public consciousness. The self fades away in "Morning After," but it leaves behind a record of personal trauma that can be engaged with by a group of listeners. Tracy suggests that the presence of protest in Hughes's poetry is covert and ambiguous, but this particular poem offers an alternative to more direct protest through its use of story. All that remains of the speaker in "Morning After" is narrative, and the poem vibrates with the sociopolitical resonance of such tellings and retellings. As Angela Davis argues, "classic blues comprised an important elaboration of black working-class social consciousness" (42). The blues singer makes previously unspoken violence and pain audible, and the performances frequently bring awareness to previously unspeakable, private violence: many blues performances narrate domestic violence and troubles. Marginalized experiences come to social consciousness through the blues singer, who troubles the boundary between the personal and the communal. The personal becomes political precisely by making otherwise unheard narratives audible, and the private becomes public as the solitary singing voice becomes elaborated in the ears of the audience. "Morning After" dramatizes these movements with the gradual transition from the "I" that begins the poem to the "crowd" that ends it. The poem insists early and often

on the primacy of the self. Before line twelve and the first mention of a person other than himself, the speaker uses thirteen personal pronouns. The center of gravity shifts abruptly with "Woke up and looked around me— / Babe, your mouth was open like a well" (11–12). The speaker awakens, and the shell of the self cracks open to allow the emergence of a second character in the narrative. The line between the speaker and his sleeping companion does remain. Much like the dash that interrupts and ultimately separates "me" from "Babe," the poem offers little in the way of real lived interaction between the two bedmates: one remains asleep while the other desperately attempts to be heard. But the poem's orbit has shifted away from the self. From the moment that the second character appears, "I" only appears once. Instead, the poem shifts towards and ultimately ends with "a great big crowd." The dream of solitary selfhood lies shattered, displaced by noisemaking bodies that sound together. These bodies do not exist in perfect harmony, but they can be held together uneasily in the space of the blues narrative.

This space is crucial for voices on the margins, caught in a narrative system outside of their control. In "Bad Man," another Hughes poem about destructive alcoholism, the speaker bemoans the social cause of his condition: "I'm a bad, bad man / Cause everybody tells me so" ("Bad Man" 1–2). Society describes him as bad, and this becomes a self-realizing proposition: the speaker is bad because he has been declared as such. For a black speaker, especially, this society is experienced first and foremost as a set of institutionally and socially codified expectations about the body. The body becomes the site for racial narratives inscribed and reinscribed by the white majority on a daily basis. Every *body* around the speaker, white or black, contains a social narrative,

one that imposes itself on his body. As Chinitz notes: "The speaker *must* be a bad man; he no longer has any choice but to bear out the general representation of himself" ("Literacy" 187). He is caught in a crisis over storytelling in which the dominant narrative reduces his unique situation to a single, all-encompassing adjective.

In the face of this reduction, the blues carries within it the possibility for counter-narratives, for new stories. As Baraka puts it, "the typical AAB Blues form is, by its structure and dynamic, given to emphasis (repeated first lines) as well as change and balance (the new rhyme line, the AA BB rhyme scheme)" ("'The Blues Aesthetic" 24). Repetition is key in identifying a passage as twelve-bar blues: the first set of either four musical measures or two poetic lines must repeat in order to set up the *AAB* structure. This repetition "worries" the first iteration by fulfilling the expectation laid out by the first couplet, creating a sense of escalating conflict. The final move to the *B* section, measures nine through twelve in a blues harmonic cycle or lines five through six of a blues poetic stanza, contains within it the possibility for change, however meager that may be. One jazz vernacular term for the *B* section of the cycle is the "turnaround," when the harmonic tension builds to the peak necessary to return, or turn around, back to the primary tonality of the form. Just at the very moment when the narrative offers a glimpse of change, the harmony is most in tension and most clearly wants to resolve back into the repetitive *A* section.

The speaker of "Bad Man" questions his own practice of domestic abuse at just such a moment of harmonic and narrative tension, lines 5-6 in the second blues cycle: "Don't know why I do it but / It keeps me from feelin' blue" (Hughes, "Bad Man" 11–

12). The last couplet of "Bad Man" marks a similar shift in direction: the speaker of the poem does not perfectly coincide with the "bad man" described and inscribed by society. The latter's destructive behavior prevents him from feeling blue. But the speaker of the poem is caught within the generic conventions of the blues form. He *does* feel blue, and the reader is witness to it. Even if the pattern must revert to the worrisome *A* section, the very act of doing so creates a new social space where "feelin' blue" is possible. The speaker abuses his partners to avoid feeling blue, but the form performs the real work of narrating the untold stories of domestic violence. It creates the opportunity for a *B* section—a turnaround. This sequence—narration, repetition and elaboration, and departure—creates a new mode of storytelling that can allow the speaker to escape from the narrative society prescribes for him. As Davis has discussed in her examinations of female blues singers, feeling blue can bring such narratives of domestic violence to the attention of a wider community of listeners and create a space in which healing can begin. Such narratives of trauma can also reveal the widespread nature of these violent acts, reaffirming the value of the victims' experiences. The private lament of one person becomes a social problem, a pervasive pain for a group of people who have felt the same pain, experienced the same loss.

The blues form allows marginalized voices to narrate themselves anew in a social setting. When the experiences of a blues singer become audible, they become accountable, as Hughes writes in "A Note on Blues": "The Mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh" ("A Note on Blues" 73). The text acts as a recording technology that allows the narrative to be recorded and re-

inflected again and again. The counter-narrative of the song offers a chance to reframe traumatic events; the recorded space of the poem offers the freedom to repeat this action again and again. In the space of the turnaround, tragedy can become comedy, and pain can become pleasure. Narration can become re-contextualized and re-appropriated. As such, the blues poem becomes a technology of what Alex Weheliye deems "sonic Afro-modernity,"[6] the means by which a performer and his audience can redefine and reconstruct their identities on their own terms. The majority presents a fixed identity, Weheliye argues, but black music uses technology to construct multivalent identities in response. Hughes's version of sonic Afro-modernity takes place on the audiotextual page, which draws into itself the social dimensions of live musical performance. While musical poetry does not allow black musicians or audience members to escape their racial identities or the narratives inflected by them, the blues poem does trouble them. Just as the second line of the blues worries and reinflects the first, an identity narrated through the blues can complicate and re-narrate a life inscribed by race, class, and ethnicity. By linking together fictional narrator with reader, the blues poem recreates the pockets of listening communities that might be constructed in a live situation; it develops a space for experiencing sonic Afro-modernity while reading poetry. When Hughes's musical point of reference changes, the poetry continues to recreate the social dimensions of live performance.

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[6] See Weheliye, "I Am I Be" and *Phonographies* 110-115.

Big Band Jazz and the Space of Encounter

Hughes continues experimenting with the blues throughout his career, but jazz music and culture also figure as strong presences even in the early volumes known for their blues poetry. *Fine Clothes to the Jew* appeared in 1927, the same year in which Duke Ellington's Orchestra began its regular engagement at the Cotton Club. While Hughes's interest in jazz grew to maturity against the soundtrack of bebop, then, his poetry was born into the world amidst the gathering steam of the big band jazz and the clubs that housed it. Hughes's blues poetry often takes the form of first-person lyrics, but his jazz poetry more consistently looks out to the audience and the space of the performance. These audiences and spaces register the friction of multiple listening communities coming into contact with each other. The blues poem records the narrative of a blues subject: racial tension and social conflict take place at the level of story. Hughes's early jazz poems make the problem physical, converting the graphic space of the page into representations of the lived racial struggle of black Americans to perform—and exist—in cramped spaces alongside white bodies. While the singer in "The Weary Blues" does a lazy sway, the performers and listeners in Hughes's early jazz poetry dance, jump, and bump against one another. Even as the nature of the aesthetic experiment changes, however, Hughes continues to meditate on a related set of social issues. If the blues constructs a communal form of sonic Afro-modernity, in which group listening allows communities to rearticulate their own stories, the big band jazz poem questions the ability of such groups to persist in a world of legal and social hostility. A

sonic Afro-modernity, not unlike a cubist work of art, is comprised of overlapping and conflicting audience experiences. The poem, like the performance space, serves as a contested site of audibility, where different audiences vie to shape the reception of sounded narrative.

As Hughes's musical influences change, the nature of the encounter between audience and performer shifts as well. After all, music is performed in particular spaces and contexts: different genres possess different resonances. Consider how Hughes's blues poetry offers the poem as the point of intersection between the individual and the crowd. The blues narrative records the experiences of an individual and acts as the technology of connection. With listening comes empathy, as well as a measure of social justice. Empathy can be taken with a listener when he leaves the space of the performance. In "The Weary Blues," the force of the singer's song is such that it stays with him even after he leaves the club:

> And far into the night he crooned that tune.
> The stars went out and so did the moon.
> The singer stopped playing and went to bed
> While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
> He slept like a rock or a man that's dead. ("The Weary Blues" 31–5)

The triple rhyme of "bed," "head," and "dead" that closes the poem suggests that such sonic effects will echo beyond the space of any one line or any one poem. Whether at home or in the venue, the blues will remain with the singer. Even as he rests his body, his soul will still have the Weary Blues. The poem records the personal trauma of the blues,

and a listening community takes this story into itself. The same blues remains with the speaker of the poem and with Hughes himself, both of whom carry the feeling with them beyond the space of the initial performance. The song is in motion.

The blues can occur any place that a blues musician happens to be. When recollecting his earliest memories of the blues later in life, Hughes claimed, "At any rate when I was a kid in Kansas City very often I used to hear the Blues. There were blind guitar players who would sing the blues on street corners. There were people plunking the blues on beat up old pianos. That was of course before the days of the jukebox and the radio" (qtd. in Tracy, *Langston Hughes & the Blues* 105). Before music technology allowed the blues to circulate to a mass audience, the blues singers themselves spread the tradition. Before the jukebox proper, the singers relied on the original technology of sound reproduction—the human voice. Charles Keil notes that such encounters are typical for the blues: "The blues has always been a migratory music. First, it was carried by men roving from town to town and from job to job; later it was disseminated by medicine shows, circuses, and other touring troupes in the South" (60). The blues is a mobile form. Even as it forms listening communities, these groups of people do not remain fixed to any particular location. Later in his life, though he would find his way into dance halls and nightclubs, Hughes continued to note that "in Chicago in my teens, all up and down State Street there were blues, indoors and out" (qtd. in Tracy, *Langston Hughes & the Blues* 108). In buildings and in the street, the blues transcend physical spaces. The same is not true for all music; some performances require specific locations.

The blues goes wherever a performer takes it, but big band jazz requires a more specific configuration of physical space. Hughes's blues poetry is mobile, but his jazz poetry is highly spatialized, focusing on the physical locations that facilitate the interactions among its performers and audiences. Jazz big bands were fairly large groups, often consisting of one to two dozen musicians, and they required venues appropriate to the size of the ensemble. Hughes's jazz poems demarcate specific spaces appropriate for such musical encounters. In "Harlem Night Club," Hughes offers the eponymous location as an uneasy scene of social confrontation:

> White girls' eyes
>
> Call gay black boys.
>
> Black boys' lips
>
> Grin jungle joys. (6–9)

While the poem describes the reception of black music, the poem registers a diverse array of audience members, and these listeners interact with each other at the same time that they hear the performance. In the club, bodies become dismantled into component pieces: the lips of the black boys are seen through the eyes of the white girls. The poem presents a jumble of body parts that interact, and it also tampers with the syntactic relations of the parts. "White" could describe the race of the girls, but it might simply refer to the color of their eyes. Body parts become confused at the same time that race relations become vexed. Just as the poem disorders bodies, it also creates a space in which racial boundaries can be explored and temporarily dismantled, as "Dark brown girls" find themselves "In blond men's arms" (10–11). The mounting sexual desire can be a means

of connection, however superficial the interaction may be. Blues poetry imagines a scene of narrative and listening, but Hughes's early jazz poetry imagines the body itself as the site of interaction and confrontation amid the new spaces for jazz performance. In its fleeting glimpses of physical body parts, the poem can be instructively placed alongside the long poetic tradition of the blason, a love poem built on the listing of various body parts and their subsequent praises. Hughes only addresses one body part for each subject, however, never touching down on one body for very long. Furthermore, the body parts never belong to any one person: we see the eyes of white girls, the lips of black boys, or the arms of blond men. The blason praises a particular beloved, but Hughes's poem moves with ease among a group of people. Just as the club patrons within the poem join together on the basis of sexual desire, Hughes's poetic listing draws equivalence among disparate groups of people: black and white, male and female. The poem itself has become the eponymous Harlem Night Club, a space in which diverse members of the New York population can come together for a cultural experience.

The title of the poem also gestures towards real, lived spaces in New York City during the 1920s. "Harlem Night Club" names this historical context as well as the particular poetic conjuring that calls the location into being. It would be tempting to read the space recreated in "Harlem Night Club" as a utopian vision of race relations, one where jazz brings together black and white audience members in sexual embrace. The descriptions of the black audience members and their "jungle joys," however, suggest that the discrimination of the white girls casts the boys in a primitivist tableau. Even as the audience members provocatively caress each other, real empathy and cultural

interaction are limited by racial prejudice. Such cultural friction was common in venues during the period, particularly in one of the most famous nightclubs in Harlem which serves as the poem's most obvious point of reference: the Cotton Club. Duke Ellington's band famously was in residence in the space from 1927 to 1931 giving regular radio broadcasts to a national audience, and the club traded in primitivism when advertising the engagement:

> [Ellington's] music was often (though not always) denoted as "jungle" music or given a heavily African connotation in promotional announcements. The distinctive growling, shrieking, and moaning sounds of band instrumentalists inspired this characterization, as did the club's penchant for presenting skits set in Africa. These skits, usually featuring scantily clad light-skinned African American women, often portrayed African Americans as being one step removed (if that) from primitivism, although Ellington and the band wore elegant tuxedos and were not part of the jungle tableaus. (Cohen 296)

The club featured some of the most famous black musicians, but it forced even the most self-consciously elegant of them to perform against a backdrop of primitivism. The juxtaposition created by the advertisement suggests that the tuxedos are the artifice and that the provocative animalistic noises prove the true character of Ellington's band. At the same time that the club's marketing explicitly connected its star performers to African scenes, it also segregated its audiences economically and physically: "The venue's exclusionary policies and excessive prices barred African Americans, except for the rich and famous, and even those visits were rare. There was a separate section for the relatives

of African American performers" (Cohen 296–7). "Harlem Night Club" offers an integrated audience embracing one another, but the poem registers the social frictions of different audiences listening to the same music. Blues and jazz music may offer modes of sonic Afro-modernity, but the music can also be reappropriated and reused by white audiences to perpetuate prescribed racial identities. The scene of "Harlem Night Club" is conducted on the terms of "white girls' eyes," eyes that view the scene through the veil of white experience.

The jazz spaces that Hughes recreates in his poetry contain a number of audiences, and these groups of people possess a wide variety of perspectives on the performers, the other audiences, and themselves. Blues poetry, I have argued, allows a singer to reinflect his narrative by exploring alternatives to his prescribed fate. The blues song brings trauma into the public sphere and connects it to pockets of listening communities. The jazz poem, by contrast, explores how such narratives can be taken up and incorporated in white fantasies. Africa was just one point of reference for the Cotton Club, as the space's physical makeup (and its name) also suggested the antebellum South: "The bandstand design replicated a Southern mansion with large white columns and a painted backdrop of weeping willows and slave quarters. A mixture of Southern Negro and African motifs (featuring capering light-skinned women) encouraged frank sexuality" (DeVeaux 139). Scott DeVeaux has convincingly argued that music during this time offered employment in which black Americans could perform on par with their white counterparts, but venues like the Cotton Club forced them to do so in spaces where their art could be reincorporated into racist narratives: in the club's antebellum fantasy,

music offers a new form of servitude for black entertainers. Hughes writes in against the racial tensions of these musical spaces when he recreates them in his poetry.

Poems like "Harlem Night Club" do offer visions of connection across racial boundaries, then, but they also question the ease of such communion. "Jazzonia" conjures similar questions of racial perspective:

In a Harlem cabaret
Six long-headed jazzers play.
A dancing girl whose eyes are bold
Lifts high a dress of silken gold.

Oh, singing tree!
Oh, shining rivers of the soul!

Were Eve's eyes
In the first garden
Just a bit too bold?
Was Cleopatra gorgeous
In a gown of gold? (Hughes 3–13)

The title of the poem offers the space as a civilization unto itself, a world of jazz. "Shining rivers" recalls Hughes's first published poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," and its attempt to connect back to a deeper sense of black history. "Jazzonia" works in the same vein, linking the dancer with Eve and Cleopatra to suggest that her frank

sexuality participates in a long tradition of seduction. Beginning with a hydra-esque jazz figure, the world of jazz takes on epic proportions by incorporating a number of mythologies: Homeric, Christian, Shakespearean, and African. Nicholas M. Evans similarly reads "Jazzonia" as Hughes's attempt to glorify the jazz dancer by placing her in a long tradition of feminine history: "Hughes portrays a 1920s African-American night on the town as a timeless experience, one whose precursors date back to the dawn of history. In this manner, the poet presents the 'beauty' of the 'the low-down folks' and portrays jazz as 'the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul'" (123–4). The singer in her golden gown becomes a modern-day Cleopatra, queen of the cabaret.

This reading assumes a singular perspective on the poem, though, one that is fully in earnest. If we take seriously the problematic race relations of places like the Cotton Club, which opened its doors in 1923, the dancing girl of "Jazzonia" becomes an ambivalent marker of the economics of racial othering. Ellington was keenly aware of the social realities facing such members of his audience, and such dancers were not always what they seemed: "The girl you saw doing the squirmy dance . . . in the middle of the floor, she was not in the throes of passion, […] she was working to get that salary to take home and feed her baby, who sometimes lived pretty well. So, all of these things are much contrasted to what they seem to be or are reputed to be" (qtd. in Cohen 297). For Ellington, dancers like those who participated in the primitivist skits of the Cotton Club did so because of economic realities: participation in white fantasies could offer financial remuneration. Hughes hints at such alternative narratives for the "Jazzonia" dancer through his means of introducing her:

Were Eve's eyes

In the first garden

Just a bit too bold?

Was Cleopatra gorgeous

In a gown of gold? (Hughes 9–13)

As with Ellington's understanding of dancers in the clubs at which he frequently performed, the dancer of the poem shifts depending on the viewer. The speaker recognizes many possible reference points in the woman's beauty. The connection with Cleopatra is tenuous, as Hughes puts pressure on the rhetorical question as a means of making the link. The speaker's questions, never answered, suggest the merest hint of a connection: the dancer both is and is not like Cleopatra, just as she both does and does not bear a relation to Eve. The poem refracts the dancer's identity through the perspectives of both black and white audiences. She acts out the fantasies of multiple listening groups, and the poem, like the space it recreates, holds both perspectives in tension.

In "Jazzonia" and "Harlem Night Club," different audiences bring their own perspectives and narratives to a listening experience. The poems become spaces unto themselves, capable of containing such multiplicities. "Cabaret" gestures towards the limitations of the jazz community and the poem to accommodate such social pressures. "Cabaret" questions the tenor of the jazz performance and the permanence of its raucous mood:

Does a jazz-band ever sob?

They say a jazz-band's gay.

Yet as the vulgar dancers whirled

And the wan night wore away,

One said she heard the jazz-band sob

When the little dawn was grey. (Hughes 1–6)

The music does not serve as the point of intersection; the physical space of the club does so. The jazz group ultimately sobs with the rising sun, which signals an end to the night's revelry. The title of the poem plants the narrative seed of the drama to come through the rhymes that blossom from its final syllable: the "gay" space of the "cabaret" must eventually go "away" when the dawn shows "grey." The cabaret offers the band life by giving it a venue in which to perform, but that location must eventually disappear.

The association of "away" and "cabaret" also contains echoes of New York City's Cabaret Law, established in 1926, the same year as the poem's publication in *The Weary Blues*. The law required nightclubs to carry licenses to operate, and the license's significance lies in its absence, real or threatened: it was often revoked by the police for criminal infractions, real or perceived. If the license were to go away, in these circumstances, the cabaret itself would disappear as a viable means of maintaining a livelihood for a performer. When it was first established, the law only regulated the clubs themselves, and it was not until 1940 that regulation would be transferred to the police departments and notoriously require all performing musicians in New York City to carry cabaret cards in order to work in nightclubs. While Hughes could not have had the card

itself in mind, he likely held the Cabaret Law as a point of reference. As Paul Chevigny writes, the very term "cabaret" was an anachronism by 1926:

> By the time the City got around to regulating the "cabarets," in 1926, they were gone, destroyed by Prohibition. When the City finally passed a licensing ordinance, it was regulating speakeasies, some of which were no doubt as elegant as the famous cabarets, although more were, as we have seen, just "joints" with music and dancing. In the cabaret law, the City was seeking to apply its regulation to a genre that was already out of date, as it has consistently from that day to this. (55)

The title of the poem, then, recalls such legislation and the increased social pressures that it brought to the world of jazz music. The Cabaret Law was indicative of the legal and social distrust caused by jazz musicians and especially by black Americans: "The ordinance must have been largely directed at the black music and dance that was performed in the Harlem clubs, as well as the social mixing of races that was part of 'running wild,' because in 1926, the 'jazz' about which the aldermen complained was being played mostly in Harlem" (Chevigny 57). In this context, the poem echoes the physical space of the performance at the same time that it recalls the sociopolitical frictions caused by its walls. When Hughes notes the uncertain futures of jazz outside the space of the club, such speculations are bound up with the larger socioeconomics of racial discrimination.

The Cabaret Law was brought into existence to regulate just the sort of "vulgar" dancing that "Cabaret" describes, but the poem also suggests the limitations of such

outside pressures to proscribe the joy of the venue. Not even the sun can permanently end the revelry: it only temporarily stops it until the next evening. The rhyme scheme of the poem further suggests this cyclical nature, as its *ABCBAB* form offers a clear pattern that echoes past its final line. Even after the poem ends and the cabaret's doors close, "Cabaret" suggests that echoes of the song will continue on, ready to be taken up by a new audience.

Hughes's big band jazz poetry, however, suggests that the reception of music is also the locus of a variety of sociopolitical and racial tensions. A sentimental lyric expression, like the blues, might offer the chance to articulate again the desires and needs of a community. But, in a space with many audiences, the listeners of this song could interpret it in their own ways, to their own ends. Dancing turns vulgar depending on the perspective of the viewer. To the initiated audience, it might register as a carefully considered work of art. One response to such interpretive stakes is to sing a new song or to discover new venues. Another is to refuse signification and space entirely, to fashion a new aesthetic that tries to refuse listeners the ability to compose unintended narratives.

Hughes and the Underdog: Improvisation and Hipster Aesthetics

In both his blues and his big band poetry, Hughes suggests that musical performances offer occasions for connection among varying audiences. The space of the song and the poem that records it can bridge the gap between self and other, performer and audience. Such listening experiences can afford alternatives to prescribed narratives

about race and culture, allowing a subject to reinvent himself for an audience. Hughes's jazz poetry begins to register the frictions inspired by such interactions. Narratives can be reappropriated outside a performer's control, as a hostile majority can still regulate both bodies and businesses. Narratives and performance spaces each offer affordances and limitations for blues and big band jazz. In the final move, musicians turn against these systems that can betray them. Bebop shapes its own reception by rejecting clear meanings and narratives to establish narrow circles of initiated listeners. Hughes's bebop poetry seizes upon this attitude and develops a fragmented, despatialized aesthetics as a means of approaching the problem of reception. Even so, Hughes attitude towards the sociopolitical dimensions of such a move remain ambivalent: refusing to signify can shape your audiences and be powerfully political, but it can also be dangerous.

The friction among diverse musical audiences in Hughes's career came to a head in his spontaneous collaboration with Muddy Waters at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival, caught live on Waters's record *At Newport 1960*. The event serves as a watershed moment in the history of Hughes's engagement with blues, jazz, and the public. The program for the festival began on Thursday, June 30th and was scheduled to run through Monday, July 4th, but the event was cut short by rioting during the third day of the festival. Hughes was set to emcee a blues program on Sunday, and his event was allowed to continue while the city council finished deliberating, ultimately deciding to discontinue the festival.[7] The events surrounding the 1960 Newport riots, as recounted by Hughes in a

[7] Although, at the time, the city council intended the festival to be discontinued permanently, the festival continued in various forms and locations for several years before returning to Newport permanently in 1981.

dispatch for *The Chicago Defender*, suggest the changing tenor of the relationship between musicians and their audience in post-war jazz: "But on Saturday night while such mighty jazzers as Ray Charles with his singers and the Horace Silver Quintet were on the stage, a riot broke out in the streets beyond the park. Oscar Peterson's car could barely get through the sticks, stones, tear gas and fire hoses in time for him to close the program at one o'clock in the morning" ("Week By Week"). Here, the very crowd with which the blues musicians might have communed actually prevents the jazz musicians from taking the stage. The productive tension of the blues have transformed into outright opposition and defiance. The frictions contained with the spaces of the big band venue erupt into outright violence directed at the walls separating different audiences: the rioters were mainly white hipsters, angry at being unable to listen to the black performers.

Charles notwithstanding, Peterson and Silver are both musicians associated to varying degrees with bebop and hard bop styles of post-war jazz, the same thread of esoteric jazz that Hughes describes as being the sounds of a community in transition in the preface to *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. Just as Hughes approximates blues form and performance techniques elsewhere, his later jazz poetry adopts the stylistics of bebop, an emergent jazz sub-genre associated with the 1940s and 50s. Blues and bebop are radically different in terms of musical characteristics. Charlie Parker's "Ko-Ko" serves well as a typical example of the latter form (Audio Example 2). Whereas the blues is characterized by a skeletal harmonic structure, often reduced to just three chords at its most archetypal, bebop's complex harmonic patterns frequently result in a densely packed and difficult form. If blues can be thought of as offering a synecdochic

performance in which the individual stands in for and articulates larger social concerns, bebop verges on deliberate exclusion and defiance. Like many other bebop recordings, Parker's record exhibits a frenetic pace, angular rhythms, and hyper-complicated melodies that prevent easy listening, dancing, and even performing. In bebop, simple melodies become blindingly quick rites of passage: a newcomer to the bandstand must prove his ability to improvise over complicated chords at breakneck speed. Listeners must pay careful and close attention to follow along. Even as Hughes comes to adopt the fragmentary aesthetics of bebop in his poetry, I argue that he ultimately critiques its politics of exclusion. The posture of the solitary jazz soloist standing outside his community cannot persist: the social forces around him press in, and the performer must shape his art accordingly.

Hughes's bebop poems dramatize the changing relationship between the individual performer and his audience. The sun may be rising as "Dream Boogie" opens, but the poem launches *in medias res* into an audible event already in progress. The speaker hears music, and he challenges an unnamed listener to attend to it as well:

> Good morning, daddy!
>
> Ain't you heard
>
> The boogie-woogie rumble
>
> Of a dream deferred? ("Dream Boogie" 1–4)

Despite the intimate address, the speaker assumes prior and superior knowledge to the unnamed listener. The speaker hears and recognizes the music, but the listener can do neither. The blues brings the private into the public consciousness. The move may be

misheard or misunderstood, but ultimately the blues recommends listening and understanding. Hughes's bebop poetry allows for missed opportunities—that "boogie-woogie rumble" may go unnoticed, even as the poem invites listening and reading. If a dream can be deferred, the audience can be fragmented and deliberately challenged. The poem defies the reader by acknowledging the limits of his ability to perceive the "rumble" under discussion. Blues poetry participates in a long oral tradition, but, ultimately, any given blues lyric can be understood on the terms of its own narrative. "Dream Boogie" is more openly dialogic, suggesting that a prior knowledge of its own intertexts is essential to understanding its meanings.

"Dream Boogie" thus marks itself early as a poem that contains hidden meanings that may go unrevealed, and Hughes's prefatory note to *Montage of a Dream Deferred* closely aligns this potential withholding with the deliberately obscure aesthetic practices of be-bop. Hughes fixates on the complexity of bebop as he develops his own bebop poetics:

> This poem on contemporary Harlem, like be-bop, is marked by conflicting changes, sudden nuances, sharp and impudent interjections, broken rhythms, and passages sometimes in the manner of jam session, sometimes the popular song, punctuated by riffs, runs, breaks, and disc-tortions of the music of a community in transition.
>
> ("Preface" 387)

Hughes perceives the social unrest of a community in movement, and he hears such change as a rift. The most salient point of the text, his neologism disc-tortions, links the

aesthetic transformations experienced by the community to new records, new music. Hughes speaks, in particular, of the aesthetic character of bebop: "conflicting changes," "sudden," "sharp and impudent," "broken," and "punctuated." In theory, a kind of modernist fragmentation becomes the means by which Hughes approximates the jagged performance techniques of bebop. Moments like "*Hey, pop!* / *Re-bop!* / *Mop!*" approximate the frenetic aesthetics of a bebop solo as their monosyllabic rhymes morph repeatedly ("Dream Boogie" 18–20); defiant jazz complexity translates as nonsense poetry. Taking a cue from Hughes's preface, Günther Lenz suggests that these fragmentary poetic practices approximate the process of "cultural renewal and reconstruction" of a community heaving under the pressure of social change (275). In practice, however, I suggest that *Montage* puts pressure on the ability of bebop politics to interact with the community around it. Although the aesthetics may sound a "community in transition," Hughes at times seems to yearn for the clear connection the blues offers between subject and object, performer and audience.

Hughes divides the world into two classes in "Dream Boogie," the ignorant and the initiated, and he leaves no question as to which class the reader belongs. There is a second music to the poem, one that the reader may recognize:

> Listen closely:
> You'll hear their feet
> Beating out and beating out a—
>
> *You think*

It's a happy beat? ("Dream Boogie" 5–9)

"Feet" suggests dancing but also poetic feet, the dancing rhythms of the poetic music. The shift into regular trochaic tetrameter in the next line underscores this effect: the text is thoroughly aware of its own music, and the poem invites the reader to process it as it elides the differences between poetry and music. Hughes distinguishes between hearing and understanding, though, quickly refusing the reader the latter: "*You think* / *It's a happy beat?*" Such questions punctuate the poem: "Ain't you heard?" and "What did I say?" simultaneously defy the reader to display understanding and expose his ignorance (11, 14). The reader may be able to read the poetry, but he is not uninitiated into a deeper understanding of it.

Anita Haya Patterson connects these moments to typical criticisms of popular music fans: "Like Adorno, Hughes in 'Dream Boogie' suggests that too many people who listened to jazz did not hear the seriousness of its emotional message and were not aware of the violent historical conditions out of which the impulse to formal innovation emerged" (682). Hughes does align the reader with the ignorant listener, but "Dream Boogie" also creates a situation in which understanding the music's larger social and historical context is impossible within the terms of the verse. The poem almost reveals the nature of its music:

Listen to it closely:

Ain't you heard

something underneath

like a—

What did I say?

Sure,

I'm happy!

Take it away!

Hey, pop!

Re-bop!

Mop!

Y-e-a-h! ("Dream Boogie" 10–21)

The poem leaves the reader floating with an unfinished simile, coming just to the brink of revelation but ultimately denying it. Instead, it disintegrates into a stream of nonsense lyric; the poem refuses to signify as a sonic gesture with its inscrutable associative sound play. If the poem is aware of its own music, it also knows the limits of this textual sound. The hyphens of "Y-e-a-h," like the italicized font, are textual artifacts that do not have direct sonic equivalents. Even as it plays most effectively with sound, the poem marks the limitations of its print text by employing a visual dimension that would be unavailable to jazz performers. The textual representation of sound also fails, just as the simile of the poem as a sound object remains unfulfilled by graphic signifiers. The poem offers an event that is both unwritable and inaudible, an audiotextual paradox. The reader may be

attuned to the music of the poetry itself, but any amount of attention to poetic sound effects leaves the "boogie-woogie rumble" *within* the poem impossible to hear: the poem remains silent on the page until sounded. Similarly, the unnamed listener will never hear the "boogie-woogie rumble," that "something underneath." This sound predates the existence of the poem, and the address that opens the piece suggests that the unnamed listener has only arrived with the onset of the lyrics. The speaker of the poem gestures at a sonic event outside and before the poem, but the listener only exists within the text itself. The listener of the poem has an impossible task: to identify the music that takes place before his own narrative existence. The defiant stance of bebop manifests in the poem as a game of understanding that must be lost: the reader/listener cannot grasp the historical or sociopolitical contexts of the poem because the lyric provides no such framework for understanding. If, as Norman Mailer suggests, "one is Hip or one is Square" (278), the reader is hopelessly square.

The aesthetics of rupture and inscrutability that Hughes borrows from bebop has explicitly political and economic resonances for the music. Bebop practitioners used their fearsome skill as a way of combatting impoverished economic opportunities resulting from "the social contradictions of the war years" (Lowney 365). They accomplished this by defining a subculture of technical professionalization: DeVeaux describes the origins of bebop in a "vision of social advancement in which the black jazz musician, through the disciplined exercise of talent in one of the few professional avenues open to African Americans, would find a place in the world commensurate with his skills" (29). The jarring and highly wrought complexities have a socioeconomic aim: their inimitable

virtuosity puts racially marginalized artists on par with or above white musicians. As Eric Lott argues: "'Ko Ko,' Charlie Parker's first recorded masterpiece, suggested that jazz was a struggle which pitted mind against the perversity of circumstance, and that in this struggle, blinding virtuosity was the best weapon" (597). In the process, bebop musicians become the ultimate insiders, an oppositional stance described by Lenz as "a *political* act of cultural liberation from white domination and of affirmation of a viable black urban ghetto culture and public sphere. Indeed, bebop was a radical response to the political frustration in a racist society, the revolt of young black musicians of the ghetto against the commercialization of 'swing music of the time'" (Lenz 274). Bebop artists developed an avant-garde jazz form that challenged listeners and performers alike to develop new skills, new tools, and new aesthetic standards. By radically reinventing their own musical forms and the terms of their own reception, bebop musicians created new, viable spaces for black art.

In 1958, Hughes collaborated with jazz musicians Charles Mingus and Leonard Feather on a series of musical settings of his poetry, "Dream Boogie" included, and the record further illuminates the distinct racial politics at work in Hughes's bebop poetry. The 1958 recording was entitled *Weary Blues*, but it actually drew from poetic material throughout Hughes's career, blues, early jazz, and bebop alike. On the record, improvisation intersects with militant racial politics in Mingus's music, in particular, offering a touchstone for how solo utterance and opposition impinge upon collective utterance in Hughes's work.

Perhaps the most famous example of Mingus's racial politics is articulated in "Original Faubus Fables," a reference to Orval Faubus, the Arkansas governor who deployed the National Guard to prevent the integration of Little Rock Central High School. The song opens with a series of prayers (Audio Example 3):

> Oh, Lord, don't let 'em shoot us!
>
> Oh, Lord, don't let 'em stab us!
>
> Oh, Lord, don't let 'em tar and feather us!
>
> Oh, Lord, no more swastikas!
>
> Oh, Lord, no more Ku Klux Klan! (1–5)

While Hughes's blues poetry invoked individual experiences as a means of raising private pain to social awareness, the opening prayers of "Original Faubus Fables" express already extant social woes. Few Americans needed reminding of the Ku Klux Klan's efforts to devastate race relations throughout the century, and the memory of World War II was similarly fresh in people's minds at the time. Rather than making visible the invisible, "Original Faubus Fables" dramatizes the violence already taking place between different groups and heightens it, likening opponents to desegregation in Little Rock to Nazis. The song illustrates the desperate need for clashing social groups to find a measure of uneasy cooperation with each other, and it does so through its interweaving melodic lines. Mingus's groups were particularly famous for their heavy use of collective improvisation. More typical bebop improvisation features a soloist performing virtuosically while accompanied by a backing band whose parts, although largely improvised themselves, tend to be subordinated or supplementary to a primary soloist.

Collective improvisation, often associated with New Orleans jazz or free jazz, elevates these background voices to significant soloists in their own rite. The distinction between fore and background does not hold the same way, as multiple soloists all work together to create a polyphonic web of interweaving melodies. Musically, "Faubus" alternates between sections of subdued musical textures and frenetic explosions of activity. Narratively, the lyrics describe the ridiculousness of attempts to halt inevitable integration. Just as collective improvisation erupts from an otherwise subdued texture, the song argues, so too will attempts to stifle the voices and experiences of social groups through violence ultimately lead to violence.

"Faubus" suggests both the powerful political messages that bebop contains and the ways these challenging aesthetic messages remain subject to socioeconomic systems of control. Columbia Records originally refused to release Mingus's song with the politically charged lyrics, so the song's first distribution in the world was as an instrumental version entitled "Fables of Faubus" (Audio Example 4). The instrumental version loses its political charge:

> Stripping the original of much of its political force, the revised "Fables of Faubus" completely excises the song's provocative lyrics and largely whitewashes its jagged hard-bop sound, carnivalesque spirit, and demented playfulness, ultimately turning Mingus's trenchant political engagement into a high-production-value musicianship that still swings and bops but delivers few punches. (Bennett)

The shift to the nonverbal does not necessarily preclude political content: bebop's politics long existed without verbal cues to assist them, and, as Lott and DeVeaux have argued, bebop's defiant racial politics exist even when its music is purely instrumental. But for a song like "Faubus" that began as explicitly confrontational, language itself carries much of the political power. Hughes's poetry returns bebop to the explicitly political realm of the verbal, and his poetry carries these politically active meanings not only in its content but also in its refusal to signify. "Dream Boogie" contains no defiant message of social revolt, but it creates clear distinctions between insider and outsider consistent with the challenging aesthetics of bebop.

Understanding and signification become deadly serious matters in "Motto," another Hughes poem from *Montage*. The poem describes an aesthetics of knowing, a social posturing that places the speaker as the center of a body of insider knowledge:

> I play it cool
> And dig all jive
> That's the reason
> I stay alive. ("Motto" 1–4)

Cool, dig, jive: these words have long since entered mainstream English, but they began life as vernacular terms associated with jazz, part of the private vocabulary words that Norman Mailer identifies in "The White Negro" as containing myriad meanings: "They serve a variety of purposes and the nuance of the voice uses the nuance of the situation to convey the subtle contextual difference" (286). In the context of the poem, these intricacies are unavailable to the reader, who must read them as silent print text. The

poem preaches understanding: "*Dig and Be Dug* / *In Return*" (Hughes, "Motto" 5–8). It does this, however, through a deliberately obscure mode of vernacular address that potentially excludes the reader from the symbiotic relationship. Even if the reader already speaks the language, the nuances conveyed in speech would be unavailable on the page. The poem creates a subgroup that the reader can never fully join. If comprehension is a survival tactic, Hughes puts the reader at risk. A bebop solo defies the listener to follow its every intricacy, and the poetry here marks understanding as a problem of media. The poem marks itself as only partially developed on the page. To be truly dug, I will come to argue, the poetry must exist as performance.

Hughes interrogates the tenability of the hipster aesthetic even as he appropriates it, as suggested by his 1958 recording of "Motto" with Mingus and Feather. In the moments immediately prior to the poem, a transitional instrumental section from the previous poem features five members of the band playing a twelve-bar blues together. The collective momentum builds during the sequence, but it breaks down when Hughes enters (Audio Example 5). Opening figures by the saxophone and trombone repeat, gradually building into a light group improvisation. The cohesion disintegrates over the course of the lines "I play it cool / And dig all jive," as the instruments drop out one by one until Hughes is left alone ("Motto" 1–2). The band re-enters over the course of the second stanza:

My motto,

As I live and learn,

is:

Dig And Be Dug

In Return. (“Motto” 5–8)

The musicians return one at a time, however, with little sense of a collective composition. Instead, they give a sense of free and rubato collective improvisation. Until this moment, the solo voices grow in individuality at the same time that they begin to interact with each other; a small musical community establishes itself. When Hughes asserts the motto of hipness, of defiantly existing apart, the musical collective breaks up. In a bebop community, the band is the hippest, the ultimate insiders as the masters of the complex musical form. Here, however, even this innermost coterie breaks apart. The final couplet promises shared understanding, but such mutual recognition may not be possible between two individuals standing defiantly apart. Bebop lives by its virtuosic individual musicians, but “Motto” as poem and as performance suggests that this same focus on the self can push too far. The blues speaker of “Morning After” fades into a collective. Instead of such a group formation, “Motto” suggests, the politics of bebop can fracture audiences and performers alike.

Bebop’s defiant stance challenges listeners and performers to join in the project of carving out a space for radical new black art music. The musical form is a challenging call to active listening, and Hughes’s poetry reflects this same effort to construct a sophisticated and politically active listening experience. But Hughes’s critique of this social posturing suggests that this defiant stance can come with a price. When bebop first emerged, jazz journalists saw the music not as a unified movement but as a collection of virtuosic performers. Initially, the press focused on Dizzy Gillespie as an exceptional

individual surrounded by a horde of imitators. It was only later that other musicians like Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk were recognized as participating in the same types of aesthetic experiments. The shift from individual prodigies to a coherent movement took some time, and the press did not term the movement "bebop" until April 1946.[8] An aesthetics founded on virtuosity can run the risk of appearing too individualized, of not cohering at all.

The same performance tactics that make musicians like these unique and irreplaceable can also alienate audiences and other performers. Not all listeners or artists understood bebop or had any desire to do so, and, as the Newport riots suggest, musical tastes did not fall neatly along any demographic lines. Substantial critiques and challenges to bebop came from other artists, from the "resentment of musicians outside the movement—mostly from the swing bands—who were made doubly insecure by the threat of marginalization in an already shrinking market" (Gendron 150). Musicians like Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong were deeply critical of the movement, describing bebop musicians as fakes, jealous upstarts attempting to force music from vast collections of weird notes that did not cohere.[9] Such internal rifts in the musical communities and the reception of the music were as much driven by the white jazz culture industry as they were by black performers, whose own perspectives on the music were filtered, re-contextualized, and distributed to fit the particular agendas of writers and publishers. Even when allowing for the often good intentions of these enthusiasts of black art, Bernard Gendron notes, "the fact that bebop got enveloped by the virtually all-white,

[8] See Gendron, "A Short Stay in the Sun."
[9] See Gendron, "A Short Stay in the Sun" 145-55.

jazz-culture industry assured that this African-American movement would be to a large extent discursively constructed in a way that reflected the biases of such a racial hegemony" (Gendron 158). In the absence of clear meanings and in the presence of challenging new avant-garde music, the reception of bebop suggests that new narratives will be created to account for experimental forms. Instead of distributing a private narrative to a wider audience as in the blues, bebop's cult of virtuosity forms a shrinking coterie that cannot necessarily control their own narrative. The politically active dimension of the bebop does persist, but it does so, at least in the early years, alongside a hostile counter-narrative that attempts to account for the music in other ways.

Even as Hughes takes bebop as inspiration and aesthetic provocation, he remains keenly aware of the contested reception that the music received. "Motto" asks us to question the use of digging, of hipness, as a survival tactic. Hughes suggests it fails in this, as "Dead in There," the subsequent poem on the recording and in the collection, demonstrates when it describes the death of a motto-driven "hep-cat." On the page, "Motto" and "Dead in There" do not necessarily refer to the same person. In performance, however, Hughes draws the two poems together with a long introduction to "Dead in There": "Well that's the motto of a hep-cat. But unfortunately this particular hep-cat didn't live very long" (Audio Example 6). Explicit references back to "Motto" lead into a repeated phrase that shifts from a description of the man's fate to the invocation of the next poem's title: "This young man was going Lennox Avenue in a box. A long box. Dead in there. Dead in there." This unprinted introduction to the poem links

"Motto" and "Dead in There," creating a narrative across the two poems, allowing the latter poem to continue the doomed narrative of hipsterdom:

> Hearse and flowers
>
> Guarantee
>
> He'll never hype
>
> Another paddy.

In life, the subject existed in a creative world apart. In death, he will never be able to engage in the deceptive signifying practices of the hip aesthetic. He cannot trick any white people, or paddies. "Dead in There" also gives "dig" a secondary meaning: "Squares / Who couldn't dig him, / Plant him now" (18–20). The denied majority could not dig him in life, but in death they can dig him—a grave. The majority "plants him," fixing his meanings in place to prevent any further subversions. The uninitiated squares fully reclaim the hipster in death, as the recorded introduction to the poem makes clear when it describes the young man being placed in his coffin, "a long box." Differentiated as squares in life, they have their revenge on the hipster: they turn him into a square by enclosing his corpse forever within the coffin. The hipster aesthetic, to some extent, remains after death: the coffin itself is an imperfect geometric approximation of squareness, and the hipster vernacular permeates the poem, outlasting the life of the dead man. "*Dig and be dug*" becomes a warning nevertheless: engage in exclusionary practices and the penalty may be death, social or otherwise ("Motto" 5–6). Digging can only beget more digging.

Hughes suggests that the very exclusionary practices of bebop that create sophisticated listening communities also subject those same audiences to the withering power of the majority. Perhaps all too appropriately, the riot that disrupted the Newport Festival was comprised largely of white hipsters, participants in the very bebop culture that their actions disrupted. The blues offers a space for productive conflict and engagement between individual and community. The oppositional stance offered by hipster and bebop aesthetics, however, can actually end in the disruption of both musical forms. Having heard of the council's plans to cancel the festival, Hughes improvised a lyric for Waters to sing, "Goodbye Newport Blues," a kind of elegy for the event (Audio Example 7). As Scott Saul argues, the improvised lyric for "Goodbye Newport Blues" focuses on the effects that the end of the festival would have on the musicians themselves: "Hughes asked himself, 'What's gonna happen to my music? What's gonna happen to my song?' then replied with tough-mindedness: 'It's a hard, hard world we live in, / And it's been hard so long.' In the last verse, he refused 'to drown in [his] own tears': 'I got to keep on singing / Though I got the Newport Blues'" (131). Saul reads the moment as a "blues-tinted mix of anguish and perseverance" (131), but the poem departs significantly from Hughes's other blues poetry as discussed in this chapter in that it offers no elaboration of social consciousness or re-articulation of personal narrative. The Newport Blues will end; this lament is a swan song that chronicles the passing of the occasion for its singing. After the festival closes, the Newport Blues will go unheard, the audience itself having brought about about the end to the blues song.

Until now, I have traced a common line through blues and bebop music, a tension between individual and community, between the expression of a performer and its reception by various audiences. In the blues, Hughes turns this friction to productive ends, offering the individual as an expressive mouthpiece for wider social trauma. In the end, the demise of Newport actually prevents singing. Friction with the white audience closes the festival; the conflict with listening communities disrupts the music itself. The turnaround for the final stanza of "Goodbye Newport Blues" disintegrates into a parody of typical blues lyrics, virtually nonsensical despite their earnest delivery: "Lord sad bad sad bad sad bad / Sad bad goodbye Newport goodbye woah goodbye goodbye" (Waters). The narrative ability of the blues disintegrates under the weight of the ending of the poem. The individual narrative requires a community of listeners, a performance space. Without one, all that remains for the blues is a cycle of inescapable pathos: "sad" and "bad" rhyme into one another repeatedly, giving way to a repetitive farewell to the festival. For bebop, all that remains is undirected social outrage, channeled back against the very music that generated it. As swan songs go, "Goodbye Newport Blues" does not sing; it turns the singer into a skipping record player, buckling under the absence of audience in the same way that the festival crumbled under the pressures of social tension. In the face of such a diminished blues, in the presence of such violent audiences, Hughes embraces the characteristic element of all the different musical forms upon which he draws: he improvises.

Audiotextuality and a Poetics of Performance

Blues, big band, bebop: these genres of poetry engage in distinct aesthetic practices, but their sociopolitical concerns are part of an ongoing effort to articulate the needs and contributions of marginalized black audiences and performers. The blues makes private narratives available for public consumption, but the counter-narrative of blues poetry only exists insofar as it is realized within a group of readers. Hughes's big band jazz poetry, which ostensibly recreates cheerful, lively performance venues, does so in the service of registering the troubling realities experienced by the black patrons and performers who frequented those spaces. Even as Hughes adopts the fragmentary aesthetic practices of bebop, he also places the form under pressure and suggests the limits of such a deliberately obscure form to control its own reception. Hughes articulates his poetry's relationship to social consciousness via these musical forms, but the move can only be recognized when his blues poetry and jazz poetry are placed against each other. Doing so reveals one underlying and consistent thread that joins together blues, big band, and bebop in Hughes's poetry: the live performance. More than most other types of music, these forms rely on the nuances and improvisations occasioned by the live event. Of course, the experiences of audiences listening to the music differ immensely from the experiences of readers of a poem. When Hughes reads live for an audience, the phenomenological experience could be roughly analogous. A poem read privately by an individual usually takes on altogether different dimensions, but Hughes draws the performance of the poem into its composition. Even as his poems record, archive, and

mediate, they also adopt a posture of spontaneous performance. Hughes's live poetry draws together composition and improvisation, record and live concert. Existing in an unstable relationship to any one side of these divides, Hughes's audiotextual poetry occurs in the overlaps among them. The resonant liveness of his poetry ultimately becomes the site of the contested auditory experiences that run throughout Hughes's musical work.

Hughes was a relentless consumer of live music. His research notes for *Black Magic*, a pictorial history of African-American music, draw upon this life of active engagement with a performing community to construct a vivid sense of the contemporary jazz and blues scenes in America. Hughes was a prolific live performer himself, often embarking on vast lecture tours that depended upon his own charismatic performances as a reader and speaker. As Meta DuEwa Jones describes, these tours were significant both for the income they provided him as well as the exposure they offered his work.[10] Before a performance of *Ask Your Mama*, Hughes wrote to Arna Bontemps that he had "turned down about 20 lectures for the rest of this season including Wayne, Syracuse U., Yale, NAACP, NYU, and am taking NONE at all for next season—which I vowed before, but this time I MEAN it. Just the art of writing from here on in" (qtd. in Jones 1157–8). Hughes frequently wrote about such a tension: reading and performing his works took away time that he could have spent writing. The live, audible work cuts against the written.

[10] See Jones, "Listening to What the Ear Demands."

Nevertheless, Hughes's own poetry is infused with the experiences of such live performances, and, much like a jazz improvisation, it exists in an unstable space between composition and performance. Nonsense lyrics like those in "Dream Boogie" are familiar to a history of modernism:

> *Hey, pop!*
>
> *Re-bop!*
>
> *Mop!*
>
> *Y-e-a-h* (18–21)

We could trace a lineage for the moment running back through Gertrude Stein or through the experimental aesthetics of Dadaism, but the moment also suggests the sort of wordplay associated with African-American music. In particular, the lines seem to recall an apocryphal narrative of the origins of scat singing. According to the tale, Louis Armstrong dropped his sheet of lyrics during the recording of "The Heebie Jeebies Dance" with the Hot Five. Not wanting to spoil the take, Armstrong continued improvising nonsense syllables in the moment. Brent Hayes Edwards recounts this narrative in "Louis Armstrong and the Syntax of Scat," ultimately concluding that "The syntax of scat points at something outside the sayable, something seen where it collapses" (649). For Edwards, this "something" is a signifier outside of the capacity of language. Words fail, and scatting allows the singer to gesture towards the unsayable. In the context of Hughes's poetry, scatting points towards the moment at which composition folds into and intersects with improvisation. Hughes performs his poems on the page. "Dream

Boogie" dramatizes its performed nature as the syllable "pop" morphs and transforms over the course of the poem. Rather than settling on a single instantiation, the speaker tries out different options, different improvisations. Just as bebop musicians use harmonic and melodic theory as skeletal frameworks for improvisation, so here does the sonic, rhymed dimension of "pop" provide the occasion for and marker of the poem's liveness.

The distinction between live recordings and staged improvisation proves useful for understanding the nature of Hughes's own poems as sound artifacts, which exist both in the composed world of print and in the live mode of improvisation. Hughes's collaboration with Muddy Waters captures a live event for preservation on record. As a studio recording, Hughes's work with Mingus would appear to be a more meticulously composed and staged performance, but it also relies heavily on improvisation, on the spontaneous utterances of the musicians. In jazz more generally, the line between composition and improvisation shimmers and blurs. Jazz musicians often think of their own performances as spontaneous works of art, no less crafted for their fleeting and non-premeditated existence. John Coltrane speaks in these terms of one of his own improvisations: "I did not play as I wanted last night. I know what I was trying to do, but it is not always easy to achieve…I want to get to a point where I can feel the vibrations of a particular place at a particular moment and compose a song right there, on the spot – then throw it away" (qtd. in Kahn 172). Coltrane views his performances not as gestures towards the perfect solo, but as expressions of a particular moment. Jazz performers often include alternate takes of particular tracks on the final cut of a record, a move that undercuts the authority of any one performance of a track. Jazz recordings are only ever

possibilities: any live performance of a recorded number would inevitably vary from the recorded version.

Coltrane thinks of improvisation as composition, but Hughes thinks of his compositions as improvisations. Tracy approaches such an understanding of Hughes's poetics, but he stops short by only considering improvisatory elements as they appear in Hughes's written work. Hughes himself considered his work subject to change:

> The music should not only be background to the poetry but should comment on it. I tell the musicians—and I've worked with several different modern and traditional groups—to improvise as much as they care to around what I read. Whatever they bring of themselves to the poetry is welcome to me. I merely suggest the mood of each piece as a general orientation. Then I listen to what they say in their playing, and that affects my own rhythms when I read. We listen to each other.
>
> (qtd. in Tracy, *Langston Hughes & the Blues* 178)

Hughes's own performances of his poetry further suggest that his poetry records poetic possibilities. In performance, he sometimes departs from the text of the poem, as with his 1958 recording of "The Weary Blues," when he reads "by the pale dull pallor of a wan bulb light" (Audio Example 8), rather than, as the text reads, "by the pale dull pallor of an old gas light" (5). Once recorded, the change effectively creates a new version of "The Weary Blues." On the same recording, Hughes makes a more substantial change, inserting a large passage to transition between "Motto" and "Dead in There" that binds the two poems together (Audio Example 6). While such substitutions could be considered

insignificant, the field of textual editing has argued convincingly and at great length for the significance of even the smallest change in the construction of a text. Such changes could have been worked out ahead of time for this particular performance, and we cannot be certain whether or not Hughes acts as an improvising musician in this moment. Nonetheless, they suggest that Hughes understood his texts as flexible documents subject to change for the particular occasion. These authorial additions combine with the collective improvisations of the musicians to generate new audiotextual artifacts, each of which would vary from performance to performance.

Even as Hughes embraced the spontaneity of musical performance in his work, the realities of the music industry required that he engage deeply in how such musical performances might be approximated in fixed, publishable forms. As early as the 1920s, Hughes published song lyrics in conjunction with other musicians who set his verse to music, and he would go on to publish hundreds of songs throughout his career. Hughes gained renown as a contributor to the musical world: he was a registered member of The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) from 1935 and the American Guild of Authors and Composers (AGAC) from 1959. During his time in ASCAP, he progressed through the various stages of membership and was eventually nominated to their Board of Directors in 1955 and to their Board of Appeals in 1956. Hughes corresponded and worked with a wide variety of publishers and record producers during his time, key of which were the Broude Brothers and Chappell & Co., Inc., though

he communicated with a vast number more.[11] Furthermore, he frequently communicated with musicians and composers concerning the use of his copyrighted material in their music. While he explored the afterlives of his poetry, he was scrupulous in maintaining his legal and economic right to the original expression of it.

At the same time that Hughes produced a vast amount of recorded material, he also actively shaped the means by which his own growing audible celebrity was recorded in the world. He engaged in a fierce amount of brand regulation. He relentlessly promoted himself throughout his career, sending signed promotional copies of his works to friends, acquaintances, and professional contacts. He did the same with his audible work. When corresponding with industry contacts, Hughes almost always dropped notes about upcoming performances of his work, live or on the radio. He consistently worked to ensure that his growing notoriety as a creator of music was documented. When he recorded *Weary Blues* with Leonard Feather and Charles Mingus, Hughes asked for a number of promotional copies of the record to be sent in advance of him on a lecture tour. Both institutionally and practically, Hughes acted as a recording industry unto himself.

Hughes's compositional practice draws upon live performance and its engagement with an audience, but his own biography suggests a deep and vested interest in the mediation of such art forms. Weheliye's estimation of sonic Afro-modernity is that it grows from a sense of black engagement with recording technologies:

> the obvious point remains that modern black cultural production is intimately tied to sound as it is embodied by a variety of technologies, such as literary texts,

[11] For a more complete list, see box 207 of the Beinecke Library's collection of the Langston Hughes Papers.

> films, records, tapes, and CDs. Not only did these technologies modify the ways in which cultural artifacts were produced, but, and perhaps more importantly, by virtue of radically altering how music was consumed, they enabled new modalities of existence for black subjects within and against Western modernity: sonic Afro-modernity. ("'I Am I Be': The Subject of Sonic Afro-Modernity" 103)

I lean on the first of Weheliye's listed technologies to suggest that Hughes's poetry acts as a sonic mediator for jazz and blues music. The musical poems each convert the live audible performance into text. Hughes acts as a kind of recording technician as he designs audiotextual works that, while graphic, are never fixed. Just as a sonic Afro-modernity offers a subject that is both more and less than its prescribed racial identity, an audiotextual poem shimmers. It cannot be bound to either the graphic or the audible works that it contains. Audiotextuality exists in the space between the two. In Hughes's case, it is the binding that joins his poetics of improvisation to the audible worlds of blues and jazz music.

Simultaneously written and spoken, fixed and fleeting, Hughes's poems invoke and call out for sounded performance even as they exist as recorded print artifacts. Lesley Wheeler discusses Hughes's graphic construction of sound as an attempt to reach across the gap between the two categories: "voice or sound can intersect with script in many ways, but the two media also remain essentially different. That is, a poem can exist as sound, but the voice of a printed poem is usually a metaphor, and metaphors obtain their very force through the distances they contain" (63). For Wheeler, the audiotextual poem constantly attempts to overcome the divide between visual and audible: it shuttles

between the two categories, or it joins them together. Ultimately, for her, the gap in media remains. *Ask Your Mama*, Hughes's last published work in his lifetime, explicitly demonstrates the exact difficulties that Wheeler recognizes of conveying a simultaneously audible and textual work in print. *Ask Your Mama* is comprised of twelve sections, each of which is structured as two parallel tracks: poetry on the left side of the page runs alongside a musical score on the right. Wheeler's gap becomes literalized in clear distinctions between the text's graphic components and its imagined musical accompaniment.

Wheeler and *Ask Your Mama* point to the fundamental paradox of audiotextual works: sound and text exist alongside each other, but they often do so in unstable and hierarchical relationships. The two worlds intersect, they may overlap, but the two media themselves seemingly remain distinct. Hughes does not overlook the gap. He embraces it. The construction of *Ask Your Mama* strains against the conventions of reading print, which ask the reader to process a particular line word by word, as it is virtually impossible to read the poem with both the poetry and the musical score in mind. One can only reread the piece, an action that depends on the memory of the reader to bridge the gap between the left and right margins, between print and sound. Performed aloud, the spoken poetry can be produced alongside the musical score as part of the same cohesive listening experience. On the page, Hughes's musical score is incomplete. As Tracy writes of the blues,

> there has been no system of musical notation devised that totally captures the blues as they are performed. Because of the "bent" notes, slurs, pitch coloration,

> and melismatic effects in the blues, for example, conventional musical notation is inadequate; the music cannot be trapped behind the bars of a staff. In addition, visual representation of the music and the sung performance is no substitute for the experience of hearing the performance. (*Langston Hughes & the Blues* 145)

The same holds true of jazz music, where simple lead sheets contain a short melody and chord progressions for a song. These blueprints provide schematics for a song, but they require interpretation, expansion, and elaboration in order to fill the space of a complete piece of music. Hughes's score similarly requires performance in order to be expressed fully.

In sounded performance, of course, the standard graphic dimensions of the text—lineation, punctuation marks, white space—would be lost. But the original publication of *Ask Your Mama* included far richer graphic elements than its subsequent reprintings. As Ulysses Lee recounts in a review of the text:

> The typography of the book provides yet a fourth dimension, for the poems are printed in blue and brown inks on a laid paper the color of faded roses while the binding and dust jacket use a jazzy abstract design in blues, greens, reds, and black. The contrast of desiccated pink and the crisp blue and brown ink comments on the method of the poems: the juxtaposition of the unlikely to produce a syncopated view of the paradoxes of our racial times. (qtd. in Kilgore)

Ask Your Mama fully embraces the graphic at the same time that it explores its own musicality. Hughes draws the gap between physical object and sounded imagination into focus and sharpens it. By drawing together rich graphic and audible worlds, *Ask Your*

Mama can exist in neither. Sounding the poem means losing its graphic nature. Reading the poem as text means losing its audible qualities.

Hughes, however, presents *Ask Your Mama* as a solution to the gap between audio and text. He dedicates the collection to Louis Armstrong, whose Hot Five recordings trade in the tradition of collective improvisation associated with Charles Mingus and New Orleans jazz. Multiple, interweaving polyphonic lines characterize songs by these performers: no individual melody would necessarily convey the overall character of a piece. Hughes offers the graphic and audible portions of *Ask Your Mama* in the same spirit: the two media exist simultaneously and atop one another, only fully expressed in the mind of the reader. Hughes's musical poetry interfaces between the one and the many, the solo voice and the collective expression.

We should be wary of too neatly mapping blues and jazz as musical forms onto Hughes's poetry due to the limits of these generic associations. A blues performance offers certain fundamental differences from a blues poem.[12] In addition, "Dream Boogie" and Hughes's other bebop poems do not possess the ostentatious defiance of a blistering Charlie Parker solo, which attenuates their connection to bebop's militant aesthetics. These cautionary notes should not deter exploration entirely, as reference to these associated musical forms usefully elaborates the problematic relationship between performer and audience in Hughes's poetry. Critics must place Hughes's performed poetics within a broad interdisciplinary framework, one that accounts for print as well as sound, blues as well as jazz. While rigorous one-to-one analyses of musical forms have

[12] For a similar argument, see Chinitz, "Literacy and Authenticity."

their place, we should resist the urge to cordon off study of Hughes's poetry by dealing only with one musical genre at a time. For Hughes, blues and jazz are not distinct areas of interest; they are part of a humming, interconnected, and performed network of musical influence. His poetry situates itself at the nexus of this system by recreating the sociopolitical tensions of live musical performance.

Woolf and the Broken Groove:
The Textual Record and Technologies of Sound Reproduction

Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* hinges on the performance of a pageant play. A number of actors stand at the center of the event, but equally important is the machine just offstage that provides its musical accompaniment: a gramophone. In chapter one, I described how the technology created new listening cultures at the turn of the century, new coteries whose rituals became circulated and cemented in record collecting journals. The gramophone in many ways replaced the kinds of live musical accompaniments that would have been common during the Victorian period, but the machine in *Between the Acts* serves as the backdrop for the still-embodied performances of the event's central actors. The novel creates a hybrid listening coterie that stands at the crossroads of Victorian and modernist patterns of listening, one that blends human and mechanical performances with audience reception. As machines take on a larger role in the production of sound, the unnatural begins to sound human: "They had left the greenhouse door open, and now music came through it. A.B.C., A.B.C., A.B.C.—someone was practising scales. C.A.T. C.A.T. C.A.T… . Then the separate letters made one word 'Cat.' Other words followed. It was a simple tune, like a nursery rhyme—" (*Between the Acts* 114). The "someone" is, in fact, something. The gramophone's technology was in its infancy during the period, but it could already fool listeners into thinking that they heard the sound of live performers. Such moments of confusion suggest the risks of gramophonic sound, which can weaken and replace the human voice, but they also point

to the radical aesthetic possibilities offered by such technologies. Letters form words, both on the page and in the sound of the record: each medium must materially inscribe meaning from component pieces, parts which may be broken down and repurposed for aesthetic ends.

Woolf's work consistently draws praise for its musicality, for its ability to listen to the sounds and noises of the world. From the toll of Big Ben in *Mrs. Dalloway* to the tick of the gramophone in *Between the Acts*, Woolf's texts reproduce sounds as sound collages, or as what Angela Frattarola has called sound samplings years before the compositional method would become popular. In particular, scholars have noted how sound offers a unifying phenomenological experience for Woolf's characters: much in the same way that a musician offers an audience a shared concert-going experience, people achieve a kind of solidarity by listening to the music of a gramophone or to the buzz of an airplane. This chapter joins such discussions with a consideration of the materiality of sound's inscription, both on record and on paper. Woolf's prose confronts a fundamental difficulty facing audiotextual texts: as print objects, working with ink on paper, a text must represent sound graphically. Sound transcends our means to inscribe it adequately, but such materials can nonetheless be dismantled and rebuilt to new ends. The technology of sound reproduction was young during this time, and gramophones frequently broke under the pressure of such mediation. Woolf seizes upon such design failures and explores how botched sounds can be engineered, exploited, and aestheticized in a text.

This chapter examines Woolf's audiotextual inscriptions, from the malfunctioning of the gramophone to her irregular use of the quotation mark, as the sites of radical soundings and new ways of listening. By breaking apart and redesigning traditional modes of sound inscription, her texts begin to collapse the boundary between sound and print to produce a text that, by its very audiotextuality, questions implicit assumptions of sound recording. I link the materiality of gramophone recording to a digital study of Woolf's punctuation marks to trace a growing interest in Woolf's career in diversifying the voices and types of speech made available by traditional modes of sound inscription. To quote someone is to put a frame around them and enclose them in a narrative. To record a voice is to place it in a hierarchy of voices in which some are more worthy of preservation than others. For Woolf, the inscription of sound always implies its failure to authentically reproduce the diverse plurality of live voices. Terence Hewet, in *The Voyage Out*, suggests that both novels and music aim to "find out what's behind things" (253). In a similar mode, Woolf's written word embraces its own silences and noises as constitutive elements of an audiotextual universe. Recognizing and exploiting the limitations of the printed word yield an ability to hear the unheard and to stretch the capabilities of both print and sound. At the end of the century, Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* catches Woolf's echo to suggest that radical listenings can offer new networks and connections across time, space, and fiction itself. In her experiments with sound inscription and reproduction, Woolf aims to listen to silenced and unrecorded voices, those sounds that fall in the grooves of the record. The first step in making these voices audible is to make the record skip and to hear in a new way.

Septimus and the Sound of Disturbance

Woolf is alive to the tensions between the sounded quality of her work and its seemingly silent inscription early in her career. In *The Voyage Out*, Rachel describes a dichotomy between music and writing: "'Why do you write novels? You ought to write music. […] music goes straight for things. It says all there is to say at once. With writing it seems to me there's so much […] scratching on the match-box'" (239). Rachel's complaint about novels touches upon Walter Pater's famous high praise of music as the "perfect identification of matter and form" that should be emulated by the other arts ("School of Giorgione"). In the same vein, Rachel suggests that the distinction between a novel's form and its content proves to be an obstacle in effectively conveying its message: better to have music, whose only message is itself. Woolf rebuts Rachel's criticism in the form of the novelist Terence Hewet, who argues for a new form of novel, the very sort that Woolf is writing and that Kate Flint and Melba Cuddy-Keane have argued demonstrates a new aural awareness of prose's possibilities. Hewet suggests that music too suffers from a problem of mediation. He criticizes music's relation to notation: "'My musical gift was ruined, […] by the village organist at home, who had invented a system of notation which he tried to teach me, with the result that I never got to the tune-playing at all'" (*The Voyage Out* 253). While music's form might align perfectly with its content, it often comes to us by way of ink on the page, and the inscription of sound proves to be a difficult barrier to realizing audible content. Notation ruins Hewet's appreciation of music because it gets in the way: his teacher demands that he understand

sound in terms that feel alien to him. The audible can connect, but sound inscription can separate and suppress because it relies on conventions, frameworks, and values that are not necessarily shared by everyone.

Hewet only loses a passion for music, but when the human voice is the sound being captured, inscribed, and reproduced, recording becomes a dangerous event. Human voices are the most frequently represented sound artifacts in all of literature, and treating them as instances of audiotextually recorded sound can offer new insight into modernist engagement with sound recording. Critics have long discussed *Mrs. Dalloway*'s Septimus Smith as a figure for Woolf's own relationship to normative modes of mental health, but the sounded character of this struggle has yet to be heard. Septimus's mental illness is consistently figured in audible terms, and his disastrous treatment program attempts to correct what others hear as his non-normative sounding body. Woolf shapes the inscription and disruption of sound as a tool of power, as a function of and contributor to psychosis. While Septimus's doctors attempt to enforce their own conception of what his body should sound like, *Mrs. Dalloway* as a text gives ear to those non-normative voices that might otherwise be relegated to noise. The novel attempts to hear Septimus's condition on its own terms and to register the dangers of attempting to graft such non-normative sounds onto more traditional ways of understanding sound.

A strong critical tradition in Woolfian studies conceives of sound as offering utopian possibilities for connecting and reconnecting with one's self and others. In this understanding, London was becoming newly interested in the world of noise in a way never before seen: "Since the first marketed phonographs were not advanced enough to

play music, they were advertised as devices that could record and replay an assortment of sounds, heralding a new fascination with noise" (Frattarola, "Listening" 134). Critics often read Woolf's soundscapes in such positive terms, fixating on her enthusiasm for street noise and for sounds associated with the party as the means of phenomenological connection between the listeners in her stories. In this vein, Flint argues that "city noise, for Woolf, implies continuity: even the interruptive sounds that so annoyed her contemporaries and forebears can be assimilated, like fragments of urban archaeology, into a broader continuum, whether diachronic or synchronic" (187). For these critics, Woolf's celebration of noise is integral to the interwoven consciousnesses of her characters; her conceptions of sensation and being both draw on a new way of experiencing the world, one based in the auditory. Each person has his own separate consciousness, but the phenomenological experience of the world, the way we hear sound vibrations, is similar from person to person.

Persuasive though these arguments may be, they do not tell the entire story of sound at the beginning of the twentieth century, a time when urban dwellers the world over expressed more anxiety over the harmful effects of such noises than ever before. As Anne Lovering Rounds has noted, London in *Mrs. Dalloway* "is a constant mixture of mechanized, industrial, modern sounds and musics: the hum and roar of traffic, a car's horn, the moaning of an airplane overhead; the shot of a pistol; barrel organs, bands, music from a gramophone" (4). These textual phenomena had real-life counterparts that were significant concerns for Londoners at the time. *The London Times* featured several articles on noise during the nineteen-twenties, and many of them evince a growing

concern for its hazardous effects: “The difference between what may be called ‘modern noise’ and the noise of earlier days is largely a difference of vibration. […] The human body has its own vibratory rhythm. It is subjected to many other, different, rhythms all day long, in every street of every city” (“Modern”). People seemed to be aware of the new sounds emerging around them and feared that they might clash dissonantly with the rhythms of their bodies. Noise met widespread disapproval, as in another *London Times* article: “the hatred of noise, like the hatred of dirt, is healthy and natural” (“The Curse of Noise”). With the notable exception of the Futurists, who glorified the noisy clamor of the city, the general opinion on unwanted sound seems clear: noise, like other filth, was a threat to health that had no place in civilized society.

Public opinion moved at a quicker pace than the gears of government; the primary boom in noise legislation did not come until the nineteen-thirties, when numerous bylaws were passed to deal with local issues in London’s various boroughs. While slightly anachronistic to the composition of *Mrs. Dalloway*, which Woolf began writing in November 1922, these pieces of legislation likely indicate the trajectory of public opinion on unwanted sounds at this time. These isolated parliamentary acts virtually all refer back to the *Public Health Act, 1875* and its section on nuisances in order to legislate against the noise created by street criers, internal combustion engines, and church bells, among many others. The next major piece of noise legislation appeared, again, as part of a concern for public welfare—the *Public Health Act, 1936*. From a legal standpoint, as well, then, sound and noise appear to have been conceived in terms of their effects on the body, as an excerpt from the *Middlesex County Council Act, 1930* indicates:

> (2) For the purposes of this section a noise nuisance shall be deemed to exist where any person makes or continues or causes to be made or continued any excessive or unreasonable or unnecessary noise and where such noise –
>
> (a) is injurious or dangerous to health; and
>
> (b) is capable of being prevented or mitigated having due regard to all the circumstances of the case:
>
> Provided that if the noise is occasioned in the course of any trade business or occupation it shall be a good defence that the best practicable means of preventing or mitigating it having regard to the cost have been adopted. (*Middlesex* s.56)

These forms of noise prevention were qualitative rather than quantitative: their designations do not rely on mathematical measurements or scientific readings.[1] The status of a sound as a nuisance is, instead, subjective and debatable relative to its context and the person afflicted by it. Without numerical levels for determining the level of threat, designating a particular sound as hazardous noise becomes largely based on class, politics, and power.

Such historical context provides a very different picture of Woolfian sound. While listening can offer connection, it can also be divisive and dangerous as bodies become subject to ever-developing and subjective standards for sound production. *Mrs. Dalloway* describes Septimus's health in sounded terms along the lines of this second narrative of twentieth-century noise that hears unwanted sounds as threatening. For Bradshaw, silence

[1] I rely here on the distinction as described by Schafer in *The Soundscape*.

is the sign of a healthy body making no undesirable sounds. Silence, for him, is part of an aggressive treatment agenda:

> Health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says he is Christ (a common delusion), and has a message, […] you invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest; until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 99)

Like Woolf's contemporaries, Bradshaw advocates silence as a means of restoring health, but he takes this vogue in tranquility to an extreme. For him, noise is not alone in threatening health: all communications pose a danger. His prescription of silence as medicine is indicted as part of the same system of mistreatment that ultimately leads to Septimus's death. His silence goes hand in hand with Bradshaw's killing sense of proportion: "He swooped; he devoured. He shut people up" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 102). This silence is invasive and exhaustive: it devastates the person even as it ostensibly cures him. Bradshaw's silence does not aim to provide a space for peaceful recovery; it aims to coerce the patient into recovery by clamping down on all communication and silencing the sounds of pain.

Septimus's relations to his own voice and communication are at the crux of his mental health, and his own sounded body stands in contrast to the normative conception of what a voice should be. He struggles throughout the novel with his own relationship to sound. Interpreting Septimus's withdrawn nature as a symptom of his nation rather than

disturbance, Rezia notes that the "the English are so silent" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 88). In actuality, Septimus tries very hard to break this silence. He consistently describes grand ideas and profound sayings internally, some of which are the most moving passages in the novel, but he has difficulty conveying them to other people: "'Communication is health; communication is happiness, communication—' he muttered" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 93). This mumble is telling, and Rezia misinterprets his treatise on healthy communication as a frightening admission of his mental illness: "he was talking to himself" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 93). Septimus consistently struggles with this basic problem of interacting with others: "But if he confessed? If he communicated? Would they let him off then, his torturers? 'I—I—' he stammered" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 98). He cannot convey his message. Septimus's failed attempts to communicate are misinterpreted as meaningless gibberish, as non-directional language with no intended recipient. The sound of these mumbled phrases is interpreted as a sonic sign of illness. These failed attempts to speak leave Septimus as nothing more than just another source of unwanted sound.

Holmes and Bradshaw view Septimus in just these terms, as a problem that must be corrected: a noise problem. In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali suggests that the suppression of noise and the resolution of dissonance, at their most fundamental, rehearse very basic elements of civilization: they are a ritualized suppression of chaos and violence. Attali draws on ancient associations between music and sacrifice, describing the encounter in audible terms: a sacrificial death allowed a society to channel generalized violence into a single acceptable killing, and music accompanied the ordeal. He sees the resolution of dissonance in harmonic progressions as

a similar suppression of disorder. We can understand Bradshaw's encroaching silence in this mode as well. While not audible in the same way as Attali's ritual sacrifice, silence is the tool with which Bradshaw attempts to bring Septimus into harmony with society. He presupposes a normative audible experience to which Septimus must be converted. Silence is in service to Bradshaw's sense of "Conversion," who "smites out of her way roughly the dissentient, or dissatisfied; bestows her blessing on those who, looking upward, catch submissively from her eyes the light of their own" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 100). In doing so, Bradshaw practices a form of noise enforcement on Septimus. He exercises control over Septimus's body and the kinds of sounds that it is allowed to create.

Septimus's own struggle to be heard manifests at the level of narrative as a very real silence around his condition in the text. Holmes fails to recognize the legitimacy of the ultimately fatal mental condition, and the narrative withholds the term "shell-shock" until very near the end of the novel, during Clarissa's party and after Septimus has already committed suicide (*Mrs. Dalloway* 183). Shell-shock was garnering strong headlines in the nineteen-twenties, however, as Sue Thomas describes Woolf's "angry response to the *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell-shock,'* presented to the British Parliament in August 1922, and to the publicity given the *Report* in *The Times* in August and September, 1922" (49). The condition was in the public eye: it was a current events issue, and it is not difficult to assume that contemporaries would have been able to identify it. The text refuses to give a name to the illness, however, denying the reader the vocabulary with which to discuss it for much of the narrative. Holmes and Bradshaw misdiagnose and mistreat Septimus, in part, because of the silence

and misunderstanding surrounding his illness. The narrative forces the reader into a similar position. The novel is clearly sympathetic towards Septimus, but, with an inherently limited discourse in the text by which the reader can understand his symptoms, there always remains something unknown about him. The reader is drawn towards Clarissa; the novel is not, after all, called *Mr. Smith*. It is a position that we are meant to read against, but one with which Woolf ultimately underscores the danger faced by an entire generation. Jean Thomson argues that Septimus stands "both as a generality of Smiths and as a suffering individual man" and that "the generals and politicians had taken the Smiths of London to fight and kill but wanted to ignore the possible effect of such violations of normal behavior on those who returned to civilian life" (55, 66–7). The narrative's treatment of Septimus illustrates the possibility for unusual narratives of trauma to fall through the cracks in the discourse of a society inadequately prepared to accommodate them. Instead, they become silenced, and that silence can be fatal.

Septimus's story is a contest over how the body should sound when it is in pain, over how the noises of the psyche should be registered and recorded. In his final moments, he glimpses several different possibilities for suicide before settling on a leap from the window: "It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw like that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill)" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 149). Septimus's body becomes subject to the kinds of narratives that others have attempted to apply to him. He glimpses several alternative endings, but he finally settles on "their idea of tragedy," a kind in keeping with the conception of psychic distress that Holmes and Bradshaw have applied to him. Septimus, as writer and as sounded body, must be

reinscribed, re-etched along terms of normative soundedness, and it is the area railings that do so. In response to the weak, overwhelmed sound of Septimus's own stifled voice, Woolf offers a more typical sound of physical and mental distress:

> One of the triumphs of civilisation, Peter Walsh thought. It is one of the triumphs of civilisation, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded. Swiftly, cleanly the ambulance sped to the hospital, having picked up instantly, humanely, some poor devil; some one hit on the head, struck down by disease, knocked over perhaps a minute or so ago at one of these crossings, as might happen to oneself. That was civilisation.
>
> (*Mrs. Dalloway* 151)

Septimus's sounds are highly inefficient. He is unable to communicate his feelings or messages effectively with the world. In contrast, the ambulance rushes quickly to a treatment location, suggesting the cold and clinical nature of institutional medicine. Civilization dehumanizes trauma, and it does so by reducing the sound of distress to simple terms. Pain and distress yield the siren of an ambulance; health and ease require silence. These terms belong to the world of Holmes and Bradshaw, but Septimus suggests the presence of a whole range of psychic traumas that go unsounded. The question for Woolf is how such silent pains can be heard and registered.

Woolf attempts to register Septimus's voice and pain as the sounds of psychic disturbance, even if they cannot be heard in traditional modes. Septimus himself searches throughout the novel for a mode of inscribing his own narrative, textual or sonic, even as

the people around him silence his pain. Septimus does manage to transmit to Rezia small gestures of communication:

> Diagrams, designs, little men and women brandishing sticks for arms, with wings—were they?—on their backs; circles traced round shillings and sixpences—the suns and stars; zigzagging precipices with mountaineers ascending roped together, exactly like knives and forks; sea pieces with little faces laughing out of what might perhaps be waves: the map of the world. Burn them! he cried. Now for his writings; how the dead sing behind rhododendron bushes; odes to Time; conversations with Shakespeare; Evans, Evans, Evans—his messages from the dead; do not cut down trees; tell the Prime Minister. Universal love: the meaning of the world. (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 147–8)

Septimus speaks, however quietly, and he also expresses himself through writing. Septimus produces disparate forms of art; he is author as well as artist. In each case, he works in the chosen form of modernism: the mode of the fragment, the piece that is whole unto itself. His drawings reproduce a history of literary expression; they suggest the battle of the angels described in Book VI of *Paradise Lost*, while his mapping of the world with laughing faces in the water could just as easily draw upon Homer's epics. Milton and Homer, both blind, offer a long literary history in which disabled artists form a cornerstone of the canon as we know it. The passage suggests that Septimus, too, for all of his pain and non-normative sounds, could contribute to the heft of literary history. As in the passage itself, fragments can be strung into bricolage, and unheard sounds can still be registered in some way. Woolf suggests that even those sounds and works that might

otherwise be characterized as abnormal can produce powerful art. Septimus's pain is overlooked until it is too late in the context of the narrative, but Woolf attempts to register the silences and noises of his distress throughout her novel. By allowing him to sound in his own way, she explores new ways of recording the inaudible. Silence meets sound, as Woolf pushes against typical modes of sound inscription and reproduction.

Septimus faces oppressive silence at the hands of Holmes and Bradshaw, who hear him as a noise problem to be corrected. Sound and silence are the terms in which his diagnosis and treatment are conducted, and, in the moments just before his death, Septimus also adopts something of this understanding of himself. A gramophone offers Septimus a vision of how to return to some semblance of healthy living:

> He began, very cautiously, to open his eyes, to see whether a gramophone was really there. But real things—real things were too exciting. He must be cautious. He would not go mad. First he looked at the fashion papers on the lower shelf, then, gradually at the gramophone with the green trumpet. Nothing could be more exact. And so, gathering courage, he looked at the sideboard; the plate of bananas; the engraving of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort; at the mantelpiece, with the jar of roses. None of these things moved. All were still; all were real. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 142)

At this late stage, it is no surprise that Septimus finds himself faced with a gramophone. The text describes Septimus as a malfunctioning gramophonic voice: "But if he confessed? If he communicated? Would they let him off then, his torturers? 'I—I—' he stammered" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 98). Septimus's stammer suggests an infamous

technological malfunction characteristic of gramophonic sound: a needle skip. Gramophone records record their data on grooves along the disc, and sound reproduction occurs as the needle traces these grooves to recreate the shape of the recorded sound waves. When a needle slips out of the groove during playback, it can skip backwards and miss information. Often this process produces a locked groove, when a needle jumps backwards and replays the same data again and again. *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests that such non-normative sounds are seen as dangerous in a world that values health, silence, and efficiency above all else. A hand will always attempt to set the gramophone spinning correctly once more, by force if necessary. For Holmes and Bradshaw, Septimus's psychological record becomes locked. For him, and in *Mrs. Dalloway* more generally, the past continues to replay over and echo throughout the present, like a locked groove that cannot move forward. Holmes and Bradshaw aim to force Septimus out of the groove into which he has fallen to make him sound properly. In the process, Septimus falls between the grooves of the historical record. The gramophone he sees in his final moments may be real and still, but it also lacks the shimmering humanity that colors much of his narrative. The peace is tentative, and the pained impressionist portrait of distress that we get in other moments of the text is, instead, traded for a still life: a tableau of fruit, engravings, and flowers.

Septimus sees the gramophone as suggestive of potential soundedness, both of the machine and of his own voice. John Picker and Sebastian Knowles each have argued persuasively for the way in which the technology stands in for the vexed nature of the human voice around the turn of the twentieth century and how "words, and voices, no

longer possess the kind of authenticity, masterful finality, and authority" that they did before the advent of recording technology (Picker 141). Septimus's final glimpse of the gramophone, then, suggests both the potential sounding of a voice as well as the ultimate frailty of voices in the new technological ecosystem. Some voices tend towards silence even when they sound, and Woolf's text by its very nature explores new modes of recording these enfeebled bodies. Septimus's gramophone is a possibility, for life and for the voice, but it is one that goes unheard in the context of the narrative. As Woolf's career progresses, she will continue to explore new modes for recording sounds through the novel itself. The gramophone, too, returns as an object whose limitations can actually be harnessed and used in the service of exploring just those voices that it fails to recognize. Machines can break; records can skip. The risk of the materials, in the right hands, can be turned to positive aesthetic and political ends.

Breaking Records

Sound is most often a communal activity for Woolf: her characters rarely listen to sounds in isolation. Instead, a single sound travels among various ears at once, often linking them through the shared experience. Angela Frattarola suggests that Woolf's sense of listening depends upon such collective impressions, distinguishing between hostile, perspectival sight and empathic, binding hearing: "for Woolf, the eye has a tendency to dissect the world, alienating the observer, while the ear can harmonize and unite. Whereas people may see themselves as fragmented, sound can make them feel

whole, as vibrations pass through the entire body" ("Developing an Ear" 140). Sound contributes to a healthy body, and it also gathers a diverse body of people into a coherent unit. Such a reading risks verging on utopian, however, when objects rarely all sound equally. The ear does not listen indiscriminately, and communities necessarily define themselves in opposition to outsiders. Just as gaps in the print record expose racial, sexual, and economic marginalization, Woolf fixates on sound recording, both on gramophone record and within the text, as another means by which power can consolidate itself. *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests to us that some individuals always fall between the grooves of the record. In response, Woolf pushes sound technologies beyond their limits, offering her own kind of corrective sound recording founded on silence, noise, and malfunction. *Between the Acts* offers the most extensive meditation on the possibilities offered by gramophonic experiment. Miss La Trobe's pageant play gathers an audience to itself, and it constitutes this collective through the technologies that facilitate and accompany it. By tampering with the material conditions of the gramophone, Woolf disrupts standard audible narratives and, instead, provides an alternative space for communities to form. Septimus's gramophone, the site of unsounded potentiality, finds new life in the hands of Miss La Trobe, who manipulates the technology to radical aesthetic and political ends.

The pageant play in *Between the Acts* draws its listeners into a close community, but the gramophone crystallizes and binds the pageant play's audience together. The technology provides the musical accompaniment for the performance, and it also affects the group of people on a more primal level: "The gramophone was affirming in tones

there was no denying, triumphant yet valedictory: *Dispersed are we; who have come together. But,* the gramophone asserted, *let us retain whatever made that harmony*" (Woolf 196). The machine gathers the group together, and it also mandates the kinds of connection that will remain after they disperse. Woolf conceives of the communal interactions in sounded terms, as a harmony. The gramophone offers a harmonic vision of community, one where individuals exist in relation to but are not subsumed by the whole, just as a collection of musical tones retains their own sonic identities when contributing to the sound of a chord. The individual audience members vibrate together, and the text suggests that the technology that sets them buzzing can be preserved after they depart. This particular gramophone, after all, is portable. The echo of the community will remain, and the gramophone can be packed up and used to recreate the listening collective in the future.

The gramophone in *Between the Acts* creates a mobile community, and the gathering audience negotiates this new identity in relation to older, national modes of constituting a sound collective. Here, as elsewhere in Woolf's oeuvre, the gramophone plays "God Save the King," joining together the audience as a microcosm of the English nation: "*Happy and glorious / Long to reign over us / God save the King*" (195). The sonic event hyper-nationalizes the audience as English subjects, reinforcing the divine right of the monarch as lord of his subjects. Woolf's invocation catches the British Empire in the midst of fading prestige and power: the "us" of the verse shrank and referred to an increasingly small group of people during this time. The interwar period saw repeated blows to the union as the 1926 Balfour Declaration that established the

Commonwealth of Nations also freed formerly subject parliaments from direct British legislative control. "God Save the King" itself has a notoriously complicated history with numerous alternative versions, offering a diffracted view of a British Empire that no longer has a unified presence in the world. Subsequent verses often continue on to describe the spread of the British Empire across the world. Woolf subverts the imperial quality of the song by referencing only the most typically sung first verse, removing mention of empire entirely. The imperial presence of the British Empire was rapidly being characterized by its notable absence and by the damaging effects of its former dealings. The text reproduces this gap.

By 1939, the imperial apparatus had begun a long and slow decline, creaking under the weight of historical change. In *Between the Acts*, the decline in imperial power manifests in the material sounds of the gramophone and its malfunction: "Then there was a scuffle behind the bush; a preliminary premonitory scratching. A needle scraped a disc; chuff, chuff chuff; then having found the rut, there was a roll and a flutter which portended God … (they all rose to their feet) Save the King" (*Between the Acts* 195). A monarch's audience usually rises to convey loyalty, but here the parenthetically marked action actually severs the King's right to rule, as it disrupts Woolf's invocation of "God Save the King." Instead of divine right bestowed upon the king, the interruption actually makes it appear as though the sound itself "portended God." Woolf's sound devices are always one step removed from failure; just as the words produced by the machine falter and stop, the British Empire is prone to fragmentation. Bonnie Kime Scott argues that the specific machine referenced by Woolf is a relic of a bygone era: "The Gramophone of

Between the Acts is heard, but not seen, and so it is difficult to identify. I suspect from its background chuffing, buzzing, and ticking sounds, and its remote location in bushes off the lawn, that this gramophone is portable and operated with a crank—a bit of an antique in 1939" (105). The novel's particular machine fails because of natural degradation: the world of sound recording has advanced but left this particular model behind. Similarly, the formerly robust machine of the British Empire has decayed to the point that it is nothing more than a faulty machine, long due to be replaced. The old imperial song becomes nothing more than the hollow repetition of a phrase and a jingoistic collectivity that can no longer hold together, the damaging echoes of which will carry on throughout the coming century.

The gramophone in *Between the Acts* is hidden in the bushes: its mechanical sounds masquerade as a part of the natural world of the performance. In this way, Woolf plays upon conversations that have long defined sound technology, discussions that aimed to define the relationship between the reproduced sound and the natural world. One model for sound fidelity focuses on how the machine captures everything, more than might be readily apparent to the human ear. This model aims for totality: authentic reproduction by capturing all the sounds in a given event. Another model strives for just the opposite, suggesting that sound fidelity aims to eliminate the noise from an intended signal. Rather than attempting to collect all the unintended resonances in a concert-hall symphonic performance, for example, this model would reduce and distill a performance to as pure a representation of the music itself as possible. Augmented by studio engineering, these practices actually result in recordings that appear hyper-realistic,

cleaner than live listening experiences because they eliminate background noise and resonance. Both models aim at a "true" impression of the recorded event: one by way of indiscriminate collecting and the other by way of separation and distinction.

Woolf's gramophone subverts both arguments for sound fidelity by emphasizing the breakdown of the instrument. During the early twentieth century, users marveled at the ability of the machine to create the illusion of sounds that were not there, but the technology was still developing and, accordingly, quite unreliable. Woolf was keenly aware of the limitations of sound devices for conveying human voices, as she describes the gramophone as a machine that often fails in its task of reproducing sound: "Chuff, chuff, chuff sounded from the bushes. It was the noise a machine makes when something has gone wrong" (*Between the Acts* 76). Throughout her corpus, Woolf's gramophones consistently break, and the machine here is no different. The moment forces the listeners to remain aware of the technology itself: "The gramophone gurgled *Unity-Dispersity*. It gurgled *Un…dis*…And ceased" (*Between the Acts* 201). The mechanically reproduced words break apart into component syllables; semantic meaning evaporates as the grain of language pushes to the surface, and the heard word gives way to the gurgling materiality of the record itself. The human voice becomes overwhelmed by the very mechanisms that give it sound.

In its malfunction, the materiality of sound technology always crashes through. In its similar breakdown, "God Save the King" exposes the artifice of the imperial engine, which can only ever pretend towards naturalness. Once exposed as designed, such a colonial narrative can be subverted. Michele Pridmore-Brown comes to a similar

conclusion when she argues that Woolf's emphasis on the materiality of gramophone malfunction challenges the kinds of groupthink impulses associated with fascism. Chuffs and ticks interrupt the message of king and country:

> The noisiest noise, however, proves to be the silences between the ticks of the clock, the acts of the play, and the rhymes of the gramophone, when, as Woolf put it in an earlier essay, no Beethoven, no director, no God is dictating the stream of consciousness—in short, when the gramophone is unmanned. In these moments, the audience must make meaning out of randomness, an act that in informational terms constitutes self-organization. In these unauthored moments, the rift between the symbolic and the real is most salient. (416)

Gramophones may harmonize, and, as Pridmore-Brown suggests, they may magnetize. For her, the sounds of noise and silence demand that listeners make sense of a chaotic world, forcing them to become active participants in a world where fascists would lead them blindly. But organizing the world in this way smacks of Conversion and Proportion, the watchwords of Sir William Bradshaw in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Such a reading risks orienting those noises and silences in relation to a normative audible experience: listeners must order silence and noise to make them legible. In contrast, Woolf's career can be read as a search for forms of sound recording outside usual frameworks that favor stability and hierarchy. By embracing the malfunctioning machine, she produces technologies of generative chaos.

The malfunctioning sound of the gramophone accomplishes more than the disruption of a traditionally imperialist moment. Woolf creates a more expansive

narrative by developing a new form of sound recording that listens to noise and silence on their own terms, by pushing the limits of what sound recording can be. *Between the Acts* offers sound as a concrete object that can be tampered with and distorted, as something that only appears to be immaterial. Woolf suggests that silence and noise, typically understood as extraneous or distracting, can be generative opportunities for a new kind of alternative experience. In particular, the machine's malfunction creates a space in which the listeners bind together: "Tick, tick, tick, the machine continued. Time was passing. The audience was wandering, dispersing. Only the tick, tick of the gramophone held them together" (*Between the Acts* 154). The ticking of the gramophone most closely approximates the sound of a metronome, a machine whose function is to tick away a particular number of beats per minute, often to facilitate a practice session. By reducing the process of vocal reproduction to its simplest rhythmic, sonic components, Woolf draws sound down to its most basic element: time. Daniel Albright in *Untwisting the Serpent* describes music in these terms by way of Lessing as one of "the temporally progressive arts of *nacheinander*" (9). For Albright and Lessing, the aesthetic experience of music cannot be separated from its forward progression in time. The Futurists had challenged the claim that painting was a static form lacking in movement by the time of Woolf's writing, and she similarly disrupts the idea that an aesthetic experience of music must depend on time. The tick and chuff of the gramophone subvert the natural temporal progression of music by recalling Septimus's locked groove. Where Septimus's stammer suggests the failure of a gramophone to convey its encoded information, however, the pageant play's locked groove actually suggests aesthetic

possibility. As the same sonic fragment repeats multiple times, it stretches and ultimately suspends the forward motion of time. The art form that must move forward finds itself repeatedly drawn backwards, undone by the very materials meant to effect its transmission. Time passes, but it does so repeatedly, as many times as the gramophone jumps backwards to repeat itself. In that space, a community can be formed and dominant political narratives subverted.

The stylus of a gramophone must travel in the spaces of the groove on the record, tracing them to produce the vibrations that translate into sound reproduction. Woolf's novel also takes as its subject the spaces between: the action that occurs in and around a festival play set during the interwar period. The locked groove offers a sonic model for the expansion and development of such transitory moments; the material character of sound's reproduction—and of its failures to reproduce properly—can offer a new mode for engaging with and disrupting dominant aural narratives. Melba Cuddy-Keane suggests that *Between the Acts* gives voice to those segments of the population that the "dominant narratives have left out": "As if a microphone had been set up in a village on a day in June in 1939, *Between the Acts* records a multiplicity of disparate, varying, and often contradictory voices, diffused through time and space yet sounding together" (90, 92). But Woolf's alternative to dominant sounded narratives is not a proliferation of more well-articulated voices. After all, sound recording may marginalize by deeming certain voices worthy of recording, certain sounds requiring suppression. Woolf suggests that simply breaking such records is not enough, nor is simply listening to other voices. She

calls for a new form of recording that takes as its subject noises and silences, the signs of voices that cannot cohere.

Woolf's new, expansive type of recording depends as much on active participation in the production of sound as it does on the archiving of already extant audible events. Septimus's sounds are subject to the oppressive and normalizing forces around him. He glimpses the possibilities offered by sound technology, but Woolf is ultimately the one who strings his artistic fragments into something resembling modernist bricolage. His voice is weak and in the hands of someone else. The radical experimentation in gramophonic reproduction of *Between the Acts*, by contrast, actually happens at the hands of one of the novel's characters. Miss La Trobe gathers to herself a series of sound recordings that she uses to shape the aesthetic performance of the novel. Through her deliberate manipulation of text and record, she emerges as the dominant artistic figure of the novel.

Like Septimus, Miss La Trobe is a figure on the margins. In one sense, she too is subject to the people around her, who know very little about her and attempt to construct a sense of her character through rumor. According to them, Miss La Trobe's name suggests that "she wasn't presumably pure English" (*Between the Acts* 57). Her appearance and demeanor further cast her outside heteronormative assumptions about gender and sexuality: "Outwardly she was swarthy, sturdy and thick set; strode about the fields in a smock frock; sometimes with a cigarette in her mouth; often with a whip in her hand; and used rather strong language—perhaps, then, she wasn't altogether a lady? At any rate, she had a passion for getting things up" (*Between the Acts* 58). The characters

hedge such rumors as provisional observations, placing them in the same realm as Schrödinger's cat: Miss La Trobe both is and is not pure English; she both is and is not altogether a lady. With such fictions swirling around her, Miss La Trobe's character takes on artistic possibilities, and she is most fully at home in such creative spaces. Onstage, Woolf writes, "She had the look of a commander pacing his deck" (*Between the Acts* 62). The masculine pronoun further underscores her gender ambiguity at the very moment in which she asserts her dominance over the stage world. Despite her position outside the normative social world, Miss La Trobe takes control of more people and more ideas than anyone else in the novel. She shapes and orders the members of the play into the structure of her artistic vision.

Much of Miss La Trobe's commanding presence is conducted in sonic terms. Like Septimus, the novel strongly connects Miss La Trobe with the gramophone. She uses the technology as her primary artistic tool throughout the novel, and the text equates her with the machine: "Now Miss La Trobe stepped from her hiding. Flowing, and streaming, on the grass, on the gravel, still for one moment she held them together—the dispersing company. Hadn't she, for twenty-five minutes, made them see? A vision imparted was relief from agony … for one moment … one moment" (*Between the Acts* 98). Miss La Trobe, like the gramophone, draws people together for a fleeting moment, and the glimpse into her thought patterns even slips into a locked groove reminiscent of a gramophone skip: "for one moment … for one moment." The instant mirrors the gramophone's ability to hold the crowd together through repetition of a phrase, and the line between Miss La Trobe and tool can sometimes be difficult to distinguish: "They

listened. Another voice, a third voice, was saying something simple. And they sat on in the greenhouse, on the plank with the vine over them, listening to Miss La Trobe or whoever it was, practising her scales" (*Between the Acts* 115). Later in the novel, it becomes clear that the scales are issuing from the gramophone and not from Miss La Trobe, but the audience confuses machine and woman. The device becomes an extension of herself.

Where Septimus only sees possibility in the gramophone, Miss La Trobe realizes its potential. The gramophone holds the group together through its sonic power, and Miss La Trobe controls the machine. She is a master of sounds: her own and those of others. Septimus frequently finds himself at a loss for words, trapped in the locked groove of his own voice. Miss La Trobe often participates in inverse situations: she helps others find their voices when they lose them. Miss La Trobe consistently offers up line cues and phrases to actors who have forgotten their lines. Miss La Trobe actively shapes the sort of sounded lives that Septimus can only glimpse. Technology for her serves not as a passive symbol of an unattainable life, but rather as the means by which to enact meaningful political and aesthetic experiments.

Miss La Trobe's experiments with text, music, and audience subvert the sanctity of each, crafting disparate components into a composite artwork. Her aesthetic practices privilege the assemblage and juxtaposition of fragments, as well as the use of found sounds. During a break in the play she turns to the natural world as a source of artistic material:

> Then suddenly, as the illusion petered out, the cows took up the burden. One had lost her calf. In the very nick of time she lifted her great moon-eyed head and bellowed. All the great moon-eyed heads laid themselves back. From cow after cow came the same yearning bellow. The whole world was filled with dumb yearning. It was the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment. Then the whole herd caught the infection. Lashing their tails, blobbed like pokers, they tossed their heads high, plunged and bellowed, as if Eros had planted his dart in their flanks and goaded them to fury. The cows annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion. (*Between the Acts* 140–1)

The sounds of the cows fill the gaps between scenes of the play, becoming a part of the performance proper. Melba Cuddy-Keane suggests that the moment foreshadows John Cage's *4'33"*, the experimental "silent" composition that famously turned the sounds of an otherwise quiet room into the substance of the piece by heightening the audience's awareness of their ambient environment. While the reading is persuasive, Miss La Trobe's larger practices as an artist could equally suggest *musique concrète* as it would go on to be pioneered by Pierre Schaeffer and Halim El-Dabh in the subsequent decades. Schaeffer describes the practice as focusing on the importance of manipulating already extant sounds: "Instead of notating musical ideas on paper with the symbols of solfège and entrusting their realization to well-known instruments, the question was to collect concrete sounds, wherever they came from, and to abstract the musical values they were potentially containing" (qtd. in De Reydellet 10). The subgenre of electroacoustic music

relies heavily on the use of found sounds for its compositions, and artists working in this mode manipulated gramophone and, later, tape recordings to carry out their patchwork art pieces. In a similar vein, Miss La Trobe is herself an avant-garde composer, remixing her many records and sounding bodies into a radical performance. The soundtrack of the pageant play is a composite bricolage of sounding bodies, natural noises, and recordings of wildly diverse styles. For her, the sound world is an artistic play space full of possibility, but such potentials always become realized. Records, once broken, can be put back together in new ways. Noise can be recorded and sounded once more in a new context. Dominant sound narratives can be remixed. In the right hands, silence can sing.

Hearing Voices in *The Hours*

In *Between the Acts*, a sound's life has only begun once it has been put down on record. Such sounds can be repurposed at a later time for wildly varying artistic ends. Woolf, too, has enjoyed a strong afterlife as a sounded object, though its arc has taken a different shape than the others featured in this study. Unlike Joyce, there is no real cult surrounding the performance of Woolf's works aloud and, accordingly, no real canon of sound objects.[2] While *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* consistently enter syllabi and critical discussions, few clamor to record readings of them in the same way as they do *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Woolf did make a strong career as a lecturer and

[2] There do exist a few recordings of Woolf's works, notably Louis MacNeice's recording of *The Waves* in 1955, rebroadcast in 1976 with Peggy Ashcroft. More information about recordings of Woolf's works can be found in Eveyln Haller's "The Voice of Virginia Woolf in the National Sound Archive" in *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

performer of her own essays, but, unlike Hughes, recordings of these public events are rare.[3] One way in which we might make sense of Woolf's legacy is precisely through the terms offered by *Between the Acts*. The novel sets up Miss La Trobe as a figure who remixes her artwork in new and surprising ways, dismantling wholes in favor of constructing new artworks from their components. Woolf might be considered in similar terms: as an author whose legacy is characterized more by dramatic reinvention than by the re-recording of old chestnuts. Woolf invents a Miss La Trobe, and she herself becomes recreated in the hands of such experimental artists. More than any other of Woolf's later adaptations, *The Hours*, Michael Cunningham's 1998 reimagining of *Mrs. Dalloway*,[4] remains closely attuned to the audiotextual aims of Woolf's own text. Cunningham's novel continues Woolf's experimental attempts to trouble the inscription of sound and to record the unheard by explicitly imagining psychic trauma in terms of the audible. Woolf's audiotextual adventure in radical listening continues to echo through this later text as the means by which new collectives can be constituted. From the perspective of Holmes and Bradshaw, hearing voices may be a sign of mental instability. Miss La Trobe remixes extant sounds into new works of art: she imagines new sounds into existence in a way not too far removed from the way in which Septimus hears voices

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[3] As of this writing, I am only aware of one recording of Virginia Woolf's voice, a radio broadcast entitled "Craftsmanship" that took place on April 29th, 1937. The recording can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8czs8v6PuI>. For more general information about Woolf's two other radio broadcasts that preceded the recording, see "Virginia Woolf's Broadcasts and Her Recorded Voice" published by the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain at <http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_res.broadcast.htm>.

[4] Throughout this section, I distinguish between Virginia Woolf, the real-life author, and the character of the same name in Cunningham's text by always referring to the latter as "Cunningham's Woolf" or the "fictional Woolf."

that do not exist. For Woolf and Miss La Trobe such extrasensory perception offers powerful new ways to hear beyond received ways of understanding the soundscape of the world. In the hands of Cunningham, extra-sensory listening can weave together fiction itself.

The Hours describes mental health, its pains and regulations, in sounded terms. Septimus's mental struggle manifests in his abnormal soundings: his stammers and silences that go unheard by those around him. Taking this cue from *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Hours* distinguishes between different audible understandings of mental illness. Laura Brown, when faced with the pressures of her everyday life, notes the unexpectedly quiet sound of mental anguish: "Is this what it's like to go crazy? She'd never imagined it like this—when she'd thought of someone (a woman like herself) losing her mind, she'd imagined shrieks and wails, hallucinations; but at that moment it had seemed clear that there was another way, far quieter" (Cunningham 141– 2). The narratives of mental illness that Cunningham has in mind might be those of Holmes and Bradshaw, whose doctrines decree that silence represents health and that noise suggests disease. While the sounds produced by a person in pain may be quiet, *The Hours* laments the unheard nature of such silent torment. Septimus's fall in *Mrs. Dalloway*, after all, is a painful return to normative soundedness: his trauma, unheard throughout the novel, culminates in the sound of the ambulance. The machine will register sonically where his body failed, and Cunningham is keenly aware of the tragedy inherent in such an ending. Richard's own suicidal leap in *The Hours* is far quieter, unnoticed by anyone save Clarissa Vaughan: "No one has seen or heard Richard fall. […] She is aware of the sound of her own

breathing" (Cunningham 202). Richard's fall brings with it no return to well-articulated, clinical soundedness, no ambulance screaming into the ears of passersby. Instead, Cunningham gives the reader a quiet scene of grieving. Noticing the barely audible sound of her own breathing, Clarissa becomes painfully aware of Richard's lungs that do not sound: she hears their silence at the same time that she perceives something she might have otherwise overlooked. Clarissa's senses are heightened, at least for a moment. She learns to listen in new ways that connect self to other and life to death.

Clarissa hears the sounds of life and death anew, and her nearly silent grieving allows her to commune more thoroughly with Richard than she has during any of their conversations throughout the novel. Through sonic reduction, Cunningham suggests, sound may come to signify something close to silence, and learning to hear both can offer newfound connections between people. When *The Hours* was adapted for film in 2002, the quiet print page suddenly began to sound literally and for new listeners: Philip Glass's score for the film plays upon the character of psychic disturbance, what it can sound like, and how to give it sound. Deborah Crisp and Roger Hillman express shock at the importance given to the score in the adaptation of *The Hours*: "music is present in both novels but not in the foreground. Simply in terms of adaptation issues from novel into film, nothing in the sources prepares for the prominence of Glass's score in the film *The Hours*" (30). While neither *Mrs. Dalloway* nor *The Hours* contain much music proper, they teem with the vibrant soundscapes of London, Richmond, Los Angeles, and New York City. Glass's score does not inject music into a Woolfian world that had none

before: it serves as a logical extension of the kind of sonic texturing in which Woolf always engaged.

Glass's score operates through minimalism, in very simple, repetitive melodies. The repetition of fragments, begun with the stammering of Septimus and elaborated in the locked groove of a skipping record, here blossoms into a systematic means of melodic ordering. Instead of developing a theme at any great length through variation, a minimalist melody takes a single musical idea and transposes it through several different contexts to provide a more elaborate sense of the possibilities contained within any one melodic fragment. In the piece entitled "I'm Going to Make a Cake," a single interval, a perfect fourth, transforms in meaning over time through relentless repetition (Audio Example 1).[5] Where Holmes and Bradshaw hear only noise pollution and psychic disturbance, Woolf and Glass suggest that repetition can create spaces of possibility. Crisp and Hillman fixate on the repetitive elements of Glass's score to suggest that "perhaps the most striking aspect of Philip Glass's music for this film is that, despite the three parallel narratives of quite distinct characters, time, and place, he does not attempt to differentiate these characters and scenarios by any kind of leitmotif or distinct musical style" (31). Wagnerian leitmotifs associate particular melodies with individual characters or objects: with a distinct enough knowledge of the melodic associations, a canny listener could reconstruct the structure and plot of a piece from the music alone. Glass moves in the opposite direction, emphasizing texture over thread, connection over distinction. The

[5] In the referenced audio clip, the fourth is primarily played by the piano on top of a bed of strings. Crisp and Hillman discuss this motif as reminiscent of the chimes of Big Ben and, thus, the sounding of the hours. For their discussion of the theme as it relates to existential crises, see Crisp and Hillman, "Chiming the Hours."

architecture of the score is based upon the productive fragment, whole unto itself, and multiple scenes or characters may share a single generative kernel.

Glass's score offers diverse ends to a common sonic beginning. Once sonically connected, the thematic resonances of each character affect one another. Such echoes are central to Cunningham's text, which traces three lives throughout the twentieth century and explores the resonances each can have on the experiences of the others. Even as they become woven together, however, we cannot forget that one of the three main characters linked by the score is a fictional version of Woolf herself. Cunningham relies on Woolf's own biography to set up the connection between mental health and sound by quoting in full one of Woolf's final letters to Leonard:

> *Dearest,*
>
> *I feel certain that I am going*
>
> *mad again: I feel we can't go*
>
> *through another of these terrible times.*
>
> *And I shant recover this time. I begin*
>
> *to hear voices, and cant concentrate*. (6)

Cunningham fictionalizes Woolf's own mental struggle. In reality, Woolf wrote two final letters to Leonard, but *The Hours* only depicts Leonard finding the note in which Woolf describes her condition in terms of hearing voices.[6] In doing so, Cunningham draws an explicit link between Woolf's own biography and her depiction of Septimus, who hears

[6] It is likely that the letter that Cunningham selects was actually written ten days earlier. The other letter unmentioned by Cunningham makes only reference to her "disease." For more on the two letters, their texts and contexts, see Lee, *Virginia Woolf* 744-9; and Sandbach-Dahlström, "In my end is my beginning."

the voice of the dead Evans. For Woolf, especially in this skewed portrayal, mental distress is a sounded event, shot through with the unsettling feeling that one's own senses cannot be trusted. And it is precisely these same senses that Glass activates in his score, which connects character to author at the same time that it links people in the fictional universe. The score reaches out of the fictional world and back towards the very authorial voice that first gave it life.

By enmeshing the author in the texture of the score, Glass raises the stakes of the soundscape by associating it with literary creation. If fictional sound can speak back to the author, perhaps it can do so on the page as well. The unheard voices described in Woolf's letter keep her from concentrating, impeding her writing progress. Her letter goes on: "*You see I cant even write this properly. I / Cant read*" (Cunningham 6). The voices are profoundly generative for the novel itself. The letter and its surrounding tragic context act as productive narrative devices, providing the impetus for Cunningham's extensive rewriting of Woolf's own story in different contexts over the next century. Voices of a different, more productive kind also pervade the novel. When Cunningham's Woolf walks outside, she thinks to herself about the creation of Sally Seton, Clarissa Dalloway's friend and onetime lover, in Woolf's text:

> Here on Mt. Ararat Road Virginia passes a stout woman […] who, by her ostentatious ignoring of Virginia, clearly indicates that Virginia has, again, been talking aloud without quite realizing it. Yes, she can practically hear her own muttered words, *scandalize the aunts*, still streaming like a scarf behind her. (Cunningham 82)

Cunningham's Woolf speaks to herself, and the sound of such directionless voices suggests mental illness to passersby. In the same passage, literary creation joins with sexual activity: Clarissa's lover is born in this scene as a fictional construction of the author's mind. The sound of the voice is the sound of artistic production itself, a kind of creation free of sexual encounter. The words stream behind Woolf literally on Cunningham's page and take on new power: they will go on to have a textual life beyond their temporary sounding.

Cunningham's Woolf speaks characters into existence, and her words transcend the moment of their sounding to reshape textual worlds. The moment implies a particular order in which external, authorial sounds shape an internal textual universe. The novel subverts such clear hierarchies, however, as its alternating tripartite structure suggests the interpenetration of the past and the present, of fiction and reality. In the same vein, Woolf as speaking author also becomes the listener of her spoken text. Cunningham describes the voices heard by Virginia Woolf as pervasive and diverse, but they are not entirely unknown to the reader:

> Sometimes they are low, disembodied grumblings that coalesce out of the air itself; sometimes they emanate from behind the furniture or inside the walls. They are indistinct but full of meaning, undeniably masculine, obscenely old. They are angry, accusatory, disillusioned. They seem sometimes to be conversing, in whispers, among themselves; they seem sometimes to be reciting text. Sometimes, faintly, she can distinguish a word. "Hurl," once and "under" on two occasions. (71)

She actually hears across the novel, to an earlier moment when Clarissa Vaughan visits Richard and hears him talking to himself: "She can't tell what he is saying—she makes out the word 'hurl,' which is followed by Richard's low, rumbling laugh, a slightly pained sound, as if laughter were something sharp that had caught in his throat" (Cunningham 55). Richard's spoken word becomes heard by Cunningham's Woolf: the single word "hurl" becomes a kind of sonic missive, sent across time and space, that finds its way into Woolf's ear. The voices heard by each might actually be the echoes of the past or the prophetic soundings of the future. "Under" is not actually spoken by anyone in either *Mrs. Dalloway* or *The Hours*, though the word's pairing with "hurl" does suggest the twin suicides of Woolf and Richard, the first a descent into water and the second a body flung tragically through the air. Cunningham develops a network that links up character with author through the sound of particular words. Extrasensory hearing, in general, and the human voice, in particular, become the conduit that links up diverse speakers, inside and out of the text.

The Hours produces a network of speakers and listeners, and this collective transcends the printed page. The text associates mental illness with extrasensory perception and the powers of the human voice. When Clarissa Vaughan visits the mentally ill Richard, she finds herself unable to hear the same network of speaking voices as he:

"Are they here, Richard?"

"Who? Oh, the voices? The voices are always here."

"I mean, are you hearing them very distinctly?"

> "No. I'm hearing you. It's always wonderful to hear you, Mrs. D. Do you mind that I still call you that?" (Cunningham 198)

The abnormal voices remain, regardless of whether anyone hears them. Richard may hear the sound of Woolf's voice in the scene, but his own speech is overheard by more than just Clarissa. The voices of the characters are literally present on the page and equally silent to the reader. To read is, in some sense, to listen to the recordings of a silent voice. As Garrett Stewart suggests, "when we read to ourselves, our ears hear nothing. When we read, however, we listen" (11). Reading allows for the recreation of sensory events that do not exist, heard conversations that only take place on the page. Every reader takes part in non-normative acts of listening: if the production of art relies on hearing beyond the means of the ear, so too does the reception of it.

Cunningham's novel sets the scene for a new understanding of the role of listening in literature. The act of reading entails some form of hearing whether we describe it as metaphor or not, and Glass's score makes the problem of listening literal as it applies sonic texture to the events of the page. When talking to Clarissa in the source text, Richard "sits with his head thrown back slightly and his eyes closed, as if listening to music" (57). The film contains no corresponding scene of experiencing unheard music, but Glass's music reminds us that such forms of listening are essential to film. Those unheard sounds in the novel manifest in the film's accompanying score as non-diegetic sound perceived by the viewer alone. As film and as novel, *The Hours* suggests a connection between extrasensory hearing and mental instability only to put the idea under critique. Hearing unheard sounds is a condition of art in which we all engage. We all take

part in non-normative listening on a regular basis: the process has become a regular part of our cultural forms, thanks to the generic conventions that structure the ways in which we read a quoted sentence or hear the soundtrack to a film.

The voices heard by Cunningham's characters could be even more familiar to readers than I have suggested: Woolf hears across the novel, and she could perceive events outside it. Cunningham remixes Woolf's words, importing wholesale passages from *Mrs. Dalloway* and Woolf's letters into his novel. If Cunningham's Woolf hears voices that "seem sometimes to be reciting text," perhaps she hears the very sound of her own works as they become rearticulated and transposed over the course of the next century (71). She hears her own corpus as it makes its way along a network of listeners and speakers. Woolf's texts carry out their sounded afterlives outside the normal parameters of the archive, not as recordings on a shelf but rather in ears and on tongues. Clarissa Vaughan reflects on the nature of more traditional modes of sound archiving when she sees two girls observing a celebrity: "and when all that remains of these girls is a few silver fillings lost underground the woman in the trailer, be she Meryl Streep or Vanessa Redgrave or even Susan Sarandon, will still be known. She will exist in archives, in books; her recorded voice will be stored away among other precious and venerated objects" (Cunningham 59). As Clarissa juxtaposes the dead and unremembered girls against the remembered celebrity, she suggests that that the recorded voice of the passage is a museum piece. Even those voices that get placed in archives lack vitality, "stored away" to "exist" but not to be heard. The diverse collective of extrasensory speakers and hearers in *The Hours* offers an alternative to traditional modes of

preservation like these, which can all too easily give a skewed representation of the past. Just as Woolf herself has found new life beyond her single archival recording, her texts offer models for listening outside the record, for finding a way to trace the needle outside and across the grooves of history. The old technologies of sound recording may deaden more than they enliven; break them apart and twist them to new ends.

The Quotation Mark and Hearing the Text

The Hours builds on Woolf's work by exploring the possibilities offered by radical new modes of listening outside of traditional modes of sound recording. Woolf breaks apart the gramophone, revealing the possibilities inherent in turning machines meant to record sound into tools of disruption. But Woolf's most consistent tool for conveying sound, the technology of sound recording with which she tampers most frequently, is far older than the gramophone. Cunningham entangles radical listening with representations of the human voice, as when his Woolf takes a walk and observes her surroundings: "She passes a couple, a man and woman younger than herself, walking together, leisurely, bent towards each other in the soft lemon-colored glow of a streetlamp, talking (she hears the man, 'told me *something something something* in this establishment, *something something*, harrumph, indeed')" (166). The repeated *somethings* of the passage suggest the fictional Woolf's imperfect experience of the conversation, as well as the limits of her senses. As the moment is focalized through the fictional Woolf, the conversation will always be incomplete; like the largely unreliable recording

technology during the period, the sound record of the conversation is degraded before it reaches the reader. The sounded voice is altered by the materials that facilitate its transmission: it is given character by the ears of the listener, by the grooves of a record, and by the pen of the writer.

A voice can speak in a variety of modes, and one single device for recording sound has affected more voices in more ways than any other in literary history: the quotation mark. The point at which print most directly represents sound, the quotation mark lets a reader know when and how the text speaks. Just as Woolf twists the gramophone into something more than its intended use, we can look to her use of punctuation as the final and most radical scene of her audiotextual experiment. Through her irregular use of the quotation mark, Woolf dismantles the mechanisms of writing and exposes how print can perform subversive acts of sounding and listening on the page itself.

Despite their ubiquity, we tend to think of punctuation marks as less important for literary analysis. A strong subset of textual editing explicitly recognizes such a distinction in a split between substantive readings, "those namely that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression," and accidentals, "such in general as spelling, punctuation, word-division, and the like, affecting mainly its formal presentation" (Greg 22). The persuasive idea behind the split is that scribes, printers, and compositors, react differently to the two categories, often faithfully maintaining substantive readings, the words themselves, but changing the accidentals of texts to reflect house style. A major editorial decision, then, revolves around whether we honor the author's perceived intentions with

regards to punctuation. Modernizing spelling and regularizing punctuation might seem like trivial matters meant to bring works in line with contemporary reading practices, but these actions change the artifacts themselves. Texts are always social products, shaped by their transmitters as well as by their authors. Few would argue that the addition of a new punctuation mark to a poem would leave its meaning unchanged, and the same holds true for a novel.[7]

Punctuation marks convey meaning: they shape the character of a sentence into legible units of thought based on socially accepted rules and practices. Punctuation marks can serve as new objects of study, and Woolf serves especially well as the subject for such an examination. Quotation marks are graphic, a function of the press and the page, and Woolf frequently set type herself as part of her activities with The Hogarth Press. Woolf describes the processes of correcting punctuation in her own proofs as real labor. As the owner and operator of a printing press, Woolf had to deliberately and physically choose her punctuation marks. On one occasion, a scarcity of quotation marks actually led the Woolfs to go in search of more: "Our only outing after dark to the printers to borrow inverted comma's" ("Diary Entry Wednesday 5 December"). To speak of apostrophes as inverted commas suggests an understanding of them as print type that can be manipulated, and other mentions of punctuation in Woolf's diary continue to render these syntactic markings as physical components: "Am I love in love with her? But what is love? He being 'in love' (it must be comma'd thus) with me, excites & flatters; & interests" (Woolf, "Diary Entry for May 20, 1926"). For Woolf, punctuation marks were

[7] For an expanded version of this argument, see Harkness, "Bibliography and the Novelistic Fallacy."

a material part of the publication process as much as any other word, a part of process as well as physical object. The marks were given particular positions and meanings for expressed purposes; they were part of the textual object under discussion.

In studies of Woolf, however, the quotation mark finds itself undervalued. H.R. Woudhuysen, in his study of Woolf's punctuation, argues that she maintains an interest in punctuation's ability to convey audible effects by primarily focusing on dashes, ellipses, and brackets. Woudhuysen scarcely gives any notice to Woolf's use of quotation marks, though, except insofar as she uses them to represent oblique meanings or emphasis. Woudhuysen focuses on the graphic nature of punctuation to suggest speech: "What is lost in reading aloud is the author's attempt to convey meaning and nuance through punctuation, in addition to the visual signals communicated by the look or appearance of the text itself" (227–8). He suggests that Woolf's creative use of punctuation can disrupt the flow of speech, offering up a more meaningful measure of live speech. But quotation marks are the very signs by which we know that a particular passage is meant to represent speech. These marks, more than any other, convey not just how a text sounds, but whether or not it does so at all. Perhaps Woudhuysen overlooks quotation marks in large part because, as I will come to argue, Woolf's most interesting use of them is in their omission.

The quotation mark maintains the closest ties to speech of any other element in a print text: it is, literally, a *mark* meant to record *quotation*. Authors have consistently made use of sound in their silent texts for centuries by way of this graphic indicator, and closer attention to the uses of the markings can offer new ways for understanding

Woolf's audiotextual mode of writing. One of the difficulties in examining such markings is the scale at which they are used: a single text may contain hundreds or thousands of instances of quoted speech. Digital methods can assist in operating at such a scale, but digital humanities recognizes something of the same divide seen in textual criticism: text analysis protocols tend to look to the vocabulary of a text, instead of its punctuation, as its meaningful data. In *Reading Machines*, for example, Stephen Ramsay analyzes *The Waves* to produce a lexicon of terms that each speaker tends to prioritize, and he uses the information to produce readings of the monologues as they converge or diverge along the axes of empire and gender. Ramsay uses quotation marks to handily associate a character with particular speeches, but the marks do not figure into his analysis. These same approaches need very little modification to analyze punctuation, however, and they can prove no less illuminating: computational analysis can offer us a view of patterns in Woolf's audiotextual writing across her career.

Digital methods can offer glimpses of large-scale patterns in the use of quotation marks throughout Woolf's corpus. By training a computer to search for and excerpt those passages between pairs of the markings, we can begin to get a sense of those elements of Woolf's writing meant to be understood as recorded speech.[8] The following series of

[8] The texts processed for this data were extracted from <https://www.gutenberg.org/> and <http://gutenberg.net.au/>, which provide freely available versions of texts that are out of copyright in America and Australia. These sites employ teams of proofreaders that correct inaccurately scanned texts to produce their reading texts, but the sites do not list the editions from which they are working. We cannot know, without considerable bibliographical work, the provenance of the texts provided by the archives. In addition, punctuation tends to be modified more easily during the publication histories of a work than any other element of the text. All of these factors point towards the limitations of distant reading works still under copyright, where reliable full text transcriptions of

histograms gives a rough estimation of how Woolf's use of quotation changes over the course of her career (see fig. 1).[9] In each histogram, the number of quoted sentences is plotted on the y-axis against their position in each novel on the x-axis, so each graph represents more quoted speech with higher bars and more concentrated darkness. Given a thorough understanding of a particular novel, such as *Mrs. Dalloway* (the first histogram in the second row), one could pick out moments of intense conversation based on sudden spikes in the number of quotations. The histograms are organized so that, to read chronologically through Woolf's career, you would read left to right line-by-line, as you would the text of a book: the top-left histogram is Woolf's earliest novel, the bottom-right corner, her last.

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works are not always readily available. To combat this problem, I supplement my distant readings with close readings from reliable print editions of Woolf's works in the body of the argument. The potential problems with the dataset, in a certain sense, align well with the aims of this project: any errors in the texts would have been introduced by any number of hands that have affected the transmission of Woolf's work over the past century. If this dissertation is a form of reception history, then the problem I identify here is precisely one of reception and transmission.

[9] The project has been generously supported by the Scholars' Lab in the University of Virginia Library. In particular, Eric Rochester has been especially helpful and giving of his time as I continue to work on this project. The code that generated the results discussed here can be found at <https://github.com/erochest/woolf/blob/7f83bdc5a49379cb46d0b974b8d0a2653b209e7e/punctuated_spaces.py>

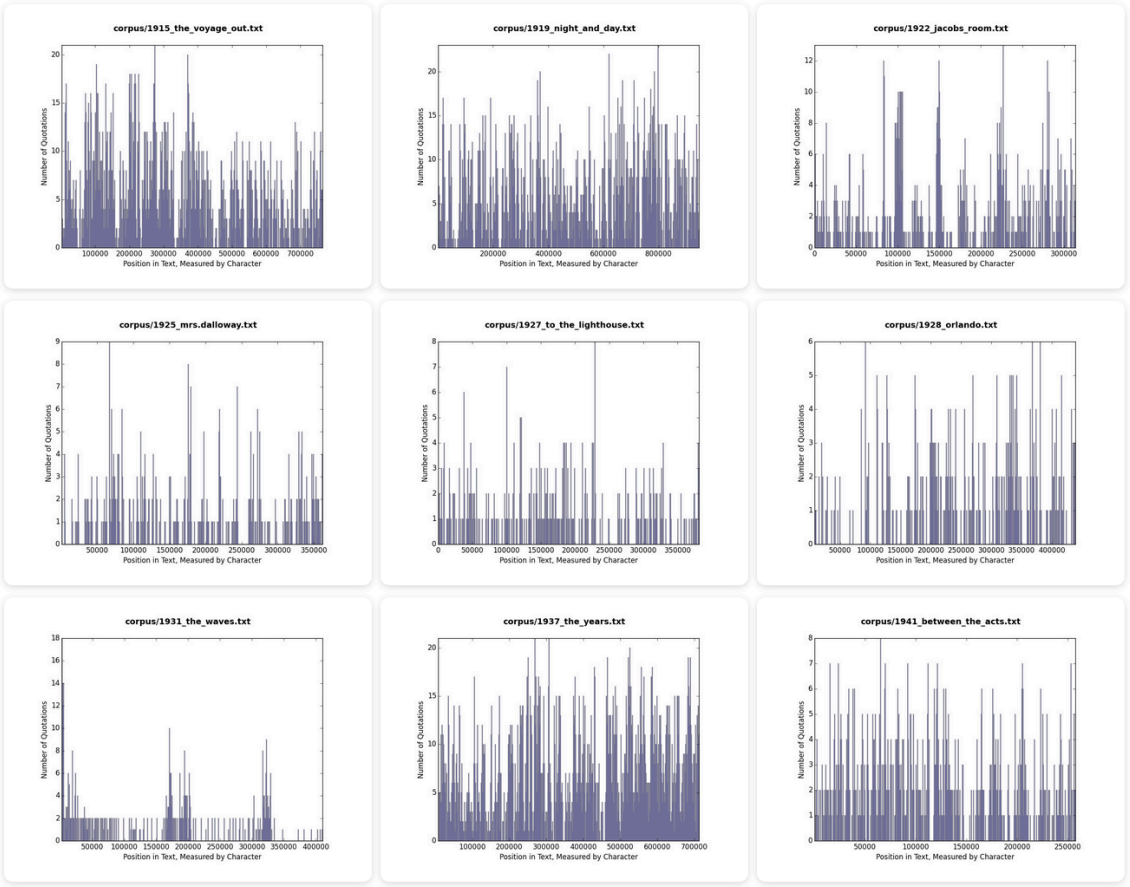

Fig. 1. Instances of quoted speech for each novel in Woolf's corpus. Row 1: *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*. Row 2: *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*. Row 3: *The Waves*, *The Years, Between the Acts*.

The output from such an analysis suggests high concentrations of conversation in the novels written at the beginning and ending of Woolf's career. Her middle period, especially, appears to illustrate a significant decrease in the amount of quoted speech. In one sense, this trajectory maps onto familiar narratives of Woolf's career: her first two novels reflect more typical Victorian aesthetics, while *Jacob's Room* serves as the first major sign of a artistic departure. If we roughly describe the shift from the Victorian to

the modernist period as a shift inward, away from society and towards the psychology of the self, it might make sense to observe conversation between multiple speaking bodies significantly fall away in her subsequent novels. The seventh histogram is especially interesting, because it suggests the least amount of speech of any other text in her corpus. But with a different visualization, we see that this novel, *The Waves*, actually shows a huge spike in punctuated speech (see fig. 2). The following, new graph represents across Woolf's career the percentage of each text that is contained within quotation marks, the amount of text represented as punctuated speech.

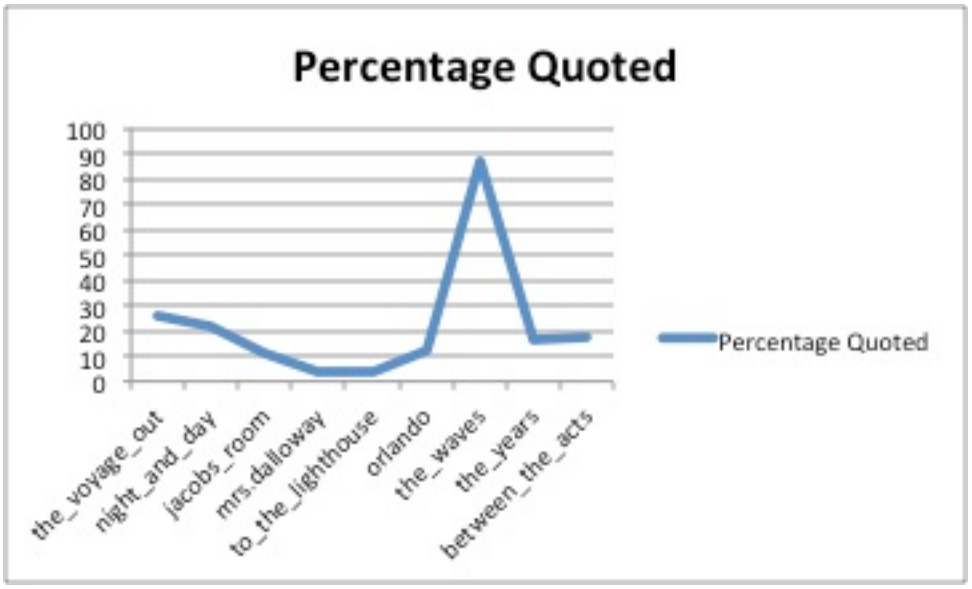

Fig. 2. Percentage of quoted text for each novel in Woolf's corpus.

Charting the percentage of quoted speech in the corpus would appear to support my general readings of the original nine histograms: the graph suggests roughly three times as much punctuated speech in the early novels as in the middle period, but it presents a

dramatically different picture of the end of Woolf's career. The sharp spike in the data given by *The Waves* suggests that my clean reading of Woolf's speech patterns will not hold. *The Waves*, the text with the fewest number of quotations, also contains the highest percentage of quoted speech: Woolf constructs the text as a series of monologues by six disembodied voices, and the amount of non-speech text is extremely small. Instead of dismissing *The Waves* as an outlier, we can take it as evidence of other modes of sound representation in Woolf's career, of the range of discourses and types of speech in her corpus. By pushing the quotation mark beyond its usual ends, Woolf expands the registers of the human voice, the sound of which floods the novel.

Quotation marks organize the text on the page, differentiating quoted from unquoted material, speech from non-speech. When used irregularly on a massive scale, this system begins to break down. *The Waves* provides evidence of vast amounts of quoted speech, but the number of actual quotation marks is relatively low. Manipulating the use of the punctuation marks in this way allows Woolf to change our understanding of what speech can look like and how it can register: after all, paragraphs of speech begin to seem more like narrative than the utterances of a voice. The previous graph suggests that *The Waves* emerges from nowhere, as a dramatic sound experiment from a corpus that increasingly moved away from audible speech, but Woolf tampers with our experiences of the heard text long before this novel. The most famous representation of speech in Woolf's corpus, after all, does not contain any quotation marks. Cunningham dramatizes the imagined composition process of the first sentence of *Mrs. Dalloway* in *The Hours*. Cunningham's Woolf thinks better of her first iteration, "Mrs. Dalloway said

something (what?), and got the flowers herself," before the sentence finally evolves into the mature opening line: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (Cunningham 29, 35). Once again, the invocation of "said something" suggests that text records the speech of a character. In Woolf's final version of the line, too, the reader understands the moment to convey part of a conversation between Clarissa and her servant, Lucy, but the text implies speech without marking it as such. Without quotation marks, discourse becomes submerged in the texture of the narrative, but it does not disappear entirely. The number of moments of implied speech like this in Woolf's career is vast,[10] and they can offer us occasion to reconsider the nature of sound's relationship to text. By distorting the standard use of the quotation mark, Woolf defamiliarizes and draws to the surface the most overlooked of sound acts in prose. Such instances of indirect or reported speech are not unique to Woolf, nor are they necessarily unusual

[10] The next phase of my work in the Scholars' Lab will be to apply principles of machine learning and natural language processing to continue analyzing Woolf's corpus and to unearth more instances like these. The first steps have been undertaken here: by flagging passages that qualify as speech but are not marked as such, I can train the computer to look for instances elsewhere in Woolf's corpus that share similar characteristics. Initially, our plan is to develop a program that will search for a series of words that flag text as implied speech to a human reader: said, recalled, exclaimed, etc. Using this lexicon as a basis, the script would then pull out the contexts surrounding these words to produce a database of sentences meant to serve as speech. Successfully doing so would offer new insight into the range of discourses used by Woolf, but even failure could be instructive, as the algorithm could locate instances of syntactical structures that we associate with speech in wildly unexpected contexts. My own hypothesis is that the amount of speech left unflagged by quotation marks will increase in the middle of Woolf's career for exactly the same reasons that I describe in this chapter. We generally associate this period of her career with an increase in free indirect discourse characteristic of a certain kind of modernist aesthetic, and I expect strong overlap with the sort of unpunctuated audiotextual writing that I discuss here. Continued work in this area would help to untangle the relationship between our print and sonic records and to show how discourse unfolds over time in the modernist period.

markers of literary experiment. Woolf makes use of them in such high proportions, however, that they come to affect the nature of speech itself: what it means to speak, what it means to hear, and, accordingly, what it means to write.

Woolf continues her radical experiments in listening through these irregular uses of the quotation mark. In particular, they often correspond closely to her experiments with narrative psychology. In an early moment in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa encounters Hugh Whitbread on the street:[11]

> Times without number Clarissa had visited Evelyn Whitbread in a nursing home. *Was Evelyn ill again? Evelyn was a good deal out of sorts*, said Hugh, intimating by a kind of pout or swell of his very well-covered, manly, extremely handsome, perfectly upholstered body (he was almost too well dressed always, but presumably had to be, with his little job at Court) that his wife had some internal ailment, nothing serious, which, as an old friend, Clarissa Dalloway would quite understand without requiring him to specify.
>
> (6, emphasis mine)

Though the passage I have italicized initially reads as though it might be narrated thought, as with the first line of the novel, one could imagine it enclosed by quotation marks: "'Evelyn was a good deal out of sorts,' said Hugh." Until "said Hugh" suddenly interrupts the narrative, the reader has no indication that these words should *not* be understood as thought. The absence of the marks forces the reader to hear again what has already been read. In *Transparent Minds*, Dorrit Cohn speaks of the absence of graphical

[11] In the following quotations, I have italicized those portions of text that read as speech but are not otherwise punctuated as such.

markers for conveying thought as one of the significant characteristics of modernist literature: instead of setting a character's thoughts in quotation marks, modernists mask mental processes in the form of narrative. Similarly, the narration of sound without graphic markers offers an as-yet-unheard feature of modernism. The moment above collapses speech into the same register as Hugh's body language. Hugh refuses to specify the nature of Evelyn's illness, and the selections I mark as implied speech are similarly difficult to ascribe to particular speakers. In the sequence of the narrative, "was Evelyn ill again?" could be a moment of free indirect discourse, but Hugh's spoken response suggests that we re-evaluate the moment as a spoken question from Clarissa. By leaving the entire passage unquoted, Woolf flattens the speech into the same realm as narrative and psychology: mouths may speak, and so may the mind. Speech tends towards the status of narrative. So too may the text itself approach the level of sound.

Moments of free indirect discourse offer evidence of narrative coming closest to the level of thought, and instances of unpunctuated speech like the ones I identify similarly offer new evidence for the close relationship between text and speech. In *To the Lighthouse*, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay argue over whether not they will be able to go to the lighthouse the next day:

> *She was trying to get these tiresome stockings finished to send to Sorley's little boy tomorrow*, said Mrs. Ramsay.
>
> *There wasn't the slightest possible chance that they could go to the Lighthouse tomorrow*, Mr. Ramsay snapped out irascibly.
>
> *How did he know?* she asked. *The wind often changed*. (35, emphasis mine)

The three italicized cases increasingly foreground the relationship between text and speech. In the first two moments, especially, Woolf divides the sentences into two long and disproportionate clauses. Only at the end of each sentence does the reader learn that they are meant to understand the text they have read as speech. The speech portions of the sentences could serve equally well if conveyed by the narrator: "she was trying to get these tiresome stockings" might serve equally well as a description of the scene. The relationship between narrated text and implied sound is murky in these passages, and the moments suggest that Woolf's printed text may invoke a range of levels of soundedness.

If *To the Lighthouse* offers examples of when the narrative voice appears joined with speech, *Jacob's Room* gives a glimpse of the continuum of potential ways to invoke sound. Take, for example, the implied conversation between Mr. Dickens and Mrs. Barefoot: "An old inhabitant himself, Mr. Dickens would stand a little behind her, smoking his pipe. She would ask him questions—who people were—*who now kept Mr. Jones's shop*—then about the season—and *had Mrs. Dickens tried*, whatever it might be—the words issuing from her lips like crumbs of dry biscuit" (18, emphasis mine). While each question suggests close affinity with elements of the imagined conversation, only the portions I italicize could potentially serve as actual evidence of recorded speech. As the narrative voice slips in and out of the potential voices of its characters, Woolf troubles the distance between text describing the conversation and narrative reporting sound. In moments like these, the narrative itself becomes sounded in a new way. The quotation mark may report speech, but sound can be conveyed by a number of other

means. By applying pressure to the quotation mark's status as sole reporter of narrated speech, Woolf asks us to hear the novel itself as sounding in a new mode.

When the quotation mark stops signifying in its usual manner, readers are asked to read more closely to determine whether a given textual moment conveys sound. Just as her novels strive after new modes of listening, Woolf asks her readers to listen to writing itself as a kind of sounding. Bonnie Kime Scott argues that Woolf's use of the quotation mark in *Between the Acts* helps to distinguish human from nonhuman noises: "I find it interesting that Woolf does not provide quotation marks for the sounds made by the gramophone, denying it character status. Woolf also denies quotation marks to general audience commentary" (108). Without a mark establishing the sentence of the crowd as human speech, Kime Scott argues, Woolf reduces the remarks of the audience to the same level as the noises made by an object. The reading relies on an axiom: refusing quotation marks for a particular sound moment questions its status as reported speech. If Woolf consistently tampers with quotation marks as conventional tools for reporting speech, however, perhaps we can shift the terms of the reading accordingly. After all, she does not consistently grant quotation marks to speech by even her most individuated human characters. We can say, instead, that Woolf levels the distinctions between speech, sound, and narrative at every turn. The process culminates in *The Waves*, in which sound and text are almost indistinguishable. Like her consistently failing gramophones, Woolf's volatile quotation marks ask us to reconsider how a silent text may speak and challenge us to listen in new ways. Standard technologies for recording sound can be broken apart to offer new ways of speaking and for listening. The quotation mark implies sound, but it

also creates audio hierarchies within the text: this moment is sound, that moment is not. By removing the markers of sound, Woolf suggests that even the quietest moments of the text might be audible; even a narrative might make noise. If some characters struggle to achieve their own voice, the audiotextual narrative can allow them to sound where quotation marks will not. Septimus may struggle with his speaking voice, but the narrative itself can let him express himself without needing to conform to normative standards for how a body—or a text—should sound.

The Textual Record

Woolf searches for new technologies for recording sound in her texts by breaking apart those same machines that helped to institutionalize dominant narratives about soundedness. By tampering with technologies of recording voice, Woolf remixes old sounds into new, subversive art and flattens troublesome hierarchies produced by the act of preservation. Her two principle objects of experimentation, the gramophone record and the quotation mark, offer one last opportunity for tying the knot between Woolf's dual interests in the audible and the visual worlds. Adorno suggests that the two technologies share a common, audiotextual interest, as a gramophone turns sound into inscription:

> music, previously conveyed by writing, suddenly itself turns into writing. […] If, however, notes were still the mere signs for music, then, through the curves of the needle on the phonograph record, music approaches its true character as writing. Decisively, because this writing can be recognized as true language to the extent

> that it relinquishes its being as mere signs: inseparably committed to the sound that inhabits this and no other acoustic groove. (59)

Graphic and phonic merge in the phonographic when a record is pressed: sound becomes written upon the grooves of a disc. These etched writings remain inscrutably silent, unable to be read as sounds with the naked eye, but they remain nonetheless bound to the world of sound. If a gramophone record can be thought of as sound approaching the level of writing, Woolf's own use of punctuation similarly forces writing to the level of the audible. The quotation mark denotes speech with paired ink strokes, but, by unsettling its dominion over the spoken word, she suggests that all writing might approach the level of sound. In the space where sound meets inscription, Woolf develops a new form of audiotextual writing that allows troubled voices to speak. She looks to the technologies, new and old, that we use for conveying spoken speech and asks them to do more. She asks how we might inscribe the grooves of the new, textual record in such a way that it might allow new voices to sing.

Coda: Audiotextual Writing and Digital Humanities

The story of modernism that I sketch here is one that sounds on and off the page, and I have modeled an audiotextual criticism that honors this legacy by itself listening across media. For this purpose, I maintained and referenced a small collection of digital audio materials on the web, while, in years past, I might have used a CD to similar effect. Such archival measures are integral to the work I have undertaken here, but they do not exhaust the work of the audiotextual critic. Derek Furr movingly speaks of the implications of digitization as a means of recovering fragile auditory pasts: "Re-archiving poetry on record—digitizing dated formats and making the audio more widely accessibly online—at once preserves and alters it" (146). Large digital archives like *PennSound* and *SpokenWeb* perform valuable services for critics by making new materials available for study, even as they necessarily alter the contexts in which these materials are found.[1] Audiotextual work does not stop at producing an audio archive to supplement a textual argument, however, and in these final moments I reflect on the audiotextual character of my own study. After all, it is possible to imagine a new form of writing that can fit the shape of a new form of criticism, to conceive of a critical page that sings as literally as the recordings under discussion.

We use recorded materials to help place our writing in context, but the act of reading exposes the difficulties inherent in working with audio materials. A reference to an outside artifact necessarily takes readers out of the page: read text recommends an

[1] See, respectively, <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/> and <http://spokenweb.concordia.ca/>.

audio supplement, the reader locates that file on the Internet, and the reader finally returns to reading the chapter. The same problem would hold true if the audio clips were provided on any number of other formats: vinyl record or compact disc would require the reader to interact with other interfaces and materials. The very act of reading audiotextual criticism requires readers to act across media, even as it challenges them to think in terms that unite them. An argument that requires readers to engage with archival materials in this way risks focusing on the print at the expense of the audio materials themselves; it could reduce the very sound artifacts meant to be the centerpiece of the work to a kind of shadow archive, often mentioned but kept outside the text itself. The modernist authors I discuss here consistently employ sound and text in concert, but the printed page alone offers only one mode for engaging in the actual act of writing audiotextual criticism. We need a space for arguments that can literally sound off, a platform that can hold in a single space both the critical text and the auditory materials under discussion.

For all of the strong audiotextual work done in print by the authors examined in this study, it is not the only possible way to conduct an argument. Scholars must think beyond the page to explore new platforms and methods that better fit the shape of the materials that we aim to discuss. Increasingly, advances in digital technology offer the best opportunities for reshaping the interactions between sound and text. In 2011, for example, Touch Press Ltd and Faber and Faber released an iPad application for *The Waste Land* that featured the full text of the poem along with six audio recordings by a variety of readers, Eliot included. The app allows users to shift fluidly between audio recordings without pausing the sound: with the tap of a button a listener can hear “Speak

to me. Why do you never speak? Speak" read by Alec Guinness and then, in the next breath, "What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?" spoken by Ted Hughes (Eliot, *The Waste Land* 112–113).[2] Furthermore, the text synchronizes with the selected audio recording and scrolls automatically to keep in time with the speaker. If a reader touches a particular line of text during the audio performance, the recording will jump to that section of the text, the effect being, in the words of the app's designer, that "the words speak in response to the reader's touch" (Kenna 215). The interface offers a new mode of interacting with the text, as well as a new consideration of the poem's soundedness. The original poem has an uneasy relationship to its proliferation of voices, as it is unclear whether the text is spoken by one speaker or by many. The iPad realizes the unstable voices of *The Waste Land* with a flexible interface: any speaker can be interrupted at any time with the voice of any other by passing the text of the poem from mouth to mouth. The publishing platform fits the texture of the poem's audiotextuality in ways that the printed page cannot, suggesting a new form of reading that allows readers to explore visual and audible connections in unforeseen ways. Text does not disappear. Instead, it interacts with audio in new ways by changing its mode of presentation.

Digital environments can offer new modes of writing about sound as well as reading about it. In particular, work in digital humanities offers new publishing methods for elevating the sounded status of critical work itself. Joanna Swafford's twin projects, *Songs of the Victorians* and *Augmented Notes*, aim to better integrate literary analysis with musicology by offering a publishing platform that can directly embed score excerpts

[2] The iPad application will only allow a user to shift recordings at line breaks.

in a written text.[3] Rather than referencing an external archive, these tools allow the context for a particular argument to become woven into the text itself. Similarly, *SoundCite* offers critics the chance to make their writing fully audiotextual with the click of a button: just as hyperlinked text offers users the occasion to travel to a new page, *SoundCite* embeds playable audio in marked text so that a textual description of a sonic event can also play the associated sound file.[4] Sound is no longer referenced as an external addendum to the argument: it is a constitutive element of the text itself. In addition, robust new platforms like *Scalar* or digital journals like *Vectors* can offer scholars the chance to produce born-digital scholarship suited to the study of audiotextual modernism.[5] Multimedia environments like these can produce new scholarship that would be entirely impossible in print, as is the case with Emily Thompson's *The Roaring 'Twenties*, an attempt to historicize listening by offering a navigable historical soundscape of New York City and an expansion of her earlier book, *The Soundscape of Modernity*.[6] The result is not just an audio archive, but also a sonic experience that performs the same argument as her print manuscript. As Thompson writes in her introduction to the project, "simply clicking a 'play' button will not do": sound examples must advance, rather than simply accompany, an argument. Digital platforms can allow

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[3] See Swafford, <http://www.songsofthevictorians.com/> and <http://www.augmentednotes.com/>.
[4] See Fisher et al., <https://soundcite.knightlab.com/>.
[5] See the *Scalar* homepage at <http://scalar.usc.edu/> and also the *Vectors* homepage at <http://vectors.usc.edu/journal/index.php?page=Introduction>.
[6] See the project itself as well as Thompson's introduction to it at <http://www.nycitynoise.com/> and <http://vectors.usc.edu/projects/index.php?project=98&thread=AuthorsStatement>.

audiotextual critics to construct more interactive sonic experiences that enrich textual study without being subordinate to it.

Sounds can advance arguments, but they can also be arguments unto themselves. Digital methods can offer new ways for thinking about the audible nature of our work. Examining audiotextual materials already implies an elastic understanding of text and context, of medium and message. The *Manifesto of Modernist Digital Humanities* argues for a re-evaluation of method to fit the nature of our objects of study: "critical self-reflexivity calls for a qualitative characterization or evaluation of methodologies as well as technical disclosures of sample sizes, data gaps, and human intervention in algorithmically generated data" (Christie et al.). For the authors of the manifesto, this means reflecting on the prevalent realisms inherent in digital methodologies and, in opposition, infusing digital humanities with the same spirit of interpretation, ambiguity, and radical experiment that characterized modernism. Scholars aiming towards audiotextual criticism could similarly consider the audiotextuality of their own methodologies. In many cases, audiotextual criticism means learning to produce audio materials in addition to thinking critically about them. Citing an audio clip is not as easy as quoting a piece of text, particularly if the clip is part of a larger audio track. As I uploaded materials to my small audio archive, I needed to create new artifacts and perform basic sound engineering tasks: in the process of preparing this dissertation I excerpted, processed, and, in some cases, re-recorded passages from larger works to

prepare them for online publication.[7] Audiotextual critics must become practitioners as much as thinkers, sound artists as much as writers. Beyond the materials it produces, audiotextual writing should consider the possibilities and limitations of itself as a sound object. Digital tools like *Paper Phone*, for example, can help turn read text into performance, permanent argument into experimental utterance.[8] An interactive audio application for processing and transforming speech, *Paper Phone* allows authors and critics to become sound performers, warping and distorting the reading of their academic papers into sound art that can reflect their arguments. Similarly, the *Soundbox* project asks critics to reconsider the possibilities of sound arguments: "We embarked from the following question: What if it were possible to make arguments about sound using *sound itself*?" (Lingold, Mueller, and Trettien).[9] The answer, clearly, is yes: sound arguments can offer new modes for engaging with the objects that we study. The form of our critique can no less be taken for granted than that of the literary sound recordings I discuss in these pages. Playfully experimenting with the form of criticism can inspire new modes of inquiry, including those in which soundscapes and mix tapes might offer new collages of material, new juxtapositions and implications.

The final turn comes when we recognize that sound and criticism have long informed one another. Modernist authors hold sound and text in productive tension and generative unity, and critics can learn from their example by exploring the sounded

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[7] My audio editing software of choice is *Audacity*. For more information about the process for curating audio materials in this way, see my blog post on "Audio at THATCampVA" at <http://bmw9t.github.io/blog/2013/11/13/audio-at-thatcampva/>.
[8] See Hsu and Zorn, <http://www.beingwendyhsu.info/paperphone/>.
[9] See the project's homepage at <http://sites.fhi.duke.edu/soundbox/>.

possibilities of their own work. The authors I have discussed suggest that a history of modernist texts cannot be separated from a history of sounds, and, similarly, our critical work has always been sounded even as it appears in print, as much formed in daily conversations, lectures, and presentations as in articles, chapters, and books. Audiotextual criticism exposes those connections that have always existed between modernist materials and late-century works of sound art, between texts and reinventions. Modernist authors are kept alive as much by those that hear them as by those that give them voice, and what are critics but the latest in a long series of listeners, speakers, and performers? Audiotextual criticism continues the modernist echo. It challenges critics to bring modernist materials out of the archive and set them sounding.

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