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Broadcasting Modernity:
Eloquent Listening in the Early Twentieth Century

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Committee of the Faculty of Arts, University of Glasgow.**

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Abstract

This thesis, 'Broadcasting Modernity' is an account of sound technology, namely wireless, as a feature of early twentieth century literature. If modernism is a historical-specific movement, and language a repository of time, then the advent of radio broadcasting cannot be ignored -- a medium which inscribed itself into the pages of books. The present study is original, in that it establishes radio as a portal through which to regard the wider cultural mentality, cross-cutting, or 'crashing' the written word, and thus producing the effect of two wires instantly reacting to one another. Therefore, just as radio may be accessed through literature, certain texts between 1900-1945 may be reinterpreted acoustically. To qualify this argument, a select group of writers are discussed individually, and at length -- figures who allowed radio to affect their creative output, at various levels, in a period of rapid technological change.

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Introduction

Gillian Beer contends that "[w]riters respond to current scientific thought in many ways: as fugitive allusion, as narrative direction, as enigma. To do so, they do not need to practice in the laboratory". Writing on Virginia Woolf's capacity to "skein ideas across time without embarrassment", Beer rightly observes that the "teleology of science and its constant search for the new explanation" is often ancillary to the apprehending -- and re-imagining -- of an idea.¹ Elsewhere, she suggests that the presentation of science through literature should be a process of interchange, rather than perceiving two separate spheres, who occasionally borrow from one another:

More is to be gained from analysing the transformations that occur when ideas change creative context and encounter fresh readers [...] Neither literature nor science is an entity, and what constitutes literature or science is a matter for agreement in a particular historical period or place.²

By nature, scientific language operates "to keep non-professionals out", as the closed readership "enables precise conceptual exchange and continuance" -- a view endorsed by Modernism, which as noted by Leon Surette "legitimised [its] cognitive elitism by an implied, and occasionally an explicit analogy with modern science".³

¹ Gillian Beer, *Wave, Atom, Dinosaur: Woolf's Science* (spec. ed. for the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, London, 2000), pp. 3-15, at 10.

² Beer, 'Translation or Transformation? The Relations of Literature and Science' in *Openfields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 173-195, at 173.

However, it seems that in aligning one's doctrine with similarly exclusive traditions and incorporating the language of those traditions into areas of artistic expression, modernist writers would naturally produce a jarring epistemology. Many individuals disregarded their non-specialism -- indeed, Surette applies the label "scientifically illiterate", adding that Mme Curie's radiation, Einsteinian relativity and Planck's quantum theory were "interchangeable [and] no more mystical" than Freud or other, more esoteric, tendencies (150). 'Scientific' rhetoric -- internalised, cogitated over and lastly written about -- was often inaccurate, overtly expressive, personalised and elegaic, demonstrating how, as Beer notes, concepts can "change their import when posed within different genres" (173).

This thesis attempts to chart a single phenomenon: that of wireless technology, through literature and *upon* literature of the early 20th century -- a process reliant on textual and historical evidence which is vastly interpretive:

Every age is a kaleidoscope of conflicting elements, rationalised and categorised into shapes according to the sensibility, taste and fashion of the day [...] These operations are necessarily both of ephemeral value and unreliable, since they are carried out by subjectivities which are part of the very flux they describe.⁴

Historical texts of a particular time fade when viewed from a distance, especially if the author in question has drafted a piece of work assuming his/her reader's

³ Ibid., p. 183; Leon Surette, *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats and the Occult* (Montreal & London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993, p. 120.

⁴ Joseph Chiari, *The Aesthetics of Modernism* (London: Vision Press, Ltd. 1970), pp. 16-17.

familiarity with certain material. This becomes an overriding factor in any approach to technology read through, or amidst, literature.

Therefore, it is preferable to locate a specific *mindset* peculiar to the era in question; for example, the way in which our contemporary, commonplace, medium of wireless was aligned to other influential factors in society nearly a hundred years ago. Michael Whitworth has noted the problem inherent to studies in arts and science, that is, the compilation of these conflicting themes and instances, which are nevertheless associated.⁵ The present enquiry careers through spiritualism, music, time travel, politics, fantasy, madness, death, speech and thought, all of which are examined within the framework of a defining cultural moment.

The thesis is largely in agreement with Whitworth, who argues for a scientific language consisting of certain "models [...] metaphors [and] key images" which recur in writing as a distinct response to the climate, to "reflect modernity, and to compensate for it, according to the situation of individual subjects". Yet:

It is dangerously easy [to] assert that 'everyone' was talking about a science, and far more difficult to uncover eyewitness accounts of such conversations [...] We can glimpse fragments of the mechanism- and author reading science in one place, an expository metaphor emerging in their writing elsewhere- but never the full machine; an author who left a full archival record of his creative processes would be suspect on other grounds.⁶

⁵ Michael Whitworth, *Einstein's Wake* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 234.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 234-236, 231.

The specific issue of radio as a correlative to literature is minimally debated; it usually features in larger investigations of sound as an art form. Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead have provided an arena for critique of wireless in the avant-garde, although Kahn's recent work is more extensive, charting phonographic activity in the twentieth century from Filippo Marinetti's radio 'sintesi' to a concerted analysis of artists such as John Cage, another "practitioner and purveyor of live goods". Kahn is able to define a "distinct radio art" after "developments of microphony and amplification in telephony [and] radiophony" allowed for, what Adelaide Morris terms as, "newly reorganized sense ratios of secondary orality".⁷

There is little inclusion of literature in Kahn's new category, although he registers "gregarious texts written alone" in the soundscape created by verbo-acoustic technologies (42-44). If Cage wrote radio music "to pit disintegration against disintegration, noise against noise", then, surely, lines of poetry or fragments of written conversation might operate in the same way (194).

It is Friedrich A. Kittler who establishes a prototype for the recasting of literature in the wake of new media. His formidable *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (1990) and *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999) complement more accessible critics such as Morris, who avoids weighty theoretical debate in order to assert direct connections:

⁷ Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead, *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: M.I.T. Press, 1992); Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Massachusetts, London: M.I.T. Press, 1999), pp. 176, 131; Adelaide Morris, 'Sound Technologies and the Modernist Epic' in *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies* ed. Morris (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp.32-55, at 37.

The modernist epic's glossolalia, echo-lalia, puns, transegmental shifts and drifts -- all the sound effects, the sound defects, of a charged poetic phonotext -- are amplified by their tendency to converge at a moment in which everything else seems to rip apart. The technologies that allowed a World War II speech delivered in Germany to resound simultaneously in the streets of Toronto, Paris, London, and New York made the world once again to submit to a single story teller, a politician or a poet able to weave a spell [...] (49).

Morris refers to an open-air address of October 1939, to which separate media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan and Eric Havelock listened in separate unity, generating similar theories on orality and literacy. This trope is used to demonstrate the impact of "technologized listening" -- as experienced by writers who henceforth imbued their texts with "aural opulence".

Crucially, Morris notes the lack of research into the relationship between "such auditory technologies as telephones, radios and tape recorders and the imaginations of [writers]", yet, in acknowledging that certain inventions "decisively altered the nature of poetry and literature" she merely focuses on the modernist epic. As a result, consideration of other factors is outwith the scope of Morris's essay, namely, how the "phonotexts" she describes -- Pound's *Cantos* (1950), Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) -- differ from one another in their deployment of disembodied sound. Are they appreciative? Fearful? Is it deemed to be a formative influence or an impediment to creativity? Perhaps both.

It becomes necessary to *categorise* the reverberations of radio in order to avoid such generalisation; for example, its effect upon the structure of written words.

Guillaume Apollinaire's calligram 'Ocean Letter' (1914) imprints a view of the modern world in a frieze of undulating lines suggestive of wireless waves. The pulverised language of the poem evokes the jumbled voices and wires of half-heard transmissions, circling in layers from two circular shapes on the page.⁸ Another topic is the generally agreed assumption that radio offered the "ideal medium for exploring the inner landscape of the soul"; it echoed the ambiguity of language and leaps across time propounded by modernist fiction. This is implied by Rudolph Arnheim, in *Radio* (1936), who commends the free nature of a wireless monologue, "where no external action has to be indirectly represented".⁹ Moreover, the textual incorporation of wireless forged a vocabulary, as intimated by later theorists, which, at one level, might "have no coherent purpose [...] other than to assert topicality [and] modernity", but might also be a reflexive response to new modes of expression.¹⁰

Morris's compilation refrains from discussion of other writing concurrent to modernism which might betray a *type* of literary reaction to acoustic mechanisms. Furthermore, the question of patterning is avoided; that is, how early doctrines and ideas espoused by certain writers often reached a logical conclusion in their endorsement of, or revolt against, the wireless world. If sound insinuated itself so vigorously into writers' aesthetic, then the issue of direct contact with the media should be noted: writers employed *for* the purposes of radio, or even *over* the radio as a speaker. This thesis endeavours to address these

⁸ See Guillaume Apollinaire, *Caligrammes: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916)* trans. Anne Hyde Great (Berkeley: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 23-25.

⁹ Morris, p. 38; Rudolph Arnheim, *Radio. An Art of Sound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936), p. 178.

¹⁰ Whitworth, p. 211.

areas, while acknowledging that each one is deserving of more concerted analysis.

In 1908, Hudson Maxim considered that "those in whom the faculties of hearing predominate are called *audils*", adding that, in his opinion, Milton may be considered "both visual and audil [...] having both sensual responses "correspondingly developed".¹¹ It seems appropriate then, that the principle of my thesis should be encapsulated by a random comment heard at a party -- staged by Natalie Barney in Paris, October 1965, to mark Ezra Pound's eightieth birthday. Wrapped in silence and old age, the poet seemed to emit a curious quality, that of "an eloquent listener".¹² Such an observation would typify the collection of writers chosen to demonstrate the irrefutable connection between radio and aspects of writing in the early twentieth century.

It should be emphasised from the outset that wireless was not the most potent influence upon their work, however, my thesis charts the ebb and flow of its *presence*, whether as direct subject matter or a subliminal force operating beneath a familiar veneer. Other writers are clearly deserving of selection; notably, the work of T.S. Eliot inspires great debate in this area, already ventured into by recent critics.¹³ This allows the present study to treat Eliot as a signal flickering into focus as a support or comparison, ushered from the league of

¹¹ Hudson Maxim, *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language* (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1910), p. 208.

¹² Recorded in Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), pp. 889, 970fn.

¹³ See Michael Coyle, 'T.S. Eliot on the Air: 'Culture' and the Challenges of Mass Communication' in *T.S. Eliot and Our Turning World* ed. Jewel Spears Brooker (London: MacMillan, 2001), pp. 140-54; also Christine Sizemore, 'The Sweeney Allusion in John Cheever's 'Enormous Radio' in *Notes on Contemporary Literature* vol. 4 (1977): 9; William P. Keen, 'The American Waste Land

alternative -- and equally compelling -- case studies who will appear transitorily. Every one is capable of producing "gregarious texts written alone" but the writers discussed are significantly charged with 'eloquent listening', that is, the process of hearing and cohering. When silent, they permitted the fluid, multi-faceted nature of wireless to impact upon their consciousness; when voluble, their words betrayed how intently they became affected, or infected, by such a forceful medium.

It is suggested that James Joyce utilised radio as a leading principle of his final novel, whereas Winifred Holtby incorporated its capacities into her personal mythology. Virginia Woolf and Stephen Spender would discover how the maximum expanses offered by wireless could intrude upon the smallest of words, spoken or written. Ezra Pound is posited as a final, connective, component, who nevertheless short-circuited his own artistic doctrine by speaking over the radio.

Such themes may appear wilfully eclectic; however, the common denominator is that each writer envisaged a potential in radio never reached in actuality. By that maxim, the idea of experimentation is shown to be a vital undercurrent. In the first chapter, pioneers in science and spiritualism transcend those particular boundaries, thus laying a foundation for that most extreme of psychic investigators: the sleeper in *Finnegans Wake*. Winifred Holtby's attention to the mechanism of wireless itself -- and the inventor who dispatches knowledge -- constitutes a phantom area of her work previously undiscussed. Her inclusion in

- Brought to You by John Cheever's Radio' in *Notes on Modern American Literature* vol. 6, no. 3 (Winter 1982): 20-21. Cheever's story is briefly discussed in the course of this thesis.

this work is deserved, in that radio occupied her creative output in a manner akin to writers of a very different dispensation. Virginia Woolf refused to encounter the medium with Holtby's solicitude, belonging to a category of writers in the 1930's who felt experimented *upon* by mass communications, often, as in the case of Stephen Spender, to an extent that their work resounded with echoes of wartime conflict. Nevertheless, it is not radio, but the voice of the poet lingering in conclusion: Ezra Pound who assayed into an arena over which he had speculated and thought to be manageable. Should a circular pattern be applied to this thesis, it is significant that Pound can be recalled through the medium for whose appropriation he was gagged. A dead voice, not merely restored through a machine, but swirling in the ether, available for spirit scientists -- and other *audils* -- to apprehend and interpret, much like certain texts approached during research into this topic.

1. From Separate Stations: Wireless Preludes 1870 - 1930.

Insofar as writing is thought to succeed orality, writing assumes control of an echo. Writing is, in effect, the ventriloquial means of transposing an acoustic event onto an optic event, thereby pacifying the sensory incertitude of hearing by substituting another sense as legislator. The proprioceptive and exteroceptive ambiguities of sound are suspended as the voice is fixed by graphic interception. Such a paradox makes poetry the phantom double of language.

Jed Rasula

death is primarily a radio topic.

Eric A. Havelock

Broadcast ether/Writing other

During his enquiry into modes of communication, John Durham Peters defines the initial, individual, response to the new medium of writing as one "haunted by multiplication". In Plato's *Phaedrus*, whose anxieties about technology's effects on human interaction is the basis for Peters' argument, the poet Socrates considers that writing disembodies thought; it allows for false couplings where distant forms influence the present state, and where the multitude read what was intended for the few. It is, in essence, a "dead discourse"¹:

If man learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls: they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks...And once a thing is in writing, the composition, whatever it may be, drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with it; it doesn't know how to address the right people and not address the wrong.²

The notion of the written word as a transgressive signal, circulating at random beyond the original context of its oral, interactive presence has been widely assessed; theorists include Walter Ong, Marshall McLuhan and Friedrich Kittler. A persistent image within the latter's *Discourse Networks 1800-1900* (1990) is "the deathly still room" where the pen scratches "without preliminary speech and so without a soul", blankly spewing an inarticulate tone, a white noise: "If only it would speak as people speak!"³ Conversely, to write is to prevail upon the mind

¹ John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1999), p. 37.

² Plato's *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth (New York: Bobbs Merrill Ltd, 1952), pp. 157-158.

³ Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800-1900* (California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 183.

and actions of the eventual reader, regardless of his/her impartial claim to the pure text message. The act of receiving any written word is to succumb to a peripheral entity who imagined a different audience: before, during and after the words were dredged from memory, plucked from the air in a deathly still room and then consigned to paper. Both sides of the exchange are marred and unsatisfactory.

Using the *Phaedrus* as a benchmark, Durham Peters notes that from the outset, an author 'Lysias' exerts "remote control" over a reader's body and voice, consequently, his words are apprehended by "unintended ears", those of Socrates. The rhetorical exercise, on the subject of love, is eventually recited in complete form by Phaedrus, for he has not yet committed it to memory; in so doing, he relinquishes his physical being to the eloquence of another's material, quite literally a parchment script previously concealed beneath a tunic. Registered as an object to be hidden and thus unleashed, the written word transcends Phaedrus's halting version and becomes "Lysias himself", disembodied (228e).

The response from Socrates is tantamount to any contemporary debate on modern communications, stressing that no orator can transmit successfully "unless he acquires the ability to enumerate the sorts of characters to be found in any audience, to divide everything according to its kinds" (273d-e). It follows that his theory on rhetoric has been instilled and rigorously documented; for these purposes, however, the view of faulty communication circuits is paramount. Ideally, any expression must align to its recipient with no leakage or

dissemination. This kind of mutual engagement, a soul-to-soul address, would prevent any misinterpretation, pollutants or eavesdroppers.

In a Socratic sense, writing produces a negative effect, scattering, rolling and throwing voices in a pretence of mutuality, mouthing imperfect dialogue and distributing itself randomly. Media is the means by which interaction continues unimpeded and unconditionally, a fact specified in the *Phaedrus* which is vital to any assessment of our technologies. The aforementioned charges of inauthentic discourse were levelled at the printing press, cinema, phonograph, and the gamut of communication tools, all of which attempt to reclaim personal fidelity. With the advent of writing on papyrus as opposed to 'sowing' intellectual knowledge in the mind of another who may generate further thought, modern media becomes oddly sterile. Wafting in the air and taking root indiscriminately, words are broadcast rather than fertilised.

The origin of the verb 'to broadcast' is assumed to lie in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8), where Christ delivers the parable of the sower to a vast audience by the sea, "impressing upon all that if the vitalising seed were the imparted word, it was their part to receive and treasure it. And this seed, the Word of God is sown broadcast, as all our opportunities are given" (Mark 4, 1-20).⁴ There are degrees of listener, those who attend with "the outward ear without coming under deeper impression"; the second type who "receive the

⁴ 'The Gospel According to Mark', ed. W. Robertson Nicholl (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947, pp. 109-111).

Word with superficial enthusiasm" and those who have "other loyalties", that is, deaf ears. (Luke 8, 4-15).⁵

The emphasis here is on broadcasting as a liberating concept, one which allows the recipient to interpret the signs at will, although the type of message cannot be programmed to reach the various levels of a given audience. An indirect mode of communication which exposes the chasm between speaker/writer and passive decoder. Significantly, the Greek term *parabole* implies something puzzling or inconclusive, a barrier which requires surmounting. This style of doctrinal dissemination in the synoptic gospels is the one-way transit offered not merely in the Christian tradition, but by modern media, as a method infinitely superior to co-operative dialogue.

It is necessary, before evaluating the nature of 'broad/casting' as an ordered cultural practice, to take cognizance of its meaning and henceforth to maintain awareness. The agency of broadcasting encompasses all technologies, including the written word; it is an abstract term which implies 'free character', often employed in nineteenth century literature to describe the arbitrariness of nature.⁶

⁵ 'The Gospel According to Luke', ed. Marshall Morgan Scott (Edinburgh: Norval Geldenhuys, 1950), pp. 241-245.

⁶ For instance, Walt Whitman in *Leaves of Grass* praises man's natural instincts, which correspond with the "broadcast doings of day and night". Durham Peters provides further examples (pp. 206-208). Of course, these parallels were appreciated by employees of radio in the 1920's and 30's:

"[T]he B.B.C. was under the direction of John Reith who took a very biblical view [of] how culture would stride forward distributing the good seed. Some would fall on stony ground (not even heard because 'crystal sets' were unpredictable); some would fall by the wayside and be trodden down (by Marconi and his commercial traffic of Morse code); some among thorns (of oscillation and atmospherics); but it was all good work, done to do good to the community", James Forsyth in *Proceedings of the Radio-Literature Conference 1978*, ed. Peter Lewis (Durham: University of Durham, 1978), p. 125.

This current section of the chapter does not aspire to paraphrase *The Gutenberg Galaxy* in arguing for mutations of literacy; however, it is useful to recall Marshall McLuhan's binding of the primitive past and electronic present in relation to the fragile wiring of acoustical space, written words and fatal utterances. He argues that "[if] a technology is introduced from within or from without a culture and if it gives ascendancy to one or another of our senses, the ratio among all our senses is altered".⁷ To hear a word spoken via an unfamiliar medium prompts concentration on the mechanics of speech, the mouth, teeth and tongue positions required to produce a particular phoneme, the vibrant sound of one's own vocal cords, timbre and effect. Similarly, the visualising of marks on a page would invite the same response; consider Stuart Gilbert's review of *Finnegans Wake*, that "the mere *sound* and *look* of the prose, its verbal antics, are a delight in themselves"⁸

In his comprehensive study of ancient and contemporary non-literate societies, McLuhan posits writing as an interiorised world in depth, a "visual enclosure of non-visual spaces and senses", whereas "speech is an outing of all our senses at once" (43). A return to what Conrad called the "Africa within" is achieved "simply because we have recreated it electronically within our own culture [...]" the non-visual resonating interplay by which electricity and radio especially were to regenerate" (43, 55). Similarly, Wyndham Lewis, throughout *Time and Western Man* (1927) often alludes to the reintroduction of auditory space into twentieth century culture; as evinced by his disparaging review of Gertrude

⁷ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: 1962), p. 24

⁸ Stuart Gilbert, 'The Growth of A Titan', *Saturday Review of Literature* vii, 2 August 1930 (London: Chapman & Hall): 17-19.

Stein, whose "thick, monotonous prose-song" brutalises the "poor, worried, hard-worked *tongue* -- inside the reader's head".⁹

To an extent, McLuhan's critique defends the progress of communication, that is, until citing the Roman practice of 'collecting' an audience, in order for an author's voice to be heard:

The concept of literature as something to be listened to in public rather than scanned silently in private itself makes the notion of literary property more difficult to grasp [...] public recitation continued to be the regular method of publication even after books and the art of reading had become common [...] here we may pause to notice the effect of oral presentation on the character of the literature itself (85).

Hudson Maxim, in tracking the birth of verse following primitive man's mastery of utterance, wrote on how the sound of words "marshalled in a sentence" were reliant on the mind of the hearer being "adjusted and attuned [to] the thought esprest".¹⁰ The "important standpoint" of a listener was similarly noted by Allen Upward; one who has to derive "the gist" of an emotion "because it is for his sake that the speech is made". However, during any exchange, "what the one tries to tell is truth and what the other yearns to hear is verihood".¹¹

Broadcast words may have a determined address, although when publicly disseminated, they become a dilution of the original intent. They belong to no-one, yet become imbued with personal wishes to transmit and interpret. It appears that every new medium, in addition to reconfiguring the order of senses,

⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), p. 59.

¹⁰ Maxim, p. 35

is by nature disruptive; it fails to complete the loop, or to cement the age-old address gap.

It is told that Edison's phonograph, "notebook of the soul" evolved after an incident with a needle attached to the diaphragm of a telephone receiver.¹² Scarified flesh prompted the deaf inventor to consider the effects of magnetism, and how the *function* of his ear could be transferred, and partially restored, by another sense.¹³ At the laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, 1877, a new vehicle of writing -- the *phono-graph*-- was duly constructed. Seemingly, an artificial ear already existed in the coil of the telephone, an object already "beyond fiction's most self-declaring fiction", which, writes Avital Ronell, notoriously contains the unknown "voice coming from me and beyond me [...] performing and inducing fraud".¹⁴

In practice, the phonograph harnessed distant roars into a more verifiable murmur, etching the modulations by way of a stylus which formed grooves in a metal disc, thus repeating what was already uttered. It wrote, it heard, it restored and registered the mortal and forgotten, thus commandeering the human ability to memorise. Charles Grivel observes how the phonograph not only impacted upon society, it seemed to work in tandem with other modes of expression:

¹¹ Allen Upward, *The New Word* (London: A.C. Fifield, 1908), p. 42.

¹² Jean Marie Guyau, 'Memory and Phonograph' (1880) *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* 5: 319-22. Quoted in Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 30.

¹³ Edison was so deaf he had to use an ear trumpet jammed against the phonograph horn itself to hear any semblance of the recording. For detailed analysis see Walter L. Welch and Leah Brodbeck Burt, *From Tinfoil to Stereo: The Acoustic Years of the Recording Industry, 1877-1929* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), chapters 1-5.

At the time [...] Rimbaud was writing that "je est un autre", Mallarme that a blank volume is his expression, Lautreamont that poetry is made up of everything and by everyone, and Nietzsche, of course, that since God is dead, the voice, without reservation, dissolves, [a] machine arrives in the nick of time to capture all this and give it an appearance. It is reproduced, and one can see that it is reproduced: a box with wheels tells us so [...] A voice comes from a voice comes from a voice. Generic transmission. An infinite sense bursts forth from an organ given a body *outside the body*.¹⁵

He adds that such recording devices are simply the machine inside poetry which compensate for a lack of perception; the individual does not hear sufficiently, yet never tires of listening to oneself. The phonograph is an "adventitious ear" affixed to a deficient corpus, a medium pre-empted by "sculpting, painting and photographing", all of which attempt to "bring back an appearance". Therefore, "if [one writes], it's by consolation", certifying existence by distribution of one's words, and emanating 'in person' even though the body is omitted.

In observing that "literature is overflowing with phonographs", Grivel cites examples from the work of Villiers de L'Isle Adam and Alfred Jarry, who briefly feature in larger case studies of this thesis; they support a theme that literature often 'calls forth' acoustical technologies in the desire to capture and preserve the voice, even whilst acknowledging the near-futility of duplication. Words circling beyond reach in the *Phaedrus* are bloodlessly scratched on papyrus, thus contracting an impossibly high standard to which our machines must attain, that is, the transmission and reception of identity, of meaning.

¹⁴ Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 87.

Grivel observes this as a logical step, the technical "accession to being [...] what I invent is also what I am". By this maxim, "technology cannot be set *against* literature, [for] what I write brings the apparatus [...] unfailingly back to its proper ends". However, all technologies are imperfect in that they never reproduce accurately, "not enough, not what is called for, not in the right way, never well, never more".

The absent body in the act of written speech recurs in the monotone, metallic, nasal whisperings of the phonograph, whose records, *schallplatte* (literally, 'sound-plate' in German) eventually stored, as Adorno claims " a music deprived of its best dimensions, a music, namely, that was already in existence."¹⁶ Later, the atmospheric chaos of wireless communications would produce a medley of layered voices, distorted and constantly fluctuating. Both mediums act out their designated roles, yet they subvert the data.

For instance, George Bernard Shaw, in a rather macabre radio broadcast of 1927, objected to a gramophone transforming the "melodious" tones of Ramsay MacDonald into a "high-pitched yapping", and begs his own listeners to persevere:

What you are hearing now is not my voice, unless your gramophone is turning at exactly the right speed...But what do you do if you have never heard me?...well I can give you a hint. If what you hear is very disappointing and you feel instinctively, 'that must be a horrid man', you may be quite sure the speed is wrong...slow it down until you hear an amiable old man with a rather

¹⁵ Charles Grivel, 'The Phonograph's Horned Mouth', in *Wireless Imagination*, eds. Douglas Kahn and Geoffrey Whitehead (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), pp.31- 62.

pleasant Irish voice...that is me...all the other people you hear at different speeds are imposters, sham Shaws, *phantoms who never existed*.¹⁷

This chapter outlines how radio became a barrier to reciprocal dialogue between live sources, in contrast to existing technologies such as the phonograph, which 'petrified' the very life it sought to rescue. Adorno's essay focuses on the parallel nature of sound, specifically music, and writing, whereby the process of "reification" removes the utterance from the arena of live production and makes it readable. Through the engraving of the needle, the signs, or notes, of music approach the level of writing "decisively", because this writing can be recognised 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". Adorno partially commends this eternal recurrence of language in a phonograph record, whose "scriptal spiral disappears in the center [...] but in turn survives in time", having been etched and recorded.

The control exerted by the phonograph, its ability to capture sound waves minus the presence or consent of the original source, highlights the manipulability of inscription and raises the complaint of Socrates over disjointed messages, given that the visual marks of sound once uttered excludes any human agency. Of course, the intent of phonography was to extend the ghostly nature of writing into a new sphere, as Jacques Perriault notes, "the creation of artificial life and

¹⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Form of the Phonograph Record' trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *October*, no.55, Winter 1990 (Cambridge: Massachusetts): 56-61.

¹⁷ George Bernard Shaw, 'Spoken English and Broken English' (1927). In B.B.C Listening Archives, *Writers and Poets: Historic Recordings* CD 1.cat. no. 342.

the conjuring of the dead", through a machine which arrested sound once mortal and subject to the cycle of time.¹⁸

In their collection *Wireless Imagination*, Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead identify three figures -- vibration, inscription, and transmission. These frame the ways in which sound is "located or dislocated, contained or released, recorded or generated".¹⁹ Inscription is held to be a limitless trope, in that all sounds are equally duplicated on a surface, whether distant or dead, therefore it becomes vastly interpretive. After all, "anything can grow from a seed you can't see".

Kahn continues:

[W]riting is a seed from which entire bodies may grow, but there also exists the possibility of severed mutation, injury and destruction, set off simply by the act of reading and writing, of bringing the text to light, of turning a body inside out to expose the inscription, a violence that accompanies the technologization of the body and the abeyance of sonic movement. (19)

Sound-scattered words which revivify corpses is the inevitable progression from 'dead' scripts, wrought from a device which even drew blood from the inventor's hand to indicate the corporeal bind.

This is unrestrainedly treated in an 1896 piece, 'Voices of the Dead', where an experimenter applauds the phonograph for restoring the "full juices" of great men's speeches; the "delicate mechanism" both contains and *becomes* the "body, the soft modulation, the emphasis". As the poet Lysias emanates from another

¹⁸ Jacques Perriault, *Memoirs de l'ombre et du son: Une archeologie del'audio-visuel* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), p. 224. Cited in Peters, p.161.

¹⁹ Kahn and Whitehead, p. 14.

mouth, remotely possessing all bodies who speak and listen, the experimenter feels the "presence" of those he knew vaguely, insisting that "their spirit pervaded me".²⁰

The concept of an acoustic device morphed into flesh emerges in modernist literature; surely culminating in the man-machine Earwicker. A radio in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) is also the sleeper's arteries ["twintriodic singulvalvalous pipelines"], mouth [the "vitaltone speaker"] and brain [a "harmonic condenser enginium"].²¹ Another example is Rilke's essay 'Primal Sound' written some twenty years earlier in 1919, which fuses physiological knowledge into modern writing, apparently inspired by the traces of a phonograph. The strangeness of reading is intensified by markings traced on the *schallplatte*; sounds spoken yet preserved differently. He procures a skull and notes that the coronal suture has "a certain similarity to the close wavy line which the needle of the phonograph engraves on the receiving, rotating cylinder of the apparatus". Inevitably:

What if one changed the needle and directed it on its return journey along a tracing which was not derived from the graphic translation of sound but existed of itself naturally- well, to put it plainly, along the coronal suture for example. What would happen? A sound would necessarily result, a series of sounds, music [...] Feelings- which?²²

This text is a commonplace of current media theory, largely treated by Kittler, who observes that a poet would recognise the very opposite of his own medium- the "white noise no writing can store", perhaps, unsettlingly, the decoding of the

²⁰ Cited in Peters, p. 163. No mention of the author is given.

²¹ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Paladin, 1992), pp. 309-310.

²² Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Primal Sound', in *Rodin and Other Prose Pieces*, trans. G. Craig Houston (London, New York: Quartet Book Ltd 1986), pp. 127-132, at 129.

real which pen and paper fails to capture.²³ To elicit sound from a skull without prior recording is to argue that any graphic sign produces noise.

The present work adheres to Kittler's assertion that technological developments in the early 20th century galvanised literature to the extent that a skull fails to prompt "melancholic associations of Shakespeare's Hamlet". Instead, the writer might see "phonographic grooves", aware that he/she can no longer be assigned to every lasting remnant of sound or script, never more absent and a victim to misrepresentation (43). Talking machines create the capacity for illusion, whereby words are manipulated as if there were no distance between source and receiver, as if "voices travelled along the transmitting bones of acoustic self-perception directly from the mouth into the ear's labyrinth [and] hallucinations became real" (37). Every interpretation is variable, therefore it becomes unheard and impure; music 'in one's head' is only possible through the efforts of mouthpieces and microphones.

A further consideration is how a writer's awareness of such machines would relate to corresponding ideas of selfhood and audience, as implied by the case studies of this thesis: 'real live' Earwickers, who project a wide range of responses to the medium of wireless, from abhorrence to approbation.

As aforementioned, the purpose of the phonograph was, as Perriault remarks, to store and reactivate the "missing"; it is noteworthy that inventor Charles Cros, Edison's French counterpart, called his version a *paleophone*, implying an organ

²³ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 45.

which, indeed, calls out of the past. Unsurprising then, that Oliver Lodge likened a phonograph to the realm of spirits, which apparently contained intelligibility without bodily form. In commenting on the analogies between psychological research and sound recording, Lodge considers the phonographic ability to transfer discs from one instrument to another as akin to "the telepathic or telergic process whereby a psychic reservoir of memory can be partially tapped through another organism".²⁴

So, originally conceived as a figure of inscription, the phonograph is by nature allied to *transmission*, broadcasting voices of the departed without presence or permit. Douglas Kahn notes this paradox, although maintains his classification. He writes that "in transmissional space, the object was ostensibly replicated in itself as it was transported over an equivalent distance", arguing that phonography "did not strongly imply sound from a distance".²⁵ However, its origins in telephony rather occludes the idea of suspended dialogue, implying, instead, the notion of two terminals detached from one another by temporal sequence, each separately trying to facilitate understanding. This corresponds to the desire of Edison, who hoped to replace his hearing prosthetically in creating a more effective telegraph 'repeater', with the following sequence: you are far away; you are here; I can hear you.

Avital Ronell, during her unorthodox enquiry into Alexander Graham Bell describes his usage of the phonautograph, from which the one-membrane

²⁴ Oliver Lodge, *Raymond: or Life After Death* (London: Methuen and Co, 1916; 1922), p. 328. All citations are to the reprint.

²⁵ Kahn and Whitehead, p. 20.

receiver was modelled; both of whom resembled the structure of the human ear.²⁶ Notably, Ronell labels the father of the telephone as no scientist or technologist, but "an artist of the beyond who had struck up a contract with his dead brother", to "bring [him] back". Any invention, she adds, "originates with the dead. It's not the living, but the first to die who has to make efforts to communicate". Ronell implies that audio technologies confound tradition, as usually, it is ghosts who revisit with a 'message'.

Little Nipper -- the faithful hound at the gramophone -- waits for 'his master's voice' whose acoustic presence is permanent yet inadequate, for no interaction may occur. Such ease of "transfer" offered by machines, as Durham Peters argues, is "paid for with ghostliness" (164). The body resides in wires and horns, manifesting itself by virtue of the voice, and in doing so becomes dismembered and vaporised, inhuman. As the tempting call of voices from elsewhere became a subject for creative expansion, it is crucial to observe the rewriting of literature under conditions of new media, whereby technological precision and failure either mirrors the aurality of the written word, or, renders it handicapped in the presence of more faithful reproductions.

For example, the German writer Salomo Friedlaender presents this shift in a story, 'Goethe Speaks Into the Phonograph' (1916), which revivifies Germany's

²⁶ Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book*, pp. 332-333, 393. Also mentioned in Kittler, *Gramophon Film, Typewriter*: "And once Bell realised that "such a thin and delicate membrane could move bones that were, relatively to it, very massive indeed", the technological breakthrough was achieved, [...] I saw that a similar instrument to that used as a transmitter could also be employed as a receiver"(p. 75).

ur-author in order to "predict the transformation of literature into sound"²⁷ A scientist, Professor Abnossah Pschorr endeavours to "bring forth" the vibrations produced by Goethe using a very specific receiver modelled on the cadaver's wax-moulded throat, a dummy which merely mouths the *sound* of the poet unless placed in a room where *certain* words had been spoken. The machine operates like a "sieve", intercepting acoustic traces until Goethe erupts through "the buzz of the recording phonograph" on playback: "a remarkable voice that electrified everybody". Anna Pomke, the beloved of Abnossah Pschorr is "almost maenadic, as if in a trance", swooning over the replica, which implies that indelible traces of Goethe are somehow erotic, when re-established as a technical replay through a visible channel. "How he stresses the *r*'s", she whispers rhapsodically.

This tale is noteworthy in that, firstly, the "feel" of Goethe's speech is only achieved by personifying a phonograph, attaching a pair of bellows between the machine itself and the dummy whose mouth "occupied the same position as Goethe's had when he was sitting". A monstrous image which raises the query of authentic communication, "real echoes" so vital to Pshorr's experiment. Why should the spoken traces of a writer, in particular, be exalted and why is it necessary for such words to be clear "reality", and not the fragmented "repetition of a possibility", as Pschorr says? Because, conceivably, the ghostly medium of writing fails to leave a sensual imprint, it broadcasts to the unintended and waits for a lost response. A mutated, machinic ex-poet may be preferable to a phantom.

²⁷ In *Das Nachthemd am Wegweiser und andere höchst merkwürdige Geschichten des Dr. Salomo Friedlaender* (Berlin: 1916, 159-78). Cited in Kittler, *Gramophon, Film Typewriter*, pp. 59-68.

Furthermore, this flesh-enhanced crypt of storage is activated by a signal, silently dominant in a story supposedly about phonographic retrieval. The "conditions" of the apparatus must be favourable in order to apprehend an oracular voice, which emanates not from an archive, but out of the etheric expanse.

Technology thus enters the short story, on the premise that dying breaths relayed by Edison's phonograph hinted at a spirit world densely populated. As will be demonstrated, the figure of Pschorr is typical in media conceptions of the early twentieth century, hoping that fragments of human voices after centuries need not be silent, only "diminished", and therefore retrievable by a mighty filtering and amplification process. It is fair to assume that Goethe is still 'around', not merely "in the shape of a corpse", and Pschorr's efforts to short-circuit the respiratory system points to an awareness of the void opened by early electrification where the body is only the entry and exit for random frequencies.

Furthermore, Friedlaender's parallel between certain machinery and the human physiological structure arises from awareness of tube-type innovations; namely Lieben's work of 1906 and De Forest's audion detector patented in 1907, both of which surmised that transmitter and receiver are interchangeable.²⁸ As outlined previously, Goethe's larynx is utilised as *both* microphone and passive recipient, given that "speaking is no more than [...] the filtering of breath or noise, [and the] larynx will admit only those frequencies which escaped from it". Pschorr merely enacts the realisation of Alexander Graham Bell, by morphing the poet's

²⁸ Lieben investigated the amplitude fluctuations of a speech signal in relation to the cathode current; De Forest pioneered the third electrode in an electric current. Both facilitate the advance of radio technology. See J. Scott-Taggart, *The Manual of Modern Radio* (London: Amalgamated Press Ltd, 1933), chapters 2-6.

throat into a transmitting organ which in turn replaces the ear -- the receiving organ.

By activating the device, a partial sense of fidelity is achieved in the technical reconstruction of language extracted from this vibrating sphere. A success based on tacit disregard for the horror: a slab of flesh placed strategically in order to summon a ghost. Although proclaiming all speech 'immortal' following construction of the phonograph, Edison and his cohorts were unable to access voices from beyond.²⁹ The machine affixed an utterance to a specific source, merely implying an intangible space where entities operate from a distance and sound is stored data capable of being manifested elsewhere.

Pschorr's weird antenna evokes the chagrin of Bernard Shaw, that his voice is hijacked by grotesque nonentities. For sound is not, as Walter J. Ong asserts, a viable index of personality or an adequate method of communication:

It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent. When I pronounce the word "permanence", by the time I get to the "-nence", the "perma-" is gone and has to be gone".³⁰

Goethe rambles robustly yet pointlessly and is finally reduced to snores, a most infuriating hindrance to communication. The ether, an abstract force which

²⁹ See Edison's famous article, 'The Phonograph and Its Future', *North American Review*, vol. 126 (May-June, 1878): 527-30; also 'A Wonderful Invention- Speech Capable of Infinite Repetitions' *Scientific American* (December, 1877): 318-21, which contains the legendary assertion: "Speech has become, as it were, immortal". In the light of this realisation, the author considers the impact on existing ways to render speech, venturing: "Are we to have a new kind of book?" Welch and Burt provide extensive commentary on Edison's accomplishments in *From Tinfoil To Stereo*, chapter 2.

³⁰ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), p. 32.

allows for all action at a distance, exceeds the phonograph in collecting and emitting dead sound, thus altering the properties of a writer's words in any sense.

To summarise, Friedlaender's story of disc-less and wire-less receptivity straddles the two axes of transmission and recording inherent to the practice of writing itself, which belongs in the category of space-binding media³¹. New words are placed in the dead author's mouth by another writer who fabricates and assumes, extending his own intuition into an actual mechanism which similarly speaks falsehood. This technical and anatomical reconstruction of language is applicable to Socrates' concern over writing, whereby any data committed to permanence subverts authoritative discourse. According to Goethe:

Literature is a fragment of fragments; the least of what happened and of what had been spoken was written down, and of what had been written down, only the smallest fraction was preserved.³²

Posthumous articulations only serve as a reminder of the absent other, thus intensifying problems inherent in the written text. Rather than expiring and fading away, the poetic voice can potentially reach an early 20th century scientist who scrambles the message from a repository of half-heard signs intended to cohere in a different pattern, just as a reader is forced to hallucinate a personality between the silent lines of the page. To scatter abroad in space either through

³¹ Terminology coined by Harold Adam Innes in *Empire and Communications* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 25, 50, 115. Paper and electricity are 'portable', transcending infinite boundaries in order to link two distinct points, however incompletely, whereas a weightier medium such as architecture is time-bound and 'durable'. See Durham Peters, p. 138; McLuhan *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, p.165.

³² Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels; or The Renunciants in German Romance: Specimens of Its Chief Authors*, vols. III/IV trans. by and with biographical and critical notices by Jean Paul Friedrich Richter (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1827), 118-250, at 122.

auditory sign or lonely inscription reconfigures human contact, a dilemma accompanying every technological advancement which duplicates and distributes indicia of human presence, namely writing, telegraph, telephone, phonograph and radio.

Spectral figures dance around the printing press in a depiction of 1499, implying that words on the page somehow retrieved lost spirits, engendering hallucination for those who could read: that is, who dabbled in the anonymous coding.³³ Audio technology interposed itself further into the chasm, at one level shattering ephemerality by retrieving lost voices. It therefore resided, noted one writer "among carrion, skeletons, nothingness".³⁴ An avenue of criticism has debated this correlation, revolving upon Kittler's famous proposition that "the realm of the dead is as extensive as the storage and transmission capabilities of a given culture".³⁵ Durham Peters perpetuates the idea that disembodied presence of an absent other in Plato's *Phaedrus* dominates all subsequent response to mediated interaction, alongside the realisation "that what new media gain in fidelity, they lose by conjuring up a new spirit world" (39). The general premise is that practical aspects of long-range communication replicate a fundamental human desire to fuse incarnate and discarnate minds; therefore 'bridges' such as psychical research are not peripheral, but central to any enquiry into a technology such as wireless. For instance, "why is it?" writes Jeffrey Sconce, "after 150

³³ See Kittler, *Gramophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 5.

³⁴ Maurice Renard, 'Death and the Shell', in *Invitation a la peur* (Paris: 1907), pp. 67-72. Discussed in Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, pp. 51-55.

³⁵ Kittler, *Gramophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 13.

years of electronic communication, we still so often ascribe mystical powers to what are ultimately material technologies?"³⁶

This project perseveres with the theory that any type of media enhances conceptions of distance and death. In doing so, it forms a space 'nutritious' for ghosts, or rather, absent others who speak from afar yet resound at close range. In the following section, early acoustic technologies are assessed, chiefly focusing on specific pioneers who unleashed the paradox of wireless-ness and proximate bodies.

Terminal Science

There is no accurate method by which to write a chronicle of machines and processes; a sentiment shared by Hugh Aitkin who nevertheless argues for a less biographical, or practical, approach in favour of attention to "the history of ideas".³⁷ Aitkin recognises that certain theories have a "creative force of their own, an impact on history that is distinguishable from the individuals who [...] undertook to translate concept into hardware" (44). Therefore, it is important to identify nuances of wireless, in support for the statement that certain characteristics endorsed an insecurity in the cultural mindset.

³⁶ Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 6.

³⁷ Hugh Aitken, *Syntony and Spark: The Origins of Radio* (New York: Wiley, 1976), p. 28.

It is pertinent that the enduring *idea* of wireless often superseded any structural detail, evinced by the mixture of awe and avaricious regard for the potential of mankind in Friedlaender's fantasy 'Goethe Speaks Into the Phonograph'. This also characterises physics papers written during the same period which often resort to conjecture, however eminent the writer. I would slightly rework Aitkin's assertion, adding that as radio science advanced, its innovators often became intertwined in the mass reception of their discoveries. This was largely owing to their personalised approach.

The pivotal work by Sir William Crookes, 'Some Possibilities of Electricity' (1892) is noteworthy in its wild imaginings of disembodied voices and the flight of departed souls, however, as Aitkin notes, "there is hardly any one figure important in the early days of radio who does not at some point in his memoirs or correspondence refer to the article of 1892 as having made a difference" (114). Crookes, a reputed physicist and chemist, had discovered the element thalium and subsequently invented the radiometer (a device for measuring radiant energy), in addition to pioneering the cathode-ray tube, a crucial component in future television technology. Concurrently a believer in spiritualism, he served as president of the Society for Psychical Research (S.P.R) between 1896-1899, a sideline shared by the elite of British physics who collectively approved of a transcendent principle of order -- the ether. This abstract force was cogently summarised in the writings of another key source, James Clerk Maxwell:

Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum was a sufficient reason for imagining an all-surrounding aether [...] To Descartes, the bare existence of bodies apparently at a distance was a proof of the

existence of a continuous medium between them...Aethers were invented for the planets to swim in, to constitute electric atmospheres and magnetic effluvia.³⁸

Maxwell, whose equations first combined electricity, magnetism and light, anticipates wireless telegraphy by observing the universe to be vibrating with impulses, and potentially dependent on "some third thing, some medium of communication occupying the space between the bodies".³⁹ This establishes, according to Durham Peters, "the heartland of the problem of communication" reactivated by the promise of a wire-less state: "contact between people via an invisible or elusive material linkage" (103). Notably, Maxwell regarded the ether as the divine, yet un-divinable force supporting all interstellar regions, which seems to function as a vast container for not merely molecules of hydrogen, but also "languages not yet interpreted [in] the hidden underworld from minute to minute and from century to century".⁴⁰

Contact with the disembodied is innate to early radio history, which repeatedly affixed metaphysical musings to concrete technical invention. This appears to be a general tendency of the age, as indicated by Hudson Maxim's fanciful portrayal of "the magic wand of the intangible" keeping time with technical progress. He maintains that "the advance of cold calculating science need not make us fearful of losing, as a playground for the imagination, the old wonder-world from which we are emerging".⁴¹ Such realisation was thrilled over in popular discourse such as *Telepathy of the Celestial world: Psychic Phenomena Here but the*

³⁸ James Clerk Maxwell, 'The Ether' in *Collected Papers*, ed. W.D. Niven (Cambridge: 1890), p. 763.

³⁹ 'On Action at a Distance', *ibid.*, p. 311.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Maxim, p. 40.

Foreshadowings of Our Transcendent Faculties Hereafter; Evidences from Psychology and Scripture That the Celestial Can Instantaneously Communicate across Distance Infinitely Great (1913); a minor example of how wireless telegraphy became imprinted in other areas of cultural consciousness.

An important figure in this correlation is Camille Flammarion (1862-1927), originally an astronomer, who founded the Society of Psychological Studies in Paris (1891), and became a president of the British Society for Psychical Research between 1923-24. In his novel *Lumen* (1897), Flammarion extrapolates a metaphysical system to contain and dramatise his scientific data, adopting ideas on continuation of the disembodied soul and its serial reincarnation as alien life-forms. Lumen -- the departed spirit -- waxes lyrical over movements of the ether, believing that a "soul vibrating under their influence perceives them as well". Consequently, he is able to measure attractions of the mind through "a process [belonging] to the psychic order", which renders "transmission instantaneous".⁴²

The dialogue with Quaerens, an aspiring philosopher, considers forces of action in the universe -- a region notoriously uncharted by the human race who, insists Lumen, only adapt to their terrestrial environment:

Successive transmission [...] in space, is one of the *fundamental elements of the condition of eternal life*. According to this law every event is imperishable, and the past is always present. There are stars which you see from the Earth, and which no longer exist, because they became extinct after they had emitted the luminous ray which has only just reached you [...] In the same

⁴² Camille Flammarion, *Lumen* (London: Heinemann, 1897), p. 100.

way you might hear the voice of a man at a distance who might be dead before the moment at which you heard him (222-23).

Forever in transit, the evanescent Lumen holds great knowledge of communication within the spheres. He argues that humanity need not be so remote in its "dark cavern", if it would only "advance into the air with a velocity superior to that of sound", that is, by arresting the travel of sound and capturing that which "left the lips of a speaker". Only then, could the faculties of human souls be relayed in a similar fashion to spectrum rays, "across millions and millions of miles", thus disregarding the mortal barrier of death. *Lumen* complements the 'neo-scientific novel' by Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Dr Faustroll, Pataphysician* (1898), wherein a "telepathic letter" from Faustroll to the physicist Sir William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) is relayed from a "state which constitutes death":

Eternity appears to me in the image of an immobile ether [...] it is appropriate to write
ETERNITY.⁴³

William Crookes had confidently extended the definition of ether as proposed by forerunners such as Maxwell, admitting its vastness, but locating *electricity* as the primary mode, perhaps a "manifestation" of the fluctuating void.⁴⁴ Therefore, the focus of his 1892 piece is on study of invisible wave-forms *within* the ether

⁴³ *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*, eds. Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor (London: Eyre Methuen, 1965), p. 249. The work also contains a missive to English physician C.V. Boys (1855-1944) who invented the radio-micrometer, and wrote several popular scientific texts such as *Soap Bubbles and the Forces Which Mould Them* (London: 1890). More significantly, the same section of *Dr Faustroll* (chapter 6) is dispatched to Boys, although it contains sentences paraphrased from Sir William Crookes's presidential address to the S.P.R, London, 1897.

⁴⁴ William Crookes, 'Some Possibilities of Electricity', in *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 51, Jan 1-June 1, 1892 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1892): 173-181. At the outset, he cites Oliver Lodge:

"or in some still more subtle substance" which may elicit further understanding of spirits, telepathy and clairvoyance.

"Telegraphy without wires, cables or posts" is offered as the next stage to transmitting and receiving intelligence, where "any two friends living within the radius and sensibility of their receiving instruments, having first decided on their special wavelength [...] could communicate as long and often as they pleased". Crookes idealistically deems the problem of human contact, or "mutual receptivity", as surmountable by *tuning*. However, the issue of accuracy thus enters scientific attempts in telecommunications as swiftly as the notion of inauthentic discourse surrounded writing:

At first sight, an objection to this plan would be its want of secrecy [...] the transmitter would send out the waves in all directions.

Countless wavelengths would apparently dissuade even the most inveterate from reviewing every one until 'hitting' on the oscillation he wishes to 'tap'. Even from a speculative position, Crookes is anxious to prevent any chance of "surreptitious straying"; a vitally revealing phrase which recurs and intensifies with every media projection. Already, the idea of dissemination -- or broadcasting -- facilitated by "telegraphy without wires" is portrayed as unsatisfactory.

This is apparent in Crookes' insistence on a junction with "other sentient beings" or in thought transference of two kindred spirits. Hugh Aitkin also observes that

"...electricity is a form, or rather manifestation of the ether". See Lodge, 'On Electrolysis', *British Association Reports* (1885).

"nowhere does Crookes envisage the use of radio frequencies for anything other than person-to-person communication" (173). The experiment recorded in the 1892 article occurs within the confines of a house; it resembles a séance, with the messages clandestine and controlled.

Future commentary was certainly influenced by Crookes' ventures, as shown in titles such as 'Wireless Telegraphy and Brain Waves' (1899) a concept furthered in Upton Sinclair's lengthy investigation *Mental Radio* (1930), which hoped to find "reality" behind spiritualist practices, linking them to the human brain, " a storage battery, capable of sending impulses over the nerves by means of some other medium, known or unknown?"⁴⁵ Similarly, professional psychic Frederick Fletcher estimated that "if a machine produces etheric waves capable of cognition and communication, then the same possibility should exist within ourselves".⁴⁶ The overriding theme of such writings is joy at the ability of modern science to locate infinitesimal human traces. By that maxim, it suggested limitless access to a void made apparent by any distance, namely death.

One essay by Professor John Trowbridge in 1899 hoped to "make wireless telegraphy intelligible [...] a panegyric of this buried form, a history of its new life and its unbounded possibilities" for travel amongst the spheres.⁴⁷ It begins in the physical laboratory of Harvard University, where antiquated pieces of apparatus are collected, "dead mechanisms born to new uses and a great future",

⁴⁵ James T. Knowles, 'Wireless Telegraphy and Brain Waves, *Living Age* vol. 222, London (8 July 1899); 100-106; Upton Sinclair, *Mental Radio* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1930), 9-10.

⁴⁶ Frederick Fletcher, *The Sixth Sense: Psychic Origin, Rationale and Development* (London: Fowler Ltd., 1907), p. 8.

the most "interesting skeleton" being a Hertzian transformer.⁴⁸ Two lengths of wire placed together constitute a Ruhmkorf coil; batteries are attached to the inner section, while the outer coil is connected to two balls between which an electric spark flows. In essence, one coil is adapted to receive, the other responds by sympathy or induction. By raising faint impulses by careful positioning of dismembered parts, this spark system reconfigures internal circuitry of the human body. The eye, in response to a flashlight "acts as the coherer" with its rods and cones in the retina [whereupon] the nerve system, the local battery, makes a signal or sensation in the brain".

Moreover, the delicate counteractions of the transformer are the "nearest approach to telepathy", despite the inability, Trowbridge adds, to obtain *individual calls*. Like telephony, where messages can be detected by "gossips", he recognises that certain rates of vibration "cannot be sent from point to point over wires to which only certain definite apparatus will respond".

Some years later in 1924, *Scientific American* staged experiments into 'Thought Transference from the Broadcasting Studio', where members of the radio audience were invited to reproduce words, pictures and ideas emanating from the "senders"; a task which failed owing to the promiscuous nature of the medium which "swallowed up" any merging of minds. "One cannot get undisputed possession of the air at any rational hour of the day or night", the paper

⁴⁷ John Trowbridge, 'Wireless Telegraphy', in *Popular Science Monthly*, vol. 56 (November 1899): 59-73. As a sideline to academia, Trowbridge wrote scientific fantasies for 'story papers' in the United States, for example 'The Electric Boy' (*Everybody's Magazine*, 1890).

⁴⁸ Heinrich Hertz had experimented in the 1890's with oscillatory discharges using a Leydon jar condenser and induction coils. He succeeded in making small sparks stronger by adding metal detectors.

complained.⁴⁹ Hugh Aitkin regards this field as the 'geewhiz' approach to technology, whereby the indiscriminacy of electrical waves in free space was approached by hypothetical musings.

The wireless signal, at this stage, was a symptom of the ancient -- and progressive --- desire to relay messages "through space, for great distances from brain to brain in the entire absence of any known means of physical communication between two widely separated stations".⁵⁰ Significantly, this remark was not in relation to telepathic endeavours, but the trials of Guglielmo Marconi, another visionary who nevertheless shared the same 'blind spot' as William Crookes and Oliver Lodge: a hesitance in recognising the public nature of the private voice.⁵¹

Lodge once admitted to feeling like a boy "who has been long strumming on the silent keyboard of a deserted organ, into the chest of which an unseen power begins to blow a vivifying breath. Astonished, he now finds that the touch of a finger elicits a responsive note [...] half-affrighted, lest he be deafened by the chords which it would seem he can now summon at will".⁵² This was in response to Professor Hertz's development of a primitive detector which recorded electromagnetic waves in motion, instigating the charnel-house of oddments described by Trowbridge -- copper wire, induction coils, sheets of zinc, copper, filings, batteries, and a meter.

⁴⁹ J. Malcolm Bird, 'Telepathy and Radio: Results of the Scientific American Test of Thought Transference from the Broadcasting Studio' in *Scientific American* (June 1924): 382, 443.

⁵⁰ Knowles, 'Wireless Telegraphy and Brain Waves' at 100.

⁵¹ Aitkin, p. 173.

⁵² 'The Discharge of a Leyden Jar' in *Oliver Lodge: Modern Views*, (London: Cassell, 1923), pp. 359-383.

In the resulting chain of pioneers, it is difficult to ascertain who effected the actual wireless signal: Lodge 'summoned' electric telegraphy during a Royal Institute lecture of 1894; Marconi's use of the first aerial with his mentor Professor Righi facilitated the "modern machinery" he took to the Bath-Salisbury tests.⁵³ Alternatively, Kittler is adamant that Adolphus Slaby made the first accurate transmission, while a letter to the *Listener* in 1932 revived the experiments of D.E Hughes, who reportedly achieved wireless contact twenty years before official successes.⁵⁴ Sir Edward Rigg describes an experiment in 1879 where Hughes spoke to "someone at the upper end of the street" in a demonstration to a Committee of the Royal Society. They were unconvinced and the paper thus withdrawn.⁵⁵ Hugh Aitken, however, is allied to the efforts of Lodge, writing that Branly's "improved coherer and spark gap" shown at Oxford was actually employed in very different circumstances:

Later that month, at a 'Ladies' Conversazione' of the Royal Society in London, a small portable receiver was demonstrated using headphones [...] Lodge claimed that ranges of half a mile had been obtained. Difficult though it may be, we must learn to think of radio as born not on the rolling hills of the Marconi estate outside Bologna, nor on the barren heath of Salisbury Plain where Preece carried out his post office tests [...] but rather amid the teacups and genteel chatter of a Ladies' Conversazione on a June evening in London" (117, 120).

⁵³ For in depth discussion of the tests see Orrin J Dunlap, *Marconi, the Man and his Wireless* (New York: MacMillan & Co. 1937) pp. 54-59; Degna Marconi, *My Father, Marconi* (London: Frederick Muller, 1962).

⁵⁴ In 1890, David E. Hughes created a conductor out of zinc and silver filings; the next year Edward Branly extended the components to include a glass tube, connected to batteries and a voltmeter. This became known in radio parlance as the 'coherer'.

⁵⁵ The *Listener*, vol. viii (20 July, 1932): 105-106.

This is hugely relevant, in that the cult of the drawing room at the turn of the century accounted for another mass diversion, the cult of spiritualism, whose mediums operated in small domestic circles. An unfolding 'housebound' drama of unfathomable scientific proportions would correspond to an environment where, as one historian notes, "palmistry, necromancy, crystal-gazing and betting on horses" were habitual.⁵⁶ Esoteric fancies of communing with the past and divining the future could be verified by an instrument which seemingly collapsed space to an instant. Moreover, the insularity of the upper middle-classes in London during this period of transition -- between dying Victoriana and the emerging modern spirit -- may have caused wireless to be a whispered phenomenon in literary societies and private clubs before any commercial distinction.

Later, the figure of Marconi would mysteriously appear in "Piccadilly or Pall Mall" disguised as "the average club or city gent" blending into the crowd. This was the man caricatured in 1911 as a necromancer, "sparks snapping out like lightening flashes from his finger tips", who held arcane knowledge. He understood that "the *uninitiated* must regard the developments in wireless as something bordering on the supernatural". Notably, when charting early endeavours of Marconi, his biographer Orrin J. Dunlap includes the chapter heading: 'Acts in An Occult Drama'.⁵⁷

It was the drama of Marconi which captured the popular imagination: a zealous boy with his equipment of two balloons and "longtailed calico kites bedecked

⁵⁶ Marghanita Laski, 'Domestic Life' in *Edwardian England 1901-1914*, ed. Simon Nowell-Smith (London: OUP, 1964), pp. 179-191, at 184.

with tinfoil" as aerials.⁵⁸ Most commentary centred on "magic [...] the occult modern mystery" of "thought passing between" something more delicate than the earthy cable.⁵⁹ By initially substituting a Morse machine for a voltmeter in the Branly coherer, Marconi reinforced the current with a 'relay' (a combination of a receiver and transmitter designed to apprehend signals and retransmit them, in order to extend their range). This enabled the sending of wireless over the Bristol channel during December 1897. In attendance was Adolphus Slaby, who recalled the copper wires dipped into the sea, the giant aerials, and primarily the *sinister, silent printing* of the Morse through that "unknown and mysterious agent, the ether" Inspired by unseen forces, the machine shuddered in sympathy to produce markings on a surface. Markings controlled -- dictated -- by excitation in the atmosphere.⁶⁰

Two years later, on 27 March 1899, the first trans-Channel exchange -- "Gniteerg morf Ecnarf ot Dnalgna hgowht eht rehte" [Greetings from France to England through the ether] -- proved how various 'agents' could distort the intent of any message. Dunlap considers that "[t]he Dover operator may have thought something was tangled up but he copied just what he heard" (72). Following these efforts in long-distance signalling, Marconi filed for a patent in 1900 which hoped to advance his instrument, "to *control* the action [...] to cause intelligible communications with one or more stations out of a group of several receiving

⁵⁷ Dunlap, pp. 88, 179, 304, 37.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵⁹ Ray Stannard Baker, quoted in Marconi, p. 105.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* pp. 46-47.

stations", namely, selective tuning (93).⁶¹ Thereafter known as 7777, the patent officially gave scientific licence to attempt a basic human aspiration, that is, to send and receive messages privately and simultaneously under all conditions.

A Marconi family legend, which may be slightly embellished in secondary reporting, holds that the infant Guglielmo's ears were very large at birth and continued to be prominent; his mother retorted that he would always "be able to hear the still, small voice of the air". Degna Marconi adds that her father viewed himself as "a scientific vessel, a human instrument" acted upon by a higher force (85). To an extent, he physically advertises the graduation from recording technologies; his "uncanny [...] facility in hearing conversation at a distance and distinguishing between a multiplicity of sounds" is often invoked.⁶²

For instance, on 12 December, 1901 when Marconi attempted, and logged, the first transoceanic message in dots and clicks, it was belatedly detected after great effort by his less perceptive assistants. Speaking of his aims for 7777 -- to regulate both transmitter and receiver -- Marconi commended the findings of Alexander Graham Bell, who as aforementioned, based his device on the membrane of an eardrum. Conspicuously, the message of December 12 was actually 'read' through a telephone receiver. This acted as a corporeal appendage, somewhat neutralising the horror of the new medium, wireless. For it represented no-body; it opened up a vacuum containing the "merest trajectory of a signal".⁶³

⁶¹ The official term is 'syntony', that which "makes it possible to locate a radio transmitter or receiver at a particular wavelength [...] in the radiofrequency spectrum and at none other" (Aitken, p. 34)

⁶² Dunlap, p. 267.

Telephony already implied the walled-in self, expectantly signing to an absent other with no guarantee of *consensus in idem*. A more theologically inclined writer during this era summarised that any attempts in communication are "launches from solitude in the direction of an assumed reality; which reality, if it exists, is no less solitary".⁶⁴ Touching then, Marconi's desire that his wireless be used by "men on lonely lightships and isolated lighthouses [...] to send messages of a daily private character [...] to render less painful their isolation". He assumed that his force which knew "no frontiers" might "fulfill what has always been an essentially human need".⁶⁵ This is reminiscent of Bell's command to Thomas A. Watson across the telephone circuit: "Come here, I want you!", which epitomises the response to a disembodied voice. "It emerges from what is not present-at-hand", Avital Ronell explains, "thus, 'I want you' *phantomizes* you. I want that which I do not possess, I do not have you, I lack you, I miss you" (228).

The blind spot of Marconi, as defined by Hugh Aitken, is innate to experimenters who in Lodge's words were, instead, "deafened by the chords [...] they could summon". Slow in adjusting to the practical, business capacities of the broadcast voice, Marconi appeared to balk at the "dream of *direct* wireless abandoned in favour of a world relay system" as favoured by cable companies and sponsors. His rapid improvements to early wireless -- the four sevens -- were fuelled by, firstly, what the Futurists called 'the ancient nostalgic torment of long distances', and a comparable concern that "anyone with a [radio] receiver could eavesdrop.

⁶³ Kahn and Whitehead, p. 21.

⁶⁴ William Ernest Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), p. 245.

⁶⁵ Marconi p. 65; Dunlap, citing Marconi at City Hall, New York, 1927, p. 289.

Worse, two senders could blot each other out".⁶⁶ His intent was to fix wavelengths in the radiofrequency spectrum; in the words of Aitkin, to assert that "place on the dial [...] where the station *is*" (27). One might hope to secure the absent voice, establishing that 'you' are definitely there.

However, it was admitted that cross-interference would always remain within this chaotic system of lines and flow, whose electric waves wreaked "disturbing influence upon one another". They obscured the specific location, which veered tantalizingly within reach, and then sank beneath surging frequencies. Styled as the "main prospector [of] the ether", Marconi may have granted ingress to the vacuum, but could never slice through with certainty.⁶⁷

His future modifications to wireless naturally revolved around the idea of accuracy; destined, as he was, to sending "a lot of messages that never got anywhere".⁶⁸ After radio broadcasting had existed for over a decade and the curvature of the earth was thoroughly surmounted by long-waves, Marconi recognised the intensity of ultra-short, or micro-waves (10 metres long) in 1932, which extended distance to beyond the perceptible horizon. He felt, writes his daughter, that 'limitations' were imposed upon the radio signal by external control, chiefly his own spiralling venture, the Marconi Company which supplied high-speed commercial service to the entire planet (the British Government signed a contract in 1924). The first sizzle of micro-waves was recorded at the Vatican, 12th February 1931, through an installation requested by Marconi in

⁶⁶ See Kahn and Whitehead on Futurism, pp. 20-26; Marconi, pp. 169, 61.

⁶⁷ *ibid*; Dunlap, p. 75.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 334. Marconi, address to directors of Radio City Rockefeller Centre, June 1927.

order that a 'living voice' of the Holy Father be dispatched to the countless unseen.

Dunlap declares this to be "the most globe-girdling broadcast ever attempted" as the Pope departed from "limited means of communication by evangelical letters to speak into a gold mounted microphone" (302). Marconi's response -- that such a momentous occasion destroyed "one's belief in the boundary of possibilities" (328) -- may incite Roy Stemman's unsubstantiated claim that Marconi researched electric contact with the dead. Towards the end of his life, in what purported to be an intuitive extension of radio science, Marconi allegedly worked to create a "highly sophisticated" device that would pluck forgotten voices from human history, hoping even to hear the last words of "Jesus on the cross".⁶⁹

Concrete evidence for Stemman's assumption lies in Marconi's comment when presented with the John Fritz Medal for engineering distinction in 1930. Journalists alerted him to the medium Eileen Garrett, who had recently received a posthumous suggestion from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: that radio might be used to communicate with the spirit world. It was made explicit by a situation occurring 7 October 1930 at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, whereby Garrett's attempt to contact the novelist was surprisingly thwarted by an intrusion from Flight Lieutenant H.C. Irwin of the fated Airship 101, who 'crashed' the airwaves of Garrett's séance almost as spectacularly as his dirigible had fallen in flames over Beauvais, France, two days earlier. An anguished voice delivered highly technical details of the disaster -- "Engines wrong- too heavy-

⁶⁹ Roy Stemman, *Spirits and the Spirit World* (London: Aldus Books Ltd, 1975), p. 98; Also regarded in Sconce, p. 61.

cannot rise. Never reached cruising altitude- same in trials". All was confirmed six months later by an official inquiry.

The jumbled signal from Irwin at the moment of his incineration amounted to a posthumous S.O.S which was strangely resented by those attending the séance as noisome interruption. One sitter testily remarked that "[...] finally Conan Doyle did come through after Irwin went silent".⁷⁰ Despite such intriguing evidence, Marconi jocularly replied that electric forays into a parallel universe "would take too long a wavelength", although "[n]o-one can say definitely that abnormal sounds on the wireless originate on [this] earth", hinting that his device could be hijacked by intangible forces.⁷¹

Point-to-point wireless clearly verified survival, and any failure to answer the call signified loss. In 1908, another technician, Ernst Ruhmer surmised that after pioneering efforts were "all forgotten, when copper wires, guttapercha covers and iron bands are only to be found in museums", a wireless operator of the future might "call with an electric voice [heard] only by him who has a similarly tuned electric ear". On failure of reply "he will know that his friend is dead".⁷²

However, Marconi styled himself as a 'visionary' inventor (regardless of any

⁷⁰ Eileen Garrett, *Adventures in the Supernormal: A Personal Memoir* (New York: Creative Age Press Inc., 1949), p. 8. Maurice Barbanell also comments on the writer's alacrity in adapting to twentieth century progress. Upon conducting a séance in an aeroplane in 1936, where "spirit voices were heard speaking through trumpets that had been placed in the darkened cabin [...] Conan Dyle declared: "This is an adventure more fantastic than death", Barbanell, *Across the Gulf* (London: Psychic Press Ltd.), p. 59. Documents on Airship R101, named the '*Titanic* of the Air' for its superior structure and dramatic demise can be found at the Public Record Office, Kew, London, under AIR 3, 5, 11. Photographs of the wreckage are under AIR5/1070. Of course, a parallel also exists in the use of communications received over vast distances; in the case of the *Titanic*, actual wireless telegraphy which flashed messages from the stricken vessel. This momentous event of telegraphic exchange is widely discussed; a lively version is Steven Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, pp. 65-67, 107-110.

⁷¹ Dunlap p. 267

'blind spot') and shared Flammarion's opinion of the universe as "an invisible dynamism [where] everything is electrical".⁷³ His wireless was conceivably "an electrical device [...] with which to dig out the secrets of space", and to "tap inexhaustible traffic" flocking in from elsewhere. The latent suggestion was that syntonic advances -- beginning with 7777 -- could pinpoint the site of other dimensions.⁷⁴

Enlivened Spiritualism.

Just as the invention of the Morse code alphabet in 1837 spawned the rapping knocking spectres at seances, and daguerreotypy froze the random flickering of a departed loved one, so wireless technology promised to restore the absent. As outlined previously, the zone of the dead is adjustable to the storage and transmission 'capabilities' of a given culture, specifically the present mediascape, continues Kittler, of "flight apparatuses into the great beyond" (13). From the remembered dead to the transmitted dead, to interact with a half-heard half-felt duplicate became a palliative to the ultimate separation.

During the first chapter of his enquiry, Jeffrey Sconce charts the explicit connection between spiritualism -- managing to sweep over the gamut of

⁷² Ernst Ruhmer, *Wireless Telephony in Theory and Practice* (London: Crosby, Cockwood & Son 1908), p. 301.

⁷³ Flammarion, *Haunted Houses* (London: T.Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1924), p. 314

⁷⁴ Dunlap, p. 327 citing paper delivered by Marconi for the Royal Institution 12 June 1902. Marconi's comment on his 'visionary' nature appeared in the *New York Times*, 24 March 1912. He added that he tried to keep his "eyes and ears open" to possibilities (p. 226).

paranormal phenomena, "seances, spirit circles, automatic writing, telepathy, clairvoyance, Ouija boards" -- and electromagnetic telegraphy. By noting the "historical proximity and intertwined legacies of these two founding mediums, one material [...] the other spiritual", Sconce diagnoses the cultural mentality of the early 20th century, as " a collective fantasy of telepresence" which allowed the paranormal to align itself with "animating powers of electricity".⁷⁵ Jenny Hazelgrove also registers that scientific concepts became a "standard means of representing telepathic experience", as the voice of a person traversing through a delicate medium was a common project.⁷⁶ It is generally understood by Durham Peters that:

[a]s soon as spirit-to-spirit contact became realised in new technologies, mutual presence "in person" took on a new premium and a new deficiency (142-3).

It becomes evident that wireless animated spiritualism -- conceptually. This thesis deems aspects of the paranormal to be definable as telecommunications media, primarily because they furnish science with the vocabulary, or issue, of solitude and unity. In turn, episodes of ghoulish activity were often peppered with scientific terms, thus verifying, or rendering acceptable a practice which exuded both pathos and horror.

⁷⁵ Sconce, pp. 26-28.

⁷⁶ Jenny Hazelgrove, *Spiritualism and British Society between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 21. See also Richard J. Noakes, 'Telegraphy is an Occult Art: Cromwell Fleetwood Varley and the diffusion of electricity to the other world' in *BJHS*, vol. 32 (1999): 421-59. Noakes addresses the mid-Victorian period "when both telegraphic and spiritualistic forms of communication proved troublesome and promoters of either scheme could be accused of fraud, ignorance or over-credulity".

There are several examples of this mutual influence, given precedence by the Fox sisters in 1848 who alleged to be a channel for otherworldly entities; their house was eventually described as "charged with the aura requisite to make it a battery for the working of the telegraph".⁷⁷ Elsewhere, the spirits themselves were thought to "ascribe *their electricity and their light* to the undulation and polarisation of an analogous etherial fluid", akin to Flammarion's Lumen, nourished in provinces beyond our feeble understanding of celestial transmission.⁷⁸ Although earthbound creatures, according to Allen Upward, derived energy from "the millions of waves forever flowing in and out of us from the Strength Without, whose best name is Heaven [...] conductors gather a few here and there to keep the body safe".⁷⁹

Flammarion's case-notes often address the automatic, credulous response to various "remarkable phenomena" of science, which provoke a tendency to surmise rather than understand:

[The] vacillating lights of the *Ignes-fatui* or will-o-the-wisp have appealed to the superstitious feelings of the people. The frightened imagination has often looked upon them as wandering spirits [gliding] between the graves of a churchyard during the silence of night [...] They are sometimes emitted suddenly, when an old burying vault is opened.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Emma Hardinge, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Year's Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits* (New York: Robert M. De Witt 1869; reprint and with notes by E.J. Dingwall (New York: New Hyde Park, 1970), p. 29.

⁷⁸ Robert Hare, *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations, Demonstrating the Existence of Spirits and Their Communion with Mortals* (New York: Partridge and Brittain, 1855), p. 393.

⁷⁹ Upward, p. 287.

⁸⁰ Flammarion, *The Atmosphere*, trans. James Glaisher (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low and Searle, 1873), p. 495.

One writer, Robert Milne, was encouraged by the notion that ghosts might capitalise upon electricity. At the close of his story, 'Being A Dip Into the Doings of the Four-Dimensional World' (1889), the narrator is electrocuted by deathly forces who rampage the house during a séance, pointedly short-circuiting the electric wires. With the intuition of Marconi, a character in 'The Great Electric Diaphragm' (1879) contrives to send messages through space by probing atmospheric layers above the earth. He uses a rooftop wire, stretching into the clouds, which becomes the ideal channel for spirit energies.⁸¹ Any further intellectual reception to such a conflating of disparate realms is a focal point of the present study; this particular section denotes actual contact through wire-less means, or rather, illustrates that in certain cases, the notion of *wires* became prevalent.

Owing to the growth of electric technology, any séance was invested with a note of authentic drama. Psychologist William James -- who founded the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research in 1889 -- explicitly compared the brains of those at a seance to Marconi sites, amplifying news from the grave. As a result, he styled the female medium as a portal for repositories flowing through those "receiving stations".⁸²

⁸¹ Robert Milne, 'A Mysterious Twilight; Being a Dip into the Doings of the Four-Dimensional World', *Argonaut*, vol. 34 (23 December 1889), 9-16.

Robert Milne, 'The Great Electric Diaphragm: Some Account of the Telegraphic System of the Baron O-', *Argonaut*, vol. 15 (24 May 1879), 21-27. These stories characterise popular science fiction in the United States at the dawn of telecommunications. Titles included 'Towering Buildings that Grab Gales from the Skies, Snatch Electricity From the Earth, and in Many Other Ways 'Butt In' (Arthur B. Reeve, *Everybody's Magazine*, March 1908). See Sam Moskowitz, *Strange Horizons: The Spectrum of Science Fiction* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1976), pp. 131. Further commentary is in Sconce, p.216 f42.

⁸² William James, 'Report on Mrs Piper's Hodgeson Control' (1909) in *William James on Psychical Research*, ed. Gardner Murphy (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), p. 208.

In Britain, the poet Edward Carpenter -- commended by Eileen Garrett as "one of the greatest spirits of the modern age" -- argued at length for "some form of life after death with the postulates of science".⁸³ Carpenter determines "the possible radiative power of the etherial body", given that the human body is comprised of "soul-fragments (or 'psychomeres') with negative and positive charges". Upon death,

Liberation from the gross body is naturally accompanied by an enormous extension of faculty. The soul in its new and subtler form passes out into an immensely wider sphere of action and perception.

This evokes Alfred Jarry's *Dr. Faustroll*; it is also reliant on James Clerk Maxwell's claim for a vast force supporting all stellar regions, choked with faint impulses. Carpenter insists that direct converse between the differing planes of such an ETERNITY and human life is difficult, unless a medium be interposed in order to catch the "electric charges [...] moving at prodigious speeds".⁸⁴

This desire to seal the gap, to restore absent bodies, naturally imbued the séance with fakery and farce. Emanations from the performing medium, whether it be a wafting fragrance or a projection of his/her mind often occluded spiritual traffic, as noted in the extensive reports of F.W.H Myers. In an essay entitled 'On Hindrances and Complications in Telepathic Communication', in *Phantasms of the Living* (1886), the process of sending a message through a medium is likened, by a disgruntled voice from beyond, to "standing behind a sheet of frosted glass -

⁸³ Eileen Garrett, *My Life as a Search for the Meaning of Mediumship* (London: Rider & Co, 1941), p. 120. Edward Carpenter, *The Drama of Love and Death: A Study of Human Evolution and Transfiguration* (London: George Allen & Co. Ltd, 1912), p. 202

which blurs sight and deadens sound - and dictating feebly - to a somewhat obtuse secretary".⁸⁵ At a later date, the medium Helen Hughes freely admitted that messages are never "perfect and conclusive" owing to "imperfection of the receiving instrument":

The spirit people may be 'broadcasting' the most conclusive evidence and yet the medium hears nothing, or only part of what has been spoken. We are dependent on laws of attunement of which we know little. Even our telephone system has temporary defects. Can we wonder at the difficulties encountered in trying to communicate with a world of a different dimension.⁸⁶

Hester Travers Smith, in her memoir of mediumship, *Voices from the Void* (1919), implies that her visitors dictate proceedings. One spirit, 'Peter Rooney' is "very particular about the mediums through which he communicates" and gathers his power to "see without eyes" from some unknown quality in certain sitters.⁸⁷

Another "control" -- the entity who facilitates between medium and spirit world - - is anxious to "exclude other controls" who may impede his passage. Smith adds, "I have known him to "block the telephone", as he calls it, for a month at a time and exclude any communication but his own" (19). The only solution is to hypnotise two mediums and "suggest Eyen not be permitted to speak", so restraining the current in a strange pastiche of early wireless, where undesired high-frequency signals are filtered out by a choke-coil and condenser.⁸⁸ This is a viable example of scientific tropes applied to a rather incredible scenario.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* pp. 295, 183, 249-50, 208-210.

⁸⁵ *Phantasms of the Living*, eds. FWH Myers and Eleanor Balfour Sidgwick (London: Society for Psychical Research, 1886/New York: Arno Press, 1924), p.433.

⁸⁶ Bernard Upton, *The Mediumship of Helen Hughes* (London: Spiritualist Press, 1946), p. 49. Eileen Garrett also wondered if "when I contacted another intelligence, could I ever fully understand what he desired to transmit?" (*Adventures in the Supernormal*, p. 157)

⁸⁷ Hester Travers Smith, *Voices From the Void: Six Years Experience in Automatic Communication* (London: William Rider and Son, 1919), 15.

Seemingly, the spirit world not only suffered impediments to cross-border communications, but it also had internal 'hijackers' of important outlets.

Smith's text is thus noteworthy in that spirits dominate attempts at human mediation. This causes confusion over the veracity of reports:

Whether the spirit speaks to us directly, through a control, or only when dreaming, no-one can say; the extreme uncertainty of the messages received and the mixture of fact and fiction point to the latter idea (102).

A phrase which outlines a typical séance, where all tactile sensation is uncanny and each percipient seeks a message unique to them, invigorated by the "urgent demand of affection" as Oliver Lodge was to discover.⁸⁹ With all 'natural' modes of contact -- touch, smell, sight -- subjugated to paranormal rules, the experience is vastly interpretive.

After all, the medium has an impulse to perform and assuage grief but does so in a half-oblivion; philosopher Charles Horton Cooley contemplated that some of the dead are "more real in a practical sense than most of us who have not yet lost our corporeity".⁹⁰ Ghosts only haunt borders registered by the living, a difference painfully accentuated by the very act of communication. Consider the chilling exchange between medium Maurice Barbanell and another:

"We can't see you", I said to one spirit voice, heard regularly.

⁸⁸ Scott-Taggart, p. 125.

⁸⁹ Oliver Lodge, *Raymond: Or Life After Death*, p. 83

⁹⁰ Charles Horton Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Scribner's, 1902), p. 119

A laugh came.

"*Why, you must be dead,*" was the amused answer.⁹¹

Successful psychical intercourse at any level is, continues William James, a matter of dividing "the rubbish-making and truth-telling wills" of the ghostly transmission; certainly a vital concern of radio dialogue in the media age. Both demand the same response: is this acoustic effigy a viable substitute for the person I want? Should a part of the body -- the voice -- be salvaged and renewed by an intervening medium, then it may be mutated, wrong, or subsumed by the flow.⁹²

As a means of surveillance, the Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882 to ascertain the 'facts' of spiritualist encounters, as apart from their 'nature'. Primarily a legitimate arena for research, the S.P.R., writes Janet Oppenheim, "had a social and intellectual cachet all its own [...] indebted for its identity to the tradition of discussion and debating clubs in British intellectual circles".⁹³ Amongst the luminaries, a number are striking in that their experiments are multi-faceted; the buzz of electricity often surrounds their quest for mutual kinship, to read the 'flow' of dead traces.

⁹¹ Hannen Swaffer, preface to Maurice Barbanell, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (London: Rider and Co., 1933), p. 9. Also quoted in Steven Connor, 'The Machine in the Ghost: Spiritualism, Technology and the Direct Voice' in *Ghosts: Psychoanalysis, Deconstruction, History*, eds., Peter Buse and Andrew Stott (London: Macmillan, 1999): 203-225. Connor sketches the machinations of the séance, implying that the disembodiment of acoustic technologies forced spiritualism to actually borrow elements of wireless etc., to restore bodily presence.

⁹² Barbanell describes a séance attended by twenty-six people, wherein eighteen spirit voices added to the confusion.

⁹³ Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: 1985), pp.127, 136.

Spiritualists were "particularly jubilant", Oppenheim notes, whenever a feted scientist succumbed to the cause, as it was generally assumed that such men possessed "special investigative talents that enabled them to identify fraud in the séance chamber" (342-343). This comment relates to psychic investigations performed by William Crookes in July 1870, where the necromancy of spiritualism was officially subdued by a greater authority; that of Crookes' material devices and practical reasoning.

From the outset, he saw the "movement of substances and the production of sounds" as "resembling electric discharges", which inspired a task with mediums Florence Cook and Annie Eva Fay respectively. By wiring the subject to an instrument called a galvanometer, any forgery would be registered by the dial. Apparently, several musical instruments reverberated "while the galvanometer index was very steady", which implied authenticity.⁹³ Another attempt to locate psychic force was a "helix of insulated wire" encasing the medium Daniel Dunglass Home, through which an "electric current of different intensities was passed" (359). By applying the unknown agencies of physics to another indefinite phenomenon, Crookes hoped to rationalise spiritualism, but faltered by decorating the séance with more trappings. Just as trumpets served to amplify spirit whispering in order to *prove* contact, so the inclusion of wires justified greater attempts to bridge the chasm.⁹⁴

⁹³ 'A Scientific Examination of Mrs Fay's Mediumship', *Spiritualist Newspaper* (12 March 1875). Oppenheim adds that the inventor of the galvanometer was Cromwell Varley whose wife was a private medium (p.474).

⁹⁴ Steve Connor in 'The Machine in the Ghost' mentions a spirit circle in Cincinnati, 1871 which incorporated a telegraphic instrument into their seances. However, "it was necessary to materialise a 'battery' to power it" (211).

Believing in 'Worlds not realised' and the domain of the mind, Crookes was an idealist who seemed to perceive grossness in spiritualist strivings and even in the recesses of science, particularly when the two combined to pull the ghost *through* the machine. "I have had hundreds of communications *professing* to come from deceased friends", he wrote, "but whenever I try to get proof that they are *really* the individuals they profess to be, they break down."⁹⁵

Sir Oliver Lodge, president of the S.P.R, 1901-1902, could not maintain the degree of pragmatism which characterised Crookes' foray into hidden forces; instead, he retained staunch belief of survival after bodily death. Oppenheim rightly considers that Lodge became rapidly outmoded, in that he 'clung' to the ether while physics progressed (381). In his opinion, the living and the dead would surely exist as "independent, isolated fragments" were it not for the cohesive agent which summoned impulses through a copper wire. If science resisted explanation of the interconnected universe, then, writes Oppenheim, its "laws needed to be augmented until they could apply to the phenomena of psychical research" (378).⁹⁶

Recalling his development of the coherer at University College, Liverpool, 1883, Lodge described "picking up lots of communications from ordinary telephone lines, and [hearing] people ordering potatoes for dinner and other such

⁹⁵ Letter from Crookes to a Mme. B, reprinted in *Crookes and the Spirit World*, eds. M.R Barrington, K.M Goldney and R.G Medhurst (London: Souvenir Press, 1972), p.237.

⁹⁶ Michael Whitworth points out that Lodge's writings gradually extended the functions of the ether, "insinuating very strongly that [it] must be preserved for the sake of the spirits". For Lodge, it began as the vehicle for transmission of light and evolved to become "the living garment of God" (*Einstein's Wake*, pp. 203-208).

absurdities".⁹⁷ This talent for eavesdropping would prove beneficial. A black-bordered telegram dated 14 September 1915 announcing the death of his eldest son in battle, confirmed a seance message of 8 August -- via the conduit of Miss Alta Leonora Piper. This tragedy spawned the book *Raymond: or Life After Death* (1916), an elegy to survival -- unswerving in its belief -- which provided solace to those painfully aware of separation, reinforced by telegrams and half-heard news.⁹⁸

Steven Kern writes on the synchronised movements of bombardments and offensives by technologies in World War I, which also focused the attention of the home front:

Europe became a communications network that processed more information than ever before [about] more events in widely distant places at the same time. World War I was the simultaneous drama of the age of simultaneity.⁹⁹

Yet science was often heralded as a method of retrieval, shown by Edison's posthumous status as "a quasi-body which could better commune with ghosts" even though his attempts to do so in life were remarkable.¹⁰⁰ *The New York*

⁹⁷ Letter to J. Arthur Hill (5 July 1915), in *Letters of Sir Oliver Lodge* (London: Cassell, 1932) pp. 83-84.

⁹⁸ In *Raymond*, Leonora Piper is abbreviated throughout as 'A.L.P.'. The connection to Anna Livia Plurabelle of *Finnegans Wake* should be noted and surely deserves great analysis. Evidence that Joyce was familiar with *Raymond* and read other works by Lodge is treated in James Atherton, *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in Finnegans Wake* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974)

⁹⁹ Kern, pp. 287-312.

¹⁰⁰ Kahn and Whitehead, p. 77. See Sconce for reference to an article of 1920: 'Edison Working on How to Communicate with the Next World' (*American Magazine*).

Times in 1921 requested an explanation from the inventor as to the fates of many dead soldiers: "People everywhere are anxiously awaiting word from you..."¹⁰¹

Hence, a spiritualist tract from a reputed wireless pioneer such as Oliver Lodge would perversely extend the interplay of electricity and psychic ritual which already imbued the cultural consciousness. As Sconce points out, radio may have orchestrated, reported and kept vigil over the scene of mass warfare, but it "impassively [suggested] that souls rising from [...] their trenches along the Siegfried line had evaporated into the flowing ether, perhaps to be retrieved by wireless, or perhaps to wander forever" (75).

Motifs of Lodgeian doctrine persist throughout *Raymond*, chiefly, the "waves of vibration" at a sitting and the portrayal of "Ether or a still more myriad existence: a region in which communication is more akin to telepathy" (208). Yet, as aforementioned, the mechanics of spiritualist discourse often reduced accuracy. Raymond must channel through 'Feda', the control and suffer the vagaries of 'A.L.P' and her colleagues. "He wants to know", says the trumpet medium, during a direct-voice sitting (which elicited a gentle '*Ray mnd*'), "did the voice *sound* like mine?" (173-74). Later sessions raise further objection:

I didn't like it much. I didn't use his tongue, I used his larynx without his tongue and without his lips [...] and that's why tones of the medium's voice come in, and why it's so often coloured by the medium (177).

¹⁰¹ Before his death, Edison promised to return via his own device. This was reported in the *New York Times* as 'Mr Edison's Life Units: Hundred Trillion in Human Body May Scatter After Death- Machine to Register Them' (23 January 1921). Unsettlingly, his expiring gasps were recorded for millions of people: "It is very beautiful over there". See Wyn Wachhorst, *Thomas Alva Edison: An American Myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981), p. 140.

This amounts to a grotesque semi-possession, where the spirit of Raymond inhabits selected parts of a corpus. He projects inaccurate, perhaps guttural sounds akin to the wax dummy in Friedlaender's tale which spews out apprehended fragments of Goethe.

As suspected by Hester Travers Smith, errors in communication are multiple in the afterlife. Seeing "through a glass darkly" or hearing through layers of distortion results in polluted exchange, as Raymond finds that "the different sound of voices confuses me and I mix it up with questions from another's thoughts" (108). It is unclear whether he refers to a bustling séance, or agitation in the spirit world. Trying new ways of "getting through", his words are "twisted" by Fedra, he loses the "Power", and is broadcast wrongly (154). A fate shared by every beneficiary of Oliver Lodge's work on telecommunications.

Lodge may have wished his son to resemble an electric signal, composed of an immaterial substance which has no property of "age, or wear and tear", as he depicts the ether in *My Philosophy*.¹⁰² This applies to excerpts in *Raymond*, where shattered limbs are said to be reconstituted in certain spheres. On one occasion, Raymond's visit to a higher plane is related, where he contracts into a tiny shape (an atom?), flowing down a "river of electricity or force, going all ways at once" akin to Edward Carpenter's vision of the disseminated 'psychomeres' sizzling with electrons (184).

¹⁰² Oliver Lodge, *My Philosophy. Representing My Views on the Many Functions of the Ether of Space* (London: Ernest Benn, 1933), pp. 220-222.

Radiotelegraphy is directly mentioned once, when a spirit titled F.W.M. infiltrates the proceedings. A notice for Oliver Lodge from Myers who wishes to be remembered; he is still "active" (perhaps 'charged'?) and reminds his counterpart to "Get in touch with Crookes re the Wireless". At the time, Lodge was in Kent, working on the physical apparatus, whilst William Crookes was modifying his stance towards communion with the dead.

Shattered by the demise of his wife in 1916, Crookes had resumed uncritical attendance at seances and seemed to pursue the dualistic explanation of a psychic force with less zeal. It is tempting to imagine the departed F.W.H Myers, who always perceived death as "not a cessation, but a liberation of energy", urging the use of an impersonal yet equally palpable medium, to revive the missing and loved: an aspiration fusing the realms of science and spiritualism which Crookes, in particular, may have deemed tenable.¹⁰³

Notably, an authorless volume published in 1918 outlines the same theme. In *Thy Son Liveth: Messages from a Soldier to His Mother*, a young American is slaughtered in France, but speaks to his family through the wireless set, of whose mechanics -- during his earthly existence -- he was greatly obsessed.¹⁰⁴

The most outlandish, yet undisputed example of wireless as a pervasive feature or *idea* within the séance, is found in the case notes of Clive Chapman and a 'journalist friend': *The Blue Room: Being the Absorbing Story of Voice-to-Voice Communication in BROAD LIGHT with Souls who have passed into the GREAT*

¹⁰³ F.W.H Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival After Bodily Death* vol. I (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903), p. 133.

BEYOND.¹⁰⁵ Dedicated to "Wee Betty, whose body is at the bottom of the ocean [...] the 'sparklet' who kept the proceedings moving merrily along" (73), the book recounts frequent conversations with a band of spirits characterised by their voice modulations and ability to play musical instruments. Predictably, the number includes World War I aviators who frequently overturn furniture in their gallant enthusiasm.

In a typical séance, darkness allows the medium to be identified, "a woman wrapped in flame [...] a clear white fire" as Travers Smith explains, whereas Chapman's account refers to excess illumination -- a bright fire and numerous lamps -- all of which supposedly demand authenticity.¹⁰⁶ Bodies "over there" replicate the environment: "you'd think we had electric lights in us, like glow worms", enthuses Wee Betty (87). By employing a phonograph to intensify voices heard alongside a piano, Chapman concluded hazily that "different phases of mediumship" were possible; using "*their* own power [the voices'] in combination with the power around the medium, together with the utilisation of sound waves" (48).

The breakthrough occurs "when those from the other side refused to use the horn any longer and we sat and listened for the voices coming in "on the air", so to speak..." (54):

¹⁰⁴ Sconce, p. 220.

¹⁰⁵ Clive Chapman and 'G.A.W.' (London: Special Edition for the Psychic Book Club Ltd, 1927).

¹⁰⁶ Travers Smith, p. 41.

In June 1924 - during the playing of a piano piece "YooHoo" - a kind of set tone or vibration was set up which was continuous. And it was on this wave that we first heard our soul friends speak to us (59).

Crucially, if the music ceases in mid-flow, then 'Dorothy' the control [a fine contralto] is displeased, as the sudden stoppage nullifies their efforts to "tune-in".¹⁰⁶ Chapman maintains that psychic power and sound waves are coterminous, and those in the spirit world control both facets, with each entity aligned to a different frequency. Wireless terminology is abundant, despite being dismissed as a contributing factor to the phenomenon: "Science will never [...] pierce the Veil by throwing material conditions at it!" is the staunch rebuttal. Radio exists in Chapman's account as an "everyday occurrence" devoid of its original magic, which nevertheless vindicates an idea of audible phantasms composed of vibrations, "talking intelligently" and communing in a "refined form of electricity" (98).

Like Marconi's maxim regarding patent 7777, effective contact in *The Blue Room* is only possible when certain chords are struck and minds duly sensitised, which results in "perfect harmony all round"(100-103). During a voice-to-voice interview with Wee Betty, the journalist G.A.W. supposes that human transactions are vastly inferior, as "thoughts carry millions of miles [...] like a telephone" in the other dimension, only impeded by clumsy signalling from our earthbound circle. This is a premise of spiritualist writings, heralded by Flammarion's *Lumen*. Edward Carpenter proposes "telepathy in the beyond-

¹⁰⁶ Maurice Barbanell found that 'Onward Christian Soldiers' played through an electric gramophone was conducive to seances, as the "vibrations were helpful [...] after a while you do not notice the music" (*The Trumpet Shall Sound*, p. 22.)

world", whereas Lodge's *Raymond* refers to a form of broadcasting between the spheres when 'He' (Christ) wishes to speak:

[not] in words but soul to soul or mind to mind. If it were words, why should a thousand of us all get a message at once.¹⁰⁷

At one point Chapman interjects, only to be reprimanded by Wee Betty for "eavesdropping"; these spirits are adamant that exclusivity be maintained, even whilst their voices harmonise from every corner of the house (120).¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, their patterns are bafflingly assisted by "machines, like aeroplanes or Zeppelins, with wings [...] a distinct buzz" reverberating beneath every séance, which points to oblique methods. Background conversation, heard "as if through a fog" is also reported (84, 147). Despite endorsements from ministers of religion, scientists, commercial operators and the odd magician, it is likely that generic radio interference -- static -- was the only uncanny visitant of Chapman's blue room. Without adequate filters, the hissing would be a constant irritation. However, to engineer such an elaborate hoax would be profoundly technical, as musical transmission by wire from another, blocked, room, involved careful positioning of microphones and loudspeakers, in addition to mixing and amplifying the "several different instruments" featured in the ghostly concerts (131).

¹⁰⁷ Carpenter, p. 298; Lodge, *Raymond*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁸ Barbanell records the tendency of his control 'Red Cloud' to speak "out of mid-air and from the ceiling"; another spirit admits "listening in" to earthly conversations. (*The Trumpet Shall Sound*, p. 75)

Extracts from Chapman's diary certainly decode the subliminal influence behind his faintly ridiculous testimony, regardless of any fraud. On 27 September 1925, he ponders a dream of the previous night, wherein a ship complete with wireless aerial battled through stormy seas towards a corresponding radio station on an island. Hearing a random voice proclaiming ultimate communication, Chapman infers that science is, in fact, an auxiliary to the supernatural, and prefigures Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his conviction:

Perhaps it may mean that those on the other side have been able to link up with our wireless stations and that before long, the world will get some startling messages through [...] electricity is easy to handle as far as they are concerned [...]The wireless station on the island represents those souls who are tuned-in to the faith, receiving and sending out messages of hope [and] the words I heard must mean that communication has been established by the faith of those who believe and that direct communication will be opened up, *most likely through our wireless machines* (146).

Disappointingly, reports of any enlightening trials are confined to a single entry, 5 October 1926, where the radio is present during a session, "now and then giving lots of volume, while in between these wireless items I played the piano". In the void opened by the dial, when the room was silent of terrestrial noise and ecstatic hymns, Chapman claims, "we all heard a voice speaking in a whisper...very very close" (151).

These amateur seances hardly differ from the awed hush and sinister energies surrounding Rudyard Kipling's story 'Wireless' (1902), which pursues the magic of communication at a distance, and underscores the parallel between acoustic

technology and paranormal practices.¹⁰⁹ Reputedly the first imaginary work to explore radio's phantasmic presence, the tale centres around an apothecary where a long-range wireless installation is attempted after dark.

Marconi's experiments have recently taken place at Poole, further up the coast, in Haven Hotel which boasted a mast of 110 feet. At the outset of 'Wireless', a conversation reports that "they" are using stronger batteries than ever; the water supply at "one of the big hotels is [...] electrified". Elsewhere, the legitimate operation occurs with drama; the experiment enacted in the backroom seems arcane and rather seedy. Young Mr Cashell, the electrician, may or may not be one of Marconi's helpers at Haven Hotel, although he invests his home battery, the coherer, with mystical capabilities, unaware that it was always "the weakest link in the chain that produced Hertzian waves" often reacting wildly to incoming oscillations, regardless of source.¹¹⁰

The narrative, however, revolves around Mr Shaynor the pharmacist, who is dying of consumption. Swallowing pastilles which emit a noxious blue fume "very like incense", he begins drafting a letter to his unrequited love, whilst Cashell strives to make wireless contact. "There are a good many kinds of induction", Cashell announces ominously as the "Power" begins to leap and crackle through the mechanism. In the adjoining room, Shaynor lapses into a stupor, scribbling lines from Keats' 'The Eve of St Agnes', not in the way that "a vile chromo recalls some incomparable canvas", but producing an identical

¹⁰⁹ Rudyard Kipling, 'Wireless', in *Traffic and Discoveries* (London: Macmillan, 1904), pp. 213-239.

¹¹⁰ Marconi, p. 122

reprint, or echo. He is evidently attracting traces, or 'particles' of the dead, as Edward Carpenter would postulate.

Shaynor pre-empts mediums such as Helen Hughes, who felt "something like a series of telegraph wires" along which messages were relayed, before lapsing into entrancement. Power for public demonstrations lasted "about half an hour" after which it ebbed away, as to force these energies would "court inaccuracy and impose a strain on the system".¹¹¹ This is akin to Shaynor whose poetry is gathered from a specific, transient, wavelength:

"Not yet- not yet," he muttered, "wait a minute. *Please* wait a minute. I shall get it then--

Our magic windows fronting on the sea,

The dangerous foam of desolate seas...

For aye

Shaynor is instantly cut adrift -- and sputters out with a scream of "*Ouh*, my God!", jerking his body like a stray wire ripped from its port.

Spectral messages are "coming through" in direct parallel to Cashell's excursion, which is ultimately futile. He captures "just enough to tantalise" from two ships moored in the Channel, who obstruct his own frequency directed inland:

The Morse instrument was ticking furiously. Mr Cashell interpreted... "*Can make nothing of your signals*". A pause. "*M.M.V.M.M.V. Signals unintelligible...* Do you know what that means? It's a couple of men o'war working Marconi signals [...] They are trying to talk to each other. Neither can read the other's messages, but all their messages are being taken in by our receiver here...

The boundless ether allows signals to stray; Cashell's target is never reached, instead he is compelled to eavesdrop on one-way traffic flowing into his coherer from ships who failed to syntonically adjust transmitter and receiver. Cashell's device becomes the invisible third valve, yet up the coast in Poole, someone is waiting for *his* call of 'T.R. T.R.' in vain.

'Wireless' is a primary text of communication breakdown, implying that all attempts are abortive, even Shaynor will never send his love letter. The subtle claim is that poetic "induction", is statistically more successful than radiotelegraphy. Cryptic messages wandering in purgatory, and a medium susceptible to delicate vibrations from afar; the narrator sees Shaynor's fugue state as "logical and inevitable" even though his soul cowers:

If he has read Keats it's the chloric-ether. If he hasn't, it's the identical bacillus, or Hertzian wave of tuberculosis. [All] in conjunction with the main-stream subconscious thought common to all mankind, has thrown up temporarily an induced Keats (231).

The narrator would rather see "bright red...arterial blood" as a conductor, choosing to electrify the body rather than accept paranormal activity. It is the presence of wireless which injects this note of pragmatism into his reasoning.

Of course, Kipling weaves a tale of great sophistication around the mechanism itself, disturbing the etheric ocean in which time and space are collapsed. The only clear transmission is from a dead poet, attracted by live wires and the semi-

¹¹¹ Upton, pp. 51-57.

corpse of Shaynor. As an increment, it may be read alongside Friedlaender's tale of electronic simulation, 'Goethe Speaks Into the Phonograph'. Both stories infer that sound waves fall into accidental receivers, and genuine duplication is possible according to "conditions". Whereas scientist Pschorr drags the poetic voice through an anatomical remake, Shaynor is possessed, or rather *inspired*, writhing in effort and scratching lines "as it is written in the book". He becomes a graphophone activated by a finer technology -- wireless.¹¹²

In 1924, Hester Travers Smith published a collection of automatic scripts, *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde*, where the departed punster seemingly relayed unfinished business through a 'Mr V's' fountain pen.¹¹³ Wilde considered " a literary ghost to be a new departure in the psychic world", and was initially enthusiastic at finding an outlet: "Even when you are tired you are a perfect aeolian lyre that can record me as I think" (97, 163). However, Smith records later sessions wherein Wilde objects to "finding unsuitable words in his medium's mind":

¹¹² A radio play by L. Du Garde Peach, *The Séance* (1930) asserted the parallel further, in utilising the capacities of the medium itself- and the genre. Sound effects, such as random stringed instruments, imply encroaching paranormal activity; one of the characters remarks: "Much better chance of something getting through in the dark". Yet, at the close of the piece, an American voice breaks in with "Hello folks...". The characters are radio hams, sifting through the airwaves to find a concert, and the listener is exposed as one who readily connects supernatural elements to aspects of radio. See Jean Chothia, *English Drama of the Early Modern Period 1890-1940* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1996), pp. 252-255.

Another example is a magazine story by Arthur B. Reeve, 'The Radio Wraith' (1923) wherein a crime is solved through a scientifically manufactured séance: " a wireless loud speaker, placed in the room underneath with the mouthpiece of a speaking horn [...] under the spot where the séance trumpet lay on the floor". A character offers to play 'ghost' appearing in absentia through the radio, thus exposing the medium as a fraud, and, eventually, as the murderer.

Everybody's Magazine, New York, no. 5, vol. XLIX (November 1923).

Jenny Hazelgrove remarks that "[a] wireless became even more popular after the Second World War, conversations with the spirit world seemed to follow conversational conventions established in listener participation shows like 'Family Favourites'- passing messages to people 'at home'" (Hazelgrove, p. 22).

[The] only simile he can seize on to describe the moon is "a great golden cheese". [Wilde] can't bear this and writes "stop, stop, stop, stop, you write like a successful grocer...(151)

Automatic writing may suffice when words already exist, lost in the void and responsive to any coherer. As noted, the germination of Keats' poetry in 'Wireless' is imprinted on a particular channel to which Shaynor is attuned; new messages, however, are invariably garbled and misread.

Oscar Wilde objected to the arena in which he was expected to maintain his creativity, proposing that the medium "be dispensed with, and a suitable 'telephone'" system constructed between the realms. Therefore, results might be "less uneven and clearer". Given the haphazard nature of earthly telecommunications, Wilde's assumption is greatly optimistic (76-77).

Ironically, but perhaps as one might expect, Smith's work was rejected as 'true' Wilde; John Drinkwater in the *Weekly Despatch* attacked the "crude expressions" of a great writer, insinuating that originals can never be restored to full power, as Goethe's snoring in Friedlaender's tale would suggest (20).

Awash with sound, confused discourse and false echoes, marginal writings such as *The Blue Room*, 'Wireless', and Lodge's *Raymond* pre-empt areas of concern within inveterate modernist works. Their treatment of the unknown, which incorporates the mystique of electric science, is characteristic of Marinetti's

¹¹³ Hester Travers Smith, *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1924).

writer, throwing "nets of analogy" in a versatile wireless world.¹¹⁴ In essence, these intuitive texts qualify the need for syntony in the early twentieth century, for "identical minds in concert" which would theoretically rebuild the evasive body, perhaps battle-torn and certainly hidden.¹¹⁵ Rapport with the dead was the *primus inter pares* of communication, extended further by the strange solace of radio. Hence, etherised patients became a condition of modernity: wired-up, yet solitary and ever inclined to eavesdrop.

Not What I Meant At All

Poets require, according to Leon Surette, "a traditional or perennial mode of expression and hence they are drawn to inventions [and] coteries that will maintain the tradition". Moreover, they need "a special vocabulary or symbolic code in which to express his or her 'obscure impulses'".¹¹⁶ Styled as a reassessment of occult knowledge within early twentieth-century literature, Surette's critique identifies 'secret history' writings which amalgamate religion, anthropology and ethnology. These are distinct from spiritualism, a mere 'branch' of the occult, responsible for contact with deceased humans as opposed to fusion with a higher source of being.

¹¹⁴ Filippo Marinetti, 'Destruction of Syntax -- Imagination Without Wires -- Imagination Without Strings -- Words-In-Freedom' (1913), in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio (New York: Scribners, 1973), p. 89

¹¹⁵ Durham Peters, p. 241.

¹¹⁶ Leon Surette, *The Birth of Modernism; Ezra Pound, T.S Eliot, W.B Yeats and the Occult* (Montreal: McGills-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 88. "The central occult claim [...] is that all of the world's religions are partial, popularised, or even corrupt versions of a revelation, gnosis, or wisdom, that is fully possessed by only a few mortals [...] The occultist is typically an autodidact and often very prolific (p. 26, 34). Surette provides a helpful overview of connections

Upon insisting that that supernatural phenomena count for little in the history of modernism, Surette nevertheless provides an expansive definition which should identify spiritualism as a key instigator of the following tendency:

The occult is almost invariably monist, assuming a single realm modulating from a material or "hylic" thickness through mental or psychic attenuation to spiritual or noumenal reality. Because of this monism, the modern occult thought it had found an ally in materialist science's discovery of radiation and the non-particulate nature of quantum physics (13).

This vast, intersecting network of metaphysical speculation is formulated around the initiate. At every level, those who acquire 'wisdom' -- or abstruse information -- can speak to the unenlightened, "only in figures, darkly and obscurely" like Lodge's spirits. In general, "[the] occult believes that gnosis or revelation can be *communicated* only to those who already understand, to initiates, or adepts" (26). One should be mindful of Marconi's public image, fabricated by those not conversant with "developments in wireless" and, particularly, his band of workers at Poole and Dover who learned to detect radio signals from the master with an "uncanny facility".¹¹⁷

More typically, Surette points to Ezra Pound's Canto 36 (1937), where his translation of Cavalcanti's 'Dona mi prega' is exclusive to "present knowers". The topos of descent and death adopted by Tennyson, Wagner and Eliot was also prevalent, a logical quest defined by occultist G.R.S. Mead as "an essential

to, and relationship within, branches of the occult; continuing the debate over G.R.S. Mead, Allen Upward and A.R. Orage as influences upon, mainly, Pound and W.B. Yeats.

¹¹⁷ See pp. 28-30. By the same degree, some visitors to Chapman's blue room reported hearing nothing at all.

transformation or transmutation leading to a transfiguration [...] first of all a "passing through oneself", a mystical death and finally a rebirth". Similarly, Oliver Lodge was convinced that his son had only "passed through the body and gone, as Browning said in *Abt Vogler*". Both statements clearly endorse the notion of infinite life.¹¹⁸

Since knowledge is available in separate minds and, in the opinion of spiritualists, readily transferred by telepathy in other worlds, then surely "some *obscuring* or occluding agency exists preventing access to it". Surette notes that "for the modern occultist, the [...] agency is most commonly the flesh, the body" (84). Only angels communicate without the devious ministry of flesh or language, exchanging their interiority in a silent stream of intelligence, and affected by "neither difference of time nor local distance". Durham Peters points to the fact that angels "haunt modern media; adopted as the logo for Deutsche Grammophon, they suggest "dispatches [...] never lost or misdelivered or garbled in transit" (73, 75). Although, in the paradox of modernity, a body is sought after regardless of its 'occluding' capacities. Goethe's throat must be remodelled; Edison's death rattle preserved phonographically; and the first wireless transmission received through a pseudo-eardrum.

Flesh and its boundaries of life and death were irreversibly "problematized" by electricity, as noted by Tim Armstrong.¹¹⁹ Ideally, the body should be disregarded in favour of myth, ritual and ineffable messages, but within the

¹¹⁸ G.R.S. Mead, 'The Meaning of Gnosis in Higher Religion,' in *Quest*, London (4 July): 676-97. Cited in Surette, p. 18; Lodge, *Raymond*, p. 197.

social fabric and creation of modernist literature, the fear of communication breakdown was usually figured as loss of the other. If meaning is in the *mind* of the beholder, a mismatching of intention occurs during verbal intercourse, summarised in 1923 by C.K.Ogden and I.A. Richards who blamed a "veritable orgy of verbomania" for the "impasse of solipsism" in modernity.¹²⁰ Hugh Kenner in *The Mechanic Muse* (1987) rightly attributes this to the "new century's pervasive experiences, that of being talked to by people we cannot see".

With regard to acoustic technologies, Kenner cites a drama of mixed messages, T.S Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* (1936), wherein Julia remarks that one cannot tell the truth on the telephone, "meaning probably that you lose three quarters of your communicative power when you cannot be seen and your breathing body is absent".¹²¹ The phrase 'Hello Hello are you there?', since dissected by Avital Ronell, also equates to the opening call at a séance, and must always be answered by 'No': although a voice 'sounding' like the one desired is at the end of a wire. Kenner continues:

What is present to you is my phantom presence [...] not even in the room where you are, the way a ghost's voice would be, but exactly in your head. Eliot belonged to the first generation of poets to have such an experience (35).

Kenner vividly depicts the intrusive, unavoidable human progress of the era, containing "a thousand increments of technological pressure" from clock-

¹¹⁹ Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology and the Body* (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1998), p. 18; Allen Upward surmised in 1908 that "Matter is electric charge, or electric charge is matter" (Upward, p. 122).

¹²⁰ C.K Ogden and I.A Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and the Science of Symbolism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1952, 8th ed.), p. 20.

addiction to persistent radiospeak (12). The searing conclusion to Tillie Olson's *Yonnondio* (1934) artlessly renders a moment central to this mindset: the weirdness of wireless.

One by one on the Metze's borrowed crystal set, they hear for the *first time* the radio sound. From where, from where, thinks Mazie, floating on her pain; like the spectrum in the ray, the magic concealed; and hears in her ear the veering transparent meshes of sound, far sound, human and stellar, pulsing, pulsing....¹²²

That unique *sound* would inspire further waves of creative response; surely a vital factor within -- what may be termed as -- the modernist enlightenment, and which should be heeded during the course of any evaluation. Gradually, writes Kenner "people had acquired the habit of attending to disembodied voices, and returning them routine answers. It is as queer as any transaction with a ghost in Shakespeare" (36).

Environmental shifts and their subsequent effects on modernist writing are well documented, both in terms of thematic concern and formal directive. The consensus is that phantoms walk through the "fractured atoms" of a postwar world ('Gerontion' line 69), constantly present in "the rending pain of re-enactment" ('Little Gidding' II, line 85). Knowledge of death is a dispensation granted to a necromancer, Tiresias, whose role is intensified by countless experts traversing the void of etheric expanse. "Want to hear it?" asks a radio operator in an essay of 1922, described as a "high priest of mystery" who can summon "the

¹²¹ Hugh Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 34.

¹²² Tillie Olson, *Yonnondio: From the Thirties* (London: Virago Ltd., 1980), p. 191.

wailing of winds lost in the universe". And Prufrock the initiate -- once the amateur -- returns to tell all.¹²³

Stan Smith briefly discusses the trait of ghostly language in the poetry of T.S. Eliot, which signifies both rehearsal and reburial. For example, faceless entities bringing news in 'Little Gidding', are artificial but insistent, "merely textual [...] carrying a message we already know, in a passage, cunning, dark, dissatisfied, between two worlds".¹²⁴

It is arguable that the condition of the modern -- that which inscribes, diminishes, recycles, erases -- was formulated by science and the paranormal, whose symbiosis opened up a void. Once again, the dyadic nature of all enforced communication ensures that whenever a gap is surmounted, the abyss becomes more prominent. As Durham Peters recognises, it is a constant "fear of inescapable solipsism" which informs the "microdramas" of modernist literature (16).

Notoriously, *The Waste Land* itself is a tableau of communication breakdown, with "every sphere [...] opaque to others which surround it".¹²⁵ A vast telephone poem or mangled séance, it also sabotages the act of reading, as the signs can never be properly translated. Discorporated voices emerge from the text as pure utterance and return misunderstood, they "crave and lack audiences, like the

¹²³ Bruce Bliven, 'The Ether Will Now Oblige' *New Republic*, New York (15 February, 1922): 328-330.

¹²⁴ Stan Smith, *The Origins of Modernism: Eliot, Pound, Yeats and the Rhetorics of Renewal* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 125.

¹²⁵ F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), pp. 306-307. The passage is quoted in the notes to section 5 of *The Waste Land*, 'What the Thunder Said'.

wind that crosses the brown land 'unheard' in III."¹²⁶ In "American acoustical science", the 'cocktail party problem' is considered to be the fundamental problem of radio technique. It is also a feature of specific writing which must glean words from spatially disparate sources -- in the attempt to reproduce a non-exclusive aural environment.

Were one [...] to playback through a single speaker a recording with absolute fidelity taken in the middle of a room at a party, one would be unable to select from the mass of sounds a *single* sound to which to attend.¹²⁷

Stan Smith agrees that the motif of disinterment is central to modernism, given that literature raids "the interior of dead lives, as if we were living them for the first time [...] a kind of spiritual *possession*", like the remote control of Lysias (5). By the same degree, to be inspired by the Muses' *pneuma*, or breath, is a bodily invasion where a writer becomes a virtual radio transmitter or solid-state amplifier. The resulting information is likely to be inaccurate, for which reason Plato banished poets from his Republic "since in their trances they were out of their minds, blithely vocalising words not their own, and worse, words that the Muses concede might be true but the veracity of which cannot be confirmed."¹²⁸

In a startling essay which combines antiquity with cybernation, Jed Rasula defines poetic inspiration as *alieniloquiam*, to 'speak otherwise', and therefore meaning is only a simulated truth:

¹²⁶ Smith, p. 137.

¹²⁷ Evan William Cameron, 'The Influence of Radio Drama on Cinematic Design' in *Proceedings of the Radio-Literature Conference 1978*, ed. Peter Lewis, pp. 85-98, at 92-93.

Possession and dispossession are intertwined in the Muses' bestowal of voice-over to the poet's personal voice. To cite the legacy of the Muses in this way is to place poetic inspiration in the realm of prosthetic technologies. [T]he poet turns out to be *accessed* from above and beyond [...] a human megaphone, a prosthetic stylus (287).

My contention is that wireless technology alerted this 'first generation' of writers to their role as a secondary mimic. With the advent of sound storage, the dead found an oracle greater than the printed page, whilst overhead signals clashed through Marconimasts. It is evident that the failed synapses of modernist discourse equated to the appearance of unreality forged by wireless, which, as Gillian Beer writes, is not 'common sense'. The airwaves never cease, they replicate "the tumult always at work in our silences".¹²⁹

Additionally, by restoring the dream of telepathy, wireless aggravated the inability of words to speak 'exactly' and therefore prompted extreme self-reflection. "Every man is both a transmitting station and a receiving station", said a broadcaster in 1932:

As a transmitter he sends out speech - his mother tongue on a certain wave-length as it were. As a receiver he is tuned to receive his mother tongue in this wave-length, and any variation [...] will immediately endanger reception.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Jed Rasula, 'Poetry's Voice Over' in *Sound States; Innovative Poetics and Acoustic Technologies*, ed. Adelaide Morris (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 274-316.

¹²⁹ Gillian Beer, "'Wireless': Popular Physics, Radio and Modernism", in *Cultural Babbage*, ed. Francis Spufford and Jenny Uglow (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 149-166. Orrin J. Dunlap

An obvious parallel worthy of reassertion, as the concept of wave-lengths twenty years earlier denoted the frustrations of spiritualism and would contribute to breakdown in narrative.

In later life, W.B. Yeats hinted that modern life produced insecurity, leading him to blatantly imagine his audience as opposed to believing they existed. He said, "I am writing for a man I have never seen...I do not know whether he is born yet, but born or unborn it is for him I write".¹³¹ His poem 'The Gift of Harun al Rashid' (1925) is directed to a *specific* reader Abd Al-Rabban -- "And for no ear but his" -- while the author is not Yeats but a construct, Kusta Ben Luka. A single example of unreliable narration, the poem blunders through "contradictory stories" and "confused recollections" of an original text, whose ultimate, pure, truth is only available in dream utterance. Sadly, it becomes polluted by word of mouth -- a common occurrence in the "civilisation of 1930", as predicted by Bruce Bliven, where nothing is sacred.¹³²

Writers, always aspiring to the exclusive code supposedly revealed to those deserving, were challenged by new media which rewrote human discourse. In essence, the telephone, phonograph and chiefly wireless, raised the phantom of Socrates who had warned of misfires and ambiguities in the earliest communication technology. An undercurrent of this thesis charts a convergence

agreed that "[s]ilence in a vacuum had made wireless more mysterious" with burgeoning technology - the vacuum tubes themselves which allowed for rapid noiseless dispatch (p. 349).

¹³⁰ 'The Complex Mechanism of Sound' in the *Listener*, vol. viii (1 June 1932): 794.

¹³¹ 'The Growth of a Poet: by W.B Yeats', in the *Listener*, vol. xii (4 April, 1934): 592-4. He refers to his 1916 piece 'The Fisherman' in *The Wild Swans At Coole* (1917).

¹³² Bliven, in *The New Republic*, p. 330.

of personal and general address, the literary realisation that 'Especially for you means all of you' -- a phobia compounded by sound technology.¹³³

I often think," wrote Carlos Chavez in 1927, "that at present the radio is frequently, at best, a voice speaking well, but not understood, or imperfectly understood, or heard inopportune".¹³⁴ It is a dilemma which courses through that sterile tract of meaning *The Waste Land*, where connections end in straggling, far-flung sentences:

"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?"¹³⁵

A seed sown broadcast -- the imparted word -- is likened to a dead body which may be abnormally revived, but will probably lie fallow.

¹³³ Leo Lowenthal, 'Biographies in Popular Magazines, in *Radio Research 1942-43*, ed., Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton (New York: Sloan, Duell & Pearce 1943), p. 507.

¹³⁴ Carlos Chavez, *Toward A New Music: Music and Electricity* (New York: Norton, 1927), p. 133.

¹³⁵ T.S.Eliot, 'The Waste Land' (1922) lines 71-3, in *T.S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), pp. 59-81.

2. Finnegans Wake: "Pa Druskai nur durch Radio!". A Tale of H.C.E and E.V.P.

We shall have a procession of data that Science has excluded. Some of them are corpses, skeletons, mummies, twitching, tottering, animated by companions that have been damned alive. There are giants that will walk by through sound sleep. There are pale stenches and gaunt superstitions and mere shadows and lovely malices: whims and amiabilities. The naïve and pedantic, the bizarre and the grotesque, the sincere, the profound and the puerile...

Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned*.

The Electric Book of the Dead

James Joyce considered abandoning *Work in Progress* after the death of his father, John Stanislaus Joyce, on 29 December 1931. Guilty and grieving, he told Eugene Jolas, "I hear [him] talking to me. I wonder where he *is*".¹ At times, however, the voice would seem to emanate from within his own body or throat, "especially when I sigh".² An insistent, choking, reminder of absence, coupled with a realisation that fragmented atoms of the old man were *in* the person of James Joyce, whose talent originated from a disposition "got from" his father.³ As Mrs Alving in Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881) declares:

I almost think we are all ghosts- all of us... It isn't just what we have inherited from our father and mother that walks in us. It is all kinds of dead ideas and all sorts of old and obsolete beliefs... and we can never rid ourselves of them.⁴

We begin again -- utilising physical and mental traces which have endured, yet in *Ulysses*, the mother originates as a separate vision, mouthing "mute secret words" and severed from any continuation through Stephen who cannot equate the spheres of life and death.⁵ Adam Piette points to Stephen's bitter description of Hamlet's father, "the ghost from limbo patrum, returning to the world that has forgotten him", whereas Leopold Bloom bridges the divide, regardless of and perhaps owing to, his alienation. Flitting between places, he functions as a

¹ Eugene Jolas, 'My Friend James Joyce', cited in Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 658.

² Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 22 July 1932, in *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York and London: Faber and Faber, 1959).

³ *ibid*, p. 312.

⁴ Henrik Ibsen, *Plays: One. Ghosts, The Wild Duck, The Master Builder*, trans., Michael Meyer (London: Eyre Methuen, 1978), p. 163.

transmutable figure "like a ghost", as Piette argues, "invisible to most [...] people [and] absent in their eyes".⁶ Stephen requires the ministry of Bloom in order that his mother speak in 'Circe' as a character in their mutual auradrama, praying for him in her "other world" yet weirdly morphed into Stephen; her face "green with grave mould" is echoed in his fearful expression, "drawn and grey and old" (*U* 680, 682).

In his biography of Joyce, Richard Ellmann maintains the idea that co-existence of the living and dead became a central theme for Joyce, noting that one of Thomas Moore's Irish lyrics called 'O, Ye Dead!' recurs thematically in his writing:

It is true, it is true, we are shadows cold and wan;
And the fair and the brave whom we loved on earth are gone;
But still thus ev'n in death,
So sweet th' living breath
Of the fields and the flow'rs in our youth we wandered o'er,
That ere, condemn'd, we go
To freeze, 'mid Hecla's snow,
We would taste it awhile, *and think we live once more.*

This stanza, wherein the disembodied souls speak to the living, may have augmented Joyce's development of dialogue based on missed understandings and need for resurrection.⁷ For example, in 'The Dead', Michael Bodkin persists "wayward and flickering" in memory, compounded by an invisible "someone"

⁵ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 241; Adam Piette, *Remembering and the Sound of Words: Mallarme, Proust, Joyce and Beckett* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 187-188.

playing the piano, who is ever present yet unidentified and unapprehended.⁸ Ellmann adds that corpses rarely stay buried in Joyce's texts; they cause agitation by not appearing in person but nevertheless striving to maintain their existence. This creates a 'community' devoid of boundaries where ghosts retain influence over the living, a premise in *Ulysses* "accepted by Bloom from the start".⁹

In this chapter, it will be explained how the concept of this intermediary state between two worlds was brought to a mighty conclusion in Joyce's final novel, where dead voices are never mute or secretive. They have graduated from Bloom's imagination into an auditory phantasmagoria, using channels of "phone, phunkel or wire"; aspects of electricity combined with the mediumistic capacities of an improved everyman.¹⁰

This proposition is supported by John Gordon, who allowed a preview of his forthcoming work on the image of the body; how certain writers in the twentieth century responded to areas of physics and medical history. His chapter on James Joyce proposes that an interest in psychophysical operations -- quasi-mystical evocations of internal electromagnetic resonance -- was a direct source for *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, both of which unite the mechanics of human sensation and communication. Gordon notes how periods of telepathy, or "synchronicity" in *Ulysses*, are inspired by Bloom himself, who operates as an acutely sensitive "acoustical reflector". Significantly, Gordon's assessment of Bloom admits to "*looking forward to Finnegans Wake*", as:

⁷ Ellmann, p. 253.

⁸ James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1993), p.161.

⁹ Ellmann, p. 372.

Much of *Ulysses'* second half depends on effects deriving from ideas [we] would ordinarily dismiss as occult or pseudoscientific mumbo-jumbo -- telepathy, psychically-engineered correspondence, telekinesis, ghost-visitations, the apparition of etheric doubles, and (of course) metempsychosis.¹¹

Gordon contends that Joyce actively pursued the possibility of "new instruments [...] bringing the formerly occult into the realm of the *experimentally observable*". This is explained by elucidating the link between "the brain's central bundle of circuitry" and electrical pulses, as noted earlier in this thesis. For instance, in 'Cyclops', the Citizen is a hideous phantom, or submerged impulse, summoned by Bloom and given voice. Gordon views this as a generative process, whereby inner components of Bloom work in tandem with outer forces to produce an apparition (126). The present chapter suggests that in Joyce's later work, the subject's ability to stretch the boundaries of pseudoscience would be perfected; it furthers Gordon's reading of Bloom as a precursor to the figure in the *Wake*.

Nevertheless, *Finnegans Wake* is widely considered as a dream-novel, reinforced by Joyce's explanations. "Writing of the night", he said, "I could [not] use words in their ordinary connections. Used that way they do not express how things are [...] conscious, then semi-conscious, then unconscious."¹² To Harriet Shaw Weaver, he hinted that his book "contained the *doubles entendres* of wake

¹⁰ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Paladin, 1992), pp. 502, 26-33. Henceforth, all citations occur in the text.

¹¹ John Gordon, from an unpublished manuscript, 'The Orphic "Sirens"; the Orphic Ulysses'. Chapter 4 of *Physiology and the Literary Imagination: Romantic to Modern*, (pp. 97-139). Currently going to press.

(funeral) and wake (awakening or resurrection) as well as Fin (end) and again (recurrence).¹³ However, as John Bishop argues in *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, to commit literary criticism to this standpoint would be reductive. Although "dreams pock the [night] with innumerable random obscure points of entry", this is merely "one necessity that compelled [Joyce] into the writing of the *Wake*", which is, continues Bishop "an inflected synonym for 'The Dead'".¹⁴

Without discussing the story, Bishop implies that juxtaposing death-in-life was an early preoccupation, extending to the use of other "mortuary literatures and funerary texts" in his final "construction of the human dark" (86). Specifically, Bishop posits the Egyptian Book of the Dead as a primary source, whose papyri are unique to each deadman; a personalised guidebook enabling him to navigate the afterlife. Much of the characteristics are consonant with the *Wake*, in particular the notion of a "second death" or a purgatory where souls attempt to locate the divine region before succumbing to Real Absence: "a nothingness unfathomably deeper than that endured in the night" (103). Bishop perceives this to be a logical reconstruction of the human night in *Finnegans Wake*, where the sleeper is "dead to the world" yet suspicious of his "orientation in the night's 'seemetery'", and who finally rises out of corporeal inertness into a new dawn (104).

Compelling in detail, Bishop's critique nevertheless retains the motif he wishes to avoid: that of the individual, unconscious interior. By observing that death is

¹² Conversation recounted by Max Eastman in *The Literary Mind: Its Place in an Age of Science* (New York: C. Scribners & Sons, 1931), p. 101.

¹³ Ellmann, p. 609.

evoked by somnambulism, Bishop focuses on the afterlife as a supportive device, or process, rather than a feature of the *Wake*. I would contend that sleep, the trance-like state endured by the body himself, is a 'thoroughfare' for death, and not a rehearsal. For he is not alone, traversing the nocturnal underworld or vacuum of the mind, but instead constantly harried by voices. Notably, Ellmann comments that by night "plagiarism is forced upon us", as the entities of thought and sound begin to detach and act independently.¹⁵

Attempting a relatively uncharted reading of *Finnegans Wake* is helped by the Joycean "principle of accessibility", a phrase coined by Derek Attridge, who adds that "a whole series of minority audiences" can access familiar items within the body of the text.¹⁶ Sifting through the inexhaustible encyclopaedia -- which grows infinitely personal with every new discovery -- is crippling in that the original argument can be obscured beneath a mass of conjecture. My exposition of the *Wake* is largely formulated from a historicist approach: the premise that Joyce reacted -- quite forcibly -- to the unavoidable progress of the age in which he lived. For, as Wim van Mierlo notes:

[T]he danger still exists that we cannot bring to bear the historically "real" in *Finnegans Wake*, [and] the temptation to support [it] in its own promotion of a dehistoricized view of history is

¹⁴ John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), pp. 20-21.

¹⁵ Ellmann, p. 729. In 1927, J.W. Dunne's enquiry *An Experiment With Time* discussed a theory that "the present moment" is due to "a mentally imposed barrier [which exists] only when awake". In actuality, "the associational network may stretch far and wide across space and time [...] why only in dreams?" (London: A.C & Black Ltd, 1927), pp. 53-55, 87.

¹⁶ Derek Attridge, 'Theoretical Approaches to Popular Culture' in *Joyce and Popular Culture*, ed. R.B Kershner (Florida: University Press, 1996), pp. 23-38, at 24.

great too- unless we put history back into the text, and read *Finnegans Wake* through its own genesis.¹⁷

This practice has been adhered to by several critics, as shown in John Gordon's impending study, and, for these purposes, Donald Theall, who discusses Joyce's treatment of writing in the age of time-saving media culture. Citing Bloom's reflection on the printing press ("Everything speaks in its own way. Sllt", *U* 7. 174-175), Theall alludes to the "copresence" of text and machine, both of whom communicate to the absent other, and Joyce's tendency to amalgamate differing forms of media into his work.¹⁸

Thematically, any technology can be traced through the Joycean maze. For example, the chaotic mumbling and hissing of early wireless was, writes James A. Connor, "not something to be ignored", either by the masses or certain individuals defined as "these modernists", particularly one in exile, the self-styled "afficionado of popular culture".¹⁹ As shown, John Gordon intends to locate Joyce's innate regard for electricity itself, beginning with his recognition that impulses in the mind corresponded with "electrical impulses across wires" or rather, in the expanse of space, "which it turned out was already abuzz with [...] undetected static" as radio waves moved invisibly overhead. (117)

¹⁷ Wim van Mierlo, 'Finnegans Wake and the Question of History!?' in *European Joyce Studies 9, Genitricksling Joyce*, eds., Sam Slote and Win van Mierlo (Amsterdam: Rodpoi, 1999): 43-64.

¹⁸ Donald Theall, 'Joyce's Techno-Poetics of Artifice: Machines, Media, Memory and Modes of Communication in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*', *ibid.*, pp. 139-151. Theall notices how the varying roles of communication machines often posited simultaneously: "traditional sign systems (hieroglyphics, alphabets, icons, drawings); technologically mediated modes of reproduction (books, telephone, film); and crafted modes of popular expression dependent either on the traditional or the technologically mediated (sermons, pantomimes, riddles, comics)".

¹⁹ James A. Connor, 'Radio Free Joyce: *Wake* Language and the Experience of Radio', in *Sound States*, ed. Morris (Chapel Hill and London: 1997), pp. 17-31, at 18.

In an oft-cited passage, Connor suggests that the "something in the air" permeated the early twentieth century writer's immediate space. "[H]eterodyne screeching" clotted their prose, whilst the concept of a "wandering signal" certainly reconfigured ideas of communication. His description of radio as an unreliable, sinister intrusion on the pattern of everyday life, "fluid, multichannelled [yet] intimate" revolves around static; either "generic radio interference" which includes disconnected words "settling, whistling, humming, screeching", and secondly the "sibilant white noise [...] close to pure chaos"(20). Such scrambled reception caused by radio frequency shifts and poor circuitry, unavoidable for the average listener who spent evenings with, according to Connor, "poor dead souls" wailing for a terminus. This vocabulary was often employed in articles of the 1920's and 30's to intensify the eerie sound of a random signal "no doubt made by some far-off world as it flees shrieking in agony across the firmament".²⁰

Already intertwined in early twentieth century death mythology following World War I, the dualistic ability of wireless -- to connect and simultaneously isolate -- was furthered by the advent of radio broadcasting where half-heard voices clashed at the perimeters of hearing and the blanket of transmission supposedly united all recipients. In spite of all attempts to speak electromagnetically over the ether, one commentator noted that often "no reply would come, and the person would then know that the other was dead [...] It would be almost like dreamland and ghostland".²¹

²⁰ Bliven, in *New Republic* (15 February 1922): 328.

²¹ P.T.McGrath 'The Future of Wireless Telegraphy,' *North American Review* 175 (August 1922): 782. Recall Ernst Ruhmer's statement of 1908, wherein the wireless operator of the future would know his friend to be dead if no reply was received. He had merely foreseen the nature of radio

The call sign for Radio Eirann was 2RN, chosen in 1926 as a gesture from the British Post Office, suggesting 'Come Back to Erin' which also extends the idea of discord and loneliness: all hearers in exile, every reply unheard. Furthermore, it echoes 'QRN', the call featured in radio 'DX-ing' where the listener deliberately seeks contact with the most remote possible station, "a journey traversed primarily across mysterious expanses of silence and static".²²

By 1933, the station at Athlone was broadcasting at 60 kilowatts, a frequency which would have brought Irish voices into Joyce's Paris apartment; however, the service was operating from temporary quarters without sound insulation, which resulted in novel "Effects". One broadcaster recalled how a gramophone positioned in the corridor provided the incidental music for programmes "by opening and closing the studio door".²³ So, when 'home' was finally reached after interruption from more efficient European stations, the outcome may have been little more than confused knocking and snatches of melody. For example:

The clip, the clop! (all cla) Glass crash (a special effect). The
(klikkakkaklaskaklopatszklatschabattacreppycrottygraddaghsemmihsammihnouithappludyappl
addykonpkot!)

(Ardite, arditi!

Music cue.) (*FW.44.19-23*)

broadcasting. See previous chapter, p. 37, fn. 72. Similarly presageful is Flammarion, *Lumen* (1897), on the characteristics of space transmission: "you might hear the voice of a man at a distance who might be dead before the moment at which you heard him" (223). See previous chapter, fn. 42.

²² Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media*, p. 65. The key call in DX-ing is 'CQ', from the phrase "seek you".

²³ Maurice Gorham, *Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting* (Dublin: Talbot Press Ltd, 1967), pp. 101-102.

Critics have compiled a radio miscellany from *Finnegans Wake*, instigated by Harry Levin's original assertion that Joyce was replacing the archangel's trumpet with an electric amplifier to pronounce his last judgement.²⁴ "What the eyes bring is nothing", Joyce announced in the event of incipient blindness, "I have a hundred worlds to create, I am losing only one of them".²⁵ Whilst formulating his ear-culture, possibly "pecking at thumbnail reveries, pricking up ears to my phono and picking up airs..." from Radio Athlone, Joyce confessed that while reminiscing over Dublin, he often heard other voices from the past (*FW* 489. 13-14). These may have been coaxed from his lower mind by the irritating crackle of radio, whose static repeatedly barred access to 'home' on the dial, and which crafted false words out of white noise.²⁶

By employing the nuances of radio to give formal structure and texture to his discourse in, for example, Chapter III, ii of the *Wake*, Joyce would be alerted to all methods of retrieval. Eric McLuhan agrees that any direct reference to radio in *Finnegans Wake* is of a "purely Menippean" device, capable of "tuning across the centuries from antedeluvian time to the present [...] just as in ear-culture all ages are eternally present". Conditions are favourable for this process, as during

²⁴ Harry Levin, *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk: New Directions. 1941). He labels the "loudspeaker" element of radio to be "the medium of *Finnegans Wake*" and thus responsible for the complex fabric of semantics.

²⁵ Ellman p. 676.

²⁶ Letter to C.P Curran, 6 August 1937, *Letters*, p. 395. The medium Eileen Garrett knew Joyce during this time, "among the habitués of the Café Royal". She adds: "My desire [...] was to get him to talk of the activity of the unconscious. I had sensed (almost) a chaotic personality- and in a way wished I had not sought him out, as I had seriously done in order to understand his *method* of entering into the deep unconscious, a process I hoped would give answers to my own work" (*Adventures in the Supernormal: A Personal Memoir*, p. 62)

night-time, "radio reception and distance-getting [that is, 'DX-ing' through the radio spectrum] is best".²⁷

Earlier sections of this enquiry trace how wireless, telephone and telegraph restructured individual perception and the dream of mutuality where lines of contact could be established and destroyed in an instant; therefore, it is arguable that *any* novel written during the early twentieth century uses modern media as a 'metaphor', either subconsciously or explicitly, owing to a general mindset of insecurity. *Finnegans Wake* however, is significant, in that radio should be considered as the primary means through which Joyce intended his novel to be understood, more than simply a unifying device at the juncture of Chapter II, iii. At times, it rudely consumes the text, turning electricity into sound and static into words; in other sections, the noise reverberates beneath a phrase or sentence.

It is reported, however, that Joyce claimed not to "believe in any science". Such a statement implies that certain developments, in his opinion, had never attained their potential.²⁸ For instance, language which coursed freely through wires was hardly liberating, it was often inarticulate and dispatched wrongly, like a dream warped by external noise. Any sender is analogous to the dead who sign through a glass darkly, perhaps speaking in tongues or finding that their words are garbled in transit. The illogical nature of radio -- an ability to cross spatial and temporal boundaries -- allows it to become a psychical force in *Finnegans Wake*; a theory which is often proposed but rarely brought to fruition. This chapter contests that Joyce returned radio to its source, formulating the initial idea of

²⁷ Eric McLuhan, *The Role of Thunder in Finnegans Wake*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 156.

contact with another world and, in turn, finally utilising technology to re-call the ghosts who hover behind his every written word, who may *mean* something else.

Metaphors of death and the séance occur in 'Circe', deliberately aligned to a recording instrument: the gramophone. Steven Connor cites the example of Paddy Dignam who presses his ear to the earth, exhorting "My master's voice" and then vanishes, to be heard later "muffled [...] baying underground".²⁹ This sustains Bloom's belief that bodies endure through the phonograph, despite being reduced to "poor old greatgrandfather Kraahraak!"(U 144, 23-24). A poor substitute, which, adds Connor, is "exactly [...] a deathrattle [...] the stuttering, squawking and syllabic collapse of the apparatus becoming the voice of an empty and ruined materiality". The sound of cranking flesh is a "rictus of repetition", a primitive way of urging the dead to speak which nevertheless pre-empts the etherial babble of *Finnegans Wake*. A telephone line into the grave, muses Bloom, would be effective: "Wonder does the news go about whenever a fresh one is let down. Underground communication".(U 145, 24-25)

A recent thesis by Michael Heumann partially connects radio science to aspects of telepathy and spiritualism, thus encountering *Finnegans Wake* as a text which employs telecommunications as narrative and theme.³⁰ Such an argument -- also followed by the present chapter -- is substantiated by an entry in Joyce's 1924

²⁸ Ellmann, p. 706.

²⁹ Steven Connor, 'Jigajiga... Yummyyum... Pfuiiiiiii!... Bbbbbblllllbbllbblobshob!: "Circe's" Ventriloquy', in *European Joyce Studies* 3, ed. Andrew Gibson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994): 93-142.

³⁰ Michael Heumann, *Ghost in the Machine: Sound and Technology in Twentieth Century Literature*. Copyright 1998. Displayed on <http://www.hauntedink.com/ghost>.

notebook as he drafted ideas for Chapter III, iii, where the Shaun-figure lies insensate as 'Yawn':

telegraph
Yawn
telephone
wireless
Dawn
thought transference.³¹

To some degree, Heumann circles around issues of relevance in order to maintain the pace of his enquiry, although the notion of breakdown -- the "need to send a message from one place to another" -- is admirably traced in his discussion of the cable, how "[the] power and promise of technology [...] can only be realised if all the wires are in place". In the *Wake*, communication is paramount, as all figures are "impossible to locate and define [...] their identities are always in flux".³² Frustratingly, Neumann resists further analysis of his concluding observation that, in the messages flying between Shem and Shaun -- "...punk wire splosh how two plays punk Cabler"-- the ensuing static may operate as a gateway to another dimension (*FW* 488. 27-28).

Traditional exegesis of 'occult' forms, such as spiritualism and telepathy, within the *Wake* is generally confined to Chapter III, iii. In 1954, J.S Atherton affirmed that a form of séance is sustained throughout, accentuated by reference to famous

³¹ Notebook VI.B.5.29; cited in Roland McHugh, *The Sigla of Finnegans Wake* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976) p. 19. See Wim van Mierlo, 'Indexing the Buffalo Notebooks: Genetic Criticism of the Construction of Evidence', in *Writing Its Own Runes For Ever: Essays in Joycean Genetics*, eds., Daniel Ferrer and Claude Jacquet (Paris: Editions du lerot, 1998): 169-60.

mediums such as Eusapia Palladino and Daniel Dunglass Home, whose popularity among the gentry is satirised in "Hone! Gestermed with the nobilities" (*FW* 535. 36). Atherton surmised that:

There is probably much more about spiritualism in *Finnegans Wake* and it seems likely that much of James Joyce's information came from French sources such as the works of [Camille] Flammarion.³³

Compendiums of psychic investigations were hardly scarce, and Joyce is known to have possessed, at least, a copy of the *Death and Its Mystery* compendium (1923-24). How intently he read, digested and subsequently inserted other degrees of Flammarion's writing into the *Wake* is certainly worthy of debate.

Elsewhere, Joyce's distrust of electric storms may have been compounded by *Thunder and Lightning* (1905), which posited the latter as "the most terrible of aerial messengers". Flammarion adopts the Roman tendency to characterise lightning, as that which advises or becomes disagreeable "monitory, perfidious, pestiferous [...]". An invisible force which "gets into" buildings, as related in one case where "the master of the house" fell victim to electrocution whilst asleep: a potentially *Wake*-ean fate.³⁴

At every level of his output, Flammarion maintained the idea of electricity as "capable of becoming amassed, condensed and rarified; of discharging itself

³² Heumann, chapter 5, 'The Cable in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*', pp. 2-3 of 15.

³³ J.S Atherton, 'Spiritualism in *Finnegans Wake*' in *Notes and Queries*, vol. CXCIX (Jan-Dec, 1954): 222-223.

³⁴ Camille Flammarion, *Thunder and Lightning*, trans. Walter Mostyn (London: Chatto and Windus, 1905), pp.56, 31, 209-211.

from one body into another" with the implication that lightening may represent "a fourth dimension".³⁵ Hence, aspects of material science are often considered alongside Flammarion's enquiry into posthumous manifestations: houses which may become "impregnated with vibrations", or a "psychic current" from a dying man translated into the "sensation" of a sound:

Why the strange noises accompanying the last hour? They seem to us absurd, but they exist none the less, Are they produced before the departure of the soul or at the very moment? One thinks of an electrical disturbance. What is electricity? Nobody knows.³⁶

This is reminiscent of Edward Carpenter's theory, that upon death, liberation from the "gross terrestrial body" released the "radio-activity of the inner being".³⁷ Typically, throughout the investigation into *Death and Its Mystery*, Flammarion also uses pseudo-scientific vocabulary to prove existence of the soul, adding that percipients at a séance should be "attuned" to the "effluvia" of spirits riding ether waves. Observing the importance of electricity, he predicted that hyperspace -- the "fourth dimension" -- where spiritual life existed in tandem with earth, would eventually "enter *our* sphere of activity [and] express itself *by mechanical means*".³⁸

As contributions to the *Wake*, particular case studies cited by Flammarion may have appealed to Joyce's imagination, such as Madame J. de Vasconelles, whose

³⁵ Flammarion, *The Atmosphere* (1873), p. 475; *Haunted Houses* (1924), p. 205.

³⁶ Flammarion, *Haunted Houses*, pp. 177, 252, 189.

³⁷ Carpenter, pp. 249, 298.

³⁸ Flammarion, *Death and Its Mystery After Death*, vol. III, trans., Latrobe Carroll (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1923), p. 351.

dead brother invades her boudoir, in a more dramatic version of Issy's trickling faucet.

The room was suddenly lighted by electricity and the noise came from the *combination washstand and chest of drawers* a meter from my bed [and then] something flew over my head [...] a strong current flowing by [and] a continuous cracking noise (174-175).

Certain instances are given explicit diagrams, such as the haunted house of M. and Mme S, which similarly contains a bed, small table and washstand. During "the phenomena of Valence-en-Brie", a voice with "instantaneous changes of direction" is heard, "connecting the cellar with the house" with no visible source.³⁹ Such an event is comparable to the melodious, and ridiculous, spirits of Clive Chapman's *The Blue Room*, who function in a wire-less manner, so encouraging his idea that radio might be used to relay intelligence from world to world.

It is noteworthy that Flammarion does not credit the dead with supranormal intelligence, wit or capacities. Messages are "vulgarly trivial" and thus to be believed; one spirit actually 'calls' in objection to a spelling mistake in the newspaper. Joyce would surely appreciate that if "terrestrial mentality" -- resentment, religion, class, nonsense -- was alive and nourished within the ether, then a fertile terrain of subject matter might be within reach.⁴⁰

Clive Hart favours "psychic cross-correspondence" as the source for Shaun's utterances in III. iii, of the *Wake*; largely culled from reports of the Society for

³⁹ Flammarion, *Haunted Houses*, pp. 191, 232.

Psychical Research, where messages from a single spirit were transcribed simultaneously by a number of mediums. Hart attributes Joyce's "positively grotesquely distorted macromass" (*FW* 111, 26) to accounts of "superposition", where dissociated sentences are bound together; "a part from one version combining with another to build up the sense" so becoming "crosscomplimentary" (*FW* 613. 10). In a structural sense, this would unravel 'Yawn' language, which Hart defines as "the reduction of simple statements to a large number of tantalising units which insinuate their collective significance subtly".⁴¹

Yet, to simulate *written* spirit-talk amounts to hearing a phonograph's hollow intonation: both are secondary mimics. Conceivably, the reports from the Society for Psychical Research resembled a chaotic radio broadcast: interpretative by nature, as every stray word could be affixed in a different place. The sound of spirits would surely be akin to static, sizzling and howling in the attempt to find a conduit, in order that they may speak.

Neumann hints at some form of interplay, in noticing an attempt to "use wireless technology to communicate beyond physical parameters". Additionally, he refers to Yawn as another manifestation of HCE, a medium through which a crowd of figures chatter and flow.⁴² Extending this theory, I propose that Joyce used *Finnegans Wake* to rectify the language of the dead, liberating it from hollow phonography and false mediumscribble -- such as that endured by Oscar Wilde,

⁴⁰ Flammarion, *Death and Its Mystery*, pp. 351, 356.

⁴¹ Clive Hart, *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), pp. 155-158.

⁴² Heumann, chapter 6, 'The Wireless in *Finnegans Wake*', p. 5 of 15.

whose posthumous words were feebly transcribed. However, by emphatically remaining in the etheric expanse, spirits could never be so confined or imitated.

The New Science

Over thirty years after the publication of *Finnegans Wake*, spiritualism was adapted to the twentieth century -- and thus given mass appeal -- by Dr. Konstantin Raudive, a Latvian psychologist who investigated the "electric voice phenomena", widely termed as E.V.P. Raudive furthered the pioneering experiments of Friedrich Jurgenson in the late 1950's, who used his expertise as a documentary filmmaker to make supernatural contact. Sounds made by the dead were seemingly audible beneath the range of human hearing: a more delicate instrument was required in order to intensify the spirit voices and facilitate dialogue. Indeed, the title of Raudive's conclusive findings was *Unhoerbares Wird Hoerbar* (the Inaudible made Audible), which appeared in translation as *Breakthrough: Electronic Communication with the Dead May Be Possible* (1971).

A useful comparative text is David Ellis's *The Mediumship of the Tape Recorder* (1978), which investigates Raudive's methodology with the clarity of an impartial observer/auditor. Ellis was awarded the Perriot-Watt Studentship from the University of Cambridge (1973-1977) for presenting a plan of study which included rigorous experimental work and progress reports on the voice

phenomenon -- by definition, a traditional example of psychical research. His work outlines alternative hypotheses, collection and verification of events other than those presented by Raudive, with whom Ellis also collaborated. From the outset, he remarks that the title of the pioneering text should be amended to *Possible Potential Breakthrough: Some Strange Experiences Involving Apparently Electronic Ostensible Communications from soi-disant Discarnate Entities*, and concludes, after much anecdotal material, that the paranormal process is inextricably linked to "a naturally-accountable process of error and wishful thinking" like any aspect of spiritualism.⁴³

Initially, the method of detection was to place a tape-recorder in an empty room with microphone poised; on playback, certain utterances were heard, "very soft, quick as lightning".⁴⁴ Raudive eventually graduated to use of the radio, which provided the majority of his successes: a "complex" medium subject to external conditions and, often, the spirit voices themselves:

A wireless receiver is coupled to the tape recorder exactly as is done for the recording of any radio programme [...] A small piece of wire is inserted into the aerial box in order to keep out any long-distance reception. Then, [the experimenter] finds a spot in the medium wave-band in between two stations where background noise is as blank as possible. The diode method (a short 6-10cm long aerial) provides the clearest voices, but the interference caused by near-by strong wireless transmitters must be reckoned with. (341)

⁴³ David Ellis, *The Mediumship of the Tape Recorder: A detailed examination of the Jurgenson/Raudive phenomenon of voice extras on tape recordings* (Harlow, Essex: Dorstel Press Ltd, 1978), pp. 18, 143.

⁴⁴ Konstantin Raudive, *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*, trans. Nadia Fowler (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1971), p. 22. Henceforth, all page numbers are cited in the text.

Ellis describes two versions of radio-recording; initially the 'white noise' method, which "[allowed] fragments of broadcasts to be received indiscriminately" (137). One drawback was noted; that should an experimenter be constantly immersed, "the brain seems to grab at odd occurrences in its randomness" and he might hear "snatches of conversation in the mud" (71). The second method entailed "[gliding] slowly from one end of the wavelength scale to the other, and listening carefully for a voice that will hiss 'Now', or 'Make recording!' or some such hint" (19).

"Koste connects. Fisherman Koste", says one of the voice entities in *Breakthrough*. A key statement for Raudive, as he viewed his work with radio waves as "unpredictable [...] just as the fisherman hopes for results when he casts his net at random" (239). Though considering electric science to be an intermediary between "two worlds", Raudive nonetheless relies on the presence of a control, " a mediating voice [...] telling one which transmitting station, wavelength, and hour of day or night to choose for a recording" (22). As a result, the data shows collective appreciation for radio transistors, with voices proclaiming:

"Pa druskai nur durch Radio" (Latv., German: "Bit by bit only through radio")

"Durch radio mes pienemam. Te Technik"" (Latv., Germ.: "Through radio we accept. Here is technique) (171-2)

They ask to transmit in "the same old way" if recordings are hampered by inclusion of a microphone, and they strongly object whenever an experimenter manipulates the dial (222). "Stay on one particular station!" they cry, "...keep to

the spot [...] drive in the middle [...] It is narrow here!" (172-3). Ellis's research is more extensive, providing examples of the "variety" of voices received: "some threatening, some pleading for help, others from relatives or famous people". They often correspond to the outlook of whomever turns the dial (140). Akin to Flammarion's lightning, it appeared that this phenomenon could be subjectively interpreted.

Startlingly, Raudive found that "other-worldly" transmitting stations were mentioned by the voice entities, to which he attributed their favourable response to radio. Within the sprawling mass of *Breakthrough*, one recording is significant in that two stations, 'Radio Peter' and 'Studio Kelpé' clash over access to the diode. A verbal battle ensues:

"Tais tiltus Kelpé," ("Kelpé builds bridges")

"Radio Peter...Peter, Kosti, unser Studio, unser Studio!" ("our studio, our studio!")

"Hier Kelpé, hier Kelpé! Wahle, wahle!" ("Here Kelpé! Choose, choose!") (174-177)

A number of stations exist, for instance 'Goethe-Bridge' with several transmitters, 'Sigtuna', and 'Vasa-net' who slices through a speech-recording to "take control"(178). On the record distributed by Vista Productions, a voice is heard to rasp, "Wot nun gute Nacht von Citadi": 'goodnight from radio Citadi'. This follows termination of an entertainment feature by the phantom announcer.⁴⁵

Crucially, Raudive presents a distinct notion of the 'here' and 'hereafter' (described by one spirit as an "Anti-world"), *both* of which require electronic techniques to clarify understanding, to pass beyond.

In summary, he hopes for a "kind of 'telephonic communication' between the worlds, such as Sir Oliver Lodge envisaged". Material boundaries are transgressed -- and used to advantage -- in E.V.P, revealing an "intensely active new existence" which need not be distant or inaccessible (302). Raudive would certainly commend the efforts of 18 April 1967, when amongst the white noise, his call was answered:

"Te, Kosta, Lodge...As probindo" (Swed., Latv., Span., "Here, Kosta, is Lodge...I connect."
(257)

Owing to the unique linguistic content of the recordings, Raudive, and many of the collaborators cited in the Appendices, were able to dismiss the overriding explanation that fragments from ordinary, human, radio transmissions acted as voice sources. The voices speak "their own language - a kind of Esperanto", which is truncated in order to derive wider meaning from a single sentence. For example, "Here are the distances of the wolf" derives from an expression in German, meaning 'endless distances' or the inability to surmount a great divide (142). This line was recorded amongst a number of voices recommending a "bridge" to the afterlife.

In E.V.P, sentences are consistent in their rhythmic enunciation and speech-pattern, "a multi-lingual world salad" writes Professor Gebhard Frei (302). Or, in Joycean terminology:

⁴⁵ *Breakthrough: Examples of original voices received during transmission*, ed. Michael Smythe

...told in sounds in utter that, in signs so adds to, in universal, in polyglutlateral, in each auxiliary neutral idiom...ereperse and anythongueatall. (*FW* 117. 11-15)⁴⁶

On one occasion in *Breakthrough*, a voice-entity expresses anxiety over blurred channels, using the phrase "Sie sind augenseits" (Germ.: "They [the experimenters] are within our sight."). Raudive explains that "the word 'augenseits' does not really exist in German; it is an interesting neologism and literally translated means 'eyesides' -- "on the sides of our eyes" (113). Portmanteau words are most frequent in the entities who appear in "manifold forms". Generally known to the experimenter when alive, they have a distinct identity which is nonetheless subject to slippage, or rather, amalgamation into other voices. Such personalities, continues Professor Frei, could never be maintained on a standard radio frequency.

He adds that an E.V.P session "is rather like listening to an opera: if one is not accustomed to hearing words sung to an orchestral accompaniment, one tends to hear nothing but [...] meaningless vowels and consonants" (312). Only static can interfere, as the radio is deliberately tuned to a point between stations.

Conspicuously, Raudive operates on the premise that interpretation is vital: one must be correctly attuned to E.V.P as a believable phenomena, or the voices will

(London: VISTA productions recording, 1971).

⁴⁶ Of EVP, Ellis writes that "grammatical rules are frequently abandoned [and] one needs to be a very versatile linguist to be sure of the correct pronunciation of the original voice texts" (19-20). This corresponded to the barriers in hearing the voices correctly, as "the problem lies in the consonants, which are ephemeral sounds at best, and easily destroyed, changed or added" (42). From the other side, more recent enquiry into EVP noted : "These entities' time frame is enormous. Plus they have to translate a vast multidimensional image into linear language" (Justine Picardie quoting a New York medium "Jeannie" in 'Talk to Me', *The Guardian Weekend*, 15 September 2001)

not cohere. He is certain that "only after intensive and concentrated listening does a tangible word emerge. [On] first encounter, without comment, it seems confusing, even senseless". In many cases however, each word has a wider, symbolic meaning, given to it in such a way that "the individual experimenter may *recognise the voice entity behind it*" (29). As a by-product, lightening voices drawn to the expressive outlet of radio often seem to deliver "pointed, personal and sometimes blunt remarks".⁴⁷

Correlative with many wild imaginings of the twentieth century, such as *Finnegans Wake*, E.V.P is ultimately translatable, but only to those who 'know' and wish to be immersed and initiated. If this is how the dead speak, then Raudive's 'reader' (as he prefers to call the E.V.P analyst) must combat acoustic, electric and interpersonal resistance, all of which appear to be characteristic of the secreted, phantom world. Upon encountering *Breakthrough*, Ellis admitted to feeling "a little overwhelmed by page after page of rather inconsequential, unconnected utterance". His survey often focuses on the exclusive nature of E.V.P, and generally charges Raudive with "making 'sense out of nonsense' by using his knowledge of languages and imagination to extract a meaning from incoherent and incomprehensible sounds".⁴⁸

Further explanations are debated in the supplementary essays of *Breakthrough*; chiefly a report by Dr. Theo Locher, a parapsychologist who fleetingly raises the idea of "secondary personalities [...] formed by the unconscious, [who] then transmit the voices via radio waves" (322). For example, one of Raudive's

⁴⁷ Ellis, p. 125

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 22, 47.

interactions with a frequent visitor, 'Margarete Petrautzki' resulted in a dream of her "transcendental appearance". Raudive falters in his usual unswerving belief to note that:

[t]here must be some connection between the psycho-acoustic manifestations on tape and the pictures and impressions received in dreams. Shakespeare was right: We are such stuff as dreams are made of (273).

Locher, however, cannot comprehend how such forces could re-group electrically and formulate their own words. He prefers to consider 'Elementals', diverse spirits of an inferior nature, who penetrate the mind of the sitter in order to piece together polyglot messages. Featured in traditional modes of spiritualism, elementals are "able to masquerade as deceased persons and often imitate voices and mannerisms". Famous personages [Goethe, Nietzsche, Hitler] are singled out for telepathic mimicry.⁴⁹

Ellis recounts the view of another collaborator, Prof. Alex Schneider -- a Swiss physicist and electronics engineer -- who argues for a "psychic flotsam of the ether" comprised of "parts of personalities". This, apparently, would justify the 'banality' of the messages, such as:

⁴⁹ William Burroughs noticed that the linguistic content of the *Breakthrough* recordings betrayed a "distinctive style reminiscent of schizophrenic speech" and many of the historical figures cited had "undergone a marked deterioration of their mental and artistic faculties".

William Burroughs, 'It Belongs to the Cucumbers' in *The Adding Machine* (London: John Calder 1984), pp. 54-60).

Similarly, an experimenter quoted in Ellis points out "the very close parallel between Dr. Raudive's results and the hallucinatory voices heard by schizophrenics [...] both comprised polyglot sentences, neologisms and grammatical distortions" (133).

"Stalins te!. Furchtbar farsts. Furchtbar Eile" (Latv. Germ: "Stalin is here. Terribly hot. Terrible hurry") (87)⁵⁰

These appendices of *Breakthrough* largely focus on a direct linkage between the electric apparatus and the persons present, who, in some way, affect the transmutable flow. E.V.P doctrine holds that spirits "plug into" vibrations caused by radio waves, and are reinforced by a "mediumistically gifted participant" (371). This notion is analysed by Peter Bander, a trained psychologist who was drawn into E.V.P by Colin Smythe in 1969, and published the counterpart to *Breakthrough* titled *Voices From the Tapes* (1973). It sought to legitimise the process, tentatively allowing for problems in translation and, notably, Raudive's unyielding temperament.⁵¹

Bander presents an alternative first-hand account of "psycho-acoustics" alongside more sceptical responses. It is opined that the voices originate from a state similar to dream-fugue, or semi-delirium:

⁵⁰ Further examples of extreme 'banality' occur in Ellis, one of which bears resemblance to the miracles in Clive Chapman's *The Blue Room* (1927). The evidence from "Mrs N" is a medley of disembodied voices caught on a Ferguson 2300 2-track tape during the BBC programme 'Songs of Praise': "They not only sang with the hymns- and accompanied them with sounds of tinkling bells and some sort of pipe or whistle- but also made comments such as, 'Hello C' [...] There was one recording, made on Mrs N's birthday, on which can be heard the [...] faltering but unmistakable rendering of 'Happy Birthday To You' on the pipes" (77). See also Flammarion's reports of puerile commentary from spirits.

⁵¹ Peter Bander, *Voices From the Tapes* (New York: Drake Publishers Inc. 1973). Bander, a former Senior Lecturer in Religious and Moral Education, Cambridge Institute of Education, met Raudive's publisher, Colin Smythe, at the Frankfurt Book Fair. After resigning his academic post, he became the public advocate for EVP, facilitating a demonstration on Gay Byrne's *Late Late Show*, *Telifis Eirann* (May 1973). Bander's work also raises the possibility of fraud. For example, on one occasion Raudive supposedly heard a voice saying "Glaube du Schidin". On playback, other sceptical listeners remarked that Radio Luxembourg aired a programme at 1.00 am called 'Jenson's Dimensions', whose opening call, "Hello, this is Kid Jenson..." was more applicable.

Within our brain emerges an almost schizoid personality. We tend to perceive information from apparently nowhere, without our willing it.⁵²

This implies that a supine body is vulnerable to abuse from within, the "abstract and obscure" thoughts which bleed up from a pressured mind. E.V.P would align this to external, astral, sources, who similarly flock to a responsive human target: a live wire. It was remarked that "one has the impression of being plugged into a network and experimentally fed in metered doses with chosen but brief material [whereupon] a nervous person could get the impression of being bugged -- from human or non-human sources".⁵³

According to Bander, and articles in journals such as *Psychic News* in the 1970's, Raudive's findings exist outside the remit of mainstream Spiritualism, a claim which seems incompatible with early examples of paranormal investigation.⁵⁴ As shown, electricity was often synonymous with forays into the unknown as a means of justification, or rather, the vocabulary of telecommunications was applied to spiritualist endeavours where contact was desperately desired, such as the Raymond Lodge affair. " We Spiritualists already understand all about voices on tape", was one ungracious remark from the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain forum (1971), which implied that scientific 'reason' was trespassing on the covert.⁵⁵ However, using technical apparatus to penetrate the ether was a

⁵² Bander, p. 114. Burroughs compared excerpts from *Breakthrough* with his own dream diaries, noticing patterns in the language which could be construed from a number of sources, e.g political events and "the human memory bank [containing] everything you have ever heard, including, of course, your own words". Burroughs' essay is more concerned with the storing of data - the "slowdowns, speedups, overlays" of the tape recorder rather than the notion of attracting random signals from the ether.

⁵³ Ellis, p. 125

⁵⁴ Bander, p. 87.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 79. Article cited by Alex Owler in *Spiritualist News* (August, 1971).

logical advance, as predicted by Clive Chapman in *The Blue Room*, who learnt that "electricity is easy to handle as far as they [spirits] are concerned" (146).

In 1936, the artist Attila von Szalay declared himself the precursor of voice phenomena after a visitation from his dead brother, although attempts to save the voice onto a 78 rpm record were unsuccessful.⁵⁶ Earlier in the decade, H.D. Thorp had published *Etheric Vision* (1932), a bizarre tale recounting his own visualisation of electric sparks. These "aireons" (designating a force "more evasive" than electrons) were conducted via Thorp's "vital forces [...] sending out commands of extra voltage".⁵⁷ After hearing a 'Voice' -- the "stentorian command 'Aufstehen' of a German sentry on his 'appel' rounds" -- Thorp suppresses the probability of hallucination (119). Convinced that the "aireons" are "a conduit to other entities who control this force [...] some secondary power trying to establish contact", he speculates that continuity of life is represented by electric fields "in air and *in vacuo*"(126, 106). Finally and fundamentally, he raises the "possibilities of *mechanical spirit voice reception*", as a method to enhance communion with the "physico-psychic" unknown (149). It echoes Camille Flammarion's idea that the fourth dimension might be approached via 'mechanical means'.

A brief case history of E.V.P in Bander's points out that the reality of "psychic intrusions occurring outside both the Spiritualist and orthodox scientific frame of

⁵⁶ Ellis briefly alludes to hearing tapes made by von Szalay between 1956-58: "almost invariably in (American) English, and many of them can actually be heard at the time of recording, in the sound-proof cabinet in which [he] sits, or perhaps through one of the trumpets he uses [...] Mr von Szalay postulates that the communicating entities build an ectoplasmic structure by which the speech vibrations are transmitted to sensitive components in the circuit which have a microphone function"(84).

reference" was outlined in the late 1920's by Charles Fort (1869-1932). Regarded as a minor lunatic by the scientific establishment -- "a convinced prophet of fruitless negation"⁵⁸-- Fort was an American iconoclast who assembled more than 1200 reports of happenings devoid of any rational explanation, such as random showers of insects and persons 'teleported' across time and space.

Although less concerned with Spiritualism, an instance cited in Camille Flammarion's magazine *L'Astronomie*, where a fall of dried leaves had apparently hovered in suspension for a week, prompted Fort to meditate on "a nearby world complementary to this world where autumn occurs at the time that is springtime here".⁵⁹ His final anthology of freakish events, *Wild Talents* (1931), mentions a "fourth dimension", accessible through "any kind of radiation, from radio to lightwaves".⁶⁰

It would be extreme to classify the dramatics of Charles Fort as, even, a minor feature of *Finnegans Wake*, or that the essay of R.D. Thorp was compounded into Joyce's schemata; however, the *concept* of electric voice phenomenon was, if anything, airborne in the early part of the century. The fact should not be disregarded that in September 1925, a gaggle of psychic researchers met in Paris to debate 'Wireless Talks With Spirit World'.⁶¹ Ellmann records that, in this particular week, Joyce had returned to his Paris address, 192 rue de Grenelle, after a painful bout of conjunctivitis at Arcachon. Subsequently, he "put off" his

⁵⁷ H.D Thorp, *Etheric Vision: Its Development and Use* (London: Rider and Co., 1932), pp. 88-94.

⁵⁸ Damon Knight, *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1971), p.2

⁵⁹ Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned*, in *The Books of Charles Fort* (London: Holt, 1941), pp. 255-256.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 780.

necessary eye operation until 27 September, as "the last watch of Shaun" was in progress (*FW* pp. 555-90).⁶² Once again, there is little evidence to claim that Joyce was aware of -- and capitalised upon -- the psychics' conference; however, the aforementioned part of the *Wake* is notable for its "electrickerly in attendance" and will be analysed accordingly (579. 6).

A more certifiable fact is that Joyce, a "privileged interpreter of the media-driven age", was directly exposed to the dyadic nature of radio, which promised a mutual rapport but delivered confusion.⁶³ Perhaps nightly, Radio Athlone would deposit hallucinatory sound, far-flung pieces of a previous life where Dublin was a tangible force. In electric exile, it would be little more than an echo.

Marshall McLuhan celebrates Joyce for realising "the mechanical multiplication of messages", a trait shared by Charles Fort, who was compared to Tristan Tzara and Andre Breton for "his furious insistence that there is 'something else'. This translates as a refusal to "falsely cohere" reality, or, as in the case of *Finnegans Wake*, sub-reality.⁶⁴ "A halt for hearsake!" (*FW* 279, 9) cries the Sleeper, as he strains to catch traces of the Issy-figure: her presence is even more potent than "fort-uitous fiction" (279. 44). Certainly, Joyce realised the abnormality of radio,

⁶¹ Sconce, pp. 60, 219 fn. 4. 'Plan Wireless Talks With Spirit World: Delegates at Paris Convention Aim for a Device to Eliminate Mediums', *New York Times* (10 September 1925).

⁶² Ellmann, p. 582.

⁶³ David Glover, 'A Tale of Unwashed Joyceans: James Joyce, Popular Culture and Popular Theory' in Kershner, p. 37. In 1934, Joyce's anxiety over the mental health of his daughter was intensified by a feeling of utter alienation. In a letter of despair to Harriet Shaw Weaver, he speaks of Paris as "a haughty ruin" pervaded by radio broadcasts: the British "mumbling inanities", the German "shouting and yelling like a madman". See Ellmann, p. 697.

⁶⁴ Marshall McLuhan, 'Joyce, Mallarme and the Press' in *Essential McLuhan*, ed. Eric McLuhan and Frank Zingrone (London: Routledge 1997), 60-71, at 68; Louis Pauvels and Jaques Bergier, in 'The Morning of the Magicians' (1937), quoted in Knight, p. 206.

and crafted a vocabulary equal to any duplicitous broadcast signal, muted or twisted by static.

In assessing the qualities of E.V.P, conjoined with James Joyce's own exposure to technological media, I would contest that *Finnegans Wake* is a continual séance, conducted through a stationary figure whose "Hearsomness [...] facilitates the whole of the polis" (*FW* 23, 14-15). A *necropolis*, where all the speakers are dead but amplified, accessed and energised through a wireless set.

'Longdistance Laird'

Physicists and electronic engineers contributing to *Breakthrough* doubted that the experimenter "who [acts] as a relay station for the transformation of electromagnetic radiation, should at the same time function as an amplifier".⁶⁵ This was overcome in a 'combination' method, whereupon a microphone was placed in extremely close proximity to the radio. Raudive recommended that a wavelength should be found "that gives only the 'rushing' sound, so that no noises from radio stations can be heard and even the 'rushing' sound is hardly audible". On playback, however, it was admitted that "earthly transmitting stations [intervened]", although the distinctive features of the voice phenomenon supposedly prevented "any danger of confusion" (26).

⁶⁵ Raudive, p. 348.

A section of these trials appear on the Vista recording, where interfrequency static is enhanced in order to detect the urgent, rapping tones of voice-entities. The dead are thus compelled to labour beneath a hideous, vibrating noise like constant machinery, occasionally pierced by snarling or hooting. This process allowed collaborators to enter into a form of reciprocal dialogue, as the tape recorder would be running whilst questions were asked; usually enquiring if anyone is 'there'. At one point, a call for a recently deceased friend elicits, "Danke. Gute morning", shrill, yet hushed beneath a mighty amplification factor (219).

In the fantasy of the *Wake*, Joyce allows his sleeper to function as *every* component in the circuit. The opening passage of Chapter III, ii, prompts continual discussion of the sleeper as "machinic assemblage of machinic assemblage"; a figure who adopts features of sonic apparatus to improve a receptoretentive state.⁶⁶

[...] equipped with supershielded umbrella antenna for distance, getting and connected by the magnetic links of a Bellini-Tosti coupling system with a vitaltone speaker, capable of capturing skybuddies, harbour craft emittances [...] This harmonic condenser enginium (the Mole) they caused to be worked from a magazine battery...tuned up by twintriodic singalvalvus pipelines [...] with a howdrocephalus enlargement, a gain control of circumcentric megacycles, ranging from the antidulibnium onto the serosraatarean. (*FW* 309-310, 17-32)

John Bishop, in a valuable assessment of 'Earwicker', reveals that,

⁶⁶ Theall, *Joyce's Techno-Poetics*, Kershner, p. 151.

the real power source feeding the radio (of Chapter III, ii, pp 309-310) is our vastly "hydrocephalus" hero himself [...] However much the passage seems to be about a "harmonic condenser enginium"(310, 1), the latent immanence both of HCE and the Latin *ingenium* ("mental power") in that "enginium" suggests that the sound-sensing device in which we are interested is *embodied* in HCE, "in the flesh".⁶⁷

One might recall Marconi, dubbed "the Gulliver of science", whose "highly strung nervous system" incorporated a pair of "ultra-sharpened ears". In addition to knowing the mechanics of "radiocasting, or anything one might call it, *from A to Z and back again*", his biographer elegiacally suggests that Marconi literally "personifie[d] wireless" with his aforementioned "uncanny facility" in pinpointing words from afar and dissecting "a multiplicity of sounds".⁶⁸

Bishop declares that H.C.E is the auditory vigilance of *Finnegans Wake* who takes "readings" on the noises that emanate from the non-sensed dark, whose legendary ears translate cryptic signs, "as if by wireless from another world" (282) and render them "audible and interpretable" (276). Disappointingly, Bishop's enquiry maintains the motif that acoustic events of a single night are "misconstrued through free association as a process of radioreception" (276), and generated by a radio set in the vicinity which "pinnitrates" the "tropped head"(FW 310, 17). Whilst acknowledging Bishop's detailed critique of the "audio-selective oddness of nocturnal hearing", I would contest that such sounds are not adapted into the layers of a dream-state (278). Conceivably, the auditory montage is more insistent: the voices emerge from a space blacked-out and

⁶⁷ Bishop, p. 274.

⁶⁸ Dunlap, pp. 179, 266, 293-298. Reputedly, "after six years" of dissecting static, Dr. Raudive's hearing was considered to be "very acute" (Ellis, p. 20).

spirited, through the conduit of a figure who is *acted upon*, tampered with and wildly galvanised.

Unlike Bishop's contention that "static" is a term of inaction, and the radiophonic appendages are substitutes for being "not all there" (273), a preferable image is that of a suspended no-body, hissing and sizzling, a "man-made static" (*FW* 309. 22) and "highly charged with electrons as hophazards can effective it" (615. 17). He functions in a manner to Flammarion's lightning victim, "the intermedial body [...] who plays the role of conductor [to] the electric fluid". In doing so, he assumes the attitude of one "mediumistically gifted" in his house "of the hundred bottles with the radio beamer tower (*FW*, 380, 16-17).⁶⁹ Furthermore:

Sunset is often the signal for radio men, especially experimenters, to go to work; the end of the evening repast often sends them back to the apparatus. All wireless men like the witching hours of the night. Darkness helps the waves to go further.⁷⁰

The erstwhile medium Leopold Bloom suspects that night is "a good conductor" (*U.* 1013-1016), echoing Camille Flammarion's opinion of darkness, where "there is nothing to lessen the intensity of sound [...] it is then that pusillanimous

⁶⁹ Raudive, p. 371. Flammarion, *Thunder and Lightning*, p. 195.

Earwicker's house might resemble the Eiffel tower, boasting several "multiplex conductors [...] veritable wiretraps to catch the lightning and channel it to minimise destruction" (Flammarion, p. 247). However, the equipment would not track weather conditions but stray voices, as outlined in Ellis:

"Mr Tobler's apparatus includes high and low frequency meters, a high impedance voltmeter, a high-frequency low noise amplifier and an oscilloscope [...] used for studying the input signals"(41). See also the *Wake* shortly before the eighth thunderclap "...where the deiffel or when the finicking or why the funicking who caused the scaffolding to be first removed you give orders, babeling [...]" (314. 3).

Eric McLuhan traces the exegesis of these pages, focusing on the prevalent influence of radio, namely the "Arab muezzin tower motif from thunder 1" to dispatch signals. McLuhan briefly adds that Joyce paradoxically "seems to have regarded the 'world' of ear-culture as etherial and interiorised", but fails to elaborate (McLuhan, pp. 152-171).

⁷⁰ Dunlap, referring to Marconi's regime on board his yacht *Elettra* (p. 263).

fears and superstitions take possession of the timid". Such people imagine Ignis-fatui as a wandering spirit, or they mould familiar words from extraneous noise.⁷¹

One interpretation, by Roland McHugh, is that the "high-fidelity daildialler" of the *Wake* -- a radio -- is "a gift (to the unidentified figure) from his customers", whereupon he "dialls" into the past, or elsewhere.⁷² In concordance with this notion, I view the wireless as *separate*, and employed for "Hystorical leavesdropping" (*FW*. 564, 31). The sleeper is merely a 'wireless man' who becomes a vessel, or "more strictly [...] the cluekey to a world room beyond the roomwhorld" (100. 28-29).

From the outset, this body is inhabited. He becomes a "metherjar" in a "tombing" process (26. 18, 24), who, like Raudive's microphone, is affixed to the radio set and capable of amplifying "one thousand and one stories"(5.28-29) through his "ears, eyes of the darkness" (14. 27). After a final, conscious, activity (stumbling to the lavatory), it is arguable that the radio is switched on, and the séance begun:

Dbln. W.K.O.O. Hear? By the mausoleum wall. Fimfim fimfim. With a grand funferall. Fumfum fumfum.(13.14-16)

⁷¹ Flammarion, *The Atmosphere*, p. 75. An instance noted in chapter 1 of this thesis.

⁷² McHugh, p. 77.

"Dbln" may be a faint 'Dublin calling' in the style of Radio Athlone, as the frequencies collide before 'home' is reached, creating that vital point *between* stations which signifies 'Hear/*here*'.⁷³

The wireless thus operates as an "optophone", a "magic lyer", a "harpsdischord" (13. 17- 18) for voices who initially address the sleeper favourably: he who "comest without ever being invoked, whose coming is unknown" (26. 21-22). However, as clarified earlier, they "perform *upon*" him (26.20). This establishes that although the sleeper has sought contact by way of an electric channel, the "sharestutterers and their "serial story" cannot be controlled (28. 27).

To some degree, Joyce articulates Flammarion's reworking of the label 'medium' which ordinarily supposes a link between spirit and mortal worlds. However, if the radio is operating as the connective tissue, the sleeper could "more appropriately be called the dynamogen, because he [...] engenders -- or facilitates -- the force".⁷⁴ This word is amalgamated into descriptions of 'Finn' at certain point in the text: "that *homogenius* man, as pious author called him" (34. 14), or the *astroglodynamologos* (184. 14) who has "foul deed thoughts, wishmarks of mad *imogenation*" (251. 14)

In Book I, i -- as themes of the *Wake* judder into a flickering half-life -- noises of "ssss" and shshsh" accompany the first visitors: Mutt and Jute, who fade into a more vehement agency, the Issy-female. She is heralded by the "larprnotes" of

⁷³ Recall the methods of obtaining radio voices during an E.V.P session; Ellis presents examples of a successful connection after 'gliding' along the wavelength scale: "VOICE: Concentrate.....mmyeah.....and I shall talk" (p. 126).

⁷⁴ Flammarion, *Haunted Houses*, p. 288.

water (21. 03), thereafter associated with her every appearance. John Gordon suggests that every external noise within the immediate locale of the episode contributes to the particular message relayed, adding that Issy is primarily a voice "intermittently audible but apparently nonstop, [an] uncontrollable nighttalker" and that the dream-fugue transposes the "leaking faucet" into her words.⁷⁵ Always overheard yet frustratingly inaccessible, she rather invites comparison to an elusive radio band repeatedly swerving out of range. The stationary figure exhorts her voice to "Stop deaf stop come back to my earrin stop"(21. 23-24); this allusion to Radio Eirann implies that Issy and her cohorts traverse the radio spectrum, and prefer to avoid legitimate wavelengths.

Then, abruptly, a command is issued: "Repose you now! Finn no more!" (28. 33-34). A certain percentage of criticism -- exemplified by Campbell and Robinson's *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* -- agrees that the figure, a Viconican sleeping giant, is "Finnegan [...] decently entombed" and subsequently supplanted by HCE, the epic paradigm of everyman.⁷⁶

Bishop adapts the motif towards a more specific argument, noting that "'Earwicker' [...] as opposed to 'Finnegan' is simply a cipher whose appearance throughout the *Wake* alerts us to moments in which its sleeping hero has transitorily ascended into a state of auditory vigilance". The distinctive vocabulary of death streaks this passage, as the figure is interred beneath shutters, "perpetrified [...] by soundwaves" (*FW* 23. 29, 26). Feathers drop down

⁷⁵ John Gordon, *Finnegans Wake: A Plot Summary* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd, 1986), p. 77.

⁷⁶ Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957).

the chimney, his lips are dry as parchment and "flattering candles flare", all of which denotes a corpse before burial (28. 30). Partially dead-to-the-world, Bishop's "Absent Subject" may, nevertheless, be sifting through sounds "for all within crystal range" (*FW* 229. 12).⁷⁷ He twists the dial and receives a chorus of twelve voices, preparing the legend of 'Earwicker' alongside the "News, news, all the news [...] Angry scenes at Stormount [...] China floods" (28. 21-22, 24) and snippets of the evening serial "*Les Loves of Selskar*" (26).

The call is answered: sliding into a space emptied of the sleeper's consciousness, a "sibsubstitute" arrives (28. 35), the "archipelago's first visiting schooner" (29. 33). A bloated, earwig-shaped publican with white hair and enormous features, yet toothless and purblind. Here, the spectral projection of 'H.C.E', or rather, the *possession* of a supine body by such an overwhelming presence, would imply that a mighty paranormal event is being prepared:

And roll away the reel world, the reel world, the reel world! (64. 26-27)

In *Breakthrough*, a female figure, 'Spidola', is often the most potent voice-entity, combining "the two primeval powers of sister and mother" to vitalise traffic between the experimenter and "beyond".⁷⁸ 'Spidola', a latter-day control, is hence the most personal, and necessary, element of the linkage. This may be aligned to the "Secret Hookup" of *Finnegans Wake* between 'Issy' and the inert figure, who desires a more intense communion (*FW* 360. 16). As Shem in III, iv, he confesses, "I have heard her voice somewhere else's before me in these ears still

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 274-275.

⁷⁸ Raudive, pp. 169, 166.

that now are for mine" (565. 15-16). For she persistently intercepts, with variations on "Pip" or "pet" (a dot) , and eventually as "Meesh, meesh" (457. 25), a "telepath" dash, buoyant on "heartz'waves" (460. 21, 25). The sleeper is transfixed by her dulcet tones, she is, at times, almost embodied, and painfully inaccessible:

Hungreb, dead era, hark! He hea, eyes ravenous on her lippling lills. He hea her voi of day gin by. He hears! Zay zay zay!but, by the beer of his profit he cannot answer (68. 25-28.)

All attempts to conjoin -- to *relate* to her -- are futile, even "hosting himself up and flosting himself around and ghosting himself to merry *her* murmur" above the others (501. 30-31). For, as a "coaxing experimenter" (582. 03), the sleeper cannot be selective:

Listen, listen! I am doing it. Hear more to these voices! Always I am hearing them. (571. 24-25)

Ellis remarks that on reading *Breakthrough*, "one gets the impression of a number of communicators all eager for a turn at the 'celestial microphone'" as if the device itself, and the persons present, are overrun and usurped (21).

In deferring to spirits, a "dweller in the downand outermost where *voice only of the dead may come*" (194. 19-20), the sleeper of the *Wake* must be completely null and void, an "indepondant reporter" (602. 17) or even "someone impartial who will somewherise for the *whole* anyhow" (602. 6-8). For example, during the Mime of II, i, his hallucinatory state transposes the crackling fire into a children's tea party; the spluttering Shem-self morphs from honey pitcher to

kettle, and the sleeper acquiesces that "control number thrice was operating on the subliminal of his invaded personality" (247. 8-9).

In the final pages, Joyce alludes to a continual circuit in the restructuring, or revivification of 'Finn', at peace in bed. Described as a "Prospector projector" (576. 18), he would seem to divine the realm of the non-sensed dark, and simultaneously transmit, or amplify, those ghostly whisperings otherwise dispersed. A homage is sounded to the burnt-out, deactivated figure still harried by spirits: the "bodikin by him" may be a reference to Michael Bodkin of 'The Dead', "eskiipping the clockback" (579. 5). The cycle of the *Wake* is celebrated as follows:

A mortal ghost-hunter is prostrated, and "receives through a portal vein [his ear-canal clamped to the radioset] the dialectically separated elements of precedent decomposition [the dead] for the purpose of subsequent recombination" (614. 33-35). So that, acoustically speaking, they may return, "recoup themselves: now and then, *time on time again*" (577. 20).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ With regard to the structure of the *Wake*, it is worth mentioning a comment by R.D Smith: "[T]he ring as opposed to the straight ribbon describes many of the best works for radio. The sailor, explorer or fugitive who comes back to his home port, the pilgrim who finds at the programme's climax that 'in my end is my beginning [are] typical figures in radio, as they are in a great deal of literature" (R.D Smith 'One Grain of Truth' in *Proceedings of the Radio-Literature Conference 1978*, ed. Lewis, pp. 219-229 at 222). It was suggested later that Joyce may "have written [the *Wake*] for radio - for some venturesome Third Programme planners who might one day put the seal on the project?" (Clement Semmler, 'Radio and James Joyce' in *B.B.C Quarterly*, vol. VII, no. 4 (1950). This is an immense area for research and, regrettably, outwith the scope of this -- very specific -- chapter.

"All are dood!" Voices from a-nether-world.

On commencing the séance, 'H.C.E's sequence -- his rise and fall -- is traced by a series of personages throughout Chapter I, iii. They arise to defend or abuse the entity in question, often in fragmentary gestures, as they are incomplete; their "contraries reamalgamerge" into H.C.E at this stage, often speaking for his "centuple selves" (49. 36, 33). Clive Hart denotes the symbol of I, iii as "Viking; Coffin"; clearly, a channel, or container, is present beneath this line of gossiping antagonists.⁸⁰ The sleeper is, "at his best a onestone parable, a rude breathing on the void to be, a venter [rendered] dumb!" (100. 26-28, 36).

The technique of this section is media-styled "Rhetoric", debatable in quality and "potent of suggestion" (53. 05). Radio is mentioned for the first time: a voice remarks that a "mimage" of the culprit is available "across the wineless Ere", through secondary reporting which creates misapprehension, a mirage or phantom (53. 3-4). "Mass Taverner's at the Mike again!" they cry, a phrase interpreted by Campbell and Robinson as disparagement of the publican "advertising his credits".⁸¹ H.C.E is certainly jostling for attention over a cacophony of tongues: Moslem, Bulgarian, Norwegian -- "Eli alo, ecou, Batiste, tuvavnr dans Lptit boing going" (*FW* 54. 69-70) -- supposedly "caught from the lips of a cosmopolitan passing crowd".⁸²

⁸⁰ Hart, p. 17.

⁸¹ Campbell and Robinson, p. 63.

⁸² Ibid. Ellis commented that in EVP, one might be "walking through a crowded room and just catching the odd phrase or two from each of a number of animated discussions" (21). It amounts to the quintessential 'cocktail party problem'.

Indeed, but the multitude exists etherically, and this is surely deadspeaking, swirling nonsensically before the "mike" is commandeered, a pattern which recurs throughout *Finnegans Wake*. "Lend ears and you shall hear" is a premise for reading I, iii, the entrée to a "D.e.e.d" realm, where all speakers crave contact and embodiment,

[D]etermining as regards for the future the howabouts of their past absences which they might see on at hearing [...] To ought find a values for [...] When ex what is ungiven. (355. 2-4)

In translation: they wish to reverse what has occurred -- the "yawning (abyss)" of death -- by radio *valve/value* (56. 03-04) and the "dode canal" -- *diode* -- of the sleeper (100. 30). Just as Raudive's voices reluctantly admit to their experimenter: "Ty moc. Ich bin te Stimme" ('You are the Power. I am only a voice here') (295).

The language of the dead, "apically Volapucky, grunted and gromwelled" under the "ppppfff" of static (*FW* 116. 32-34) is formulated throughout Book I, after 'H.C.E' becomes silent in "suspensive exanimation"(143. 8-9). Critics maintain that he gazes into a looking-glass cued by a visual circuit of the room, splitting into Shaun-self and Shem-self, the "hypostatisation of his two abstracted psychic constituents".⁸³

Here, confusion is minimal, as the chief voice-entities merge into respective layers. For example, the arrival of Issy mouthing "pepette... pette... Transname me loveliness, now and here me for all time!" (145. 19) with her tinkling,

trickling sound, forestalls the "extension to [her] personality"(144.23): the 'A.L.P' entity. This is akin to seances by medium Helen Hughes in the 1930's where spirit speakers used "vibrations created by previous communicators".⁸⁴

So, Issy's dot, dash signature is appropriated by "electrified [...] anner" (201.33-36) whose intensity silences 'H.C.E' and his persecutors: he is "deafadumped" throughout the "hole affair" (200. 15). A distant station blares "Quoiquoiquoiquoiquoiquo!" before the wireless settles on pure static, rushing, "chittering [...] and liffying" (281, 203) like water, ideal for deadspeak.

One might hear in their beyond that lionroar in the air again, the zoohoooom of Felin [Eirann] make Call (488. 13-14).

didn't you hear it a deluge of times, ufer and ufer, *respond to spond* (214. 08-09).

The entities are responsive to sound, either continually ('ever and ever') or echoing the German *uber und uber*, meaning 'all over': an expanse of ether stretching through space, hovering between the "lionroar" of radio stations and deceptively silent unless penetrated.

In a summary of I, iii, Peter Myers traces a technique comparable to 'Effects' in a radio play; the "Flip! and "Flep" (207, 213) are clearly meant to evoke wet sheets slapping on stone, as the washerwomen converse.⁸⁵ Onomatopoeic

⁸³ Gordon, *A Plot Summary*, p. 157; McHugh, p. 18.

⁸⁴ Upton, p. 55.

⁸⁵ Peter Myers, *The Sound of Finnegans Wake* (London: MacMillan, 1992) p. 146.

embellishments of "sh" and "ch", signify a continual ebb and flow; the accompaniment to formidable gossip and "evesdripping" (89. 01).

As previously outlined, E.V.P was reliant on interfrequency 'rushing' to encourage voices in the range of audibility, or successful "telling [and] taling" (*FW*. 213, 11-12). Raudive's test-recordings indicate that voice-entities are anxious to speak of others' activities and whereabouts, often purporting to represent the "truth" and ever eager to grasp the airspace while conditions are favourable:

Tja plapu daudz. Paciet" (Latv.: "There are a lot of gossips here. Bear with it")

Plaras te. Kosti, peti! ("Here are gossips. Kosti, explore!")⁸⁶

The "Dispersal women" of the *Wake* attending to their ghostly business would certainly agree: "I lovat a gabber. I could listen to maure and moravar again" (101. 1; 213. 8-9).

Similarly, only above the static of I. iv -- "Zijnzijn Zijnzijn!" (75. 08) -- the four annalists may conclude H.C.E's sorry tale, suffused with "the rustlings and the twitterings and the raspings [...] and all the scandalmunkers" (95. 29-31). Gossip is always misleading, often sinister:

Hear, O worldwithout! Tiny tattling! Backwards, be wary! (244. 1-2).

⁸⁶ Raudive, pp. 156, 182. A vital issue surrounding EVP is raised by Ellis, who asks, "Are [the voice-entities] merely taking to each other? [...] Is Dr. Raudive just an eavesdropper?"(48). Although phrases in *Breakthrough*, and the *Wake*, suggest otherwise, it is useful to note that the EVP experimenter 'listens-in' to a different sphere; an occasional visitor who receives half-heard information.

This rather Raudivian warning translates as, "Hear, Oh world beyond the grave.
A tiny tot is tattling! Be wary everybody!"

Even so, the idle banter which animates A.L.P is not continually sustained, as the interminable drone becomes a torrent, hence blocking transit: "Can't hear with the waters of [...] we'll part once more " (215. 05, 31). The "Poolbeg flasher" (215. 01) is not merely a lighthouse, but suggestive of a Marconi mast which emits a noisy "Zerezere...Whark?" (215, 30) It is imitated by the washerwomen, who gibber "bawk talk...bawk of bats...Dark hawks hear us", as they relapse into crackling confusion (32-33, 36).

Degrees of hearing, or the inability to hear, is also relevant in the "yonderworld" (593. 23); a distant hum of static prompts the entities to speak, whereas a direct signal arrests the 'flow'. Notably, one voice complains of the "irrawaddying" in her ears which "husheth the lethest zswound" (214. 09-10). The 'sh', 'th', 'zs' are keynotes of static; she no longer apprehends the wake-up call. With senses impeded like the sleeper, whose mouth is glued in trance, "thinking himself to death" (422. 09), this voice-entity betrays her funerary rites.⁸⁷

All orifices blocked with cotton wool, she is a reminder of how communication with the afterlife requires a "presentiment", or an "engravure" (87. 33, 13. 7) of sorts, as exemplified by the sleeper, who is temporarily "the late cemented Mr T.M. Finnegan. R.I.C." (221. 27). In *behaving* like the dead -- "ghosting" himself

to echo Issy and ritually adopting "the stenchions of the corpse" -- he is capable of summoning spectral acoustics (343. 08).

The semi-visualisation of A.L.P as "mouthless" (101. 30) is enhanced by her final monologue, transmitted in the desire to "begin again":

If I lose my breath for a minute or two don't speak, remember. Once it happened, so it may again. Why I'm all these years in soffran, all beleaved [...] Wrhps, that wind out of nowhere! As on the night of the Apophanypes. Jumpst shootst throbbst into me mouth like a bogue and arrohs. (625. 28-30, 626. 3-5).

Recalling her cadaverous state, wrapped in saffron and preserved -- like the Egyptian mummies -- A.L.P is dumbed down in a purgatorial "blink pitch" (93. 04) before she is galvanised, vocalised, into being-speech by an electric spark in I iii. Notably, compilers of the Egyptian Book of the Dead devised a ceremony, 'Opening of the Mouth' (Chapter XXII), whereby the embalmed corpse was equipped with paraphernalia to dispense of facial swathings in the afterlife. Bishop explains that:

By internally opening a mouth helplessly and involuntarily closed -- whether in sleep or death -- "the inert one" in the body regained the extinguished capacity for speech [and] language.⁸⁸

At the close of 'Anna Livia Plurabelle', the washerwomen gently dissolve into white noise, their words polygutteral and inconclusive. Released from time, they reminisce, predict, and vow to return: "Forgivemequick, I'm going! Bubyee! And

⁸⁷ John Bishop writes on dream-void sensory paralysis in the *Wake*, which creates a "language of nihilation", described in Joycean terms as "sordomutics" (*FW*. 117. 14) i.e *surdus-mutus* - 'deaf

you, pluck your watch, forgetmenot" (215. 07-08). Myers suggests that "Forgivemequick" gives the impression of "a frantic attempt to save the soul at the point of death", which would apply to their descent into nothingness, to absence, after a brief flowering ("forgetmenot").⁸⁹ They metamorphose into stone, as the frequencies gradually shift to the harsh, insistent "certelleneteutoslavzendlatinsoundscript" of Book II (219. 17). Although, "If Standing Stones Could Speak" (306. 22-23), the women would continue babbling "a testament of the rocks from all the dead unto some the living" (72. 32-33).

Later, A.L.P echoes the fate of her consorts while the "baylight" streaks into the sleeper's sphere, "tightening down" all nocturnal activities (626. 02). Her speech blurs: "duv...Inn...nno" as her essence sharply, and briefly, flickers into a younger self "Swimming in my hindmost...a spink, spank, sprint of a thing" (627. 4-5). With a lament of, "I'm getting mixed [...] I am passing out [...] Thinking if I go all goes" (626. 33, 627. 14, 31), A.L.P becomes verbally fragmented in the effluvia created by "therrble prongs": the electric forks in the nearby radio server, which conduct a muffled torrent of static, "Lff...Whish...Lps..." (628. 7,12,14).⁹⁰

Further evidence that all the speakers are dead lies in the repetition of *anam* (as Irish: 'I am not'), initiated in I, vii, with the first conundrum of Shem the Penman.

and dumb'. Bishop, p. 48.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 116.

⁸⁹ Myers, p. 167.

⁹⁰ On the presence of water in the *Wake*, as heralded by Issy's 'larprnotes', it is worth consulting Ellis, who reports a voice-entity requesting water as a communication tool. For instance, sounds made by a kettle during boiling, and a microphone placed in the bath, which supposedly echoed the subject's words "but with a stress on a different syllable" (pp. 69-70). William Burroughs mentions that during his own experiments, "words will emerge from recordings of dripping faucets" (p. 54).

John Gordon translates the riddle, "when is a man not a man?" (170. 05), as 'when is a man/soul not alive?' The answer must be "when he is a [...] Sham" (170. 23). This is read as *asham*, the Hebrew terminology for a sacrificial victim, who dies that another may live.⁹¹ Although this word-cycle blatantly supports a major motif of *Finnegans Wake* -- the fraternal conflict -- it is arguable that all voice-entities are "haunted by a convulsionary sense of not being all or being all that I might have been" (193. 34-35).

They clamour for assistance: for example, in II, ii, the Shem-self demands to be ushered, or unmeshed, from his "ghastcold [...] Yeomansland" [no-man's land] by electricity, a vehicle "[w]here flash becomes word and silents selflound" (267. 12, 16-17). He craves this outlet, as the subtext reads "Anama namaba anamaba" (267. 33): *Because I am not, I do not exist.*

Such desire for contact is pivotal to facilitating E.V.P. Raudive quantifies this in a section of *Breakthrough* titled, 'Here and Hereafter - The Antiworld - The Bridge, Crossing and Customs Points', listing occasions where "the voice entities reiterate their plea that a bridge should be established" (141).

"Tais tiltu! Tais Stimme!" (Latv., Germ.: "Build the bridge! Make the voice!")

Dialogue with the experimenter is achievable once this "crossing point" is surmounted, which apparently requires a passport. Although a challenge to credulity, it nevertheless follows the pattern of traditional spiritualism where a word or phrase often prompted a certain spirit to 'speak'. As shown in Raudive's

⁹¹ Gordon *A Plot Summary*, p. 160.

tests, electric voice phenomena itself is generally perceived as a bridging construct, although access is often withheld:

"Tulli, ernst." (Swed., Ger.: "Customs are a serious matter") (143)

"Propusk, Pass!" (Germ., Russ.: "Identity card, passport!")

"...svart att koma...Netiekam!" (Swed., Latv.: "...it is difficult to come over. We can't enter") (144).

Chapter II, ii of *Finnegans Wake*: the 'Study Period - Triv and Quad', is a medley of crossings and intersections, and widely considered as "devoted to the appearance of [...] words on the page".⁹² The final segment of II, i, reveals how the ensuing convoluted drama is instigated through "dial...doodling" (306. 8):

[T]he unhappitents of the earth have terrumbled from firmament unto fundament and from tweedlededumms down to twiddlededees (258. 22-25).

Spirits mouthing dumbly in the void are "phonoised by that phonemanon" (258. 23) who twiddles the wireless to a constant "Mummumm" (259. 9). The voices leap through the portal: "Loud, hear us! [...] graciously hear us! (258. 26-27), with typical supernatural gratitude also evident in Raudivian cases:

"Tacka, tacka, tacka... Vi bundna kopa" (Swed., Latv.: "Thankyou, thankyou. We are now linked together" (117, 130).

It must be noted that the triad of voices in the study period of II, ii are simultaneously visual and auditory, as, for example, a spirit "assoars [...]"

hickerwards" from the "unterdrugged" lower text to the "studorium upsturts" (*FW* 266. 8-9, 13). Riding the "top line [...] suits me mikey fine", interjects one voice. Even further down the page, a marginal note hints at "Fossilisation...Startnaked and bonedstiff. We vivvy soddy ['buried in the earth?'] *All be dood*" (264. 34-350).

Moreover, distances are breached in the *Wake* by a highly charged "*contact bridge* of two million two humbered and eighty thaussig nine humbered and sixty radiolumin lines".⁹³ It has "kaksitoista volits ykitoista volts kymmenen volts yhdeksan volts...setseman volts, kuusi volts..." (285. 17-21). Thus multilingually charged -- in a volapuk -- it is sourced "where G.P.O is zentrum" (256. 29-30), namely, the site of Radio Eirann, "three makeshift studios at the top of the General Post Office".⁹⁴

I consider the following exchange in the *Wake* as evidence: a pattern of voices attempting to communicate from another realm once the wiring, the radio, has been established:

Approach to lead our passage!

This bridge is upper.

Cross.

Knock.

A password thanks.

Yes, pearse.

⁹² Hart, p. 36.

⁹³ This is likely to be a reference to Flammarion's *Lumen*, whose spirit scans the diffuse space of the ether.

⁹⁴ Gorham, p. 101.

Well, all be dumbed (262. 2-9).

The shout of "Boo, you're through!" (247. 12) is applicable to the medium twisting a radio dial, but may also represent spiritistic endeavours as they tunnel through white noise.

At this juncture, literally the very heart of *Finnegans Wake*, the 'H.C.E' entity is "lost" beneath a blanket of geometry and a one-sentence fugue recapitulating his past. He calls an S.O.S before the "death he has lived through becomes the life he is to die into": a pre-existence, or complete oblivion implying the Egyptian 'second death' (293. 3-5). Previously, an S.O.S has given Issy a permit to speak: "(pip!) a message interfering...(pet!)...a dash to her dot!" (232. 10, 28). Here, Joyce suggests that radio is capable of snatching, and thus liberating, the dead from an abyss -- by "ancient flash and crash habits" inspired in the cable and brought to fruition in "live wires". The sub-harmonics on page 289 provide explanation: "They just spirits a body away" (32).

Only in the realm of the dead may old phantoms eavesdrop on previous traces, as noted by John Gordon, who terms the *Wake's* 'Recorso' section as partially fictive, "a deathbed-like sequence of flashbacks from [...] past lives", as the two primary figures, 'H.C.E' and 'A.L.P' exist in "comparitive accoustomology" with their younger selves (598. 23).⁹⁵ It is a "tense continuant" (598. 29) -- present continuum -- a state similarly achieved by Raudive's voices, who always maintain, "Laika te nav" (Latv.: "There is no time here").⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Gordon, p. 277.

⁹⁶ Raudive, p. 140.

As reported in *Breakthrough*, conditions in the afterlife greatly vary, depending on the particular voice-entity, and "whether actual statements really refer to situations in the beyond, or [are] simply impressions carried over from earth life".⁹⁷ A potentially mundane "City de mortis"(155) corresponding to mortal realities is revealed in snippets such as, "Where has the mail got to?"(153); "No money" (138); "Bring cigarettes"(154) and "For me the bathroom. Heat the bathroom"(139).

In the *Wake*, spirits en-voiced by wireless are almost "word made flesh", quarrelling, loving, ruminating and talking incessantly (*FW* 140. 08). Nevertheless the Issy-figure hints that it may be the "Seekit headup! [Secret Hookup], the "live wires" of the radio medium which reinstalls negative mortal traits:

No petty family squabbles *Up There* nor homemade hurricanes in our Cohortyard, no cupahurling nor apuckalips nor no puncheon jodelling nor no nothing (454. 35-35, 455. 1-2)

More pervasive, however, is the notion of death as comfortless: a grinding, rather tedious, ordeal beset by antagonists who are frequently mentioned in Raudive's tests:

"Slepu zinas. Te slikti" (Latv.: "Secret reports. It is bad here") (157)

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 153. Ellis cites one researcher who detected differing 'planes of existence' on the other side. Those on the lowest plane could only communicate by microphone; the more refined entities would use progressively higher radio frequencies (p. 35). In his forthcoming work, John Gordon notes that the scene in 'Cyclops', where Paddy Dignam's voice is transmitted from a realm serviced by modern conveniences is a wry critique of Oliver Lodge's *Raymond*, where certain spirits reside in comfortable abodes.

"Wir leiden...Ai hier ir sodi...Vergi mes esam" (Germ., Latv.: "We suffer...there are penalties here... We are slaves") (156)

"Lyudzi par mums! Mias capam." (Latv.,Lat: "Pray for us. We burn" (132)

Similarly, 'A.L.P' aches with regret that "dev do espart" (*FW* 626. 31-32) as her final transmission sinks into the ether, reluctant to rejoin the "underworld" (147. 27) and its population:

I'm loathing them that's here and all I lothe [...] and I am lothing their little warm tricks . And lothing their mean cosy turns. And all the greedy gushes out through their small souls (627.17-19, 31).

Most accounts of séance activity record how 'influences' are attracted by light. As noted previously, by Hester Travers Smith, a lamp strategically placed would encourage spirits who described "a brilliant light on the head of the medium [...] a woman wrapped in flame".⁹⁸ Flammarion recalls how ghosts would be summoned by a fire in the grate, despite preferring a less lurid beacon: "Meno luce! Meno luce"[less light], they protest, often favouring a soft red glow.⁹⁹ In Raudive's experiments, voice-entities often defer to light as a connective mechanism, or magnet; the phrase "Tulpe gaisa" ("the tulip is bright") is a continuation of previous recordings, where "voices had already referred to the lamp in [Raudive's] study, and asked for a red light" (255). Elsewhere, praise is given to the "pretty shining light" emitting from an oscillograph, which in turn, registers the acoustic vibrations (293).

⁹⁸ Hester Travers Smith, *Voices from the Void: Six Years Experience in Automatic Communications*, pp. 40-41.

Alongside the prostrate figure, a bedside lamp intermittently flickers and gutters throughout *Finnegans Wake*. "A lighted lamp without globe" (FW 559.14) which eerily distorts the séance by infiltrating every layer of consciousness, "with waverings that made shimmershake rather naughtily all the duskcended airs and shylit beacons from shehind him back" (222. 35-36). At the close of Chapter III, ii. the lamp glows like "a meednight sunflower" (470. 7), ushering a host of female voices to exorcise Jaun the Boast -- a Shaun incarnation -- whose last, spluttering "fireless" (469. 29) words anticipate the electrical interference of II, iii, a drama far greater than shadow-pictures caused by a phosphorescent bulb.

Book II, iii.: Bad Static

An immense catalogue of debate exists around the 'Tavernry' or 'Norwegian Captain' sequence, with the consensus that episodes in H.C.E.'s shameful life are recounted by denizens of his hostelry; a downstairs room in the sleeper/proprietor's house. Campbell and Robinson trace nine interwoven, snarled-up yarns, all of which recirculate the myth of a returning avenger who woos and wins the damsel, growing fat and base before angry deposition by his people. Persecuted, ghosted and finally exiled, he returns to the purgatorial river.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Camille Flammarion, *Mysterious Psychic Forces* (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Campbell and Robinson interweave the section as follows: A) Tavern Brawl; B) Norwegian Captain story; C) a radio skit of the brothers Butt and Taff; D) Butt's shooting of the Russian General at the Battle of Sevastopol; E) the Steeplechase; F) a televisioning of four events; G) an

The principal motif is a radio, whose continual presence ensures that all dialogue is loud, rapid and scattered; furthermore, every item broadcast from the "earpicker" (*FW* 312. 16) recasts the legend in another form. In essence, the majority of interpretation holds that the wireless is at a distance, exclusive of the sleeper and operating at the same level of external noise as, for example, the "Rolloraped" (330, 20); a rollerblind at the window, ripping through consciousness and thus mutating word-patterns.

This would place the sleeper in sonic turmoil, compelled to "electrically filter" (309. 24) sounds from the external environment which are thus incorporated into the erratic imagery of, allegedly, a dream. Derek Attridge ventures that, although Joyce complacently supported those who used the strategy, "there is [...] little evidence to suggest he associated his laborious project with [...] sleep or dreams".¹⁰¹ This would correlate to a letter by Harriet Shaw Weaver, in 1954, which dismisses the dream-form as a "convenient device", that was never intended to expand into the somnambulistic wanderings of H.C.E.¹⁰² Elusive about his formula, Joyce seemed to have plundered dreams as, simply, another source, for expressing the "shiftings and changes and chances" of an illogical state.¹⁰³

By that maxim, my theory slightly amends the accepted reading, in the suggestion that a wireless set is adjacent to the sleeper -- literally at his bedside. I

account of the Annihilation of the Atom; H) a radio review of the Dismemberment of the Hero. H.C.E. apparently presides throughout. See p. 164.

¹⁰¹ Derek Attridge, 'Finnegans Wake: The Dream of Interpretation', in *James Joyce Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1989): 17-18.

¹⁰² Quoted in J.S. Atherton, *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake"* (Illinois: Southern Illinois Press, 1974), p. 17.

would add, that there are no -- mortal -- brawling customers within earshot. The radio, although capable of "condensing Naul and Santry" from infinite distances, is simultaneously repressive and an impediment to contact (310. 13). Official broadcasts aired on earthly, robust, wavelengths, jump into the gaps inhabited by spirit-voices, who rely on more delicate tuning. This section may be construed as a critical juncture in the séance, where the stationary sleeper, communing "in his glass darkly" (355. 9) falls victim to "Infernal machinery" (320. 32).¹⁰⁴

In *Break through*, interference from radio bands and external transmitters was of great concern, primarily for the investigators who operated under suspicion of fraud. They argued that electromagnetic radiation 'modulated' sounds within the radio antennae, which extracted low-frequency oscillation from normal radio programmes. This attracted "paranormal excitation of the air" rather than snippets from a distant station.¹⁰⁵

However, demodulating strong signals on reproduction did not minimise problems during a session, as the carrier wave from transmitters was needed to generate a required "blank noise"(340). This caused a paradoxical situation: whilst preferring the refinements of radio-methods, Raudive's voices suffer and wane in the blast created by attendant frequencies. "At your place it sounds loud," a voice objects, after a case of faulty tuning (163). Mainly, the spirits urge participants to settle at one spot on the waveband and dispel the encroaching noise:

¹⁰³ Ibid. J.W Dunne had remarked that dreams should be approached as "episodes in a personal adventure story of a only partially reasonable character" (*An Experiment With Time*, p. 25)

¹⁰⁴ This is a blatant reference to Lodge's *Raymond*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁵ Raudive, p. 343.

"Turat vilni, brali. Herrlich!"(Latv., Germ.: "Hold the wavelength brother! Marvellous!" (124)

"Das Radarproblem...Stop muziku!" (Germ., Eng., Latv.: "The radar problem. Stop the music!"(174)

"Berore inte med Sender!" (Swed., Germ.: "Don't come into contact with the transmitter!" (173)¹⁰⁶

Throughout II, iii of *Finnegans Wake*, "Boildawl" interference -- that is, hijacking of the radio dial -- is continual (*FW* 322. 2). Two primary broadcasts, a sermon and a weather report, collide with spiritspeak, rudely "crupping into our raw language" (323. 5) and causing "Enterruption. Check or Slowback. Dvershen" (332. 36).

Subjects and details of conventional broadcasts are warped into more unique transmissions, for example, the ghost of Daniel O'Connell ("old damn ukonnen") is engulfed by the "flash" of a racing report, a "bunch of palers on their round, timemarching [...] six to one, bar ones" (323. 25, 29-30, 336.7).¹⁰⁷ The horses compete in a "blazy raze"; this terminology of heat and fire becomes incorporated into a panicked response to wireless intrusion. Voices combine to tell "...how the whole blazy raze acurragedh [...] from spark to phoenish" (322. 19-20). Excruciating static sounds like a "Scaald!" of oil-on-flames, before

¹⁰⁶ Ellis writes that "harmonics from the local oscillator" were problematic. When the radio was tuned between stations, "the chances are that two different sidebands will be received, but no carrier, and this will result in reception of a weak, distorted, jumbled combination of the signals from both stations" (p. 115)

¹⁰⁷ John Gordon writes that O'Connell's speech is "a re-enactment of [his] career or coverage of a speech given in the Dail by one of his many descendants.[It is] the voice of a ghost, embittered by the disdain of the rising generation, remembering the brave words of his heyday [...]. (*A Plot Summary*, pp. 199-200).

"Rowdiose wodhalooing" -- 'Radio Atha Luin' -- partially consumes another ghostly signal from the "Land under Wave"(247. 03).¹⁰⁸

Campbell and Robinson state that fragments of a séance interrupt news items, although it would appear to be the reverse, as an intriguing phrase filters through the pounding of hooves.¹⁰⁹

[T]heir joke was coming home to them, the steerage way for stabling, ghustorily speaking, gen and gang, dane and dare, like the *dud spuk* (323. 35-36).

This implies resentment from spirits over the indiscriminacy of radio, a medium they haunt and abuse, which, in its legitimate capacity picks up more insistent traffic. "Shut down and shet up", is the demand, "Our set, our set's allohn" (324.15). In the style of Raudive's 'Radio Peter' and 'Studio Kelpie' jostling for attention, the spirits of the *Wake* ask that 'their' transmission be favoured. The word "allohn" may be doubled as 'only', or even 'alone' in a welter of noise. Additionally, the German verb 'lohn' means 'to be worthwhile'. This would alter the command to: 'Shut down the others -- our station is worth it'.

A direct link occurs at a future point in the séance during Yawn's inquest, where a noisy intrusion from official stations: "Dang! And tether, a loguey O!" seems to enrage the Matthew-entity:

Dis and dat and dese and dose! Your crackling out of turn, my Monster firefly, like always. And 2 R.N [Radio Eirann] and Longhorns Connacht, *stay off my air!* (528. 26-29).

¹⁰⁸ 'Radio Atha-Luin' was the pre-World War II identification of Radio Athlone.

The situation in II, iii, is that a host of phantom raconteurs are indeed trying to 'get through' to continue the 'taling'. The auditor appears to *turn* the dial -- "Say wehrn!" (German: 'to turn') -- to locate their precise whereabouts. Textually, acoustic jolts such as, "A pause", "Zoot!" or "Off" signify a frantic channel-hopping to retrieve the messengers from friction, in particular the female figure cast in 'A.L.P' mode who is borne in on more conducive static:

Pappappapparrassannuargheallachnatullaghmonganmacmacmacwhackfalltherdebblenonthedubbl
andaddydoogled (332. 5-7).

Eric McLuhan perceives the eighth thunderclap of *Finnegans Wake* to be resonant of every theme present in the episode, specifically "eye and ear reuniting; overtones of the story of Private Buckley and the Russian General; the [...] simultaneous development of silent movies and radio".¹¹⁰ If allowing for this -- Joyce's crucial "incommixtion" of the senses -- it posits the rollerblind shadow-show as a *partly visual* explanation of events (347. 21). Functioning as a brief interlude in the acoustic drama of the *Wake*, certain segments of this thunderword specify death.

Still in *argea* (ear-mode), the projections are *nuaragh* (mirages), merely ghost images. McLuhan translates *tulla* from the Norse, a word eventually construed as 'ear language revival'.¹¹¹ Additionally, the multiple meanings of *dubbl* -- 'dubbing' sound onto image; devil; echo or 'double' -- insinuate that the eventual

¹⁰⁹ Campbell and Robinson, p. 175.

¹¹⁰ McLuhan, pp. 173-174

¹¹¹ Ibid, pp. 186-191.

flimsy apparition of Butt and Taff is a "*metenergetic reglow*" (349. 07). This means it is second-rate, a "poor daguerre!": that is, a phonoscope of phantom voices (339. 23).

Written during 1936, this chapter conveys the current "fascion" (353. 21) as a Czech radio station cuts in with ominous regularity. Field Marshall von Molke marches through the "danzing corridor"; the noise he evokes is a "clopping of horses hooves, characteristic of radio drama effects" (333.8). Other sounds have a twofold impact, notably:

Knock knock. War's where! Which war? [...] Knock knock. Woos without! Without what? [...] Knock knock. 330. 30-32)

This anticipates a hunting pack of "Gestapose" on a dawn raid, and also alludes to spirits at a séance, whose presence was often announced by rapping and knocking (332. 27).

The "wackawacks of the sturm" outside in II, iii. (335.19) is doubly shattering for Joyce's voice entities, as they navigate turbulence which has ripped the "currans" (curtains) and unravelled a blind which enhances "swishingvision" instead of sound (345. 34).

Furthermore, the weather has undoubtedly affected an external transmitter which pumps out conflicting waves, one of which is the weather report itself, prophesying further doom. Interestingly, the next "Gael warning" is intoned by a random spirit "in the free state on the air, clearly not affiliated to any 'official'

party line such as 'Radio Peter' (604. 22-23). The swishing rhythm of trees outside, subject to every gust of wind, corresponds to the ocean, "atatlantic breastswells", as described over the wireless (336. 27). This is recast in the nautical themes invoked by the revellers. The Norwegian captain sounds, and speaks, like a fragment tossed to the elements: "rent, outraged, yewleaved, grained, ballooned, hindergored and voluant!" (339. 28-29).

Such violent, uncontrollable, activity often characterises a séance -- the breaking of furniture, ripping of fabric and freakish currents of air were widely reported. In *Finnegans Wake*, there are hints that certain forces -- perhaps the 'Elementals' described in the Raudive study -- perpetuate the chaos. For example the Butt-incarnation "blue[s]" the air alongside "Chorney Choplain", and exhorts the "rinks" (ranks) to "Up the revels [and] tune in [...] to the topmast noviality" (351. 13-16). In general, however, this habitat is damaging to the efficacy of messages, as researched by Camille Flammarion, who wrote that "meteorological conditions seemed to exercise some influence [over séances]. Fine weather, dry and warm, acts favourably".¹¹²

It may be that following a laxative commercial and excerpts from a high-society event -- a "fictionable world" -- the sleeper rises to redirect the current of the *Wake* (345. 33). As aforementioned, Butt and Taff are being mutated onto a "bombardment screen", the visible phantoms "borne by their carnier walve" (carrier wave/valve. 349. 12). To amend this distraction -- which amounts to a

¹¹² Flammarion, *Mysterious Psychic Forces*, p. 279. Ellis notes how adverse weather conditions radically affect EVP by recombining frequencies from a various sources. This makes the point between stations even more elusive to find (p. 114).

temporary usurping of sound-sense -- the sleeper closes every orifice, sealing his eyes, nose and throat like the Egyptian dead:

He blanks his oggles because he confesses to all his tellavicious nieces. He blocks his nosoes because that he confesses to everywheres [...] he wollops his mouter with a sword of tusk in as because that he confesses [...] all his handcomplishes and behind all his comfoderacies (349. 25-33).

The action taken by the sleeper is amalgamated into H.C.E's disgraceful behaviour, and the motifs of revenge and treachery relished by those voices who succeed in wading through the crowded airspace.

Moreover, this passage highlights the profligacy of words: how gossip and constant 'taling' is unavoidable in the ether. Some order is resumed, as John Gordon notes, "this is where the tale begins to be the ghost story promised- from the king himself": H.C.E, "the pints in question" (356. 14). Once the sleeper's "travelling self" (358. 13) is no longer deranged by false optics, the radio begins to broadcast short pieces on "dismemberment and dissolution".¹¹³ Voice-entities berate the sleeper, wishing to "sock him up", electrify him, cook him like a "ham pig" who listens-in (359. 19-21): the "eeriwhigger" who neglects his post.

Ultimately, in the choppy climate of II, iii, all elements in the circuit are subject to false outlets created by radio stations, and hence the suffocation of external influences. For instance, as the section closes, the four apostles, "avunculists"

¹¹³ Gordon, *A Plot Summary*, p. 207; Campbell and Robinson, p. 192.

(367. 14) who recur in multiple form throughout the narrative, struggle to find their longitude and latitude in the debris

The for eolders were aspolootly at their wetsend in the mailing waters, trying to. Hide! Seek! Hide! Seek [...] all trying to and baffling with the walters of, hoompsydoompsy walters of. High! Sink! High! Sink!" (372, 34-36. 373, 5-7)

Although the sleeper is a haven, or port, for the unclaimed dead, he realises that "the pipette will say anything at all" during interference (374, 11-12). Even signals from Issy are dispersed in the promiscuous babble of radio, particularly when he is "inspiterebbed by a sibspeicious connexion", that is, inspirited: taken over by a suspicious connection (374. 08).

As an endnote, H.C.E swings briefly into earshot talking "pidgin" and "[s]ecret things other persons place there" (374. 35-36). His words are garbled in a diverse radioscript, before calm ensues and the sleeper becomes a vessel once again: blind and dumb, the terminus intact.

Losing Control in Book III, iii.

Occurring at the dead of night, this section comprises a séance report, whose complexity arises from the corrupted messages relayed onto the page. It is widely termed as a ghost-raising, where the corpse of 'Shaun' exhibits latent multiplicity under cross-examination by a series of interrogators, or "projectors whose

preconceptions interfere" with every response.¹¹⁴ Fused with every aspect of wireless terminology, this section justifies the present argument to the extent that referencing every page would be pertinent, but eventually reductive. In compiling the technical "mulligatawney" (310, 17) and maintaining the concept of *Finnegans Wake* as an electric visitation by the dead, it transpires that Chapter III, iii. is a more emphatic development of the two major strands. Firstly, that a figure in a mediumistic trance intercepts, and is arrested by, voices from elsewhere; secondly, that the spirits are simultaneously vitalised and restricted by their gateway: a radio.

To arrive at the core of the seance, one must have recourse to the induction of III, i, where Shaun's genesis is aided by the bedside lamp:

Shaun! [...] With a high voice and O, the higher on high, the deeper on low, I heard him so. And lo, mescemed somewhat came of the noise [...] When look, was light and now t'was as flasher, now moren as the glow [...] Blessed mومence, he's growing to stay! (404, 7-15)

He is established in a "whish...wish" (407. 11) of static; a voice loud and clear through a successful tuning compared to "loftly marconimasts from Cliften" who "sough open tireless secrets [...] to Nova Scotia's listing sisterwands" (407. 20-22). This refers to Marconi's first accurate usage of syntony -- patent 7777 -- by jumping an electric spark across the Atlantic.

¹¹⁴ Gordon, p. 238. During the course of his enquiry, Ellis mentions the 'scatter effect' whereby a single voice may be ripped apart by others "as many as eight in number" (p. 131).

Initially, the Shaun-entity urges the sleeper to "Tune in, tune on, old Tighe, high, high, high.." (408. 23), which presages Raudive's voices as they grapple with frequencies:

"Kostja har startet under Ton." (Swed., Ger., Ital.: "Kostja has started below pitch")

"Slikti sture." (Latv.: "You are steering badly")

A series of questions are devolved on 'Shaun', from somewhere "on high" (410.1), chiefly inquiring into his authorisation: "[D]ear Shaun [...] who out of symphony ['syntony'?] gave you the *permit*?" (409. 8-10). It seems that only deserved voice-entities are allowed access to the 'bridge', as suspected by Raudive, who found that in certain recordings, some "controlling authority" either prevents, or challenges others' entitlement to the radio (255). At this stage, Shaun abruptly signs off, trilling "Goodbye" in an "echorightdainty" (409. 11-12).

In the rumbling preparation to III, iii, the wireless and sleeper are figured as interchangeable, in order to create a "double dyode" (319. 24). The brutal re-electrocution of II, iii, is repeated in a "Suckit Hotup!" meaning: heat up the sockets, then our secret hookup will continue (415. 34).

As Shaun becomes more substantial, he flows into the sleeper's void, so exhibiting traits of the man-made static. Notably, after question 6 -- an impenetrable burble of multilingual spiritspeak -- Shaun is "naturally incensed" but already jammed into his role within the "mordant body" (412. 14-16). Being "instrumental [...] to *igniting* the *prepurgatory* grade" -- that is, sustaining the

séance (446. 36) -- he constantly evokes methods of inter-world communication: the "bringfast cable" and the Morse code "me dash in-you through wee dots Hyphen" (434. 31; 446. 4). The installation of Shaun as medium occurs in a renowned passage where he prepares for "psychical hijiniks" as the "spirits of itchery" work their influence (439. 15-33).

In preference, I would define Shaun as the *control*, the bridging entity to a chattering vacuum: he functions within the vessel, or barrel, of the sleeper, who is thence occupied by voices.

And the topnoted delivery you'd expected be me invoice! [...] darkens alone what'll who'll be saying of next (439.19, 24-25).

Evidence for Shaun operating in the capacity of a control is after a visit from Issy, whose "high fa luting" seeps in *through* his words, which consequently become effaced and "somewhit murky" (448. 34-35):

O, the vanity of Vanissy! All ends vanishing! Personally, Grog help me...(449. 04)

A radio link is explicit, as the Shaun-sleeper's role is to turn "a widermost ear dreamily to the drumming of snipers, hearing the wireless harps of sweet old Aerial" (449.29-30), and naturally -- like "th'author" -- "picking up airs from th'other over th'ether" (452. 13). Transcendental co-existence and soul-to-soul address is thus inspired electrically:

[W]e shall all be hooked up and happy communionistically, among the fieldnights eliceam, *elite* of the elect, in the land of lost time (453. 30-32).

In essence, this is the Secret Hookup eagerly sought by the sleeper and substantiated in the compelling notes of Issy: a dot, dash and rustle which literally intercepts Shaun's address on "Terminus Lower" (456. 26). Gordon writes that the "female element" pervades Shaun, her language of Pond's face cream, "sinarrettes [and] silkettes [...] whooshes" into being (457, 23-25), and even projects from the "focus" -- fireplace (452.12) -- in a truly Flammarionesque manner.¹¹⁵ Shaun is temporarily disbanded, or rather, halved into another spirit, "Dave the Dancekerl [...] me alters ego in miniature" (462.17, 463,7), and calls for assistance to "Be sure and link him, me O..." by "quinquiscular cycles" (462. 22, 34).¹¹⁶

This last phrase is reminiscent of the radiophonic device awakened in II, ii. with its "circumcentric megacycles and magazine battery" (310, 1-21). Owing to this rupture, Shaun is unable to wholly continue as the control, spiralling back into the "fourth dimension" with an etheric "ocean between his and ours" (467. 23).¹¹⁷

Thus, in Chapter III, iii, the supine unconscious subject, 'Finn', is also Shaun/Yawn. His wires are down, he cannot facilitate or conduct other entities, and as a result falls victim to inquisitors, "spirit[s] from the upper circle" (484.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.,p. 232.

¹¹⁶ This episode typifies the theme of sibling rivalry: Jonathan/David- David as the notorious seducer and world traveller. Additionally, the communication difficulties between the pair is evinced in their cable messages. In Chapter I, iii, Shaun describes the time Shem "cabled him [...] from his mearapoblican asylum to his jonathan for a brother [...] to which Shaun had answer: Inconvenient, David" (172. 22-260).

¹¹⁷ See Flammarion's description of 'hyperspace'/the fourth dimension in *Death and Its Mystery After Death*, p. 351.

31). He lies "proxtended aloof upon the ether [...] like Lord Lumen", a reworking of Flammarion's ghost who rides the constellation (476. 7, 24). For the sleeper, this is a "drama parapolylogic" where voices are multiple and anarchic, streaming over the "dormant" bridge and freely abusing the wireless (474. 02).

Such cacaphony impedes communication. The language chosen by Joyce is markedly polyglot and rhythmic, and seemingly unallied to any source: "What! Henu! Spake up laut!" ('Speak up loud': 479. 33). These arbitrary, multilingual commands are projected from a "station...far away...and no other place", akin to Raudive's ghostly domains (480.8, 476, 7):

Are we speachin d'anglas landadge or are you sprakin sea Djoytsch? ('Are we speaking the English language or Joycean?' (485. 13).

Essentially, they speak "blarneying Marcantonio", which implies a mutation of wireless signals: *Marc-oni*, or, possibly, the static is intruding once more (483.

16). I would propose that the howling of "Wolves" is friction caused by frequencies converging, a state aptly described by James A. Connor as sounding like "banshees keening through the airwaves". The passage in the *Wake* reads as follows:¹¹⁸

Dood and I dood! [...] Do not flingamijig to the wolves [...] The cubs are after me it zeebs, the whole totem pack, vuk,vuk, and vuk vuk to them [...] The animal jangs again- What? Wolfgang? Whoah! Talk very slowe! (479. 12-13, 480.31-36)

¹¹⁸ Morris, p. 20

I am dead, says 'Shaun', and hounded by static unable to transmit or receive.

Another S.O.S is spelled out in the hope of detecting Issy, although a voice condemns the idea, pointing out that if a "contraman [...] is looking for writing that is not a good sign" (490. 28-29). The four sages re-emerge as the Gospels delivering hostile scrutiny, particularly Matthew, whose aggressive protestantism is coloured by excerpts from a séance. This passage would align to Clive Hart's theory; that literature from the Society for Psychical Research -- often detailing trivial and often ridiculous encounters -- was greatly influential to this section:

- I see a blickfrinch pastrycook...who is carrying on his brainpan...a cathedral of lovejelly for his...a cathedral of lovejelly for his...*Tiens*, how he is like somebodies! [...]
- I feel a fine lady...floating on a stillstream of isisglass...with gold hair to the bed...and white arms to the twinklers...O la la! (486. 17-19, 22-24)

These rapturous outpourings are succeeded by a strident address to Shaun:

[Y]ou might, bar accidens, be very largely substituted in potential secession from your next life by a *complementary character*, voices apart...Think! Put from your mind that and take on trust this. The next word ['world?'] depends on your answer (487. 2-6).

As Shaun labours under investigation, it follows that he is challenged by fiery 'Matthew' for, literally, *losing control*: the séance is otherwise chaotic. In a call beneath a call, Shaun frantically emits signals to his missing half, over the "zooohoooom of Felin" (488. 13-14):

Punk...punk opening tomorrow two plays punk wire splosh how two plays punk Cabler (488. 26-28).

Michael Heumann notes that "whereas 'Cabler' hints at a clear and definite transmission, 'punk' implies static: a disruption that causes the cable to become undecipherable".¹¹⁹ Again, wireless is portrayed as ambiguous: a liberating, yet volatile thoroughfare.

In due course, attention is directed to the sleeper, "an earthpresence" rooted to the "deafspot" (498. 32, 499. 28). Campbell and Robinson interpret the subsequent babble as spewing from the Shaun-corpse, "echoes [...] out of the deep grave mound of the past".¹²⁰ Yet, it is probable that the strange, wild cries of "Nomo Humilo! Dauncey a deady O! Dood dood dood!" and variations on the conundrum 'Mamalujo' are merely spirits, lambasting the sleeper with "zounds of sounds" (499. 5-6, 26). The static is "babel", thus dispersing the control 'Shaun' who has proven unsatisfactory. A fervent question is immediately rapped out:

Whioshe whoishe whoishe whoishe *linking in?* Whoishe whoishe whoishe? (499. 35-36)

This is a critical juncture in the mighty séance of *Finnegans Wake*. Clearly, the sleeper -- a "dead giant manalive" (500. 01-2) -- must adjust the wireless settings in order to resume effective communication. The ticking radio clock, "Zinzin...Zinzin" (500.5-35), intersects directions and demands from spirits who, in a fashion similar to Raudive's voices, need 'their' wavelength verifying:

¹¹⁹ Heumann, Chapter 3, p. 9 of 15.

- Aure! Cloudy father! Unsure! Nongood! (500. 19).

- Pipette dear! Us! Us! Me! Me! (500. 23).

In a momentous gesture, the sleeper turns the dial:

Now we're getting it. Tune in and pick up the forain counties! Hello! (500. 35-36).

He has found the blank spot, an oscillation between medium-distance band waves imperative to electric voice phenomena. "Hellohello! Am I thru?" (501.04) is the cry before an impassive, poised, restoring "SILENCE" (500.06).

It emancipates the "priority call" of spirits, who predictably settle on "the swish channels" rather than pure radio (501. 06-7). After the line is cleared, they express satisfaction at being rehoused "again in the magnetic field" (501. 09), although an official broadcast rumbles at the perimeters, thus affecting navigation:

Better that or this? [...] Better that way... Yes. Very good now... Mind the flickers and dimmers!

Better? [...] Still calling of somehave from its specific. (501. 6-13, 18)

As 'Shaun' lies temporarily void and censored, a more reliable control is suggested, the "gendarm auxiliararianautic" Sackerson, who realigns the "Hookup!" (530. 18).

A "superstation" -- such as Radio Peter or Studio Kelp -- begins to mimic the style of the B.B.C (533. 32). For instance, Shaun is re-tuned by his tormentors

¹²⁰ Campbell and Robinson, p. 252

into a staid announcer, only known as "Big, big Calm" (324. 07), and a number of items are advertised for future transmission:

That was Communicator, a former Colonel. A disincarnated spirit, called Sebastian, from the Rivera in Januero, (he is not all hear) may fernspeak shortly with messuages from my deadported. Let us cheer him up a little and make an appunkment for a future date (536. 1-4).

The chapter merges into an evaluation of the sleeper who gropes at the furthest boundaries of his reverie, hearing the circular story of H.C.E bounce from "anodes to cathodes" (549. 17). It is tainted and embellished by hints of exorcism or conclusion, as references to dawn suffuse the narrative. Contact endures on a muted, hushed level: the spirits have "tattled tall tales" across the chasm (545. 26), and "daybowbreak" threatens to infect discourse with more external components (546. 23). Negative voices suggest an interval, in order to fully acknowledge the haunted, "begraved" medium -- or 'dynamogen' -- and, of course, his sonic device (560. 19):

All halt! Sponsor programme and close down. That's enough, genral, of finicking about Finnegan and fiddling with his faddles (531. 27).

Specturesque Silentiousness and "Missed Understandings"

Scrambled tales retold in vain, unreliable intermediaries and obstructed networks, *Finnegans Wake* is a text of communication breakdown: improperly transmitted, deadlocked and half-glimpsed. Joyce already knew that a story

moulded into print defied original intention, as 'Fourworded Wavespeech' constructed in the mind could never materialise accurately (*U.* 62, 19). This is patently evoked in 'Aeolus', where misinterpretation is recognised as a by-product of print journalism. "My dear Myles," says J.J O'Molloy of the *Evening Telegraph*, "you put a false construction on my words" (*U.* 175, 28-29).

Any medium, whilst seeming to advance reciprocal understanding only furthered the chasm between sender and receiver, for "[i]n this wireless age any owl rooster can peck up bostoons", that is, anyone can select random broadcast signs fallen in the process (*FW.* 489, 36. 490. 1). The act of communication becomes the secondary modes of earwiggling, gossip, slander and conjecture. For example, in the *Wake*:

They had heard or had said or had heard said written.

Fidelisat (369. 16-17).

Weaving amongst the disjointed themes is a letter, multiply authored and widely misread:

[The] continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators, as the time went on as it will variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled, changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns (118. 24-28).

Any readers or listeners of a message -- of *Finnegans Wake* itself -- are 'anticollaborators' in that their eavesdropping continually warps the prototype, like Morse code: "the curt witty wotty dashes never quite just right at the trim

trite truth letter; the sudden spluttered petulance of some capitalised middle" (120. 2-5). The phantom epistle will continually misfire, for the "radiooscillating" sleeper has the "trademark ear of a broadcaster" (108. 21-24). He calls everywhere and, in turn, receives faulty information.

In Chapter I, vii. of *Finnegans Wake*, the "excommunicated" Shem-entity is charged with perverting the spoken word into babel, languishing between "soundconducting walls [...] literatured with burst loveletters, telltale stories" and crucially, "ineffible tries at speech unassyllabled" (181. 34; 183. 9-16). Largely construed as Joyce's self-portrait, Shem the Penman -- a "premature gravedigger" -- similarly abuses "defenceless paper" by writing nonsense, or rather, unearthing the dead (189.9).

Acoustic perversions are rife in *Breakthrough*, notoriously the voice which "may be Winston Churchill's" as featured on the Vista recording. The phrase, "Mark you make believe my dear yes", is delivered in a high, clipped tone, and caused great controversy. It was heard according to preconceptions of style, personality and intent, namely a J.C Burley, M.I.Mech.E., who stated:

[T]o my ears he is quoting a line from Elgar's Land of Hope and Glory, thus: 'Mark you, make thee mightier yet'. *This is a typical Churchillian mode of speech*".¹²¹

A vast proportion of David Ellis's work is a catalogue of listening tests, used to determine varying interpretations of voice-recordings. The previous sentence was

¹²¹ Bander, p. 152.

heard as: "methylene Mike is here"; lately miyake bien" and "let's leave Michael here Kevin" (94).

Clearly, the obstacles of inter-medium transposition -- from sound to print and vice versa -- are naturally extended in E.V.P, where the afterlife cruelly impaired diction even further. If Joyce endeavoured to write dead words, they are present in the *Wake*. During the extraordinary 'voltapuk' section already cited, an adjacent note in the lefthand margin reads "*Arthurgink's hussies and Evergin's men*", behind which hovers the spectre of a secondary meaning, 'all the king's horses and all the king's men' (285. 15-17). Every sentence is littered with doubles, or rather, 'dubbing' from one medium to the next and back again. For example: "Bag bag blockcheap, have you any will?" (300. 39).

Placing the reader of the *Wake* in a position correlative to psychical research is supported by the nature of E.V.P. where, as Raudive found:

one hears the sounds, but the sense of hearing has the utmost difficulty in recognising them as words; only after intensive and concentrated listening does a tangible word emerge (28).

The sleeper of *Finnegans Wake* operates in the same manner, although from a completely impartial vantage point, as he becomes confined in a mediumistic trance, asking "why in limbo where is he and what are the sound waves saying ceased ere they all wayed wrong" (*FW* 256. 23-24). Any form of decoding is reckless, especially if the subject is immersed in, or emasculated by, stronger forces such as text, voice or spirit.

"Overshooting one's mark" was admitted by one champion of E.V.P, where, "either through fascination and emotional strain caused at times by preoccupation with such phenomena, or through sheer tiredness - one may imagine 'words' when in reality there is only a 'noise'".¹²² Certainly, this would apply to *every* expositor of Joyce's "funferal", who "stalks all over the page [...] sensationseeking an idea, amid the verbiage" (121. 2-3).

Toward the close of *Finnegans Wake*, the issue of broken dialogue is accentuated. Peter Myers, who rightly notes that the sleeper constitutes "a mouthpiece through which the *Wake* flows", insists that the penultimate section is encapsulated by the line:

Shop! Please shop! Shop ado please! O ado please shop! (560. 16-17).

Potentially a voice struggling to speak, clawing up from nightmare, it cyclically concludes the Mime sequence of II, i. where a telegram is sent, implying "the deep disturbance of communication [...] where the surface is broken up to become less comprehensible".¹²³ If this be one occasion where the sleeper's voice is manifest, it reaffirms his quest throughout: to commune without interruption, and preferably to a specific addressee. The blurring of 't' into 'sh' as the sleeper moves into consciousness signifies trauma; he is also making a 'noise', talking like the ghosts:

¹²² Frantz Seidl in Raudive, p. 364. Ellis discusses the liability of "paranormal modifications". Seemingly, voice-entities are able to fashion broadcast speech or other sounds into "meaningful messages"; yet sounds of a mechanical nature often resemble the sounds of speech, and the hypothesis is that "the words [are] merely less distinct, [and] more imaginative interpretations become possible"(p. 140).

How hominous his house, haunt it? Yessess indeed it be! (560. 17-18).

By terminating the wire sent in II, i. he alludes to the failures of the night, the 'priority calls' which never worked. Just as E.V.P relies on "the *single true voice* to prove the facticity of the phenomenon", under a misleading rabble, efforts in *Finnegans Wake* to define, and consort with, the female entity are always futile.¹²⁴ As outlined, the sleeper may hear her, but he cannot sufficiently answer, as death proves the ultimate barrier. "Tod, tod, [Germ., 'death'] too hard parted", rages an inquisitor in III, iii. to be replied with "Let's hear what science has to say" (505. 23, 27).

Yet, the innovations of telegram, cable and wireless bring disadvantages of clashing antennae and faulty hookups, quite literally "missed understandings" which aggravate the spirit world (175. 27). Elusive by definition, voice-entities adapt to earthly technologies -- and revert to human characteristics -- by dissembling and omitting information. It appears that "Secret satieties and ononymous letters make the great unwatched as bad as their betters" (435. 31-32). It is appropriate that, at one point, Issy transmutes into a "Miss Senders, poachmistress" (412. 23).

From the other side, telecommunications rarely attain, or retain, the human contract. The entities' desire to speak is enhanced through "phone, phunkel [and] wire" (420. 33), which should exalt their status to that of invisible angels, exempt from the limitations of embodiment and unhindered by distance. Angelic

¹²³ Myers, pp. 34-35

¹²⁴ Raudive, p. 352.

swiftness, remarks John Durham Peters, "has been the standard against which [our] capacities are measured", an "instantaneous unfurling of interiorities" without distortion or interference.¹²⁵ This vital characteristic is denied in *Finnegans Wake*, as spirits falter within the internal circuit, ultimately becoming a constituent of the electricity which powers their speech:

It is interesting to note that troubles arise not only on the side of the listener, but also on the side of the speaker - the voice entities. I have examples on my tape which demonstrate how a voice tries to form words out of torn vibrations that sound like the humming of a bumble bee.¹²⁶

Raudive's observation demarcates an issue in the *Wake*, that is: how the voices are inspired by static but weaken in the acoustic debris left by other frequencies. Dispossessed of airtime, they have little certainty of relaying an urgent command or, rather, they cannot assume exclusive, aural, control over the sleeper. A comparison may be drawn:

Nav lauzu, nav verigu lauzu (Lat.: "There are no people, no attentive people")¹²⁷

Pipetto, Pipetta has misery unnoticed! (*FW*. 470, 21)

"It is difficult for us, difficult..." complain Raudive's voices. One implication is that "the communicator cannot [fully] remember what he has to say [and] cannot hear how his voice *sounds*."¹²⁸ After all, he is disincorporated and has no larynx, akin to Raymond Lodge, who was dissatisfied with his tonal representation by a direct-voice medium.

¹²⁵ John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air*, pp. 76-77.

¹²⁶ Raudive, p. 29.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 120.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 157. Ellis, p. 48.

After an early recording in July 1965, Raudive supposed aloud that "entities who produced the voices were just as hampered by limited possibilities as [...] humans here on earth". The rejoinder was instant:

Paraeizi ta bus! (Latv.: "That is right") (118)

In the *Wake*, Issy pipes her discourse from other channels, the "Elm, bay, this way...take a message" (FW 571.7), and even the fireplace, "cold in dearth" (571. 13). She elicits a strange picture of the netherworld, in a description of the "brillling waveleaplights" which enable her passage (571.01). They "cast their spells upon [...] the druggetted stems the leaves incut on trees" but cannot guarantee a distilled connection, as "the daft to hear all blend": they mix all sounds together (571. 36). Notably, during this attempt, her signal is truncated by other forces, a creaking door, and the final visit of 'H.C.E' and 'A.L.P'.

Spiritualism innately expands into a limbo rather than the afterlife, as a degree of mutual advance is required. If the medium temporarily becomes a vacant corpse, the ghosts must correspondingly be semi-present. In *Finnegans Wake*, they seem "unclaimed [...] humble indivisibles in the grand continuum", rendered partially human by inhabiting wires and *sounding real* (472. 29-30). However, in becoming broadcast, and mingling with a weather report or "spurts flash" they are utterly disseminated, and non-existent like every transmission (342. 35). Issy deduces this in regard to her secret message: "[S]ure where's the use of my talking quicker when I know you'll hear me all astray?" (472. 12-13)

If the *Wake* is termed as a circuit and the spirits are given a half-life by electrodes and a night-cycle, then, with the approach of morning they are 'negatived':

Where are we at all? and whenabouts in the name of space? I don't understand. I fail to say. (558. 33-34)

They are unable to 'say' -- to talk -- as the sleeper-accumulator slips out of trance, the electrodes are distracted, and "*Hear* are no phanthares in the room at all" (my italics, 565. 22). For the wireless rumbles ominously with "Slew musies" and "Thunner in the eire" which predicts further disruption from Radio Eireann calling all receptors (565. 20).

The co-operative elements are nevertheless honoured, as every participant has entertained the fantasy of selective tuning and sought a mutual bind across the void, "so we have heard, what we have received, that we have transmitted" (604. 29-30). Conditions are infinitely fallible, but the séance will be re-enacted, it "may again how it may again" by "passing over the dainty daily [...] ah diar, ah diar!" (604. 34-5, 608. 36) The radio will be adjusted once more, sliding across the waveband to find the "essenesse" of a monologue made static (608. 04).

P.S. We Dead Awaken

The light failed in the studio during Joyce's gramophone recording for the Orthological Institute, August 1929. Ellmann writes that the fragment, 'Anna

Livia Plurabelle' was not directly *read* by Joyce, for he was half-blind and blundering through the text, eventually "prompted in a whisper throughout".¹²⁹ Of this event, Peter Myers is elegaic, likening the twilight by the Liffey to Joyce's enunciations, "a ghost by absence, speaking his own words put in the mouth of a washerwoman" and immersed in literal darkness.¹³⁰ Then, Joyce fractionally raises *his* voice to break in with:

You deed, you deed! I need I need! (214. 8).

Of which Myers only notes the "echoic effect" in a passage dripping with singsong raillery and lyrical movement. Yet, the women's obliviousness of words corresponds to the gramophone listener, who partially hears -- in the dark -- and must imagine the 'kneading' of wet clothes, but also senses a cry of loss.

All human element seemingly "dissolves in the diphthongs" should 'Anna Livia' be read aloud; no connections are evident, "as if only the finest fibrils of sound are carried through the air".¹³¹ To hear Joyce linger over a phrase so potent only accentuates the idea that words in *Finnegans Wake* are divested of usual boundaries, because they evoke a plane where *sound* is the only index of presence.

After a private recitation of 'Anna Livia Plurabelle', translator Armand Petitjean was deeply affected by Joyce's delivery, commenting, "He was Orpheus".¹³² A poet-singer with a power to entrance, the momentary bridge between absence and

¹²⁹ Ellmann, p. 630.

¹³⁰ Myers, p. 166.

presence who could "stretch his consciousness to states unknown to most [...] and bring a soul back from the dead".¹³³ Notably, the Orphic perspective signifies:

the emergence of a human language from a world of expressive sentience, but this emergence is always partial and conditional.¹³⁴

Another piece by Katherine Anne Porter in 1934, recollects a *salon* where Joyce and T.S Eliot performed under slight duress. Eliot "did not like the sound of what he was reading", while Joyce sat blinkered in dark glasses, "motionless [...] as if he were already dead", all senses occluded and "his mind turning inward to its own darkness".¹³⁵

In life impaired and thus entombed, Joyce would whisper the dead onto a gramophone, which, as Myers notes, adds poignancy to his evocation of "Ordovico or viricordo" when reciting 'Anna Livia Plurabelle' (*FW* 213. 23). The *Wake*-ean cycle is lastingly maintained, as the Latin *recordari* = 'to remember', is compacted with the Italian *vi recordo* = 'I remember you'. Therefore, Myers continues, it may be appropriate to wish Joyce "happy returns" (181).

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 177.

¹³² Ellmann, p. 683.

¹³³ Walter A. Strauss, *Descent and Return: The Orphic Theme in Modern Literature* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), p.35.

As noted, John Gordon's forthcoming work posits the legend as a great thematic influence of Joyce's work, which becomes evident in the latter stages of *Ulysses*: "a new, modernized, science-fictionish Orphism". Crucially, it is acoustic technologies which allow "newly respectable Orphic effects", a concept later developed by Joyce in the *Wake* (120-121).

¹³⁴ Jed Rasula, 'Poetry's Voice-Over' in Morris, pp. 274-316. Rasula also notes that the Orphic shamanistic abilities are, by nature, "technical skills" (290).

¹³⁵ *James Joyce: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. E.H Mikhail (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 136-7. Malcolm Muggeridge scans over the reception of Joyce's later work: "Mr Harold Nicolson [...] mentioned that gramophone recordings of Mr Joyce's prose recited by Mr Joyce, had pleased

On that assumption, one might consider the VISTA recording of *Breakthrough*, where a voice is heard buckled and broken under layers of surface noise, amplified to distortion:

James Joyce

James Joyce

James Joyce...

The interpreter, Nadia Fowler, withholds further explanation. It may be an S.O.S to the writer from a phantom station; an earthbound wireless programme about his textual impenetrability; or it may have been Joyce himself, "Still calling", and thus verifying his attempt to write and raise the dead.

Mr Eliot [who] announced his intention of keeping *Finnegans Wake* by his bedside, presumably for occasional reading".
Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Thirties* (London: Collins, 1940), p. 285.

3. Minding the Rights of Sound: Winifred Holtby's

Ulterior Vocation

*Oh! Oh! You Radio!
Oh! what I owe to you my radio!
I listen in and you dispel the gloom
For you bring all the stars into my room
Oh! Oh! You Radio!
You're the most entertaining friend I know
You give me music, dancing...joys I never knew
Oh! radio I'm radiating thanks to you.*

(Theme song of Radiolympia 1936)

*...the words came crowding thick and fast
And each more harsh and puzzling than the last
Watt and erg and dyne and ohm
Gauss and ampere and coulomb
Armature and commutator
Secondary generator.
Anions, ions, cells and cation
Radiophony, amalgamation
Agonic, isocinic lines
Coils and shunts, circuits and sines
Molecule and atomicity
Currents and cosmical electricity...
Equipotential, consequent pole,
Just here they stopped -- God bless my soul,
The gods themselves had e'en gone mad
The scheme that they for others had
Contrived had done its fatal work
Try as they might, they could not shirk
The fatal consequences...*

(from 'Electrical Nomenclature' by William S(hakespeare) of the New York Electric Club)

Lured by an Echo

The writer Winifred Holtby is rarely permitted a space in literature distinct from the role established, and perpetuated, by her few biographers. Her feminism, pacifism and socialism, her anti-racism campaigns and general commitment to the 'woman-citizen' ideal in the years after 1918, all provide material by which to chart a largely fulfilled life. Alternative readings of the textual material are rarely attempted, largely owing to Holtby's superficial accessibility. Furthermore, much of critical opinion is reliant on *Testament of Friendship* (1940), the extensive record by Vera Brittain, which affixes Holtby in the legend of a secure and noble pairing, and thus affords her minimal independence or deviation from this category. Their sixteen-year relationship was undoubtedly a major factor of Holtby's life, yet this primary source often suffocates the areas irrelevant to Brittain's portrait, which is, notes Marion Shaw, a selective tract of "nullifying sanctification" with "Vera [...] as the star".⁶ Meanwhile, Shaw's biography is styled as a "revisionist account, aiming to free Holtby from Brittain's embrace", which acknowledges that a "more robust, humorous [...] active and innovative person, even a more dislikeable person, still waits to be recovered."²

Shaw attempts to relocate Holtby, and the version of her life relayed by Brittain, in the context of other relationships, such as Margaret Rhondda, editor of *Time and Tide*. Although rightly observing that alternative vantage points restore Holtby's "independent status", Shaw's effort is rather insubstantial, often grasping

⁶ Marion Shaw, *The Clear Stream: A Life of Winifred Holtby* (London: Virago Press 1999), p.7

² Susan Watkins, 'Determined to Spin', *London Review of Books*, vol. 22, no. 12 (22 June 2000): 40-42; Shaw, p. 10.

at events or random statements in order to ascertain Holtby's character and writing methodology (292). By lightly encompassing the gamut of her achievements, from trivial journalism to serious campaigning, the result is a fragmented overview, where Holtby flickers in and out of focus, once again subsumed into other stories and rarely embodied. Essentially, a less frantic, more detailed analysis of her writing would elicit the person whom Shaw claims to have resurrected.

Consequently, this chapter proposes an interpretation of Winifred Holtby's work which challenges her status as a rather omnifarious writer, the mistress of no trade who belatedly produced a classic provincial novel, *South Riding* (1936). The evidence is that Holtby regretted her prolificacy, describing herself as "second-rate", a "publicist [...] a useful, versatile, sensible and fairly careful artisan", far removed from "[p]eople who only write very rare things -- like Virginia Woolf".³ Brittain adds that the "journalistic octopus" constantly ensnared Holtby's creative process, as she was continually uncertain of her primary role; she once confessed to fluctuating between a "reformer-sort-of-a person or a writer-sort-of-a-person", innately incapable of ignoring a "responsibility for contemporary affairs".⁴

Naturally, Brittain commends the "social-reformer half of her personality" rather than any imaginative power, which would suggest depths rarely glimpsed by her closest friend. The "elusive perfection" sought by Holtby in her fictions is unwittingly disparaged by Brittain as the labours of a writer more suited to

³ Vera Brittain, *Testament of Friendship* (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1980), p. 138.

⁴ Brittain, p. 364; Shaw, pp.233-234. Letter to Margaret Rhondda also cited in Brittain, p. 129.

"lively topical articles", rather than one translating obscure musings into a more accessible form. Indeed, Holtby repeatedly subdued her own capabilities, admitting:

At odd moments I write works of the imagination- stories, satires, poems and plays. They are very uneven in quality. They have moments of virtue. But I feel as though a pedestrian gift like mine must apply itself to quantity.⁵

Her biography of Virginia Woolf may serve as an introduction to Holtby's works of "virtue", in that she accurately registers sound-sense in Woolf's fiction; the process by which the reader must deduce internal thoughts and "half-buried memories" from the equally insistent string quartet or neighbours' chatter.⁶ In labelling Woolf a "conductor" who presides over, and fuels, the scene, "beckoning now to fancy, now to power, now to a noise of traffic from the street", Holtby prefers to methodise what appears to be an unconscious technique:

She must keep control. She must make some sort of harmony, of melody, some intelligible rhythm, some sequence that the listener can follow, or the music will dissolve into a confused cacophony of sound (114).

Furthermore, Holtby accurately deduces that features of modernist writing can be aligned to more concrete shifts in perception:

At certain times particular forms of style present themselves to different writers and quite independently of each other they begin to work on similar lines; just as scientific theories or

⁵ Brittain, pp. 139-140.

mechanical inventions seem from time-to-time to blow about the world waiting for receptive minds to catch and fertilise them. (108)

Cruelly derided by Woolf as a farmer's daughter who "learnt to read [...] while minding the pigs", and moreover, terminally locked into the "scribbling business", Holtby indeed sidestepped the venture of modernism.⁷ However, her perceptive commentary contextualises Woolf into a facet of the age, subject to the ebb and flow of progress. She makes a guarded prediction: that such unique writing within the modernist canon may inspire, but it will eventually rust and be replaced, just as "Bleriot laid a wreath on the grave of the aeroplane designer, Bondfield".⁸

Biographers encounter difficulties when attributing Holtby's creative inspiration to anything other than reforming zeal, although her colleague Evelyne White makes a rather inelegant link between a certain pattern of behaviour and the remembered past:

She always thought that a background of rhythmic sound was extremely helpful to hard work because it cut out unusual noises that tended to distract attention. Indeed, during the last months of her life [...] she worked to the accompaniment of a wireless programme. Might this not be accounted for in a measure by the background of pleasant sound of mowing machines etc, to which she became accustomed [...] in her early days?⁹

⁶ Winifred Holtby, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Wishart and Co., 1932), p. 104.

⁷ Virginia Woolf, *Letters*, vol. V (1932-35), ed. Nigel Nicholson (London: Hogarth Press, 1979), p. 114; *Letters* vol. VI (1936-41), p. 380.

⁸ WH, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 108.

⁹ Evelyne White, *Winifred Holtby As I Knew Her: A Study of the Author and her Works* (London: Collins, 1938), p. 27.

This practise was shared by Gertrude Stein, who also preferred to work in the presence of distracting noise, not, as Walter Benjamin remarked, a blanket of particularly "insipid sound", but a consistent external chatter which oddly dictated concentration and the beat of creativity:

In your working conditions [...] accompaniment by an *etude* or cacaphony of voices can become as significant for work as the perceptible silence of the night. If the latter sharpens the inner ear, the former acts as a touchstone for a diction ample enough to bury even the most wayward thought.¹⁰

Frustratingly, Vera Brittain only alludes to a 'fascination' expressed by Holtby for the capacities of wireless, which, I would argue, permeate her fiction both as intentional subject matter, and as an outlet for deep-seated psychological concerns. By her own definition, Holtby seems constantly "[l]ured by an echo", as she versified to her friend Jean McWilliam in 1920. Notably, the piece adds, "while about me lie/ The ghosts of spinning worlds that leap and die".¹¹

Another letter summarises the impact of disembodied sound upon her psyche, as she contemplated buying a gramophone:

I want a gramophone. I long for [one]. Enchanting music, Mozart and Scarlatti -- clean, elegant, intricate harmonic patterns that cleanse the mind and purify the thoughts of their listener. And I should like one to work with, although [a] gramophone would constitute a claim, I fear [...] upon one's passions. Like a library, it would hold by reason of its beauty, fragility and *intimate*

¹⁰ Walter Benjamin, 'The Writer's Technique in 13 Theses' in *One Way Street and Other Writings*, trans., Edmund Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 65.

¹¹ *Letters to A Friend: Winifred Holtby to Jean McWilliam*, eds., J. McWilliam and A. Holtby (Bath: Cedric Chivers, 1937), p. 19.

companionship. All my life, I have regretfully refrained from the accumulation of books entirely for the disturbing affections with which they *bind me to their vicinity*.¹²

This tentative fear would be realised when, a decade later, Holtby lay dying of Bright's Disease in her country retreat of Monks Risborough, temporarily revived after dark by radio: the B.B.C symphony orchestra performing Bela Bartok. Allegedly she would "turn off the light [...] until the Downs and the music and the starlight seemed all to be one, and she was not sure whether she was looking at harmonies or listening to stars". In solitude, her points of reference became blurred and 'bound' to noises emitted from the wireless.¹³

It is significant that, after a decade of extoling the fantastical properties of radio as an outlet for private escapism, Holtby would often use scientific terminology to express deeper feelings. Once, subconsciously prompted by visits from "a woman demonstrating the electric washer, and the man from the electric works [coming] for breakfast", Holtby wrote to Vera: "Bless you, my dear, my safety valve, my *incomparable companion*".¹⁴ This occurred after the respite of Monks Risborough, where radio had escorted her through a significant trauma: physical decline and the inevitable approach of death.

In assessing the designated works of momentary 'virtue' -- Holtby's short stories and plays -- this chapter contends that the author's last months are a testimony to, or rather, consummate her preoccupation with acoustic technologies. The nature of wireless, in particular, provoked issues of misinterpretation, blockage and

¹² Ibid, p. 382.

¹³ Brittain, p. 321.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 357.

breakdown, which Holtby explored in oddly chilling satire. Her 'journalese' becomes secondary, and may be treated as a vehicle to render such concepts accessible.

As an aside, her notorious momentum should be observed for its machine-like regularity. Described in the early 1930's as "the most brilliant journalist in London", Holtby was often lampooned for cranking out articles.¹⁵ Woolf, in particular marvelled over the process, opining that Holtby's work often "rattled on so":

I think she has a photographic mind, a Royal Academicians mind. It's as bright as paint, but [...] how little she's got beneath the skin [...] And oh Lord how I loathe that scribbling business: 35 novels to be reviewed for Harpers Bazaar in one morning in a bungalow.¹⁶

The present argument diverges from typical scholarly evaluations of Winifred Holtby, which combine to form a diluted version of Woolf's comment: that there are no idiosyncracies -- or maverick tendencies -- beneath the veneer of a rather robotic writer. However, the re-articulation of certain themes throughout Holtby's work, suggests she was energised by a singular force operating alongside her public commitment to improvement and regeneration in society.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 140.

¹⁶ Woolf, *Letters*, vol. VI, pp. 380-382.

'Electricisms'

Malcolm Muggeridge summons the 'Thirties with a mixture of fascination and cynicism: a dirty decade where "the inexorable process of change continued" regardless of humanity, the "separate particles of life" who scrabbled amongst dog-racing tracks and amusement arcades, determined to "extract material satisfaction from life".¹⁷ Seemingly, a muted scepticism was dawning as cities expanded and publicity reigned over electrified streets:

In Piccadilly Circus- fiery words written on darkness [and] across the blue sky 'Bile beans' written in smoke. [N]ewspapers delivered at each door to tell of the world's doings, who's in, who's out, who loses and who wins; radio sets to give instruction and music , sometimes played the live-long day, a rhythmic murmur, underlying all sounds, and constant as the sea's wash.¹⁸

Clustering beneath a blanket of false deities -- speed, gadgetry, cosmetics and contraceptives -- Muggeridge richly portrays the "Godless" masses of the era, who must coagulate, as "alone, their condition is unbearable, [the] solitary ego in its nest of decaying flesh, counting the hours as they pass" (200). The "tedium of time" constantly and indelibly marked by technical progress, was simultaneously the tick-tick of life passing, and a welcome respite from contemplation. After all, "[s]ilence and solitude were too like Eternity to be comfortable" (196-198).

In an oft-cited passage, Vera Brittain resolutely posits her friend and colleague within the social and cultural maelstrom; a unique observation in her sprawling

¹⁷ Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Thirties* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1940), p. 200.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 196.

memoir which monopolises Holtby studies, and often obscures the essence of a woman she knew so well:

Winifred had always been a typical product of her age; an age of perpetual and intensive propaganda by screen, wireless and Press, in which it is less possible than it has ever been for a writer to live in serene detachment from the controversies of [her] time.¹⁹

Winifred Holtby did not live to see the nightmare scenario anticipated by C. DeLisle Burns, whose review of radio as a unifying leisure activity foresaw the capacity for "hate and fear" engendered by "any group in control" of wireless communications. He added that "[b]ridging the gap may be only increasing the tendency to fight on the bridge", as "[t]he more you know of other people, the more you may dislike them".²⁰ Rumbling ominously, the "intensive propaganda" brought to fruition in World War II is a minor feature of Winifred Holtby's literary output, with the exception of *Take Back Your Freedom*, a play published after her death in 1939. The subject, Arnold Clayton, succumbs to Fascist ideology and becomes "a human gramophone", hypnotizing the masses with his diatribe.²¹ As a citizen of the early 'Thirties and bombarded with diverse information, she thus witnessed the transitional phase of radio and its social effects.

¹⁹ Brittain, p. 440.

²⁰ C. De Lisle Burns, *Leisure in the Modern World* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932), pp. 62-63.

²¹ WH and Norman Gainsbury, *Take Back Your Freedom* (London: Kegan Paul, 1939), p. 40. Better examples of this genre are Rex Warner, *The Professor* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1938); Hillel Bernstein, *Choose A Bright Morning* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1936); W.H Auden and Christopher Isherwood, *On The Frontier* (London: Faber, 1938). All define radio propaganda as the primary weapon of oppressive regimes, or as social addiction.

Born into a generation cultivated on "private speech, local entertainment -- the amateur theatrical, the travelling show", Holtby was not, therefore, completely anaesthetised to the cult of diversion.²² During her lifetime, 'Radio-bibbing' became socially acceptable, an encroaching addiction alluded to with distaste by Arthur Calder-Marshall in 1938. "Should the comforter be lost", he writes, "[and] the wireless for a moment fail [...] what a sudden shrieking of these starved addicts!" who absorb nonsense.²³ Sir Thomas Beecham was moved to denounce Britons as ambivalent towards music, insisting, "they just like the noise it makes".²⁴ This statement is somewhat enacted by a character in Walter Brierley's novel *Sandwichman*, who warbles and whistles in imitation of his aural opiate, as "it wasn't important to Sidney what was coming over".²⁵

An atmosphere of complacency into which Holtby graduated; an era which nevertheless retained elements of mystery surrounding telecommunications media before radio gibbered reassuringly by the fireside. The paraphernalia of accumulators and high-tension batteries were operated by amateur technicians, summoning their families to the cabinet-style receivers, whose "magic conjure[d] people, nations, castles and kings right out of the air!"²⁶ In the first committee of enquiry into broadcasting in 1923, Hilda Matheson recalled the "dizzy height of prophecy" unleashed by wireless -- and the cult of Marconi -- a potent force where "the listener may perhaps become an experimenter [and] the experimenter

²² Arthur Calder-Marshall, *The Changing Scene: Essays on Contemporary Society* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1938), p. 84.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁴ Sir Thomas Beecham, cited in *Early Twentieth Century Britain: The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain* series, ed. Boris Ford (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1988), p. 33.

²⁵ Walter Brierley, *Sandwichman* (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 258.

²⁶ American advertisement for General Electric Radio, from *Life*, (January/February 1940), inside front cover. See Morris, *Sound States*, p. 22.

may possibly become an inventor".²⁷ A comment surely applicable to the brilliant, and sinister, project of Joyce's sleeper in the *Wake*.

Articles in early editions of the *Listener* evoke this period of tentative speculation and mild bemusement over long-distance communicating devices, whose exegesis only served to heighten the mystery:

There are billions of invisible Robots making it possible for telephones to function; these are the electrons which carry the electric current along wires and work the instruments. No-one knows how multitudinous these electrons are; they are the mystery force which bring electricity to the services of mankind.²⁸

Correspondence was published on topics such as 'Wireless a Hundred Years Ago' which cued the natural response to electricity, one seemingly dulled by the twentieth century. For example, a running topic was the contents of a letter dated 1836, on the "thunder and lightening man", scientist Andrew Crosse, who had used copper wires to measure climactic disturbance, and so inspired rustic tales of necromancy and possession:

"You can't go near his house at night without danger of your life; them that have been there have seen *devils* all surrounded by lightning, dancing on the wires that he has put round his grounds".²⁹

A 'voice' from planet Venus was reported from a station in New York City -- a sound beam apprehended by a new device, the photo-electric cell. The resulting current activated the microphone, which, after amplification and filtering of

²⁷ Hilda Matheson, 'The Record of the BBC: Programme of Speech and Entertainment', *Political Quarterly* (June 1935): 506-518.

white noise, produced a "high clear sustained note, like the note of a violin, and gave an opportunity to those who heard it to describe it as [...] the music of the spheres". Making Venus "speak to millions" was a congenial reworking of what was, literally, a howling void.³⁰

"I should just like to mention," added Gerald Heard in a broadcast of 1932, "that a new planet about the size of East Anglia has been picked up. [This] is only a tithe of the science news which keeps on calling us out from our narrow round into a world of wonder".³¹ Even established devices, namely the Blattnerphone, were treated with awe; a method of sound-storage which recorded short broadcasts on a steel tape, faithfully and indelibly for future generations as "a matter of course, but which seems only slightly removed from black magic".³²

Such a cataloguing of every electronic development assumed the audience to be technologically transformed, and eager to visualise new modes of communication capable of scaling interplanetary distances. In the domestic sphere, the polished walnut machines often contained parts which, in their nonspecific way, described the ritual of listening-in and the infinite capacities of wirelessness. 'Beam-a-scope' and 'Dynapower' described the more sombre components of field coil, or B.R.V.M.A valve, which made "all barriers of time and space [...] fall away" and the "unseen curtain of distance lift".³³ The radio

²⁸ *The Listener*, vol. VII (2 March 1932): 308-311.

²⁹ *Ibid*, vol. IX (27 September 1933): 467.

³⁰ *Ibid*, vol. VII (4 May 1932): 638.

³¹ *Ibid*, vol. VII (16 March 1932): 390.

³² *Ibid*, vol. VIII (28 December 1932): 952.

³³ Morris, p. 38. She lists "Bell's telephone, Edison's 'aerophone', Cros's 'paleophone', Bell's 'photophone', Edison's 'kineto-phonograph', the marconiphone [as] only a few of the many sound devices invented, patented and distributed between 1880 and 1960" (42). Evidently, they are all appellations of their maker.

was continually presented as a gateway to a vacuum, one so large as to contain both dead voices and oscillations from a future time. Therefore, the instrument itself was innate to any conception of human advancement, as unconsciously observed by a character in Holtby's *South Riding* (1936), Mr Holly, who epitomises the naive working man:

Wonderful thing, science...Ever thought of what they can do nowadays? Wireless. Incubators. Ether. Maybe hatch us out of eggs one day.³⁴

Often, poetry in the *Listener* used wireless as direct subject matter, eulogised as a liberating force, having "pierced layers of inertia" and lit "scattered beacons in the human mind". The contributor of these lines, Ethel Parker, summarises the "scientific magic" of an instrument which collapses time:

And some [...] view again the long lane of *history*
With keenness edge the *immediate* hour,
And mould mayhap, the pregnant *future* of mass reasoning and its power (my italics).³⁵

One broadcast by J.E. Barton, 'Will the New City Make New Man' captured the sense of disquiet felt by Muggeridge's godless individual who must navigate a cultural territory determined by technology, a "bottleneck age [where] a hundred new currents of thought, and a hundred new habits of life, have been poured into it with a disconcerting suddenness that has no parallel".³⁶

³⁴ WH, *South Riding*, (London: Virago, 1988), p. 150.

³⁵ *The Listener*, vol. VII (16 November 1932): 698.

The conjoining of fact and fantasy in the mechanisms devised by mankind often produced an expressive blend of wild acceptance, coupled with a fear of solitariness. Conceivably, citizens of the 'Thirties may be read through Patrick Hamilton's narrator of *Impromptu in Moribundia* (1939), a man who feels rooted, "audacious and noble", until his "nothingness" is revealed by the Asteradio, a vehicle to the stars which resembles a hybrid of familiar amenities such as the telephone booth and the cabinet gramophone.³⁷ J.E Barton noted that writers, in particular, contacted him feeling "dispossessed", and unable to share "the optimistic view that machine craft is [...] gradually drawing into itself more and more of the human element": an ambiguous comment working on many levels.

People were becoming machinic, replaceable, and above all, imbued by the prevailing fad of science. As telephone operators acted as invisible electric sparks, creating ease of transfer, the amateur radio fanatic could constantly tinker, imagining oneself as a vital part of the circuit and not merely "a mechanic loon at the wireless counter" attempting to penetrate the etheric expanse.³⁸ A character in Walter Greenwood's novel, *He Worship the Mayor* (1934) sinks irrevocably into silent communion with his device, thus becoming slightly automatised with every twist of the dial -- like Joyce's sleeper, unable to extricate himself from his craft:

³⁶ Ibid, vol. VI (23 March, 1932): 410.

³⁷ Patrick Hamilton, *Impromptu in Moribundia* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 1999), pp. 27-29.

³⁸ Lewis Grassie Gibbon, *Grey Granite* (Edinburgh: Jarrolds, 1934), p. 87.

I've left him trying to get Moscow or whatever he wants on wireless. And his tea what he was shoutin' about goin' cold on table. That's a man all o'er for y'. Contrairy, contrairy. Twiddlyitis on the wireless, that's his latest craze.³⁹

Early radio seemingly appealed to men, as control of the apparatus often rested with male members of a family listening group. This is shown in recollections compiled by Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff:

...my brother used to put the earphones in the basin and the sound was amplified by it...

Only one of us could listen in and that was my husband. The rest of us were like mummies...He'd be saying, "I've got another [station]", but of course we could never hear it.⁴⁰

It is generally outlined how "the receiving equipment looked more like something out of [...] science fiction than a simple household object"; clearly the mystical element was heightened by rituals of listening, whereby the man was engrossed in preparing the experiment, or meticulously registering the impulses.⁴¹

In 1932, *Wireless Magazine* ran a column titled 'Wireless Femininities' which accentuated the gender divide, implying that "[t]o women, wireless is distraction or an excitement. [T]o men -- a toy" (358). The earphoned ladies of leisure were not programmed to understand their 'comforter'; an assumption of technical ignorance which occurred with every advance in communications. Carolyn

³⁹ Walter Greenwood, *He Worship the Mayor* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934), p. 127.

⁴⁰ Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, vol. I, 1922-1939 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1991), p. 357.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

Marvin writes on the attitude displayed in electrical journals of the 1880's following installation of the telephone into domestic life:

Predictably [...] women failed to understand electrical messages the way their male protectors did- as scarce and expensive commodities. To women, electrical talk was a delightfully extravagant extension of face-to-face intimacy, almost a free good [...] Men, by contrast, wanted control of all communication conducted through the technology that belonged to them.⁴²

Ownership was progressively important if one were to master the void opened by long-distance linkage; the need to minimise a lingering sense of supernatural forces by asking: how does *my* device function?

Marvin alludes to a "technological code that bound men but that women did not respect" (25), a mentality which endured as male wireless enthusiasts sidelined women to the "fireside type of wireless discussion [...] knit-and-sew, cup-of-tea atmosphere", one which apparently never comprehended the origin of a signal, and merely accepted disembodied voices.⁴³ Notably, in Holtby's novels, groups of men frequently "fall to talking of wireless and aerials," after drink-fuelled conversations where prejudice or misunderstanding is prevalent.⁴⁴ They dissect and warp the minutiae of peoples' lives; their electrical superiority seeming to provide justification for what amounts to spiteful gossip.

Women, however, are vastly removed from the trivial business of tubes, batteries and crystal detectors; they often embrace the spacial uncertainty of modern life,

⁴² Carolyn Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking About Electronic Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 24.

⁴³ *The Listener*, vol. VIII (8 January 1932): 17.

not wishing to explain, or confine, their sensations to mere mechanics. A typical response is embodied in Joanna, the flighty heroine of *The Land of Green Ginger* (1927), who declares with "excited solemnity":

[A]ren't cables fun? I'd never thought of sending them before. If I had money, I'd live in constant temptation. I'd want to send hundreds and hundreds of cables to all sorts of people in all parts of the world. Just imagine inquiring after the Shah of Persia's kittens [...] Or sending Valentines to Mussolini and Christmas greetings to Trotsky and to the agent of the British American Tobacco Company in Hankow. [H]ave you ever had that wonderful feeling that there are so many gloriously silly things to be done in the world that time and space aren't big enough to hold them?⁴⁵

Joanna represents much of Winfred Holtby's attitude to her environment: a writer who occasionally paused, changed track and boldly considered the potentialities of electric communication, from 'gloriously silly' to deeply disturbing.

It is important that, after a dinner party, Joanna wishes to "capture" and "hold" the evening, in order to replay the scent of azaleas, the chatter of voices. She whispers to herself, "I had my hour. Life cannot touch it. It's mine, mine, mine for ever".⁴⁶ The issues of retrieval and restoration suffuse Holtby's writing, often enhanced, or supported, by wireless technology. As shown, its structure was defined by her peers as containing dark elements and requiring exclusive control; it may be termed personal *reinvention* for a storyteller to acknowledge those negative features, but primarily retain a fantasy of arresting the cycle of life.

⁴⁴ WH, *The Land of Green Ginger* (London: Virago Press, 1983), p. 118.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 298.

Time-saving Devices

As early as 1920, Winifred Holtby was harried by the imposition of external factors, or rather, those which forced categories and limits upon her very existence. Writing to Jean McWilliam, she regretted how her writing, in particular, was dictated by the clock "[ticking] away, seconds, minutes and hours!" devouring her psychological moment and time itself, "the most precious thing I have now".⁴⁷

This nagging sense of loss pervades her sporadic poetry, usually scribbled in response to an emotional upheaval such as Brittain's marriage, which produced a lament over "the foolish clocks" who have "no wit for hoarding/ The precious moments". Denoting the march of time is a "worthless" activity, as the past cannot be recalled by the "thrifty hands" of such fatuous machinery.⁴⁸ Another piece, 'Invocation to Time' (1925), lavishly begs "one hour/That will not perish, one immortal flower", implying an occult ceremony with "wine of strange communion" to achieve this desire.⁴⁹

The motif is enlarged in a later story, 'Sentence of Life' (1933), where a profligate city merchant is mistakenly diagnosed with a fatal illness and learns to appreciate the brief, irrevocable moments he must wrest from time itself. During

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 67-68.

⁴⁷ J. McWilliam and A. Holtby, *Letters* p, 27.

⁴⁸ WH, *The Frozen Earth and Other Poems* (London: Collins, 1935), p, 14.

⁴⁹ Cited in Brittain, p. 186. It appeared in *Country Life*, December 1928.

Mandoa Mandoa! (1933) this regret is personified in Bill Durrant, who draws upon the lifeblood of the heroine, leeching away her "vitality":

[T]he unsleeping clock of criticism beat in her brain, tick, tock, tick, tock, marking his faults, her withdrawals, the time they were wasting, the energy they spilled.⁵⁰

Death is figured as not only a cruel cessation, but also as a barrier to Holtby's understanding of human experience. Her poem 'Symphony Concert: To a Dead Musician' (1931), is an elegy to Edward Brittain who was killed at the Italian front in 1918. Information on this tragic incident was received second-hand, and probably inaccurately, by Holtby who admits, "How should I hear as well as other men/ Who [...] have heard re-echo that last sound you knew--/ The shrapnel splintering before it slew". She was not *there*, and as a result, believes her ears to be "untutored".⁵¹

Holtby's tale 'Harking Back to Long Ago' (1929) outlines the concept maintained in her unpublished play, *Judgement Voice*: that specific shards of life may be accessed and stored in a mechanical memory bank for future empathy. It revolves around the "particular little private ecstasy" of a frosty Christmas night where a group of carollers slice through "air as sharp as eau de Cologne", their feet crunching on gravel outside the bedroom window.⁵² No-one else, Holtby considers, can ever channel into the euphoria issuing from the "unblurred imagination of a child"; its residue is exclusive to the narrator and will perish with bodily death. She adds, however:

⁵⁰ WH, *Mandoa Mandoa!* (London: Collins, 1933), p. 233.

⁵¹ WH, *The Frozen Earth*, p. 21.

Suppose that men do one day invent a machine which will listen to the past, pick up the sound waves as they slide off the air waves onto the ether, and reproduce for us all sounds that have ever been.

The dial would forage through latitudes and longitudes, names and dates, eavesdropping upon "*others'* Christmas memories", which Holtby claims "I would most joyously purloin". Emperor Charlemagne founding the Roman Empire; the court of Saint James "where the jokes might be a trifle coarse", or an encounter with John Knox. Primarily, "since I have the power", writes Holtby, she might endeavour to retrieve a child's cry heard two thousand years ago in Palestine.

This tale compiles an acoustic archaeology of time; the 'machine' merely extends the capacity of wireless frequencies in order to turn back, and "*tune-in*" to incidents of varying relevance. It is significant that Holtby prefers to indulge in the minor details of lost presence, for example, "Lady Castlemaine's mad musical laughter [...] the rustle of Mrs Samuel Pepys' noble silk and her husband's yawn..." Instinctively, Holtby recoils from actually locating the moment of Christ's birth, dismissing her unique privilege which suddenly seems less controlled. "And among so many sounds how should we *know* the sound that changed a world?" she explains. As in radio interference the unfiltered signal may fade in and out, disrupted by the weight of centuries and fleeting voices who arrest the dial.

⁵² WH, 'Harking Back to Long Ago', in *The Selected Stories of Winifred Holtby*, eds., Paul Berry

By noting the ramifications of her "ingenious" instrument, Holtby echoes the popular reaction to preservative, and electric, media, which seemingly established "a moral and intellectual reference point, a resolver of controversy in important debate".⁵³ For example, in 1888, one journalist was stirred to write wistfully of the times "missed":

Suppose we could have graphophonic communication with the year in which Plato lived and philosophized, and we could listen to his voice and hear his discourse. [If] there had been phonographs in the Garden of Eden, how easy it would be for us to sit down, turn the crank and listen to Adam's courtship and Eve's interview with the serpent. What an endless ecclesiastical [sic] disputations would have been avoided.⁵⁴

Holtby recasts this notion of a voice-gallery into the twentieth century, still hoping for the "roar of the lions in Daniel's den [and] the sound of Nero's fiddle", but by a less rigid method, that of 'harking' or listening-in.⁵⁵

Ancestral history may be verified by sound storage, but the result was a hollow indicator of lost life. Reconstructed from fragments of a phonograph cylinder, Caruso's voice was "built up again to its full capacity" using the electrical impulses of 1932.⁵⁶ This is a form of acoustic taxidermy akin to the process in Friedlaender's tale, 'Goethe Speaks Into the Microphone' (1916), whereas to capture vibrations of past lives implies a parallel existence. The ultimate machine

and Marion Shaw (London: Virago Press, 1999), pp. 9-16.

⁵³ Marvin, p. 203.

⁵⁴ 'The Good the Speech Recorder Might Have Done', *Electrical Review* (25 Aug 1888): 7-9. Douglas Kahn notes the American author Florence McLandburgh, whose leading story in *The Automaton Ear and Other Sketches* (Chicago: Jansen and McClurg, 1876) would comply with these sentiments: "The protagonist, a professor, runs across a paragraph describing how sound never fully dissipates and sets out to construct a device to aid the ear in hearing these wayward atoms" (Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, p. 212).

⁵⁵ 'The Future of the Phonograph', *Electrical Review* (21 April 1888): 1.

would instantly detect these traces, "[s]o that no sound ever dies", as Holtby reinforces in her play *Judgement Voice* (1929).⁵⁷ As a result, the individual would radiate beyond death in the same form, uncorrupted and genuine.

This very phrase may have been inspired by J.W Dunne's bestselling text *An Experiment With Time* (1927), which Holtby read in the autumn of 1928 -- shortly after the death of her sister. Dunne sought to popularise, or rather provide an accessible discourse for, the theory that time is a flux and not a series of discrete units. Moreover, sound is innate to separation, distance and memory: upon striking a wine glass, Dunne explained that "after [the ring] has disappeared, you can still remember what it sounded like before it died away".⁵⁸

Arthur B. Evans argues for " a new scientifico-literary genre that literary historians (rightly or wrongly) have come to call S.F [science fiction]".⁵⁹ Focusing on late nineteenth century French literature, he classifies the distinction between texts which "accommodate" the technology; those which artificially clone scientific discourse, and narratological literature which embodies the "limitless powers" of machines as a "metaphoric bridge [to] the true message". Features of the latter group include quasi-technical terminology and a tendency for "the concrete to be replaced by 'vagueness'", owing to an underlying

⁵⁶ *The Listener*, vol. VIII, 7 December (1932): 826.

⁵⁷ Unpublished typed manuscript held at the Winifred Holtby collection, Hull Central Library.

⁵⁸ J.W Dunne, *An Experiment With Time* (London: A&C Black Ltd, 1927), p. 19. His introductory statement, "this is not a book about 'occultism'" (p. 1) was in keeping with other efforts such as Professor Hogben's *Mathematics for the Millions*, which, writes Muggeridge, "made thousands feel that they were equipped at any rate mathematically for citizenship and progress [...]" (286).

⁵⁹ Arthur B. Evans, 'Functions of Science in French Fiction', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. XXII, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 79-100.

preoccupation with the arcane or the political. This characteristic is present in much of Winifred Holtby's discourse.

Chiefly, the notion of time-travel is an enabling device for social commentary and acknowledgement of man's finitude, a blend encapsulated in Patrick Hamilton's satire *Impromptu in Moribundia*, where the narrator's interstellar journey plunges him into Einsteinian hell: "'It's two- it's two- it's two!'" I can remember screaming...'.⁶⁰ He also encounters a place where vicious stereotypes are "cold calm actualities", for instance, the working-classes are excessively lazy and uncouth.⁶¹ By the same degree, Winifred Holtby's tale 'Anthropologist's May' (1930) is set in the year 3149 and provides a glimpse into 'Modes and Social Codes of the British Islanders' in the "bygone civilisation of 1933".⁶² The excavated Tooting relics are "about as accurate as most [...] reconstructions can hope to be", hazarding that the newspaper headline 'Liberal Women' is "a reference to sexual characteristics...Liberal = generous". At one level, Holtby is confirming her suspicion that remnants of the past may be unreliable -- they are, at best, a mutated echo.

Olaf Stapledon, largely categorised as a writer of science fiction, shared this tendency to glance backwards in order to illuminate the present. His novel, *Last and First Men* (1931) charts mankind's downfall from the vantage point of a 'Neptunian', a member of the tribe who eventually fulfils an ideal of telepathic

⁶⁰ Hamilton, p. 28.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶² WH, *Selected Stories*, eds., Berry and Shaw, pp. 49-52.

communication sought by seventeen species.⁶³ The Neptunian -- who is able to traverse the gamut of universal history -- attributes the first Dark Age to a garbled radio broadcast precipitating full-scale European war. This inability to decode crucial messages is a weakness of the race, enduring until the Fifth Men, who notably suffer from an "obtuseness" in seeking contact with their "beloved dead".⁶⁴

In Stapledon's fantasy, conquering the past entails a complete collapse of boundaries where "some feature of a past event may depend on an event in the far future", only obtainable through the discovery of "'wave systems' akin to normal protons and electrons" (343, 346). Eventually, it is "confined to *specialists*", having led to "disorders of temporal experience" in the uninitiated (350). In retrospect, the Neptunian concedes that:

Throughout all his existence, man has been striving to hear the music of the spheres, and has seemed to himself once and once again to catch some phrase of it [...] Yet he can never be sure that he has really heard it (353).

Leslie Fiedler ascribes these visions of utopia and nihilism to "the chilliastic expectations of the era" and cites William Empson's shrewd offering, 'Just A Smack At Auden' by way of encompassing the general malaise:⁶⁵

Shall we send a cable, boys, accurately penned,

⁶³ In 1977, the Olaf Stapledon Society published a hitherto unknown and never performed radio drama titled 'Far Future Calling', an abbreviated version of this novel.

⁶⁴ Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future* (London: Methuen and Co., 1931), p. 248.

⁶⁵ Leslie Fiedler, *Olaf Stapledon: A Man Divided* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 44-47.

Knowing we are able boys, waiting for the end

Via the Tower of Babel, boys? Christ will not ascend.

He's hiding in the stable, boys, waiting for the end.

The death of God was hastened by spaceflight into a chattering cosmos which had no creator, but promised the retrieval of ultimate truth. Modern technologies only hinted at, for example, the capacities of "the little box of sound at your elbow": the radio.⁶⁶

A self-conscious essay by Hilaire Belloc in the *Listener*, 'Machine versus Man', pondered the virtue of electronic progress, asking, "How far are we controlled by instruments; are they our masters, or are we masters of them?".⁶⁷ Time-snatchers such as Winifred Holtby hurriedly harness the machine for private gain, unearthing an ordered catalogue from the abyss. "The world would then be *mine*, and all the sounds thereof", she writes of her foray in 'Harking Back to Long Ago'. Previously, Alfred Jarry deduced in 'How To Construct A Time Machine' (1898), that "every simultaneous segment of Time is extended and can therefore be explored by machines that travel in space", or rather, the 'Luminiferous Ether'.

In 1902, Marconi cryptically remarked on "the privilege of lengthening life by saving time which composes it" in a speech announcing his intention to tap inexhaustible traffic". Jarry explains that the inventor/Explorer, encased within or alongside his invention, would be in complete control, significantly immune to "the action of Duration", that is, growing older, younger, or facing death.

⁶⁶ The *Listener*, vol. VII (2 March 1932): 304. Douglas Kahn writes that sound technology itself provides the foundations for "device[s] to hear the inaudible" and other "preternatural time-travellers- the sounds and voices from the future" (Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, pp. 213-214).

[A]ll future and past instants could be explored successively, just as the stationary spectator of a panorama has the illusion of a swift voyage through a series of landscapes [...] A Machine to isolate us [from] the physical drag which a succession of motions exerts on an inert body will have to make us 'transparent' to these physical phenomena, allow them to pass through us without modifying or displacing us.⁶⁸

Chiefly, it was the visions of H.G. Wells which inspired Olaf Stapledon, and, to some extent, his work informs the wilder speculations of Holtby. They shared certain traits, those articulated by Stephen Spender, who noted that within the literary canon of the 1930's some writers were regarded as "publicists and not quite artists":

Wells, although priding himself on being a social prophet, cultivated the manner of a travelling salesman for the scientific culture [...] he thought of his public personality as *anti-aesthetic, low-brow*. He was ever explaining that he was a journalist who breathed a different air from that of characters in the novels of Henry James.⁶⁹

In a short work for the 'Today and Tomorrow' series titled *Eutychus: or The Future of the Pulpit* (1928), Holtby posits Wellsian doctrine -- secularism and science -- as the logical route for humanity; beneath her sardonic dialogue is great respect and a vested interest in Wells's dark speculations. Their acquaintance was severed by Holtby's death, an "easy, slightly jocular exchange"

⁶⁷ Ibid, 268.

⁶⁸ Speech by Marconi, Royal Institution 12 June 1902 (Dunlap, p. 130); *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*, eds., Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor (London: Eyre Methuen, 1965), pp. 114-116. Marconi spoke of "the privilege of lengthening life by saving time which composes it" in his address -- shortly before successfully transmitting through the ether.

⁶⁹ Stephen Spender, *The Thirties and After: 1933-1975* (London: Fontana, 1975), p. 186.

poetically exaggerated by Brittain into the desperate wishes of an invalid who cleaves to her favourite author.⁷⁰

It may be assumed that certain passages in *The Time Machine* (1895) may have provoked Holtby's enthusiasm for the "geometry of...Dimensions" and the process by which specific events might be recalled:

It would be remarkably convenient for the historian [...] One might travel back and verify the accepted account of the Battle of Hastings, for instance [...] One might get one's Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato.⁷¹

Ensnared in the dingy habitat of spectral Morlocks, however, Wells's traveller admits he is "particularly ill-equipped [...] for such an experience", not merely in medical supplies, but also lacking a method by which to verify his experience:

If only I had thought of a Kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the Under-world in a second, and examined it at leisure (55).

It is noteworthy that, like Hamilton's Asteradio and the long-distance apparatus of 'Harking Back to Long Ago', the time machine of 1885 borrows elements of contemporary science and thus foreshadows equipment of the twentieth century.

Wells portrays a bulky piece of furniture interspersed with "glimmering quartz"

⁷⁰ Shaw, p. 393. Also see Brittain, p. 330.

⁷¹ H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine & War of the Worlds* (London: Millennium, 1999), p. 7. Jarry illustrates, bafflingly, how "Duration is the transformation of a succession into a reversion" which is "in other words THE BECOMING OF A MEMORY". This is possible in that the present "has three dimensions of Time: space traversed or the past, space to come or the future, and the present proper" (121, 114). Holtby may have resisted reading Jarry, but, as shown, she was familiar with J.W. Dunne who agreed that the "present moment is a mentally imposed barrier" and "one merely had to arrest all obvious thinking of the past and the future would become apparent in disconnected flashes" (Dunne pp. 55, 87).

(90), anticipating the fact that piezoelectric crystal adapted from quartz was often used in early wireless sets to enhance electric polarity. Alfred Jarry's vision is similarly robust, "absolutely rigid", comprising flywheels "made of ebony case in copper, mounted on rods of tightly rolled quartz ribbon [and] set in quartz sockets".⁷² During the early days of wireless, spatial disintegration became eerily acceptable with the advent of certain household amenities, such as the aforementioned 'Beam-a scope' or the Murphy Type 4-Valve Screened Grid Portable Receiver, with "additional controls, wave-change switch...No aerial or earth required".⁷³

The suggestion is not that Winifred Holtby wholly shared the apocalyptic spirit of 'scientifico-literary' authors such as H.G. Wells or Stapledon, rather that her writing betrays an awareness of the genre. Not actively inclined to treat collective anxiety or social problems as a grim portent of mass destruction, Holtby nevertheless adapted certain ingredients into her own battle with mortality.

I would contest that her extra-curricular fiction was galvanised by a wish to stop, or retard, the 'foolish clocks', although her penchant for specific themes hints at an artistic divergence. One assessment of H.G. Wells holds that "he increasingly discovered and made increasingly explicit, the implications of his early [...]"

⁷² Jarry, pp. 116-118.

⁷³ Frank Murphy, *Making Wireless Simple* (London: Murphy Radio Ltd, 1931), p. 19. William Burroughs' commentary on the Raudive phenomenon in *The Adding Machine* somewhat extends the process, noting that "a similar principle might be applied to listen to the future and not just to representatives of the past" (pp. 54-60). Douglas Kahn writes that such opinion implies "a time-machine [the actual radio mechanism itself?] that would travel from one type of place to the same type of place. The question of course, becomes by *whom*, or *what* are the words and images pre-recorded?" (Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, p. 221).

scientific romances and sketches".⁷⁴ This relates to his admirer, Holtby, who almost bridged the divisions of her career -- to be reformer or writer? -- by incorporating human issues of power, ownership and progress into a deeper spiritual dilemma. Regrettably, the time in which to develop this concept was never granted.

The Source Himself

If science were given "a hundred more centuries of increase", wrote Charles Sanders Peirce in 1892, one could expect "to find that the sound waves of Aristotle's voice have recorded themselves".⁷⁵ He infers that all speech, once emitted, silently pulsates until mankind's technologies are able to detect, retrieve and amplify. Over a century later, Douglas Kahn considers an all-consuming "deafening sound",

[...] which individuals can neither hear or see in all its consonance, for it is silently constituted by signals saturating the substance of all space with the din of mass-mediated culture (221).

This suggests that past traces are present within the signals and wires of these noisy instruments, which correspondingly provide a conduit to the furthest reaches of soundspace.

⁷⁴ Frank McConnell, *The Science Fiction of H.G Wells* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1981), p. 77.

⁷⁵ *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 542.

Yet *who*, indeed, is "able to project the Athens of Euripides onto a screen or make heard the voice of Sappho", as one writer remarked in 1907.⁷⁶ Hence, the role of the inventor was markedly heightened in the early twentieth century; he not merely had an inclination for the esoteric, but also the resources to detach sounds from the organic cycle of birth and death. With regard to progress in radio, Oliver Lodge noted in the *Listener* that "this is but a flowering of the plant [...] nursed in darkness preceding 1922". He lists Faraday, Hertz, Clark Maxwell and David Hughes, "thinking with his fingers about ether disturbances", all of whom gallantly, and through practical means, addressed the enigma of souls in transit.⁷⁷

Indeed, Carolyn Marvin observes that "builders of a future inherit a past that they reshape", explicitly dispelling magic and myth, which nevertheless become incorporated into their specialist status. After all:

Priestly groups effect and maintain power by possession of significant cultural secrets. [P]rofessionals were anxious to guard [technological literacy] from eager nonspecialists who might dilute it or, perhaps alarming, possess it independently of the elite whose exclusive domain it was supposed to be.⁷⁸

For example, as if to preserve, and capitalise upon, the superstitions surrounding electricity, Edison Company representatives wreaked havoc upon a less astute public in Boston, 1887, by enacting a séance: "noises natural and unnatural were

⁷⁶ Maurice Renard, 'Death and the Shell' (1907) in *Invitation a la peur* (Paris: Belfont, 1970), pp.67-72. Quoted in Kahn and Whitehead, *Wireless Imagination*, pp. 49-51.

⁷⁷ *The Listener*, vol. VII (13 November 1932): 702-704.

⁷⁸ Marvin, pp. 54, 39.

heard, a cabinet revolved and flashed fire, and a row of departed skulls came into view".⁷⁹ An article from *Engineering* in 1911 lists improvements in telephonic circuitry, affirming that the unversed man succumbs to the mysteries and "miracles" of science rather than forging ahead with new ideas, "a matter which must be left entirely to the experts" like Olaf Stapledon's 'wave-systems' in the far future.⁸⁰

In her fiction, Winifred Holtby responds to the climate engendered by contemporary reporting on telecommunications. As mentioned in articles from the *Listener*, radio was often featured as a cryptic, enchanted medium to which a select few -- such as Marconi -- had the formula. A short-lived appendage to the wireless set, patented in 1933, allowed the recipient to create 'electronic music', which caused dismay over "how far it [might] be safeguarded from abuse". Unnervingly, a "houseful of amateur 'electronics' could soon produce the nearest approach to cacaphonic Hades that the world has yet suffered".⁸¹

Holtby's unpublished play *Judgement Voice* and her truncated sequel, 'The Voice of God' (1930) highlight this area of defilement, namely, the improper usage of a machine which -- in its very germination -- is a blatant attempt by the inventor to extend his mortal capabilities. This chapter determines that such works belong to a tradition comprised of, stylistically, widely differing authors who recognised electric technology as a means to call forth history, restore dead traces, and alter the course of fate.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 57.

⁸⁰ 'The Immediate Future of the Long Distance Telephone', *Engineering/Current Literature*, May 1911 (London: Journal of the International Institute of Technical Bibliography, 1912): 504.

⁸¹ The *Listener*, vol. IX (16 November 1933): 51.

As has been suggested so far, the phonograph inspired a longing to hear the Word, whilst radio was a portal to other dimensions. This blend of archival and futuristic is vastly inflated in the pursuits of 'magicians' whose machines betray nostalgia, insecurity and megalomania. The legend of Edison, and other pioneers of sound, stalk these texts: the figure who justifies fantasy through his endeavours. Such a condition is diagnosed by Alfred Jarry, who saw that "*without the Machine an observer sees less than half of the true extent of Time*".⁸²

Holtby's *Judgement Voice* was written in 1929, immediately after the embryonic 'Harking Back To Long Ago'. It was rejected by Curtis Browne Ltd., who deemed "Miss Holtby [to be] up against the impossible". The report from Maurice Browne reads:

The author has got hold of a good idea, although the play is too thin for its immense subject [I]t is too reminiscent of Karel Capek's *Krakatit*. The Cosmic Receiver is too fantastic to be acceptable, and this kills the possibility of drama.⁸³

Hovering between pseudo-scientific farce and a chilling discourse on humanity, the main defect of the play is the woefully untechnical jargon; it is foregrounded in the text rather than used to extend thematic possibilities. As Browne deemed, this rather neutralises the implicit horror of the situation. One response would be that such jarring rhetoric and ironic wit was characteristic of surrealist writers

⁸² Jarry, p. 121.

⁸³ Copy of 'Reports on *Judgement Voice*,' from Maurice Browne's office (15 October 1929). Held at the Winifred Holtby Archive, Hull City Library.

such as Villiers de L'Isle-Adam (1838-1899), who revelled in more abstract conceptions of media control.

Set in "the near future", *Judgement Voice* revolves around an impoverished audiophile. Mark Southernwood, who has invented a Cosmic Receiver, a device "like a wireless [...] with 3 lamps and 2 dials". He is heralded as a genius by his sister Joan, who considers it "madness for Mark to sit down and design phonofilms or parlour televisions". She outlines his superiority from the outset:

Do you remember Molow's theory of sound? He was an American physicist who discovered that when the sound waves reach the outer atmosphere they are converted into ether waves that vibrate for ever and ever. Mark worked on his calculations till he realised he might be able to make an instrument that would pick up the vibrations. [N]ow he's been working on 2 rejectors -- one for time and one for space -- so that he can reject all the sounds except exactly the one he wants.

In imagining nuggets such as "Joan of Arc being burned [...] the splash of trees in a primeval forest, [or] Beethoven improvising at the piano", Joan assumes that only exemplary moments will be redelivered, rather than a profusion of everyday speech.

This selective ability is yearned for by 'The Sorcerer of Menlo Park', a literary version of "the engineer, Mr Edison, our contemporary" in Villiers de L'Isle Adam's fable, *L'Eve Future* (1886).⁸⁴ From his laboratory "on the grounds of a mausoleum", the inventor regrets the delay of his phonograph; if only "the mages

⁸⁴ Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, *Tomorrow's Eve*, trans., Robert Martin Adams (Urbana, London: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p.4.

who served the ancient satraps of Media" had sought a means of preservation, or he himself had "been lurking behind some secret thicket in Eden".⁸⁵

Dead voices, lost sounds, forgotten noises, vibrations lockstepping into the abyss, and now too distant ever to be recaptured...I have this little spark [which] is to sound what the greyhound is to the tortoise. It could give the sounds a start of fifty centuries and yet chase them down in the gulfs of outer space, ancient refugees from the earth! But on what wire, along what trail could I send it? How teach it to bring the sounds back, once it has tracked them down? How redirect them to the ear of the investigator?⁸⁶

Edison's problem is addressed by his scientific descendants; meanwhile, he literally embodies his thwarted longing in a similarly audacious project: the "transubstantiation", or improvement of an imperfect soul, into the flawless android Hadaly. She is thus "animated [...] by the vital, surprising agent that we call Electricity" and subliminally responsive to the "deepest desires" of a lovesick lord (61). Edison's underlying objective is to condense sound, "reclaiming from Destiny [...] absolutely perfect moments...so constructed *that we want no others*" (137). Hadaly never improvises, as to do so is rather profane:

Didn't God himself [say]: "When ye pray, let it be after this manner etc." And isn't it true that for the last two thousand years other prayers have been nothing but pale dilutions of this one that he gave us? (137)

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp, 9, 20.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.10. Villiers' fantasy of "the man who made a prisoner of the echo" emphasises the physical space inhabited and controlled by Edison. He has installed a "sounding box" with "remote switching mechanism" which enables electric contact with any person resident in Menlo Park (pp. 11, 16). Marconi's yacht *Elettra* had similar attributes: "close to his bed is a speaking tube which communicates with any part of the ship" (Dunlap p. 263). Dunlap is eager to add that "Marconi was never a laboratory-hugging genius as [was] Edison"; preferring instead to roam the oceans, tapping aerial wires between the masts. After probing the jazz floating overhead and the "constant flow of human thought" Marconi could nevertheless "snap a switch and shut it all off" (pp. 257-261).

In Act I, scene ii. of *Judgement Voice*, Mark Southernwood commands all proceedings in a public demonstration of his achievements, inadvertently demanding respect from the uninitiated. The hired help, Mrs Barnett, arrives during a replay of Mark's laboratory that same morning; her voice becomes a ghostly inhabitant of two vessels, body and machine:

Rita (out of the darkness): Look here Mrs Barnett, you've charged 9 pence for my husband's pyjamas [...] I won't pay a penny over sixpence...

Mrs Barnett: If you call something that's trying to be silk just mercanised cotton, you take all the fun out of it.

"Did I have one over the eight?", the corporeal Mrs Barnett interjects.

Holtby's handwritten note in the manuscript offers practical solutions to stage this phenomena:

The voices supposed to be reproduced from the Cosmic Receiver can really be made from gramophone records. The slightly mechanical sound of the records will give exactly the right suggestion of artificial reproduction. All other instruments could be hired from a wireless firm.

Mrs Barnett is intrigued, and begs to hear her dead husband once again -- a solitary, exclusive sound, which Joan is flippantly confident of locating. In a sinister manner she adds, "we'll just insulate his voice from *all the others*", implying that the stockpile of history merely houses the dead, all clamouring for an outlet, in a manner akin to Raudive's voice-entities.

Act I, scene ii closes with Mark and Joan preparing for time travel; the Receiver "blurs and buzzes", sounds drift in and fade out from a Conservative party conference ten years previously. Then "on a bit"; the condenser is adjusted, and a contralto sings 'Land of Hope and Glory' on a random time frequency. Mark urges Joan to "increase the High tension [...] to carry more tone," hence abolishing decades. "Oh, I shall hear Charlie..." says Mrs Barnett rapturously, paying homage to the magician who assuages her grief.

Following media interest in the Cosmic Receiver, and a potential contract from Wendover Parsons, an electronics company, Mark Southernwood becomes less *substantial*, "on the verge of a nervous breakdown", whispering and stuttering like a faulty version of his device. A parallel may be drawn with Karel Capek's chemist in *Krakatit* (1925) who mimics the diabolic powder he has mixed, which is capable of global annihilation. Literally an unstable element, prone to shakes and nervous collapse, "'engineer' Prokop" becomes horrified at his knowledge of "what a tremendous thing experiment is" and how his laboratory represents "the High Place of temptation".⁸⁷

This unwieldy novel suggests that, should a gifted inventor "cast his eyes upwards" he shall grow "insane and irresponsible" over limitless opportunities; a sombre realisation for Mark Southernwood, who is unhinged by a final irony. His Receiver settles upon a sermon from St Mary's Church, Arncroft, which relays the Book of the Prophet Habbakkuk and a "taunting proverb [...] Woe to

⁸⁷ Karel Capek, *Krakatit*, trans., Lawrence Hyde (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1925), p. 359.

him that increaseth that which is not his". For Mark has deified himself, with ill-fated results. His final soliloquy admits he was lured by the idea:

I must be more than human [...] I'm going to change the world. I shall have abolished forgetfulness... We shall live forever in the words that we have spoken. Do you think that beside this choice any personal failure can touch me?

He echoes the scientist, old Rossum in Capek's *R.U.R.* who "actually wanted to make people" rather than his synthetic substitutes, the robots, and so behaved as "a kind of scientific substitute for God...with the sole purpose of [supplying] proof that Providence was no longer necessary".⁸⁸

When the Edison in *L'Eve Future* dictates in a "voice of thunder" his plans to reinstall the object of Lord Ewart's desire in a second copy "with the sublime assistance of Light!", the young lord senses a "chilly gust from the Infinite". From his vantage point, "Edison was like an inhabitant of the distant kingdom of Electricity" endowed with a physical magnetic force concealing "*the real motive inspiring him*".⁸⁹

Mark Southernwood exposes his own, underlying, reason, for building a Cosmic Receiver. The impression is that his marital relations have already disintegrated owing to poverty and Mark's work pattern, and it becomes apparent throughout the play that he uses his machine as an instrument of surveillance, "to track my wife down -- to spy on her -- for every word she'd spoken". Intending to retrieve memories of their courtship, in particular playing truant from work and

⁸⁸ Karel Capek, *R.U.R.* trans., P. Selver (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 11.

picnicking by the river, Mark masochistically tunes in to Rita's infidelity, her conversations and clinches with a bland, wealthy doctor. As Joan blithely predicts: "It might solve scientific problems to be able to hear lost sounds. But what about the domestic problems it raises?" While the machine claims to deliver any requested item, Mark knows bitterly that "we aren't perfectly accurate yet -- sometimes we're about a mile out in space or half-an-hour in time...".

Therefore, contamination is probable, with unwanted, yet compelling, frequencies intruding upon the experiment. "You must not expect science to be tactful", warns Sir Robert Wendover, chairman of the wireless company. This is comparable to a situation provoked by the "indecent" instrument in John Cheever's story 'The Enormous Radio' (1950), which develops a capacity beyond its range:

Irene shifted the control and invaded the privacy of several breakfast tables. She overheard demonstrations of indigestion, carnal love, abysmal vanity, faith and despair. [She] continued to listen until her maid came in. Then she turned off the radio quickly, since this insight, she realised, was a furtive one.⁹⁰

Correspondingly, Holtby portrays 'listening-in' as something illicit, rather disgraceful like a secret narcotic binge. It signifies great vanity whilst revealing the poignancy of such a grandiose, yet grubby, act. Mark Southernwood uses the Cosmic Receiver as an extension of his own faculties: the ideal tool for a cuckolded husband. As expected, the extramarital affair is a result of Mark's

⁸⁹ Villiers, pp. 63-64, 53, 164.

⁹⁰ John Cheever, 'The Enormous Radio', *The Collected Stories of John Cheever* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 49-60.

inability to communicate with the person closest to him; he is deaf and blind to Rita's discontent.

As Edison acknowledges of his replica in *L'Eve Future*, any invention can become unique to the recipient. "I am disconnecting Hadaly", he announces to Lord Ewart, "isolating her, in a word, since she no longer belongs to anyone but you" (206). Similarly, only engineer Prokop can relate to the explosive krakatit; other, political, organisations keep it "like a sacred relic", musing over the formula.⁹¹ In *Judgement Voice*, the inventor's "personal failure" gives credence to his personal machine, a prosthetic device designed to relive the past and rejuvenate dead emotions. Carolyn Marvin rightly observes that within scientific manifestations lies an "echoic and potent image" of the designer, a notion concurrent with sound technology.⁹²

Projection, but also retrojection [...] I invent, but I invent myself. [A] machine corresponds to what its user expects of it but also provides him with an unprecedented, unformulated response of which it is itself the idea.⁹³

In essence, the inventor is godless, that is, he cannot succumb to the overriding assurance of a single broadcast voice, for he is rendered cynical. Like the customised Cosmic Receiver, "the living idea of God appears only to the extent that the faith of the viewer is able to evoke it". To assert his position, Edison of *L'Eve Future* wishes that:

⁹¹ Capek, *Krakatit*, p. 353.

⁹² Marvin, p. 192.

⁹³ Charles Grivel, 'The Phonograph's Horned Mouth', in Kahn and Whitehead, at p. 35.

He would [just] permit me, Thomas Alva Edison, American engineer, His creature, to make a simple phonographic record of His True Voice [...] *the day after that event, there wouldn't be a single atheist left on earth!* (24).

Although, to view God as another machine, the "most sublime of conceptions" existing in accordance with the individual is, conceivably a form of atheism, or as Edison notes, the beginning of madness. Such a man does little but "*deliberately decapitate his own mind*" (24). Upon hearing the Arncchester sermon, Mark believes that God sends *him* a message, or jealous thunderbolt, along the wires of the Receiver -- a machine actually designed to invest the operator with superhuman skills. For, ultimately:

The inventor's stroke of genius -- or of madness -- is to have dared to make a machine speak in man's place, in order to fulfil the reality of his language better than he. [It] is conceived to carry out blasphemy, to deny the word of God [and] this machine that speaks matter as reality without remainder carries out the negation of the famous, orthodox, "In the beginning was the Word", substituting in its place a disgusting, "I created the Word".⁹⁴

Mark Southernwood dies connected up to his own sound-system, electrocuted in the Receiver's embrace. He attempts to burn the detailed plans and diagrams by way of restoring his perspective, asking, "How can I judge the world if I can't hold my own wife?". In choosing to spare humanity from a plague of Cosmic Receivers, Mark knows this to be his sole divine function, as he has been helplessly humanised by playing with omni-science: thou shalt not appropriate the Word, or rather, attempt to access inappropriate words.

⁹⁴ Ibid, pp 48-49.

Dialling the Divine

Indeed, "all these new-fangled things are an offence to the Lord", objects a character in *R.U.R.*, "It's downright wickedness, that's what it is, wanting to improve the world He's made".⁹⁵ In the past, electricity had augured ill for the fate of mankind, as warnings from the diocese were often reported in the popular press:

[Bishop Turner] predicts that the unbalancing of the air currents which electricians are causing will in a few years, if they increase in number as fast as in the next five years, cause whole cities to be blown away at a time, and floods like any save Noah's.⁹⁶

Aware that stray soundwaves were unlikely to muddle cosmological, and terrestrial, order, Winifred Holtby nevertheless felt the dark side of modernisation. A letter to Jean McWilliam correlates with her portrayal of the scientist in *Judgement Voice*:

We are so busy with our patient creations of scientific invention. We build our aeroplanes and our wireless stations [yet] we don't seem to pull our spiritual standard up to the level of our material civilisation.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Capek, *R.U.R.* p. 52. Marvin cites the example of Michael Faraday, discoverer of electromagnetic induction, who was ostracised from his family's Sandemanian congregation attended. They "considered it a terrible thing for a good man to devote himself to such doubtful subjects as electricity, instead of reading the Bible and being satisfied with things as they were" (Marvin, p. 125).

⁹⁶ Report in *Electrical World* vol. 70, no. 25 (5 June 1886): 4. Cited in Marvin, p. 128.

⁹⁷ Holtby and McWilliam, *Letters To A Friend*, p. 202.

Her play highlights the pathos of man, resorting to blasphemy in order to affirm his position within the universe. Some form of communication with God is the exhilarating potential of any time-saving, time-storing device, but ironically, the production of Cosmic Receivers only reduces the scientist to an audacious puppet of the original Creator. Lord Ewald in *L'Eve Future* shudders over Edison's dark venture:

So that's how it is!...Miracles like these seem designed more to terrify the soul than to console it! Since when has God *permitted* machines to usurp the right of speech? (201).

It is suggested that the Lord allows mankind to tinker over "patient creations" in order to probe the skies and spheres for ideal communion, and is subsequently angered by this more ambitious undertaking.

Harmonious concord with divinities is seen as tantamount to wireless endeavours, both of which seek perfect reproduction, breathtaking range and selectivity. Merely because the Word is uniform, and vastly interpretive. For example, a sign outside one church in the 1920's proclaimed, 'God is Always Broadcasting', surely intending to emphasise His all-encompassing nature, but it reads as a lament for individual address.⁹⁸

Kierkegaard berates modern Christianity for attempting to honour the 'message' of Christianity whilst omitting the person of Christ himself. The reality is that "[a] sign is something different from what it immediately is", therefore, Christ's

⁹⁸ Related in Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States to 1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 104.

voice is never reported accurately, and he amounts to little more than a public façade subject to defamation.⁹⁹

In *Judgement Voice*, a tempting prospect is entertained by the Bishop of Beverley:

He himself declared, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now!" I do not think that His Voice was silent forever after Pentecost. May it not be that the Lord uses for his great purposes instruments unforseen by human imagination? [...] Somewhere in the swirling oceans of ether that enfold the world quiver the vibrations of a Voice that once was heard by the Lake of Gallilee...Give us back our Christ!

The Bishop is a member of the League of Nations Tribunal, who meet in the 'trial' scene of Act III. They debate a number of points to ascertain whether Mark should further his research, and circulate the Receiver; an aspect developed when Holtby streamlined her vision into a more approachable state. Her story, 'The Voice of God' (1930) is typically flippant in style, although the chief figure is a sinister Dean, rather than the inventor, who innocuously finds "his new instrument more entertaining than his wireless set, and [listens-in] to Queen Victoria scolding Prince Albert on a Sunday afternoon".¹⁰⁰ Hearing of this device, the Dean adapts his professional dilemma to the lure of advertising, and writes an article for the *Daily Standard*, headlining 'When Christ Returns to London':

⁹⁹ Soren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 123.

¹⁰⁰ WH, *Selected Stories*, pp. 151-160.

For two thousand years the world had tried to reconstruct from the inspired fragments of the Gospels the full record of his tremendous doctrine. Scholars had argued, armies fought and martyrs died because of Man's imperfect understanding. But now Science, the handmaid, not the enemy of religion, had wrought the miracle, and men might listen again, not only to the Sermon on the Mount, not only to the evidence of the Resurrection, but to all those lessons which had never been recorded, to the full story of that perfect Life.

In heralding the instrument as one "chosen by God Himself to enable man to hear", the Dean reconciles faith and science, wildly evading the issue of superior Truth, propounded separately by both fields. This corresponds to an actual endorsement of technology by the Bishop of Aix in 1896, who believed that electricity was preordained by the Almighty, and had a role in the final scheme:

And man has appropriated this terrible fluid; he has made a circle of wires around the globe [...] He has said to the lightning: "I will condemn thee to the most prosaic uses; thou shalt light our houses, our streets; and we are not yet arrived at *the limits of the benefits of thy power*, which has no equal in the masterpieces of creation."¹⁰¹

In Holtby's story, everyone is entitled to transmitted corrections of the Word, from the "housewife in Clapham" to "the Chinese mandarin". The ensuing media frenzy includes argument from the Nonconformists, who protest that "the Established Church had no monopoly of the Word of God", and, consequently, the machine remains with the inventor, "connected by wireless with loudspeakers placed in every public hall, church and chapel in the kingdom". It bears some resemblance to Marconi's "crowning miracle": the transmission of the "living voice", of Pope Pius XI in 1931 through 'micro-waves'. He declared:

¹⁰¹ 'An Electrical Dedication,' *Electrical Review* (24 June 1924): 138.

With the help of the Almighty God, who places such mysterious forces at mankind's disposal, I have been able to prepare this instrument that will give to the faithful throughout the world the consolation of hearing the Holy Father.¹⁰²

Before the event in Holtby's tale, a huge crowd in Wembley Stadium sing, sob and faint in anticipation, as a Voice crackles over the speakers. However, it is incomprehensible, which thwarts the scoop of all time: "With the King listening too", rages the editor of the *Daily Standard*, who had arranged for transcriptions in the morning press.

Authentic though it may be, the Word of Christ is not available in BBC English, only the Aramaic dialect spoken two thousand years ago. Scholars attempt to decode the noises, but, as in biblical Palestine, "the Voice did not immediately reveal itself as the Voice of God, so now in Fleet Street it was difficult to distinguish the speaker of the words received". Additionally, some of the lines seem "quite trivial".

National chaos erupts, as the citizens are denied revelation and as a result the Dean repents his "vainglorious action". Kneeling before the machine, he prays in the knowledge that the Word is innately adaptable, and mankind is unable to withstand "high doctrine" when so directly delivered:

The churches [have] adapted Your teachings to the needs of men, remembering their difficulties and limitations. But when You speak, Your council of protection destroys our humble work of compromise.

Holtby implies that if God truly speaks, it is in the form of jumbled nonsense, a stray signal which cannot be verified, or an anthem no-one can genuinely read. This is a literal depiction of Christ's teachings, accentuated by the grossness of twentieth century media.

In the early '30's, radio 'pulpit English' was a concern for those accused of patronising listeners in "the adoption of certain tones for certain purposes". Under the auspices of the BBC Religious Advisory Committee, ten gramophone records of Bible readings were prepared and disseminated by the Linguaphone Institute. Eight "habitual broadcasters" clearly demonstrated how the Word *should* sound -- at a particular time.¹⁰³ Holtby would later consider this dictatorial stance as indistinguishable from any tub-thumping evangelist, as described by Archbishop Fenelon in *Eutyclus* (1928): a "Firebrand, who [...] shouted down a strange trumpet-like instrument called a megaphone his garbled version of the Gospel".¹⁰⁴

Eutyclus is a three-way debate between the Archbishop, Mr Anthony (a Young Man about Bloomsbury) and Mr Eutyclus, a 'common man'. Whilst the clergyman believes that progress has not disavowed the Church, Anthony argues that a congregation is drawn to anyone who demonstrates a manifesto: the scientist, the Wellsian philosopher, sects promising health or fertility, differing strands of Politics and, occasionally, "controllers of Big Business" (35); all of

¹⁰² Dunlap, pp. 302-304.

¹⁰³ *The Listener* vol. VII (7 July 1932): 105.

whom liberate man from superstition. Eutychus, who actually speaks for the congregation, makes no firm judgement, seeing "plenty of kick" in both discourses (36). He, however, sees the pulpit as enduring, and revived, in modern media. Cogently, he adds that "the Man in the Pew" is merely on a quest for salvation (109):

Well, there's death. That's the first thing we're all afraid of [...] I tell you that as soon as anyone comes along and tells us what happens to the dead whether it's the Conan-Doyle-Oliver-Lodge idea, dancing all round in another dimension [...] white Robes and a Harp, or the medical student's dissecting room and worms, *we'll listen* (111-112).

Harley Street specialists and quacks promising wonder-cures, priestesses at the Hollywood temples of beauty, and fitness cults to retard the ageing process; all promise "success in life whether in this world or the next" (131). Moreover, it is available on tap from the household comforter:

[W]hen Dick Sheppard wants to preach loving-kindness and all that, we just draw our chairs closer...and we turn on the loudspeaker and stay as cosy as anything (135).

Mechanical devices make 'sermons' from any agent, or popular saint, "more palatable" to the congregation. The medium can be the message, if the "Broadcasting voice [...] goes right to the heart" and redemption is promised (136).

¹⁰⁴ WH, *Eutychus: or The Future of the Pulpit: A Short Treatise in the form of a Plain Dialogue, suggested as a possible epilogue to Fenelon's Dialogues sur l'Eloquence* (London: Kegan Paul, 1928), p. 48.

Hearing and Hying

To command mass devotion, Eutyclus adds that "new stunts" are required, citing the examples of a long-distance loudspeaker and a new beacon in New York City: "a 75-ft illuminated cross on the top of Broadway temple" (137). The League of Nations panel in *Judgement Voice* is duly concerned with aspects of promoting the Cosmic Receiver, and whether it is "inimical rather than useful to humanity". Representatives from areas of commerce, academia and leisure personify Holtby's conflicting attitude toward sound technology; they are reminiscent of the Medical Man, Psychologist, Editor, and other token figures in Wells's *The Time Machine* invited to preview the miraculous device.

A more cynical treatment of outside intervention occurs in *L'Eve Future*. In creating his masterwork of transubstantiation, Edison disappears from the public domain, whereupon the 'Society to Exploit the Intellectual Capital of Edison' makes a profit on "rumors that [the] cash register (!) had at last been successfully adapted to work by electricity [and] that he had discovered a way to split the atom, the demon!" (182-183). With regard to Marconi -- another "wizard" -- Orrin J. Dunlap perceives that,

[t]he most harrowing part of invention is usually what follows filing of the patent claim. Invention is but the spark that kindles a great fire upon which theories and imitators seek to offer the inventor to the gods of destruction (270, 227).

Mark Southernwood in *Judgement Voice* resents the "moonshining mummery" of the League of Nations tribunal, although his career depends upon a consensus of approval. "You must not be surprised if we turn around and try and master *you* a bit", says Sir Robert Wendover. He wants the official demonstration to include a re-run of conversations played out mere seconds previously, as "that always goes down well". This is a preamble to "that Boston 18th century stuff and anything you like in Paris", thus aiming to attract vestiges of drama and scandal.

This idea appeals to Llanely Green of Ross Empires Ltd., the driving force behind the British music hall, who envisions a portable Cosmic Receiver:

We could give you half an hour's turn in all our major halls - something fruity and unexpected. A dialogue between Henry VIII and one of his wives, for example, a pleasant evening with the Prince of Wales, you know. Intellectual, unique, improving. [I]t'd be a high-class scientific 'turn'!

He offers the tempting reversal of a situation in 1896, when telephone wires were laid from Buckingham Palace to places of entertainment in the capital. One journalist complained that, "[it] will even be possible for the royal ears to hear the latest music-hall gags, and that too, without compromising in the slightest degree queenly dignity".¹⁰⁵

Carolyn Marvin records instances of "electric automata" showcased at theatres and other spectacles of professional achievement such as a "mammoth Edison electrical globe" at the Cincinnati Exposition 1889, standing on a base "of about 3,200 globes that will gleam pure white, except where the word 'Edison' will

¹⁰⁵ 'A Queen Who Believes in Progress,' *Electrical Review* (8 July 1896): 37.

flash and glow in colored effects".¹⁰⁶ This degree of publicity, writes Marvin, signified a "marriage of convenience" between experts and showmen "to capitalize on the entertainment value of magic" and show that inventors were sorcerers by nature (143). Not solely the Bishop of Beverley, but all authorities in *Judgement Voice* seek collaboration to some extent: the Oxford professor Rudge Tempole -- A Historian -- hopes that the Receiver "would be of assistance in clearing up a few outstanding problems...the authorship of the Franciscan treatise against absolutism written in Henry III's reign, for instance".

The working relationship sought by other media is addressed in 'The Voice of God', with the reprehensible *Daily Standard* introducing "a striking example of British enterprise" with articles on "If I could listen into the past and why...", from several contributors. This boosts circulation even when martial law is declared, following a crusade for "the Protection of the Holy Voice" against "Jews, Freemasons, Theosophists and revolutionaries".¹⁰⁷ The transcripts of the Word are faulty, but, as Geoffrey Tandy remarked in the *Criterion*, sound is often warped by print: "How black is the aluminium of the B.B.C. kettle when it reflects the sooty pot of the Daily Press!".¹⁰⁸

In 'The Voice of God', Holtby thus lightly recasts, and effectively parodies, her own issue of "complete publicity" which dominates the League of Nations symposium in *Judgement Voice*. This is qualified by Professor Martindale -- A Psychologist:

¹⁰⁶ 'A Novel Electric Tower,' cited in Marvin, p. 166.

¹⁰⁷ *Selected Stories*, pp. 152-156.

Have you realised at all the consequences of complete abolition of privacy? [Not] one of our spoken words can be forgotten, not one of our secret interviews remain unheard. [W]e shall give omniscience to our enemies.

The political implications are sobering; admittedly, falsehoods would be exposed, but, with every conceivable frequency open to access, blackmail would predominate. Naturally, with the advent of 7777 in 1908 -- syntonic or multiplex telegraphy on a single aerial -- visionary writers had predicted that "the spy of the future must be an electrical expert who slips in somehow and steals the enemy's tunes".¹⁰⁹

In *Judgement Voice*, with national security clearly under question, James MacKenzie, M.P, inquires into "the likelihood of remaining friends with people who can hear every word we say behind their backs", a sentiment shared by Mark who states that "[l]isteners never hear any good of themselves", after the Boston tea party is arrested by a more contemporary snippet: a "stirring dialogue" between Rita and her lover. Alas, in *Judgement Voice*, electrical devices fulfil the prediction that "what is whispered in the closet shall be proclaimed from the housetops".¹¹⁰

Lack of secrecy is a premise of wireless telegraphy, which the Receiver will "make an absolute back number" in that all previous fears are realised. From the outset, even William Crookes lamented the privacy of exchange, as even the

¹⁰⁸ 'Broadcasting Chronicle' in the *Criterion*, vol. XVII (July 1937): 487-494, at 492.

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Dunlap, p. 120.

¹¹⁰ Samuel D Warren and Louis D. Brandeis 'The Right to Privacy,' *Harvard Law Review*, 4. (Massachusetts: J. Wilson and Son, 1890): 193-220, at 195. John Durham Peters considers this to be a famous piece. It discusses how elements of instantaneous media, such as photography, invaded the sacred precincts of domestic life, thus heightening the very concept of privacy

"most inveterate" experimenter would recoil from monitoring every possible wavelength before "hitting on the particular [one] employed by his friend whose correspondence he wished to tap".¹¹¹

As discussed earlier, Bruce Bliven's piece in the *New Republic* (1922) describes a radio-telephone experiment from the broadcasting studio involving men from "that extraordinary group which dedicates itself to Machines", and one "high priest of [...] mystery" who dictates proceedings, akin to Mark Southernwood in command of 'all sounds that ever were'¹¹²:

Up another thousand meters or so. A second telegraph message, a higher note, and a faster tempo. "I guess that's press stuff from Paris to London," says the man at the knobs. "We usually pick them up at this time of night".

Aware that it seems like "high impropriety to sit in New York and eavesdrop" on transmission between two other stations, Bliven notices how the experts are "quite calm about it", calculating and rather dishonourable. He meditates on the civilisation of 1930, where global concerts are performed nightly from a solitary orchestra, and every university is amalgamated into an acoustic super-institution.

Unsettlingly:

[E]very person will be instantly accessible day or night to all the bores he knows and will know them all; when the last vestiges of privacy, solitude and contemplation will have vanished into limbo.

¹¹¹ Crookes, in *Fortnightly Review* (February 1892): 174-175.

¹¹² Bliven, in *New Republic* (15 February 1922): 328-330.

This is an intuitive, if rather desultory statement. The 'jamming' of radio stations was a growing affliction in the 1930's; it seemed to hasten war and often reaffirmed the desire for personal sanctuary -- a topic central to my thesis, and therefore treated in due course.

As if to instigate concern, the B.B.C aired a programme in 1932 "illustrating in sound the progress made in all types of communication (1922-1932)". It was narrated by H.G.Wells, who "turn[ed] in imagination to the future, to speculate, as probably only he could do," on the potentialities of media.¹¹³ Every fantasist would have recognised the helpless slide toward constant vigil -- for example, the Cosmic Receiver is certainly feasible to those exposed to the devious tricks of radio, silently overhearing and noisily cutting-in:

Llanelly Green: Bad enough if we gave ourselves away to our neighbours...Rather like the texts we used to have hung up in seaside lodgings- 'Thou God seest me', only now it's -- 'Thou my neighbour hearest me'.

Geoffrey Tandy deplores anonymous wiretappers who play God, constantly eavesdropping but also capable of disrupting authoritative broadcasts. He writes in 1937 of the Madrid and Moscow radio stations, regularly clotted to the extent that speech was no longer intelligible: "I have no notion *who* is doing it, no doubt that it is being done -- effectively".¹¹⁴

In Capek's *Krakatit*, the powder itself is responsive to Hertzian waves; certain "phlegmatic salt being a first-class coherer", which is then preserved by an

¹¹³ *Listener* vol. VIII (11 November 1932): 674.

"oscillatory bath" of wireless signals. Another scientist, 'Mr Thomas', has discovered a way in which to "loosen the interior structure" and disturb electric waves via an illegal radio station, which interferes with transmissions across Europe. While broadcasts are disturbed, the explosive is activated. "Imagine...a war," says Prokop, "Anyone who possessed Krakatit could...could...whenever he liked..." (134-136).

The station is operated by futuristic techniques, counter-oscillations which send "new waves into our medium, or interfering with ours at fixed intervals". Furthermore, it communes with itself in code, "secret messages by secret waves to a secret addressee" (138). Prokop is urged to relinquish Krakatit, for the powder is a "deciphering key" to this unknown current; its "microscopic fragments" correspond to the "t-r-r-r ta ta t-r-r-r" of intrusive signals (142).

As in *Judgement Voice*, the inventor is threatened with exploitation by those seeking profit and control; eventually he is offered use of the 'Secret Wireless Station' and its ability to "checkmate the world" (355). The anarchists have created a massive condenser on "forty thousand tons of magnesia" containing a replica of Prokop's laboratory (376). However, the chemical apparatus is replaced by other items, condensers, a variometer and a regulator:

Under the table was the usual transforming apparatus and at the other end...

"That's the normal station", explained Daimon, "[T]he other is our extinguishing station. With it we send out those anti-waves, magnetic storms, or whatever you want to call them. That's our secret" (378).

¹¹⁴ Tandy in the *Criterion*, vol. XVII (July 1937), at 491.

The machine is a jumble of wires, cathodes and drums, from which "a silent and exact cannonade is going out into space" (381). Prokop faces the dilemma of Mark Southernwood, in that he belatedly considers his research in a wider context -- only after it is chronically abused. Creating an electric compound will inevitably interfere with existing technology, yet Prokop blurts out his formula to a fellow technician when under duress.

Professor Martindale in *Judgement Voice* concludes that Mark is blind to the effect of his Receiver, he acts as a robotic inventor, rather than a human being fearful of detection. His machine is rather monstrous, adds Bishop Beverley, "a terrible innovation to those who have not accustomed themselves to the sense of an ever-present...God". At one level, Holtby uses the microcosmic drama of Mark Southernwood, and his desire to re-call the past, as a vehicle for comment on surveillance: how it invites those who would augment their existence. Being 'ever-present' is an attraction for the individual and collectives alike.

B.B.C.: The Immediate Oracle

"A fascinating [...] illusive, and probably incomprehensible medium," was how Lord Reith described the notion of "universal ether".¹¹⁵ As shown, macabre elements suffused the parlance of broadcasting from the outset -- even the B.B.C

Director General reportedly wired-up his study to Savoy Hill in the early 1920's, in order to unnerve, and thus initiate any sceptical visitors.

On one occasion, while entertaining the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Randall Davidson, Reith "pressed, unseen, the switch of the wireless set. In a few seconds the room was filled with music."¹¹⁶ As Dr. Davidson stood by in amazement, his wife "wondered aloud whether the window should be left open when the set was on," as if the swirling frequencies were somehow noxious.

More significantly, this incident prompted the lofty aims of the B.B.C Religious Advisory Committee, as Davidson's own "conversion" to radio was "instantaneous and lasting". The next day, 17 March 1923, he summoned a number of religious dignitaries to his chambers in the House of Lords, proposing that there ought to be a religious element in broadcasting: if so what, and by whom arranged?" This was a "lasting" response, after contemplating his professional position as similar to that of the B.B.C: a public service to instruct and guide.

It may be presumed that his 'instant' reaction echoed the fear of Mrs Davidson. The Archbishop spent a sleepless night considering how to 'spread the Word', but perhaps writhing uneasily over departed spirits and the etheric expanse. If only science had not, inadvertently, made life more abstract. Talking might help;

¹¹⁵ Asa Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting: The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 174.

¹¹⁶ This incident is cited in Andrew Boyle, *Only the Wind Will Listen: Reith of the BBC* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), pp. 149-50. Also in Briggs, vol. I, p.241. From 1923 to 2 May 1932, the nerve centre of the B.B.C was Savoy Hill. The move to Broadcasting House was recommended, in order to create a more "comprehensive headquarters" (Boyle, p. 247).

talking as if from a pulpit, across and through an abyss which technology hoped to bridge. As Eutyclus explains, the audience *would* listen, because it was the voice of God, or equally, the respectable endeavours of Reith -- known as "the prophet and practical mystic of broadcasting" -- whose antics as spiritualist impresario are comparable to those of another pioneer¹¹⁷:

Thomas Edison was said to have startled a guest in his home [...] with a phonographic click that announced the time to the unsuspecting visitor at 11.00pm., and the next hour called out, "The hour of midnight has arrived! *Prepare to die.*"¹¹⁸

Under the austere, yet visionary, command of Lord Reith, the B.B.C is often depicted as a formidable restraint. Malcolm Muggeridge remembers how "it came to pass, silently, invisibly; like a coral reef, cells busily multiplying, until it was a vast structure", rarely deflecting from its course. It presented a communal voice which was "silky, persuasive...passionless," mixed and cultivated by Reith's laboratory assistants.¹¹⁹

Arthur Calder-Marshall writes a stirring critique of the B.B.C. which shares the concern of *Judgement Voice*, mainly, that authority over sound breeds corruption. He describes Broadcasting House as ship-like; its studios placed within the building to ensure silence, and surrounded by offices for "sound-insulators".¹²⁰ Although rigidly ordered by the broadcast schedule, it resembles a time-machine -- self-sufficient and remote from the present. A "queer place" noted Raymond East in the *Left Review*, "fantastic clocks with flowers as hands

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

¹¹⁸ 'That Phonograph Again,' *Electrical Review* (22 Sept. 1888): 3.

¹¹⁹ Muggeridge, p. 65.

gibber at you from the wall", quite literally 'telling' the time, as if the B.B.C claimed responsibility for temporal progress.¹²¹

Holtby's parody, 'The D.O.I: An Interview of the Future' (1931) maintains the enigma:

Silently, swiftly, the aspiring lift bore me upward through the towering tunnel that pierces the most mysterious building in London. I was there [...] It was It. I was in the third New Building of the British Broadcasting Corporation, on my way to interview the Director of Inventions. It was incredible.¹²²

These examples reinforce the B.B.C's attempt to reveal technicalities of broadcasting while preserving the sense of clandestine control. In the same year, 1931, the *Listener* ran a series entitled 'The Story of Broadcasting House', which portrayed the Listening Halls and Echo Rooms -- strange internal cells where sound was forcibly diverted:

[O]utput from the studio passes along two circuits, one of which leads direct to the control room and thence to the transmitter, while the other is connected with a loudspeaker in an echo room. The product of the loudspeaker echoes in this empty room where it is picked up again by a microphone and passed to the Control Room [...] so producing a 'stunt' effect, an artificial echo.¹²³

¹²⁰ Calder-Marshall, p. 89.

¹²¹ Raymond East, "B.B.C", *Left Review* (London: Left Book Club, 1934-1935): 522-524.

¹²² WH, *Selected Stories*, pp. 128-131.

¹²³ *The Listener*, vol. V (3 April 1931): 107-108.

Trade secrets are strategically reduced to layman's terminology, thus lending the impression of experts in a secret powerhouse, who masterfully harness sound for mere mortals' consumption.

However, the machine promises little security for its inmates, as Calder-Marshall revealed. For, "in the small broadcasting rooms what you say can be overheard without your knowledge"; an ironic fate for those whose profession entails listening-in to other stations. "[A] spy for a spy", Calder-Marshall adds, citing the opinion of an ex-employee who reports "something morbid, unhealthy and overwrought in the sentiment of the place":

I have friends [...] in the Corporation, whom I have known for years and now, *if I talk to them, they look around to see if they are being followed. They warn me that I must not telephone to them because the telephone will be tapped...*¹²⁴

This image of the B.B.C worker as a paranoid drone, stifled in the airless labyrinth of power, is one of the topics given whimsical treatment in Holtby's book *The Astonishing Island: Being a Veracious Record of the Experiences Undergone by ROBINSON LIPPINGTREE MACKINTOSH from TRISTAN DA CUNHA during an Accidental Visit to Unknown Territory in the Year of Grace MCMXXX-?* (1933). The text remains unevaluated, mainly as it follows the pattern of Holtby's journalism at the time; spoof articles on the stereotyping of women and the working-class. For example, an article in the *Listener*, 'The Native Woman', is supposedly from a Martian visitor who consults the tabloids

¹²⁴ Calder-Marshall, pp. 89-91. Boyle compiles a number of quotes on how "the damned monolithic imitation of a battleship" seemed to "cast a cold functional spell on all without regard

for a balanced viewpoint. He deduces that women fall into the categories of Girl, Wife, Mother or Spinster, and cannot transgress those boundaries.¹²⁵

One exception to the lack of secondary material is an essay by Nan Bowman Albinski, which recognises *The Astonishing Island* as "a sustained critique of society".¹²⁶ It should be approached as a dystopia, with the classic formula of a naïve traveller who navigates a strange territory -- or time -- although the island is Britain, with every national myth perpetuated and exposed.

Hearing that "the most cultured thing on the island" is the I.B.C (Island Broadcasting Corporation), the guileless Mackintosh duly investigates "a building so high that it looked as if it had been squeezed by accident", filled with similarly narrow corridors and "doors that did not look like doors". Shown into a "bare, poverty-stricken room" he reflects that the cultured are always poor:

[A] young man came in...his face was very pale and when he spoke he sounded so tired that I knew the I.B.C people were not only poorly housed but overworked, and I felt more sorry for him than ever.¹²⁷

Mackintosh encounters the freakishness of broadcasting where a so-called "concert hall" can be empty -- "no nice plush curtains, no gilded angels..." (134). He responds to these examples of hardship by purchasing 110 sausage

for rank". Whereas Savoy Hill had signified "intimacy and harmony" Broadcasting House was deemed suitable for the "bureaucratic stage" of the B.B.C" (p. 249).

¹²⁵ 'The Native Woman', *Listener* vol. XI (3 Jan. 1935): 144.

¹²⁶ Nan Bowman Albinski, 'Thomas and Peter: Society and Politics in Four British Utopian Novels', *Utopian Studies* 1 (1987): 11-22, at 14.

¹²⁷ WH, *The Astonishing Island* (London: Lovat Dickinson, 1933), pp. 132-133.

rolls for the I.B.C workers, mistaking their guarded superciliousness as fatigue from hunger.

Notably, it is the I.B.C. which finally drives Mackintosh from the island, as he suffers the tribulations of a family Christmas with his hosts, the Macnamaras. After gratuitous overeating and family feuding, Mackintosh realises "the sinister intention of the whole affair", when faced with the imminent massacre of 'Boxing Day' (180). The wireless breaks in with a "weary cultured voice", announcing the festive gala and deliberately engendering a false atmosphere. "What would Christmas be without children?" it begins, as the Macnamara household is upturned by delinquent offspring (182). Mackintosh is sensitive to the I.B.C. delivering propaganda of the most insidious kind, that is, making the Islanders believe they are enjoying themselves. The Corporation aims to project, as Muggeridge writes of the B.B.C, 'a very incarnation of British mentality at its best...the gentle persuasion which washes away at the nine million, patiently wearing away angular opinion'.¹²⁸

A Reithian counterpart does not appear in *The Astonishing Island*, although Holtby gave him credit elsewhere for shaping the unique B.B.C. atmosphere, controlled, as Geoffrey Tandy writes, "by principles and not by an unorganised mass of likes and dislikes".¹²⁹ This is satirised in 'The D.O.I: An Interview of the Future', a tale set twenty years hence, in 1951, where a female journalist is permitted a glimpse into the mind of a *cause celebre*: the "Magician of the

¹²⁸ Muggeridge, pp. 67-68.

¹²⁹ Tandy, in the *Criterion* (July 1937): at 489. The *Daily Worker* noted "militaristic methods of organisation" (23 April 1935): 18.

B.B.C, whose genius has transformed England".¹³⁰ Only her credentials from the *Radio Times* open the "guarded doors", as the Director of Inventions is under constant threat from other disappointed inventors -- reputedly a "savage" race. Her awed passage to the forty-eighth floor is an amusing rendition of B.B.C policy when the Director General was in attendance, as related by Raymond East:

The big event at Broadcasting House is the arrival of Sir John Reith. The life of the building is suspended for an awful moment. Commissionaires salute and freeze. Small boys become paralysed. The two lifts, warned by a secret code, abandon their destinations and hurl to the ground floor to receive the Presence.¹³¹

In 1951, Holtby's liftboy is a robotic "cherub-cheeked Mercury" genetically modified for obedience and protection, that is, both parents ranked highly in the police force. This is a prudent strategy, for the charismatic D.O.I. is endowed with godly status and a sublime aura -- all maintained by frugal diet, painstaking routine and the Reithian ideals of "Family Love. Shakespeare...Hygiene. Truth...work work work". In his biography of Marconi, Orrin J. Dunlap observed that "[r]egularity is a paramount factor with this genius [...] he believes in beginning the day with activity, and punctually". Holtby's character survives on a mere four hours sleep, considering leisure time to be "unnecessary for the well-regulated system".

The journalist asks the D.O.I. to verify rumours that his corporation once "turned down" the most "wonderful discovery of modern times": Holtby's indomitable

¹³⁰ WH, *Selected Stories*, pp. 128-132.

'receiver'. In this incarnation, it is conceived and constructed by a female student from Chelsea Polytechnic. The D.O.I claims the first thing to be heard on the instrument was his "own voice" refusing support, "for the sake of England". Adding graciously that "the British Broadcasting Corporation had almost failed in prescience", he explains the concept of Sportsmanship:

Do you realise [that] the whole of our national life would be disorganised? The result of the Derby, the result of the Cup Final...Speculation on the stock exchange would be unnecessary. [T]hink what would happen to our political system if everyone knew beforehand what was in next year's Budget!

Visualising the breakdown of "morality" the D.O.I. makes a strong case for his rejection of the instrument as "a moment's foresight", thus casting himself as the saviour of national structure. However, he refers to Britain as "*my* country", and clearly has an iron grip on sport, leisure and politics, all of which exist at a level of indeterminacy unless radio is there to report, influence, and predict. "We learned in time," he confirms, as Holtby hints alarmingly that even Big Ben is synchronised to "wireless control".

Dunlap's portrait of Marconi offers a similar sentiment:

He leaves a distinct imaginary picture of a future world run by wireless [...] The outstanding feature of that changed world is its cleanliness; the second, its compactness [...] He hopes beyond hope to harness space completely for wireless [...] to light homes and run factories by radio power. Nothing can divert him from it. Nothing but his end of time (282, 327).

¹³¹ East, in *Left Review*: at 522.

In the last few months of her life, Winifred Holtby launched a characteristically lively attack on the institution which, in her considered opinion, was a dictatorial and prejudicial clique. It was published in *Nash's* magazine alongside the response from Sir Stephen Tallents, the recently appointed controller of B.B.C. Public Relations. The emphasis is that Reith's house of culture "(at present constituted) is one and indivisible. It holds a monopoly. It is God".¹³² In comparison, a more hostile reprimand was delivered by Calder-Marshall's B.B.C source, who believes it to be "the nearest thing to a Nazi government".¹³³

Listing her complaints, Holtby notes that the B.B.C "cannot help but become pompously aware of its millions of listeners". This reduces programmes to the "lowest common denominator" rather than attempting variety. Order is paramount, as nothing "violently controversial" -- the Ethics of Birth Control, for example -- is allowed past the censors. "Even the dance bands have to prune the words of their vocal choruses", she persists, inclining towards Raymond East, who also noted the "mediocrity" of the B.B.C's output owing to rigid standards.

Holtby's solution to the hierarchy is to make each regional division a separate public body, which would cater for listeners in the immediate vicinity. Then, areas such as Daventry could relish their "Tory, Anglican and Carnivorous" principles without dissent. Stephen Tallents politely explains that the "worse abuses" of American wireless occurred before the Federal Radio Commission intervened. He presents the B.B.C as a unified bastion aware of a duty to society,

¹³² 'Two Resounding Arguments in the Great Controversy over THE B.B.C', *Nash's* magazine, London, Hendon (Oct/Nov 1935): 24-25.

¹³³ Calder-Marshall, p. 91. With Lord Reith as "the Mussolini of Broadcasting House", *Daily Worker* (2 August 1935).

and understands that accusations of "false divinity" surround such efforts to bridge public and private address. In summary, he asks, "why [should] *anyone* be free to open a station," an argument which invites recourse to Capek's *Krakatit*.

This debate serves to highlight Holtby's ambiguous response to wireless. She objected to the stranglehold of the B.B.C. in its restriction of enquiry and free choice, although when her fictional listener -- lured, like herself, by the wonder of the waves -- becomes an experimenter, and henceforth an inventor, the results are formidable.

Like Mark Southernwood in *Judgement Voice*, who tries to create and authorise the sole origin of sound, the B.B.C, in Holtby's view, also imposes a dictatorship upon a thing essentially democratic, the disembodied voice. It is implied that the 'Magician' of the B.B.C was originally a solitary tinkerer before his world domination as D.O.I. On being presented with the John Fritz Medal for engineering distinction in 1930, the so-called 'father' of wireless, claimed "there [was] still room for other Marconi's", gifted individuals who might recognise, and exploit, the levels of wireless.¹³⁴ One might recall Joyce's sleeper in the *Wake*, whose foray into the ether is natural and habitual: he has "the ear [...] the trademark of a broadcaster" (*FW* 108. 21-22).

The divisions of Holtby's career are evident; the *Nash's* article betrays a calling -- hence 'vocation' -- to protect the freedom of sound, as she often defended other victims of constraint. Nevertheless, her satires tell a darker tale of liberation.

¹³⁴ Dunlap, p. 336.

Viewing radio and its capacities from every angle was, for Holtby, a more internalised debate, one that shuttled between the dual issues of private menace/public solace, and private solace/public menace.

All Together and All Alone

Kinship in *The Astonishing Island* is expressed by an outing to the country, where crowds relax in the sunshine, edified by gramophones and wireless sets. Mackintosh learns that this mode of behaviour is "uplifting", to sit amongst pylons which stretch across the landscape "carrying light and warmth and other conveniences" as further reassurance.¹³⁵ For, writes Holtby to McWilliam, "that's what we want" -- a sense of belonging to a tribe with "folk dances and basket balls and broadcast loudvoice machines telling stories and singing songs to the aged and invalids and the lazy and retiring..."¹³⁶

This inclination permeates Holtby's final -- and posthumous -- novel, *South Riding* (1936), where the communal spirit is inexorably linked to progress. The town of Kiplington sprawls along the coast; a downtrodden area known as the Shacks provides a summer retreat through which "exuberant human life" flows to the tempo of "loud-speakers utter[ing] extracts of disquieting information".¹³⁷ The child Lydia Holly reads *A Midsummer Night's Dream* alongside the Light

¹³⁵ WH, *The Astonishing Island*, p. 58.

¹³⁶ Holtby and McWilliam, *Letters To A Friend*, p. 186.

Orchestral Concert, "a gentle and appropriate accompaniment" from the twentieth century Puck, encircling the earth in an instant (32). She is a product of the decade, just as the maid Elsie speaks "B.B.C. English" to her employer. Both adapt to the relentless monitor of radio which fulfils every purpose, as claimed and substantiated by Holtby's D.O.I.:

...ushering in each new year, bidding farewell to each old one, announcing a King's demise and a government's fall, a new King's enthronement and a new government's formation, presenting happenings great and small to its immense audience [with] their own collective voice echoing back to them.¹³⁸

Radio marks time, and, by that maxim, it exposes the individuals -- and sections of society -- who are rooted to previous concepts. During the abortive dinner-date between protagonists Sarah Burton and Robert Carne, the muted sound of a dance band fills the room. Sarah mistakenly assumes it to be a wireless, as that would comport with the new postwar, synthetic, South Riding. She herself is the revolutionary force in the novel, the new head teacher of Kiplington High School, whereas Carne personifies the *ancien regime* of landowners crippled by local redevelopment and changing opinion. Notably, he assumes the "common interest" to be the maintenance of rural life, although he bypasses every omen suggesting otherwise, including the radio weather report. "Never listen to the things," he confesses to his foreman, with regard to the premonitory device itself: "I [d]on't believe in 'em" (77).

¹³⁷ WH, *South Riding* (London: Virago Press, 1988), p. 30. All future references appear in the text.

¹³⁸ Muggeridge, p. 65.

The finale of *South Riding* is an epiphany, giving credence to Glen Cavaliero's statement that Holtby is "conscious of life as essentially communal".¹³⁹ All the townsfolk -- and 162 characters -- assemble in the Esplanade Gardens for the Silver Jubilee broadcast (6 May 1935) so professing traditional loyalty to King and Country.

Live coverage of outdoor events via radio had increased since 1927, the landmark year, where the F.A Cup Final, the Grand National and commentary from Wimbledon, were all transmitted in swift succession. The concept of 'sportsmanship' was certainly inherent to national identity, and restored by wireless control; engineers who blended the "essence of the event [with] skilful microphone placements" alongside a voice-over which shaped the scene.¹⁴⁰ Of royal occasions, Calder-Marshall observed that the "pageantry of pomp" was eventually "superseded by the broadcast description of that pageantry".¹⁴¹

In *South Riding's* Jubilee, the "low roar outside St Paul's" is complemented by the "bland, informal" tones of Commander Stephen King-Hall, enlivening the residents of Kiplington who bask in the unity of emotion. "O God, make speed to save us...Lord, make haste to help us", they chant, incorporated into the din of "a thousand scattered hamlets". As a result, the feisty Sarah Burton loses her "immunity" (489-90):

¹³⁹ Glen Cavaliero, *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel 1900-1939* (London: MacMillan, 1977), p. 100.

¹⁴⁰ Scannell and Cardiff, p. 282.

¹⁴¹ Calder-Marshall, p. 102.

We all pay, she thought, we all take; we are members one of another. We cannot escape this partnership. This is what it means, to be a people (491).

As Carolyn Marvin writes in relation to the telegraph, new media offered " a long-deprived humanity access to its emotional center", advertising a "universal, simultaneous heart-throb". Conversely, one effect was to "render inhabitants of that center ever less physically and morally obliged to *stir from it*".¹⁴² Sarah is lulled by a "dim archiepiscopal voice", reminding her that "glory and honour" is only achieved by sacrifice, possibly "without the consolations of triumph" (491-2). She knows she will adapt to the town (to the kingdom, to the empire?), therefore she is "humbled", and in a sense, numbed and defeated by the congregation who submit to the national anthem. According to one critic, this is "a moment of intense and irrevocable social strain", where erosion of the old 'community' is complete.¹⁴³ The new ethos is potentially more alienating, as individuals must dissolve into "massed ranks," ritualistically facing the loudspeakers rather than one another (489).

In 1928, during his first year as a broadcaster, E.M. Forster implied that the spatial boundaries shattered by radio only serve to heighten the final barrier:

Wireless etc. abolishes wavings of handkerchiefs etc. Death the only farewell surviving. We do not get away from each other as we did.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Marvin, pp. 199-200.

¹⁴³ James Grindin, *British Fiction in the 1930's: The Dispiriting Decade* (London: St Martin's Press, 1992), p. 66.

¹⁴⁴ E.M.Forster, 'Modern World,' in *Commonplace Book*, ed. Philip Gardner (California: Stanford, 1985), p. 38.

Vera Brittain contends that *South Riding* is a portrait of numerous minor characters who transcend the whole. Holtby's "intellectual allegiance" to the "strident crudity" of modernisation is shown to falter when shaping her personalities.¹⁴⁵

Hence, treatment of radio is contradictory. Functioning as an epilogue to the novel, it denotes the collective theme which persists throughout; however, at certain points, listening to the wireless is portrayed as more instinctive, an action contributing to a personal struggle or revelation. Lydia Holly, immersed in "the magic of Shakespeare's uncomprehended words in a wood near Athens", is able to temporarily surmount her deprived environment:

She did not know what it meant but it was glorious. She forgot the angry sawing cry of a very young baby, lamenting life from [its] pram [...] She forgot her mother's weary voice, scolding Gertie for letting Lennie, the latest baby, cut his lip on a discarded salmon tin. She only heard...the silvery sweetness of Mendelssohn from the wireless (33).

Brittain interprets the figure of Lily Sawdon as representing "the isolation of coming death [...] realised and accepted", which admits readers into Holtby's own poignant battle (422). Lily suffers from terminal cancer, creeping "livid" in agony to her store of barbiturates and terrified lest her husband discover her secret, only feeling "brilliantly receptive" in the early evening before being consoled by wireless:

It was dangerous to sew or move about much; she might startle to life the sleeping pain. But voices came to her out of the silence, singers and jesters and actors from Broadcasting House.

¹⁴⁵ Brittain, p. 421.

She acquired favourites and enemies. She loved the songs that she had known as a girl -- "If I built the world for you, dear", "Melisande" [...] Mrs Waters' daughters made her laugh and Lily Morris she found vulgar but a real scream (277).

Here, radio allows Lily to stall her decline. The evenings appear longer, stretching out until ten o' clock, as her memory fixes upon youth. Allowed to experience long buried sensations, she believes the variety stars are ministering to her needs. They provide a grounding to the vibrant, contemporary, world spinning away from her grasp, whilst injecting her with the nostalgia required to appreciate life passed.

A comparison may be drawn with Holtby's sleepless nights at Monks Risborough, listening to her -- "beloved" -- portable wireless set when *South Riding* proved too arduous. Vera Brittain writes at length on this interval, although often resorts to conjecture owing to familiarity with her subject. Apparently, Holtby would "lie in the lonely darkness thinking sorrowfully about the hampering interrelation of man's imperfect body and his aspiring soul...".¹⁴⁶ I would refrain from such an abstract summary of Holtby's mental state, arguing that passages of her later work unite difficult emotions with items heard on the radio. It is not merely "idiots" -- in the dismissive statement by Calder-Marshall - - who choose to see their 'comforter' as both "stimulant and [...] sedative".¹⁴⁷

A number of Holtby's female characters, such as Lily Sawdon, are tortured, awaiting release from a self-imposed exile or state which seems irrevocable. The

¹⁴⁶ Brittain, p. 321.

¹⁴⁷ Calder-Marshall, p. 104.

unpleasant Mrs Barrow in 'Resurrection Morning' (1927) retreats from society after her husband's death when "things go less well with her":

Sometimes when the Morse from the North Sea interfered with her wireless, she would shut it off and sit listening eagerly, her short-sighted eyes peering into the gloom of the November evening.¹⁴⁸

She believes the ghost of her equally disreputable husband is present in the silence *after* radio, "a heavy tread in the passage and the creak of a chair..." as though he is summoned by colliding frequencies rather than official broadcasts. She collapses in the street after being reminded by a group of singing Salvationists that, "[t]here is no death for you and me, you and me", terrified of "waking in Heaven and seeing the old man again", as opposed to hearing his presence. As in the final scene of *Judgement Voice*, a religious message is used to verify a situation inspired by technology.

This is greatly elaborated in Holtby's depiction of the lonely schoolteacher, Miss Sigglesworth, in *South Riding*. Unable to bear the demands of the profession, her attempts at discipline are scorned by her pupils and her superior, Sarah Burton, which causes intense anguish. After listening to a broadcast of St Matthew's Passion from York Minster, she walks out along the cliffs, her thoughts mingling with excerpts from the radio programme:

It's true. I know I can't keep order...Oh, if only Father hadn't died quite so early [...] Thou art Peter. On this rock will I build my church [...] I'm too old, I'm too old (155-57).

Remembering the morning's lesson on the wireless: "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, canst thou not take away my burden?", Miss Siggleswaite imagines the bliss of death, free of "time and weariness" (157). She prepares to fling herself to the rocks, but, auspiciously, the sudden sighting of a real flock clarifies her reason for listening:

Like doom on her heart chimed that morning's service- "O Lamb of God, who is that betrayeth Thee"

Not sin but time.

Time, that betrays the leaping lambs...turning them into feeble, slow, blindly bleating sheep.

She understands that the cycle of life is an "enemy"; it rips away childhood promise and preys upon "laborious endeavours" rendering them fruitless. With this realisation, Miss Siggleswaite is imbued by "a new energy of defiance", and prepares to defend her career (158-59).

The self-contained radio listener in the multitude is a feature of *South Riding*, the individual who may reach a plateau of understanding, not chiefly a solution, but a brief respite from angst. Brittain believes that St Matthew's Passion "runs like an underlying theme" through much of the novel, and attributes the chapter of Miss Siggleswaite's illumination on the cliffs to Holtby's own experience.¹⁴⁹

In summary, the letters dispatched from Monks Risborough in Spring 1934 contain shards of bitterness, seemingly referring to "all the half-dead people who 'put in time', as though time were not the greatest gift in the universe", and she

¹⁴⁸ *Selected Stories*, pp. 197-201.

soon to be "deprived of it forever".¹⁵⁰ One morning, it was excessively cold, and the lambs on the surrounding hills were trying to drink from a frozen trough. Holtby broke the ice with her stick, and in doing so heard a voice, saying: "Having nothing yet possessing all things". It was so distinct that she wheeled around, startled, but only the lambs were present. From that moment, all frustration and fear was replaced by an agreement with death, and the Holtby legend is thus cemented. She reportedly told Brittain in the final stages of her illness that this "conversion" became the "supreme spiritual experience of her life".

It is doubtful that the voice of God was received that morning, or even that Holtby became instantly resigned to her fate. It is more likely that the broadcast of St Matthew's Passion heard that month on the wireless stirred an implicit religious tendency. One must recall she was in isolation, only exposed to the broadcast voice, which, she admitted, often followed her on night walks.¹⁵¹ Feasibly, over-exposure to radio precipitated this illusion, to a mind hovering between rationality and the need, as Eutyclus explains, "to be made safe -- saved, you know".¹⁵² Her most devout allegory, significantly titled 'The Comforter' (1934), was also written following the Passion service, a tale where even sinners are healed by recognising "the incongruity of eternal bliss", and gladly accept their place in the flames.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Brittain, p. 369.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 325.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 368.

¹⁵² WH, *Eutyclus*, p. 111

Last Words

Margaret Rhondda held the opinion that "all [Holtby's] work was -- partly subconsciously -- for the last few years, full of references to her own death -- if one had the key".¹⁵⁴ Amongst her papers, copied into the League of Nations file, was a reminder in the form of a poem by Richard Goodman, which insists that, "images of death lurk in my brain/ and track me where I go".¹⁵⁵ If this be a legitimate indication of Holtby's mindset, then future analysis of her work -- from brittle journalese to pedestrian novel to radiophonic fantasy -- must address such a vital concern.

I have attempted to correlate this preoccupation with death alongside an eager response to wireless technology, which, like a distant signal, oscillated through Holtby's work at various strengths and levels. Keenly observant of modernity, from the vantage point of citizen, consumer and critic, she was consistently *informed*: a 'scribbler' who adapted to, and amalgamated, elements of social change into her writing, rather than succumbing to lofty detachment.

Fundamentally, Holtby witnessed the rapid transition of wireless from a point-to-point medium into a potentially threatening blanket of word-wide control, aware that death figured prominently with every development. Just as the solitary wireless telegrapher kept vigil over an instrument which ascertained, or denied,

¹⁵³ WH, *Selected Stories*, pp. 133-138.

¹⁵⁴ Brittain, p. 422.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 377. The title is merely *Poem 1933*.

existence of another, so the masses were poised to hear of death occurring elsewhere -- the King's demise or incipient war.

In 1934, the B.B.C aired a series, 'Scrapbooks', which, as the title suggests, mingled various sound-memories of a specific year. The programme on 1914, was, according to Holtby, "one of the best and most unendurable things I have ever heard [...] the Germans and English singing Christmas carols together and then going into No-Man's Land to bury their dead..." This would naturally appeal to Holtby's conviction that wireless was admirably suited, as Villiers wrote in the frontispiece of *L'Eve Future*, "to seek in the transient for eternal tracks." It could unearth lost feelings of pride, nationalism and pity; in wilder moments it was a mechanism for time travel, capable of selecting figments from the ether in order to -- literally -- revivify the individual who may be slipping into a fearful depression.

Anyone who projected scientific authority, the inventor or technician, would resemble the preacher offering a lifeline to infinity. This stance naturally provoked self-aggrandizement and corruption. However, as Holtby conceded at a more rational stage of her life, all efforts were innately futile:

[I]n spite of the so-called modern enlightenment we are still capable of being priest-ridden? What dark shadows of the primeval forest still hang about our minds? Mithras, Balder, Apollo -- gods of light and beauty, at war with gods of darkness and horror -- and the priest, the medicine man with his charms and incantations to keep the dread thing from us. Neither Shelley, nor Darwin, nor H.G Wells can quite whistle away the phantoms.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Holtby and McWilliam, *Letters To A Friend*, p. 88.

Therefore, time -- and the spectre of death -- could never be decelerated by an electric genius. Any success was partial, restricted to scrapbook efforts by the mighty B.B.C -- a self-styled god, endeavouring to probe the past and restrain the present.

**4. Anguish of Ghosts and Gaps Between... Radiogenic
Elements in Stephen Spender and Virginia Woolf.**

Unreal war! No single friend

Links me with its immediacy

It is a voice out of a cabinet

A printed sheet, and those faint reverberations

Selected in the silence

By my attentive ear.

**Herbert Read, 'Ode Without Rhetoric', Written during the Battle of
Dunkirk, May 1940'.**

Background (Noise)

Virginia Woolf would have certainly endorsed the 1993 Penguin edition of *The Years*, whose cover depicts a painting by C.R.W Nevinson (1889-1946), 'Amongst the Nerves of the World'.⁸ The scene is one of muted energy, where the observer is positioned over a drab, shaded street full of automobiles and countless hurrying stick figures, ink-black, tiny and sexless. From concealed points above, and within, the buildings, a tensile web of lines glitters darkly against the pale blocks of granite, cross-connecting all disparate elements in the field of view. Although these charged lines, or filaments, clearly form an internal network, the suggestion is that they hover invisibly, stretching beyond the limits of the painting. It is a mere segment, representing the era where noise and time flow incessantly through electric capillaries, where human systems are re-ordered even at street level.

Essentially, the painting records the cultural shift between 1920-1940 during which the dimensions of personal and societal experience were significantly altered. Even inveterate technologies such as writing became subsumed by, as Friedrich Kittler writes, "the omnipotence of integrated circuits".⁹ As I have indicated in previous chapters, critics such as Kittler, Douglas Kahn and Durham Peters continue to assert a theory established by pioneers Marshall McLuhan and Walter Benjamin: that technological media determined human perception.

⁸ Held at the Museum of London (c. 1930).

⁹ Kittler, *Gramophon, Film, Typewriter*, p. 19

Filippo Marinetti, initially envying those to be born into a future electric utopia (where "men can write in books of nickel no thicker than three centimetres [...] and still containing one hundred thousand pages") admitted in *Destruction of Syntax* (1913) that all recipients of telephone, phonograph, "dirigible or airplane" were vulnerable, as intervention by machines exerted "a decisive influence on their psyches".¹⁰ In 1930, Bertolt Brecht observed that whilst science was capable of perfecting radio, the human mind was "not sufficiently advanced to take it up".¹¹ Post- Edison, writes Kittler, certain orders of sense-experience became polarised by electric media, which replaced "the functions of the central nervous system" with wires.¹² The quiet interior space of the brain, where words might flow unimpeded was thus challenged by other narrative strategies.

This chapter seeks to expand upon ideas alluded to by Gillian Beer and Keith Williams: that aspects of radio broadcasting were a formal influence on interwar literature, both explicitly and subliminally.¹³ Williams argues that a breed of "radio literature" was never defined in the '30's, whereas cinema technique was essential to certain writers, chiefly W.H. Auden and Joyce and in marginal Leftist fiction by John Sommerfield and James Barke. Although claiming that 'radiogenic' notions were present in literary texts "long before the medium itself", Williams only fleetingly refers to the parallel development of radio and the modernist novel, citing Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, the 'Circe' episode in *Ulysses* and

¹⁰ F.T Marinetti, 'Destruction of Syntax- Wireless Imagination- Words in Freedom', *Lacerba*, 11 May and 15 June 1915, translated in Richard J. Pioli, *Sung by Salt and War: Creative Texts of the Italian Avant-Gardist F.T Marinetti* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 45.

¹¹ Bertolt Brecht, 'Radio As A Communication Apparatus' in *Brecht on Film and Radio*, trans. and ed. by Marc Silberman (London: Methuen, 2000), pp. 41-46, at 42.

¹² Kittler, 16.

¹³ Gillian Beer, 'Wireless, Popular Physics, Radio and Modernism', in *Cultural Babbage*, eds., Francis Spufford and Jenny Uglow (London: Faber and Faber, 1996); Keith Williams, *British Writers and the Media, 1930-1945* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

George Orwell's 'Trafalgar Square' experiment in *A Clergyman's Daughter*, where a series of voices intersect one another and speak at cross-purposes. The scene also makes use of narratorial breaks to introduce, and dismiss, the 'characters'.¹⁴

Traditionally, Williams posits both Woolf and Stephen Spender in the field of cinematic influence, rightly noting how the multiple consciousness of Woolf's narrative evokes a film where the single viewpoint is scattered into "mobile images".¹⁵ Pre-empting Brecht's remark on the precocity of radio, Woolf similarly considered cinema as "born fully clothed" and only capable of artistry once "some new symbol for expressing thought is found". She adds that the dislocation caused by reading a novel could be assuaged by this idealists' cinema where "[the] past could be unrolled, distances annihilated".¹⁶ This comment implies that Woolf was not specifically moved by the actual process of picture-making, clearly preferring *concept* to actuality.

Gillian Beer has addressed, at length, the climate fostered by the new physics, spearheaded by James Jeans and Arthur Eddington during the 1930's, whose rhetoric made the infinity of space -- its multiple perspective and muddle of soundwaves -- seem partially accessible.¹⁷ Beer notes that up to 40% of articles in the *Listener* between 1920 and 1934 were concerned with science, reprints of

¹⁴ Williams, p. 120. George Orwell, *A Clergyman's Daughter* (London: Gollancz, 1935).

¹⁵ Williams, p. 129. Notably, it is Winifred Holtby, as Woolf's first biographer, who initially notes cinematic elements in 'Kew Gardens'. She adds, "Could the same free technique be applied to the fragments of thought, sounds heard [...] passing through the mind?" (Holtby, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 111)

¹⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'The Cinema', *Collected Essays* Vol. II (London, Hogarth Press, 1946), pp. 268-272.

talks transmitted by the B.B.C which, said one employer, "seemed cleverer than anybody, a kind of super Dr Arnold who was always right".¹⁸ Broadcasts on 'The Quivering Universe' by Gerald Heard did little to threaten the habitual ways of the public, being, as it was, a single constituent of Lord Reith's campaign to dispatch useful information.¹⁹

However, as Woolf appreciated, the loneliness of the knowing mind was intensified by "a shift in the scale", causing alienation from the past and extreme awareness of the present.²⁰ Edgell Rickward, in *The Mind in Chains* (1937), noted how the popularisation of science lulled one into "a pleasurable feeling of being highly advanced" while inducing "vague pessimistic helplessness at the dwarfing of human values".²¹

Literature was quick to report this insecurity. Ashley Smith's 24-hour portrait of London. *A City Stirs* (1939) describes how the inhabitants are subject to a curving, not linear "flame of activity". Beneath them "the board has moved [and] without are the impenetrable mysteries of space and time...pressing upon [the city] and making it small".²² Similarly, the astronaut in Patrick Hamilton's *Impromptu in Moribundia* recognises his "nothingness" when the interstellar journey begins:

¹⁷ It is noteworthy that in Patrick Hamilton's dystopia *Impromptu in Moribundia* (1939), Jeans and Eddington "may really be called saints for reconciling Science and Religion"! (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 1999), p.113.

¹⁸ Peter Black, *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World* (London: BBC Publications, 1972), p. 79.

¹⁹ See the *Listener*, vol. VII (16 March 1932): 390.

²⁰ Woolf, 'How it Strikes A Contemporary', in *Collected Essays*, vol. II, p. 254.

²¹ Edgell Rickward, 'Culture, Progress and the English Tradition', *The Mind in Chains: Socialism and the Cultural Revolution*, ed. Cecil Day Lewis (London: Frederick Muller, 1937), p. 249.

²² Ashley Smith, *A City Stirs* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1939), pp. 15-19, 182.

"It's two- it's two- it's two" I can remember screaming. And it was the Universe I was alluding to.²³

The most accessible point of reference was wireless, not merely as a *vehicle* to promote these theories, but as *evidence* for the vagaries of time. With regard to Eddington, who used radio broadcasting to expound the diffuse components of signal, sign and location, Gillian Beer writes:

Wireless makes intermissively manifest the invisible traffic passing through us and communicating by our means [...] In such a newly imagined world it becomes more than a metaphor for the almost ungraspable actuality of the universe.²⁴

Elsewhere, Beer outlines how *Orlando* and *The Waves* were indebted to Woolf's reading of Jeans, how the "etherial world of play and physics" corresponded to her emerging rhythmic prose and boundless approach to time, crucially noting -- in an aside -- that radio "fascinated" Woolf in its separation of source and receiver.²⁵

Between 1929-1939, wireless swelled from an instrument associated with point-to-point contact into a blanket of mass broadcasting wherein acoustic intruders could impinge upon personal space. In reiterating the central thrust of my thesis, I would argue that the creative process of any writer during this time was affected by the surround-sound of context, or rather, the colonisation of daily life

²³ Hamilton, p. 29.

²⁴ Beer in *Cultural Babbage*, pp. 151-153.

²⁵ Gillian Beer, 'Physics, Sound and Substance: Later Woolf', in *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 118, 114. See also 'Wave, Atom, Dinosaur: Woolf's Science'; spec. edition for the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain (London: 2000), pp. 3-15. The piece reasserts how current scientific writing energised "and perhaps validated [Woolf's] pleasure in hyperbole and paradox" (p. 7).

by radio. How many texts were drafted with one ear open? What was playing in the background? With specific regard to Woolf, Beer similarly contends that science writing and its commentary was "*wrought into* her creativity in the 'thirties". I find this to be an accurate portrayal of the manner in which radio affected Woolf's 'sphere', akin to her friend Stephen Spender, who responded to the climate with similar intensity.

A comparative study of the two writers may appear, at first, rather discordant. This view rests on the long-held assumption that a modernist pioneer ("Lord-how tired I am of being caged with Aldous, Joyce and Lawrence!"²⁶) should rarely be critically approached alongside any member of the club disparaged as "Young Brainies".²⁷ Samuel Hynes labels Woolf as a chief propagator of the 'Thirties Myth, mentioning her significantly spaced essays 'Letter to A Young Poet' (1932) and 'The Leaning Tower' (1940), where she castigates the profusion of politically determined writers, chiefly "the loud-speaker strain that dominates their poetry".²⁸

Yet, in approaching both writers as equal 'residents' of a decade, it becomes apparent that the barriers collapse. For example, Spender and Woolf were two radio listeners within a tribe, as "the angry noise of history" grew louder.²⁹ A stream of auditory disruption was objected to by Woolf as "incessant company";

²⁶ VW, *Letters* vol. IV (1929-1931), ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth Press, 1931), p. 402. On 29 September, in his opening talk for a BBC series, 'The New Spirit in Modern Literature', Harold Nicolson labelled as "modernist" writers Woolf, Eliot, Lawrence, Joyce and Waugh. Printed in the *Listener*, 30 September, 1931)

²⁷ VW, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. V (1936-41), ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1984), p. 116. Henceforth, all references from this volume will be in the text.

²⁸ Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930's* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), pp. 392-393; VW, 'The Leaning Tower', *Collected Essays*, vol. II, p. 175.

radio broadcasts merged with wasps, clocks, aeroplanes, and, significantly, visits from other writers such as Spender himself, who fled to "the Woolves [...]" as a kind of raft" one weekend in September 1939 to assuage his writer's block.

This seemingly un-momentous occasion acutely epitomises the symmetry of the writers -- a linkage displayed in the early months of the war, which would endure and clarify itself in the following years. During the weekend, Spender oddly prescribed himself a 'talking cure', in order to facilitate words *arrested* by fear of conflict, by too much *contextual* talk on the radio, in the papers, and in rumour. Woolf listened to him ramble and "sprawl" over Bach and Gluck, and passed comment:

Stephen scribbling diary - no, reading Proust in drawing room [...] Odd how the diffuse, expostulating, exaggerating young disturb my atmosphere. I've talked miles since last night, in spite of Stephen's colic. A loose disjointed mind - misty, clouded, suffusive. Nothing has outline. Very sensitive, tremulous, receptive and striding. (DV, p. 238)

Maintaining an image of Woolf and Spender in tandem is paramount to my debate, as is the notion of *receptivity*. This process is markedly different from Walter Benjamin's commendation of external noise as a welcome accompaniment to the writing process, as practised by Winifred Holtby. It should be noted, that the ability to be 'receptive' may dually act as a creative deterrent; one 'picks-up' all manner of signals regardless of their form, or purpose. Spender's retreat to Woolf's therapeutic environment implies a shared concern

²⁹ John Lehmann, *The Noise of History* (London: Hogarth Press, 1934), p. 44.

over types of disturbance, and how writing could be altered -- even shattered -- by interfering bodies.

This chapter presents Woolf and Spender as friends, writers and listeners; charting various means of 'connectedness' in their response to wireless sound. Whereas Holtby, and to some extent James Joyce, recognised, and gleefully capitalised upon, particular facets of radio, the following two case studies exhibit a number of emotive contradictions. Originally conceived as a supportive mechanism in my analysis of Woolf, the figure of Spender proves equally potent, and central, to the idea that radio -- during this era -- seemed poetically exciting, yet publicly limiting.

Other 'Young Brainies' such as Auden or Louis MacNeice were able to treat mass media objectively; for example, they succeeded in compartmentalising wireless *as* fiction, and fiction *for* wireless.²³ In reviewing Spender's work I would contest that, in this specific field, he resembles Virginia Woolf -- a writer of the previous 'generation'. The texts cited as justifiable evidence are Spender's early poems and consistent autobiographical writings such as *World Within World* (1959) and *European Witness* (1946). Throughout this enquiry, they reflect Woolf's diaries, essays and final novel, *Between the Acts* (1941), functioning as interchange rather than interval. It transpires that the writers' reaction to radio throughout the

²³ Although other members of the 'MacSpaunday' set appear in this chapter, more detailed discussion of their radio work is, unfortunately, outwith the pattern of the thesis as a whole. Besides, the area is rigorously treated elsewhere. Select examples include Williams, *British Writers and the Media 1930-1945* (1996); Robert Hewison, *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977); Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC 1939-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Barbara Coulter, *Louis MacNeice at the BBC* (London: Faber & Faber, 1980); Sean Day-Lewis, *C. Day-Lewis, An English Literary Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980).

late 1930's was congruent; furthermore, such responses logically extended their innate preoccupations with sound, history and words.

Woolf: "Permanent Impress" and Radio Time

In her series of autobiographical impressions, 'A Sketch of the Past' (1939), Woolf unwittingly aligns herself to her own biographer Winifred Holtby (who seemingly never revealed "a single original idea") in imagining how previous sensations might be apprehended:²⁴

Instead of remembering here a scene and there a sound, I shall fit a plug into a wall and listen in to the past. I shall turn up August 1890. I feel that strong emotion must leave its trace; and it is only a question of discovering how we can get ourselves attached to it, so that we shall be able to live our lives through from the start.²⁵

This is reminiscent of work by scientist Karl Pearson, whose *The Grammar of Science* (1892) contains a section on 'The Brain as a Central Telephone Exchange' where a "clerk" automatically links sender B with receiver X. A sensory nerve conveys a message to the brain, so achieving "permanent impress" from which memory and thought arises.²⁶

²⁴ VW, *Letters*, vol. VI (1936-41), p. 382.

²⁵ VW, 'A Sketch of the Past', *Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (Sussex: Sussex University Press, 1976), p. 67.

In these diverse examples, the vocabulary of electric communication is used to explain layers of consciousness, implying that to retrieve past traces may be a rather mechanical act -- and also a very direct one. Woolf's diary records a meeting with Sybil Colefax, who seems transparent and enviably interconnected, "popping up one light after another: like the switchboard at the telephone exchange at the mention of names".²⁷

Like Holtby, Woolf desires a specific conduit into different spheres of time, not merely an involuntary reminder by Pearson's invisible "clerk". In her portrait of childhood, she notes a "general impress"; the residue left by listening to "the roll of Meredith's voice [...] the humming and hawing of Henry James' voice". Eavesdropping from the hallway, she remembers "not what they said but the atmosphere surrounding them" -- an imperceptible buzz of contextual static, or white noise.²⁸ The "invisible presences" of great writers shape the memoir, akin to the "voices of the dead" referred to in 1924, which were channelled through an agitated brain for lack of a more direct medium.²⁹

Writing on Woolf's efforts to depict both consciousness and subjectivity, Julia Briggs asserts the relevance of "time as loss, and of time as history, whether personal, familial, cultural social or political" and most stridently:

²⁶ Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science*, Part 1- Physical (London: Adam and Charles Black, 3rd ed. 1911), pp. 44-45.

²⁷ VW, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. III, 1935-40 (London: Hogarth Press, 1980), p. 116.

²⁸ VW, *Moments of Being*, pp. 135-136.

²⁹ VW, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol II, 1920-24 (London: Hogarth Press, 1978), p. 283. The postscript to the entry 9 January 1924 explains, "I've had some very curious visions in this room, too, lying in bed, mad [...]"

Within the life of the body, moving momentarily towards that final obliteration of consciousness which is death [...] And though memory runs backwards across breaks and ruptures, losses and changes, the ability to remember and relive past events cannot alter their past-ness. Writing is one way of stemming a sense of human loss, [of] restoring the decayed house and recalling the dead.³⁰

Briggs recognises that, for Woolf, acts of creative expression entail 'turning-up' a past grown faint.

As reinforcement, I deem Spender's writing to be similarly consumed with "an influence/From the perfecting dead"; his volumes of poetry during the '30's and '40's foreground the tendency to revisit and redraft areas of the past.³¹ *Poems* (1933), *The Still Centre* (1939), *Ruins and Visions* (1947) and *The Edge of Being* (1949) often focus on how the "instance of perception in the brain" is dulled through distance, particularly by the ultimate barrier of death, which obscures ideas from "other minds".³²

Spender's focus in 'Variations on My Life' (*The Still Centre*), 'Time in Our Time' and 'Speaking to the Dead in the Language of the Dead' (*The Edge of Being*) is to measure his own sensibilities, and incompleteness, in relation to those truly great. In later life, Spender was asked by the sculptor Richard Lippold if writing poetry was a continuance of "dialogue" with his father, Harold Spender (1864-1926), who preferred that his son be a poet rather than a painter; certainly, Spender considered poetry as a method to *tap* the expanses of time, as "[c]orpses

³⁰ Julia Briggs, *This Moment I Stand On': Woolf and the Spaces in Time*, spec. edition for the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain (London: 2001), pp. 3-22.

³¹ Stephen Spender, 'Speaking To the Dead in the Language of the Dead' in *The Edge of Being*, (London: Faber, 1949), p. 52.

have no telephone".³³ The ideal root to the past is to speak telepathically, through "[t]he whole quivering human machine".³⁴

It is significant that Louis, Woolf's character in *The Waves* who inhabits all spatial expanses -- "I seem already to have lived many thousands of years" -- is an advocate of modern communications. "[H]alf in love with the typewriter and the telephone", he fuses his "many lives into one" by forging lines of contact across the globe, but craves a similar linkup to memory, lost images and stray words:

What is the solution, I ask myself, and the bridge? How can I reduce these dazzling, these dancing apparitions to *one line* capable of linking all in one?³⁵

Louis imagines himself as a cable running underground, weaving together fragments of the friends' history. His exposure to, and use of, telegraphy allows for this comparison. Significantly, these "roots" have a dual purpose -- they detect "rumours of war" like the "wires of the Admiralty shiver[ing]" with some far-away conflict at the close of *Jacob's Room* (1922). In addition, Louis feels they provide a conduit for "the wandering and distracted spirits", who need reducing to order.³⁶

³² Ibid. p. 55.

³³ Spender, *Journals 1939-1983*, ed. John Goldsmith (London: Faber, 1985, p. 393; Spender, 'The Drowned' in *Ruins and Visions* (London: Faber, 1947), p. 53.

³⁴ Spender, 'Variations on My Life' in *The Still Centre*, (London: Faber, 1939), p. 91.

³⁵ VW, *The Waves* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 48, 127, 167-8. Also p. 95; Louis adds: "Every day, I *unbury* - I dig up".

³⁶ VW, *Jacob's Room* (London: Penguin Books, 1965), p.183; *The Waves* pp. 70-71. There are many points of comparison with Louis and T.S Eliot, chiefly in his language of pp. 47-58, and 155 which evokes the *Waste Land*, and 'Preludes'. This is widely noted; critics generally focus on circumstantial similarities, the banking career and Tiresias-like fascination with the poetics of history. This subject is worth expanding into a study of how Eliot's communing with the 'dead' was registered by his contemporaries. For example, Louis eavesdrops: "I have read my poem in

Woolf's more playful, earlier, piece about connections -- to another, to the social world of England -- *Orlando* (1928) similarly suggests that "we are all somehow successive, & continuous, we human beings", like parts of an atom subject to fluctuation, and able to transgress bodily death.³⁷ Once again, 'plugging' into the abyss of time is shown as the only method of perfect repetition, or rather, by alighting on a wavelength where voices still exist. Gillian Beer cites the ending of *To the Lighthouse* (1927), where the emphasis is to "sustain entity", pre-empted by Mrs Ramsey's bedtime story from the brothers Grimm.³⁸ "And there they are living still at this very time," she reads, after wishing privately that "she never wanted James to grow up, or Cam either. Those two she would like to keep forever, just as they were".³⁹

This evokes Spender's theory that, "[p]erhaps we live time as on a plain/ Where our life is the blurred and jagged edge/Of all who ever died", a sentiment forcibly evoked in *The Waves*, where Woolf achieved her aim of "[doing] away with exact place and time", as the characters stretch backwards and forwards.⁴⁰ Rhoda's absence for two sections obfuscates her actual suicide, a barrier over which she still speaks -- possibly as an echo.

an eating house, and, stirring my coffee, listened to the clerks making bets at the little tables, then "turning back to what Plato said" (128-29). This invokes his electric distance-getting "fibres" (13) in order to "assemble a few words".

³⁷ VW, *Diary*, vol. III (London: Hogarth Press, 1980), p. 218. "The true length of a person's life, whatever the *Dictionary of National Biography* may say, is always a matter of dispute", *Orlando* (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1995, p. 151).

³⁸ Beer, *The Common Ground*, p. 47.

³⁹ VW, *To the Lighthouse*, (London: Hogarth Press Vintage Edition, 1990), p. 54.

⁴⁰ SS, *The Edge of Being*, p. 53; VW, *A Writer's Diary (Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf)* ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 143 (28 May 1928).

Things are, explains Woolf, "oddly proportioned [...] The unreal world must be round all this- the phantom waves".⁴¹ She describes "swimming in the highest ether" when writing at speed, and often alluded to *The Waves* as a kind of freeflowing text, "a mosaic [...] all at high pressure", which required Woolf's immersion in its sphere.⁴² "From some higher station", she wrote, "I may be able to pull it together".⁴³ James Jeans' analysis of the etheric expanse applies to figures in *The Waves*, who amalgamate yet "carry their own ether, much as in a shower of rain each observer carries his own rainbow about with him".⁴⁴ He also highlighted Hermann Minkowski's theory that all electrical phenomena occurred in "space and time so welded together that it was impossible to detect any traces of a join".⁴⁵

This was surely noted by Woolf, who imagines being attuned to, and having coordination with, the past; furthermore, in her 1932 essay, 'Evening Over Sussex: Reflections in a Motor Car', she sees the capacity of electric signals to expand in all directions.⁴⁶ An emerging light over the downs seems to "[dangle] from the future" -- perhaps the "quick perspective" offered by Spender's pylons -- thus inspiring thoughts of Sussex in five hundred years where electricity improves all

⁴¹ VW, *Diary*, vol. III, p. 145.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴³ VW, *Diary vol. IV* (London: Hogarth Press, 1982), p.4.

⁴⁴ James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 91.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.86. Hermann Minkowski (1864-1909) who taught Einstein at the University of Zurich in 1900 is responsible for the precise definition of space-time as it appears in Einstein's relativity theory. Jeans writes that, "[s]pace and time separately have vanished into the merest shadows and only a sort of continuum of the two preserves any reality" (p. 90). During composition of *The Waves*, such theories were "communicated at large through the new medium of radio" as noted earlier, "which gave access to the 'insubstantised' world both as medium and message". Beer, *Wave, Atom, Dinosaur*, p. 9.

⁴⁶ VW, *Essays*, vol. II, pp. 290-292.

areas of life, creating a telepathic environment "full of charming thoughts, quick, effective beams".⁴⁷

Steven Connor rightly observes that:

Sound is Time. We hear time passing rather than seeing it, because *passage is the essential condition of sound*. [And] time speaks to us, in the machines we have developed to mark it. Our world is a world of recordings, replications and action replays [...] characterised by multiple rhythms, deviations and temporalities, of rifts and loops and pleats in the fabric of linear time.⁴⁸

While debating the existence of the ether -- admittedly a "pre-abstraction; at best a local habitation and a name" -- James Jeans proposed a frame of reference to understand the time-dimension, a tactic "of course, ready to hand - it is the division of the day into hours, minutes and seconds".⁴⁹ This material comparison is important, as it justifies ether behaviour and provides a concrete escape, as such, into the machines which 'mark' it. Gillian Beer observes that Woolf's work is not merely furnished with scientific metaphors, but "they sometimes chill down meaning to *sound alone*, eventually [producing] energetic if conflicted action".⁵⁰

For example, in the Hampton Court episode of *The Waves*, every character is "lost in the abysses of space [and] illimitable chaos", only to be re-orientated once again by sounds of life. Bernard says:

⁴⁷ Spender, *Poems* (London: Faber, 1933), p. 57. Consider Orlando, who reaches "the present moment" of October 1928 whilst driving in a motor car, acquiescing that all traces of past and future events fuse together as the clock strikes (*Orlando* pp. 150-162.)

⁴⁸ Radio talk by Steven Connor, from a B.B.C Radio 3 series, 'Noise', broadcast 24-28 February 1997.

⁴⁹ Jeans, pp. 92-93.

But now listen, tick, tick, hoot, hoot, the world has hailed us back to it. I heard for one moment the howling winds of darkness as we passed beyond life. The tick, tick (the clock), then hoot, hoot (the cars). We are landed...⁵¹

Yet, Woolf does not consistently favour these safer limits offered by external stimuli. The "unlimited time of the mind" -- dangerously proved by the new physics -- often clashes with "that other clock": the logical route. Bernard summarises these fluctuating perceptions, where a ticking sound causes one to be extracted from a state "which stretches in a flash from Shakespeare to ourselves". He considers it "painful".⁵²

As the 1930's drew to a close, Woolf's diaries indicate that acoustical markers became more prevalent than any private retreat into a boundless void. Certain machines -- chiefly radio -- whilst having the characteristics of ideal time-travel, were employed as an index of uncertainty which rooted the individual to the present. Consequently, for Woolf, they barred access to her vital trans-historical correspondences. Despite being "raddled and raked with people, noise, telephones" who all construct the temporal progress, Woolf complains that she has "[n]o time. Time wasted writing an angry letter [...] My new clock says its just on one: & my new clock can't lie" (DV, p.155). Time was literally speaking, not through the consciousness of an Orlando, but in a climate where, as Spender stated, "the nerves hark/ For the man-made toys/ To begin their noise".⁵³

⁵⁰ Beer, *Wave, Atom, Dinosaur*, p. 14.

⁵¹ VW, *Waves*, p. 173.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 210.

Upon listening to the wireless in October 1938, Virginia Woolf noticed that the smooth tones of the B.B.C, slashing gamely through Hitler's "baying", had created a "sense of preparation to the last hair"(DV, p.178). Her diaries often imply that this heavy, suspended sentence -- the leadup to war -- had been rigidly orchestrated by radio, which could simultaneously transmit "cold menace" and factual detail (V. 178). "Bach at night. Man playing oboe fainted in the middle. War seems inevitable", she wrote in 1935.⁵⁴ Before Munich, the act of waiting -- the inner conflict of *straining* to hear something one dreads -- is repeatedly asserted: "Sybil threatens to dine, but may put us off - should a Cabinet Minister crop up. Politics marking time" (DV, p.165). And later: "[i]n fact, we are simply marking time as calmly as possible until Monday or Tuesday when the Oracle will speak" (167). It is wireless which "announces the result" of Chamberlain's journey; it repeatedly "staved off" war, with peace often seeming "24 hours longer" (170, 179). These excerpts strongly infer that radio, as a 'marker' was preternaturally stretching, or shrinking time, beyond its natural order.

As previous chapters explain, World War I had utilised wireless to dictate the emotional response of the individual, whether he were a foot soldier awaiting directions for a trench attack, or the receiver of a black-bordered telegram. Once again, home-front trauma originated from the paradox of immediacy and separation; an electronically mediated time-warped state where communication was always vital yet inadequate. Substituting bodily interaction for dead letters or a cold signal foregrounded the issue of 'presence', that is, the address gap in every facet of wireless contact. During the '30's, the approach to conflict was

⁵³ Spender, 'A Man-made World' in *Edge of Being*, p. 33

⁵⁴ Woolf, *Diary*, vol IV, p. 336

equally fraught and fragmented, with only, as Louis MacNeice wrote in 'Autumn Journal', "a howling radio for our paraclete", through which, for Woolf, Hitler merely exists as "a mad voice [...] lashing himself up" (*DV*, p. 232).⁵⁵

When Vernon Bartlett reported from radio premises in Vienna, July 1934, which had been recently demolished in the attempted Nazi coup, he confessed: "[I]t gives one a strange feeling to broadcast to people in peaceful British towns and quiet villages".⁵⁶ The mystery of the wireless studio was reliant on its role as an anonymous junction; here it became the first located victim of political violence. "Do you mind if I speak to you direct for a moment", asks MacNeice's Radio-Announcer, in his play *Out of The Picture* (1937). "I'm going to be out of a job soon [...] Because the wireless is going to be appropriated for military purposes".⁵⁷

In reviewing the growth of telecommunications as "an abuse of army equipment", Friedrich Kittler argues for "war as acoustic experience", a phrase which, at one level, relates to the manner of British broadcasting in the 1930's.⁵⁸ "Yes we are in the very thick of it", frets Woolf, "Are we at war? At one I'm going to listen in [...] One touch on the switch & we shall be at war" (*DV*, p.230). Tension is heightened the following week; "[w]ill the 9 o'clock bulletin end it all? - our lives, oh yes, & everything else for the next 50 years" (231). All

⁵⁵ Louis MacNeice, 'Autumn Journal', *Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice*, ed. E.R Dodds (London: Faber, 1966), p. 144.

⁵⁶ Broadcast 31 July 1934 and printed in the *Listener*, vol. XII (8 August 1934) pp. 217-18.

⁵⁷ MacNeice, *Out of the Picture*, (London: Faber, 1937), pp. 76-77.

⁵⁸ Kittler, pp. 107, 97. Also Paul Virilio, who writes at length on media and warfare, noting that "the superior speed of various means of communication and destruction is in the hands of the military" evident in the "lightening war" of the 1940's.

'Military Space' in *The Virilio Reader*, ed. James Der Derian (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 24-29.

other modes of communication appear secondary and incomplete. In a letter to Ethel Smyth, Woolf attempts to continue an old subject, but admits that "the connections are broken [...] all's so dislocated. Nobody answers letters - everything hangs fire", as if her friends are dismantled puppets with snapped wires dangling uselessly.⁵⁹

MacNeice's Listener-In objects to the incipient blanketing of an English summer routine -- Wimbledon, the County Cricket -- by official reports, the "certain factors" which imply there may soon be no "green grass at Lords".⁶⁰ During that hot, static summer of 1939, evoked in *Between the Acts*, Woolf recalls the lament of J. Alfred Prufrock (line 133) on two separate occasions in her notebook: "Human voices wake us and we drown" (DV, pp.227- 228). Not, however, in the etheric ocean, but under a deluge of intrusive bleeps and ticks, which sliced up the day into newsflashes, ordering and infiltrating every area of life. Even when the radio ceases, Woolf detects "a kind of perceptible but anonymous friction [...] The Poles vibrating in my room", rather like the 'atmosphere' of eminent voices which suffused her childhood (225).

Notably, at the end of the waiting period -- the "war of nerves"--⁶¹ on September 3rd, Woolf writes how she and Leonard briefly "stood by" for Chamberlain's declaration, but to no avail: the wireless lures her back at "about 10.33 [...] I shall now go in". This prompts the memorable image at the close of Robert Graves' *The Long Weekend*, where the intelligentsia -- "those in the know" -- are

⁵⁹ VW, *Letters* (vol. VI), pp. 353-54 (29 August 1939).

⁶⁰ MacNeice, *Out of the Picture*, p. 77.

⁶¹ Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain 1918-1939* (New York: The Norton Library, 1963), p. 452.

"left staring rather stupidly at the knobs of their radio sets", with the time-limit expired and their fears finally pronounced. Perhaps Spender hurried to 'the Woolves' for his 'talking cure' because he admired "Leonard and Virginia [as] among the very few people in England who had a profound understanding of the state of the world in the 1930's".⁶²

The newspaper extracts which Woolf had included in her diary since the 1920's are rarely discussed after the outbreak of war, as they merely "boom, echoing emptily, the BBC" (*DV*, p.263) as if the printed word is behind schedule, failing to arrest that immediate dart of information vital to morale. "Scarcely worth reading any papers", she writes. "Emptiness. Inefficiency" (234). Previously, the Night of the Long Knives in 1934 had seemed as disparate as "an act in a play" when discovered in print.⁶³

The dispatching of news had always concerned Woolf; as early as 1921, she contemplated the futile search for accurate rendition:

But how is one to arrive at truth? I have changed the *Daily News* for the *Morning Post*. The proportions of the world at once become utterly different. *The Daily News* [is] a vivacious scrapbag. News is cut up into agreeable scraps and written in words of one syllable. I may well ask, what is truth?⁶⁴

⁶² Graves, p. 455. Spender elucidates: " Leonard, because he was a political thinker [...] Virginia, because the imaginative power she shows in her novels [...] held at bay vast water, madness, wars, destructive forces".

World Within World (London: Faber, 1951/77) p. 154.

⁶³ VW, *Diary* (vol. IV), pp. 223-224. Note the role of newspapers in *Between the Acts*, refuting or obscuring items of relevance amid tittle-tattle: "Did you see it in the papers - the case about the dog? D'you believe dogs can't have puppies?...And Queen Mary and the Duke of Windsor on the South Coast? D'you believe what's in the papers? I ask the butcher or the grocer..." (p. 74).

Although radio, too, was by nature terminally insincere, "a mere travesty and distortionment", as Woolf complained to Ethel Smyth.⁶⁵ Twisting the dial of her radio set, like any listener of the time, Woolf would have encountered shards of unconnected dialogue, the hissing of static and superheterodyne screeching, all of which enveloped the 'genuine' message from a disembodied voice at the opposite end of a circuit.

Woolf's denunciation of wireless is emblematic of a particular period where norms of attentiveness were deeply affected by political and national unease. Of the Munich Bierhalle bombing in November 1939 -- where a serious attempt on Hitler's life was made -- she notes the lack of balanced reporting, as "all the loudspeakers [contradict] each other" (*DV*, p.245). The situation resembles "a crosseyed squint" like searchlight beams or even a jumble of wires through which there is "no getting at truth". Invisible oratory from a source known to be threatening reasserted the binary character of radio broadcasting as all-consuming yet sneakily intrusive. Contradictory and confusing, it eerily mirrored Woolf's nature: an ability to register the most immediate sensation coupled with an urge to encompass the whole.

Over the airwaves, the unwelcome few -- "howling" Ribbentrop; the persistent Lord Haw Haw -- could seep into the drawing room, although radio was generally seen as a unifying force which fused "the nerves of the whole world

⁶⁴ VW, *Diary*, vol. I, 1915-1919, ed. Quentin Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), pp. 127-128

⁶⁵ VW, *Letters* (vol II)I, ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), p. 146 (6 January 1933).

together".⁶⁶ Martin Doherty writes comprehensively on the period of suspended action between October 1939 and early 1940, termed the 'Phoney War', on how specific techniques were effected by enemy 'disintegration' broadcasting. Relayed from the Hamburg stations as well as Berlin, the bulletins were largely designed to "provoke and manipulate psychological and emotional responses in the target audience" and detach "governed from government". Not merely was a divorce case in the papers upheld as an example of moral decay, but Britain's own "cloak and dagger propagandists" at Broadcasting House were persistently "exposed" by the 'enemy'.⁶⁷

One example of radio duplicity is the *Graf Spee* episode which reached a dramatic finale on 17 December 1939 during action off the River Plate. The German pocket battleship was scuttled by her captain Hans Langsdorff in the neutral port of Montevideo, Uruguay, as a favourable alternative to bombardment. All that day, an American broadcaster -- the aptly named Mike Fowler -- from a vantage point overlooking the harbour, had become the quickest source of information, mainly for the world, and rather distressingly for the British Admiralty whose elaborate telegraphy system was rendered defunct by Fowler's feverish conjecture: "Will they make a dash for Buenos Aires? Will it be a fight to the death?".⁶⁸

⁶⁶ An article in *Popular Science Monthly* (9 February 1922) cited in Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting 1899-1922* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press), p. 23

⁶⁷ M.A Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in World War II* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 54-55, 185.

⁶⁸ From the *Documentary Anthology of the Graf Spee 1914-1964*, compiled by Sir Eugene Millington-Drake, British Minister in Montevideo 1939 (London: Peter Davies Ltd, 1964), p. 337. The announcer's voice was apparently "hypnotic. It was impossible not to listen to it".

Furthermore, British wireless reports had been so successful in assembling mythical fleets of destroyers -- the *Ark Royal* was majestically resurrected and "oiling at Rio" in anticipation of a showdown -- that an artillery officer of the *Spee* had hallucinations of battleship *Renown* through his range-finder; a factor which cemented Langdorff's decision. In reality, all that could bar the *Spee*'s passage was two cruisers, *Ajax* and *Achilles*, with six-sevenths of their outfit fired, manned by sailors who, confessed one, "laughed hollowly" when the B.B.C promised "interesting developments".⁶⁹ Virginia Woolf deplored the allegiance of the B.B.C in what appeared to be the wholesale hijacking of naval intelligence. "And we shall have it served up for us", she wrote, "as we sit over our logs this bitter winter night" (*DV*, 351).⁷⁰ The fate of the *Spee*, lured to destruction by wireless -- a twentieth century siren whose words rebounded off the waves -- certainly verifies Friedrich Kittler's observation.

William Shirer, a journalist in Berlin, noted that Goebbels' contingency plan was to broadcast news of an alleged air victory and hide the fact of Langsdorff's suicide. The radio described how the captain remained on his ship until the bitter end; a single death falsely relayed to a multitude, of a man who had, for days, been harried by artful means and appliances for the benefit of mass psychology.⁷¹ "You can't believe a word it says," is the opinion of a character in George Mackay Brown's story, 'The Wireless Set', which satirizes the counter-propaganda displayed in winter 1939. In this case, the community of Tronvik,

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 332. Apparently, there was a leakage on the telephone line between London and Buenos Aires; a handwritten sign on the door of the British embassy read, "TAKE CARE- THE ENEMY HAS EARS EVERYWHERE".

⁷⁰ Beer notes in *The Common Ground* how radio can alter the tone of "authoritative pronouncements" into "shards of gossip" as shown in *Between the Acts* (p. 131).

Orkney, acquires a radio and hears Lord Haw Haw's "evil refrain" on the bombing of the Ark Royal; the ship is actually "anchored in safe water on the other side of the hill".⁷²

For passive recipients such as Woolf, this atmosphere of perpetual dissembling on all radio frequencies would highlight the issue of trying to detect a viable signal amid the noise. Later in the war, she learned to select and compare reports, just as she once compiled information from "vivacious scrapbags", the differing newspapers:

[The] BBC announced the taking of Amiens & Arras. The French PM told the truth & knocked all our "holding" to atoms. On Monday they broke through. It's tedious picking up details (*DV*, p.287)⁷³

Constant listening -- the very act of tuning in -- was necessary and, therefore, much like a guilty, unsatisfying addiction. Nevertheless, the idea of being severed from potential truth -- from the action -- was equally unsettling. A cogent point is raised by Paul Virilio, in relation to advance warning of enemy squadrons:

With the compression of space-time, danger was lived simultaneously by millions of listeners. For want of space to move back into their only protection was time given to them by the radio.⁷⁴

⁷¹ William Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941), pp. 179-193. Marconi's misguided prediction on 10 March 1918 was that "[t]he Germans dread wireless" (Dunlap, p. 244).

⁷² George Mackay Brown, 'The Wireless Set' (1948) in *A Time To Keep and Other Stories* (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 43-49.

⁷³ Doherty suggests that "the B.B.C's methods of data gathering were probably inadequate", acknowledging a regular and widespread habit of listening-in to foreign stations among that section of the public who "followed the war in detail" and felt ill-informed (pp. 186-187). Once again, this can be aligned to Spender's opinion of Woolf as knowledgeable on current events.

On a brief visit to her Mecklenburgh Square flat in London, Woolf recalls keeping "one ear pricked", as the "sense of siege" became apparent. The uneasy situation was thus determined: "One seemed cut off. No wireless" (*DV*, p.242).

Woolf's ideal, of a boundless sphere of time, had radically altered into a state wherein even clockwatching was no gauge of events. Instead, a notion she entertained years before -- during the air raids of 1917 -- was concurrently pertinent. It seemed that "[h]aving trained one's ears to listen one can't get them not to for a time".⁷⁵

Spender: The Effort to Envoice

At a dinner at University College, Oxford in 1981, the elderly Stephen Spender was approached by a physiology student "doing a study of the brain", who wished to know if Spender's "memory was stimulated by visual or auditory impressions".⁷⁶ Regrettably, his answer is not recorded, although evidence would point to the latter. A conversation with T.S Eliot shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War encapsulates Spender's creative process; suggesting a link between his theories of poetry and the power of sound:

⁷⁴ Virilio, *War and Cinema*, p. 28.

⁷⁵ VW, *Diary* (vol I), pp. 84-85.

⁷⁶ Spender, *Journals 1939-1983*, ed. John Goldsmith (London: Faber, 1985), p. 419.

We talked about writing poetry. I tried to explain my difficulties. I write entirely from ear and from my own inner sense of what the poem should be.⁷⁷

Furthermore, in his book, *The Making of A Poem* (1955), Spender charts his method of grasping the "unsaid inner meaning" of a single line which constantly eludes "the attempt to state it", fading in and out of the mind's eye -- or ear -- like an errant signal.⁷⁸ Here, he struggles to fuse a seascape with patterns of music; how the glittering waves of the sea resemble strings of a harp, a "dim cloud of an idea" which he, as a poet, must condense, although the "*unseen life of words*" oscillates powerfully, demanding to be probed and expressed (60).

An episode in Spender's autobiographical novel *The Temple* -- first drafted in 1930 -- shows the inefficiency of writing, as Paul Schoner's subject "suddenly stepped out of the printed page". He adds:

Paul had to admit that until now he thought of everything Ernst said as lines of print in Paul Schoner's novel [...] Now the words describing The Trip to Altamunde, which, as soon as spoken, Paul saw flowing into ink which dried, black and white, on paper in his notebook for this fiction, suddenly dissolved into the ever-changing, never-fixed unpredictable stream of language [...]⁷⁹

For these purposes, it is important to locate specific themes in Spender's life, all of which operate both indirectly and conspicuously, rather like the "wireless wail

⁷⁷ Diary extract of 26 October, 1939, printed in *Letters to Christopher: The Letters of Christopher Isherwood and Stephen Spender, with 'The Two Lines of the Branch': Two 'Thirties Journals*, ed. Lee Bartlett, (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1980).

⁷⁸ SS, *The Making of A Poem*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955), pp. 49-52.

⁷⁹ SS, *The Temple*, (London: Faber, 1988), p. 87.

in the lounge margin"; often never marginal but deadly insistent.⁸⁰ In *The Making of A Poem*, he refers to a state of "half-waking, half-sleeping [...] conscious of a stream of words which seem to pass through my mind without their having a meaning, but they have a sound [...] a sound recalling poetry that I know".⁸¹ He sifts through old -- singular -- voices, those which are motivational and never cease to impress upon his faculties.

One of these is Beethoven, acknowledged by critics as "an artistic hero for Spender throughout his career".⁸² His autobiography, *World Within World* (1951) aligns an admiration for the composer with childhood experience of radio; how certain symphonies by Beethoven seemed to unearth his receptive tendencies, in noticing the "almost human speaking voices when the flutes replied to the violins".⁸³ Spender considered music to be the most refined of the arts, offering an "alternative" world "full of abstract aural patterns which are not related to the noises we hear in everyday life", and capable of identifying the "absolute ideas which have such a wavering meaning in words".⁸⁴ Later, he would note the "kind of anticipating memory" -- a concrete sensory experience -- involved when listening to a quartet of Beethoven or Mozart, in comparison with poetry or prose is never fixed. The existence of any text prompts "continuous development of [...] imagery", and this often results in disorientation, shown at the close of

⁸⁰ SS, 'Thoughts During An Air Raid' in *Still Centre*, p. 45.

⁸¹ SS, *The Making of A Poem*, p. 60.

⁸² Michael O'Neill and Gareth Reeves, *Auden, MacNeice, Spender: The '30's Poetry* (London: MacMillan, 1992), pp. 53-54.

⁸³ SS, *World Within World*, p. 23

⁸⁴ SS, *September Journal*, serialised in *Horizon* I, 2 (Feb 1940) & 3 (March, 1940); my edition is in SS, *The Thirties and After: Poetry, Politics, People 1933-1970* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1978), p. 117.

September Journal (1940) where Spender cannot express himself, as "words suggest their own sequence".⁸⁵

For Spender, Beethoven quantified his notion of a great writer, one who could "make a synthesis out of his incompleteness in the same way as Beethoven was able to use for material [...] the discordant noises which he heard in his ears instead of hearing".⁸⁶ In 'Beethoven's Death Mask' (1933), the composer is figured as a conductor for natural forces; a cacophonous flow transformed "as in a shell".⁸⁷ This is emblematic of Spender's overriding theory and practice, that both should include the interiorizing of experience -- rather blatantly reworked in his homage, 'Late Stravinsky listening to Late Beethoven' (1977), where senses collide.⁸⁸ Bird/violin sustains "a curve, a tune, a parabola" held in the eye which has become an ear.

Spender's emphasis is always on Beethoven, or the poet, as "cut off from being", communing with and recasting imagined sounds in "the listening writing of the eye": this amounts to a kind of private electric circuitry.⁸⁹ In Spender's early poetry, even "[s]ilent messages from star to star/ Exist only in the flash within the single flesh".⁹⁰

The evidence is that he was mainly drawn to Beethoven's posthumous works, in particular the Quartet No. 15 in A. Minor, opus 132. which was appointed as his

⁸⁵ SS, *Journal*, p. 331 (11 Jan 1976); SS, *Thirties and After*, p. 130.

⁸⁶ *Letters to Christopher*, p. 156.

⁸⁷ *Poems*, p. 19.

⁸⁸ SS, *Collected Poems, 1928-1985*, (London: Faber, 1985), pp. 182-3.

⁸⁹ 'In A Garden' in *Ruins and Visions* (1947), p. 72.

ultimate choice for 'Desert Island Discs' in 1962, having "already lasted me about 30 years".⁹¹ He continually interpreted the opus as a perfect rendition of isolated experience, akin to another of his formative voices: the writing -- and person -- of T.S Eliot.

In a critical analysis of Eliot's work, Spender extends his comment in *The Destructive Element*, that section II of 'Ash Wednesday' shares "conjunctions of mood" with the Beethoven *Quartets*, specifically opus.132.⁹² He quotes Eliot's response to this theory, a letter of 1931 which largely evades Spender's enquiry. After reminding himself with a gramophone record, Eliot concentrates on the general import of the piece rather than any definitive nuances. He hears "the fruit of reconciliation after immense suffering", admitting, "I should like to get something of that into verse before I die".⁹³

However, Spender was eager to establish -- or to clarify -- the presence of a late-Beethovenian device in the scheme of 'Ash Wednesday'. Throughout opus 132, one line, or theme is dismissed with the next. Similarly, in section II of Eliot's poem, the scattered bones speak, then are spoken about, then spoken to. The form provides certainty and structure; the syllables may contain reverberations of instruments in a poem described as "a pure lyric sequence of fragments".⁹⁴ It is significant that Spender's initial enquiry to Eliot was not ascertaining his

⁹⁰ 'Time in Our Time' in *The Edge of Being* (1949), p. 55. Recall Joyce's sleeper, the semi-machinic medium of the *Wake*.

⁹¹ SS on Radio 4, 'Desert Island Discs', 9 July 1964. Script held at the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham Park, Reading: Scripts, file 2.

⁹² SS, *Eliot* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1975), p. 128.

⁹³ Letter from T.S Eliot to SS, 28 March 1931. Quoted in *Eliot*, p. 129 and *The Thirties and After*, p. 254.

⁹⁴ SS, *Eliot*, p. 120

awareness of the posthumous *Quartets*, but if he had "heard" them, preferably during composition of 'Ash Wednesday'.

A link to Virginia Woolf is apparent: during 1927 she worked at *The Waves* "in the evening when the gramophone is playing late Beethoven sonatas".⁹⁵ Here, an opening question of this chapter is partially treated, by Woolf's overt acknowledgement of 'something' playing as a backdrop to intense writing, and in Spender's assumption that certain 'types' of music affected poetic structure. His memoir, 'Remembering Eliot', printed in *The Thirties and After* (1978) even promotes the idea that Eliot's artistry was determined by a "kind of perpetual listening, waiting for the rhythm" of a poem to strike which may derive equally from Dante and the music-hall (249).

It is arguable that this amounts to transference on the part of Spender. For, the *sound* of Eliot was compelling, not simply as a polyphonic myth -- the "street-haunting dandified nightbird" or the dour bank clerk (248) -- but in the "subdued metric quality" of his actual speech, which Spender considered natural in a poet whose work was "conversation made rhythmic" (250). This startling sensitivity is a key factor in my appraisal of Spender: his urge to *listen* beyond normal parameters. In *World Within World*, he recalls the jolting sensation of hearing Eliot recite a line which might have been said by Prufrock, adding that "his voice alone is Eliot", gravely pedestrian and undeviating in subject matter. The typical mode of enquiry, such as, "Now will you have a turtle soup (I doubt whether it

⁹⁵ VW, *Diary* (vol. III), p. 129.

will be made from *real* turtle)", is also mimicked by Woolf in *The Waves*, which suggests that Eliot's oral 'tics' were rather infectious, pervasive and evocative:

"Now let me try", said Louis, "before we rise, before we go to tea, to fix the moment in one effort of supreme endeavour. This shall endure".⁹⁶

Both Spender and Woolf imply that to 'know' someone, is to hear, imagine, and thus re-appropriate their voice. To some extent, they 'share' Eliot, turning their ears to his very *intonation*, which had imposed itself upon other words. Spender charts this process of becoming inspired:

[Eliot] continues about the weather: "If I remember, this time last year the lilac -" and then it is quite likely that if I have gone on *listening carefully* out of this dry climate, there will suddenly flash a few words of poetry like a kingfisher's wing across the club room conversation.⁹⁷

Intercepting these flashes is essential to Spender's recognition of acoustics within his own methodology. For instance, in *September Journal*, he records a passing comment:

Eliot said that he did not care to listen to Beethoven so much just now. We both agreed on Bach and Gluck for the war.⁹⁸

Spender treats this decisive shift very seriously; it would be invoked during a future episode of crisis.

⁹⁶ VW, *The Waves*, p. 28.

⁹⁷ SS, *World Within World*, p. 146.

In a general summary of poetry in the 1930's, D.E.S Maxwell assumes Spender to be the poet of 'sensibility'; his subjects are typically the "acted upon, not the doer; at best an involuntary instrument" in the fashion of Tiresias, who Spender regarded as "the consciousness totally acted upon and conditioned [...] fragmented by the fragmented state of the civilisation".⁹⁹ One example is the outcome of Spender's long poem, *Vienna* (1934), which details the suppression of Austrian socialists by Chancellor Dolfuss. A helpless observer waits for the hotel wireless to announce murder; the "foursquare voice through unassailable air", in a land where words "can change the idea of houses/As they alter the time of trains".¹⁰⁰

Throughout, the narrator reels from Anschluss to pogrom, to his private romantic drama, all of which amounts to "a sporadic incoherence of delivery", as Maxwell writes, "from confusingly mobile premises".¹⁰¹ The clamour of *Vienna* has no ordered choric passages, as in Auden and Isherwood's verse drama; it sounds, and reads, as though opposing frequencies are converging on some kind of wireless outlet. Finally visited by five voices, all proclaiming 'I', who dissolve and fade out into ellipses, the narrator/Spender is compelled to replace one theme with the next, like a Beethoven quartet.

Maxwell observes Spender's general inclination "to fall for the floating associations of words [...] the odd scraps of outmoded diction amid the

⁹⁸ SS, *Journal*, p. 194.

⁹⁹ D.E.S Maxwell, *Poets of the 1930's* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 175; SS, *Eliot*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁰ SS, *Vienna* (London: Faber, 1944), pp. 28, 22

¹⁰¹ Maxwell, p. 198.

modernist phrasing".¹⁰² Conceivably, the insertion of "charmed", "ennui", "pox" in a number of poems are simply flashes from the "grave", hushed and ceremonious Eliot ("I don't think I dare eat smoked eel").¹⁰³

In the 'Analysis and Statement' section of *Vienna*, the influence is blatantly stylistic:

Fading fading the importance

Of what was said

By so many voices

Between the sunset and the coffee;

So many faces, so many invitations (37).

According to Maxwell -- who refers to stylistics rather than echoes -- the failure of Spender's verse drama is a result of "background interference from other voices, like Eliot's, jamming his own". Virginia Woolf applauded the effort but confessed to Spender she "felt something confused; as that you've not got the elements rightly mixed".¹⁰⁴ She implies that Spender is extensively channelling one voice, rather than conducting a series of influences in moderation.

In *Vienna*, it is apparent that Spender's desire to imbue, and project, every facet of the public situation alongside interior drama was, firstly, a concerted effort to apply his specific aural stimuli to poetry. He wants to 'record' Eliot, just as his

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 193-95.

¹⁰³ Words featured in *The Edge of Being*, a collection which also contains Spender's tribute to *The Four Quartets*, 'Time in Our Time'; Eliot quoted in *WWW*, p. 146. Both SS (*WWW*, p. 145) and VW (*DV*, p. 320) separately comment on the priestly, restrained nature of Eliot's speech.

¹⁰⁴ Maxwell, p. 199; VW, *Letters* (vol. VI), VW to SS (25 June 1935), p. 408.

elegy, 'Auden's Funeral' (1980) literally articulates the poet "who made his life an instrument for expressing experiences in language":¹⁰⁵

Back in the village inn, we sit on benches
For the last toast to you, the honoured ghost
Whose absence now becomes incarnate in us
Tasting the meats, *we imitate your voice*.¹⁰⁶

Each mourner is "a ventriloquist's doll", therefore, Spender's tribute is to allow Auden's words -- and actual delivery -- to permeate his writing. This is reminiscent of an early meeting between the two, at Oxford in 1926, when Auden recited a stirring passage "in his flat expressionless way", which nevertheless seemed to enliven the lines:

"Who wrote that" I asked. "You did."

Now when I saw my own creation transformed through the medium of his mind, I felt the pleasure and relief which the writer feels on very rare occasions.¹⁰⁷

Spender would remark in his journal of the '70's that it mattered little if a person were living or dead, if their presence continued to exert the same impact and energy. He adds that "we do not [...] draw as clear and hard a distinction between the embodied and bodiless as we certainly suppose ourselves to do", given that most interaction in life is with absent voices - "even those who are

¹⁰⁵ SS, *Thirties and After*, p. 268. He describes Auden's atonal voice which had the power to "insulate any two words [...] from the rest of the created universe.

¹⁰⁶ SS, *Collected Poems*, pp. 184-188.

¹⁰⁷ SS, *WWW*, p. 61-62. See also *Journal*, p. 334, where SS recalls a poem by Day-Lewis "transformed in Wystan's voice to language cold and clear [seeming like] the most beautiful crystal in the world".

close to us are invisible much of the time".¹⁰⁸ He is aware that the essence of words can be rapidly altered by their interlocutor, irrespective of proximity through space, or time.

This realisation informs the fragmentary, jumbled structure of *Vienna*, and most of Spender's early poetry, mainly composed against a backdrop of political upheaval where sound technology often prevailed as an measure of fear and conflict. In addition to shards of Beethoven and Eliot, a third 'presence' in his work is Germany: the fabled Berlin of 1931-1933, experienced intermittently, and constantly recounted in his autobiographical works.

He writes of being intoxicated by the mild decadence and languid summers characteristic to the Weimar interlude, ever observant of the "dry electric evil in the air" -- a signal of poverty, agitation and propaganda as government disintegrated:¹⁰⁹

The Nazis at one end and the Communists at the other [...] Chancellor Bruning had abandoned the attempt to govern through the yelling mob of twenty-nine different political parties, which was the Reichstag (broadcasts of whose howling debates, punctuated by a tinkling bell, were a feature of German wireless).¹¹⁰

In *World Within World*, Spender confesses to feeling charged by the environment, "as though my blood were a river of music" like the "pulsing

¹⁰⁸ SS, *Journal*, pp. 320-321.

¹⁰⁹ SS, *The Temple*, p. 116.

¹¹⁰ *WWW*, p. 116. A useful cultural assessment of the period is Anton Gill, *A Dance Between Flames: Berlin Between the Wars* (London: John Murray, 1993). Amidst the medley of Berlin café society and the burgeoning art scene, Gill only considers that "Radio was just beginning to walk" (193).

arteries" of Berlin itself (109). He notes a brittleness, where everything is deceptively "new" and therefore transient, lending an air of unreality like the experimental movies which also included "bells of trams and bicycles"(108). Engaged with *Poems*, he misses the stillness of attention necessary for creative work; many of the pieces are rapid, laden with memory but ever cognizant of the unharnessed future: "We hear of towers long broken off from sight/ and tortures and war, in dark and smoky rumour".¹¹¹ As shown, this conflict is also inherent to Woolf: a yearning for distance and silence following initial stimulation. In retrospect, Spender adds:

No wonder the literature of this period is time-obsessed, time-tormented, as though beaten with rods of restless days (137).

Spender is an interesting case study in that he saw "a phase of isolation" in Britain of the time, which meant that "the middle years of the 1930's were symbolised [...] not by Hitlerism or even the Spanish Civil War, but by the Royal Jubilee" (142). Indeed, Robert Graves derives an impression of reluctance in British media to provide "helpful analyses of the world situation", for example, the mysterious blaze in the Reichstag, February 1932, was considered to be a probable Communist strike.¹¹² In contrast, Spender's piece 'Van der Lubbe' (*Poems*), faithfully reports from the trial scene; he apprehends and redistributes words of the accused:

Yes, no, yes, no. Shall I tell you what I know?

Not to Goering, but, dear movietone, I whisper it to you

¹¹¹ 'Without that once clear aim...' *Poems*, p. 41.

¹¹² Graves, p. 260.

I laugh because my laughter

Is like justice, twisted like a howitzer (39).

In his choice to experience the "storm centre" rather than linger on the periphery, Spender considered himself grittily over-informed for life on his return -- the literary-social life of luncheons, teas, and week-ends at country houses, presided over by Virginia Woolf who sardonically wondered "how to refine to alchemy these rough youths", the "young Brainies [...] bubbling with discontent and ideas" (*DV*, p. 116).¹¹³ I would contest that Spender was not exclusively prepared for war; only that the *style* of his exposure was markedly different. Whilst his colleagues in Britain became media sleuths, dissecting newspapers and radio frequencies to obtain the wider picture, Spender lived in the *Weimardaemmerung*, a "rallying place of frightened people". Uniquely, he was present at the germination of Nazi wireless propaganda.¹¹⁴

Berlin, during this time, was a territory stalked by Gauleiter Goebbels on behalf of the NSDAP, having been appointed to this pompous title -- of area manager -- in 1926. This was largely a fantasy of Hitler's, as the city was so ideologically polarised; every group, wrote Spender, was "conscious of themselves as a political interest" (130). Mindful that Berlin craved "sensation like a fish needs water", Goebbels' campaign of lurid posters, loudspeakers and organised riots was greatly strategic, targeting beerhalls where unemployed young men

¹¹³ See *WWW*, pp.151-159 for Spender's account of Bloomsbury etiquette.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

congregated; youths with whom Spender and Christopher Isherwood would consort.¹¹⁵

On several occasions, Spender remembers how the cult of Adolf Hitler was so seductively crafted that every region of life was infiltrated. At parties, he is murmured over -- the orator capable of hypnotic speech, bewitching those who stopped to listen. Viktor Reimann comments that "*Goebbels* did not take part in the Black Mass -- he crucially directed it" by circulating "the medicine man's abracadabra" in the form of rumour.¹¹⁶

Reimann discusses styles of oratory, portraying the "immediate effect" of Hitler's speeches, where detail was secondary to a stultifying closeness, the blanket of "inarticulate sound" (92). Spender's depiction of "a gripless private stammer of shouting" is peculiarly apt, a noise which somehow connects with the public.¹¹⁷ Otto Strasser likened Hitler to a wireless set which enabled him "to act as a loudspeaker, proclaiming the most secret desires, the least admissible instincts, the sufferings and personal revolts of a nation".¹¹⁸ Goebbels' method, in comparison, blended stark erudition with theatrical aplomb. New word-patterns were enhanced by fitting intonations of voice and "effective last-curtain phrases",

¹¹⁵ Joseph Goebbels, *Der Kampf um Berlin* (Munich, 1941), p. 28. Quoted in Viktor Reimann, *Joseph Goebbels: The Man Who Created Hitler* (London: William Kimber & Co. Ltd, 1977), p. 75.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 93. Referring to the Minister of Propaganda's fascination with rumour and ability to 'massage' news, Paul Virilio writes that "memory is science itself for those who make war". A good example of Goebbels' "electronic counter-measures" is the aforementioned *Graf Spee* incident, 1941. Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989) p. 33.

¹¹⁷ SS, 'The Uncreating Chaos' in *The Still Centre*, p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I*, trans. Gwenda Davidson and Eric Mossbacher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940), p. 66

appearing to speak extempore, when in reality, he prepared for every minor mood fluctuation of the audience.¹¹⁹

His ensuing talent for radio manipulation is widely assessed; for these purposes, a defining moment occurred in the Prussian Diet elections of April 1932. This was naturally experienced at first-hand by Spender, who intermittently read Goebbels' literary output during this year. On April 9, Bruening broadcast his final speech of the campaign from Koenigsberg shortly before returning to Berlin, unaware that Goebbels had advertised a debate at the National Socialist rally of that evening. To a packed auditorium, Goebbels explained that the event would continue regardless, as Reich Chancellor Bruening was present in mechanical form, having been recorded earlier that week. A verbal duel commenced with Goebbels stopping, replaying and answering the record, hacking into the disembodied voice, as one witness remarked, "like a vulture into a corpse". Goebbels would brag in his diary that "[e]ven the most evil-minded admit that [Bruening] was *soundly beaten*".¹²⁰ I would call attention to *Vienna*, where Spender seems to identify this technique as the epitome of all propaganda which moulds history, selecting and removing parts with a scalpel:

[...] Even miracles

Have been performed, as the elimination of voices

That contradict official faces.

Or voices have been transplanted, and who

Once was our enemy, ripe and unseen,

Fearless as love, is now as true

¹¹⁹ Reimann, p. 92.

¹²⁰ Quoted *ibid.* pp. 163-164.

As a dead voice played through on a machine.¹²¹

John Lehmann's poem, 'Vigils' also relates "a grand transformation scene" by false prophets, "magicians, schemers", in the wider context of social consciousness.¹²² This notion is imperative to Spender's subsequent dislocation in, and beyond, wartime: a basic theme of this chapter.

Absent presences, the "lonely ghosts" of his past are always evoked by sound -- the wireless playing the Schubert Octet, for example.¹²³ In *September Journal*, Spender strives to locate his "Germany of Goethe, Hoelderlin and Schiller" within the "frenzy of words" exerted by Hitler's dictatorship. All definitions are blurred, as shown by the German U-Boat commander's wife who weeps over Beethoven -- a sonata "so full of peace". Simultaneously, she considers the brutal Goebbels to have "the face of a saint - *ein Heiliger*".¹²⁴ This discordant mentality is also made relevant by Alan Bush, who deplored the Nazi's tactical slogan: 'Beethoven, the first Nazi' which arose from persistent use of the rousing Eroica Symphony.¹²⁵

¹²¹ SS, *Vienna*, p. 22.

¹²² John Lehmann, *Collected Poems 1930-1963* (London: Eve and Spottiswoode, 1963), pp. 60-63.

¹²³ SS, *Journal*, p. 427. An extract from 1980 where music reminds SS of a particular sensation aroused in 1929: a house in the forest, dead friends, Mozart.

¹²⁴ *Thirties and After*, pp. 134, 105.

¹²⁵ Alan Bush, 'Music', in *The Mind In Chains*, ed. Day Lewis, p. 137. Asa Briggs recalls how the 'V' campaign in Britain during 1940-41 caused Goebbels to worry over "the intellectual invasion of the continent by British radio". As a counter-measure, he "appropriated" the letter V- and more- by broadcasting "the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which matched the Morse for the letter 'V' and had hitherto been heard only from London, as part of their station signals" (Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. II, London: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 197)

After reporting these incidents in his journal, Spender proceeds to elaborate on the "virtuosi of listening" -- certain people who recognise any work of art as a medium of transformation which says:

This is what life is like. It is even realer - less to be evaded - than you thought (118).

Spender had listened, and would continue to listen -- far too intensely -- through a period of phoney war and into the extremes of combat, where the urge to 'switch off' jarred with an equally fierce desire for information. Evading the trajectory of life became almost impossible, as externalities were relayed -- and altered -- through wireless sound.

At this stage, one may determine the slight variance in Woolf and Spender's modes of listening, or hearing -- as they both exhibit a tendency to tune-in, or tune-back. Woolf sought to reclaim the dead -- or admired -- working to extend time and consciousness against threatened chaos. Her overriding impulse is one of *doubt*, seeking verification through sound, whereas Spender uses it as a classic 'retrieval' vehicle to assuage *loss*, endeavouring to recover, connect, and make sense of things 'scattered' or 'broadcast'. The following section accentuates how these separate attitudes converged, in response to a medium of 'information overload' which doubled as a pernicious presence.

Between the Lines

Anna Snaith has catalogued in detail the levels of 'invasion' wreaked upon the private by the public, a "radical intermingling" which informed Virginia Woolf's

last few years, evinced in her diaries of the period, where invasion -- both actual, by media, and prospective, by the enemy -- is often enacted textually.¹²⁶ Snaith notes a "bizarre dichotomy" (138), where Woolf makes a concerted effort to separate the realms of public and private, "as though by indicating the difference she can prevent any kind of guilty overlap" (135). I would add that her style is resonant of soundbites, newsworthy bulletins which rapidly sketch the atmosphere: "Pop-pop-pop as we play bowls. Probably a raider over Eastbourne way" (*DV*, p.312) For, as Gillian Beer asserts, "very little time seemed left", which made acceptable the hasty indulgence and recording of pastimes suggesting "that there is time in abundance", and, continues Snaith, any guilt is mixed with urgency; "she needs to use what time she has" to register her thoughts (138).¹²⁷

At one point, Woolf commends herself for "[forging] ahead with PH" ('Pointz Hall', a working title for *Between the Acts*) whilst "waiting for the wireless", which seems to demand the hidden mental resources usually required for writing. Acoustic interference was beginning to noticeably arrest words on the page, as the bombers swoop past Woolf's Sussex enclave and on to London, "the twang of plucked strings" causing a rupture in concentration: "I must black out. I had so much to say" (*DV*, p.320)

Additionally, her diaries express psychological tension in rather scientific terms, such as the friends left in London "jangling like so many strained wires".¹²⁸ She

¹²⁶ Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (London: MacMillan, 2000), p.132.

¹²⁷ Beer, *The Common Ground*, p. 130.

¹²⁸ *VW Letters* (vol. VI) VW to Edward Sackville-West (25 October 1939) p. 365

catches rumours and thus "reverberates so instantaneously" (DV, p.238), declaring later that any "feeling faculty gives out" after such continual assault on the nerves: "[N]ext day one is disembodied, in the air. Then the battery is recharged, & again- what?" (DV, p.285). It is as though she is scattered, like Rhoda in *The Waves* "without any anchorage anywhere [...] incapable of composing any continuity".¹²⁹

It is noticeable that Woolf feels "all creative power [to be] cut off" (DV, p.235). As proposed earlier, her writing patterns were clearly affected, not merely by the war, which she blamed for preventing entry "to that exciting layer so rarely lived in: where my mind works [...] like the aeroplane propellers" but the *methods* by which conflict imposed itself, firstly upon her mentality, and secondly, the autonomous process of gathering information (DV, p. 214).

The breakdown of Woolf's private space may be compared to -- and clarified by -- an excerpt in Spender's *September Journal*, which directly implicates the disembodied voice of radio as a negative textual presence. Writing in dejected terror during the early weeks of wartime, Spender aims to make his diary move in "several layers of time, present and past".¹³⁰ Describing a traumatic incident in Cologne -- the theft of some possessions -- he recalls lying in bed "listening to the noise from outside, and a continuous sound like water running away into the darkness", adding that "something terrible and mysterious" was gradually unfolding within himself (126). This retrospective sense of dissociation

¹²⁹ VW, *Waves*, p. 91.

¹³⁰ SS, *Thirties and After*, p. 122.

occurring in a rather anecdotal passage, is partially -- if subconsciously -- explained in a later paragraph:

While I have been writing this last page-and-a-half, I have had the wireless on, broadcasting Hitler's latest speech. His voice varies from a cavernous rumbling to the peaks of an exalted hysteria from which he shrieks like a raucous bird of prey [...] Undoubtedly, there is something disintegrating about that voice, that applause [...] The cities of one's mind seem to be bombarded, as though a threat could make them fall to pieces (127).¹³¹

For Spender, the speech over the airwaves has, in one moment, fused remembrance, despair and sound within the very act of writing itself. Years ago, he lay dispossessed in Cologne to the background music of street chatter and an unidentified trickling noise -- a noise which is actually the hum and bark of wireless being re-inscribed into memory.

He physically interrupts the narrative to play Bach's *Mass in D Minor* on the gramophone, and resumes writing. He considers Gluck's *Orpheus*, hoping that "reality and exultation lie in those transparent harmonies and not in [...] high-pitched shrieks of hysteria" (128). Before Bach drowns out the radio, Hitler speaks of "a new, terrible secret weapon," and Spender feels ominously, "as though the world could be destroyed by pressing a button [...] and he were about to press it". This imaginary act is *paralleled* by Spender's operating of the gramophone; switching it on to regain a minimal sense of control over external forces who shatter his reminiscence. Conspicuously, it was he who gave licence

¹³¹ Apparently, other planes of consciousness resent this onslaught. During his research into the electric voice phenomenon in the 1950's, Konstantin Raudive recorded a plea of: "Hitlers musu radio parnem. Furchtbar!" (Latv., Germ.: "Hitler takes over our radio. Terrible!"), Raudive, *Breakthrough*, p. 91.

to the radio -- by actively turning the dial -- thus allowing harsh voices to circle unhindered, while he writes.

"It is possible", Spender continues, "that I shall be broken and unable to understand Gluck's wonderfully coherent music any longer. The part of my mind that composes itself into a dance or a crystal when I hear this music will be a cathedral that has been bombed". Spender fears that his receptors are being slowly poisoned, just as Woolf, trapped in the circumference of war and finding "the present moment [...] difficult to centre" (*DV*, p.284), wondered if she would "ever write again one of those sentences that give me intense pleasure" (*DV*, p.357). As aforementioned, Woolf also felt that "one touch on the [radio] switch" might summon noxious news, inferring that *she* might be responsible for admitting the infection into her sphere, and, even hastening events.

After Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940. Churchill broadcast a speech detailing "the first main clinch of the war"; a phrase inaccurately heard by Woolf, who relays it in her diary as "crunch" (*DV*, p. 279).¹³² This word is cued later, in describing her effort to write: "a crunch after the long lapse" (280). Such a slight degree of misinterpretation is characteristic of wireless, particularly if dialogue is reiterated or obscured; a technique used in *Between the Acts*, where, as Beer notes, "the ear is the arbiter of significance" and words "spring apart and reorder themselves with kaleidoscopic comedy".¹³³ For instance, the "*Digging and delving...hedging and ditching*" and reiteration of "*thorn tree*" by the elusive chorus inspires Lucy Swithin to thoughts of a

¹³² Speech to the House of Commons on April 11, relating events prior to the invasion, in which British forces were engaged.

"dagger" and provokes random observation of the orchard: "I'd cut down those trees..." someone says.¹³⁴

Equally potent in this novel is the "interrupted mind action", whereupon a snippet of sound unleashes a great wealth of past traces and flickering words. They shade into one spoken sentence, or gesture, only to disperse in meaningless "random ribbons":¹³⁵

The tune changed. "Any old iron, any old iron to sell?" 'D' you remember? That was what the men shouted in the fog...Coming back from a Ball, past the clock at Hyde Park Corner, d' you remember the feel of white gloves?...My father remembered the old Duke in the Park. Two fingers like that- he'd touch his hat...(95)

Woolf's burgeoning aural perception is denoted by a comment of June 1940, during a concentrated period of radio broadcasting apparent in the diaries -- heavy fighting in France and Churchill's rallying calls to the country. Furthermore, Elizabeth Bowen's presence at Monk's House is unsettling:

[Her] stammer had a disintegrating effect: like a moth buzzing round a flower - her whirr of voice as she cant alight on a word- a whirr of sound that makes the word quiver and seem blurred (*DV*, p. 299).

Stephen Spender, also acoustically sensitised to voice-modulation, would recall "a sense of unreality" produced by Bowen's delivery, a "long flow of anecdotes

¹³³ Beer, *The Common Ground*, p. 133.

¹³⁴ VW, *Between the Acts* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 76, 86-88, 91.

¹³⁵ Beer, p. 135.

and comments [...] just below the threshold of my hearing".¹³⁶ It is pertinent that Woolf considers dialogue with her guest to be smothered by vibration, an irritant which extends the act of waiting for a word to fall.

Melba Cuddy-Keane dismisses the idea of a "specific technological influence" on Woolf's work, yet diagnoses a "new acoustical perception closely related to the experience of *listening to* and *working with* electronic media". This gives credence to N.K. Cecil's disparaging assessment in the *Left Review* (1935), that modern writers "suffer from something like head noises and do not really handle their words at all".¹³⁷ In analysing Woolf's textual incorporation of aural stimuli, Cuddy-Keane writes that "with attentive hearing, there is, in reality, no silence". Furthering this observation, I would reassert that Woolf's sounds are often distorted and misheard; in 'training' her ears to listen, she was also vulnerable to background static.

In the context of this chapter, the issue is whether Woolf and Spender were, to any degree, *aware* of radio becoming psychically assimilated into their work, given that they clearly equated its capacities with a sense of oppression. In 'The Leaning Tower' (1940), Woolf outwardly blamed radio for instigating contemporary malaise, as writers in the nineteenth century never heard Napoleon on the air and were thus granted a kind of "immunity from war".¹³⁸ A passage of

¹³⁶ SS, *Journal*, p. 390.

¹³⁷ Melba Cuddy-Keane, 'Virginia Woolf, Sound Technology and the New Aurality' in *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. Pamela Caughie (New York & London: Garland, 2000); N.K Cecil, *Left Review*, vol. I (1934-35), p. 141. A critique of *Poems* by George Barker.

¹³⁸ VW, *Essays*, vol. II, p. 164.

Douglas Kahn emphasises politics invading art through wireless in his analysis of John Cage's *Credo In Us* (1942), a percussion piece with radio as one of the instruments. The directions were as follows: "If radio *is* used, avoid news programmes during international emergencies",

Spender's journal relates a conversation between Spender and Cyril Connolly on the disorientating effects of the war, "making people who are weak in some way crack up"¹³⁹ Even the *BBC Yearbook* of 1941 reported nervous collapse among its employees in the monitoring service, as a result of being "intensively wired" to "friend and foe alike".¹⁴⁰

The closing sequence of Patrick Hamilton's *Hangover Square* (1941) embodies this idea *in extremis*, as George Harvey Bone's disturbed brain goes "CLICK!" for the final time, causing him to strangle heartless Netta. Meanwhile, a radio unleashes the pent-up chaos:

I have to tell you now...that no such undertaking has been received...and that consequently this country is at war with Germany...

Oh, they were at it, were they, at last! Well let them get on with it - he was too busy.¹⁴¹

Areas of *September Journal* and Spender's subsequent diary entries in the first months of the war are often assembled randomly, a brainstorm of reminiscence mingled with concern over words, which break in the mind and refuse to be spelled correctly. On visiting the Hogarth Press shortly after the declaration of war, Woolf recorded Spender's writer's block: " Stephen came in. His great joints seemed to crack. Eyes stared. Is writing reams about himself. Can't settle to poetry" (*DV*, p. 236).

suggesting that wartime had inconveniently hijacked frequencies designed for freedom of expression (Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, p. 405)

¹³⁹ SS, *Letters to Christopher*, p. 201 (25 October 1939).

¹⁴⁰ E.A Harding, 'Listening Post', *BBC Yearbook* 1940 (London: BBC Publications, 1940), pp. 84-87.

¹⁴¹ Patrick Hamilton, *Hangover Square* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2001), p. 274.

Spender describes waiting for a "singular" phrase, as he feels trapped amongst an all-encompassing tangle of words. Failing to perceive a clear chain of thought, he is once again jerked back to his environment, confessing, "I have lost it. I am conscious of the bone of my forehead". Oddly, he becomes alert to his body, just as Woolf imagined him to physically revolt, to *bend*, under stress. He opines that preparing oneself for an impending radio broadcast was akin to a mini-breakdown, where the mind does little else but "stare, without crystallizing disparate emotions".¹⁴²

When the bulletin arrived, the balance could be altered, thus 'clicking' the individual into a new state of emotion -- potentially to the level of George Harvey Bone. Although Spender writes:

This morning the news about the Russo-German mutual assistance Pact came over the wireless. Although I expected it, I felt shattered when I actually heard it (189).

He wishes to "smash the radio" after a broadcast from the King on September 4, which produces a general, infuriating, effect of "colourless monotony" with sporadic jumbling, so potent as to obscure the actual meaning of his words (163). The device was innately duplicitous: it delivered a mixture of blinding clarity -- Woolf's harbinger of future chaos -- and a surface blurring which invaded the mind, as shown in Spender's Cologne incident. By definition, 'hearing voices' is a signifier of madness and greatly threatening to selfhood. In the arena of war, the

¹⁴² SS, Journal (16 November, 1939), p. 201; *Letters to Christopher*, p. 162.

In *War and Cinema*, Virilio quotes General F. Gambiez: "War abounds with suggestions and hallucinations [...] The search for psychological factors - whether depressive or tonic - helps to restore the true countenance of battle" (p. 149).

'heard' voices often seemed, themselves, to be neurotic -- constantly ushered in through radio, which also reported on a *collective* state of derangement. One paradox is that listening to the wireless was vital for maintaining some kind of equilibrium, that is, one's personal urge to stave off hysterical conjecture by being constantly *informed*.

The previous examples do not constitute an argument for Spender's mental collapse, rather a shift in the factors which compelled him to write. As Woolf wrote in 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' (1927), the "emotions that used to enter the mind whole are now being broken up on the threshold" by modern life, specifically sound technologies which speak of battle through wires.¹⁴³ Spender's meditations on Germany are rendered superficial; he suspects his memories are false, saying "it has been blown away now".¹⁴⁴ Contracted to a wire's breadth, the 'narrow bridge' of artistry was easily ruptured.

Spender's acute 'receptivity' -- an attribute noted by Woolf during the weekend retreat of 1939 -- would continue, or rather, his writing process was habitually accompanied by external sound. A note in 1978 during a trip to America indicates how early exposure in the 1930's, his wireless age, left a residue:

I feel very dissatisfied with myself. When I'm working I constantly interrupt myself, listening compulsively to music on the F.M radio. My powers of concentration really seem weak though, by writing things many many times, I seem sometimes to arrive at a result which I could have arrived at much more easily if I could really concentrate.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ VW, *Essays* (vol 1), pp. 11-23.

¹⁴⁴ SS, *Thirties and After*, p. 105.

¹⁴⁵ SS, *Journal*, p. 335.

He also despaired that much of his poetry since 1933 lacked a clear structure, appearing to be clogged with "obfuscated, obfuscating verbiage", like trailing weeds or remnants.¹⁴⁶

An American journalist, A.R Pinci, once admitted "to punctuating his space bar, as I typewrite, to whatever tempo radio sets for me": an enforced routine comparable to the dilemma faced by Woolf and Spender.¹⁴⁷ The exquisite pain of writing, for Woolf, was an internal, pulsing rhythm which punctuated all other levels. She attacks *The Waves* "at such high pressure that I can only write it for about one hour, from 10 to 11.30", striving to synchronise the various elements. After the cathartic completion, she is silent, recalling "the voices that used to fly ahead [...] when I was mad", as though the alarm calls are partially postponed. Later the question remains, "so now, what shall I work at? So many works hover over me".¹⁴⁸

Woolf perceived herself to be "a mere target for impressions"; here, she operates like an antenna, plucking out and intercepting silent signals to compliment the inner tempo.¹⁴⁹ Spender adheres to a similar principle, as "[t]houghts are plucked from the air, where they are on the wing and all that matters is to catch them".¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 346.

¹⁴⁷ A.R Pinci, 'This Is Radio-Casting Station 'H-O-M-E'', *Dearborn Independent*, 20 September 1924 (Michigan): 4-17. Cited in Catherine L. Covert, 'We May Hear Too Much': American Sensibility and the Response to Radio, 1919-1924' in *Mass Media Between the Wars: Perceptions of Cultural Tension 1918-1941*, eds. Catherine L. Covert and John D. Stevens (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984)

¹⁴⁸ VW, *Diary* (vol. IV), pp. 4, 10, 49

¹⁴⁹ VW, *Letters* (vol IV), pp. 171-72, VW to Ethel Smyth: "I am enthralled that you, the dominant and superb should have this tremor and vibration and fire around you- violins flickering, flutes purring [...] There I sit a mere target for impressions and try to catch each one as it flies [...]"

¹⁵⁰ SS, *Journal*, p. 462.

This method of composition clearly faltered under a more insistent presence: the accepted cycle of the broadcast day -- news, talks, the evening concert -- where unwelcome facts 'seep in' irrespective of the mental effort to be selective. Furthermore, the wireless regulation made "[t]ime's clock audible", a fact particularly odious to Woolf; it was reminiscent of a "pumping machine" which once dictated her creative flow into "spaces of 25 minutes".¹⁵⁰ This enforced segmentation was incongruous with an idealised 'wireless' state of creativity.

In a broadcast of 1937, Woolf attributes the complications of writing to words themselves "being out and about on people's lips", airborne and instant. Rather slurred, the recording is a notoriously poor rendition of her voice as she abruptly judders to a close, precisely enacting the title of the B.B.C series for which the talk was commissioned: 'Words Fail Me'. Woolf reworked this piece under 'Craftmanship', in *The Death of the Moth*, emphasising that "words, like ourselves [...] need privacy".¹⁵¹

She implies that the free character and over-usage of all things 'broadcast', that is, scattered, may have contributed to the death of mnemotechnology; a situation where the ancient power of words and their meaning was annulled in the chaotic public forum of twentieth century media. As Spender wrote at the close of 1939, the fear is that one may lapse "into the grooves of words which instead of expressing what I see, drag me along their lines away from it!". The image is

¹⁵⁰ VW, *Letters* (vol. IV), p. 3, VW to Vita Sackville-West: "But why am I writing so fast?... They have started a pumping machine in the hotel basement which shakes my studio: 25 minutes pumping like the tread of a rhythmical Elephant; then 25 minutes silence".

¹⁵¹ VW, *The Death of the Moth* (London: Hogarth Press, 1947), p. 132.

machinic, even suggestive of a phonograph record, which yokes the author to its "scriptal spiral", monopolising the storage of intelligence once held by written words.¹⁵²

In particular, Woolf objected to the "highflown tense voice" distinctive of radio commentary, likening it to "the imposition of personality" in writing by Meredith or Carlyle, where words seem ancillary (*DV*, p. 290). A letter to Edward Sackville West accentuates this correlation:

Did the diary ever take shape? I wish it would. I want some fragmentary but natural voice to break into the *artificial bray* to which we're condemned.¹⁵³

Such an artifice was maintained by scheduling, patterning and planning from the B.B.C -- which was generally assumed to have "a controlling mind".¹⁵⁴ Habitual listening, on the part of the writer, would enfeeble the *process* of refining words, as interruptions are readily, and seamlessly, absorbed into prose.

This condition was manifest on the page, often pronounced at certain points in Woolf's penultimate novel *The Years* (1937). For example, in the present-day section, North reads poetry to Sara Pargiter in the shadows of her dingy apartment:

Hugh Kenner observes that "[t]he real language of men is chameleon-like; words refuse to mean what they ought to, and a culture which does not observe this is a culture in decay" (*The Mechanic Muse*, London: O.U.P, 1987), p. 131.

¹⁵² *Letters To Christopher*, p. 204 (16 November 1939). See Adorno, 'The Form of the Phonograph Record' discussed in chapter 1 of this study.

¹⁵³ *VW, Letters* (vol. VI), p. 365.

¹⁵⁴ *Daily Telegraph*, 6 November 1935. A review of the radio drama 'Death at Broadcasting House'. As shown, this sentiment was flagrantly displayed in Winifred Holtby's satires.

The words going out into the room seemed like actual presences, hard and independent [...] As she was listening they were changed by their contact with her. But as he reached the end of the second verse-

Society is all but rude

To this delicious solitude

He heard a sound. Was it in the poem or outside of it, he wondered.¹⁵⁵

Here, Woolf charges poetry with a further layer of meaning when recited through the darkness from one terminus to another, both invisible. The interference, however, is not the poem resonating, but footsteps outside. This constitutes an unwelcome noise "integrated by the narrative ear", as seen in *September Journal* and also recognised by Cuddy-Keane, whose reading of Woolf's 'Kew Gardens' (1921) admirably notes "the aleatoric quality in its inclusion of ambient noise and environmental sound" like loudspeakers randomly distributed in a music hall.¹⁵⁶

Woolf's later work, therefore, intimates a growing concern with the breakdown of meaning. Treating oneself as a "gigantic ear" was conducive to encoding a cityscape, but difficult when the environment was choked with undesirable frequencies.¹⁵⁷ The passage in *The Years* shows how transmission -- from speaker to receiver, writer to reader -- is easily fractured; a sentiment often espoused in poetry of the late 1930's and early '40's. John Lehmann's 'Dialogue at a Distance' is a fine example, wherein two voices fail to successfully articulate:

The broken cloud rattles on the skylight

¹⁵⁵ VW, *The Years*, (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 273.

¹⁵⁶ Cuddy-Keane, in *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p. 84.

Rattles so loud I can hardly hear you

Your voice is not clear, I cannot see your features

A channel between, many frontiers [...]

Speak louder, for the noise of day begins.¹⁵⁸

Lehmann worked at the Hogarth Press, and was known personally to Woolf. Once again, her 'Letter to A Young Poet' (1931) emphasises a familiarity with material produced by Spender, Lehmann, and their contemporaries in response to "a thousand voices prophesying despair". It is known that Woolf heard Spender's concerns; it might also be construed that other 'Young Brainies' rashly judged her to be a stabilising force in a "tumultuous and transitional" climate.¹⁵⁹

In summary, for Woolf and Spender, the issue of apprehending -- and projecting -- words accurately, is indicated by textual trauma. A culmination of this is surely the sundering of Mr Streatfield's syllable in *Between the Acts* by an aeroplane formation, beginning as "distant music":

"...So that each of us who has enjoyed this pageant has still an opp..." The word was cut in two.

A zoom severed it (114).

Alternatively, this may be read as an opportunity for correctly received speech decisively lost: Woolf 'zooms' away from her own material, as if changing frequencies on a radio waveband.

¹⁵⁷ VW, *Between the Acts*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁸ Lehmann, *Collected Poems*, pp. 28-29.

Woolf and Spender's experience of *deliberately* listening-in to wireless bulletins, and, *inadvertently* absorbing the continual "hum & saw & buzz all around" had deeply affected their capacity as "stringer[s] together of words and words and words" (*DV*, p. 311).¹⁶⁰ As I outlined earlier, this is contrary to Benjamin's statement, echoed by Douglas Kahn, who attests that background noise complements the act of writing by providing a "nascent public imagined".¹⁶¹

As I have alleged so far, radio often asserted itself too forcibly by staining or warping a sentence, and it represented misfires in the act of communicating. Consequently, both Woolf and Spender's direct involvement in the medium itself would elicit a varied and complex response.

The Speaking Selves: Theory and Practice

It is tempting to visualise Woolf in the precincts of Monks House, endeavouring to pick up 'impressions'. Spender found her "closed-in valley" in Sussex greatly appealing, unaware that he represented "London's imminence" and a "sense of pressure", therefore grating on Woolf's desired solitude (*DV*, p. 314).¹⁶² In her

¹⁵⁹ VW, *Collected Essays*, vol. II, p. 191.

¹⁶⁰ VW, *Letters* (vol. IV), p. 397. VW to G.L Dickinson (27 October 1931).

¹⁶¹ "In other words, it is through interruption that the semblance of a continuous integrity is established [...] bringing unity to an inaudible intellectual life by providing an atmospheric dispensary for tangents as a stand-in for sociality" (Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, pp. 43-44). This, and Benjamin's view of composition, 'The Writer's Technique in Thirteen Theses' (*One Way Street and Other Writings*) is, as noted, more applicable to Winifred Holtby, who responded favourably to acoustic disturbance.

¹⁶² SS, *Letters To Christopher* (20 October 1939), p. 198.

self-perception, she resembles Bernard -- the writer-figure in *The Waves* -- whose "intelligence" floats unattached, drawing upon extraneous sound, and also Eleanor, the grand dame of *The Years*, the 'I' at the epicentre, who sits "at her table [...] digging little holes from which spokes radiate"; thus functioning as an arbitrary dispatcher -- and collector -- of waves.¹⁶³

By this maxim, one would assume Woolf to be a model broadcaster, sending poetry into the dark from a closed, controlled space. The evidence is, however, that Woolf's embroilment in radio plainly manifested her dread of dissociation, a widening schism felt toward the end of her life, when she concluded that "the writing 'I' [had] vanished. No audience. No echo. That's part of one's death" (*DV*, p. 293).

Woolf's concern is innate to humanity, quantified by Ralph Waldo Emerson who diagnosed a "condition of [...] infinite remoteness" in every act of communication.¹⁶⁴ This extols the failure of writing; a private act which automatically severs any mutuality, as argued in previous chapters of this study. Rather than achieving transliteration across the mind of another, to write is to leave words -- and their intended meaning -- to circle abroad like a spectral radio broadcast. Whilst the studios of the B.B.C restaged the philosophical scenario of interaction through walled space, it transpired that a microphone offered little certainty of interaction. One performer objected in 1927:

¹⁶³ VW, *Waves*, p. 191; *The Years*, p. 295.

¹⁶⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Consecration of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery' (1885), in *Miscellanies* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), 427-36. Cited in John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air*, p. 153.

You think [...] the operator has turned off the current, that everyone has tuned out. You wonder who these people are who may be listening, in what obscurity, in what hostility.¹⁶⁵

Graham Greene describes an encounter with 'The Box', during which several co-broadcasters apply methods of "wooing":

Satire had been tried, philosophy had been tried, I would try sentiment. As Earl Harold at William's Court spoke over the casket of saint's bones, I spoke over this box I hoped would contain the great heart of the great British public. The box did not deign a smile, not a glimmer of a glance.¹⁶⁶

Similarly, on walking home after a session for the B.B.C Talks Department in 1937, Woolf reflected that her efforts had gone unnoticed, thinking "that very few people had listened: the world much as usual" (*DV*, p. 83).¹⁶⁷ She often writes harshly with regard to her minimal radio work, talks she could never 'time' accurately:

[...] squeezing drop by drop into my 17 minute B.B.C which is alternately 25 & then 15 minutes. Curse the BBC [...] Never again. Yet of course there's a certain thrill about writing to read aloud - I expect a vicious one. And it could have been a good article. It's the talk element that upsets it (*D IV*, p. 80).

More successfully, Woolf would use these same verbal techniques to clarify and re-structure her own prose; "staring at the typewriter and speaking aloud phrases

¹⁶⁵ Gilbert Seldes, 'Listening-In', *New Republic* (23 March 1927): 140-141.

¹⁶⁶ Graham Greene, *Reflections* (London: Reinhardt Books, 1990), pp. 14-16.

¹⁶⁷ Woolf was always worried if, or *how*, she may 'come across' -- ever conscious of being 'in public'. After her photograph appeared in *Vogue*, she fretted over being reduced to a mere figure -- a *sight*. I am grateful to Catherine Galloway for this reminder.

of *The Pargiters*".¹⁶⁸ This is maddening, yet somehow crucial to refinement, as she believes the book will cohere "in a few days when I let myself write again". On occasion, mouthing sounds was clearly more liberating than the "constant effort anxiety and rush" of pen-work, the agonising "turn of the screw" (*DV*, p. 84). In outlining her idea for 'Craftmanship', Woolf muses on "new" words, easily created: "Squish squash: crick crack", adding, strangely, "[b]ut we can't use them in writing" (*DV*, p. 77).

Therefore, Woolf rapidly detected the difference between her notion of auralty worked out on paper, and official requirements of radio.¹⁶⁹ The mechanics of studio work -- constant re-recording -- seemed worth enduring for the aftermath. Woolf describes her massive relief when fleeing the "sad discreet atmosphere of the B.B.C" which was "plumpudingy" but simultaneously figured as manipulative and "myth-making" (*DV*, p. 292).¹⁷⁰

Towards the end of 1933, Logan Pearsall Smith proposed that Woolf join the B.B.C Advisory Committee on Spoken English; she initially agreed, but retracted her support on the grounds of "defective" education. "I have no special knowledge of words or their pronunciation", she claimed, "and frequently find myself at fault in pronouncing biblical or classical names".¹⁷¹ Possibly, Woolf had no intention of aligning herself with B.B.C-speak, which would prove odiously difficult to perfect in writing, yet always aroused contempt. She wrote in 1935:

¹⁶⁸ VW, *A Writers Diary*, p. 193.

¹⁶⁹ A useful comparison is VW's essay 'The Cinema' (*Essays*, vol. II, pp.270-272) where she derides the clunking props -- "A kiss is love. A broken cup is jealousy. A grin is happiness. Death is a hearse" -- all of which destroy the potentialities of the medium.

[A]t 2.30. we went to the B.B.C and listened to some incomparable twaddle - a soliloquy which the BBC requests me to imitate (*D IV*, p. 351).

In the *B.B.C. Quarterly* (July 1947), V.S Pritchett remarked on a conflict between broadcasting and the "inside writer", enquiring on the subject's state of mind when he leaves the studio and returns to the desk:

In what way does talking or having one's words spoken affect the words which are written for silence? [...] it is not easy to move quickly from a mode of writing in which not every word counts to one where every word must have its full effect. The rhythms of speech or of one's voice infatuate the pen [...] and what writers contemptuously call 'talk' pours off it. The nib loses its cracked and vigilant scratch.¹⁷²

Pritchett advised a period of "convalescence" after broadcasting; certainly, Woolf's vehement 'never again's when relaying the experience in 1937 imply mild trauma; furthermore, her diary is preoccupied with trivia -- or 'talk'-- for the next few entries, which flippantly shrouds concern over the ephemerality of her words: "by the way, no letters about my B.B.C except private ones" (*DV*, p. 85).

Pritchett explains how radio writing drops into "a hole in the air" after a couple of empty re-runs. "It will never be heard of again", he adds, " No-one will remember I wrote it". Even if an echo arrives, as Woolf found, it may reveal a mistranslation, a general inability to decode the intent:

¹⁷⁰ VW, *Letters*, vol. VI, p. 368.

¹⁷¹ VW, *Letters* (vol. V), p. 257.

[Reverend] Allington sneers at me on the B.B.C -- too clever "for myself who am only a simple person" [...] Yet I so slaver and sliver my tongue that its sharpness takes some time to be felt (DV, p. 84).

As noted, the only vestige of her short broadcasting career, 'Craftmanship', is unusually blurred and halted; the voice of a pale shadow aired to an audience who will never know what she *really* means. It seems likely that Woolf was unnerved by her own transition into the robotic voice-in-a-machine issuing impure words like a propagandist, words that have failed her. In adopting the role of broadcaster, she colludes with "the premonitory shivers and disgusts of that B.B.C", which dutifully spread the seeds of impending ruin (DV, p. 83).¹⁷³

In 1944, Cecil Day-Lewis summarised the position of writers, who, "faced with the old choice of writing potboilers" were compelled to deliver scripts for radio and documentary films, following "the startling discovery that if one wants the best words, you should go for the best writers for them".¹⁷⁴ B.B.C Talks producer Donald Boyd added that "if we want the stuff fresh from the mind, speech will be its medium" and writing should function as a purifying tool. Significantly, he

¹⁷² V.S Pritchett, 'Broadcasting About Literature' in *B.B.C Quarterly*, 1947/48 (London: BBC Publications, 1948): 77-82.

¹⁷³ Another reason for Woolf's distaste over broadcasting may be that she felt exposed as a member of the clique. Kate Whitehead's essay, 'Broadcasting Bloomsbury' charts how the radio 'chat' show was, at one level, augmented by the Bloomsbury Group, whose most "prolific output - - conversation -- was the product of proximity" and gossip (*Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 20, 1999: 181-191). However, such media exposure resulted in charges of arrogance and narrow-mindedness. Brecht's comment on radio recording is particularly apt:

"Later generations would have the chance of seeing with amazement how a caste, by making it possible to say what they had to say to the whole world, simultaneously made it possible for the whole world to see that they had *nothing to say*".

Bertolt Brecht, 'Radio - An Antediluvian Invention' in *Brecht on Film and Radio* (1930) pp. 36-38. See also Stuart Hood, 'Brecht on Radio', *Screen* vol. 20, nos. 3-4 (Winter 1979-80): 18-27

¹⁷⁴ Cecil Day Lewis, broadcast script for 'Wartime Bookstall', B.B.C Overseas Pacific Service. See also *New Writing*, no. 3 (20 June 1944).

argues "[i]f sound is the form of thought, sound must be the test of writing".¹⁷⁵

These comments typify a strain of idealism in broadcasting which lingered until the early 1950's, owing to the fact that, as George Orwell writes, "the relationship between wireless and literature [had] never been thought out". Uppermost in Orwell's mind is the concept of developing a poetry for the masses, despite radio having been "bureaucratized". I would approach his observation from separate angles, enforcing that to write *for* wireless was different from incorporating wireless *into*, or *as* fiction. During this era, both categories were practised but rarely comprehended.¹⁷⁶

In 1935, Hilda Matheson lamented the absence of "experiment or enterprise" in developing the silence of print, while Pritchett defined radio as "an intermediary without a literature of its own".¹⁷⁷ Henry Reed, while assuming drama to be the dominant form for radio, argued for a co-operative approach, whereby "authors must be encouraged to feel that their radio-writings have a permanent value", as "the serious writer [...] cannot be sure that his friends will have switched on": a important characteristic of radio work, transferred, as seen, to the actual studio.¹⁷⁸

In wartime, Day-Lewis thought his "public writing" for wireless might endure, as a new mode of expression beckoned:

¹⁷⁵ Donald Boyd, 'The Spoken and the Printed Word', *B.B.C Quarterly* 1947-1948: 146-150.

¹⁷⁶ George Orwell, 'Poetry and the Microphone' (1938) in *The Penguin Essays of George Orwell* (London: Penguin, 1968), pp. 245-252.

¹⁷⁷ Hilda Matheson, 'The Record of the B.B.C: Programme of Speech and Entertainment', *Political Quarterly*, vol. VI (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1935): 506-518.

¹⁷⁸ Henry Reed, 'What the Wireless Can Do for Literature', *B.B.C Quarterly* 1948-1949: 217-222.

By perfecting a style, many styles of its own, it may well *enable* written literature, the literature of imagination and criticism, to rediscover the sense of style it has lost.

Stephen Spender's stronger, visionary essay, 'Thoughts on the Broadcasting of Poetry' (1951) proposes a route to this new reciprocal 'genre'. Avoidance of any other model is advised, in order to engage mutual transfer of literature and wireless.

As illustration, he cites his ongoing proposal to the B.B.C itself -- twice submitted and never performed -- an "imaginary conversation between the ghosts of Trelawney, Mary Shelley, Hogg and Peacock, called 'Shelley would have loved the Wireless'".¹⁷⁹ B.B.C producers were hesitant; "A bit nervous about the title," wrote one, aware that Spender was referring to the more esoteric aspects of radio -- previously having waxed lyrical on Shelley's talent to "bring us to the verge of what is unanswerable".¹⁸⁰

Undeterred, Spender made this the pivot of his essay, outlining how the "disembodied friends" agree that 'Percy', may have scorned material in the *Radio Times*, but would certainly have seen radio as an instrument for "vocalising the whole choir of humanity".¹⁸¹ Spender writes that,

¹⁷⁹ Letter from SS to Rayner Heppenstall (11 December 1947). Held at the B.B.C Written Archives, File 1, 1932-62, Caversham Park, Reading

¹⁸⁰ Reply from Heppenstall to SS (12 December 1947): "I am also just a little nervous about this being in verse. These imaginary conversations never have been..." Accessing the dead was beyond the remit of the B.B.C; SS 'The Task of Poetry' (10 April 1943): radio script held at Caversham Park, File RCont 1 - Scripts 1936-62.

¹⁸¹ SS, 'Thoughts on the Broadcasting of Poetry', *B.B.C Quarterly* vol. VI, no. 1 (Spring 1951): 12-17.

the very terminology of wireless has something Shelleyan about it: oscillate, ariel, ether, waves, vibrations etc. A million instruments in a million rooms [...] turning a message of light into sounds, this is science in the Shelleyan sense in which it is really *social magic*, playing a humanistically religious role.

He adds that the actual process of broadcasting is reductive; "simply diffusing [...] amplifying and eavesdropping", which smothers the "genius intrinsic to the medium". Spender imagines the *idea* of wireless to be present in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, where the speakers are embodied by the mood of the poem, and fade out of existence once their lines are spoken. Woolf would agree, perceiving how, in 'Mont Blanc', the words efface one another, "overlapping like ripples" and producing "general confusion"(DV, p. 206).¹⁸²

Indeed, the "all-sustaining air" of Shelley's masterpiece carries dead souls, echoes, and voices 'auscultated' from diverse spatial points; "*from the mountains...the springs...the whirlwinds*".¹⁸³ Spender saw how "the dimension of ether" in radio would attract Shelley, a vehicle where voices are potentially from "a star, or [even] pre-history". A force of electricity is evoked in *Prometheus Unbound*, "scarce like sound; it tingles through the frame/As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strikes".

¹⁸² The language of Shelley courses through *The Waves*; generally associated with Rhoda, who, as seen, flows between death and life. See p. 171 for specific Shelleyan references. I would argue that she is *dead* here, for she visits the "circumference" of Hampton Court, only seeing with difficulty "parts" and "sides" of the room. Her friends' voices are fragmented; she is present but stands "at a distance". Crucially, she claims, "I am nothing. I have no face". Compare to the repetition of '*anam*'[I am not] in the *Wake*.

¹⁸³ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poems of 1820: 'Prometheus Unbound', A Lyrical Drama in 4 Acts: With Other Poems* ed. and notes by A.M.D Hughes (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1910), pp. 13-114.

These intimate, yet impersonal voices quantified, Spender felt, the correct way to speak through radio: merely a mask behind which lurked a continuous personality, adopted, and visited by anyone who takes the microphone. This is akin to Spender's mingling -- or receiving -- of influential traces, such as Beethoven or Eliot, into his own sense of poetic selfhood

Ultimately, the wireless mask is Spender's *realisation* of poetry itself, the elusive voice

capable of being, not the actor, or speaker - or writer - but simply those words which express the rustling of leaves, the *anguish of a ghost*, the fury or madness of a nation, the *passage of time* (my italics).

Spender may have also detected the 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' where Shelley seeks inspiration from those truly great, pursuing "high talk with the departed dead" through "many a listening chamber, cave and ruin".¹⁸⁴ In observing that posthumous voices exert a strange authority over the wireless, Spender shares Woolf's yearning for an accessible time sequence in 'A Sketch of the Past'. He considers:

That the voice of a man three thousand miles away can crystallise into sounds at the end of a wire, suggests a slight possibility that one day we will be able to pick up the voices of human beings living a hundred years ago.

Hearing a dead friend speak over the telephone would merely emphasise the innate improbability of electric technology itself. A few years later, Spender

mused that "communication between people who are not present to each other is like that between disembodied spirits" -- those envied residents of the afterlife who speak telepathically.¹⁸⁵

Dialogue with figures lost or imagined is crucial to Spender. Potentially, the wireless apparatus gives him the metaphor, or means, by which interaction may occur. In an ideal state, one would attain the level of Joyce's sleeper, whose mind Spender declared to be a "*receptive* consciousness" able to scour past and present. Whereas Woolf wished to capture voices, preventing them from morphing into lies and obscurity, Spender was interested in how they might correspond.¹⁸⁶

In 'Broadcasting of Poetry', Spender praises Orson Welles, suggesting that the panic broadcast caused mayhem for a different reason other than potential apocalypse. He explains that Welles awakened public consciousness to the essence of radio, "a medium which moves through the ether" just as alien spacecraft might annihilate distance. Recalling an early 2LO drama of a coal mine listened to in childhood, Spender is lured by this "darkness of night *between*" two terminals, a vast expanse containing messages and thoughts "on the wing".¹⁸⁷ Once again, this is a key element in the current discussion of Spender: his receptivity to a liminal space.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 78-81.

¹⁸⁵ SS, *Journal*, p. 321. This concept is discussed in chapter 1.

¹⁸⁶ Spender's comment on 'Earwicker' is from the commentary of a radio talk by Spender, 'Goethe: 'Faust'', delivered 5 April 1947. Script held at Caversham Park, File 1, 1932-1962.

¹⁸⁷ Richard Hughes' play 'Danger', broadcast January 1924; SS *Journal*, p. 462.

Poets should, he writes, be aware of the dimension merely opened by a radio set simply present in a room. Spender's ideal of radio-literature is one where the work itself resonates, where the "unsaid inner meaning" is broadcast and received, as he outlines in *The Making of A Poem*. Given that the only speakers in a radio piece are disembodied and invisible, it allows every facet of nature -- and the mind -- to be manifest. This is implied by the "spirits of pity and irony" in *Prometheus Unbound* and, notably, "the inarticulate people of the dead".¹⁸⁸ In contrast, the B.B.C had promulgated a genre dependent on theatre and film scenarios, wherein the listener expected studio personalities -- and a writer had stringent guidelines.

Particularly during wartime, Spender was employed in public relations, that is, in his own words, requisitioned by the B.B.C to "write anything, so long as it [...] will not be of the slightest value or interest" once the issue faded into history.¹⁸⁹ Unsurprisingly, Woolf advised him against such drudgery.¹⁹⁰ He frequently delivered lectures on the Indian Service, as a token authority who might impart, and unravel, the essence of Romantic thought in twenty-and-a-half minutes; one broadcast being a line-by-line reading of Shelley's 'Defence of Poetry'. "[P]ersons like you are not made for such organisations" wrote controller Z.A. Bokhari, who largely opined that Spender "accredited the young man of India with more knowledge of poetry than he actually has".¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act 1, line 183.

¹⁸⁹ SS in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 1943. Cited in Robert Hewison, *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939-1945*, p. 84. Hewison provides a stirring account of literary culture; the function and practice of writers in World War II. See also Keith Williams, *British Writers and the Media*, chapter 4, pp. 151-231

¹⁹⁰ Noted in Humphrey Carpenter, *The Envy of the World: 50 Years of the Third Programme and the B.B.C* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), p. 118.

¹⁹¹ Z.A Bokhari to SS (12 December 1943); Bokhari to SS (17 December, 1940). Held at Caversham Park, Letters File 1, 1932-1962. Bokhari refers to Spender's proposed "schedule" for

One commission, however, was important to Spender; it arose from his work at the Foreign Office which began in 1944 after a spell with the fire service. He was seconded to the Political Intelligence Branch, and subsequently accompanied an occupying force -- the allied Control Commission -- to Germany in 1945, with the task of "de-Nazifying and then re-opening public libraries".¹⁹² It also allowed him to write a coda to his conflicting memories of the pre-war years in *European Witness* (1946), described by Hugh David as a "missive from the front line".¹⁹³

The news was that Cologne had become "a putrescent corpse city" and Berlin lay so ruined that Spender treats it as a vast crypt full of sounds and relics.¹⁹⁴ He was urged by the B.B.C to secure these impressions in radio talks during 1946-47, such as 'A Visit to Hitler's Chancellory' (7 May 1946) written and delivered by Spender. These items extended to a drama for three voices, the 'Poem for New Year', a rather grim, simplistic script where the speakers are ghosts, concentration camp victims "sheeted in white" on whom is written a future legacy of sorrow and peace.¹⁹⁵

a series of talks for India called 'Turning Over A New Leaf', which ignored Tennyson in favour of Hopkins and concluded with Auden.

¹⁹² SS, *European Witness* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1946), p. 100.

¹⁹³ Hugh David, *Stephen Spender: A Portrait with Background* (London: Heinemann, 1992), p. 292.

¹⁹⁴ SS *European Witness*, p. 133.

¹⁹⁵ SS, 'Poem for New Year' (27 June 1946): radio script held at Caversham Park, File RCont 1 - Scripts 1936-62. This is a prime example of the experimental radio play of the post-war period which combined political documentary with attempts at introspective monologue. Detailed discussion of the genre is outwith the scope of this thesis; a large degree of commentary already exists. Texts consulted include Horst P. Preissnitz, 'Problems and Characteristics of British Radio Drama' in *Proceedings of the Radio Literature Conference 1978*, pp. 45-72 (Durham: University of Durham, 1978); Peter Black, *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World: A Personal Celebration of Fifty Years of the BBC* (London: Routledge, 1972); D.G. Bridson, *Prospero and Ariel: The Rise and Fall of Radio; A Personal Recollection* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1971); Jean Chothia, 'The Blindfold Medium: Early Radio Drama' in *English Drama of the Early Modern Period 1890-1940* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1996). Chothia discusses the radio play noted by Spender;

Correspondence from departmental producers indicate that Spender was a useful resource for the B.B.C during this time, as the roving reporter who could also dramatise. One script -- of a talk broadcast on 1 July 1946 -- is noteworthy in that it lent the title to his book, *The Making of a Poem*, the theme of which appears in *European Witness*.¹⁹⁶ Spender's letter to his producer, Patric Dickinson, rapidly explains how his public journey often clarified private notions of poetry:

I spent a day (while travelling) reading various books by Nazis and Nationalists, such as Goebbels and Ernst Junger [seeing] one theme, the idea of demonic possession. The depressing part of it is that these ideas are reflected in Romantic poetry [...] The pursuit of what Keats called "a life lived for sensation" has become an all-destroying sensationalism.¹⁹⁷

In his professional capacity, Spender re-read most published works by Goebbels; his diaries, the *Kampf um Berlin* and mainly, the verse drama *Michael* (1929), no doubt releasing memories of his noisy *Weimardaemmerung*. He notes that this rather rigid document of warped ideology forms a logical basis to Goebbels' attempted conquest of the modern world. The hero typically claims to be "a Titan, a God", like the Minister of Propaganda, who wanted his wireless to be all-consuming, to probe into the minds of an audience. Regarding broadcasts to Britain, Goebbels adhered to a principle that "constant dripping wears away the stone" and later in 1940, assumed "the Reich's dominance in the radio field will

Danger by Richard Hughes where "[t]he listener is trusted to join the characters in interpreting sounds" of a coal mine (p. 250).

¹⁹⁶ SS 'The Making of a Poem - Wordsworth's 'Ruth'. Broadcast and read by SS (1 July 1946).

See *European Witness*, pp. 175-192.

¹⁹⁷ Letter from SS to Patric Dickinson (16 January 1946). Held at Caversham Park.

be stronger than ever," after acquiring stations in "the protectorates and conquered territories" of Prague and Brussels.¹⁹⁸

Such a "sensational", very direct use and appropriation of radio was collectively - and personally -- unnerving; it expressed "the madness of a nation" rather than an impersonal conduit for the poetic voice. Moreover, it seemed to Spender, that the "social magic" of radio he later believed Shelley would appreciate, was actually attained by propagandists in World War II -- as a fatal inversion which destroyed rather than created connections. This may have formulated Spender's identification of Goebbels' verse drama as confirming "the intuition of poets".¹⁹⁹ In the shifting wartime boundaries, writers who were visionary (to whatever degree) could conceivably become legislators of the world.

Ironically, practising poets such as Spender suffered the consequences, in that *they* were censored, whilst more negative frequencies disrupted the airwaves. As a broadcaster, Spender would suffer the B.B.C's relentless 'blue pencil', as scripts were routinely altered to ensure uniformity. Louis MacNeice would summarise this tendency in *Autumn Sequel* (1953):

We hack and hack. What ought to soar and flame

Shies at take-off, all our kites collapse [...]

The Word takes shape elsewhere and carapaced

Administrators crouch on constant guard

¹⁹⁸ *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941*, ed. Fred Taylor (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982), pp. 95, 135.

¹⁹⁹ *European Witness*, p. 192.

To save it for business and good taste.²⁰⁰

On several occasions, Cecil Day-Lewis's talks were diluted for containing radical statements. For example, a script in 1934 elicited the following: "Must politics come into it and must such politics be so extreme?" wrote one producer, wishing to counter "violent feelings" in the listener. The amendments made Day Lewis "decidedly prickly"; he was said to feel intellectually and politically compromised.²⁰¹

Matters of style were also monitored at Broadcasting House. One letter from producer Christopher Salmon in 1941 asked Spender to amend his submission for the programme 'Writers in the Witness Box', advising against using the phrase: "most people are unaware of the fact they exist", which, considered Salmon, would strike most listeners as meaningless.²⁰²

The difficulty was, as D.G Bridson became aware, that certain work submitted to the B.B.C was "too popular for the few and too poetical for the many"; in general, Spender was advised to make his writing "more edged and abrupt".²⁰³

Internal B.B.C memos are more scathing: his translations of Stefan George vary from "intolerably obscure [and] unplayable" to "lines only fit to sing in an opera".²⁰⁴ The consensus in the establishment was one of frustration at writers

²⁰⁰ Louis MacNeice, *Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 344.

²⁰¹ Geoffrey Pocock to CDL (7 December 1934) File 1 1932-1941; Ronald Boswell to Mr Peter Stanley (26 January 1939). A memo containing 5 headings on CDL.

²⁰² Christopher Salmon to SS (31 October 1940).

²⁰³ D.G. Bridson, *Prospero and Ariel*, p. 59; Salmon to SS (10 October 1940)

²⁰⁴ Script reader's report of a SS translation, 'Danton's Death' (30 December 1952). Comment by E.J King-Bull to an A.H.D (9 September 1950). The more fearful Woolf never subjected herself to this kind of attack -- she was not prolific enough as a broadcaster to merit the criticism.

who submitted, to quote producer Douglas Cleverdon, "weakly emotional treatment of material [...] tied up with critical issues of world politics".²⁰⁵

During this time, Spender believed the B.B.C to represent the "enormous machinery for misdirecting creative energy" prevalent in wartime which supposed writers to be "wise" on popular subjects, yet easily malleable.²⁰⁶ This was the radio Spender, and Woolf, knew in actuality. As well as permeating writers' solitude with unbidden sound, a helpless contributor would find his/her words and concepts twisted, mutated and often stifled: words "cut out with a needle made of some precious stone", remarked Spender of one transatlantic broadcast, possibly recalling the fate of Bruning's voice in the Prussian Diet elections of 1933.²⁰⁷

Yet, to verify one's writing in person, over the air, was deceptive. Spender surely shared the concern of Virginia Woolf, in that his disembodied voice could really be that of an agitator, advertising B.B.C doctrine -- the party line. Perhaps he was even guilty of disturbing someone else's train of thought.

Out of Time: the late transmissions

Acoustic effigies persist through Woolf's prose, chiefly in *Between the Acts*, where, regardless of the "oracle" gramophone spewing its scraps and orts of

²⁰⁵ Douglas Cleverdon to Chris Holme (7 March 1948).

²⁰⁶ SS *WWW*, p. 272.

mimcry, the spectators can thank no-body for their entertainment. Successful discourse in the novel is an ideal soul-to-soul exchange:

Giles said- without words, "I'm damnably unhappy".

"So am I", Dodge echoed

"And I too", Isa thought (205)

It is Mr Oliver who pointedly refers to thought transmission without words, but only as a random idea.

The concept itself was only addressed in 1950 by Britain's foremost mathematician, Alan Turing. In his essay, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', he outlined an experiment where computer 'A' and computer 'B' exchange data through a telewriter interface monitored by a censor, 'C', who only received written signs. Both 'A' and 'B' randomly pretend to be human, while the third -- flesh and blood -- attempts to discern the fake. An effective machine would be proved intelligent by the failure of 'C' to specify which of the veiled interlocutors was artificial. All signs of embodiment were removed; the dialogue occurring through Turing's "discreet state machine", which, as noted by his biographer, "was like an ideal of his own life, in which he would be left in a room of his own, to deal with the outside world through rational argument".²⁰⁸

The Turing test presents the meeting of minds as though physical interaction was unimportant; it re-enacts the classic idealist image of a teleproof room or opaque

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 321.

sphere reflected upon by F.H. Bradley, or even Karl Pearson's efficient telephone exchange. This sophistry is qualified in the writings of sociologist Charles Horton Cooley, who believed that "fellowship in thought" surpassed "the destruction of distance".²⁰⁹ Such doctrine, as evinced by Turing, disregards the imperfections that constitute a mortal being, namely, the desire for the other. Miss La Trobe in *Between the Acts* must concede that hiding the body in the machine was no guarantee of triumph, as the audience never grasped her meaning.

Alex Zwerdling writes that Woolf's perpetual literary theme of human isolation is quantified by the pageant of her last novel, where each spectator is "trapped in the prison of self" with no general "coherence of interpretation".²¹⁰ They are silent broadcasters, emitting rays to no-one; Woolf realises that if shared consciousness -- a soul-to-soul transfer -- is the criterion of success, then communication is impossible, and we therefore stick in the impasse of solipsism.

The approach to war only extended this state; in 'Fable and Reportage' (1937), Spender comments astutely on the individual whose "very perception of the significance of what is going on around him often becomes a means of imprisoning him in his own personality".²¹¹ This statement evokes the early poem, 'Perhaps':

²⁰⁸ Andrew Hodges, *Alan Turing: The Enigma* (New York: Vintage, 1983), p. 423. See also 'Mechanical Intelligence' in *The Collected Works of A.M. Turing*, ed. D. Ince (Amsterdam & London: North Holland, 1992), pp. 133-160.

²⁰⁹ Charles Horton Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Scribners 1902), p. 63.

[...] Can it be that we grow smaller
donnish and body shut in our racing prison:
headlines are walls that shake and close
the dry dice rattled in their wooden box.²¹²

Afterwards, when conflict was in progress, the flimsiness of any network became apparent, as shown in the irregular, jolting relationship of Woolf and Spender themselves. At times, it dramatised elements of the wireless debate, namely, the frustration of the solitary telegrapher. Woolf 'signed' to Spender in March 1940:

[...] asking you to write me a letter. Someone said you were teaching in Devonshire - someone else that they'd seen you in London. How vanished everyone is [...] Not seeing one's friends is very depressing; not knowing what point they've reached; whether as I hope you're in the middle of a great book. Poetry? Autobiography? Fiction?²¹³

Spender was actually engaged in launching *Horizon* with Cyril Connolly, on the fabled "island of civilisation surrounded by burning churches", feeling oddly secluded and severed.²¹⁴

Four days prior to her suicide, Virginia Woolf fantasised poignantly that she and her sister Vanessa could "infuse souls", anticipating a Turingesque demand for the noiseless rustle of intelligence. This reiterates an occasion of early 1929, when Woolf noticed how her "dialogue of the soul with the soul" -- a meeting with Vanessa when both were "sunk fathoms deep in that wash of reflection" --

²¹⁰ Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1986), p. 320-321.

²¹¹ SS, 'Fable and Reportage', *Left Review 1935-1936* (London: Bodley Head, 1936): pp. 779-782.

²¹² SS, *Poems*, p. 50.

²¹³ VW, *Letters* (vol. VI), p. 384.

was never written.²¹⁵ Instead, she is consumed by routine (a rigid timetable akin to a 'radio day') and, in particular, the minutiae of literary expression: "by telephoning corrections of *Twelfth Night* to the N.S.: put in a comma, take out semi-colon; and so on".

All other media were thus proven deficient. Wireless, in theory so liberating, was in practice, the most remote of transactions. Promising the wonders of time travel, its prosaic function was to dismantle the boundaries which once preserved the individual from a troubled environment; in doing so, it accentuated the void of modernity. For, the role of a listener was to linger ineffectively -- 'standing by' the dial, just one of an atomised mass.

In *Between the Acts*, sound exists as a reminder of the abyss wherein a vital signal may be lost. Despite a chorus of intrusive surface noise, "horns of cars [...] the swish of trees", the audience waits in a kind of purgatory, for the announcement which will deliver them onto a further level:

All their nerves were on edge [...] They were exposed, without being, in limbo. Tick tick tick went the machine (207).

Waiting for the next 'tick' to legitimise one's situation -- to be as painfully "landed" as those in *The Waves* -- would inevitably result in paranoia, a mindset

²¹⁴ SS, *The Thirties and After*, p. 91; *WWW*, p. 284.

²¹⁵ VW, *A Writer's Diary*, p. 212.

regarded by Geoffrey Tandy in the *Criterion* as "an infectious ether-borne disease".²¹⁶

Toward the end of her life, Woolf would experience dissociated voices in her head; a potential relapse of an earlier breakdown when she seemed to "stumble after some sort of speaker".²¹⁷ By their resurgence, these voices were a danger signal, a personal Cassandra bell denoting a future period of suffering. It would be incautious to attribute any of Woolf's psychological deterioration to aspects of radio, although the ordeal of Spender offers a degree of support to this hypothesis. "My mind is terrible", he confessed in *September Journal* after speculating on the latest news, "but there are a dozen people worse off whom I know [...]".²¹⁸

Echoing Marinetti, the critic Catherine Covert acknowledges that "fragmentation, disjunction and consciousness pushed to the very edge of sanity" is a feature of radio broadcasting, in itself.²¹⁹ This causes perceptual confusion in the listener, which would account for traits shared by Woolf and Spender; how they became highly sensitised participators and recipients.

Covert maintains that the individual often projects his/her dominant fear onto any new cultural element, an issue compounded by Woolf's agonies over her "disparition", the vanishing self into "waste air" (*DV*, pp. 293, 357). Evidently, she was a wireless purist, transfixed by the concept of an electric spark which

²¹⁶ Geoffrey Tandy, 'Broadcasting Chronicle' *Criterion*, vol. xvii (January 1939): 288-296.

²¹⁷ VW, *Diary* (vol. IV), p. 10.

²¹⁸ SS, *Thirties and After*, p. 123.

²¹⁹ Covert, p. 212.

might retrieve lost traces of the dead, or probe the expanses of time. On that basis, she also wished to access, and express on the page, a fleeting order of consciousness somewhere in the void -- thought transference, which was *far beyond the logic* of radio. With no public to 'echo back', her work dropping into the ear of the body politic -- collectively fixed to its radio set -- she was deafened by a clash of noise and silence, admitting: I am alone, bombarded by a stream of voices, both extrinsic, and from the deepest recesses of my mind. Yet none are valid, none respond.

I would argue, however, that an answer came intermittently from Spender, who was ever responsive to faint impulses of the dead; "half-articulate" ghosts who stalk his writing. The direct tribute to Woolf, 'V.W. (1941)' is composed with decades of hindsight, casting Woolf as a visionary who transforms reality "with rays/From her wild eyes".²²⁰ One may recount Woolf's ideation of herself as the writer 'radiating' spokes into the air.

The 'echo' that Woolf sought may be detected in Spender's poem, 'June 1940' -- published in *Ruins and Visions* (1947).²²¹ It follows the time and place of *Between the Acts*: a heady, heated garden "crossed by bees/Electrified with lizards; and the voices each to each/ Speak afloat on deck chairs". Even the channel, the "raw edge of France", is visible, and, like the aeroplanes which shake the axis in *Between the Acts* by "fortell[ing] what the *Times* was saying yesterday" (213), so Spender's poem bristles with "a murmur", which disperses into "ruffled whispers". I perceive this to be a wireless set "imagining" the dread

²²⁰ VW, *The Waves*, p. 222. See also Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*; 'VW (1941)' in SS, *The Generous Days* (London: Faber, 1971), p. 19.

of invasion; German tanks cutting through "spring songs and green hedges/
Crushing the lark's nest, with a roar of smoke".

Similarly, Cecil Day-Lewis depicts a scene resonant of Woolf's novel in 'O
Dreams, O Destinations' -- *Word Over All*, 1943 -- where the 'ether-borne
disease' is starkly apparent:

All that time there was thunder in the air:

Our nerves branched and flickered with summer lightning

The glare [...]

On the roses seemed irrelevant, or a heightening

At most of the sealed-up hour wherein we awaited

What?- some explosive oracle to abash

The platitudes on the lawn?²²²

As structure, Spender's 'June 1940' broadcasts the aged speakers from separate
locations, the "ghastly last-war voices" who lackadaisically discuss world events,
just as *Between the Acts* rambles through war, refugees and the royal family. Mr
Streatfield's attempt to cohere the pageant, "Surely we unite?" (113) recurs in
Spender's line: "Then altogether, they begin/ To murmur: 'Of course we shall
win'".

Woolf's masque is a cacophony of civilisation where, as Beer writes, "mere
sparks of reference" combine with obvious signifiers -- Caesar and Shakespeare,

²²¹ SS, *Ruins And Visions*, pp. 40-43.

²²² *The Poems of Cecil Day-Lewis 1925-1972*, ed. Ian Parsons (London: Jonathan Cape and Hogarth Press, 1977), pp. 192-199.

whose fragmented recurrence points to a breakdown in continuity.²²³ Spender presents a single voice, carried on the air from the past; a soldier from World War I, who "lay down dead like a world alone". He indicates that Woolf's novel written during the "national hallucination" of peace, is an accurate piece of prehistory.²²⁴

It is of vital concern that Spender's emulation of Woolf should contain wire-less utterances. Shortly after his 'Thoughts on the Broadcasting of Poetry' (1951), he conceived a story where the dead "conduct a campaign through their voices beyond the grave, letters left, remarks in wills etc", and, primarily, the remembered sound of the person.²²⁵ On a visit to America over twenty years later, in 1976, Spender notices his tendency to unconsciously restore old contemporaries who left an impact. One example is Day-Lewis who, in Spender's dream, waits to hear a piano recording:

But I could not find the records, though I had just been playing it before I saw him. Also there was no plug at the end of the wire connecting the gramophone with the wall plug. It was just a frayed end (333-334).

After further reminiscence of Day-Lewis and Auden, Spender concludes, "I feel mildly sorry for myself in this room, knowing no-one here, with no-one calling [...]". By internally gathering the dead, does he wish them to reward him by making contact?

²²³ Beer, *The Common Ground*, p. 134.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

²²⁵ SS, *Journal*, p. 151.

In lectures to college students, he either feels inchoate, "behind a glass screen gesticulating" or exposed (355):

I then read from a brightly lit rostrum into a black void, the *unseen public* (384).

This section of Spender's journal from 1976-1979 is striking for its continual interruption by other voices; directly after this statement, he mentions Woolf, whose diaries and letters accompany his trip. Spender ostensibly 'eavesdrops' on her maliciously funny remark to Quentin Bell in 1933 about the "nice poetic youth -- big-nosed, bright-eyed" who will clearly become a "prodigious bore".²²⁶

This bears some resemblance to Spender's chagrin in 1941 over a radio broadcast by Cyril Connolly on a black-spot frequency "which (in theory) reached India". The director of this programme, George Orwell, encouraged writers to utilise this- minimal- loophole for free speech. In *The Thirties and After*, Spender writes:

[...] it came back to me that Cyril, speaking on this wavelength, had made a particularly wounding personal attack on his fellow editor on *Horizon* - myself (89).

On being challenged, Connolly explained his reproaches were "only for India", just as Woolf's jibing is 'only' to be read by Bell. Yet, as Spender knew from continual exposure to radio, the notion of a specific addressee is false. Certain broadcast words had a time delay beyond the scope of immediate transmission; forty years hence, Spender reacts to Woolf's judgement of his younger self,

adding, "[I]t's impossible not to write these lines without a sense of a reader looking over my shoulder"(J384). Therefore, Spender's sole audience in 1977 is *not* the students to whom he speaks directly, but the echo of dead writers.

Further, Spender's dream of Day Lewis evokes Woolf's device in 'A Sketch of the Past', although the mechanism is faulty, perhaps owing to a literal bout of eavesdropping the preceding day. The grating in Spender's hotel room allows voices in the next room to seep through: "inaudible gurgles" from an old lady whose son is verbally abusive. Spender records snippets of dialogue, but never fully enters the situation, like the Westcotts in John Cheever's 'Enormous Radio' who innocently alight upon solely negative frequencies: "indigestion [...] abysmal vanity and despair".²²⁷ As Spender, firstly, adhered to an idea of spiritual continuity, and secondly, allowed himself to be imbued by wireless, it follows that his act of remembering should mimic attempts at electric communication -- with its inevitable misfires and obscurity.

Spender's 'Thoughts on the Broadcasting of Poetry' is written a decade after the height of World War II. I would contest that, here, radio appeared manageable at last; once again relative to his poetic ideal. During the war, a role *within* the machinery of wireless had extended Spender's ambiguous -- and profoundly subjective -- web of sound, music and memory to another level, one where it was impossible to be rhapsodic. By nature, he and Woolf may be defined as "virtuos[i] of listening" whose sensitivity to sound, and idealistic theories of wireless communication, was betrayed by a material medium. Woolf ebbs and

²²⁶ VW, *Letters* (vol. V), p. 261-262. Spender's comment on the 'unseen public' might also be a subconscious imitation of one of Woolf's primary concerns.

flows among Spender's words, an additional 'invisible presence' to a writer accused of re-calling his biography in different forms, just as she immortalised her meetings with the young poet. Both writers figure in the other's working response to the background noise of historical context, and the potentiality of radio waves.

²²⁷ *The Stories of John Cheever* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 49-60.

5. 'He Do Himself in Different Voices'. Ezra Pound and the Auratic Pornograph.

We must take seriously [...] these radio speeches of World War II, in all their intemperateness, and try to find some meaningful link between the evil and ugly Pound so abundantly represented in them, and the good and beautiful Pound so overwhelmingly present in the poetry. [A] close study of the interplay between psychological and historical factors will enable us to approach such an understanding.

Daniel Pearlman

Is it a love poem? Did he sing of war?

Is it an intrigue to run subtly out

Born of a jongleur's tongue, freely to pass

Up and about and in and out the land,

Mark him a craftsman and a strategist ? [...]

Oh, there is precedent, legal tradition,

To sing one thing when your song means another....

Ezra Pound, 'Near Perigord' in *Lustra*, 1916.

Intro: "acephalus...jitterbug..."³¹

In 1954, Wyndham Lewis published 'Doppelganger', a tale portraying Ezra Pound, who was, at the time, incarcerated in St Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, as inmate number 58 102. Lewis's subject is a poet known as Thaddeus Trunk, who employs his talent as "majestic Word-Man" to dispatch knowledge and alter opinion:

With a lot of cracks and quips, and mouthings and rumblings (about "Yew young avant-guardistas"), and so forth, he would deliver what he wished to deliver. He would be the pedagogue or the soothsayer.³²

In love with the past, he "dies and dies and dies" in the refined air of a mountain retreat like Thomas Mann's sinister patients, spitting out incomprehensible typewritten letters to the anonymous horde "he woos and wows".³³ Tellingly, he is reduced to a "bulky phantom of Publicity" after his rational alter-ego -- the Stranger -- arrives, who reconstitutes and clarifies his words. 'Uncle Thad' is convinced of a "telepathic" phenomenon: the force of his personality has galvanised the visitor. However, his wife and followers "change Thaddeuses"; they shift their allegiances; and his lifeblood is drained away until a "shell" remains", just as Lewis perceived Pound in the asylum, his critical faculties and practical mind having departed. He is essentially a "disembodied instrument

³¹ 'Ezra Pound Speaking': Radio Speeches of World War II, ed. Leonard Doob (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 112.

³² Wyndham Lewis, 'Doppelganger' in *Unlucky for Pringle* (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1973), pp. 203-222.

³³ While at St Elizabeth's, Pound's output was immense: the *Section: Rock-Drill De Los Cantares* (1955); an anthology of Confucian translations (1954); a version of Sophocles' *Women of*

[producing] annually, perhaps, a slender volume with verses of the same matchless beauty", but without ever *saying* anything: incapable of communicating with success.

'Doppelganger' merely reasserts Lewis's opinion in 1927 of his sparring partner as a "revolutionary simpleton", fatally responsive to the "glitter of *action* kicked up by other[s]", and therefore aligning himself with the "herd" he claims to eschew.³⁴ This parasitism is a facet of Pound's instinctive need to translate and restore, functioning as a "receiver", writes Lewis, or at best "a little crowd". The figure in St Elizabeth's, its tongue agitating and lips moving to no avail, seemed to encapsulate all previous statements:

He should not be taken seriously as a living being at all [...] his field is purely that of *the dead*.³⁵

Daniel Tiffany notes that while 'Uncle Thad succumbs to his own propaganda, the doppelganger is "an emblem of the real ghosts" within Pound's poetic practice, "his susceptibility to things that disappear and return again".³⁶

Furthermore:

What difference would it make to the history of Anglo-American poetic modernism if we were to read Pound as a poet whose progress begins and ends in the realm of the dead, the author (and protagonist) of a literary odyssey culminating in a political *inferno* haunted by his earliest poetic principles? (81)

Trachis, and countless articles to journals and newspapers. He was also estimated to produce at least one thousand letters a year.

³⁴ Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), pp. 39-40.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 69

³⁶ Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University press, 1995), p. 81.

The basic tenet of this chapter develops an idea raised by Tiffany, that Pound's journey is logically traceable: the road to the "bughouse" and his subsequent abstract state -- epitomised by Lewis's mannikin -- are, in part, a reaction to stimuli other than contemporary politics.³⁷ Tiffany's thesis -- though vital to the present discussion -- is problematic, in that he attempts to revise the gamut of Pound's aesthetic ideology, "a preoccupation with death and memory that impedes his formalist agenda" (20). In summary; he asks:

Should we begin to think about the radio broadcasts as a culmination of the *radiology* of the Image, a discourse of radio pictures [...] the light of reason made invisible and displaced along the magnetic spectrum? [...] whether a theory of autonomous images bears any relation to the rise of state fetishism [and] the collapse of subject and artifact into a new medium "half-way between writing and action" (25).

The central premise of Tiffany's "perilous restaging" is in fact death and mourning, the "necrophilic dimension" (26-27) of Pound's modernist poetics and his use of radio; one stemming from grief over Henri Gaudier-Brzeska -- the young sculptor who died in the trenches during 1915.⁸ Tiffany plots how a lingering "fascination" (29), an "illicit infatuation" (159) with death, causes Pound's "Decadent interests" -- his mediation with ghosts -- to be exhumed in Imagism, an ideology which seeks to "converse *directly* with things" (26). It is precisely this obligation to discuss every cognate term, which prevents the kind of scrutiny demanded.

³⁷ "Ezra Pound Speaking", p. 27. Henceforth, all references to the Rome broadcasts will be in the text.

For example, he proceeds to explain how "the technological face of Pound's Image is riddled with ghosts, vortices and ideograms" (41) presided over by Gaudier-Brzeska's phantom: to be precise, the disfiguring absence of Gaudier, which prompts the memoir of 1915 -- a "literary crypt" (89), or "translational space" from which a constellation of dead voices are gathered. Tiffany objects to existing theory which notes the mediumistic nature of Pound's poetry -- the art of memory, and so forth -- yet he withdraws from the "pre-supposition of mediality" that the verse contains (69). Therefore, it proves frustrating when Pound's broadcasts are repeatedly invoked, but only swerve into focus during culmination of Tiffany's analysis -- via the conduit of radioactivity as "phantasmic *substance* of the Image" and a "genealogical tracing of the ideogram" to tribal "drumming languages" (222, 234).⁹ These are most seductive arguments which nevertheless leave little space for acoustics, or Pound's affinity to radio: a medium "always present", Tiffany adds hurriedly, at every level (234).

As a rejoinder to such a dense argument, this chapter proposes a more concerted investigation into select areas of Pound's work, enlarging upon details often submerged by Tiffany. I would insist that radio is not merely an enabling conceit -- such as "a translation of Gaudier's phantom" -- but the site of extreme paradox and intensity (275). This causes any examination of Pound's behaviour to be equally riven with contradictions. Nevertheless, it will be apparent that

⁸ Tiffany may be developing Paul Virilio's contention: "Rest never comes for those transfigured in war. Their ghosts [...] most frequently find reincarnation in an engine of war" (*War and Cinema*, p. 61). This, however, is not observed anywhere in Tiffany's text or bibliography.

⁹ Tiffany makes a connection between Pound and Marshall McLuhan's pioneering study of media, noting: "In all probability, McLuhan's favorite analogy for radio - the tribal drum - is

disembodied sound was an overriding influence on certain Cantos, and that Pound's *appropriation* of that sound -- the radio speeches -- proved to be simultaneously atomizing and cumulative.

While acknowledging recent criticism, the chapter will resist discussion of the Image, as most connections are sufficiently observed elsewhere.¹⁰ Instead, it endeavours to retain a single visualisation of 'sound', in the form of the shamed Thaddeus Trunk who is punished for the crime of, effectively, losing his head. Or, as Pound explicitly indicates in the notes for his final Cantos, "That I lost my center/ fighting the world".¹¹ Another barbed tribute by Elizabeth Bishop, 'Visits to St Elizabeth's' describes a "talkative man", an "honoured" man, and lastly a "wretched" man, who lies in the house of Bedlam -- a sort of purgatory with ample time to reflect on lost voices and past deeds.¹² Timothy Materer writes:

If such a man (who has "immense energy") chooses the wrong mask, he is driven into all sorts of temporary ambitions [and] spends his life in *oscillation* between the violent assertion of some commonplace pose and a dogmatism which means nothing apart from the circumstance that creates it.¹³

borrowed from Pound's interest in primitive 'drumming languages' developed in relation to the ideogrammic method" (pp. 280-281).

¹⁰ Vincent Sherry, *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Radical Modernism*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). This highly competent study plots the shift in Pound's Imagist-fuelled aesthetic to "the specifically *vocal* spin that Pound puts on his grave verbal play" (143). However, Sherry also affords little treatment of the radio broadcasts, finally observing the "antithetical temperament" surrounding the medium (195), but considers it ancillary to Pound's transition of 1921, that is, the endeavour to "subdue the physical body of language to the form-making faculty of epic design", seemingly inspired by Eliot's 'He Do The Police In Different Voices' (145).

¹¹ Pound, *Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX- CXVII* (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 32.

¹² Elizabeth Bishop, 'Visits to St. Elizabeth's' in *Elizabeth Bishop: The Complete Poems* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1969)

¹³ Timothy Materer on 'Doppelganger', *Paideuma* 11 (1980): 214-216.

Such commentary invites research into the "circumstance" fuelling Pound's radio persona -- if it were so. Materer implies it to be a gradual process, of which the expression of fascism is a constituent. Moreover, when considered alongside the fictions by Bishop and Lewis, these lines indicate how, in the asylum, Pound appeared to waver and fragment, rather like the disseminated words -- publicly uttered -- which had landed him there in the first place.

Charged (Up)...

On 26 July 1943, Pound was indicted for treason by a Grand Jury in the District of Columbia alongside eight other 'broadcast traitors' who were also charged, for "knowingly, intentionally, wilfully, unlawfully, feloniously" speaking on Axis propaganda radio.¹⁴ This action implied a conscious decision to adhere to the enemies of the United States; in the case of Pound, his bi-weekly talks on Rome Radio between 1941-1943, transmitted twice a week to America and occasionally rebroadcast to England and Australia. Following the Italian surrender on 8 September 1943, and Mussolini's escape aided by a German commando operation, the Repubblica di Salo was installed on the western shore of Lake Garda. Invited to visit the headquarters, Pound pledged loyalty, and was re-engaged to broadcast "along the same lines" as his Rome material.¹⁵ When the

¹⁴ Cited in C. David Heymann, *Ezra Pound: The Last Rower* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 92.

¹⁵ Tim Redman, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 233-234. Redman documents the period between the formation of the Republic on 23 September 1943 and Pound's arrest in early May 1945, which is minimally treated elsewhere. He

radio station relocated to Lake Como, Pound continued to send scripts to Carl Goedel at the German consulate in Milan.

Pound's initial steps towards the microphone are widely discussed, and known to be partly financial. "A German near my home at Rapallo told me they were paying good money for broadcasts" he confessed, although some critics, namely Tim Redman, point to Pound's desire to act as "unofficial admonisher of the Italian propaganda service [...] a collector and summariser of important news items from the American and European press", which would certainly indicate a willingness to aid and abet Mussolini's regime.¹⁶ Writing to Luigi Villari, a member of the Ministry for Popular Culture, Pound asserted that "IF a propaganda dept. don't KNOW what is being HEARD and said and repeated in another country how theetc/ can it PUT any idea whatsoever INTO that country?"¹⁷

This rather grandiose idea of himself as a conduit for external affairs was, however, secondary to Pound's growing urge for direct action, for a "Megaphone to shout out this or that to deaf americans"; a distinct move from, as John Tytell observes, "the selective arranger of sounds and words to the doer of deeds".¹⁸ Aside from listening to these broadcasts or consulting Leonard Doob's compilation -- based entirely on Pound's typescripts from which he pre-recorded

writes that Pound was specifically approached by the new English propaganda service ; to "galvanise the situation". A useful correlative work is F.W. Deakin, *The Last Days of Mussolini* (London: Penguin, 1966).

¹⁶ E Fuller-Torrey, *The Roots of Treason* (London: Sidgwick Jackson, 1994), p. 158, quoting *The Philadelphia Record*, 29 November 1945. See also Redman, p. 207.

¹⁷ Letter to Luigi Villari, of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 December 1940. Cited in Redman, p. 207.

¹⁸ John Tytell, *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano* (London: Bloomsbury, 1987), p. 269.

the speeches -- a most accurate summary of Pound's microphone manner is by Joseph Cary, who finds:

[A] patriot-expatriate become a ranting Minute Man, sometimes inarticulate, occasionally vicious [...] a farrago of wise-acreing on bits and pieces of history and political and economic theory; of aversion to the gimcrack present coupled with a deep nostalgia for the fabulously patrician empire of Adams and Jefferson [...] and finally of a sputtering anti-Semitism based partly on the village explainer's automatic suspicion of all foreign elements.¹⁹

Each separate element -- history, the cult of money, and bigotry -- occupies a vast area of debate in relation to Pound's endorsement of Fascism; yet, for these purposes it is vital to add that, on the radio, Pound entangled them into his course of 'study' for the listener, who had been "MISinformed" by the Roosevelt administration (*RB* 25), a corrupt regime supposedly operating a "false accounting system" (*RB* 214) and overrun by "a kike gang" (*RB* 135) wishing to extend the war for financial gain. He claimed superior insight on "the questions that are NOT discussed in certain circles, explaining "that is the use of THIS radio, of me on this radio" (281) aiming to speak "a true record" (246). Notably, in one broadcast intended for Britain, Pound complains about the "rotten" press clogged with tradition, chiding, "[y]ou can't expect me to stenograph all your noises", as though he is, as always, the translator: one who may clarify (135).

¹⁹ Joseph Carey, *Paideuma* 9 (1980): 214-216.

In his essay on Adolf Hitler's superstitious beliefs and practices, Raymond L. Sickinger discusses the role of the "shaman" in the ancient world, who generally "served a political function by advising political leader. Too unstable to the "handed the reins of power, [the] shamen or sorcerer-priest is frequently classed as a psychopath. In spirit, he flies up to heaven, descends to hell [...] he receives messages from the dead, communes with spirits. But his mental balance is insecure and he is easily 'unhinged'".

Raymond L. Sickinger, 'Hitler and the Occult: The Magical Thinking of Adolf Hitler', in *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 34. 2 (Fall 2000): 107-125, at 115.

Moreover, the tone is consistently instructive: "Ezra Pound trying to tell you" (RB 121); "I am trying, still patiently trying to excite a little curiosity..." (270), often merging into a fervent "I insist" or "I propose" (217). L.S.C. Bristow argues for Pound's confidence in transmitting "unanswerable data", on the premise that his listeners "are not competent enough to sustain their side [...]".²⁰

Bristow assumes that Pound's method of linking his broadcasts is a conscious effort to thwart 'conversation' with his idiotic audience. This seems contrary to Pound's concern that he spoke into a void, "going it blind" as he confessed to William Joyce.²¹ Realistically, he could hope for "some fellow in a newspaper office sittin there, trying to get something for his column"(RB 227). Bristow's essay implies that Pound had the controls, inviting questions, closing arguments, and so forth, when it is evident he lectured into an empty auditorium. Consider the end of Speech 33: "This is my war alright [...] My Grandad was in it before me" (RB 120); to be reasserted in the following broadcast: "I said last time that my grandad had been in it before me" (121).

²⁰ L.S.C Bristow, "God, my god, you folks are DUMB!!!: Pound's Rome Radio Broadcasts" in *Ezra Pound and America*, ed. Jacqueline Kaye (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 18-42. This corresponds to Hudson Maxim's work on the power of words, which Pound read during the formative years in London. For example: "suggestive language tends to inhibit the critical powers of the mind, [causing] thought to be accepted on faith without examination or analysis. Hence, suggestive language is most effective when understanding is not awakened. The mother's 'By-Low, Baby-By is void of idea [...] the usual speech of the street-preacher or the demagog [sic] is a step higher, but similar in Nature; it is not burdened with ideas". Hudson Maxim, *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1910), p. 81. Paradoxically, Pound's broadcasts were filled with concepts and explanations.

²¹ The Pound/Haw-Haw correspondence is at Yale. Three letters are cited in Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1988), pp. 592-593. In June 1941, Pound wrote: "Dear Joyce [...] Present schedule I am supposed to be shot over the air at 4.10 a.m twice a week Tuesday and Thursday which I don't hear as I have only medium wave receiver". Of the Salo broadcasts, Pound also mentioned they "[were] not on any wave-length I ever heard in Rapallo" (*Helix* 13/14, eds. Les Harrop and Noel Stock (Ivanhoe, 1983): 130.

This is not support for Bristow's idea that certain issues are "beyond argument", rather that Pound refuses to acknowledge the fissure between talks. His urge to maintain coherence -- "[T]here IS a sequence.." (RB 191) -- suggests that his unbroken wireless "monologue" (RB 367) was designed to stretch thinly over a yawning silence, *within* which important responses were lost. This mirrors Gilbert Seldes' statement of 1922, that the intangible audience was potentially hostile.²² By that maxim, the broadcaster was not merely yammering desperately into oblivion, but perhaps causing more offence when his signal was finally apprehended.

Bristow's concept of an "articulating structure" in the broadcasts fails to incorporate the mechanics of radio itself; how a broadcaster invariably turns inward. In speech 48, Pound asks, "Do you follow me? Or am I to be once more accused of speakin' in a ramblin' manner?" even though this charge is imagined, and possibly self-induced (RB 177). Such a response is no luxury, as Bristow implies in his presentation of Pound's audience-of-one. Rather, it constitutes a polypsychical, shattering effect as favoured by Daniel Tiffany, who sees the Rome broadcasts as "gripped [by] a massive case of stage fright".²³

One can see that Pound's foray into a radio-space merely accentuated his role of solitary reformer; possibly, he felt the need to concretize the situation further. He believed the talks corresponded to his *duty* as an American citizen -- one of the

²² Gilbert Seldes, 'Listening In', *New Republic* (23 March 1927), 140-41: "The microphone, which seems so alive with strange vital fluids when you begin, goes suddenly dead; you think that somewhere in the next room the operator has cut off the current; that everywhere everyone has tuned out. You wonder who these people are who may be listening, in what obscurity, with what hostility". This was keenly felt by Virginia Woolf.

²³ Tiffany, p. 228.

invisible mass to whom he spoke. This is shown in an oft-cited letter to Adrian Ungaro shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbour, 7 December 1941:

Even if America declares war on the Axis, I see no reason [...] why I should not continue to speak in my own name, so long as I say nothing that can in any way prejudice the results of [...] the armed forces of the U.S.A or the welfare of my native country.²⁴

Unfortunately, while Japanese bombs rained on the U.S Pacific Fleet two days earlier, Pound's 6 p.m. broadcast talk 'Those Parentheses' referred to a "Nippo-Chinese invasion" which might civilise western sloth and "dirt" (*RB* 21).

Fully aware of his precarious position, Pound exerted his brand of nationalism more forcibly. For example, one broadcast has an oddly protective tone, deploring American intervention on the grounds of high-ranking stupidity: "most of them have not made any adequate use of [...] fragmentary fragments of knowledge as they possess" (*RB* 170). As stated, Pound sought to volunteer his own wisdom, as an archive of extensive data worthy of being "emitted", thus providing a service which *connected* areas of relevance (394). The dutiful listener would "TRY to get the main threads and cables" of an information overload (191). In Pound's view, this was a most necessary function, as he noticed American radio was "silent, partly from ignorance" (186) and the B.B.C. kept "so gingerly OFF all the ground where there is ideological COMBAT" (89). Once again, Lewis's 'revolutionary simpleton' is manifest:

²⁴ Letter to Adrian Ungaro, 9 December 1941, cited in Torrey p.160f, also Redman, p. 213-214.

He *opens* all doors, as it were - whether there is anything inside or not. He exclaims; he points excitedly to what he believes to be the herds of wild horses that are constantly pouring out of the doors flung dramatically open by him.²⁵

Pound heard the news of his indictment via the B.B.C -- the whining bastion of "crass imbecilities" (RB145) and "brain monopolisers" (154) with voices like "an advertisement for Bird's custard" (270). He responded immediately, forwarding a letter to Attorney General Francis Biddle which affirmed his general objective to "protest against a system which creates one war after another" rather than the minutiae of the present conflict.²⁶ Indeed, as Redman points out, the real war hardly permeates the radio speeches, with the exception of 27 April 1943 when Pound suggested the American troops in North Africa should withdraw immediately. This opening gambit, however, was smothered by more worthy concerns: "Jew-ruined England", and the "Jerusalem synagogue radios from London and New York" (290) who exert a greater influence over the G.I. than "ole Ezry speaking" (178).²⁷

Hence, this chapter intends to show how Pound's fight -- a symbolic one -- was accentuated by his involvement in radio, which he did not *use* as a device to provoke unrest, but rather *experienced*, firstly as an extension of his journalism --

²⁵ Lewis, p. 27.

²⁶ Letter from Pound to US Attorney General Sir Francis Biddle, 4 August 1943. Fully quoted in Carpenter, pp. 624-625.

²⁷ Pound's conviction, that a Jew-oriented network of malevolent forces had occupied the media, informs a large degree of the broadcasts, and widely observed in most biographies. See also Daniel Pearlman, 'Ezra Pound: America's Wandering Jew', *Paideuma* 11 (1980), 461-480. Additionally, Alice Yaeger Kaplan writes on mass communications as a site of Fascist invective in *Reproduction of Banality: Fascism, Literature and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). A case study is the journalist Robert Brasillach who complained "Radio had a Yiddish accent" (34). Another comparable area is outlined in M.A. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) which includes a CD of speeches, often violent: "[...] Jews controlling the press! Jews running the film

"freedom of speech in a radio age"-- and eventually as a marker, or extension, of his poetic self. A phrase by Antonin Artaud is appropriate:

Two roads were open to him
That of the infinite outside
that of the *infinitesimal* inside.²⁸

"Nobody here ASKS me to be political", Pound explained, thus stressing his autonomy, and evident chagrin at being sidelined by official propaganda (*RB* 375). John Tytell adds that Pound was perceived, in Italy, to be conducting a deeply personal and rambling "feud" saying "anything he had on his mind to anybody".²⁹

This was in marked contrast to objectives of the *Buro Concordia* in Berlin, which owned a number of 'secret' radio stations purporting to represent British disaffection; in essence, a factory of demagogues. Martin Doherty discusses individual employees of the *Buro*, and makes useful distinctions between the impulsive propagandists and those "with real knowledge of military [...] tactics and strategy".³⁰ Chiefly, the cult of William Joyce, often orchestrated by Goebbels himself, who remarks in a diary entry of May 1940, "*I have* Haw-Haw flay Churchill over the wireless about the as yet unacknowledged shipping losses". Joyce, affectionately dubbed "the best horse in my stables" by the Minister of Propanda, had a clearly defined role, whereas other scriptwriters and

industry! Jews owning all stage interests! Jews governing dominions! In fact, Jews! Jews! Jews! Yids!" (anonymous broadcaster 9/9/40).

²⁸ Antonin Artaud, 'To Have Done With the Judgement of God' (1947) trans. Clayton Eshleman, in *Wireless Imagination*, eds. Kahn and Whitehead, pp. 309-329.

²⁹ Tytell, p. 261.

broadcasters on 'black' stations such as *Workers Challenge* or *Radio National* were inconsistent in their motives.³¹ For example, some of the speakers were P.O.W's, reportedly "forced" into co-operation despite energetically producing Nazi diatribe; however, as Doherty notes, only a select number of British 'radio traitors' displayed the "intention" to work for National Socialism.³²

It is significant that only John Amery, dissolute son of Leo Amery M.P, actually approached the wireless authorities, like Pound, hoping to "address his compatriots at home".³³ Pound's remark to his friend Harry Meacham, that only after "insistence and wrangling" was he allowed to "GET HOLD" of a microphone, is indicative of the problematic nature of Pound's treason.³⁴

Firstly, while consciously expressing the urge to broadcast, Pound does not fall into the category of radio propaganda evoked in W.A. Sinclair's pamphlet of 1940, *The Voice of the Nazi*. Obviously aware of Goebbels' methods to arouse "hatred and suspicion", through [to use Pound's phrase] "the personae now poked into every bleedin' 'ome and smearing the minds of the peapull", Sinclair considered the Hamburg broadcasts forceful enough to compile a handbook denoting "tricks of the trade" for future interpretation and comfort.³⁵ Pound did

³⁰ Doherty, p. 8.

³¹ Joseph Goebbels, *Diaries 1939-1941*, trans., Fred Taylor (London: Sphere Books, 1982), pp. 122, 90.

³² See also Rebecca West, *The Meaning of Treason* (London: Virago, 1982), pp. 101-104.

³³ Amery's rootlessness suggests another- uncomfortable- parallel with Pound; described by Doherty as "a roving propagandist", who plead guilty to a charge of high treason on 28 November 1945, and was subsequently hanged on 19 December. Oddly, Doherty's evaluation of William Joyce might also apply to Pound: "[A] highly intelligent, articulate and well-read individual who by all accounts could be personable, thoughtful and humorous [...] But there was another, deeply unattractive Joyce - the bullying fascist, the obsessive conspiracy-theorist, whose bizarre ideas and flights of fancy must at times have made him sound absurd [...]" (p. 186).

³⁴ Quoted in Tytell, p. 260.

³⁵ The oft-cited letter from Pound to Ronald Duncan, 31 March 1940, *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. D.D. Paige (London: Faber, 1951), p. 342. W.A Sinclair, *The Voice of the Nazi*:

not speak to engender fear -- 'No Haw-Haw he'-- a caption in *Time* magazine declared; indeed, his rants were thought to be, initially, in code. The notion of Pound as a double agent is interesting, if only to prompt a study of his broadcast language, but also as an adequate explanation of the fantastical state Pound imagined for himself. Using the Megaphone he was, primarily, helping America to "oil up the machine, and change a few gadgets" by understanding Fascism, and secondly, cutting and pasting Allied information for Mussolini (*RB* 205). Surely a multifaceted and deeply addictive role: the investigative journalist who functions as receiver and diffuser.

Therefore, given that radio became the platform for this purpose, it should be reasserted that any debate on Pound's treason must include his antithetical -- and emotional -- response to the medium itself. When Natalie Barney "fled the village" (*RB* 237) after leaving Pound a radio set, he wrote:

God damn destructive and dispersive devil of an invention. But got to be faced [...] If anyone is a puurfekk Hercules, he may survive, and may clarify his style in resistance to the devil box.³⁶

By 'style', Pound is referring to written words, and how they are irrevocably altered by oral delivery; chiefly, the "histrionic developments in announcing", and dissemination of "*persanae*" [sic]. His statement is incredibly layered, in that 'style' is also figured in the act of speaking. For instance, in the preface to *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*, Pound describes a radio speech of the Duce, "speaking very clearly four or five words at a time, with a pause, quite a long

Being Eight Broadcast Talks given between December 1939 and May 1940 (London: Collins, 1940), p. 31

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Pound to Duncan.

pause between phrases to let it sink in".³⁷ Vincent Sherry notes that this corresponds to Pound's own rarified poetic:

Does the authoritative mien of Mussolini's speaking style- the method of poetic ideogram dressed up in the emperor's new clothes- reflect the poet's defiance of the normal working of words?³⁸

If so, then perhaps Pound thought he could 'speak sense' on the radio -- his 'style' was already a measure of clarity. By climbing inside the devil box, he was performing a Herculean act of resistance: a freedom fighter unearthing truth from "the fake in the voices".³⁹ This inspires the current enquiry, which aims to demonstrate how certain elements of poetry, sound, and ideology combined to produce a charge of treason, with the resulting penance of trauma.

In "not speakin' officially", with nothing "to go by save my own intuition" (*RB* 148), Pound was, nonetheless, aware that his stance would not be understood, or appreciated (*RB* 148). In March 1943, shortly before his indictment, he predicted:

My talks on the radio will eventually have to be judged by their content. Neither the medium of diffusion nor the merits or defects of my exposition can be the final basis of judgement. The contents will have to serve as that basis (*RB* 261).

His letter to Francis Biddle in July refrained from outlining his antithetical, emotive response to radio; in fact, the argument is very lucid, showing awareness of the treason charge and its consequences. He opened a debate as to whether the "simple fact of speaking over the radio" was genuinely seditious, adding "I think

³⁷ Pound, *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (London: Stanley Nott, 1935), p. vii.

³⁸ Sherry, p. 178.

that must depend on *what* is said, and on the motives for speaking".⁴⁰ As suggested, his own reason was far too complex; the public utterances lingered to cause outrage.

Some American intellectuals were eager to categorize Pound as a fascist hireling, chiefly Arthur Miller:

[I]n his wildest moments of human vilification Hitler never approached our Ezra. For sheer obscenity Ezra took the cake. But more, he knew all America's weaknesses and he played on them as expertly as Goebbels did [...] His stuff was straight Fascism with all the anti-Semitism included.⁴¹

Miller sees Pound as a master-propagandist skilled in technique, such as the specialists referred to in W.A. Sinclair's pamphlet, who elicit the feeling in the listener that "there is something wrong somewhere, and yet we cannot always disentangle the truth from the falsehood".⁴²

The second indictment, served 26 November 1945, accused Pound of encouraging racism and disparagement of the U.S. government, of "proposing [...] methods by which ideas and thoughts could be disseminated".⁴³ Namely, Pound's random reading list to his listeners, which consisted of excerpts from works by Aristotle, John Adams, Jefferson and specific texts such as Enrico Pea's

³⁹ Letter to Duncan.

⁴⁰ Julien Cornell, *The Trial of Ezra Pound*, (London: Faber, 1966), p. 9.

⁴¹ Lion Feuchtwanger, Arthur Miller, Norman Rosten, and Albert Malz 'Should Ezra Pound be Shot?' in *New Masses*, 25 December 1945. Similarly, one summary of William Joyce considered him "horribly persuasive [because] it was clear he knew his way around the British psyche and could exploit it by translating the horrible Nazi dogma into something he reckoned might reasonably be accepted in English suburbs, and I dare say sometimes was" James Cameron, *The Manchester Guardian* 19 February, 1979; cited in Doherty, p. 191.

Moscardino: "As soon as the barriers are down I shall be sendin' a copy along for the enlightenment of the American public" was the promise (*RB* 8). Pound's objective, to speak "a true record", became virtually obsolete; even those who considered him a viable, and dangerous, source of propaganda had to sift through information, through all the false leads and *fakery*. For Pound, this would prove a weighty issue.

A full consideration of Pound's charge and trial is beyond the scope of this chapter; it is meticulously treated elsewhere. Most critics agree that treason, particularly in wartime, is not easily definable; as Tytell points out, Pound's broadcasts may have been permissible, if appalling, had he delivered them in the U.S., "but of course it is exactly to the point that he did not" (272). The article by Conrad L. Rushing is consistently adhered to, wherein the trial of Pound was deduced to be a non-event. Theoretically, it became a mere proceeding to determine if he was competent to stand, having been loosely judged insane and crucially devoid of judgement.⁴⁴

According to Rushing, the U.S. dictum of "one cannot, by mere words, be guilty of treason" is paramount to Pound's case, although in the sphere of radio propaganda, the transmission of an idea seemed equally damaging. The words would be "inquired into", dissected and reinterpreted, which was, adds Rushing "something a poet might expect".⁴⁵ They were also rearranged; Pound's own

⁴² Sinclair, p. 46.

⁴³ Redman, p. 230.

⁴⁴ Conrad L. Rushing, "Mere Words': The Trial of Ezra Pound,' *Critical Inquiry*, Chicago (Autumn 1987): 111-113.

⁴⁵ Particularly if he had read Maxim, who considered that "a spoken thought is but the repetition aloud of the thought already uttered in the mind" (Maxim p. 76).

transcribers -- the Federal Broadcast Intelligence Service of the Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C) -- were unable to contend with obscure phraseology and poor reception. Hugh Kenner points to the heard-version of Canto 46, delivered on 12 February 1942, wherein the word 'Zoagli' is supposedly 'horizon'.⁴⁶ Continuing his essay on the rhetorical figuration of Pound's broadcasts, L.C. Bristow briefly focuses on these mediated documents, adding that although the F.C.C auditors were habitually attentive, they were "anything but the 'fit audience' to which a poet and essayist can appeal".

So, Pound's most regular listeners were not really *listening*; Bristow rightly observes that while his messages were finally answered, there was, of course, no arena for discussion. The substitute was an indictment, "addressed not to the content of his broadcasts but to the act of his making them".⁴⁷ Pound was not accused of 'rambling' as he had feared, but overt eloquence, cold and graphic.

Ironically, one transcript presented at the sanity hearing was 23 April 1942, where Pound advised any "lone watcher or listener [to] make notes" so as to find his "POINT" amongst the other transmissions (*RB* 104). As these were re-delivered in the courtroom, Pound may have been horrified at the incompetence of his amanuenses, translating evils the writer "never intended to put there".⁴⁸ Alternatively, his words may have finally solidified and become frighteningly *important*, when he had assumed they were lost in the ether. Another voice was speaking his broadcast musings, solid in their harshness, on the kikes bleedin'

⁴⁶ Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 446.

⁴⁷ Bristow, at pp. 38-39.

⁴⁸ See also Cornell, pp. 140-142.

and swindlin', the traitor Roosevelt. His early instincts proved correct; the radio was indeed "destructive and dispersive" in a very personal sense. Pound's letter to Ronald Duncan about the "devil box" had ended with one of his startlingly portentous statements: that an individual succumbing to overt radio exposure may be "druv to melancholia crepitans" -- the brink of depression and madness.

...and Irradiated.

In the final months of 1945, Pound was continually stopped, started and silenced, while the dispute over his state of mind gathered momentum. Shunted between the infirmary and a "bull pen" in the District of Columbia courthouse, he spoke of claustrophobia whilst the international press catalogued a tide of vengeance following Nuremburg. On the day of his repatriation, 18 November 1945, the headlines screamed: 'BELSEN BEAST, 10 OTHERS MUST HANG FOR DEEDS'. Once again, Pound's broadcasts were reconstituted; ironically achieving a forum, at last, in the *Washington Post* where choice snippets of bigotry appeared under a caption: 'Benito's Boy'.

In view of this climate, critics -- mainly Fuller-Torrey -- are eager to ascertain Pound's compliance with the insanity plea. Torrey sees "a plan for a defense" (186); the poet was actively "practising eccentricities" (194). Other arguments centre on Pound's culpability, the nebulous blanket charge itself, and his compliance with an indeterminate sentence at St Elizabeth's; all of which are

debated rapidly and simultaneously. Upon suspending further debate on Pound's tactics, it is preferable to focus on certain psychiatrists' reports which elicit symptoms of delayed shock, through peculiar verbal manifestations.

Pound suspected he lost his "grip" on arrival in Washington, as his energies were tampered with by Drs. Winfred Overholser, Marion L. King, Joseph L. Gilbert and Wendell Muncie at Gallinger Hospital, Washington, who consistently probed and galvanised him into speech.⁴⁹ During the trial on 13 February 1946, whilst Pound stood mute, the four delivered similar reports on how his words, delivered with telegraphic urgency, were easily distracted; King in particular noting how Pound "should not be interrupted" during a "flow".⁵⁰ Overholser said the "production" was often in "bunches of ideas", which recalls Pound's broadcasting method. His talks would seem to deviate from their advertised title, 'Superstition'; 'Communist Millionaires', yet he would confidently bind the disparate elements.⁵¹ Another recurring trait during Pound's interrogation was the result of sustained mental activity, after which he would describe a feeling of "pressure [...] hollowness in the cranium".⁵²

This was attributed to Pound's ordeal in Pisa, May-November 1945 at the Disciplinary Training Centre (D.T.C) provided for criminals awaiting transfer to the United States. He was unceremoniously caged and exhibited for a while in an outdoor cell; hence after a week, his mind drifted away leaving behind a vacancy

⁴⁹ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1988) p. 720.

⁵⁰ Cornell, p. 181.

⁵¹ Years later, at St Elizabeth's, Pound reputedly talked in "entire 'raps'- paragraphs and blocks of paragraphs [...] continually practising his poetry, [the] sort of way Homer must have practised on his after-dinner audiences in Ionia", Marcella Spann, *Paideuma* 13 (1974): 158-162.

in "the top of his head" marked by the eyebrows "taut in a raised position [from] the heat and glare".⁵³ On June 14, a camp psychiatrist, Captain Richard W. Fenner, registered mental disjunction in the patient, who "[worried] a great deal that he'll forget some messages which he wishes eventually to tell others". This corresponds to future grandiose gestures; claiming "connections in a half dozen countries and nerve centers of intellect", and his employment as Dr. Ezra Pound in "the academy of the air" (*RB* 377).⁵⁴

He generally preferred being "within talking distance" of a potential response, therefore, embroilment in the mechanics of wireless had alerted Pound to the efficiency of a circuit, and its resulting failure, should one element collapse. The microphone had been symbolically wrested from his 'grip' in mid-monologue: "[A]fter a hundred broadcasts it is STILL hard to know where to begin. There is so MUCH that the United States does not know" (*RB* 192). Perhaps the network existed without him, rusting away and deactivated.

Later, Pound admitted that "his main spring had gone haywire at Pisa"; since then, his refined faculties had been swamped, "a queer sensation [...] as though the upper third of the brain were missing and a fluid level existed at the top of what remained".⁵⁵ In accounting for Pound's previous depiction of the brain as "a

⁵² Cornell, p. 204.

⁵³ Tytell raises a valid point: "Pound's reference to himself as a 'prize exhibit' is suggestive. His pain becomes most intense when he is absolutely separated from the world [...] the poet himself isolated in a cage as a specimen of evil. At that point, he could only communicate as a sort of totem, like Antonin Artaud [...] signalling his message through the flames [...] telegraphing his message with his arms and gestures" (p. 278). Notably, the Artaudian theatre exerted a "new stage language of concrete signs [with] each intonation having a definite and precise expressive meaning comparable to that of Chinese ideograms or Egyptian hieroglyphics". Martin Esslin, *Artaud: The Man and His Work* (London; Calder Publications 1976), p. 84.

⁵⁴ Tytell, p.267; Torrey, p. 202, fn81.

⁵⁵ Cornell, p. 180.

[...] great clot of genital fluid held in suspense or reserve", one might infer that Pound felt like a faulty battery, the accumulator of words unable to function.⁵⁶ As he suspected in 1910, "[m]an is -- the sensitive physical part of him [...] a mechanism rather like an electric appliance, switches, wires, etc".⁵⁷ This may have derived from Hudson Maxim, with whose work Pound was familiar:

The nerve energy consumed in mental processes is analogous to electrical energy [...] and the cellular structure of the brain is analogous to a set of primary batteries connected up with the central ganglion, into or out of circuit with which it can be thrown instantly [...] Consequently, when the mind is under stress, the central ganglion throws into circuit a sufficient number of the brain supply cells to meet the emergency.⁵⁸

Using a phrase from Dr. Overholser's testimony, Pound's lawyer, Julien Cornell, was concerned he "might blow up". The previous 'blow up' -- whereupon the circuit fused -- was said to occur at Pisa, where being "held incommunicado" caused a psychological breakdown.⁵⁹ The point is that, whilst supposedly engaged in a contest of wits with many opponents, as offered by the collective psychiatric assessment, Pound was no longer able to filter his flow of rhetoric, or be comprehended by others. It was equivalent to the difficulties of broadcasting:

Transmission so BAD for last three nights that I am on the point of telegraphing [...] it must be the transmitting microphone in the ministero [...] effect is either whisper or rattle/ a bump bump

⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, *Translation, with Postscript, of Remy de Gourmont, The Natural Philosophy of Love* (London: Boni and Liveright, 1922). Additionally, "[the brain lobes are] two great seas of fecundative matter, mutually magnetised"; they "may serve rather as fuses in an electric system, to prevent short circuits [...]" (pp. 172, 179).

⁵⁷ Pound, *The Spirit of Romance* (London: Peter Owen Ltd, 1910), p. 92.

⁵⁸ Hudson Maxim, *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 140-141.

⁵⁹ Cornell, p. 44, 101.

bump, the minute one turns on enough current to hear, do fer Xt'z ache have the microphones looked at.⁶⁰

As noted, Gilbert Seldes wrote of the broadcaster losing "strange vital fluids" when approaching the microphone, implying that a strange deathliness prevailed. For whilst being raddled with atmospheric disturbance, the appendage also represented the lack of interaction in radio. Pound took issue with staff at Rome Radio, who omitted to advertise his broadcasts and, possibly, neglected to 'switch him on'. Consequently, as he wrote to Ungaro, "all the talk goes to waste". Under cross-examination, it appears that Pound almost mimicked these conditions, and would adhere to his complaint of feeling atomised, or dismembered: "I broke - my head [...] when I am not rested it goes beat beat beat in the back of my neck", akin to a malfunctioning microphone.⁶¹

In identifying himself with facets of radio -- whether explicitly or inadvertently -- Pound demonstrates that his broadcasts were sharply experienced, thus contributing to "the lesion of May" which threatened to "bust open" under scrutiny. Imprecise psychiatric jargon committed Pound to St Elizabeth's; wavering, as King suggested, between "paranoid schizophrenia or dementia praecox, paranoid type, and true paranoia".⁶²

His unclassifiable status encourages the notion that Pound was *sapped* by a number of factors, namely, that major work on the Pisan Cantos occurred after a period of intense radio activity, and whilst being held *incommunicado* in the

⁶⁰ Letter to Adrian Ungaro (Redman, p. 222). Obtained from the American Department of Justice, subsequently at the Beinecke Library, Yale.

⁶¹ Ibid.; Torrey, p. 202 fn81. Interview with Dr Winfred Overholser, 7 February 1946.

death cell. I shall attempt to explain how Pound was forced to interconnect early affinities with the present crisis, contending that his expression of the radio-imbued Cantos was a logical reflex.

(Un) Happy Medium

Throughout his career, Pound charts -- sporadically and often subconsciously -- his route to the microphone. A familiar comment is the official explication of Cantos 18-19:

[...] there ain't no key. Simplest parallel I can give is radio where you tell who is talking by the noise they make.⁶³

Indeed, even in 1910, when envisaging a "bombastic, rhetorical epic", the influence of Marconi was situated highly, alongside "Pierpont, Bleriot, Levavasour [...] etc. clothed in the heroic manner of greek imitation".⁶⁴ These Cantos, written 1924-1925 shortly after his settlement in Rapallo, convey the period of creative energy inherent to Paris in the early 1920's; specifically, Pound's associations with Dada and Surrealism through George Antheil and Jean Cocteau, both of whom made forays into sonic art.⁶⁵ Such pursuits are apparent

⁶² Cornell, p. 181.

⁶³ Letter to Homer Pound (29 November 1924), *Letters*, p. 242.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 148.

⁶⁵ Further debate on this period can be found in Richard Sieburth, 'Dada Pound', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 44-68. Douglas Kahn quotes a letter from Antheil to Pound in 1923, which details his unrealised opera 'Cyclops' based on the section in *Ulysses*. The score contained instrumentation for "the chorus (electric amplifier)" and a variety of orchestral parts

in a tribute to Antheil, *The Treatise on Harmony* (1924); however, it is Cocteau who endures, the creator of pure "RADIO DRAMA" in *Les Maries de la Tour Eiffel* and *Antigone* and, notably, as a solitary circuit:

Cocteau in his fumoir with his discs and his radio, with his oracle that speaks pure cipher, unsurpassable trouvaille; cleaving stroke of the spirit, moving us as no human voice.⁶⁶

Pound would surely have witnessed both productions during his Paris sojourn. *Les Maries*, performed June 1921, at the Theatre Champs Elysees, employed two human 'phonographs' to speak a medley of commonplace phrases while the actors mimed. "I built right on the boards a great transmitting instrument for poetry," Cocteau boasted, whilst also creating an address gap, as the conventional empathy between speaker and audience collapsed in the mediation of machines.⁶⁷ *Antigone*, at the Theatre de l'Atelier, December 1922, was a concentrated soundbite of forty minutes; a single voice -- the synthesized Greek chorus -- speaks rapidly from a hole, devoid of emotion like newspaper reportage. It seems fair to assume that Pound noted Cocteau's derivation of this theme, the film *Orphee* (1960), wherein the poet receives cryptic messages over a car radio from his alter ego Cegeste (younger, less deluded and more accessible -- like Thad Trunk's duplicate).

Cocteau -- "the livest thing in Paris" -- is a ghostly visitant of the *Pisan Cantos*.

His fumoir and "dark inner room" preserved from outside "clatter"(SP 403)

"amplified and controlled from a switchboard" (Kahn, *Noise Water Meat* pp. 126, 390. The letter is held at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale).

⁶⁶ Pound, *Selected Prose 1909-1965*, ed. William Cookson (London: Faber, 1973), p. 424.

Henceforth in the text.

⁶⁷ *The Complete Works of Jean Cocteau, vol IX* (Geneva: Cock and Harlequin, 1984), p. 222.

becomes a play area of "bricabrac [...] every man to his junkshop". Crucially, in Canto 77 he is disguised among "mechanics" rather than "men of letters", implying one whose theorising has evolved into a more dynamic sphere, that of practical innovation.⁶⁸

In discussing Pound's theoretical development of the *Treatise on Harmony*, R. Murray Schafer traces "an early mistrust in the metronome" to "fanatical respect of all such mechanistic devices", citing visits to French phonetician Abbe J.P. Rousselot as a potential "bridge" to later enthusiasms.⁶⁹ Pound had his vowels "measured" by Rousselot's invention, a phonoscope to register verbal components; emitting, probably, his legendary "yowling of a bass Siamese cat" a trait he adopted when structuring poetry.⁷⁰ Shortly before the appearance of Cocteau in Canto 77, "old Rousselot" is invoked "who fished for sound in the Seine/ and led to detectors" (C 486). In *Dial*, 1920, Pound was charmed by these other "handy little discoveries for [...] the locating of submarines"; indeed, Cocteau eventually cited ultrasound as justifying the radiological expanse:

We shall know that fish shout, that the sea is full of noises and that the void is peopled with realistic ghosts in whose eyes we are the same.⁷¹

Any examples are merely a sidelong glance at the fertile arena of experimental acoustics in the 1920's to which Pound was affiliated by choice. Such a climate would heighten his notion that a "serious artist" was comparable to hidden

⁶⁸ *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1986), pp. 467, 486. Henceforth cited in the text.

⁶⁹ R. Murray Schafer, *Paideuma* 3 (1973): 46-52. Pound mentions Rousselot in his 'Paris Letter', *Dial* (Dec. 1920) 457.

⁷⁰ Brigit Patmore, *My Friends When Young* (London: William Heinemann, 1968), p. 117.

geniuses "who worked out the determinants that Marconi [used] in his computations for the wireless telegraph"(SP 47). Furthermore, a homage to Francis Picabia in 1917 proposed that "The New Man [...] orients his inner ear toward *things to come*".⁷²

Pound's conscious tribute to radio in Cantos 18-19 enhances his idealist dictum in *Guide To Kulchur* (1938), that the substance of an age "is what you can pick up and/or get in touch with" (SP 217) Certainly, the loud, argumentative voices of Canto 18 collide and interrupt one another, although a distinct narrative prevails: "Well we tuk [...] An' we sez [...]"(C 81) running smoothly -- like Pound's broadcast scripts #33 and #34 -- into Canto 19 with the word "sabotage....SABOTAGE?" (83-84). It is important to note, however, that this differs from the white noise of later work, which is both implicitly and *actively* sound-orientated.

Pound's comment in 1940, that he "anticipated" radio with his "first third of Cantos" is worth analysing.⁷³ Evidently, he alludes to the montage effect of his random voices; furthermore, it becomes a technique suitable for weaving themes, epochs and images, as shown in the deafening jargon of Canto 20. The opening lines resonate with five languages, beginning "Sound slender, quasi tinnula" [*Lat*: "as if ringing"]. Hugh Kenner remarks how the usage of "'Sound,' bounds that quality by adducing Homeric, Catullian, Propertian detail, allowing words to

⁷¹ Jean Cocteau, *The Art of Cinema*, trans. Robin Buss (New York: New Directions, 1992), pp. 63-64.

⁷² Pound, 'Parisian Literature' in *Literary Review*, New York (13 August 1921): 7. Cited in Sherry, p. 216.

⁷³ Pound, *Letters*, p. 343.

"inblend[...] a memory" of other words spoken/written.⁷⁴ In ascertaining that language -- and history -- is never fixed but fluctuating, Pound is eager to portray something akin to a radio cosmos, where voices exist in perpetuity. This re-emphasises Adelaide Morris's contention; that the early Cantos present "a newly reorganised sense ratio [...] of secondary orality".⁷⁵

While crediting Pound with such prescience, one should approach his remark from another vantage point. Possibly, he claims insight into the degenerative effects of the medium, although by 1940, the devil box was installed, and Pound's response was weighted by direct impact rather than speculation. Namely, the ritual of 'listening-in' to radio was socially implanted; he had encountered his own opera, *Le Testament de Villon* broadcast 26 October 1931, and subsequently noticed that the ether could import -- and also support -- an array of variable material:

Waal. I heerd the MURDER in the Cafedrawl on th/radio lass, night. Oh them Cowkney voices, My Krissze them cawkney woices!⁷⁶

I read this, not so much as an attack on Eliot's ability, but as recognition that wireless had a tendency to utilise words, instead of the reverse. Here, it seems to twist an overt cockney twang from poetry. Shortly after, Pound told Ronald Duncan that "[w]hat drammer or teeater *wuz*, radio is", thus speaking as a future

⁷⁴ Kenner, pp. 112-113.

⁷⁵ *Sound States*, ed. Adelaide Morris (Chapel Hill: University of N. Carolina Press), p. 37. A sentence which informs this thesis.

⁷⁶ Letter to James Laughlin (6 January 1936), held in private collection. Quoted by Carpenter, p. 502.

wireless *performer* with a definite mission, rather than a sonically-inspired theorist of art and literature.

However, Pound's cynicism over the broadcast slaughter of 'Murder in the Cathedral' is traceable; to some degree it echoes Canto 29:

(Let us speak of the osmosis of persons)

The wail of the phonograph has penetrated their marrow

(Let us....

The wail of the pornograph (C 143)

This betrays an anxiety over technical media; firstly, the idea of hypnotism by sound through gradual or unconscious assimilation. Also, a notion that one's very essence is poisoned, even defiled, by a "pornograph", a word compounded from *porno/graphos*: 'to write of prostitutes', which would bear upon the inscriptive nature of phonography. Pound may be envisaging Alfred Jarry's 1894 piece, "Phonographe" where his machine is a twofold sexual organ, the female element contained in the horn, devouring its user who exists in absentia.⁷⁷ Vincent Sherry remarks that the wording of Canto 29 transmutes "the emblem and instrument of democratic togetherness through music rhymes" into a vehicle of crude speech for the "vulgate" (166). Therefore, in 1936, Pound confirms his early suspicion that acoustic technologies might befoul the poet; certainly, Eliot's play, when broadcast, seemed unrefined.

⁷⁷ See Charles Grivel, 'The Phonograph's Horned Mouth', Kahn and Whitehead, *Wireless Imagination* pp. 31-61.

The issue, here, is that the Cantos, so readily defined as radio-narrative, merely constitute the opening section of a pattern. Pound's initial response to wireless sound was gleaned from his dazzling, superficial, collisions with Cocteau, or Antheil, and the more elegiac parts of burgeoning sound technology. It suggested a method by which to construct -- or rather reaudit -- his epic as a dynamic, transcendent discourse, although its insidious nature -- portrayed by the offensive, wailing intruder -- was noted. As yet, Pound had not experienced the extremes, he was merely hypothesising; 'real live' radio impressed itself in later work, both conspicuously and noxiously.

Mere Words

Martin Kayman discusses Pound's "general resolution" of art and science, although the essay examines early theoretical writings rather than poetic practice.⁷⁸ He locates Pound's willingness to master technical efficiency -- and vocabulary -- to bolster his poet's role as social agent; or as Pound wrote, to simultaneously "new-mint the speech" and disseminate correct information (*SP* 331). A discourse of action would naturally derive from physics, as the advent of Hertzian waves, X-rays, radioactive waves inspired, writes Kayman, "a language of energetics" in scientific circles.

⁷⁸ Martin Kayman, 'Ezra Pound: A Model for his Use of Science', *Biblos* vol. 57 (Coimbra, 1981): 505-526.

Pound's plundering of this language is widely observed in 'I Gather the Limbs Of Osiris' (1912), where fact-finding is like negotiating an electric circuit (SP23), later enforced in 'How To Write' (1930) with its "great telephone central" as a metaphor for consciousness; and in 'Psychology and Troubadours' (1910) where the "charged surface" of a telegraph receiver equates to heightened Provencal mysticism, or "love code".⁷⁹ This parallel surely pre-empted the 1921 translation of Gourmont's *Physique de l'Amour*, which became so relevant.

Similarly, Ian Bell offers a sustained analysis of Pound's technical discourse, but chooses to cite influences such as Hudson Maxim.⁸⁰ The work of Kayman, however, tracks the definite "conjuncture of the spiritual and scientific" in aims of the Society for Psychical Research, which he aligns to Pound's endeavour, that is, "a scientific discourse of the mystical". Emphasis is placed on Pound's reworking of "perception and structure", which notes his idealist ideology rather than another, more subjective issue. If Oliver Lodge, a reputed pioneer of wireless was publicly espousing non-material communication through the ether in *Raymond* (1916), then Pound's dead voices might conceivably be stirred into action.

Daniel Tiffany asserts that "[i]t is precisely the supernatural aspect of the technical media that produced a schism in Pound's attitudes about technology" (248). Theoretically, Pound sees how the mediumistic artist -- passive to impulse -- might "[register] invisible movements in the ether" and thus be jolted out of

⁷⁹ Pound, *The Spirit of Romance*, pp. 93, 87. Henceforth cited in the text.

⁸⁰ Ian F.A. Bell, *Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound*, (London: Methuen, 1981). Hudson Maxim had attempted to synthesise a scientific foundation for literary criticism in *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language*. See Bell, pp. 26-39.

lassitude (249). As an artist endowed with prosthetic scientific awareness, Pound had a permit for "the circle absolute [...] loosed from the accidents of time and space" (*SP* 332), and hoped to apprehend the best knowledge "in the air" (*SP* 23). Words are alive with "a force like electricity" requiring the ideal coherer/writer, as "the juxtaposition of their vertices must be exact" (*SP* 34). As a poet, Pound sees this technique as purgation: one might "emerge [...] licensed, an *initiate*, with some chance of conserving his will to speak" (*SP* 35). With regard to this instinctive, very specific, appropriation of technology, it follows that to tinker with these 'new organs' in mechanic form -- the telegraph, telephone or radio -- might cause a rupture.⁸¹

For instance, on chivalric love, Pound writes:

The senses at first seem to project for a few yards from the body. Effect of a decent climate where a man leaves his nerve-set open, or allows it to tune into its ambience (*SP* 249).

Such analogies link sensibility with ideas of transmission and reception long before Pound took the microphone. Moreover, in portraying the 'donative' artist working within the environment, Pound was aware that "he draws latent forces, or things present but unnoticed" (*SP* 25). His conception of a nerve-set, or 'antennae' invites the fearful image of ghosts clamouring and crowding; when the wires crackled at Rome Radio, Pound may have recalled his early notions of the body as a mediumistic tool.

⁸¹ Humphrey Carpenter attests that Pound "regarded the 'gorbloody tHellerphone' as a trap rather than a convenience" (p. 414). The quote is from a letter to A. MacLeish (8 January 1934).

In theory, the writer could dictate the arena -- able to "not only record but create", by emitting "order-giving vibrations" which attracted certain signals. A selection process ensues, whereby he "departmentalise[s] such part of the life force as flows through him" (*SP* 346) However, when harried by "B.B.C. nuisance" and "Orful KRRumpzzz! of static or atmospheric or whatever [...]" the method was literally enacted, and proven difficult.⁸² Beset with "absoLOOT falsity" (*RB* 183) Pound resorted to blaming the radio, a medium susceptible to invasion by "super-Zukor, sub-human" cells across the globe (*RB* 159).

While this prompted fears over his spot on the dial -- at 29.6 -- being 'interfered with', Pound would surely succumb to his own doctrine. During his foray into the ambience, had he summoned voices through static- like 'Earwicker' deep in trance? When Pound dropped to a murmur, the engineers would "turn on more current" (*RB* 387) pumping him into a boundless ether. He describes one broadcast as "this spasm", which implies a transient signal capable of being intercepted, disguised and disfigured by latent forces (*RB* 100). Oddly, he wrote in 1915:

The best artist is the man whose machinery can stand the highest voltage. The better the machinery, the more precise, the stronger, the more exact will be the record of that voltage and of the various currents that have passed through it (*SP* 346).

This can be aligned to Pound's self-appointed role of Mussolini's impartial propagandist, prowling the airwaves for "a true record". In addition, it extends Lewis's portrait of Pound at St Elizabeth's, a dissipated trunk "humming some

⁸² Redman, p. 221. Dept. of Justice files; Carpenter, p. 592.

kind of tuneless chant".⁸³ For, "[w]here the voltage is so high that it fuses the machinery, one merely has the 'emotional man' not the artist" (*SP* 346).

Carroll Terrell, a frequent visitor, remarked:

It was difficult [...] to isolate oneself from the noises and activities beyond the circle around the poet: TV commenting in another alcove along the [...] hall; radio song and sound elsewhere; even sometimes the periodic, measured screams of some inmate housed at a distance proclaiming the presence of the hopelessly mad.⁸⁴

The "slippered men" on tranquilisers would hover; Terrell styled them "E.P's ghostly companions, never at rest [...] often drawn to us", as though once again, Pound attracts undesired forces.⁸⁵ The electromagnetic metaphor from his 'Vorticism' essay of 1915 seemed to be effected; that if a strong magnet were placed beneath iron filings, "the energies of the magnet will proceed to organise form".⁸⁶

In St Elizabeth's, the climate was not "decent" -- or conducive to receiving impressions. Hospital reports claimed that "Mr Pound becomes exceedingly upset and nervous [...] it is impossible to get Mr Pound to air out and ventilate [his] room", almost as if the buzz of madness -- "decayed (enervated) waves" (*SP* 346) -- might somehow infiltrate his airspace. This mirrors Pound's certainty that wartime radio was poisoned by "foreign sounds squirming OUT" (*RB* 147), a network of orchestrated malevolence emitting "Jews not news" (*RB* 237).

⁸³ Ward notes from St Elizabeth's (4 April, 1951). From Pound's clinical record file nos. 1279-1352. See Torrey, p. 243; Carpenter, p. 778.

⁸⁴ Carroll Terrell, *Paideuma* 13 (1984): 158-162.

⁸⁵ Kenner, p. 506; Terrell, *Paideuma* 13.

The issue is that, for Pound, wireless simultaneously justified his premonitions and artistic conjectures. Firstly, his efforts to create a poetics informed by disciplines of electric science had invested the Rome broadcasts with personal philosophy. In acting out his famous dictum of the "antennae" (thinking, as Kenner writes "not only of the mantis, but Marconi") Pound fell victim to an apparatus lauded as "the ONLY medium still open" (RB 283).⁸⁷ A site, or sink, for external non-sense worked by "secret control". This notion persisted in St Elizabeth's where his radio was rarely switched on -- clearly, the atmospherics were deemed sufficiently potent.⁸⁸

In assessing Pound's anti-Semitism, Robert Casillo agrees that radio is figured alongside sickness, or "infectious diseases [whereby] germs travel on the air". This corresponds to an article in *Collier's* magazine of 1924, titled 'It's Great To Be A Radio Maniac' wherein the author -- a self-confessed "wandering Jew" of the airwaves -- likened his addictive pastime to "a compact with the Lord of Darkness, known in Dr Faust's day as the devil". Toying with arcane instruments is seen to be more poisonous than "flirt[ing] with morphine". For Pound, his own terminology in earlier writings of 1910-1915 encouraged the sense that madness was 'catching': that his own nerve-set was stripped and vulnerable operating within the ether.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Pound, 'Affirmations, II: Vorticism', *The New Age*, vol. XVI, 16 (15 August 1914): 227-228.

⁸⁷ Kenner, p. 156.

⁸⁸ Marcella Spann recalls: "Several radio programmes were on his agenda [...] but the problem of remembering to turn it on in time for the broadcast was almost insurmountable", *Paideuma* (1974). I would argue that Pound was preventing further contamination....

Transeunt Pound⁹⁰

Tiffany sees a continual process of 'haunting'; the broadcaster-poet who "mimics the telepathic faculties of the dead" by communicating with mortals (288).

Naturally, this was mere signing 'through a glass darkly' as Pound was unsure of his listeners. It is necessary to pause over the link between Pound's act of broadcasting -- from a studio, a silent tomblike space -- and his opposite role as translator. After all:

Translation, like telegraphy, conjures words at a distance. This view of translation subscribes, implicitly to an archaic use of the verb "to translate," meaning to "transport" spiritually: "to convey or remove from one condition or place to another."⁹¹

Therefore, it suggests an interaction devoid of logic, explained by Jacques Derrida as "the trance of the *trans-*" wherein "transferential magneticization" occurs between textual bodies far removed: an inconceivable cross-border 'conversation'.⁹²

Lewis considered Pound to be not merely a "*time-trotter*" but schizoid (a "little crowd"), perceiving himself to be, as Pound confessed earlier, "*in touch with the*

⁸⁹ Robert Casillo, *A Genealogy of Demons: Anti-Semitism, Fascism, and the Myths of Ezra Pound* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988), p. 296. Howard Vincent O'Brien, 'It's Great To Be A Radio Maniac', in *Collier's* (13 September 1924): 15. Cited in Sconce, pp. 66, 219fn.

⁹⁰ **Transeunt:** (of a mental act) causing events outside the mind. From Latin *transiens*: going over, from *transire*: to pass over, as in TRANCE.

⁹¹ Tiffany, p. 273.

tradition of the dead".⁹³ It is noteworthy that Hugh Kenner introduces Pound's translations as "interchanges of voice and personality with [a] handful of enduring dead", adding that "[Pound] does not translate words. The words have *led* him into the thing *he* expresses", that is, atavistic shades of his own diction.⁹⁴ He implies that Pound is personally embroiled -- hardly "transparent" in the sense of Walter Benjamin, who thought a genuine translator should disappear, after deducing and arranging the "afterlife" of a text.⁹⁵

In theory, Pound favoured a similar approach; the controlled 'bringing over' as evinced in his comment on "Homage to Sextus Propertius" and throughout *The Spirit of Romance*, where Dante's *Purgatorio* Canto 24, line 52 is cited: "I am within myself, one who, when love breathes into me, take note, and go making manifest after what manner he speaketh" (*SpR* 35).⁹⁶ This self-effacement occurs in the poem 'Histrion' (1912) where the poet is a "clear space" open to visitation by a stronger force -- he is duly extinguished.

Tiffany writes at length on the figurative death of the translator, suggesting that Pound's intent to "resurrect the damaged shade" of a dead author -- be it Cavalcanti, Arnaud Daniel or Remy de Gourmont -- is a desire to fuse "with an entity (a lost time or place) that exists prior to the actual words of the original

⁹² Jacques Derrida, 'Living On/ Border Lines', trans. James Hulbert, in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. H. Bloom (New York: Continuum, 1979), p. 172, 178.

⁹³ Pound, 'How I Began', *T. P's Weekly*, London, vol. xxi (6 June 1913): 707. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose* vol. I ((1902-1914), pref. and arranged by Lea Baechler (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc. 1991), p. 68.

⁹⁴ *The Translations of Ezra Pound*, ed. Hugh Kenner (London: Faber, 1953), p. 11. Henceforth in the text.

⁹⁵ Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator' in *Illuminations* (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 70-82.

⁹⁶ Pound, *Letters*, p. 149: "There was never any question of translation [...] My job was to bring a dead man to life".

text" (219). Essentially, he refuses to lie down. While aware of Christopher Marlowe's "personality moving behind the words" and others' insistent traces, Pound could not refrain from involvement (*SpR* 194). As all ages "are contemporaneous", his role is not passive but accumulative: the voices may speak through him, but he operates alongside (*SpR* 7).

Hugh Kenner remarks that, later, "we are dealing not with inflow but homeomorphism", as Pound uses his secondary voices to transform Pound:

Rare single words can imply, like seeds, whole energy systems. "Anaxiforminges," in the fourth Canto, belongs to Pindar, "Aurunculeia" to Catullus. Three Cantos later "Smaragdos, chrysolithos" say "Propertius," and "e quel remir" says Arnaut"⁹⁷

Distinctive words are used to scatter meaning, to ignite a pattern of associations. This gives weight to Pound's idea that translation, whilst illuminating facets of the original, also functions as an "instrument" to probe the original text (*SP* 172). It therefore becomes a method of extracting items for future use.

Once again, the discourse of electricity hovers explicitly; a text transmits signs from a bygone era, and the translator officially deciphers the code -- often ventriloquising in the effort. Maud Ellmann elegantly proves how Pound resorts to "impersonation, forgery, pastiche [...] as a duty rather than a crime, because it keeps the word in circulation, encouraging the commerce of the living and the dead". This reminds us that translation defies reason. It is an insane hypothesis, by its very condition: two spheres united by a general equivalent, or as Lewis

growled, a "[d]emon pantehnicon driver, busy with removal of old world into new quarters".⁹⁸

Existing between those spheres is *transmissional* space, a vacuum reduced to the trajectory of a signal, or, as Ellmann suggests -- avoiding the telegraphic emphasis -- "the poet's art lies in the silences that canalise the text, suturing one era from another" (170). Pound creates an arena for timeless interchange and reanimation, where the *words* exist at either end. They successfully 'converse', but the channel himself is merely functional, perhaps "[a] consciousness disjunct/[an] overblotted/Series/Of intermittances," and thus refined out of existence.⁹⁹

As mentioned before, he equates to the dead, and, more specifically, the 'control' in a spiritualist séance who enables a 'bringing across' of souls, and is subsequently displaced by living and dead alike. One minor example is the provocative line from *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1917): "'Tibet shall be full of Roman policeman" (*P.* 214). The juxtaposition continues elsewhere, such as Canto 48: "At beatification/80 loudspeakers were used" (*C* 240). In *Sextus Propertius*, the emphasis is on the poet/translator as compiler of a "new gamut", warping history in "one tangle of shadows". Nonetheless, Pound seems alert to the inherent danger: that his own voice may buckle under the weight of ages. A letter to Joyce laments his tendency to "[dig] up corpses of let us say Li Po, or

⁹⁷ Kenner, pp. 170-171.

⁹⁸ Maud Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality: T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987), pp. 151, 147; Lewis in *Blast*, April 1915. See *Ezra Pound: the Critical Heritage*, ed. Eric Homberger (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 116.

⁹⁹ Pound, 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' in *Personae* eds. Lea Baechler and A. Alton Litz (London: Faber, 2001), p. 201. All further references will appear in the text.

more lately Sextus Propertius" for his poetic *incorporation*, instead of contributing to the "bitched mess of modernity".¹⁰⁰

This addictive practice would surely lead to radio, which, notes Ellmann, "attracted him because it kept [his] language in the air" (181). By that maxim, other components from the past might rotate in tandem. Pound had written of art as "a fluid moving above or over the minds of men", evidently swollen with facts, impressions, and dead voices to arrest and imitate (*SpR* 7). Overt "self-expression" might block the "interlocutory canals" [the cable? the antennae? the ear canal?] leading to the ether, which is why Pound "must restrain, or 'condense' his own emotions". Ellmann's argument centres on Pound's urge to transmit thoughts -- via writing -- with electric speed. It encourages "satanic transubstantiation, for [words] stagnate in space when they should lilt in time". Her comments apply to Pound as broadcaster/translator who is, by nature, subsumed.

Years prior to his broadcasts, Pound explains how "the child who has listened to ghost stories goes into a darkened room" (*SpR* 17), just as he masochistically settled in isolation -- the studio -- to fantastically conduct, and prolong, the "spiritual current" that rendered him a verbal nonentity (*T* 22). Pound crafted a state wherein his words were infected, both materially and stylistically, by Rossetti, Cavalcanti and nameless others, all of whom are logically manifest in the disfiguring garble of radio static:

¹⁰⁰ *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. Forrest Read (London: Faber,

Transmission, I RECOgnized my own voice, and COULD with effort identify the matter "To Aberr"/ but no one not knowing the text could have understood the meaning.¹⁰¹

Although assured of his role as a broadcaster -- the connective element, speaking sense -- Pound's anxiety over mechanical dissolution of his voice is comparable to the act of translating. In 'name' only could he persevere: E.P. always talking as a result of the poet's efforts.

He even outlines methods of translation over the air, namely "sortin' out what is ascertainable" (*RB* 373) with "HELARXE more or less twisted from a line of Aeschylus" (*RB* 35). This is implicated in his course for the listener: "If you had read as much of the Fenollosa papers as I got into print about 1917, you would not have underestimated Japan" (*RB* 159). One broadcast advises the student to "*incorporate*" one's knowledge into "Arnaut Daniel, for example" (*RB* 115). This seems osmotic; Pound merges into the flow of dead communicants, while they invade his discourse.

Significantly, after debating Aristotle's influence on Cavalcanti, Santayana's "manuscript or proofs of something" and his own preference for Italian, Pound suddenly breaks off:

But other voices are silent. You say I am also losing something, I don't deny it. I don't hear from Mr Eliot or Mr Cummings [...] The best writers in England and America do NOT get to the microphone, which is the only way of communication left open (*RB* 375).

1967), p. 148.

¹⁰¹ Redman, p. 221

Suspicion pervades this statement -- that Pound knew himself to be revivifying abstract bodies rather than imparting *contemporary* knowledge on a busy circuit. Every connection was drawn from a bygone, half-imagined realm or a foreign wavelength, and the process seemed all-consuming: "Don't know which, what to put down, can't write two scripts at once. NECESSARY facts, ideas, come in pell mell" (*RB* 192). The only definite audience was the "Oppressed Minority of One [...] Mr Lonelyheart" himself, reverberating in a deathly space.¹⁰²

...and trans-mundanities¹⁰³

Tiffany cites Pound's association with Yeats and Georgie Hyde-Lees, in his argument that spiritualist doctrine employing the verb 'to translate', was greatly influential. Certainly, the winters Pound spent at Stone Cottage between 1913-1916 cemented an interest in the occult, and certain aspects of spiritualism. James Longenbach offers detailed argument that "Yeats himself, the living man, became Pound's personal Tiresias [...] through a poetic underworld inhabited by Rhymers, Pre-Raphaelites, Victorians, Shelley and Keats". He contends that Pound's *Image* is a direct response "to Yeats' incursions into the spirit world" although evidence of complicity in seances is confined to one example.¹⁰⁴ Yet,

¹⁰² Letter to Pound from e.e.cummings (8 October 1941), in *Selected Letters of e.e.cummings*, ed. Frederick W. Dupree (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1969), p. 316. The famous quote begins: "Ikey kiky, wandering Jew..." Once again, O'Brien's article 'It's Great To Be a Radio Maniac' is very apt.

¹⁰³ **Transmundane:** beyond this world.

¹⁰⁴ James Longenbach, *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot and the Sense of the Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 30; Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats and Modernism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 48-49. He cites a

Pound's essay on Arnold Dolmetsch describes an intriguing "adventure" while seated alongside the composer:

I heard a bewildering and pervasive music moving from precision to precision within itself. Then I heard a different music, hollow and laughing [...] Then someone said: Yes once I was playing a fiddle in the forest and I walked into a wasps nest.¹⁰⁵

Longenbach accepts Pound's explanation of the 'adventure' -- that he glimpsed the god Pan -- and, therefore, fails to observe that such random noise and activity denotes the conditions of a séance.

Pound's treatment of Japanese *Noh* plays (1916) was largely drafted while resident at Stone Cottage. Nevertheless, in acknowledging the "ghost psychology" of the tradition, Pound officially considered parallels with western spiritualism to be "an irrelevant or extraneous interest", primarily because the plays are so explicit (*T* 222):

[W]e see great characters operating under the conditions of the spirit life; we observe what forces have changed them. Bodhisattwa, devas, elementals, animal spirits [...] essences that live in wine and fire, the semi-embodiment of a thought- all these move before us in the dramatic type (*T*.280).

Pound is preoccupied with poetic impact; how the entities exert their presence through voice, gesture, and the Fenellosa texts, which "are themselves but half-shadows" (*T* 214). This phantom material can only be deduced through sound,

letter from W.T Horton to Yeats, containing a cryptic message to Pound: "You'll do, only climb higher[...]"

like "listening to music" which, in Pound's theory, is "travelling rhythm [...] a composition of frequencies, microphonic and macrophonic" (*SpR.* 78, 84). The *transposition* of a Noh play is a process where every word-cadence and subsidiary element should be observed: a "polyphonic" effect, akin to hidden loudspeakers placed at intervals in a room.

In earlier work on Fenollosa's Chinese transcriptions -- published as *Cathay* (1915) -- Pound notoriously sacrificed accuracy for acoustic impact, alleging that "Chinese sound is no use at all. We don't hear parts of it, and much of the rest is a hiss or a mumble".¹⁰⁶ He adhered to Fenollosa's Japanese reading -- the "old sounds" -- and therefore "transmits" the essence of the original. Indeed, the poems are layered soundscapes wherein "wing-flapping storks" are juxtaposed against larger impulses, "ten thousand valleys full of voices and pine winds" (*T* 196). In 'The River Song', musicians retrieve, and incorporate, fleeting aural perceptions into "this flute [...] the twelve pipes here" (*T* 191).

Similarly, *Noh* theatre allows spirits to "take the form of sound" (*T* 301); they become constituents of an echo or fragments of speech, and easily extinguished "like a fire-fly's flash in the dark" (*T* 328). This anticipates the style of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* where Pound sought to "cut a shape in time" from speech, mainly "durations, either of syllables, or implied between them".¹⁰⁷ Passages of *Mauberley* are at once truncated and fused by dots, which create a respite until

¹⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, 'Arnold Dolmetsch' in *Literary Essays*, ed., T.S Eliot (London: Faber/New Directions, 1954), pp. 431-436. Originally in *Pavannes and Divisions* (1918).

¹⁰⁶ Pound, *Letters*, p. 347.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 371.

further speech: "Drifted...drifted precipitate / Asking time to be rid of.../Of his bewilderment" (*P* 198).

Pound focuses on the way "a [Noh] text seems to 'go off into nothing' at the end" signalled by a "fluttering" dance, a fading "whirl" wherein words drop piecemeal into silence, no longer heeded (*T* 237). His version of 'Tsunemasa' portrays "the tension of the séance" whereby the apparition may or may not appear, and only a thin sound remains to mark his presence: "None might see him, but he looked out from his phantom" (*T*. 265).

Pound's translating abilities were tested by 'Awoi No Uye', a play of multiple personalities and hauntings. The ghost is a manifestation of Court Lady Awoi's jealousy, which in turn, splits into a 'hannya'/ devilish force. Both come "aimlessly hither" from the "world of split-moving lightning", attracted by a distant musical instrument and the corpse of Lady Awoi (323). This is reminiscent of Pound's crypt poem, 'The Tomb at Akr Caar' (1912) where a soul disintegrates over the mummified body, flowing "through thee and about thy heels" asking, "[h]ow 'came I in?' Was I not thee and *thee*?" (*P* 56) In remodelling 'Awoi No Uye', Pound struggles to differentiate between the abstract form and the legitimate spirit, ever aware that *Noh* theatre defies reason. In attempting to render a supernatural state where spatial distinctions are irrelevant, he would be aware of the parallels with telegraphy, where messages are sent "in the current of the wind" and one's identity is subject to fragmentation (*T* 300). As observed throughout the thesis, there is evidence to assume that within the cultural psyche, electricity and the ether represented a gateway to elsewhere.

As Pound's translations suggest, the "impermanent" beings of the *Noh* are directly affiliated to sound; fluid yet evasive, and often flocking to a mortal 'conductor' -- like the sleeper in *Finnegans Wake*. Years later, when visited by secondary radio babble, Pound surely resembles Lady Awoi, lying dead while her demons are envoiced. On feeling impotent in the studio, he could *imagine* "Jewish substance thinly veiled" on the air, so creating personality divisions worthy of Marion King's eventual diagnosis (*RB* 149). Wendy Flory offers astute commentary on the radio speeches:

Even when the hold that [Pound's] antisemitic delusions had over him was too strong to break, his moral conscience could still act to inject caveats [...] to make him veer abruptly away from dangerous subjects into [...] unidentifiable allusions; and in general, to stir up such mental confusion that the only victim of these broadcasts was Pound himself.¹⁰⁸

Essentially, Pound's prolonged self-immersion in the phantasmic nature of sound -- his early work on *Noh* theatre -- contributed to a sense that radio was both a site for retrieval and a dangerous space wherein his voice might be submerged. It signalled a dilemma akin to Raymond Lodge, battling through 'theric' substance, and thus complaining "[...] the different sounds of voices confuses me and I mix it up with questions from another's thoughts".¹⁰⁹

In 1917, Pound showed his debt to the *Noh*, by drafting ideas for a circular epic - - or interminable séance -- where "Ghosts move about me [...]" awaiting to be

¹⁰⁸ Wendy Stallard Flory, *The American Ezra Pound* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p.155.

¹⁰⁹ Oliver Lodge, *Raymond* (London: Methuen and Co., 1922), p.108. See the play 'Kagekiyo' in Pound's *Translations*: "Though my eyes are dark, I understand the thoughts of another" (p. 319).

caught and bestowed with speech, much like an occasion at St Elizabeth's in 1951. David Gordon records a visit from e.e.cummings, during which Pound was urged to read journal excerpts into a microphone:

[T]he incredibly penetrating and sensitive manner in which EP was interpreting and re-expressing the remarks made me suddenly realise that EP was again being with cummings at a café in Paris among a group of dadaist - surrealist - vorticist artists and writers, and an exact moment in world history was [...] supremely alive, formative, creating in that moment.¹¹⁰

Gordon adds that Pound's stance evoked Chinese ceremonies "in which a ghost would speak through the voice of a living man. It made your hair rise to hear him bring back the dead". This expert snatching -- and recycling -- of snippets from the recent past, is evinced throughout the *Cantos*, wherein Pound mediates between many different orientations. For instance, James Joyce rises eerily in Canto 74, singing "Blarrney castle me darlin" amongst a profusion of other "Lordly men" who deliver shards of semi-remembered words (C 446-7): "'forloyn' said Mr Bridges (Robert); "'a friend' s/d mr cummings" (C 521-22). Often jolting and bracketed, the figures are zombie-like and lured to Pound's "deathless pen" (P 55):

Orage, Fordie, Crevel too quickly taken

De mis soledades vengan [out of my solitude let them come] (C 524)

¹¹⁰ David Gordon interviewed by Terrell, *Paideuma* 1, 13 (1974): 112-118.

Leon Surette slightly adjusts the commonplace reading of the *Cantos* as death and rebirth leading to revelation. He argues that the initial descent is not repeated: "As in a séance, dead souls pass before us, speak to us, and are overheard by us. They do not appear in neat chronological order, but anachronistically and capriciously" most evident -- as the present study maintains -- in the *Pisan Cantos*, where dead friends interrupt "wise rulers, great artists, and a few villains" (Surette, p. 124-125).

As Ellmann rightly notes, by unscrambling the noise of dead poets, Pound "endorses *their* identities even while he foregoes his own". By extension, Allen Tate views the *Cantos* as "cunningly disguised imitation of casual conversation [...] talk talk talk, not by anyone in particular to anyone else in particular; they are just rambling talk".¹¹¹ I would largely agree, in that Pound eavesdrops upon and reconstitutes dialogue, certainly casual, as it 'flows' in randomly. However, any direct verbal exchange is shrouded, akin to the broadcasts where Pound is aware he "might as well be [...] talking Chinese with a foreign accent, so far as making this statement clear" (*RB* 262). He is "OUT OF DATE" (*RB* 130), or "sans character" unable to *speak with* his dead contemporaries (*P* 230).

Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* has the poet-singer par excellence forge a state where *Aeonen reden mit Aonen* ["aeons communicate with aeons"] beyond time and space. Possibly, this was how Pound appeared to David Gordon on the lawn at St. Elizabeth's, spanning realms in the effort of retrieval. In partly registering this tendency, Humphrey Carpenter attests that Pound's voice "sounded ten years younger" -- only when affixed to the microphone -- as he taped a number of *Cantos* in the late '60's.¹¹²

It is generally said that, while reciting poetry, Pound developed a highly stylised, chanting method, although one listener recalls how he "seemed to read an extraordinarily long time on one breath, and then take a deep one, and go on

¹¹¹ Ellmann, p. 142; *Ezra Pound: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Peter Russell (London: Faber, 1950), p. 67.

¹¹² Rilke, *Sonnets To Orpheus*, trans. David Young (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p.26; Carpenter, p. 895. Taken from *Paideuma*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1973).

again...".¹¹³ This resembles a sinking mediumistic trance, enacted by the mask at a séance who relays words of the departed. Indeed, Pound's daughter Mary de Rachewilz attests to a supernatural aura at recitals: "no-one stirred. A sort of tinkle hung in the air".¹¹⁴

At intervals throughout the Caedmon performances, Pound is heard to mould phantoms from "fluttering" words, like the *Noh*.¹¹⁵ His delivery of Canto 92 lingers on trembling sounds of the sea, "chh ...chh", which blurs into "ch'u", becoming "fui chiamat/e qui refulgo". This is a phrase of Cunizza da Romano, speaking from Dante's *Paradiso* IX, ["I was called and here I glow"].¹¹⁶ Elsewhere, Pound delicately modulates his tone, 'ushering' in -- and briefly becoming -- a voice who declares, "Yeo creo que los reyes desaparecen". He then explains: "*That was Padre Jose Elizondo/in 1906 and in 1917*" (C 531).

Canto 16 -- a montage of war anecdotes -- is a startling evocation of sliding, eliding language, as Pound reads a slangy French monologue, shot with interruptions and gradually mutating into harsh mimicry of a Russian accent.¹¹⁷ Later, he claims: "I can still hear the old admiral", and duly imitates a characteristic of speech:

¹¹³ Carpenter, p. 563. A reading given at Harvard (June 1939).

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p. 549.

¹¹⁵ Recorded in 1958, 12, 13, 26 June 1958, Washington D.C.

¹¹⁶ The line is echoed in the *Rock Drill Cantos*, cued by a rattling of pebbles (p. 634). It also evokes Stephen Dedalus in 'Proteus': "Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, oss.." He crafts a paragraph from the burgeoning, rhythmic noises (*Ulysses*, p. 62).

¹¹⁷ The connection with *Finnegans Wake* is worthy of a separate study. Canto 16 contains a dialogue between anonymous, purgatorial voices who interrupt one another, and inhabit a suspended 'narrator'. I noted this parallel upon hearing Pound read the passage read aloud. A complete translation can be found in George Kearns, *Guide to Ezra Pound's Selected Cantos* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1980), p. 76.

"...with the face of a A y n...' he pulled it out long like that: the face of an a y n.....gel."(C 71).

Further disintegration occurs in the blundering words of Canto 4, which invokes snapshots of fallen Troy. After bardic cries, a dance begins, "Beat beat whirr thud, in the soft turf" (C 13). George Kearns remarks that since "the revival of gods in the Renaissance, there has been no poet who brings us so intimately into their presence".¹¹⁸ On the recording, Pound scarcely chants, he is literally "an old man seated/Speaking in a low drone" buffeted with voices who fleetingly gather and disperse. For example, the chirp of swallows -- "'Tis, 'Tis" -- lapses into the name of 'Itys', which imperfectly echoes Soremondo's question: "It is...?" (C 13). Lines spoken by "muttering Ovid" imply the panic of delirium: "Pergusa...pool...pool...Garagaphia" (15). They seem to herald, or even encapsulate, "a personality shot to atoms" (C 635).

Humphrey Carpenter considers Canto 4 -- drafted in 1919 -- to be a decisive moment in Pound's methodology for his "endless poem", containing stanzas wherein history is "set in montage [...] ply over ply without any emphasis on *Ezra*". Shortly before recording the Canto, Pound wrote to Archibald MacLeish, "I don't *merem*ber [*sic*] a damn thing about it". The typographic error is surely deliberate.¹¹⁹

Listening to Pound enforces my theory: that he lapsed -- fatally -- into a role of 'psychotechnical transmitter' years before his 'suspended' sentence in St

¹¹⁸ Kearns, p. 27.

¹¹⁹ Carpenter, pp. 347-358, 814.

Elizabeth's where the buzz of madness and reality infiltrated his receptors.¹²⁰ Hugely prolific, Pound talks, talks, talks, and is thus censored by the dead; only achieving "superbest conviction", writes Lewis, when becoming "the mouthpiece of a scald or a jongleur. Ironically, efforts to convey a "personal argot" are criticised as "not spirited enough".¹²¹

In the enforced, timeless space of the D.T.C in Pisa, Pound's memory enticed strange phantasms as usual, notably intensified by radiophonic traits. Tiffany confidently states that, for Pound, "radio revealed [...] the shattering effect of the Cantos", although he omits the pivotal work, written directly following this realisation (288).

The Pisan Cantos

Pound thought his Cantos produced in the late '30's -- the John Adams collection -- were untainted, written by "the last survivin' monolith who did not have a bloody radio in the 'ome".¹²² Such a validation -- that external noise of radio might affect creativity -- offers an alternative to traditional readings of the *Pisan Cantos*, all of which focus on abrupt discontinuities, the "fragmented, oblique [and] artless windings of [...] interior monologue" which integrates prison talk

¹²⁰ Hugh Kenner writes in *Paideuma*, 12, vol 4. (1980) that "a sentence is a sound in itself on which other sounds called words may be strung".

¹²¹ Lewis, *Time and Western Man* pp. 71-72.

¹²² Letter to Duncan.

and minute shards of memory. A medley harmonised by the "singer of tales who makes a recreative use of old formulas".¹²³

Not the least strange, writes Kenner, is "the invasion of the great dead, to speak through him and receive his signature on their cadences" (486). William Chace sees Pound "stunned, [having] entered a world he had for years been building [...] lyrical, decomposed, and solipsistic", whereas Flory detects a casual precision and artful nostalgia, freed from "evasions, distortions [and] obsessions" of the broadcasts.¹²⁴ Most critics observe the standard interlocking themes of time/*Time*¹²⁵; the pursuit of beauty; the guilt of an "ego scriptor" whose mouth is removed for "making clutter", and an ordered *periplum*.¹²⁶ There is a general consensus for restitution of humility after "a steady crescendo of raucous arrogance", and the recognition of purgatorial subtleties aspiring to "religious and metaphysical wholeness".¹²⁷

"What else was there to do?" Pound is reported to have said, when asked to explain those verses drafted in the penal centre. They were written each evening on a Remington typewriter, accompanied by "a high-pitched humming sound" which indicated poetry was in process.¹²⁸ Beforehand, his artistic energies were

¹²³ Anthony Woodward, *Ezra Pound and the Pisan Cantos* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), pp. 12, 36; Max Nanny, 'Oral Dimensions in Ezra Pound', *Paideuma*, vol 4 (1977), pp. 13-26.

¹²⁴ William M. Chace, *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot* (California: Stanford University Press, 1973), p. 105; Wendy Flory, *Ezra Pound and the Cantos: A Record of Struggle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 200.

¹²⁵ Kearns, p. 156. In the DTC, Pound had minimal access to copies of the American magazine, *Time*.

¹²⁶ The myth of Wanjina, originally in Australian folklore, who compulsively created so that his mouth was stopped. Pound adapts this into Ouan Jin: "Man of Letters: Writer".

¹²⁷ Donald Davie, *Poet As Sculptor* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 173; Woodward, p. 84.

¹²⁸ I've tried to make this sound. It resembles an expectant, whining, radio set -- primed to receive a signal

largely utilised in preparation of radio speeches; there were no Cantos during 1943 and until late 1944. Within the noticeable fissure, there is an anticipatory crackling noise, a pause which implies: 'when I was broadcasting...'. Hugh Kenner sees 'The Return' (1925) as a poem that "could only" have been composed on a typewriter, for, delicate "exchanges of notation" are manifest on the page.¹²⁹ By that maxim, the *Pisan Cantos* are indebted to radio: they constitute a new idelect, one of sound-saturation.

In essence, they acknowledge, and immortalise the previous state of active broadcasting. It is remarkable that those critics who argue for a single "speaker [...] dramatic situation [and] audience" consistently avoid the wireless affair.¹³⁰ Pound, having taken the microphone and succumbed to the "hypnosis of a fluent vocalese", as Sherry notes without expansion, was officially a minion of the "dispersive devil" and its sinister silences (192). By doing 'himself in different voices' he had fallen from "an aesthetic polis into the parlous inferno of political history" (194). In definition, Pound was highly attuned as a radio speaker -- this is imperative to the understanding of any line typed in the D.T.C., few of which were altered. One might assume that the *periplus* had veered to Pound's old elegiac writings of artistic telegraphy, which seemed to inform recent experience.

Another factor is Pound's heightened sensitivity to acoustics, shown in his concern over mangled radio speeches. The source of this phobia is traceable, and qualified in a broadcast of February 1943:

¹²⁹ Hugh Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 47.

And Madame [Chiang] on February 18, made a stirring speech to the American Congress [...] It was an appeal to one's sympathies. I should have been swept off my feet if I hadn't been lying down at the time, next to my radio. *Bedside habit of radio* (RB 286).

The last monolith has submitted to a strange intimacy with the object Natalie Barney 'planted' -- compensating for his former denial by allowing access to his private space. Pound resembles the *Wake* sleeper, whose body is bound into the circuit. It is previously hinted:

I unhooked my radio the other night [from where?] and the word REVOLUTION came floatin' over the ambient air (RB 66).

Here is Joyce's prostate figure, either sucking at waves of disjointed sound which promise lucidity, somewhere, or twiddling the dial to admit further invaders. Such a 'habit' is diagnosed, and addressed, years earlier:

That is the whole flaw of impressionist or 'emotional' music as opposed to 'pattern' music. It is like a drug. [Y]ou must have more drug, and more noise [...] or this effect, this impression which works from the outside, in from the nerves and sensorium upon the self - is no use, its effect is constantly weaker...¹³¹

While Pound slips into unconsciousness, the radio might be switched on, emitting a high whine or sizzle mid-frequency; even delivering a clear stream of diatribe to penetrate layers of the mind and arouse, as Surrealist Paul Nougé wrote, "the voice that suddenly materialises from some forgotten corner of our

¹³⁰ Stephen J. Adams, 'The Soundscape of the Cantos: Some Ideas of Music in the Poetry of Ezra Pound' *Humanities Association Review*, vol. 28 (1977): 167-188.

¹³¹ EP 'Arnold Dolmetsch' in *Literary Essays*, pp. 431-436.

memory".¹³² Moreover, a diffuse multitude of dead [or seemingly erased] words, would cluster, subsequently fighting for airspace in the *Pisan Cantos*.

Later, when Pound was tested for auditory hallucinations -- that is, whether "he had heard voices" at the DTC -- he promptly became evasive, "apparently unable to make up his mind whether to answer in the negative or affirmative".¹³³ This response would be in accord with the situation, as Pound was exposed to noise from his barbed wire stockade, namely, other inmates and a tannoy system. The immediate environment is shown to morph into less tangible articulations sensed -- and channelled into speech -- by Pound's fabled antennae. In terms of poetic influence, his radio sessions in the bedroom may rank alongside those of the studio.

The *Pisan Cantos* open with a stuttering uncertainty, as oblique references to Odysseus collide in presenting "the man with an education" who is also adrift, imprisoned with other "voiceless" souls -- "if we weren't so dumb, we wouldn't be here" (C 440). Woodward notes that:

Certain hypnotic refrains and the invocations of sacred presences create the overall effect of a voice gently, insistently, intoning against the turbulence. Tossed now this way and that, no stable ascent; he can only plead: 'Spiritus veni'. He is passive in the flux [...] (64)

Woodward's reading tentatively suggests the process is beyond the poet's control, such as "when he dwindles into mutter", or when a "myriad" of sensations arrive

¹³² Paul Nougé, 'Music Is Dangerous' (1928), quoted and discussed by Christopher Schiff, 'Banging On The Windowpane: Sound In Early Surrealism in *Wireless Imagination*, ed. Kahn and Whitehead, pp. 139-180, at 174-175.

in "hints and guesses" to release greater emotions (66-67). Pound depicts a kind of intermediary, permeable, state, where pieces of information seep through:

"ghosts move about me" "patched with histories"

but as Mead says: if they were,

what have they done in the interval,

eh, to arrive by metempsychosis at...

and there are also the conjectures of the Fortean Society (C 460).

...which, of course, dealt with the nebulous space between transmission and reception of concrete objects. Pound is solitary in this space, migrating between the identities of prisoners ("[...] Kernes, Green, Tom Wilson") and "cadaveres animae" [soul corpses]. He blatantly evokes "Erigena Scotus" (443) or "old Upward", but is also fretted by other reminders; the "wind [comes] as hamadryas" implying the 'dryad'/Hilda Doolittle (445). He admits that "Vai Soli [those who are alone] are never alone".

Stephen J. Adams locates different levels of music in the Pisan Cantos; the literal, represented in lettering -- "k-lakk...thuuuuuu" of rain (C 479); secondly, the historical, "beyond the reach of the musicologist" floating indiscriminately as potential "deranged imagining"; and lastly, that which distracts like the pornograph, seductive and consistent. I would consider all three to be facets of Pound's radio-suffused writing. One instance is the markings of :..... or: / or :- They announce an exchange of speaker or dissolving of subject, rapidly replaced and re-spaced.

¹³³ Torrey, p. 202.

Conventionally, Adams considers the display of music in Canto 75 -- a violin score of Janequin's 'Chanson des Oiseaux' -- to be a transcription of bird song; those perched on electric fences surrounding the compound;

F f

D

G

Write the words in their treble scale (C 539)

However, an accompanying ideogram in Canto 79 denotes "words, speech, message"; the one below means 'intelligent' or 'to apprehend'. This constitutes a mini-relay system, which posits the birds -- also affixed to telegraph poles? -- as the connecting force.¹³⁴ Furthermore:

O white-chested martin, God damn it
as no-one else will carry a message (C77. 473).

In the D.T.C., "news is a long time moving/ a long time in arriving [...] the news was quicker in Troy's time" (C79. 539). For, Pound is accustomed to speedier reception.

The pattern of Canto 75 might be a telegraphic message spelled in bird song, "a radical language of poetry" explains Vincent Sherry (152). When "further terror"

¹³⁴ Pound's arrangement on the page may also refer to Apollinaire's caligramme 'Voyage' which appeared in *Les Soirees des Paris* (July-August 1914). Next to the title, the etching of a telegraph pole crossed by wires functions as a musical time signature for words printed below.

of encroaching madness and the "loneliness of death" swoops at "3 P.M", Pound turns to "three solemn half notes/[...] on the middle wire" and raps out an S.O.S (C 540-41). It pre-empts the truncated lines written during 'Dungeon/Dementia', in Washington, January 1946, generally approached as a coda for the *Pisan Cantos*:

coherent areas

constantly

invaded

aiuto ["help"]¹³⁵

The most persistent intruders are, by Adams' analysis, self-engendered phantasms, although Pound is assured of their viability:

spiriti questi? personae?

tangibility by no means *atasal* [the aimless flitting of the mind] (C 473).

And adds, "de mis soledades vengan" [out of my solitude let them come](524).

In Canto 80, Pound remembers Yeats' position in the "Oirish Senate", although the wordplay hints at spiritualist preoccupations, stressing that "[I]f a man don't occasionally sit in a senate/ how can he pierce the darrk mind of a/ senator" (510). In the past, Pound had suspected -- prior to explorations at Stone Cottage - - that psychical research might "bore [him] to death". Here, however, he prepares

Guillaume Apollinaire, *Caligrammes: Poems of Peace and War 1913*, trans. Anne Hyde Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 92-93

¹³⁵ Cornell, p. 75.

for a "Partial resurrection [...] because there is no one to converse with" (511, 513):¹³⁶

And a navy rolls up to me in Church St. (Kensington End) with:

Yuura Jurrmun!

To which I replied: I am *not* [...]

"Il est bin comme les pain"

sd/ Mockel of "Willy"

(Gauthier Villars) but I cdn't explain to him (Willy)

what the Dial wanted and Gluck's "Iphigenie"

was played in the Mockel's garden [...] (517-18)

Such scattered excerpts combine, or rather, they *chatter* in a perpetual present. The sentences relay a brief, jarring, altercation retained in memory, and the lilting notes of classical music to accompany a long-dead debate. This type of impression reshapes the contours of Pound's aural landscape: the crickets chirping, the "puss lizard" scratching at the dusty floor (530). For instance, in Canto 83, the buzzing of a wasp invokes other half-heard sounds, misconstrued:

so that I recalled the noise in the chimney

as it were the noise in the chimney

but was in reality Uncle William [W.B Yeats]

downstairs composing[...]

had made a great Peeeeeeeecock in the...(547-548)

Pound is able to summon scenes "gone forever" by extra-sensory perception; he uses a superficial -- acoustic -- irritant to recreate flashes of significance (548).

¹³⁶ Peter Ackroyd, *Ezra Pound and His World* (London: Thames and Hudson, p. 1980), p. 32

In Canto 77, the repartee of D.T.C prisoners is fragmentary and inconsistent in volume, floating past as Pound sits typing: "...- niggers comin' over the obstacle fence [...] "what are the books of the bibl'?! Name 'em!..." (487). Throughout the piece, singular characters blare out, interject and whisper; crucially, Pound told Carroll Terrell, "you can tell who is talking *by the noise they make*", just as Cantos 18-19 could be radiophonically assimilated -- if the reader were tuned correctly.¹³⁷ In the passage quoted above, a phrase -- "*Hobo Williams, the queen of them all*" -- actually energises, once again, "uncle William", who mutters "*Sligo in heaven*" (487). For Pound, external stimuli behave like radio waves; they 'carry' further associations. In Canto 81, there is some acknowledgement:

Ed ascoltando al leggier mormorio ["and listening to the gentle murmur"]

there came new subtlety of eyes into my tent,

whether of spirit or hypostasis [...] (534)

Pound confessed this was "[n]ot a quotation, merely author [*sic*] using handy language".¹³⁸ These are words 'to hand', on the periphery but always attainable, like Pound's "active filing system" in his Rapallo study, where notes and papers hung from wires overhead.¹³⁹

Both emphatically and subconsciously, Pound exhorts remembered speech from his fleeting outer perceptions; it is, by nature, a very private activity. One line

¹³⁷ Carroll Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* vol. II (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), p.413.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 453.

¹³⁹ Tytell, p. 280.

from Canto 77 aptly describes these wraithlike forms who cluster, animated in equal measure by nostalgia and noise:

Ils n'existent pas, leur ambience leur confert

une existence...["They don't exist, their surroundings *confer* an existence upon them"]

(485)

Hugh Kenner underscores this idea, seeing "something stranger [...] transacted" in Canto 80; rustlings which "suggest some major possession to come".¹⁴⁰ It forms a séance wherein "English versification from Chaucer to 1945" is transferred, as Pound's imitative powers are used to express current anguish. For, adds Kenner, "dead poets can be of mutual service, the voice of one bereaved singer supplying in courtesy words for another".

Such a method was already processed; the unpublished manuscript passages of Canto 51 are a pastiche of Browning, 'Bishop Bloughram's Apology'. Upon consulting this text, Vincent Sherry finds "a dimension of imagined or remembered sound"(191):

[...]Time

a centipede, scuttles under the door

illusion? Matter illusion? Time rather!

And speaking of righteousness

Lacking the concrete example

Old Bob at the séance with the voice, say Gigadibs

Bloughram, Robert redividus Browning

¹⁴⁰ Kenner, *The Pound Era*, pp. 448-449.

Ectoplasmic RB. Like suds over a beer stein.¹⁴¹

Sherry accounts for Pound's treatment of "words voiced aloud", connecting the temporal medium of speech with a "fluid imprecision of *come-and-go words*". They bubble over, clotting the flow of writing with pure "vocal sensation". Moreover, "[t]he spirit matter of Browning's speech has become old Bob's beery voice", capable of randomly appearing -- a flickering signal -- yet proving to be fatally hypnotic.

As a result, in Canto 80, Pound sinks beneath anonymous English decasyllabic, possessed once again with the voice of Browning ("Oh to be in England"), and concludes in thrall to Eliot's echo: "God knows what else is left of our London/ my London, your London" (C 530). In the D.T.C., Pound was pierced with consistent surface noise, enough to support his innate theory of finer audition, which was clearly heightened by exposure to the spectral medium of radio. Voices could emerge out of thin air; on the wireless, a scrap of talk could always be reinterpreted or translated. Pound's present environment was similarly flexible: an illiterate prisoner (Hobo Williams) *redividus* W.B Yeats, for example.

Inflation, or distortion, of verbal sense is, therefore, a pivotal theme of the *Pisan Cantos*. As anticipated, noise also functions as a pollutant, displayed at the outset

¹⁴¹ Sherry p. 221. Cites from unpublished manuscripts in the Beinecke Library, Yale. He fails to recognise that these lines are actually more resonant of Browning's vitriolic satire 'Mr Sludge, The Medium', assumed to be about Daniel Dunglass Home. For instance: 'Milton, composing baby rhymes and Locke/Reasoning in gibberish [...]/ I've made a spirit squeak /In sham voice for a minute, then outbroke/Bold in my own...'
Text cited by Horace Wyndham, *Mr Sludge, The Medium: Being the Life and Adventure of Daniel Dunglass Home* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937), p. 131.

of Canto 80, where Pound's fluent rattling is arrested by his inability to remember a line from Homer [*Od.* X, 490-495]. Terrell notes that the translation does not construe. Outer rhythms press into the narrative: a "warp/ and the woof" which is emphasised later as "the *god*-damned crooning" (C 508, 513). It is apparent that a loudspeaker relays items into the compound:

Tune: kitten on the keys

radio steam Calliope (512)¹⁴²

This popular piano ditty of the 1920's, wafting on the air, inspires a relevant image, where the muse of eloquence and epic poetry becomes a mechanical instrument. Later, the British war song, 'Tipperary' is inferred, with "adieu" altered to "Ade du" which allows for a modulation of sound, or even another voice tuning in, clumsily and inaccurately (515). For, in Canto 74, the trainee "Mr Bullington" lies like "an ape/ singing O sweet and lovely/ o lady be good", which provokes Pound to exclaim testily, "in harum ac ego ivi" ["into a pigsty I too have gone"] (453).

Although this directly alludes to the immediate situation, it also reinforces "the acoustic culture of the modern vulgus" intrinsic to the radio, over which *Pound himself* yawped a vernacular poetic even whilst "trying to catch and hold the attention of individual hearers".¹⁴³ Sherry underscores this fact, adding that

¹⁴² Additionally, the following lines occur in Hudson Maxim's poem on a departed wife, 'A Veiled Illusion', which claims to paraphrase Milton: "Only the warp is real/ The woof is the substance of dreams/ Only the veil is real/ The face is the substance of dreams" (Maxim, p. 215). It is probable that Pound compiles a multilayered reference here. Not having immediate access to Maxim's text, he finds that a half-remembered phrase can be revived -- it can also perfectly summarise a different context.

¹⁴³ Sherry, p. 166; *RB*, p. 261.

Canto 46, the only poetry Pound read on air, is "[a] discourse steeped in the idiom of his native land [...]not in the optimal subjunctive of a silent visionary ideal" (194). In fact, Pound minimised inconvenience for his listeners by "feedin' [them] the footnotes" of a deliberately anecdotal sequence on "ole Johnny Bull" (*RB* 34). Attracting -- and keeping -- an audience entailed strategic use of a familiar lyric; conversely, Pound had hoped his teachings might inspire others to sing along.

This nagging realisation -- that he had somehow ingested populist tendencies -- is an enduring facet of the *Pisan Cantos*, as certain melodies converge and collide with more esoteric musings. During a significant moment of Canto 76, Pound concedes to the refrain "...See her coming down the street/ I ask her very confidentially/ Ain't she sweet". This produces a tonal distortion:¹⁴⁴

and who's dead and who isn't

and will the world ever take up its course again

very confidentially I ask you: Will it? (467)

Is the song being transmitted at that exact moment, implicitly wound into the typewriter, or has it resurfaced during compilation? Either way, a passage on monetary affairs in Canto 77 is abruptly severed:

[...] the bombardment at Frascati after the armistice

had been signed

who live by debt and war profiteering

Das Bankgeschäft

"...of the Wabash cannon ball" (488)

The section is thrown off-key, as Pound collides into a vague memory of speech in Canto 19: "In the houseboats, with the turquoise" (88). He misquotes his own line, adding "ten bob's worth of turquoise" (489). Clearly, a distracting element -- 'The Wabash Cannonball' -- effected this transition, which at once augments the texture of the sequence, and exhausts Pound's capacities:

mind come to plenum [nothing] when nothing more will go into it

The Canto sputters into nothingness, while strains of an Italian popular song over the sound system linger:

Sorello, mia sorella,

Che ballava sobr' un zecchin' (489)

Here, Pound's latent disgust for the devil box is apparent: a medium which inspires a languid torpor, where the mind becomes glugged with jargon. In Canto 79, a rare moment of appreciation for his surroundings, with a scent of "mint, thyme and basilicum", is spoiled, as:

the young horse whinnies *against* the sound of the bumm band;

to that 'gadgett' [...] (501)

¹⁴⁴ Terrell, p. 392.

Accordingly, Canto 76 contains a reminder of the "squeak doll" Churchill, a pilloried figure in the broadcasts -- the "whisky-filled [...] tank" -- of whose resignation on 23 May 1945 Pound read in *Time* magazine (RB 127). Unaware of his subsequent reinstatement, Pound reflects that, with the demise of Brendan Bracken, "the B.B.C can lie/ but at least a different bilge will come out of it" (C 472). This concern over accurate relay of "FACTS" -- so prevalent to the broadcasts -- hovers behind a passage in Canto 77, which restages a topic aired 17 July 1942:

"30, 000, they thought they were clever,
why hell/ they cd/ have had it for 6000 dollars,
and after Landon they picked Wendell Willkie. (C 487)

Here, Pound is alluding to scurrility in the American presidential campaigns of 1940. Lewis W. Wendell was the Republican nominee, castigated by Pound over radio for complying with the international monetary conspiracy. Transcripts of the talk are virtually identical to the Canto; it outlines a piece of information Pound was given:

Man said to me, "[Why] his manager spent 30 thousand dollars getting' the nomination! He was goof! He could have had it for SIX, six thousand dollars (RB 208).

Seemingly an imperceptible detail of the *Pisan Cantos*, this correlation proves that firstly, Pound can visualise his radio script, implicitly mouthing its delivery. The lines are punctuated in order to denote a superficial pause, by way of emphasis: "Why *hell*...they *could*... have had it for 6000". Furthermore, Pound's

example is not merely faithful to his own broadcast, it acts as a *precise* report of contemporary history, including statistics. This validates his early motives, in categorically refusing to spew "bilge" and falsity over the radio, for:

in

discourse

What matters is

to *get it across* e poi e basta [and then nothing else] (500)

Pound's receptors were already clotted by his "bedside habit"; a fetishization not dissimilar to Winifred Holtby's treatment of her 'beloved' device. Or rather, the "fool in the outer ear" had submitted to a latent, more acute apperception of sound.¹⁴⁵ This evidently culminated in the *Pisan Cantos*, a text enlivened by radio, formatively, subjectively -- and traumatically.

Confined at St Elizabeth's, Pound would deviously ramble, "stringing together disconnected thoughts and commenting on whatever distracted him, the birds outside, organ music from the chapel [...]", perhaps attempting to prolong the sonic intensity of Pisa.¹⁴⁶ Concurrently, Pound admitted he was "shot to pieces," which mirrors his sentiment in the 1941 letter to William Joyce, on being 'discharged' through the ether. It is clear that the restaged radiospace of the D.T.C was Pound's arena for transitional poetry: a weird nostalgia mingled with the enduring fear of self-atomisation.

¹⁴⁵ Kahn and Whitehead, p. 174.

Conclusion: "to have done..."

Pound's erratic behaviour during the St. Elizabeth's period and beyond is well-documented. In 1956, D.G. Bridson, of the loathed B.B.C, arrived in Washington intending to begin annual recordings of the Cantos. He found the poet to be of a sober, articulate disposition, tersely defending his "citizen's duties" at the microphone, which, noted Bridson, he held stiffly "like an old-fashioned upright telephone [...] as if he had forgotten his Roman training". Before reading Canto 1, Pound launched into an impromptu summary of 'Four Steps' which led to his broadcasts; mostly owing to perceived incompetence of the American government. Sharply articulate, Pound rapped out the speech he failed to make in court; swinging into radio mode when cued by a microphone. Outside on the lawn, flanked by sycophants, Pound resumed normal activity, his conversation "cryptic and idiosyncratic". Bridson later mentioned this fluid exchange, noting merely "[t]wo voices".¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Torrey, p. 161fn.

¹⁴⁷ Bridson's account is in *Agenda 21* (1979): 131-138. A more comprehensive version of the working relationship between Bridson and Pound is a feature of *Prospero and Ariel* (1971). He considered that Pound underwent personal "re-realisation" when speaking for radio (213). In 1959, he visited Pound in Italy after his release, for the purposes of a documentary, 'Profile of a Poet' (Autumn 1959). This partially allowed for his opinions on monetary reform. Bridson was pleased, adding "I had at least got him on the air without censorship and *in toto*" (251). Pound also recorded material for the Third Programme ('Readings and Recollections', March 1961) and printed in *New Directions 17* (ed., James Laughlin, New York: 1961). Once again, the flair was demonstrated "provocatively [...] brilliantly". Of Pound's subject matter, it was reasoned that after thirteen years incarceration "it was not surprising if he stayed with a few obsessions" (266). Writing in 1949, Alan Pryce-Jones opined that a "pure scholar" would not fit "the part" of an ideal broadcaster. Such a person might fail to "exclude whatever is inessential to his radio personality [...he] must try not to give himself complete to the microphone - a course which, both literally and metaphorically, would amount to throwing himself to the winds". In the case of Pound, he succeeded in being "remorselessly malleable" but failed to do what Pryce-Jones considers the mark of broadcasting success -- accepting that one has to be "a disembodied voice - suppressing some essential parts of his character as irrelevant or disturbing [...]" 'Personality on the Air' in *B.B.C Quarterly* (1949/50): 219-223.

As shown, Pound's extraction from his unique radio-therapy into an arena of continual questioning and scrutiny, had heightened -- and made public -- a disjointed orality. 'Old Ez' unregenerate and vicious, often assumed the controls. Charles Olson was disconcerted to hear Pound's reaction to an orderly at St Elizabeth's who declined one of Olson's cigarettes:

[...] Pound says, CHAW CUT PLUG. And repeated it, CHAW CUT PLUG. Explained to the guard he meant that's the only thing he guessed the guard did.¹⁴⁸

That is, chewing inferior tobacco like "ole man Comley" in Canto 28, spitting "Hrwwkke tth!"(C 136). Olson explains:

The sudden explosion of Pound's voice in this phrase was quite total to me. It was the poet making sounds, trying [...] to see if they warmed his ear. But it was the fascist too, as a snob outclassing the guard.

Within the walls of St Elizabeth's, Pound could flagrantly 'talk dirty', as though he were in his own auditorium, a telephonic existence wherein the star performer was exempt from attack. This would comply with debate on Pound's reluctance to walk free from St Elizabeth's until 1958, after unremitting efforts from Archibald MacLeish -- a socially acceptable poet/politician. In probability, Pound thought no-one would be listening; the import of the words spoken would lessen after immediate delivery, unlike his radio speeches which rebounded in the courtroom. By that maxim, Pound might continue untapped, resenting the

¹⁴⁸ Charles Olson, *Charles Olson and Ezra Pound: An Encounter at St Elizabeth's*, ed. Catherine Seelye (New York: Crossman Publishers, 1975), p. 69. Also mentioned in Carpenter, p. 738.

"imbecile mad niggers" and refusing to co-operate with members of staff he suspected to be Jewish.

Aside from the direct collision with Bridson's official microphone, Pound exhibited strains of his original antipathy toward wireless. Meticulous concerns over timing and reception gave way to a disregard, as shown, for his own "radio agenda".¹⁴⁹ Use of the instrument -- switching it on -- might unleash "unconscious agents" working *within* the "plain noise", both internal and extrinsic. They could infect a mindset which needed "to be correctly oriented in all spheres"; a concern which aligns to Pound's reluctance to 'ventilate' his room. (RB 238).¹⁵⁰

One might recall Cocteau's *Orphee* of 1926, wherein the mechanical horse -- Pegasus, once a symbol of poetic inspiration -- dictates messages on a Ouijia board. It has a dual function, suggested by Cocteau's dominant fear "of being put on trail and convicted of espionage -- presumably for spying on the unknown".¹⁵¹ A hostile force is insinuated, as Eurydice urges caution: "I'm always afraid the horse may be listening to me" (39). Crucially, this "apparatus" summons Death with great alacrity on a wave-length of seven, and a range of seven to twelve[...] thus saving calculations and [...] loss of time" (46).

¹⁴⁹ "Imbecile" quote in Carpenter, p. 791; Spann in *Paideuma* (1974).

¹⁵⁰ On arrival in St Elizabeth's, Pound was offered a radio to suppress other inmates' clamour in the corridor; he rejected it as "just plain noise" (Carpenter, p. 727). Hospital notes, 4 April, 1951 (Torrey, p. 243). Note Woolf and Spender's debate on whether to 'press' the switch.

¹⁵¹ Jean Cocteau, *Orpheus, Oedipus Rex, The Infernal Machine*, trans. Carl Wildman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 15.

The "devil in the shape of a horse" (64) can be compared to Natalie Barney's gift to Pound, which transmitted absurdities, garble, the MERDE of BBC "OOOOzing [...] filthy sub-Zukor emissions (*RB* 144).¹⁵² By nature, the device could eavesdrop upon spoken words, and crash the unconscious mind in repose. Any intimacy might posit the broadcaster as Azrael, one of the "engineers" in *Orphee*, who facilitates the passage of Death, "[entering] their homes, unseen" (46). Oddly, it is Natalie Barney who implies this connection, finally acquiescing her role as 'Death's Carrier':

Who lit this deadly spark
To triumph over reason
War aims that miss their mark
Are subject to high treason.¹⁵³

The extensive area of Pound's regret can be approached, if picturing the figure unearthed by Laurence Rainey, a Pound who reputedly beat his chest under the sacristy of the church Tempio Malatestiano, Rimini, in 1963. This archetypal Miltonic sinner repeated in tandem with his blows: "Here is hell. Here", in a "suffocated scream".¹⁵⁴ Other pieces of evidence are compiled to suggest remorse for the broadcasts, in particular, an interview with Allen Ginsberg regretting "the stupid suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism" and a "lot of double

¹⁵² "[...] the shit of BBC": Pound quoted in *Charles Olson and Ezra Pound* ed. Seelye, p. 40.

¹⁵³ Natalie Barney. Poem quoted in *Paideuma* vol. 2, 3 (1976): 119.

¹⁵⁴ Lawrence Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991). As a 'coda', Rainey includes a "free adaptation" from a manuscript by Luigi Pasquino, *Gerate del mio tempo* (Rimini: Maggiolis, 1979); it recalls the tortured Pound of 1963. See also Pound's view of himself as a caged specimen of evil (Tytell, p. 278).

talk" over the air.¹⁵⁵ Without a direct basis, it would be imprudent to credit Pound with a revelation: that his radio crimes could be sourced -- back to himself and early poetics -- even though the origins are traceable to an impartial critic.

Nevertheless, in two wireless talks, Pound inferred that electricity literally courses through his veins:

[...] a certain Loomis [Pound] succeeded in sending wireless electric signals, he invented wireless telegraphy [...] Nothin' practical came of it, til Sig. Marconi got it into a system. (*RB* 322, 177).

Pound embodies the foreknowledge of his ancestor, telepathically or via inherited memory. Indeed, Tiffany adds that Loomis should be seen as "a harbinger of the poet possessed by the spirit of radio" (279). Posing as a "phantom on the air", Pound could perpetuate, and actuate, his links to a dead realm, becoming a "posthumous voice" to be accessed and archived -- perhaps wrongly (276).

Eventually, Pound would express this indignity of being 'caught': "What he speaks for all in debt; he owes/ For every word".¹⁵⁶ A static legacy, like the victim of Edison's phonograph:

This tongueless [...] instrument nevertheless utters your words, and centuries after you have crumbled to dust will repeat again and again to a generation that will never know you, every idle thought, every fond fancy, every vain word that you choose to whisper.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Principal source: Michael Reck, 'A Conversation between Ezra Pound and Allen Ginsberg', *Evergreen* (June 1968). See Carpenter, pp. 897-9, 970fn.

With regard to Pound's guilt, my reading is one of scepticism, as it seems entangled in his *pre-occupation* (a multilayered word) with radio. A parallel exists in Antonin Artaud, another artist who believed his duty was to "go outside, to shake up, to attack the public". Certified insane and wired with electric shock treatment, Artaud recorded his radiophonic piece, 'To Have Done with the Judgement of God', in 1947, although it was never performed. Banned by the Director General of the Radiodiffusion Francais on the grounds of blasphemy, it was unclear as to *how* the work should be regarded; as "polemical pamphlet, autobiographical meditations, or 'poems'".¹⁵⁸ The purpose, "[m]ainly to denounce a number of officially/ authorized and social ills" is akin to Pound's radio manifesto, as is the unique delivery, but I would emphasize the claim that Artaud's verbal act renders any inscription obsolete: the self is dispossessed by exteriorising the language. Of the discordant, repetitive performance itself, Esslin writes:

Such is the degree of [...] Artaud's possession by the passions which convulse him that they appear as madly inspired as [the] chants of a shaman through whom the voices of Gods and Demons speak (74).

Douglas Kahn investigates the 'types' of Artaudian scream in relation to the writer's electroshock treatment, noting that the production of 'To Have Done' may contain "remnants" of previous madness; "a deep-seated, constricted

¹⁵⁶ Pound, *Drafts and Fragments*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁷ *The Diary and Sundry Observations of Thomas A. Edison*, ed. R. Runes (New York Philosophical Library, 1948), p. 81.

¹⁵⁸ Antonin Artaud, 'Manifesto in Clear Language' (1925), cited in *Wireless Imagination*, ed. Kahn, p. 229; Artaud, 'To Have Done With the Judgement of God' (1947), fully quoted in

trembling" in the voice of Artaud, who is nonetheless aware that he performs a script "tempered by technical exigencies" to which "the charged sound of fettered nerves" must adapt.¹⁵⁹

Significantly, one facet of Pound's depression upon leaving St Elizabeth's was antipathy to the sound of his own voice. In discussing Artaud, Allen S. Weiss contends that:

The features of the discarnate voice - ubiquity, panopticism, omniscience, omnipotence - cause the radiophonic work to return as hallucination and phantasm. [W]ith no visible body emitting the sound and with no image whatsoever to anchor the sound, [the work] is an anti-representational representation; a spontaneous fixing; a non-broadcast broadcast.¹⁶⁰

In 1960, Pound was interviewed by Donald Hall for the Paris Review, an ordeal characterised by "incomplete sentences, gaps, great leaps over chasms [...]. He would begin a long sentence, pause, stumble and become aware of the tape recorder. "No, no, no, no", he would say, "turn the damn thing off". Significantly,

Wireless Imagination, pp. 309- 329; Martin Esslin, *Artaud: the Man and His Work* (London: Calder Publications 1976), pp. 9-14, 74.

¹⁵⁹ Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, pp. 349-50. It is pertinent that Artaud had meningitis as a child, "a condition marked by a rigidified and torsional spine clouded with diseased fluid, releasing pain at the neck into the head, inflaming the three membranes that negotiate the space between the brain and the spinal chord". Artaud himself described "the spinal column full of crackles [and] shivering droning noises in the ears" (Esslin p. 99). Kahn links this affliction to his stammering and subsequent use of theatre space: "elaborating a vibrational economy in the confines of his own body". In this context, electroshock is termed as "[the] titrated screams of a culture that knows so little about directing energies in the body (358-359). These comments may be considered alongside Pound's physical ailment beginning in Pisa, and how it related to his poetic theory.

As shown in the *Pisan Cantos*, Hudson Maxim's 'Great Poetic Lines' were observed by Pound. Whilst feeling himself to be short-circuited at St Elizabeth's and later in life, the following certainly applied: "Thou shalt within thine own consuming essence burn/And every naked nerve shall scream" (Maxim, p. 261).

¹⁶⁰ Allen S. Weiss, 'Radio, Death and the Devil: Artaud's *Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu*', in *Wireless Imagination*, pp. 269-307.

he worked on his responses after Hall left the country, finishing the sentence in letter form.¹⁶¹

One may surmise that Pound was dissolving into an acoustic non-entity, with the transmission of his own voice beginning to signal, not immediacy, but delirium in a tomblike space. Perhaps it resembled a sort of hell, for the man who embodied loquaciousness -- the Browningsque showman and ex-demagogue. As a result, Pound became aggressively mute. In later years, he complained that "I did not enter into silence, silence captured me".¹⁶² This stance mimics a figure "tidewashed" into the oral flow of *The Pisan Cantos*: "old Train (Francis) on the pavement in his plain wooden/ chair" referring to an American writer, Francis T. Train (1829-1904) who "made inflammatory speeches against politicians, for which he was castigated" (C 461). After a voluble career, Train lapsed into another form of resistance: a silent old age, only "writing messages" like the S.O.S. of the Pisan Coda.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Donald Hall, *Remembering Poets*, (London: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 60. Hall describes his initial encounter with Pound in Rome, March 1960. He was startled by the poet's sudden switches in mood and segmentation of phrases; Pound apologised: "You have driven - all the way - from London - to find a man - who is only fragments".

Douglas Kahn raises issues surrounding the Dianetic demon, a mutation of "Socratic utility [which] becomes a surrogate self speaking with words previously recorded by the reactive mind". Importantly, "people who hear voices have exterior vocal demons [which] have tied up their imagination circuits" (*Noise Water Meat*, pp. 318-319). Pound's tape recorder would epitomise this. Kahn is referring to William Burroughs, who became similarly immersed in radio. A topic for future study is the link between Pound's "lesion of May" and Burroughs' "energetics of protoplasm" both of which are viral tropes expressed through communication technologies.

¹⁶² Carpenter, p. 882. By the same degree, Artaud endured periods of stunned "catatonic" silence (Esslin, p. 73).

¹⁶³ Terrell, p. 386; Allen Ginsberg opined that, in the recordings of Pound made at Spoleto, 1966, "you hear the voice of Prospero himself, whose every third though is his grave [...] the whispering paper-thin voice pronouncing syllable by syllable [...] Like Prospero, he drowned his books and plunged 'deeper than did ever plummet sound', his magic wand of pride, and took to his counsel silence" (Allen Ginsberg, 'The Death of E.P', a radio talk at Station KDNA, St Louis, Missouri, 1 November 1971). Transcript in *Paideuma*, 3 (1974). I would encourage a less elegaic reading.

Pound's official line of reasoning for such taciturnity was outlined to a journalist, Grazia Levi. Apparently, it evolved from an epiphanic realisation, wherein "words became void of meaning".¹⁶⁴ This was far removed from his acute confidence in 'A Visiting Card' (1942), when, speaking as an instigator of "[t]he poetical reform between 1910 and 1920" Pound had elucidated and compartmentalised the very essence of words: to facilitate "the commerce of perception, of intuition" (SP 291, 287).

In 1934, Pound had castigated Joyce for negating his previous verbal artistry, as *work in progress* signalled a withdrawal from the fresh utility of *Ulysses* which had new-minted a speech. Instead, Joyce "has mumbled things to himself, he has heard his voice on the phonograph and thought of sound, mumble, murmur".¹⁶⁵ In Pound's view, Joyce's vital abundance had been extracted by intimacy with a perverting medium -- the pornograph -- which causes incoherence. This anticipates Pound's disclosure to Levi: that he was neutralised, or 'sapped', knowing "nothing", or rather, a huge *Wake*-ean sprawl of incomprehensible nonsense:

[...] I have even forgotten the name of that Greek philosopher who said that nothing exists, and if it did it would be unknowable, and if it were knowable, it would be incommunicable... I [am] as stupid as if I had been a telescope used the wrong way.

Once again, Pound aligns himself to a piece of defunct machinery, practically the "disembodied instrument" of Lewis's Thad Trunk story, unable to detect or focus.

¹⁶⁴ 'Ezra Pound: 'The Poet Speaks'', an interview with Grazia Levi (Milan 1963), *Paideuma* 8 (1977): 346-351.

He acquiesces that, to employ Ellmann's phrasing, "the fewer words a poet uses, the less he blocks the transference of energies" (168). It is "important not to overload the switchboard", yet Pound had chattered, soliloquized, revived, declaimed, and defamed over a medium which retained the evidence.

Like Artaud, who claimed he had been "suicided" by the dissimulation of his voice through radio, Pound became a ghostly "husk of talk" (C 26). In this context, I would consider his work on Remy de Gourmont, *Physique de L'Amour*, and his infamous "lesion of May" leading to the malaise in St Elizabeth's: the lobotomised sensation. It may be aligned to the state described by Edison in *L'Eve Future*, that he who extends his capacities does little else "but deliberately decapitate his own mind". Chiefly if one were a poet -- a version of Orpheus whose dismembered head only recollects "remote impulses of the body", but sings on as a "mediumistic phantom".¹⁶⁶

Pound, the master of interconnection, would surely note, in horror, his own clairvoyancy: a poem of 1916, 'Near Perigord' -- indebted to the Provençal poet Bertran de Born. It refers to a passage of Dante's *Inferno*, XXVIII (118-123, 139-142), elucidated in the figure of Bertran, a "stirrer-up of strife [...] the headless trunk" (P 149):

Verily I saw, and I seem to see it still, a trunk

Without a head going, as were the others of the miserable herd;

And it held the severed head by the hair swinging in its hand like a lantern,

¹⁶⁵ 'e.e. cummings Alive,' *The New English Weekly* VI, 10 (20 December 1934). Cited in *Pound/Joyce*, ed. Read, pp. 210-212.

¹⁶⁶ Villiers, *L'Eve Future*, p. 24; Jed Rasula, 'Poetry's Voice-Over', in *Sound States*, p. 292.

And that was looking at us and saying, "Woe is me!"...

Because I parted those so joined I carry my brain, alas, parted from its root

In this trunk; thus is served in me the retribution.

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