DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

ORDINARY ORALITIES

EVERYDAY VOICES IN HISTORY

Edited by Josephine Hoegaerts and Janice Schroeder

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Josephine Hoegaerts and Janice Schroeder

Ordinary Oralities: Introduction

When we think about voices of the past, we often imagine grand occasions or exceptional sounds. A famous speech on the radio rousing a nation; a great diva singing her way to glory on stage, a general in the field perhaps, memorialized for the fearless leadership of his troops. Shelves can be filled with histories of such "great" voices, or at least of the impact they have purportedly had – we know far less about their actual sounds, or the very real effect they may have had on the ears of their listeners. Once a speech or performance ends up in the archives, it often loses much of its vocal quality and becomes discourse: a narrative for researchers to unravel, a puzzle-piece revealing fragments of ideas, thoughts, ideologies, or strategies. It is easy to forget that the words we piece together in the archives are often just . . . talk. Or at least they were when they were uttered. This is perhaps particularly true for what we know about the utterances of the large majority of historical actors: those who did not conquer the stage, address the masses, or lead troops into battle. These are the men, women, and children whose words have been stored only as part of a collective, extracted by police, courts, or medical authorities when something went terribly wrong, or whose stories have not been archived at all.

This volume attempts to show that, although we are often unable to recover the actual words of many (or most) people in the past, we may be able to restore some of their vocality in a more general sense. In some instances, archival documents provide access to the actual words spoken, but we have few ways of listening for the sounds of the voices that spoke them, since we assume that writing "silences" voices, leaving us only with a residue – the language spoken. Yet as François Noudelmann asks, "what do we hear from a text in a so-called silent reading? The most obvious answer is a voice, or voices".[1]

The authors in this collection start from the premise that vocal sounds have meanings in excess of the language and non-linguistic utterances voices produced. The task is to recover these meanings – even in documents that pre-date the mechanical reproduction of sound. Without romanticizing historical voices as "elusive" or "lost" to the ears of the present, we nevertheless acknowledge the difficulty of listening for voices in print, perhaps especially in the kinds of writing that was not, unlike most verse, explicity concerned with capturing or approximating the operations, tones, timbre, and rhythms of the voice. By focusing on oralities, practices of

1 Noudelmann, 2020, 412.

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vocalization, and audition, rather than discourse, we move our attention away from the selection already made in most institutional archives, and towards a history of daily practice. Few people may have managed to enter the historical record with their stories or ideas intact, but almost all gave voice to what they did or who they were, in life. *Ordinary Oralities* aims to show how some of those utterances can still make their way to the present – even if they may do so faintly and circuitously. We do not lament the "loss" of the language spoken by ordinary historical actors, since to do so would be to assume some kind of transcendent importance in the words they uttered.[2] Spoken language is just one of many forms of evidence. This collection implicitly asks, if voices could speak for themselves, what would they tell us? What is a voice's language apart from the speech it utters? At issue in the chapters of this book are what we have called "ordinary" vocal practices. This emphasis on the ordinary does not necessarily suggest any kind of average voice or even wide applicability to a population, demographic, or social group: in their own way, the people and lives represented in this book are all extra-ordinary. But we have consciously chosen to foreground what was, and is, often tuned out or forgotten: the chatter of the playground, the sounds of work and of domesticity, the temporary timbre of childhood, and so on, rather than singular memorable events. *Ordinary Oralities* attempts to historicize the daily grind and reveal how people spoke, sang, and shouted about it.

Both literary studies and socio-cultural history have been concerned with the poly-vocality of the past, at least in a metaphorical sense. They share an ambition to come to a more representative reflection of historical lives, including the metaphorical voices of women, children, people of colour, the indentured and the enslaved, disabled, and divergent people. Such projects often rely either on creative re-readings of institutional archives and canons, or on the inclusion of other documents altogether, whether in the context of postcolonial history,[3] of women's pasts,[4] and that of children or institutionalized adults.[5] The inclusion of these "different" historical actors often relies on paying careful attention to the "grain" of the archive or the canon, and to the particular ways in which it reveals or hides the stories of those who, by and large, had little power over the ways in which their lives were documented. As Christina Luckyi has shown in her history of silence (2002), "voice" or the ability to speak up cannot be simply read as evidence of agency or power, and not all documented "voices" can therefore be read as traces

2 Butler, 2020, 360.

3 Stoler, 2008.

4 Kahane, 1995; Chapman, 2014.

5 Moruzi, Musgrove and Leahy, 2019; Ellis, Kendal, and Taylor, 2021.

of privilege or authority.[6] The use of "voice" as a common-sense metaphor for resistance to all forms of oppression – important though that metaphor has been for understanding the histories of marginalized peoples – has blunted methodologies of archival listening that would provide a more precise sense of voices' material soundings, meanings, and effects.[7] Too often the "discovery" of "forgotten voices" in the archive has been a story about the historian's power to rescue and retrieve those framed as silenced, whose true self lurks within a locked and sound-proof vault. As Susanne Quitmann argues in this collection, "rather than searching for voice as an authentic expression of the self or a democratic metaphor for agency and empowerment", we need to pay greater attention to the "complex web of social forces" that produced voices and vocal practices. Doing so forces an admission that not all speech is power. Some words were uttered in despair, in helplessness, or even extracted by force. Despite its obvious limitations, seeking out these extracted, policed voices is a valuable project, slowly re-populating our collection of historical literature with a different, more diverse cast of characters – and creating more space for the busy, messy realities of past spaces. In fact, recent data-driven research, for example that surrounding the *Old Bailey's Proceedings Online* project, show that voice, gesture and behavior made up much of the reality of historical practice.[8]

This book suggests that we can think of additional, more sensuous ways to further re-imagine the chaotic practices of social interaction in the past. We are guided in part by the histories of the senses that arose in the 1980s and are now making something of a comeback.[9] These focused mostly on reception: what historical actors could see, hear, feel, taste, and how they did so. Where we depart from these histories is in our focus on the embodied and thoroughly social practices of vocalization, which consist of both the production and reception of vocal sound (as has been noted by many, but perhaps most famously by Jacques Derrida, speaking is almost always accompanied by *s'entendre,* the practice of hearing or listening to oneself).[10] Centering vocality, aurality and orality, as we do in this collection, therefore shares the ambition of the early histories of the senses to lay bare the inherently social nature of the sensorial. It also reveals the concerns of post-colonial, women's, and children's histories, which center members of otherwise forgotten or oppressed groups as individuals, that is, as members of a community, but with concerns, hopes, a sense of agency and indeed "voices" of

6 Luckijy, 2002.
7 Sterne, 2003.
8 https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/index.jsp; Hitchcock and Turkel, 2021.
9 e.g. Tuillier, 1977; Howes and Lalonde, 1989; Corbin, 1982; Corbin, 1994; Smith, 2021.
10 Waltham-Smith, 2020.

their own. The wide range of experiences examined in this collection, and its broad geographical scope, are a reminder that voice history cannot be reduced to a single narrative of power and resistance, even as many contributors recognize how fundamental voice is to the exercise of power in both public and private spheres, and on macro and micro scales. For readers already familiar with histories of marginalized or colonized people, but who are new to sound studies, this book introduces the value of thinking about the material voice as another tool of analysis. To center orality is to expose the complexity of intersubjective practices that make up socio-cultural history. And whilst intersubjectivity consists of far more than verbal or vocal interactions, this volume makes a start by taking the voice as explicitly, almost stubbornly, literal. Bracketing the metaphor of the authorial voice or the political voice as expressed in a vote, it asks which voices resounded in the past, and what they may have conveyed. Ignoring the tendency to equate voice with authorial style, this collection seeks out the sounding presence of unexalted voices in the texts of the past, over and against the assumption that only those deemed as "authors" can "speak" to us in writing.[11]

Whilst this approach is relatively new, it also takes its cue from existing methodological frameworks that consider vocal sound, most obviously from the emerging field of voice studies, but also more broadly from the work of scholars in sound studies and musicology. The latter, of course, offers a long tradition of analysing vocal sounds, including historical voices, and has recently also begun to increasingly include considerations of vocal sound that go beyond questions of musicality and aesthetics.[12] Musicological analyses of voices include various modes of gendering vocal sounds, the influence of racial imaginations and realities on vocal practice and ontologies of age and class.[13] Most of these works consider what can perhaps be described as extra-ordinary voices – the exemplary sounds fit for the stage or for professional recordings. Nevertheless, the attention that musicologists bring to aspects of vocal performance such as pitch, tonality and timbre can prove useful outside of a strictly musical context as well. As chapters 8 and 9 in this volume show, music was not the exclusive domain of professional performers, and a strict distinction between speech and song is not necessarily relevant for all historical or geopolitical contexts.

Such an aesthetic-agnostic approach to sound in general is central to the field of sound studies. Focused mostly on mediatizations and technologies of sound and sound reproduction, sound studies has been concerned more with contemporary

11 Noudelmann, 2020; Cavarero 2005.
12 e.g. Jarman-Iven, 2011, on queering practices of listening and focusing on the "musical flaw".
13 André, 2006; Grotjahn et al., 2018; Charton, 2017. André, 2018; Mecke, 2007.

anthropologies and cultures of sound,[14] but nevertheless have inquired into past soundscapes and sonic practices as well.[15] Most importantly, sound studies offer a methodological toolbox to approach sound as an acoustic phenomenon embedded in and constitutive of culture.[16] They also offer a vantage point from which to study voices without elevating them to romantically imagined positions of universality or humanity. Jonathan Sterne's *The Audible Past,* for example, while not studying voice as such, showed that voices were embedded in sound history and sonic cultures, which shaped and were shaped by developments in communication technologies, medicine, and education. Sterne's is a rigorously materialist history of sound and sound reproduction that distances vocal sound from authentic presence and individualized interiority in order to speak of the voice as collectively produced and shaped. It also suggests avenues along which histories of voice can be studied by pointing to a variety of acoustic and non-acoustic technologies that claimed to "capture" or represent sound. Enquiries into how grooves, magnetic tapes, and other technological objects have represented and shaped sounding and vocal practices[17] is therefore accompanied by histories attending to very different technologies. As Jan-Friedrich Missfelder has shown, print became an important carrier for "social hearing-knowledge and sounding practices" as early as the fifteenth century, something to which the many sounding practices that surrounded books in Early Modern Europe attest as well, as Jennifer Richards and John Gallagher have demonstrated.[18]

Central to all these tentative histories of sound and voice in the groove or on the page is not only a recognition of the materiality of sound, but also a commitment to voice as social not singular, and an acknowledgment that voice has a material history that cannot be subsumed into metaphor and universalizing gestures. Enquiries into historical language and literature have opened up similar vistas: Shane Butler's *Ancient Phonograph*, for example, makes technology rather than voice the object of metaphor and stubbornly centralizes a sensorial and corporeal approach to the sounds embedded in classical poetry,[19] and Liesl Yamaguchi's analyses of poetic representations of synaesthesia in nineteenth century literature shows how experiences that were imagined, and romanticized, as deeply interior were shaped by scientific and cultural innovations.[20] In turning to these vocal experiences

14 Schulze, 2018.
15 Picker, 2003; Sterne, 2003; Bijsterveld, 2008.
16 Ochoa Gautier, 2014; Erlmann, 2010; Bijsterveld, 2018.
17 Gitelman, 2000, Martensen, 2019.
18 Missfelder, 2022; Richards, 2019; Gallagher, 2019.
19 Butler, 2015.
20 Yamaguchi, 2020.

that were both corporeal and social, literary and historical studies attending to the vocal have also suggested re-interpretations of well-established chronologies of daily practice and behavior. The nineteenth century, with its turn to printed news and rise in literary production, has often been assumed to mark the eclipse of the voice and the vocal in favour of the written word and silent reader. Voice, according to Ivan Kreilkamp, had become a "highly charged emblem of loss",[21] but in a series of readings, he shows the indebtedness of a form like the Victorian novel to voice, vocality, and vocal performance. Writing did not replace voice and the vocal, as per Walter Ong's thesis in *Orality and Literacy*, so much as borrow from and transform the many vocal cultures of nineteenth-century England – and indeed elsewhere: see chapters 1, 3, 5 and 6 in this collection. The contributors to this volume engage in the kinds of precise empirical investigations that are needed to test often unsupported assertions about voice history. Broad claims about voice and silence as sites of power and resistance are here substantiated, but also challenged by careful research into a unique range of contexts and historical moments.

Two key theorists of voice who have helped galvanize voice studies are Mladen Dolar and Adriana Cavarero. As Dolar writes in *A Voice and Nothing More,* "we are social beings by the voice and through the voice; it seems that the voice stands at the axis of our social bonds, and that voices are the very texture of the social, as well as the intimate kernel of subjectivity".[22] Dolar provides the emerging field of voice studies with a much-needed theory of the voice that, paradoxically, disentangles it from speech, body, and sound without dematerializing it. In Dolar's formulation the voice is its own "thing," which enables researchers to pursue its specificity, yet it is also "nothing" in that it does not exist apart from the other domains in which it is entangled, such as psychoanalysis, linguistics, ethics, and politics. Yet it is not reducible to these domains either.[23] This is a different orientation to voice that attempts to shear it of universalizing gestures characteristic of Ong's sacralization of voice and Derrida's critique of phonocentrism. Likening the voice to Jameson's "vanishing mediator," Dolar asserts that "the voice is the material support of bringing about meaning, yet it does not contribute to it itself".[24] Dolar's theory of the voice clears a space for humanists to study the voice's materiality and material effects, while acknowledging that a voice is not identical to the things that produce it nor to the everyday practices that rely on it.

21 Kreilkamp, 2005, 8.
22 Dolar, 2006, 14.
23 Feldman and Zeitlin, 2019, 341.
24 Dolar, 2006, 15.

If Dolar insists on the irreducibility of the voice to language, Adriana Cavarero analyses the cleaving of voice from language in the western philosophical tradition that "neutralizes the power of the voice" in favour of the word, and especially the disembodied, divinely inspired word produced by powerful metaphors such as the "voice of reason" or the "voice of God."[25] By restoring the voice to the body and shifting the emphasis away from language, Cavarero insists on the physicality and human uniqueness of each voice – an ethical gesture rooted in a feminist philosophical tradition that situates knowledge in the pleasures, rhythms, and drives of the body and insists that *who* speaks makes a material difference. While other critics have since questioned Cavarero's formulation of a vocal ontology of uniqueness,[26] her account, like Dolar's, has been galvanizing for voice studies and histories of voice, in that it has prompted researchers to move beyond an exclusive focus on the linguistic *content* of discourse to the ethics and politics of voice, voicing, and listening in human communication. Their analyses have also added theoretical vocabularies about the voice to an instrumentarium that thus far largely relied on metaphor and semiology. Roland Barthes' famous "grain", an exercise of discovering "the body in the voice", has provided generations of musicologists and anthropologists with an impressive array of vocabularies and metaphors to talk about the physicality of voice, and to dance around the iron grip of "the adjective" in order to do so.[27] The contributions of Dolar and Caveraro, and others such as David Le Breton, have recently reminded us that the interwoven qualities of voice and language can be both constrictive and generative – in life and in research. Le Breton has also shown that delving into the diversity of registers and timbres of the human voice can give us access to social and affective practices, uncover imbalances of power and desire, and reveal both sound and silence to be "the incarnation of fragility itself".[28]

Moving in spaces that have largely been left unexplored by both sound studies and musicology, the chapters of this volume suggest some new ways to include all kinds of vocal sounds in our study of the past. In keeping with the volume's aim to prioritize the ordinary over the ideal or the exceptional, most employ a bottom-up and empirically grounded approach. In 11 case studies, ranging from the rugged environment of the Scottish Highlands to the bedrooms and courtrooms of Amsterdam, and the streets of London, authors in this volume have

25 Cavarero, 2005, 15.

26 See Kane, 2014, 152–156; Eidsheim, 2019, 3.

27 As Barthes notes in his famous essay on the grain of the voice, language "manages badly" when interpreting music (or, more broadly) sound: it leads to an "inevitable" dependence on the adjective. Barthes, 1977, 179.

28 Le Breton, 2011.

uncovered a range of sources that can illuminate how various vocal utterances were given meaning in the past – such processes of meaning-making include historical practices of listening (and the refusal to listen), various modes of performance, a range of encounters mired in joy and community or friction and violence, and interactions with institutionalized structures of inequality. The multiplicity of methods required to reflect, analyse and understand these different meanings and their (social) origins echoes the multiplicity of voices that this volume has sought to bring together. This variety of approaches also shows that vocal history is not – and perhaps cannot be – a "method" in its own right. It is necessarily relational, woven into the fabric of the social world that voices co-produce and articulate.

Most importantly, perhaps, the chapters in this book show that voices created, changed and were assigned meaning outside the well-established systems of vocality of speech and song. Social and political institutions have a long history of dismissing vocal sounds that did not conform to their conception of rational speech, including dialects and non-European languages,[29] for example, but also non-verbal sounds like weeping, laughter, sighs or groans – as demonstrated also in chapter 10 and the afterword. Whilst research on protest, for example, has shown that non-verbal sounds can have considerable disruptive power – as did sounds like laughter – the full range of meanings that we can glean from historical voices beyond the realm of intelligible speech remains underexplored,[30] and this volume hopes to go some way in suggesting how and why such histories can be written. Probing past the conventions of acceptable modes of speech also allows the authors to go beyond normative ideas of who was allowed to speak in public and what constituted "speech" in the first place. Looking for ordinary oralities necessitates the inclusion of sounds that were not considered speech or were dismissed as mere noise precisely because speech often functioned as a marker of social status – thereby excluding exactly those historical actors in which this volume is interested. Many of them did speak, of course, at length, and with great skill, but were nevertheless heard differently – as Jennifer Stoever and Nina Eidsheim have demonstrated, for example, ethnicized voices are attributed not only different meanings, but also different sounds through a socio-political practice of hearing.[31]

Attending to these voices, the chapters in this book offer one way of responding to a long-standing call to action from social historians to rethink who gets to "make history". The essay by Arlette Farge that closes this book reformulates this

29 see e.g. Robinson, 2020.
30 English, 2020; Nouws, 2015; Connor, 2014.
31 Stoever, 2016; Eidsheim, 2019.

call particularly for a historicization of the human voice, insisting that "speaking, crying and begging" are in fact all modes of "making history" (*fabriquer l'histoire*), and that a whole range of historical actors "spoke to live". As suggested in Farge's account, the authors of the chapters in this volume pay attention to both individual and collective voices, comfortable and pleasant sounds of love, friendship, and community as well as the harsh tones of conflict and violence. They listen in on the sounds of intimacy, as well as public brawls, they reflect the treble of children as well as the insistent altos of older women. Farge concludes by noting that finding voices of the past is motivated by a desire to "find the impossible", and to "capture the inaudible". Focussing on sound, ironically, drives the chapters in this volume to do precisely that.

Part I approaches the subject of ordinary voices from the perspectives of intimacy and privacy: these chapters listen in on the interactions between lovers, siblings, and unhappy couples.

Esther Hu's chapter listens for the multilingual intonation and cadence of letters written by two Australian missionary sisters to their mother. Writing from the South China Fuh-Kien (Fujian) Mission in the mid 1890s before they and eleven other missionaries were killed in the Kucheng Incident of 1895, Elizabeth and Harriette Saunders' letters home are an under-explored archive of vocalic cross-cultural encounter. Framed in relation to "the Chinese vocal soundscape," Hu's chapter shows how the Saunders sisters' effort to learn to communicate in Chinese was enabled by earlier missionaries who had romanized local Chinese dialects in translation. Learning and speaking the correct "tones" of Chinese was crucial to their everyday practices of teaching, preaching, praying, and provide nursing care in a local Fuzhou dialect; Elizabeth Saunders' written correspondence in particular indicates an emphasis on language acquisition as a relation between voice and ear. The Saunders' efforts to speak Chinese both endeared them to local people connected to the mission, and enabled a relatively new kind of subject position: the *kuniong*, or single female missionary. Learning to speak tonally correct Chinese engaged the throat's memory, a process whose traces can be heard in the archive of letters that Hu examines.

Turning to a very different archive, Tessa De Boer, Ramona Negrón, and Jessica den Oudsten listen to how couples traded insults in eighteenth-century Amsterdam – or rather, they trace how various earwitnesses heard, remembered, and later recounted sounds of the legal and social breakdown of marital relationships. The notarial attestations in which these testimonies are kept show how private unhappiness could become a communal and even public affair, as neighbours, family members, and authorities were involved. By paying close attention to the language used in these attestations – the particular phrases remembered and cited as well as the means to describe the sound and effect of oral exchanges – the authors paint a complex picture of marital strife, showing how "ordinary" people who otherwise elude historiography were stitched into the urban soundscape of Amsterdam, and how practices that we could easily assume were deeply private and hidden were, in fact, shared by a wider community.

In "Sounding Sex: Erotic Oralities in the Nineteenth-Century Archive," Riley McGuire listens to the historical record for one of the most ordinary, most sensationalized, yet most hushed-up of human sounds. The chapter refers to a range of documents – conduct books, erotic memoirs, sexological treatises, and 1890s phonographic recordings of "obscene" sound – not in order to reveal what Victorian sex "actually sounded like" behind closed doors. Rather, McGuire uses two case studies – Walter's *My Secret Life* and commercial and private phonographic recordings of erotically charged vocal sound – to ask what kinds of public, cultural meanings accrued to the sounds of "private" intimate acts. Adding sound and voice to the history of sexual *utterance* in a way that stubbornly literalizes the term, McGuire argues that human, non-human, racialized, classed, and non-linguistic sound emerges in the representation of sex as a tool of patriarchal power and control. That is, the sound of sex in the archive McGuire examines tells us less about sexual "freedom" than it does about the fantasies of power in those who produced these sounds in the written and sonic archives of the late nineteenth century.

Daniel Martin's contribution focuses on an obscure treatise by nineteenth-century ethnographer George Catlin to explore the biopolitical production of the "natural" or "normal" voice within the context of both the settler-colonial project and the early theory of speech dysfluency. In *Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life* (1862), Catlin argued that because he encountered no evidence of stuttered speech among the Indigenous populations he observed, their habits of breath and speech constituted a lost origin that could be rediscovered by "civilized" but also "fallen" nations, where speech dysfluencies such as stuttering were evident. Martin demonstrates that Catlin's work, bizarre and error-filled though it was, reflected a broader cultural desire for a "normal," "smooth," "rational" voice that also appeared in the work of elocutionists and the early theorists who anticipated the field of speech-language pathology. The chapter thus puts pressure on the ideological work of the "ordinary" or the "normal" voice, questioning its emergence as a medium that can be managed and cultivated via therapeutic means. As Martin asks, might we consider dysfluent speech to be a critical interruption or disruption to the smooth functioning of settler colonialism and its legacies, imbricated as they are with forms of biopolitical power and control that have made nature an instrument?

Part II turns toward the public life of ordinary voices, examining how they could sound out over loudspeakers, but also how speech in the streets or on public platforms found its way into print.

What kind of liberatory agency did the sound of speaking voices of oppressed peoples have in the past? Peter J. Weise's chapter on Olaudah Equiano's autobiography *The Interesting Narrative* (1789) argues that we must read the text for the embodied voice agency of the formerly enslaved Black man who defined his African name, "Olaudah," as "having a loud voice and being well-spoken." As Equiano shifted subject position from obscure slave to abolitionist, writer, and public intellectual, his voice – both written and spoken – would have been heard and interpreted by his primarily elite white audiences within the terms of popular elocutionary movements, whose primary aim was to train and regulate speech and voice according to racialized notions of polite, learned, or authoritative public speech. However, the name Olaudah, along with phonemic play and traces of Yoruba oral practices in *The Interesting Narrative,* circumvent the racist assumptions of Eurocentric elocutionism by retraining its listeners not only how to listen otherwise, but how to speak loudly for an end to slavery. If oration is a learned skill, so too is audition. While Weise suggests that we cannot recreate what Olaudah Equiano's voice "sounded like" in the public lecture halls of the abolitionist circuit, we can nevertheless listen for what bell hooks calls the "assertion of voice"[32] in the written archives of its most vocal freedom fighters. Moreover, what did it mean for Olaudah to appeal to "God" in his speeches as a divine agency uniting diverse speakers, whether African or European? Weise addresses this question with reference to the commodity-form.

If Olaudah Equiano emerges as a single extraordinary speaker in his autobiography, whose vocal power had the ability to galvanize audiences or ordinary listeners, other records of the past reveal an interest in collecting the voices of the many, less to inspire than to echo the "authentic" voices of unexalted "nobodies." In "Traces of the Ordinary," Hayley Smith examines two magazine series produced around the turn of the century, *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches*. Recorded and compiled by brothers Thomas and Leonard Guthrie under the pseudonyms F. Anstey and Lucas Galen, these series were a kind of early found sound project that mediated the everyday speech of ordinary Londoners in print. Anonymous overheard conversations were presented as the "real," raw sound of ordinary Londoners' talk and the "source" of fictionalized representations of conversation. Smith argues that, by elevating the suburban "nobodies" already popularized in late-century popular fiction to "somebodies," the Guthries produced a vocalic "sociolinguistic cartorgraphy" of urban modernity.

32 hooks, 2015, 12.

Tiina Männistö-Funk and Kaarina Kilpiö turn to other “nobodies” with their study of the disembodied voice of the tannoys used in Finnish morning school assemblies throughout the 20th century. Tracing both the technological history of the use of acoustic equipment in schools and the changes in the content of morning assemblies, the chapter reflects on the surprising resilience of the morning assembly as an acoustic and affective practice that molded the school experience of Finnish pupils across multiple generations. Amplifying the voices of first only headmasters and priests, but later also all teachers and even pupils, the public address systems in schools, the authors argue, helped to develop a particular vocality and aimed to produce experiences of the “everyday sublime”.

The chapters in part III show the voice’s entanglement with practices of community and its potential for both cohesion and conflict.

Rona Wilkie shows in her chapter how voices intoning Gaelic waulking songs sung mostly by women in the Scottish highlands could make and support communities. Waulkings were performed during the work of shrinking tweed: hard physical work was supported by the rythmic quality of the songs as well as by the affective exchanges that the songs facilitated. Moving between solo verses and choruses sung by the group, the waulking songs provided women with the opportunity to vocalize inner feelings of desire and grief. As Wilkie notes, Gaelic traditions of song have been interpreted as vocalizations of inner verbal dialogue, but many of these dialogues prioritize male poetics and politics. The usually exclusively female community of waulking centered different voices and gave room to reflections on themes like sexual politics and to female forms of community and collectivity.

Focusing on children’s voices, Susanne Quitmann also pays explicit attention to historical actors who have often been heard as silent or mute. Reading children’s voices both along and against the archival grain, Quitmann pushes against the historiographical practice of silencing; her chapter reveals the singing practices of children who migrated to Australia and Canada under the British child migration schemes in the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. Rather than presenting a romanticized image of the innocent sound of the child’s voice, however, the chapter shows how both authorities and the children themselves thought about these musical practices strategically and creatively, using them for fundraising events, to perform identity, to form community, and to express humour or discontent. Quitmann’s analytical use of “voice” not as a metaphor, but in its material and social context, allows insight not only into individual children’s experiences, but also into the broader historical dynamic of the construction of the migrant child as a social category.

In a final, silent chapter, Paula Muhr listens in on the patients of nineteenth-century hysteria researcher Jean Martin Charcot. Challenging the common idea that Charcot was not interested in his patients’ vocal utterances, Muhr carries out a close reading of a transcript of his lectures to unveil his attention to various non-verbal communicative gestures and the path towards establishing hysterical mutism as a distinct diagnostic category. Various vocal outputs and noises such as feeble cries, low-pitched grunting and whistling gained relevance in Charcot's diagnostic practices of listening, as did the bodily effort required to produce such non-verbal utterances. As Muhr demonstrates, Charcot's interpretation of his patients' vocal utterances significantly influenced his hypotheses about the causes of hysterical mutism, and eventually his belief that the condition could be "cured", thus pointing to the centrality of vocality and aurality in moments of scientific discovery.

In order to meaningfully include voices and vocal practices in our understanding of history, this volume practices an extended eavesdropping. Rather than listening out for exceptional voices, the contributors to this volume listen in on the more mundane aspects of vocality, including speech and song, but also less formalized shouts, hisses, noises, and silences. Moving away from a narrative that centers the public voice, and its use as a political tool and metaphor, we edge towards a history of voice as a history of encounter. Insisting on the intersubjective nature of voice, and its often uncanny ability to "travel" across different personal, social, and cultural divides, we offer an expansive history of everyday vocality that accounts for the multiplicity and materiality of historical voices. We offer a corrective to the grand narratives that assert voice as a site of power and resistance, but often without the empirical research to support such claims. Along with Ana María Ochoa Gautier, we argue for an "acoustically tuned exploration" of the archives,[33] on the understanding that ordinary voices in history are not neatly proffered up by single documents, but are often fleeting and muted, and dispersed across textual sites with different stated purposes. A focus on "who" speaks has, in work historicizing "great speeches" in the context of biography, often served to obscure those characteristics, insisting on universalistic notions of authority instead. This volume, too, argues for a heightened attention to who speaks, and whose voices resound in history, but refuses to take the modern equation between speech and presence/representation for granted.

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33 Ochoa Gautier, 2014, 3.

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Esther Hu

Becoming Kuniong: Vocal Encounter and Female Missionary Work in Gutian, China (1893–1895)

"I can't write my letters to suit the public. If I can't write just as I feel inclined to, then nothing will go at all. I write every now and then to most of the folks, but your letters are for you, and not for the *Argus*", wrote Elizabeth Maud Saunders ("Topsy") to her mother, Mrs. Eliza Saunders ("Petsy"). Saunders and her older sister, Harriette Elinor Saunders ("Nellie"), aged twenty and twenty-three respectively, were self-funded missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Australia, who had been appointed to the South China Fujian[1] Mission in 1893 and stationed at Gutian, a city 90 miles inland from Fuzhou, one of the five treaty ports from the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). As their nineteenth-century biographer D. M. Berry explains, the letters chronicling their history of scarcely more than a year and a half in China were "unstudied compositions" "never intended for any eyes but those of a mother." Nevertheless, in his view they showed an extraordinary amount of "work and experience" in a "bright and buoyant" manner, and his object was to let the girls "speak for themselves" by publishing their private correspondence.[2]

Originating from Melbourne, Australia, the Saunders sisters and a third Australian missionary became front page news in Australia when they perished during the Gutian Incident of 1 August, 1895,[3] traditionally viewed as a religious conflict between Chinese Vegetarians and foreign missionaries that conformed to the pattern of the *jiaoan* (Church-related incident) involving "aggressive missionaries, volatile crowds of commoners, and a hostile anti-Christian elite".[4] Historians view this and similar conflicts as a geopolitical event deeply embedded in the colonial relations between China and the West.[5] This essay enriches our understanding of the Gutian Incident by examining evidence of the ordinary and influential everyday

1 A note about spelling: In early missionary writing, "Fuzhou" city appears as "Foo-chow"; "Gutian" or "Kucheng" as "Ku T'ien" or "Ku-Cheng"; and "Fujian" province as "Fuh-kien." However, I have retained the spelling for "kuniong" as it appears in nineteenth-century missionary writing given its specialized meaning due to historical context.

2 Berry, 1896, n.p.

3 Welch, 2004, 36.

4 Bays, 2012, 76.

5 See Rankin 1961; Wehrle 1966.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111079370-002

encounters between two Western female missionaries and the Chinese local population prior to the event. In Chinese historiography chronicling the incident, the Saunders sisters' surname is among those commemorated in *Gutian Xianzhi*, the local gazetteer of Gutian at the county level.[6] And in missionary historiography, the Saunders' detailed epistolary conversations with their mother, who had planned to join them eventually in China, describe the work of visiting rural villages, teaching in schools and homes, and doctoring the sick. The letters also record the missionaries' cross-cultural encounters with the population in Fuzhou, Fujian province and their experiences of learning to speak, read, sing, pray, and preach in the Fuzhou dialect.

Using the Saunders sisters' immersion in local Chinese communities as a case study, this essay examines the material aural component of voice and its role in facilitating cross-cultural encounter. The sonic, material, or, as Jonathan Sterne has noted, aural, aspect of voice[7] is often eclipsed in the Euro-Western context by "voice" as an expression of self, identity, agency, and power.[8] Here I show how the Saunders sisters' learning to teach and preach in Chinese underpins a vocal practice traditionally in the male clerical domain, and enables the social identities and subject positions[9] of the *kuniong*, or single female missionary teacher/preacher. I first present the history of vocal encounters in Chinese (language), then analyze the aural experiences of the Saunders sisters in learning the Chinese language, and conclude with the "traveling" of this vocality to Chinese girls and women, who learn to read and write using a version of the Chinese scriptures based on local sound, or the romanized version in Fuzhou dialect. Traditionally mostly illiterate, Chinese girls and women gained both agency or voice in the European sense by developing vocal literacy in local spoken dialect. They also gained a new subject position as literacy provided upward class mobility and new social opportunities, as Daniel Bays and Kwok Pui-lan have shown.[10] Thus, by perusing the Saunders sisters' letters for evidence of ordinary vocal encounters between women, we see how these oral-aural engagements enabled alternative social identities for both the Australians and the Chinese women whom they served.

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6 Yu and Huang, 2009, Juan 20, 7. Chinese Vegetarians were identified as a secret society called the *Caihui* and were known as *cai fei* or "Vegetarian bandits."

7 Sterne, 2003, 11.

8 Weidman, 2015, 233.

9 Weidman, 2015, 237. Weidman cites the example of Tamil-speaking South Indian politicians in mid-twentieth-century India who generated political power as public speakers through the act of oration itself.

10 Bays, 2012, 79–80. While this essay focuses mainly on the female missionaries, for a nuanced discussion of Chinese women's contributions to the global Anglican communion, see Kwok Pui-lan, 2018, 19–35.

Previous research on voices in contexts of (missionary) Christian activity in the Far East has stressed the communicative capacity of the voice, whose bodily dimension provides the framework for cultural models of social behavior.[11] Voice, then, is not merely an individual's "sonorous extension," "expressive outlet," or "externalization of interior emotions," but also, and more centrally, "a channel-emphasizing phatic mode of social contact".[12] For these Australian single female missionaries, the "ordinary oralities" of encounter during their brief period in China permitted them to communicate the Christian gospel in the Chinese local dialect within a social context that productively engaged with their auditors.

Introducing the Chinese Vocal Soundscape: Tonal Theory by Liu Xie

There was already a well-developed theory of Chinese vocal language, language acquisition, and vocal sound by the time the Saunders and other western missionaries arrived on the scene. The ordinary term for "voice" in spoken Mandarin, *sheng-yin*, is, as Judith T. Zeitlin has observed, a compound composed of two characters "sheng" and "yin", which are independent characters that are also often used interchangeably. Either one alone can be used to signify voice, but each also has a long history of denoting "sound, tone, note, music, timbre, and other sonic concepts".[13] According to Zeitlin, the history of the voice in Chinese does not gesture towards "individual identity, personal agency, collective will, subjectivity, authenticity, style" as figuratively connotated when one thinks about "voice" in English or other European languages;[14] one finds, instead, in early writings an expressive model from Confucian writings on music and poetry and a physiological model from Chinese medicine. The idea of voice as natural musical instrument was developed in the court literature of the Six Dynasties (third to fifth centuries CE) by Liu Xie (465–522 CE).

11 Harkness, 2013, 15.

12 Harkness, 2013, 15. Harkness introduces the concept of the "phonosonic nexus" to show how "voice in the concrete sense and voicing in the tropic sense are scalar relations of the same thing from the point of view of semiotic function. Voice as phonosonic nexus and voicing as the discursive alignment to a socially identifiable perspective are linked semiotic phenomena by which persons and groups situate themselves in worlds of significance" (12).

13 Zeitlin, 2019, 55.

14 Zeitlin, 2019, 63.

In *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, an encyclopedic collection of Chinese literary theory and criticism thought to be composed when Liu was in his thirties, Liu understands "voice" as sonic and physical, and specifically human, its "musical quality" "inherent in man's very blood and physical vitality," on which "early kings created music and song".[15] He claims that "the human voice does not imitate the sounds of instruments:" its musicality is "the result of the movements of the lips and mouth only", with high and low notes distinguishing different tonal qualities through "the difference in the movement of the throat, tongue, lips, and teeth".[16] This physical description of Chinese "voice" receives detailed treatment in Chapter XXXIII, "Musicalness (*Sheng-lü*)", where Liu attributes the origin of music to the human voice, using *kung* and *shang*, notes C and D respectively, as a synecdoche for the five-note pentatonic scale.[17] Whether it be in singing, speaking, or literary composition, an ability to hear a "discordant note" was essential, though adjusting instrumental strings is far easier than listening to the "inner voice" because of confusion of "sounds" from "other mental activities".[18] But the musicality of Chinese is inherent in the tonal quality of the language and requires a physical vocalization which is preceded in poetic or literary composition by listening to this inner voice.

Liu was writing at a moment when Chinese was being recognized as a tonal language.[19] His descriptions of different tones mark important distinctions, and reveal the interconnectedness of tones with other elements of prosody: "Tones are of two kinds: the flying, or *p'ing*, literally level, and the sinking, or *tse*, literally abrupt; and consonance is also of two varieties: a pair of alliterated words or a pair of rhymed words. Neither an alliterated nor a rhymed pair can be separated in a line or in a sentence without doing some harm to the prosody". An aural fastidiousness accompanies his analysis, the categories of aural difference according to sound important when composing poetry: "Furthermore, a sinking tone, when enunciated alone, sounds abrupt, as if cut short; and a flying tone alone has a tendency to fly away, never to return. All these elements must be interwoven to produce a tightly knit harmonious whole".[20] "A well trained talent with a deep understanding", he adds later, "is usually fastidious about the choice of words and tones", but "a less experienced person perfunctorily takes the sounds as they come along", akin to

15 Liu, 2015, 240.
16 Liu, 2015, 240.
17 Liu, 2015, 240; 243n1.
18 Liu, 2015, 241.
19 Zeitlin, 2019, 63.
20 Liu, 2015, 241.

sounds from a sweeping wind.[21] For this reason, Liu reminds his readers, the ancients used music to pattern sound by means of jade pendants.[22] Liu's seminal work underscores the importance of the sonic voice, particularly its tonal accuracy, in early Chinese literary theory.

First Encounters: Chinese and the Challenge of Vocal Sound

The sophistication of the Chinese vocal soundscape and the work and talent required to master the language's sounds appeared as challenges to one of the first global historians of sound, the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). In his section on "China" from *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–1791), Herder begins with praise for Chinese culture and civilization, but ends with admonishment; his linking of Chinese anatomy, specifically the "Mongolian" "big ears" of the Chinese with the Chinese language, ultimately causes him to write disparagingly of both. The "delicacy of ear" results in the forming of a language, he says, with "three hundred and thirty syllables, distinguished in different words by five or more accents, to prevent the speaker from saying beast instead of lord, and falling into the most laughable confusion of words every moment; so that a European ear, and European organs of speech, can with the utmost difficulty, if at all, accustom themselves to this forced syllabical music". Herder opines that it is a "want of invention in the great", and a "miserable refinement in trifles" which resulted in the contrivance of "the vast number of eighty thousand compound characters from a few rude hieroglyphics".[23] His dismissive attitude towards both Chinese culture and language influenced the decline of China in the European sonic imagination.[24]

Similarly recognizing the challenges of mastering Chinese sounds but starkly different in attitude was Robert Morrison (1782–1834), the first British Protestant missionary in China, Bible translator, founder of the Anglo-Chinese College in

21 Liu, 2015, 243.

22 Liu, 2015, 243. ("The Ancients arranged their musical jade pendants by placing the *kung* jade on the left and the *chih* jade on the right, for the purpose of giving melody to their steps, so as to avoid confusion in the pattern of the sounds.")

23 Herder, 1800, 293.

24 In his recent *Listening to China: Sound and the Sino-Western Encounter, 1770–1839,* Thomas Irvine suggests that Herder's perspective, a theory of "radical difference", ultimately positioned Europe as the home of "higher" music and a sense of Europe's "special place as the home of musical art" while simultaneously ushering in "China's sonic decline in the Western imagination." See Irvine, 2020, 51.

Malacca, and author of a three-volume Chinese-English dictionary. Writing from Canton to the Directors of the London Missionary Society on 4 December 1809, Morrison explains that the difficulty of acquiring Chinese lies in the absence of letters to communicate Chinese sounds:

> An English boy who knows the grammar of his own language, and has a smattering of Latin, if he goes to French, Italian, Spanish, or Portuguese, finds the letters the same, their powers nearly so, the method of uniting them the same, the sound of words directing to the combination of the letters, and in every half a dozen words he finds one which he knows before with some slight modification. But if he goes to Chinese, he finds no letters – *nothing to communicate sounds* – no similarity, the method radically different, and not one word like what he has known before; and when he knows the pronunciation of words and sentences, *the sound does not at all direct to the character which is the sign of the same idea.* If my statement be correct, it will appear that the Chinese is more difficult than any of the European languages.[25]

Despite the challenges, Morrison taught a class in Chinese when he was on furlough in England. Among his students was the first British female missionary to China, Mary Ann Aldersey (1797–1868).[26]

Later missionaries resolved this challenge of chronicling Chinese sounds of local dialect through romanization, the conversion of text or sounds to the Roman, or Latin script. Adopting romanization as a system of orthography was not new in the history of Victorian missions in China: for example, J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905), founder of the China Inland Mission, had collaborated with the Rev. F. F. Gough of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Ningbo, his wife, Maria Taylor (1837–1870), and his friend Mr. (later Pastor) Wang Lae-djun (Wang Laiquan; 1829?–1901), to produce a revision of the New Testament with marginal references in the romanized form of the Ningbo dialect that had been printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society.[27] The head of the CMS in Gutian who supervised the Saunders sisters' work, Robert Stewart (1850–1895), used a Fuzhou romanized colloquial system of writing Chinese. With his wife, Louisa, and in collaboration with the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS), the CMS undertook Bible Translation in the romanized colloquial[28] and portions were translated in the Roman character for the Fuzhou vernacular, with the entire New Testament issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1889 under Stewart's editorial leadership.[29] By the time the Saunders

25 Morrison, 1839, 269. My italics.
26 Hu, Mary Ann Aldersey, 2022, n.p.
27 Hu, China Inland Mission, 2022, n.p.
28 Barnes, 1896, 27–8.
29 Dennis, 1902, 134. A committee of American and English missionaries formed in 1888 issued a revised Bible in the Chinese character that was published in 1892.

sisters arrived in China, they had ready access to this romanized colloquial system which proved useful in Bible teaching and enabled both Chinese women and Chinese Biblewomen[30] to gain literacy. In the Saunders sisters' letters, the young women frequently write out Chinese words in roman script, thus enabling their reader to "hear" the sounds of the Chinese words even if tonal distinctions are missing.

Learning and Listening to Chinese

Even in the early letters, the Saunders sisters used the romanized colloquial system to "communicate" and record Chinese sounds, and to provide short translations of the romanized scripts from Chinese to English. Upon arrival, they were christened by the head of the Church Missionary Society mission in Fujian Province, Archdeacon John Wolfe, and given Chinese names: "Nellie is Sung Kuniong", writes Topsy, "and I am Sung Ne Ku-niong. Ku means 'set apart, sacred'; Niong means 'lady'; Sung is Chinese for Saunders; Ne means 'second'". Their Christian names also required translating, and were rendered – "Na-li" and "To-si". The latter is said to mean "much silk".[31] They embarked on a rigorous schedule of learning Chinese daily starting on 19 December, 1893, with their teacher, "Wong Senang (Mr. Wong)", beginning "as soon as the Stewarts' room is ready, between nine and a quarter to ten, and go on till the boy comes to lay the table at one . . . [A]s soon as we know a sentence [we] practise it on somebody".[32] Their priority was thus to learn the language in its spoken, oral form; the focus on sound, and verbal communication ("[we] practice it on somebody") is assumed. Orality is coupled with a physical enactment: Nellie describes to her mother in a letter from 1893 that Mr. Stewart "is teaching Topsy, Ellie, and Kathleen to say Chinese tones, and in between my thoughts and meditations I hear 'Chung' (in a very high voice), 'Chung' (lower down), 'Chaong,' 'Chank,' &c".[33] In effect, Nellie begins familiarizing her mother to different tonal registers ("lower down", she notes, in parentheses), the use of the voice, throat, and mind a regular part of Chinese "vocal training".

30 Chinese Biblewomen were local converts to Christianity, often widows, who frequently assisted Western female missionaries in their teaching and preaching. For the history of Chinese Biblewomen from the nineteenth-century to the 1920s, see Griffiths, 2008, 521–541.

31 Topsy's Letter to her Mother, ? November 1893, in Berry, 1896, 26.

32 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, 19th December 1893, in Berry, 1896, 46.

33 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, ? December 1893, in Berry, 1896, 33.

In learning the Chinese language, Nellie excelled in making sense of written text, employing the eyes and hands to produce translations of the Bible in her practice sessions, while Topsy found employing the ear, that is, speaking the language, a faster way to learn. Walter Ong's fundamental opposition of orality and literacy, with the literate succeeding the oral as amounting to "progress",[34] becomes complicated when the end goal, for these missionaries, was acquiring the ability to speak and to teach in their new language. Learning to speak and learning to read were two very different skills, as the letters attest, and Nellie learned to read the first chapter of St. John's Gospel by January using the romanized text, or the sound of Chinese words written in English letters with additional marks to indicate the "tone", as opposed to learning the difficult Chinese "characters". By learning romanized Chinese, they could read for themselves and could teach other women to read. Nellie describes to her mother that one can recognize and correctly pronounce Chinese characters using romanized orthography, and memorize their meaning. As for learning Chinese characters, Nellie questions (like Robert Morrison) how one could "remember a hieroglyphic of which you can't remember the sound and never knew the meaning?"[35]

Three days before her 21st birthday in 1894, Nellie reports to her mother: "I study every morning now, it is so nice, I just love learning Chinese. I am reading Matthew now and translating into English, and then going through John with the English Bible, translating back into Chinese; it is such good practice".[36] Studying Chinese characters did not suit Topsy as much; she preferred more active work. However, after practicing speaking she proposed to give lessons to the watchman and the washerman of the household, both girls feeling that colloquial Chinese was not difficult: "You first require to master the seven 'tones', and know them by the ear as you would know the notes of the scale in music; and having done that, you find the number of words to be learnt not overwhelming. Each word, of course, has different meanings, according to the 'tone' in which it is spoken. The grammar is extremely simple. There is only one personal pronoun instead of twelve, as in our language, and only one tense to the verb".[37] Appreciating the aural music of the Chinese language, as described in detail by Liu Xie, and composing her own strategy of learning tones before associating tone with meaning, Topsy shares her system of acquiring the sonic properties of the Fuzhou dialect with her parent. Her focus is on language as *spoken* word, to be heard, and she prioritizes learning by "ear".

34 Cannon and Rubery, 2020, 351.

35 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, ? January 1894, in Berry, 1896, 74.

36 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, ? May 1894, in Berry, 1896, 108, 93.

37 Topsy's Letter to her Mother, in Berry, 1896, 75.

"Ai-a! She Can Talk Our Words!"

The Saunders sisters sought to chronicle local linguistic accents and habits, attempting to learn, transcribe, and translate. While the ultimate purpose for learning the Chinese language and local dialects was to evangelize, the process of learning local accents and carefully attending to local expressive cultures mark an attitude of curiosity and openness. Even as their sounds (or tones) might have been imperfect to their Chinese interlocutors, in emulating and repeating "Chinese" sounds, the Saunders in effect communicated an appreciation for, and validation of, the host culture's language. This in turn earned Nellie an audience with Chinese men and women. Nellie records some women saying, "Ai-a! she can talk our words" and that the Chinese asked questions about her which were answered thus:

> The master sat the other side of the ianog-ong fanning himself vigorously, and conversing with three men who were there, answering all sorts of questions about me. "No! she isn't married; foreign women don't have to be married, it is according to God's will for them whether they do or not." "Yes! She can understand what you say, and she can talk herself, too." "No! she doesn't get paid a great deal of money to come here; she came because she wants to teach this country's women about God.[38]

As Topsy passed by other villages on her way to Gang Ka, she was frequently met with a warm reception: "At nearly every place the people crowded round to talk, and either brought me cups of tea or asked me in [. . .] At one place they simply made me get out and go in, although we were in a hurry to get on as we saw a storm coming on, and they brought me tea and a fan. So in return I doctored a baby, and after some amiable conversation I got into my chair again".[39]

The Saunders sisters had studied basic nursing and some medical skills at Queen Victoria Hospital, Latrobe St., Melbourne, as part of their training. Topsy reports "sick-nursing" a girl with influenza and reading to her at the beginning of the New Year in January 1894 and dressing the wounds of a baby's head. In the autumn of 1894, she set up a clinic in a house rented by a doctor and catechist and spent more than two hours each morning taking care of people with sores, malaria, and other complaints, thus earning the affection and respect of the local community.[40] At Lang-Leng Topsy was able to assist in the healing of the son of a "literary man", one of the class that is "opposed to Christianity", who nevertheless

38 Nellie's Letter to her Mother in Berry, 1896, 259.
39 Topsy's Letter to her Mother, 14th May?, in Berry, 1896, 263.
40 Topsy's Letter to her Mother, Autumn 1894, in Berry, 1896, 137.

willingly listened to her Christian teaching.[41] Thus, in engaging with local Chinese populations in the Fuzhou dialect, the Saunders sisters taught, preached, and healed the sick. Their letters suggest that their work as single female preachers, or *kuniongs,* was acknowledged and affirmed by the people they served.

The Performative Voice and Female Public Religious Ministry

As Amanda Weidman outlines, recent voice research is concerned with ways in which "vocal modalities signal different social statuses, states of being, and life stages, stressing the iconic and indexical aspects of the sounding voice".[42] Such research points to vocal practices less as an expression of identity, than as extensions of constitutive power relations, emphasizing that the "repeated enactment of a vocal practice helps bring into being a social category and a subject position: what Bourdieu referred to as the 'symbolic power' of language, Austin conceptualized as 'doing things' with words and Butler more broadly theorized as 'performativity'".[43] The Saunders sisters' work as kuniongs (or *guniongs*, meaning "single female missionaries") placed them in a new social category in the making, both in Victorian Britain and in China: teaching in day schools, healing the sick, and preaching the Christian gospel were all cross-cultural sonic encounters that required them to speak publicly, a practice typically reserved for men, in a newly-acquired language. In their work of teaching the Bible to women, the Saunders sisters and other CEZMS and CMS female missionaries were following precedents that had been created in the revivalist movements of the 1860s.[44] Nellie's first experience "itinerating" as a "new Kuniong" brought her delight: she went to a village called Wong Dong, and showed pictures of Biblical scenes and gave cards to women and some twenty children.[45] Making steady progress in Chinese by December 1894, she reports "having the pleasure" of addressing a meeting of around a dozen Chinese women in their own language. Though she "felt as though [her] Chinese was really too poor to be able to do it properly", she was given a Scripture passage (she felt, from God) to speak on from Daniel: "They that be teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for

41 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, October 1894, in Berry, 1896, 140.
42 Weidman, 2015, 237.
43 Weidman, 2015, 237.
44 Bebbington, 1989, 175.
45 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, March 1894, in Berry, 1896, 77.

ever and ever".[46] Reflecting on her experience, Nellie confided to her mother, "and certainly God not only took away my awful shyness, but made the women understand most splendidly. Is not He good?"[47] To be sure, she had worked very hard to master the sonic nuances of Chinese. On the other hand, there was likely a performative element to this vocal public delivery in a language that she was still learning. Nevertheless, oral performances like this enabled Nellie to assume the subject position of *kuniong* in the local Chinese and Chinese Christian communities.

The Bilingual, Multimodal Voice

That this vocal training and Chinese sonic practice in acquiring the language can be "transferred" to her Chinese students is evident when Nellie shares a letter by a student, Daik Ong, who had just married a young Chinese doctor, and who had visited her right before her departure from Gutian. Writing to her aunt from Hua Sang on 28 July 1895, Nellie translates the letter, combining English with colloquial Chinese in the Fuzhou dialect:

> *Ching-ai gi Sung Kuniong* (Dearly loved Sung Kuniong [my name]) –
> *Nu ming-dang gaeng Kuniong li Ko* (I to-morrow must take leave of the Kuniong);
> *nu ceng ma sia dek* (I very much cannot bear this),
> *ing mi ming dang* (because I tomorrow)
> *ia diong Ko Dung bang* (also return to Dung bang).
> *Nu ai-uong Kuniong* (I hope the Kuniong)
> *thain a Ko nu Dung bang kakdieu* (afterwards will come to Dang bang for pleasure.
>
> My heart will be very glad I also will pray for the Kuniong so that she, riding in a chair to Hua Sang to-morrow, may not be tired, but will peacefully arrive at Hua Sang; and please will the Kuniong take my greetings to all the other Kuniongs at Hua Sang). Good-bye. – The girl Daik Ong's letter.

While Nellie begins by translating the letter from colloquial Fuzhou to English and ends completely in English, the letter demonstrates the extent to which she had been able to absorb the nuances of local Chinese language and customs even in a relatively short period. Since the girl had been illiterate, providing her student a writer's voice was no ordinary feat, but the young woman evidently mastered the lessons swiftly. And Nellie's translation, originating from a multimodal approach that attended to multiple layers of mediation, was attuned to her translation's oral and aural potential. Nellie's bilingual text reinforced the significance

46 Daniel 12:3.

47 Nellie's Letter to her Mother, December 1894, in Berry, 1896, 174.

of Daik Ong's letter through both sound and text. But because it was romanized dialect, the reader (Petsy and later the broader readership of the Saunders' letters) could also read it aloud to others. The translation thus reveals multiple avenues of possibility to be understood and remembered. However, most important of all, the wish for the relationship to continue, on the part of the young Chinese woman, was a vote of confidence regarding both Nellie's presence and her contributions in China. Daik Ong's letter, and its bilingual translation, provides evidence of how the Saunders sisters' ordinary oralities in cross-cultural encounters became personal and transformative for local Chinese women.

Conclusion

This essay has attended to oral-aural encounters in 1893–1895 between two Australian single female missionaries of the Church Missionary Society and local missionary and Chinese communities in Fujian, China, prioritizing the "social and cultural grounds of sonic experience" and the "exteriority" of sound.[48] Through both aural and visual training, the Saunders sisters learned to read, speak, preach, pray, and sing in a local Fuzhou dialect, the "vocal training" of learning Chinese and speaking in the correct tones assisting them in their new subject position as *kuniongs*, or single female missionaries. The repeated vocal encounters ushered in a new social category and subject position[49] of female missionary teacher and preacher in the later years of Victorian Protestant missions in China. With the assistance of Chinese Biblewomen, the Saunders sisters helped Chinese boys, girls, and women to gain literacy by learning to read romanized versions of the Bible in the Fuzhou dialect: sound reproduction (here, in the local dialect) in written (printed) romanization enabling a social identity that, for some, then facilitated upward social mobility as wives, future mothers and heads of an emerging indigenous Chinese Christian leadership.[50] After her daughters perished in August, 1895, Eliza Saunders, who had been accepted with her two daughters by the Victoria Branch of the Church Missionary Society, Australia, in 1893, but who had been detained because of great financial losses, renewed her offer in 1897 and was accepted on July 6. She departed for the Fujian Mission, Fuzhou, in October and continued the work begun by her daughters until her death in 1915.

48 Sterne, 2003. 13.

49 Weidman, 2015, 237.

50 Bays, 2012, 80.

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Tessa de Boer, Ramona Negrón, and Jessica den Oudsten

"Good evening, you hag": Verbalizing Unhappy Marriages in Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam

On 10 January 1725, five women appeared in front of Amsterdam notary Jan Ardinois to testify at the request of their neighbor Johanna de Motier. Johanna's husband Willem van Ginkel had been sailing for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) for many years and had rarely been at home.[1] It was not a happy marriage. Whenever Willem repatriated from the East Indies, he mistreated and beat Johanna. One night, Willem returned home after a day out and greeted Johanna with "Good evening, you hag." Johanna stood her ground, and replied "those do not live here, people live here". This angered Willem. He called her a "whore", boasted that he could get an even better whore than her, and then beat her with his cane.[2]

The exchange between Johanna and Willem, as reported upon by their neighbors, is only one example of previously buried conversations found in the Amsterdam notarial archives. Hundreds of thousands of individual voices are recorded in so-called *attestaties*: witness testimonies on any and all subject matter that was considered worthy of official documentation by the *requirant*, on whose behalf the deed was drawn up. The nature of the *attestatie* as a document, as well as the sheer size of their numbers, make for an intense variety of actors, their voices, and the subjects represented: from the fabulously wealthy to those unable to pay for the rags on their body, men and women of all geographic or social origin found their way to the notary to officially record their voice in writing.

Many (if not the majority) of the social incidents recorded in *attestaties* feature around the breakdown of marriages. The restricted availability of divorce in the eighteenth century, as well as dominant ideas on honor and virtue, left unhappy partners with limited means or will to separate. Whereas authors working on early modern marriage and divorce have provided extensive insight on the judicial process of marriage dissolution,[3] there are few perspectives on the private and personal events that preceded the couple's decision to separate. Behind the closed doors of many homes in eighteenth-century Amsterdam, the pressure was rising

1 Amsterdam City Archives (NL-SAA), Ondertrouwregister, 5001, inv.nr. 552, 3-9-1716; NL-SAA, DTB Dopen, 5001, inv.nr. 80, 20-1-1717.

2 NL-SAA, Inventaris van het Archief van de Notarissen der Standplaats Amsterdam, 5075, inv. nr. 9098, nr. 10, 10-1-1725.

3 See for example: Helmers, 2002; Roodenburg, 1992; van Weeren and de Moor, 2019; Philips, 1988.

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and eventually gave way to explosive, abusive, heartbreaking, passionate, and occasionally humorous or sarcastic language. The resentment felt between husband and wife, however, was no longer a private matter if they (loudly) verbalized it: it was witnessed by servants, neighbors, family or friends, who subsequently felt obliged or were called to step in to report upon the cries of misery. Documenting the words of bickering partners was, in short, a communal affair.

For this chapter, we employed newly developed technologies and tools in archival research to find and access these voices in the *attestaties*. Recent advances in the digitization and indexation of the Amsterdam notarial archive allow increasingly in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis of early modern Amsterdam marriages falling apart. Using these tools, we assembled a dataset with a selection of 205 *attestaties* (dated 1700–1780), querying the search engine with commonly used key terms related to marital strife (e.g. “husband”, “wife”, “adultery”, etc.[4]), and subsequently analyzed the characteristics of the involved parties, given quotations, and descriptions of sound, human or otherwise. Centuries-old voices that were previously mundane and by all means forgotten, now resurface.

The aim of the chapter is threefold. First, we contextualize the early modern unhappy marriage by outlining the possibilities for separation/divorce and provide an overview of the dataset we assembled. Second, we analyze content: which words or phrases were often used during the quarrels? Third, we assess the sounds of the bickering voices: exactly *how* were things voiced – or what was perceived? As we will demonstrate, our sources yield the answers to these questions in lively detail.

Parting Ways

In the Dutch Republic, the options to get out of an unhappy marriage were very limited. Some spouses simply left and started a new life elsewhere. In 1715, Sico de Mol confessed to some acquaintances that he impregnated his mistress, and that he had been having sexual intercourse with her mother as well. Instead of taking responsibility for his misconduct, Sico decided it was best to leave his wife,

4 The full list of queries we used in Dutch: echtelijke, echtgenoot, echtgenote, echtscheiding, hoer, huwelijk, overspel, scheiding, scheiden, schelm, separate, separeren, vreemd(ge)gaan, “zijn vrouw”, “haar man”. In English the queries are: marital, husband, wife, divorce, whore, marriage, adultery, parting, to part, rascal, separate, to separate, to commit adultery, “his wife”, “her husband”. These queries were selected based on the extensive experience of the authors with (the digitization, indexation and querying of) the source material.

mistresses, and future child, and flee to England.[5] In the *attestaties,* there are several instances of people complaining that their spouses had left them behind.

An available but rarely achieved option was divorce. During the eighteenth century, very few marriages were dissolved. Legal divorce was only granted if there was sufficient evidence of adultery or abandonment, which were often too difficult to prove. Abandonment could mean one of either two things: abandonment by malicious intent, or uncertainty of return if the spouse was on a voyage far away. The latter was possible after five years of no return, the former was more difficult to determine. Divorce granted the right to remarry.[6]

Far more common was separation from bed and board, which was granted on the same grounds as divorce but more easily obtained. With a separation from bed and board, the marriage itself was not dissolved; only the obligation to cohabitate was suspended. Separated spouses were thus prohibited from marrying someone else until their former partner had died, after which they would be addressed as their widow(er).[7]

Although separation offered dysfunctional couples a solution to their failing marriage, it did not completely resolve the issues between them, especially not when there were children involved. Husbands were often required to pay alimony and therefore had to maintain contact with their separated wives. Because they remained officially married, they were restricted from having other romantic or sexual relationships. Hence, separated spouses often meddled with their former partner’s social lives. When Dirk Valkenburg visited his separated wife Margareta Kleijnmans to pay alimony, for example, she started yelling at him, accusing him of spending his money on several “whores”.[8]

The *attestatie*

Legal documentation has gained broad recognition among (gender) historians as a fruitful source to gain insight into matters of marital abuse and emancipation. Court records in particular have been used to find “ordinary” voices.[9] However,

5 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8310, nr. 143, 8-11-1715; NL-SAA, 5001, inv.nr. 17, 28-6-1715.
6 Haks, 1982, 182, 201; Helmers, 2002, 155–167.
7 Haks, 1982, 182, 201; Helmers, 2002, 155–167.
8 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8467, nr. 91, 18-5-1719.
9 Among others: Van der Heijden, Van Nederveen Meerkerk and Schmidt, 2009; Lyndon Shanley, 1993.

not every marital fight made it to the courts. The notary's office was a much more accessible space to make a preliminary deposition: the *attestatie.*

Attestaties could be used in the legal processes of obtaining separation or divorce, but they were not considered binding proof. Several factors determined the credibility of the witnesses and the *attestatie* in general: the reputation of the *requirant* (on whose behalf the *attestatie* was drawn up), the time elapsed since the described incidents, whether the witnesses were willing to affirm their testimony under an oath, and finally why, according to them, their testimonies were credible.[10] Most witnesses stated they had seen and/or heard the incidents themselves, or that they had known the spouse(s) for a certain period. Despite this, some uncertainty remains about the reliability of the statements, as the witnesses or *requirant* could have an agenda or the notary could have made some editorial changes. However, considering that this was part of a rhetorical strategy, the actual veracity of the claims made in *attestaties* is of lesser importance for this chapter.

The *attestaties* were drawn up by a notary in the presence of two official witnesses, often clerks working for the notary. The deed always started with the introduction of the notary, the witnesses who had come to make their statements, and the *requirant*. The notary (or his clerk) then proceeded to write down the witnesses' statements, often in great detail. Lastly, the deed was signed.

The *requirant* was usually one of the spouses, but sometimes it could be the local authorities,[11] or another third party. The data shows that *attestaties* were mostly drawn up at the request of the wife (62%), followed by the husband (28%), local authorities (5%), and others (5%) (Fig. 1). The services of the notary required payment, but the less fortunate were offered the possibility to draw up *attestaties* pro deo (for free or against a small fee). Most people, however, were able to pay for the *attestatie*: only 15% was pro deo (Fig. 2).

To strengthen their claims, many husbands and wives called in the help of employees, neighbors, or other people to testify on their behalf about the (failing) marriage. We have divided the witnesses into five categories: employees, neighbors, friends and family, others, and unknown (Fig. 3).[12] Most frequent among the witnesses were friends and family (31%). Fighting couples often resorted to their family and friends, who helped them resolve fights, end instances of violence, or let them stay the night. Sometimes *requiranten* even deployed them as trustworthy spies to bust cheating spouses. In 1770, Helena Teuling sent two friends to

10 Roodenburg, 1992, 372–375.

11 The *hoofdofficier* or *ratelwachten.*

12 "Others" was used for people whose occupation was mentioned but whose relationship to the *requirant* was not clear. "Unknown" was used for people whose relationship to the *requirant* was not specified.

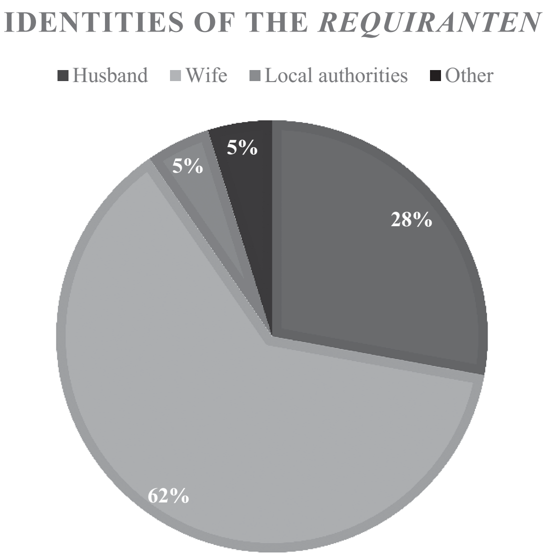

Fig. 1: Identities of the *requiranten*. N=205.
Source: Dataset.

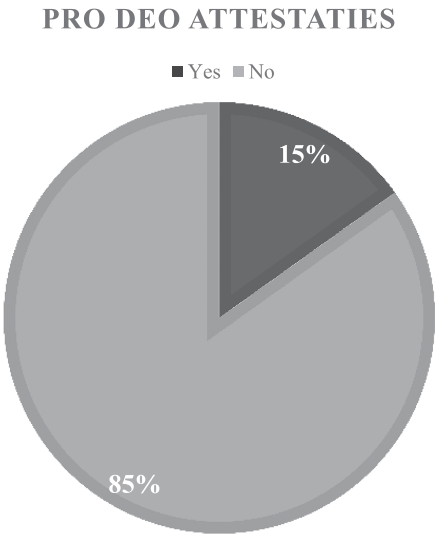

Fig. 2: Pro deo *attestaties*. N=205.
Source: Dataset.

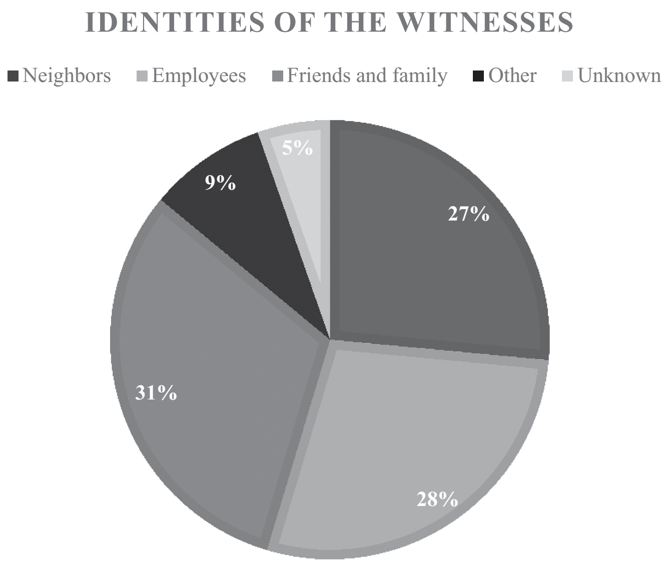

Fig. 3: Identities of the witnesses. N=657.
Source: Dataset.

follow her husband Coenraad van Lemel. Although the couple had been married for twenty-three years, it had not been a happy marriage.[13] Coenraad mistreated Helena, sometimes even in front of their children. Additionally, Helena suspected Coenraad of infidelity. The two friends shadowed Coenraad for several nights and eavesdropped on his conversations with various prostitutes. At times Coenraad was aware that he was being followed, and took a detour. One night, after having seen and heard him conversing with a prostitute called Naatje, the friends decided to confront Coenraad about his adultery in front of Helena. Coenraad vehemently denied all allegations, claiming the two witnesses were lying. However, they stood their ground, and dutifully reported "You even said 'good night sweet Naatje' and she said 'good night sweet Coentje', and then you again said 'good night sweet Naatje, sleep well'".[14]

The second-largest category of witnesses was employees (28%). The nature of their work brought them in close proximity with their employers, and thus they were often dragged into the conflicts of these employers. Most of them tried their

13 NL-SAA, 5001, inv.nr. 590, 7-7-1747.
14 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 11196, nr. 42, 19-2-1770.

best to intervene between a fighting husband and wife, though not always successfully. When silk worker David Salander beat his wife Pieternella Ploeg with his cane, his servant Hendrik Hoijer tried to interfere, but David ordered him not to meddle: “It is none of your business, go sit and smoke a pipe of tobacco”.[15]

While some employees were able to stay out of the drama, others felt a strong sense of duty to get involved. This was especially true for maidservants, who were surrounded by their employers day and night. They witnessed spouses arguing, fighting, drinking, and cheating, and were usually the first to offer a helping hand. They put an end to violence, cared for wounds, secured the children, and helped endangered spouses escape to their families and friends.

Yet, because of their intimate bond with their employers, maidservants were also the first to suffer from their employers’ unhappy marriages. They constantly had to deal with the violence committed by drunk, mentally unstable, and cheating employers. When Jannetje de Boer’s secret escapades had left her pregnant, she asked one of her maidservants if she knew a way to abort the pregnancy. The maidservant, however, refused, replying that “she would rather get something to strengthen the child she was carrying, instead of killing it”.[16]

The dissolute lives of their employers greatly affected the work of maidservants and other employees. Some lost their jobs, while others decided to leave themselves, unable to bear it any longer. Maidservant Grietje Spekking, for example, decided to leave her job after years of having to witness her mistress cheat on her husband with several other men, during which Grietje was frequently ordered to be on the lookout to warn her mistress about the husband’s arrival.[17]

Other frequent witnesses were neighbors (27%). This is not surprising, considering that Amsterdam was a densely packed city. As Helmers explains: “Houses were often divided into front and back rooms, basements, and front and back houses. A family often lived in only one room. Those who lived in basements had a front-row seat to everything that happened on the street.”[18]

Finally, when we look at the sex of the witnesses, 62% were female and 38% male (Fig. 4). This is not surprising, considering the prominence of maidservants among the witnesses. Helmers further explains that female neighbors appeared more often as witnesses than their male counterparts, because women were more present in and around the house.[19] Another more general explanation for

15 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8069, 20-2-1711.

16 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 10023, 29-3-1732; NL-SAA, 5001, inv.nr. 570, 14-4-1730.

17 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8463, nr. 36, 17-5-1714; nr. 38, 2-6-1714.

18 Helmers, 2002, 325.

19 Helmers, 2002, 325.

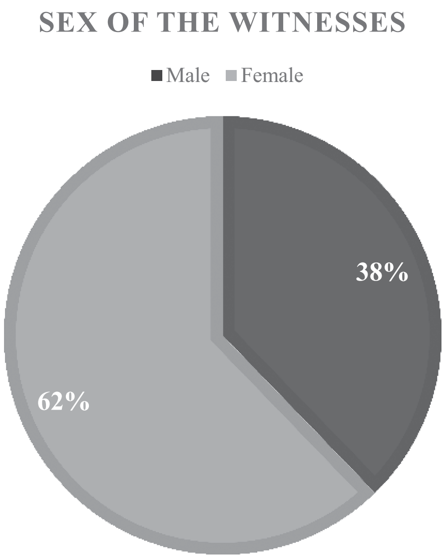

Fig. 4: Sex of the witnesses. N=657.
Source: Dataset.

the higher presence of women in *attestaties* is that there was a strong surplus of women in eighteenth-century Amsterdam, as many men went to sea.[20]

The Conversations

Although the *attestatie*, like any other notarial deed, was subject to standardized formulas, notaries frequently recorded the exact words that were used in fights between husband and wife, granting a unique insight into the private conflicts within the household, which usually took place behind closed doors. In 1756, for example, an entire conversation between Jan Aubert, his wife Maria Kemp, and their neighbors is noted verbatim in a notarial deed. When Jan arrived home after a voyage with the VOC, an unpleasant surprise was waiting for him: his wife Maria was lying in bed sick, and Jan strongly suspected that she had just given birth to a child that could not possibly have been his – after all, he had been away for years. Determined to expose his wife's actions, he called out to the neighbors: "Orderly neighbors! Be good and come into my house". When his neighbors responded to his call and entered the house, he asked them to have a conversation with Maria to discover what had happened.

20 Van de Pol, 1996, 107.

The neighbors asked Maria if she had just given birth. Maria answered: "Yes, I am a woman in childbed and I have done it on purpose, because I want to get a divorce". One of the neighbors replied: "I congratulate you on your child, but do take proper care of it". Maria said: "Perhaps I have sinned, but I will not commit sins against my own flesh and blood". Jan, who had eavesdropped on this conversation, screamed: "Mietje, Mietje, what are you doing to me and my family?" Maria was utterly unimpressed, and answered: "It is all right, if I have sinned, I will see if you have not sinned too". One of the neighbors who was in the room then said to Jan: "Well now, do not say anything else. She has now confessed to being a woman in childbed. If you have something to say, go to court".

A few days later, Jan asked his neighbors to accompany him to the midwife that had assisted Maria through childbirth. The neighbors overheard a conversation between Jan and the midwife that was recorded word for word in the notarial deed as well: "Miss, did you assist my wife during labor?" The midwife replied: "Captain Aubert, is that you? Yes, on Monday I helped your wife give birth to a daughter, who is now in the care of a wet nurse who lives in the Jordaan. I have taken the child to this nurse at the request of your wife. If you need my testimony in a court case, I am happy to testify and tell the truth. Your wife sent for me while I was at a wedding at the Boomsloot".[21]

The words of the midwife indicate the purpose of this particular notarial deed. The deed was drawn up at the request of Jan, so that he could use it if he wanted to obtain a separation or divorce from Maria. The voices of Jan, Maria, the neighbors, and the midwife were thus officially recorded. This was by no means the only instance in which this happened. Entire conversations, alongside a multitude of shorter phrases and exclamations were recorded in the *attestaties*. In these quarrelsome conversations various tropes or modes can be discerned: swear words and curses, (death) threats, denials, wishes (for example, to have never been married), and (adulterous) romantic talk. What words did spouses, neighbors, employees, friends and family members use to express their feelings during the quarrels?

The Vocabulary

Quarreling in the heat of the moment resulted in the usage of the most insulting and abusive language. The resentment felt between husband and wife was loudly verbalized through a multitude of swear words. These swear words were significantly gendered. Men were often called *schelm* ("rascal"). This was by no means an innocent or

21 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 10049, nr. 65, 15-5-1756. "Mietje" is a variant of the name Maria.

mundane slur, but rather the opposite, because it referred to the professional and financial reliability of the men and was one of the worst insults a man could be subjected to.[22] In addition, men were often called "thief", "whoremonger", "adulterer", and "(cursed) dog". Women were often called "whores", to which there were all sorts of variations: "young whore", "old whore", "little whore", "Portuguese whore", "thieving whore", "street whore", or "Judas' whore". The term "whore" did not solely refer to prostitution, but was a synonym for unchastity and referred to all sexuality outside of marriage.[23] Another word that was principally used for women was "beast". Hendrik Helmhout furiously screamed at his wife Judith Schravelaer: "Beast, pack your things and go to your parents, I do not want you anymore!"[24] Benjamin Jesurum also wanted his wife Abigael de la Penja to go away: "I want to get rid of you, beast, I am the angel of angels but you are the devil of devils".[25] Not only wives, but also mothers-in-law were often attacked and subjected to verbal abuse. Jan Wallis called his mother-in-law an "old beast" and told his wife Petronella Brouwers that her mother had to leave. Petronella answered: "Is she a beast now? When she helped you with her money, she was not a beast". Jan replied: "She has been a beast for over two years".[26]

Donder ("thunder") and *bliksem* ("lightning") are adjectives that were often used to invigorate the swear words and can best be understood as synonyms for "devilish". These adjectives were for example combined with the aforementioned *schelm*, "whore" and "beast", but were also often attached to the infantilizing word "child". For example, Jan Willem van Straten called his wife Marretje Valk "thunder and lightning child" and said that he wanted her to go back to her parents.[27]

In addition to the curses and swear words, serious and violent (death) threats were made. While Geertruijd Bartels, the wife of Jan Furstenberg, was lying in bed sick, Jan behaved very violently and shouted that if his wife hadn't been pregnant, he would have "cut her throat".[28] When Warnar van Wierst, who was having an affair with the wife of his cousin Simon van Wierst, heard that the couple had reconciled, he became enraged and said, "If I get him [Simon], I will stab him and throw him in the canal." He later added that if the reconciliation was definitive, Simon "would die by his hands", and he did not mind going to prison for it.[29]

22 Roodenburg, 1992, 376.
23 Roodenburg, 1992, 377.
24 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8069, nr. 3, 5-1-1712.
25 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 12305, nr. 3, 13-1-1747.
26 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 11704, nr. 147, 29-1-1749.
27 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 14291, nr. 95, 4-5-1760.
28 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 10146, nr. 203, 19-12-1748.
29 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 12306, nr. 40, 2-6-1748.

Alongside the curses, swears and threats, romantic talk between adulterous lovers was also reported upon in the notarial deeds. Anna Lincklaar called her lover Lambert Brugman "Sweetheart, Brugje dear". Philippus Dulleman, who had an affair with Trijntje Kroon, called her "my dear *spitsneusje*", and Trijntje said: "My sweet Dulletje" and "my dear *prince neusje*".[30] The first or last names of people were often shortened as pet names: "Brugje" as a short version of Brugman and "Dulletje" instead of Dulleman. It was important that this loving talk was written down as well because it could serve as proof of adultery, which, in turn, could help in obtaining a divorce or separation.

Sounds

The notarial *attestatie* does not only allow us access to the bare contents of marital bickering. Rather unique for institutional early modern sources, a great amount of information centered around sound and the auditory experience is contained in *attestaties*. We can distinguish three primary – perhaps consecutive – roles attributed to sound in the *attestatie.* Firstly, witnesses describe *which* sounds lured them to witness the exchanges in the records. Were they specifically called upon for help, or did the noise of the fight propel them to act and intervene on the spot? Secondly, they describe *what* the voices in question sounded like to them. What intonations were 'spotted' in the language of marital crisis? Thirdly, they describe *how* the sound of marital crises made them feel. What emotions or actions did certain sounds, voices and their intonations invoke in spouses or bystanders?

Judging from the considerable amount of reflection on it in typical *attestaties,* sound was considered an important aspect of telling the story of a bad marriage. Abuse, infidelity, alcoholism, and other typical causes of marital breakdown were accompanied by a characteristic range of sounds, the descriptions of which could significantly add to the overall narrative of the *attestatie* and its purpose. An unusually lively, and usually chilling picture is sketched through accounts of three-hundred-year-old sounds. A wide range is recorded: children crying, the rumor of dozens of neighbors gathered by the front door, drunken mumbling, and adulterous sex.

30 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 10143, nr. 222, 9-10-1745. *Spitneusje* literally translates to "little pointy nose" and *prince neusje* to "little prince nose".

A Call for Help

The *attestatie* was born at the moment the witnesses learned the details of the bad marriage. In most cases, these witnesses call upon three sources of knowledge: they had *seen, experienced,* and, most relevant in this context, *heard*. This could mean directly – they had heard the sounds and voices themselves, or indirectly – they had heard gossip *about* the marital crisis. Usually, the context is clear regarding which type of hearing is referred to.

In a significant part of the witness narratives, they explain that it was a sound – usually a human voice – that drew them to the central scene. This is most often described by neighbors, as a witness type. Neighbors were often close enough to the conflict in question to *hear* it, but unlike servants or guests, not physically close enough to *see* it before hearing it. As mentioned previously, the quality of housing in early modern Amsterdam varied, with building quality and personal space obviously diminishing the poorer the inhabitants. The *attestatie* affirms the living conditions of poor spouses in detail: the collective of witnesses called upon their marital breakdown were often the tenants of the rooms directly next door, underneath, above, and wherever else a room could be squeezed in. The poor building quality subsequently ensured that everything that the spouses perpetrated was audible to these neighbors. In 1718, Stijntje Jans provided a particularly lively description of these conditions for listening in: there was only "a single wooden panel" between her and her next-door neighbor Marritje Sardijn, "which was the cause of her ability to hear almost anything that happened in that house" – in this particular testimony, the daily visits of unfaithful husband Anthony van der Sprong to drink coffee, and, after Marritje sent her children away for groceries, extramarital "frolicking and kissing".[31] Adulterous spouses, almost naturally, produced rather hushed sounds; additionally, these were not necessarily situations that invited the witness to immediately reveal and involve themselves. This was much different in the other major "bad marriage" situation type: open violence and abuse. Witnesses often became privy to a violent situation through the sounds it produced – either the victimized spouse explicitly called out for help, or the persons hearing the sounds were drawn to the situation out of curiosity or worry. It tended to vary whom acutely endangered spouses called upon for help, using their voice to attract someone to pacify the situation. If applicable, employees would be the nearest, and we often see maids or manservants detailing how they heard a cry for help from another place in the house. A comprehensive example was provided in 1712 by Hendrikje Brand, a maid of the

31 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8468, nr. 211, 8-10-1718.

aforementioned Hendrik Helmhout, whose disturbing and abusive behavior towards his wife Judith Schravelaer is the subject of an entire series of *attestaties*:

> When she was in the scullery, she heard Helmhout's wife utter a loud cry, upon which she went to the kitchen & saw that Helmhout's wife was sitting on a chair; Helmhout was holding his wife by her arms and had his knee against her stomach; Helmhout's wife then said to him that he had to release her, and jerked her hands loose, upon which Helmhout kicked his wife in her stomach twice, and she [Hendrikje] called for help, whereupon Helmhout's brother and manservant came from the front of the house and threw themselves between them.[32]

If no employees were maintained in the house, the next type of witnesses typically attracted by the voice of abusive or abused spouses was neighbors. Violent noises often attracted a crowd, whose members could help de-escalate the situation. However, in some cases, the potential of aid offered by neighbors did not counterbalance the shame of being abused, especially not when the victim was male. We can observe this in Jan Struijs, a wealthy man who faced mistreatment from his wife Sara Schippers and his two stepdaughters. During an episode where his wife was "shouting curses and swears" at him:

> [Jan] continuously tried to get her to lower the volume, out of shame for the neighbors; however, she did not want to hear any of that, saying that she did not give a damn about the neighbors, and threatened that if he did not shut his mouth, she would beat him.[33]

In some cases, local law enforcement officers (*ratelwacht*) were alerted by violent sounds. One of such exchanges with the *ratelwacht* was recorded in 1725, when a nameless *ratelwacht* passed by the residence where Dirk Heybroek was "cursing, beating, raging and ranting" to his wife Barbara Swart. The *ratelwacht* decided to knock on the door upon "hearing the hubbub" inside, asking: "What is going on here?" – adding, when Dirk opened the door and Barbara appeared behind him, looking battered and desperate, "Scoundrel, is that your wife? Come here, I will teach you a lesson!"[34]

Sounds of Perpetrators and Victims

After voluntarily or involuntarily finding themselves in the midst of a scene of marital breakdown, perhaps drawn to the scene through the sound of it, the witnesses next describe what the words that were exchanged between partners

32 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8069, nr. 46, 8-4-1712.
33 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 10125, nr. 160, 22-5-1736.
34 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8320, nr. 29, 2-2-1725.

sounded like. How were they verbalized, pitched, emphasized? What impression was the speaker trying to give to their words, or in any case, what did the witness perceive? Overall, a distinct set of vocabulary is used to describe the voice of the perpetrating spouse on the one hand and the victimized spouse on the other. The usefulness of these "glossaries" in interpreting the characteristics of sound has been previously established in voice studies.[35] Our case affirms the applicability of this methodology.

Perpetrating voices were used in many ways, all of them – according to the witnesses – profoundly negative: they *rage, swear, rant, curse, threaten, scream,* or otherwise "vomit horrendous words",[36] to the point that it is explicitly recorded that the witnesses considered them to be so vile they were unwilling to repeat them to the notary to record. A similarly reoccurring set of adjectives is used to describe the way these swearing, ranting voices sounded, or how they were perceived. Witnesses most often stated them to have sounded *despicable, inhumane, indecent, horrendous, intense, evil, insane, insolent,* or *terrible,* often adding a "very" to emphasize the severity. These adjectives are similar to the ones used to describe the actual contents, e.g. what was actually said, but the ones listed here specifically refer to the qualities of the sound. This separate assessment of content and sound is exemplified by the testimony of some servants in an inn who were privy to a conflict between two Italian spouses: they reported that they did not understand the Italian language, but were nevertheless able to distill that husband Jean was subjecting his wife Catarina to *violent ranting* and *raging.*[37]

Occasionally, perpetrators used their voices in ways other than the loud, generally abusive modes as described above. Elizabeth Tomma *delightedly* reported to the notary to have cheated on her husband Sjoert Hamertsma on a trip to France;[38] Johannes Schmelser *silently* and *covertly* assured the witness that his wife Gesina Blom would get what was due to her;[39] Joan Meeler *heavily pressured* his maid Angenietje for sex.[40] However, none of these diversions were meant to be perceived in a positive or flattering way; instead, they serve to further incriminate the perpetrator's voice.

Victimized voices are described in somewhat less uniform ways, perhaps because they feature less often (explicitly) in the narrative – the *attestatie*'s main character is the perpetrator, although from the perspective of the victim and

35 Hoegaerts, 2021, 122–127.

36 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8303, nr. 26, 21-9-1725.

37 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 10294, nr. 942, 6-12-1760.

38 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 14310, nr. 15, 10-1-1767.

39 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 16367, nr. 148, 15-6-1780.

40 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 16365, nr. 111, 1-9-1778.

their entourage. We mostly capture victimized voices when they (directly) reacted to the attacks by their perpetrating spouse, or when they complained to a third party – almost always the witnesses – about their desperate situations. In the face of (violent) abuse, victimized voices most often *cry, scream, weep* and *pray.* These cries were often specified as either having being *very loud,* or the opposite, *muffled* and *suffocating*. In both cases, they were perceived as *pitiful, lamentable,* or *bitter.* In the worst cases, witnesses stated that the victim’s screams “sounded as if [s]he was being murdered”,[41] which could very well be an actual possibility, as some victims are recorded to literally have screamed “Murder! Murder!” and multiple (attempted) homicides feature in the dataset.[42] Another way in which the (sound of the) victim’s voice featured in the *attestatie* is when they attempted to pacify the situation. Their tone is consistently portrayed by the witnesses as considerate. This is exemplified well in the case of Joan Rudolf van der Upwigh, who, together with his infant son, was subjected to physical and verbal abuse by his wife Geertruijd Ermen, described in several *attestaties* dating from the early 1700s. Joan Rudolf was described by the witnesses as gentle, mild and affectionate, and desperate to keep the peace with his volatile wife.[43] He *sweetly and amicably* requested a raging Geertruijd to join him to go to bed, and he *politely* requested that she would leave his office after she entered with the intent to destroy it – to no avail.[44] Statements of the kind and constructive victimized voice’s attempt to (unsuccessfully) de-escalate were presumably included to demonstrate that even in the face of calm and rational resistance, the accused spouse still persisted in their heinous behavior.

Emotional Impact

Marital breakdowns have a profound emotional impact on the spouses and on those in their immediate circle.[45] The history of emotions is a relatively new field of inquiry, partly because traditionally favored (institutional) sources were either devoid of relevant information or because tracing emotion required a style of reading that was not yet concocted. The *attestatie,* however, abundantly features

41 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8320, nr. 29, 2-2-1725; NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8312, nr. 19, 16-2-1717.

42 Among others, see: NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 16136, nr. 76, 23-4-1776; inv.nr. 8303, nr. 26, 21-9-1725; inv.nr. 12303, scan 615, 17-11-1745.

43 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 7453, folio 411, 21-9-1706; inv.nr. 7453, folio 491, 13-10-1706.

44 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 7452, folio 167, 8-2-1706.

45 For new studies on emotion and (historical) marriage, see for example Seymour, 2020; Holloway, 2019.

"everyday" voices explicitly discussing their own emotions or assessing the emotions they perceived in other people. As such, it is recorded how the voices of marital strife made actors and bystanders *feel.* What emotions did these voices – contents as well as sound – invoke in the involved parties?

As mentioned previously, some of the witnesses refused to repeat the actual language they had heard from (usually) the perpetrator's voice. When looking for traces of emotional impact, it is abundantly clear why. Witnesses consistently reported that the voices in question uttered such horrific words, and in such an offensive tone, that it was utterly *embarrassing, horrendous, shameful,* or *unbearable* for a decent or polite human being to have to listen to them.[46] Occasionally, gender is brought into the discussion, with one witness stating that for women in particular, listening to such abusive language was highly embarrassing.[47] Female perpetrating voices had a similarly scandalizing effect on the witnesses, as evidenced by the testimony of two neighbors secretly listening in on a conversation between the adulterous wife Sophia Elizabeth van der Meer and her maids, whilst standing in her garden. Having heard Sophia and her maids discussing their favorite kinds and shapes of "cock", they reported that "[these words] were too horrific to listen to, and it was even worse that they were spoken by a married woman".[48]

The emotions of the perpetrating and victimized spouse, reacting to one another's voices, were fairly straightforward and predictable. Perpetrators were regarded as *heated* and *insane,* occasionally clearly *delighted* with their own behavior. The witnesses perceived victims to be *distraught, sad, embarrassed,* or in some cases, *surprised* at the abusive voices directed at them, either because the victim's own behavior (crying, screaming) clearly betrayed these emotions, or because the victims explicitly shared their feelings with the witness. Occasionally, a hint of slight amusement and self-mockery (perhaps induced through sheer desperation) can be traced in the victims: after his wife Sara violently jettisoned a plate of cabbage towards Jan Struijs's head during dinner, he requested that next time, she could at least add a sausage to it.[49]

46 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8467, nr. 88, 14-5-1718; inv.nr. 9452, nr. 26, 3-9-1719; inv.nr. 12305, nr. 5, 13-1-1747.

47 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 8483, nr. 110, 18-4-1725.

48 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 14305, nr. 409, 29-8-1765.

49 NL-SAA, 5075, inv.nr. 14305, nr. 160, 29-8-1765.

Conclusion

The notarial *attestatie* has a unique set of characteristics that make it a valuable source in uncovering, reconstructing, and listening to the voices of the past. Whereas other early modern (institutional) sources do in fact feature “ordinary” people, and occasionally record their (literal) words in writing, the *attestatie* doubles down on this by closely scrutinizing their actual sound. Our study on the verbalization of marital breakdowns illustrates this: the *attestatie* grants unprecedented access to private or public, loud or hushed, hateful or romantic exchanges, all of them between by all means and definitions regular couples whose voices were not impressive enough to reverb into traditional historiography. A vast multitude is still waiting to be uncovered.

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Riley McGuire

Sounding Sex: Erotic Oralities in the Late-Nineteenth-Century Archive

One of the most common and meaningful facets of oral experience is also one of the most elusive to locate in traditional historical records: the sounds of sex.[1] Issues of privacy and morality – operating on personal and legislative levels – conspire to render the words and non-linguistic articulations that accompany sexual acts barely audible, if not wholly muted. These challenges are compounded when examining periods prior to the twentieth century's widespread technologizing of sound. Intertwining histories of sound and sex, this chapter recollects a range of late-nineteenth-century erotic oralities from both text and audio sources, including the sounds of sex itself as well as sounds temporally adjacent to sex – that is, conversations preceding and succeeding it. Rather than offering a tenuously unified account of these utterances, I embrace a diversity of archival materials that yield equally variable sonic experiences. Given that sex is so often a blend of reality and fantasy, of physical actions and psychic imaginings, these sources have fraught relationships to "authenticity".[2] Instead of telling us what sex "actually" sounded like, then, they indicate what erotic sounds were understood to convey in the period, from pleasure to hilarity to power. In addition, they suggest the different aims of representing these sounds: to inspire amusement, arousal, fear, and more.

Discussions of sound, sex, and their interrelations permeate a range of nineteenth-century discourses. Victorian conduct books outline the ideal soundscape for copulation in heterosexual marriage: the "quietude of the night" is the "most congenial" time; husbands are encouraged to intermix speech with kisses for their wives' enjoyment; and wives are enjoined to silence – no talking, coughing, or nagging – after sex to promote conception.[3] Approaching courtship and procreation from a different perspective, speech correctionist Joseph Poett laments the refusal of "several matrimonial alliances" with those who have speech impairments due to the fear that the marriage "would entail upon their

1 I would like to thank Josephine Hoegaerts, Clare Mullaney, and Janice Schroeder for their generous feedback on this chapter.

2 For more on the relationship between sex and fantasy, see Sinfield.

3 Riddell, 2014, 99–100.

Note: *Content Warning: this chapter discusses representations of sexual violence.*

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offspring [a] distressing infirmity".[4] Decades later in *The Descent of Man* (1871), Charles Darwin echoes the notion that the voice is pivotal in procreation, declaring that "the vocal organs were primarily used and perfected in relation to the propagation of the species".[5] Sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing concurs, writing that "birds allure by their song" and the one who "sings most beautifully" will be granted their mate of choice. He extends this logic to humans, asserting "the voice may also become a fetich [sic]" and that many marriages to singers are attributable to such erotic fixations.[6] Even the ultimate icon of ostensible nineteenth-century prudery, Queen Victoria, fondly recalls the vocal dimension of her wedding night with Prince Albert as they "kissed each other again and again [. . .] of course in one bed" and she was "called by names of tenderness" she had never "heard used [. . .] before".[7]

What these disparate examples from arbiters of social mores to innovators of scientific discourse spanning the century collectively argue is that what people say, how they say it, and the sonic context of these articulations are integral to sex. To discuss sex was to discuss sound; therefore, changes in one realm entailed changes in the other. Unsurprisingly, then, scholarly accounts of significant developments in the erotic and mediatic worlds of the Victorians share a comparable outline: Michel Foucault illuminates the discursive explosion on the topic of sexuality and the rise of non-normative sexual identities in the period, while Friedrich Kittler details the advent and proliferation of new communication technologies such as phonographs and telephones during the same century. Kittler, however, notes that Foucault's "analyses end immediately before that point in time at which other media penetrated the library's stacks," so that his work does not explore the rewriting of "eroticism itself under the conditions of gramophony".[8]

I take up Kittler's invitation to explore the intersections of sound and sex in both print and audio through my two central case studies, which provide an unparalleled amount of material from the late nineteenth century – over a million words, and nearly an hour of sound. I begin with the notorious and labyrinthine erotic memoir *My Secret Life* (1888) written by the pseudonymous Walter. Next, I turn to the ribald material on phonographic cylinders from the 1890s: a collection of amateur and commercial audio recordings that approach the topic of sex in various ways. Though erotic utterances attributed to people of different races, genders, sexualities, and classes resound throughout these materials, they are mediated

4 Poett, 1833, 32–33.
5 Darwin, 2004, 632–633.
6 Krafft-Ebing, 1978, 21–22.
7 Riddell, 2014, 70.
8 Kittler, 1999, 5, 56.

through white male writers and performers; accordingly, they call for attention to the power dynamics operating between the articulation and the recording of sound by different parties.

My overarching argument is twofold. First, generally, that sound – including speech, non-linguistic utterances, and non-human noises – is not incidental to but constitutive of the representation of sex in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Second, and more particularly, sound emerges as a tool to craft patriarchal fantasies of sexual control as well as to reveal the illusory and often violent nature of these fantasies. Though my main sources purport to loosen restrictions around erotic utterances, in so doing they also reinforce social hierarchies through their dismissal of the agency of sexually marginalized others; in short, the fantasies they concoct are inseparable from abuses of power. Neither of these arguments are surprising: the entanglement of sex and sound is a commonplace reality, rather than a sensational discovery. However, despite this entanglement, sound has been underexamined in histories of sex, and particularly so in accounts focused on periods before the rising accessibility of audio recording during the twentieth century. Similarly, the violent male fantasies animating these materials are not exceptional, but belong to patriarchy's wonted operations, wherein both sound and sex are routinely mobilized as tools of subjection. Though *My Secret Life* and the phonographic recordings are unique in their voluminous material, the alignment between much of their content is suggestive of its quotidian nature. Put differently, the relationship between sound, sex, and power at the core of these texts is significant precisely because of its ordinariness.

Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1990) is a useful launching point – in terms of its rhetoric, rather than its historicization of Victorian sexuality – to consider the sexual utterances of the past. Foucault begins by ventriloquizing a once-pervasive view of Western sexuality in the nineteenth century: "a mute, and hypocritical sexuality" reigned as "verbal decency sanitized one's speech" and "a general and studied silence was imposed".[9] This sense of repression, conveyed in sonic terms by Foucault, in turn made talking about sex feel transgressive. Foucault's account then reaches its volta as he posits his alternative viewpoint, characterizing Victorian society as one which "loudly castigat[es] itself for its hypocrisy [and] [. . .] speaks verbosely of its own silence" while, in actuality, obeying institutional imperatives that reach their crescendo in the nineteenth century to transform sex into discourse "through explicit articulation" and "garrulous attention".[10]

9 Foucault, 1990, 3–4.
10 Foucault, 1990, 8, 18, 36.

Though Foucault couches his argument in vocal language – replacing mutism with loquacious articulation – this rhetoric remains largely symbolic as he analyzes material written about sex. I analyze sources, textual and sonic, that provide a materialized complement to Foucault's metaphorical claims about a profusion of sexual speech: they testify to the everyday coincidence of sex, sound, and fraught exertions of power. Historian Josephine Hoegaerts argues that to better understand temporally distant sounds, the scarcity of audio materials from the past can be supplemented by exploring the "sounding qualities of written text" – a generative approach as "listeners in a period before acoustic recording were extremely skilled at describing vocal sounds," doing so with detail and creativity.[11] Indeed, the nineteenth century witnessed an "increased awareness of sound" as "the terms of aurality" came to penetrate people's thoughts about themselves and their world.[12] As my case studies demonstrate, this rising attention to the language and experience of sound was crucial to the depiction of sex in the late nineteenth century. The pieces I examine are subjective though verbose accounts that prioritize sound as a key element in the composition and content of their sexual narratives.

My approach aligns with the work of Ellen Bayuk Rosenman who moves away from polarized conceptions of Victorian culture as either sexually repressive or sexually excessive in favor of focusing on "a continuum of desires".[13] Rosenman's preference for parsing the idiosyncrasies of sources in lieu of establishing "universal principle[s]" is one I emulate, though I substitute an attention to the sonic dimensions of sexuality for her emphasis on the "distinctive sexual charges vision takes" in the period.[14] Most scholarship on *My Secret Life* and the phonographic cylinders focuses on their anomalous existences – parsing out the history of how they came to be – rather than closely listening to their contents, and how those contents represent the everyday entanglement of sound and sex. Ultimately, both sources are structured by unequal though pervasive power dynamics that inform the relationships – at once audible and erotic – that they record.

11 Hoegaerts, 2021, 123.
12 Picker, 2003, 111, 11.
13 Rosenman, 2003, 2.
14 Rosenman, 2003, 3, 10.

"A Babel of Lascivious Cries": Vocal Pleasure and Violence in *My Secret Life*

Of all Victorian material focused on sex, none is more voluble than the sprawling *My Secret Life* by the pseudonymous Walter.[15] Variously hailed as the "most well-known erotic text from the period", a "lavish pornographic magnum opus", and an "erotic epic", it spans eleven volumes, thousands of pages, and over a million words.[16] Most famously, Steven Marcus labeled the book a "pornotopia" within which "reality is conceived as the scene of exclusively sexual activities".[17] Scholarly work on *My Secret Life* has primarily debated its authorship, authenticity, and generic manifestation. These works scour the text for "clues" about who wrote it, whether any of it is "true", and what formal characteristics predominate.[18] What is often neglected in these accounts is the physicality of the sexual activities that constitute Walter's world – context overshadows content.

Importantly for my purposes, the content of the text vividly engages the erotic sensorium beyond its expected tactile and visual dimensions. Sound emerges as inextricable from eroticism: *My Secret Life* echoes with "lascivious utterances", "baudy ejaculations", and "cries of ecstasy" that are essential to the embodied descriptions of sex it contains.[19] Walter underscores the primacy of the sonic dimensions of sex in his preface when he declares he "did, said, saw, and heard well nigh everything a man and woman could do with their genitals"; notably, two of the four verbs concern the production and reception of sound.[20] He further claims that his efforts to capture sexual speech distinguish his book from its predecessors in prose pornography. Referencing John Cleland's infamous erotic novel *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748), Walter insists the "book has no baudy worth in it" because "baudy acts need the baudy ejaculations; the erotic, full flavored expressions, which even the chastest indulge in".[21] For Walter, sex without sexual sounds is not sex worth narrating. Readers therefore encounter a book with explicit sexual language articulated as people laugh, cry, screech, yell, shout, snort, whine, moan, whisper, shriek, sing, bawl, sigh, curse, and more during sex.

15 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 1395.

16 Morrison, 2006, 16. Frederickson, 2014, 29. Rosenman, 2003, 1.

17 Marcus, 1966, 194.

18 See Gibson and Pattison for two different theories of authorship. Marcus approaches *My Secret Life* as factual, while Gay dismisses it as fantasy. Morrison tackles the genre of Walter's book.

19 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 420, 1323, 884.

20 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 3.

21 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 3.

In addition, vocal exchanges bookend Walter's sexual experiences, serving as one of their conditions of possibility, as well as one of their most pleasurable aspects for him. A sizeable amount, if not the majority, of sex acts are initiated by what Walter refers to as "baudy talk" or "lewed talk," among other terms – sexual speech becomes a prerequisite for sex itself. He then devotes ample space to recalling these conversations and committing them to the page, the transcription of speech often eclipsing the description of sex. One of Walter's earliest sexual partners shares her history with him between their sexual encounters and he includes "many of our conversations [. . .] in her very words, others as nearly as I can recollect them".[22] He claims a preternatural ability to recall and document conversations, provided they are temporally adjacent to sex. In short, speech and other erotic sounds precede, feature during, and succeed the dizzying array of sexual encounters that comprise *My Secret Life*.

Walter's excessive linguistic and sexual recollections result in a text of unwieldy length. Its intimidating scale would be mitigated by its index – if it were a traditional index. The 50-page index begins with a note informing readers that "Erotic deeds and suggestions may be found under unexpected letters [. . .] Many subjects are no doubt omitted. Pages and volumes given are likely enough to be often incorrect [. . .] The index therefore is certainly incomplete". Along with admitting the uselessness of the index in a typical sense, the author suggests its redemptive value: it "presents almost at a glance the large number and variety of amusements which the sexual organs afford to both men and women".[23] The scope of the index is apparent in a sampling of entries under its first letter – "abortion", "abstinence", "adultery", "armpits", and "aromas of male and female" – a variety of sexual practices, body parts, and sensations that persists throughout the alphabet.

Indices are arguments by their compilers about important patterns and notable moments within a text. Among the arguments made by *My Secret Life*'s index are the overall centrality of sound to sex as well as the specific power of erotic speech to destabilize social inequalities. Both the noises accompanying sexual acts – "screeching with the pleasure" from oral sex – and the conversations that take place before, during, and after sex – ranging from "carnal confessions" to "erotic, questions put to women" – are indexed.[24] The latter are prominent, with direct quotations from dialogues between Walter and his sexual partners receiving their own entries: "'Don't call me aunt'", "'Don't cry so master'", "'You'll fuck

22 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 65.
23 "Index," 1966, 2316.
24 "Index," 1966, 2334, 2321, 2327.

my bottom out'", etc.[25] Speech is used as an organizing category for the events of the text, as a shorthand for sexual experiences.

The references to speech and other sounds convey Walter's belief that sexually charged conversation should be an ordinary part of human experience as it is agreeable and arousing. Two entries encapsulate this philosophy: "Baudy, talking is natural and proper" and "Lewed talk stimulates lust".[26] The index features several gendered variations on this theme, a microcosm of the repetitiveness of *My Secret Life* as a whole, with "Baudy talk, all harlots like it", "Baudy talk, excites and seduces women", "Harlots, like baudy talk", and "Women, like baudy talk" appearing separately.[27] This insistence on the immutable yoking of erotic speech and sexual desire reveals the structuring tension of *My Secret Life* writ large. The text is remarkable in the diversity of sexual acts it details, as well as the diversity of the participants in those acts: Walter has sex with women and men, young and old, across the class spectrum, including, he claims, people of "twenty-seven different empires, kingdoms or countries, and eighty or more different nationalities".[28] Despite the variety of his literally voluminous sexual experiences, he makes sense of this diversity by collapsing it into portable, universalizing truths. Therefore, his understanding of the power of sex talk to unite people across social divides becomes the only understanding, despite the counterclaims within his own text.

Local instances of the patterns noted in the index populate the eleven volumes. Early on, Walter describes how he "greedily listened to all the lewed talk" and "incessant talk of fucking" he encounters from other youths at school.[29] This introduction to sexual speech informs his subsequent experiences as "lewed talk" enhances his physical gratification – "the words of lust as they escape me, add to my pleasure" – and features prominently in his encounters with others: "We never fucked without talking about pricks and sperm and making all sorts of lewed suggestions to each other".[30] The sexual and sonic trajectories of Walter's encounters often map onto each other, his physical orgasm accompanied by a vocal climax. The final chapter of a total 184 finds Walter "encouraging [his partner] and my-self by baudy words"; indeed, formulations of this nature are so consistent throughout that *My*

25 "Index," 1966, 2322, 2359.
26 "Index," 1966, 2319, 2430.
27 "Index," 1966, 2319, 2336, 2357.
28 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 1301.
29 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 19, 35.
30 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 1050, 1271.

Secret Life could be accurately summarized in Walter's reference to "a confusion of baudy deeds and baudy talk".[31]

However, Walter does not stop at asserting that sexual speech is arousing. In his encounter with a working-class upholstress he calls Jane, his claims intensify:

> [I] gave baudy hints, smutty suggestions [. . .] till her eyes twinkled, and she laughed much. I had now broken down the barrier, had brought myself to her level, and she as every other woman would have done, took advantage of it, and began to return my chaffing and banter, every woman feels instinctively that when a man is chaffing her [. . .] about fucking, that she may safely return it: both are at once on a common level. A washer-woman would banter a prince, if the subject was cunt, without the prince being offended. To talk of fucking with a woman is to remove all social distinctions.[32]

For Walter, discussing sex effaces gendered differences as well as their intersections with the most dramatic of class inequalities. Marcus picks up on the same moment, though misses a crucial detail when he paraphrases that, for Walter, "fucking is the great humanizer of the world".[33] Rather, to talk of fucking is the great humanizer: not the sex itself, but the discussion of it brings the washerwoman and the prince into social equilibrium, flattening the power differentials between them. Herein lies the utopic fantasy of *My Secret Life*, one that is premised on both "sexual and linguistic freedom".[34] Walter believes that frank dialogue about sex enhances everyone's pleasure and replaces social barriers with intimacy. In other words, not only does sex talk feel good, but it is also a radical refusal of the vocal decorum dictated by Victorian social mores and an especial release for women who are socialized to be "the quieter if not silent sex".[35]

Walter's constellating of sex, speech, and social equality does play out in his encounters with others, and is even relished by many, with the important caveats that the disruption to power hierarchies does not always occur and, when it does, it is only temporary. The privileged place Walter inhabits for most of the text as a white British man of ample financial means is undisturbed by these encounters, as is his control – physical, economic, and gendered – of his partners. This reveals a "gap between transgressive sexuality and social change" in which Walter can indulge in the tantalizing blurring of intersubjective distinctions "without any final loss of social position".[36] The persistent inequities between Walter and

31 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 1449, 957.
32 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 403.
33 Marcus, 1966, 152.
34 Rosenman, 2003, 173.
35 Bailey, 1998, 209.
36 Rosenman, 2003, 93.

others are most brutally apparent in the scenes of rape and sexual assault within *My Secret Life*, a facet of the text critics seem hesitant to engage with directly.[37]

In several encounters, Walter's sexual talk and actions are both non-consensual assaults on their recipients. In his second preface, he outlines what could be construed as his sexual methodology: "kiss, coax, hint smuttily, then talk baudily, snatch a feel, smell [. . .] fingers, assault, and win".[38] His usual verbal tactics – hint, talk – are succeeded by more aggressive verbs – snatch, assault – the proximity of these "steps" suggestive of the violence of both his speech and touch. Walter's idealized notion of the egalitarian power of sex talk is further punctured by his frequent refusal to listen to what others say to him. In the first volume, he recounts his initial experience with vaginal intercourse: he harasses his mother's housemaid, referred to as Charlotte, "talking smuttily" and physically assaulting her, as she screams, cries, and begs him to desist.[39] He eventually rapes her and declares "had she said she was dying, I should not have stopped".[40] This chilling assertion demonstrates that while Walter believes his sex talk can efface social boundaries, it is actually facilitated by them: he talks to Charlotte in this way because she is a working-class woman whose speech he considers to be powerless, refusing to listen to her assertions of autonomy.

In this moment and others, *My Secret Life* presents a violent schism between a theory and practice of erotic orality, between the radical fantasy of sex talk's democratizing effects and the reality of its reinforcement of patriarchy's ordinary power structures. Walter is right about sexual speech's relationship to power, but its ability to mitigate social distinctions is, at best, inconsistently evinced in his experiences and, at worst, the opposite manifests as sex talk becomes a tool of brutality. The contradictions around sexual utterances characteristic of the book are echoed in contemporaneous material. Marcus describes Walter's writing as "long phonographic accounts of his thoughts and words" associated with sex – an apt characterization that conjures the phonographic cylinders recorded simultaneously to the publication of *My Secret Life*, cylinders featuring words that Walter, for one, would be glad to hear preserved.[41]

37 Marcus, 1966, 94. Rosenman, 2003, 171. Morrison, 2006, 16.
38 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 6.
39 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 37.
40 *My Secret Life*, 2019, 41.
41 Marcus, 1966, 174.

"Virgin Plates": Fin-de-Siècle "Pornophony" in the United States

The same year, 1888, saw the publication of the first portion of *My Secret Life* and of Thomas Edison's essay "The Perfected Phonograph".[42] In the latter, Edison details the current improvements and future uses of his sound-recording technology. As Walter's exploits continued to be released in subsequent years, the phonograph's commercial availability increased. Edison declared his machine will "teach us to be careful what we say – for it imparts to us the gift of hearing ourselves as others hear us – exerting thus a decidedly moral influence".[43] Contrary to Edison's assertion, it is a truism that new technologies are rapidly mobilized to create and disseminate products decidedly outside of the realm of conventional morality; in a word, pornography. As Jody Rosen puts it, "smut peddlers have always been among the earliest and savviest adapters" of emergent technologies and the phonograph was no exception.[44] Hints of a sensual use for the phonograph populate the extensive journalistic coverage of the device. *The New York Times* writes of a "wax cylinder" that "details an interview between two lovers [. . .] the kisses were reproduced with tantalizing accuracy and fervor"; weeks later, on the other side of the Atlantic, *Punch* magazine jokes that Edison can "transmit kisses by phonograph," a disappointing experience as "man prefers / Direct and labial contact".[45]

The phonograph was envisioned as a tool to record and replay sexually charged actions, as well as to prevent them. Arthur Conan Doyle's short story "The Voice of Science" (1891) follows the scientifically inclined Mrs. Esdaile as she hosts a *conversazione* featuring the attraction of a phonographic recitation of a recent zoological lecture. The invited guests include both suitors of her young daughter, Rose. Rose's preference is for the handsome, though rakish, Captain Beesly, while her brother, Rupert, wants her to marry the ugly, though sedate, Professor Stares. Mrs. Esdaile and her children flow from discussing the phonograph's functionality to Rose's marriage prospects, intertwining the two. At the story's climax, just as Rose is on the cusp of committing herself to Beesly, the phonographic recording is played. Instead of a droning scientific paper, a voice

42 I take the term "pornophony" from Feaster and Giovannoni who use it to indicate "phonographic precursors to the stag film that documented sex acts for vicarious enjoyment." Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 52. Quotations from the recordings featured in *Actionable Offenses* are indebted to their transcriptions. I also quote from their invaluable contextualizing essay that is included with the album.

43 Edison, 1888, 650.

44 Rosen, 2007.

45 "Kisses by Phonograph," 1888, 8. "Kissing Goes By – Phonograph," 1888, 298.

recites Beesly's conquests with women and penchant for gambling, causing him to flee, leaving a reluctant Rose to become "Rose Stares."

This twist is orchestrated by Rupert, who meddles with the phonograph to discipline his sister's desire and force her to overcome her aversion to the unattractive professor. The diction of Rupert's interference as he records his condemnation of Beesly is telling: "Into the slots he thrust virgin plates, all ready to receive an impression, and then, bearing the phonograph under his arm, he vanished into his own sanctum".[46] After thrusting the virgin plates into the phonograph, Rupert makes a vocal impression on them in his bedroom, one that guarantees that the sexual impression made on his virgin sister will be of his choosing. Doyle presents a tale where the phonographic voice of science and the patriarchal voice of sexual control are one and the same.

The phonograph's connection to sex was not merely a figment of journalistic and fictional imagination, however. Abstract accounts of the "controlled erotics of modern sound technology" and the "autoerotic implications" of phonographic listening can be supplemented with recourse to actual phonographic recordings that discuss sex, both obliquely and explicitly.[47] Archeophone Record's *Actionable Offenses: Indecent Phonograph Recordings from the 1890s* (2007) brings together the Walter Miller Collection of phonographic cylinders, from the Edison National Historic Site and featuring professional recording artists of the day, and the Bruce R. Young Collection, a personal archive of anonymous amateur recordings, into one compilation. Some of the featured pieces hold the debatable honour of being the first recordings in the United States to be censored as "audio indecency".[48]

The phonograph's perceived ability to intervene in everyday intimacy was not limited to capturing kisses and shepherding sanctioned courtships into marriage. The Chicago Central Phonography Company encountered cylinders "of a Rabelaisian character," the North American Phonograph Company reported ones "which contain matter of a vulgar, obscene and improper nature," and the attendees of the 1893 Phonograph Convention railed against this proliferating use of the device, declaring it is "a disgrace that a great invention like the phonograph should ever be prostituted to such uses".[49] Prosecution of those distributing "obscene" cylinders was initially challenging as existing indecency statutes were designed to monitor print materials; eventually, however, the recordings were targeted under the Comstock Act of 1873 and its legal inheritors which imposed a range of consequences on anyone mailing, selling, or possessing "obscene, lewd,

46 Doyle, 1891, 315.

47 Sterne, 2003, 172. Picker, 2003, 135.

48 Rosen, 2007.

49 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 5–6, 53–54.

and/or lascivious" materials.[50] While the fear of hefty fines and even imprisonment curtailed the commercial dissemination of sexually charged recordings, the phonograph's dual capacity as a recording and playback device – it "would listen to – and say – *anything*" – left it available for the private creation of erotic audio.[51] This is embodied in the anonymous speaker on the Young cylinders who, akin to Walter, experiments with a technology of inscription to leave a record of the intertwining of sound and sex.

The recordings are diverse in form and content, featuring poems, songs, skits, jokes, riddles, and more that range in subject from the treatment of sexually transmitted infections to a thinly veiled account of a presidential consummation of marriage. What these recordings do not capture, despite their range, is audio from sex itself. The compilation – featuring a misguided attempt to masturbate a cow's udder and the painful urination caused by gonorrhea – lacks what most would consider conventionally "sexy." Instead, they are a marked contrast to the tone of *My Secret Life*, a text full of violence, anxiety, and lust: they remind us that one of the central purposes for speaking about sex is to entertain, though they do so while retaining a sinister edge.

To take the second example from above, "Hamlet's Soliloquy, otherwise called Gimlet's Soliloquy" replaces Hamlet with a gonorrhea sufferer pondering "To pee or not to pee, that is the question . . . To drug, and pee; to pee! Perchance to burn".[52] The bawdy satire of Shakespeare aims to amuse while at the same time deriving that comedy from the reality that pervasive sexually transmitted infections in the nineteenth century involved unenviable conundrums. Sex is at once something to laugh at and no laughing matter. Though humour is the dominant tone of the recordings, it is not the exclusive one. The final piece from the Young Collection adopts the perspective of a woman looking back longingly on her first sexual experience with a man named Will, recalling in particular "what sweet words of love [he] spoke".[53] From the ridiculous to the achingly nostalgic, these recordings are indicative of the range of affective responses sex was understood to elicit.

To accomplish their aims, the recordings make strategic use of sound in both the narratives and composition of the ribald material. To begin with the former: as in *My Secret Life*, speech frequently anticipates and follows the sexual acts gestured to in the recordings. In one vignette from a woman's point of view, she chastises her beau for his "bad" talk that eventually leads to their intercourse; in

50 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 10.
51 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 12.
52 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 22.
53 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 43.

a second from a man's point of view, his sexual partner "laughed a soft ha-ha" before throwing his sperm in his face and saying "Go, son, and kiss your papa".[54] Another recording stars an Irish police officer testifying in court about the public indecencies he has arrested people for, including sex, nudity, and defecation. After the judge's injunction to "Always [. . .] speak to the court plainly" and the officer's subsequent use of colloquial expressions, he finds himself sentenced to 30 days of prison time for "indecent conduct" instead of the perpetrators he arrested.[55] The comedy here, firmly grounded in the racialization of Irish people and their speech, suggests that sexual indecorum is outweighed by linguistic indecorum. To expose oneself in an "inappropriate" public setting is a lesser social transgression than to speak "inappropriately" in the setting of the courtroom.

Of course, sound is more than just an aspect of these narratives: it is the very stuff that comprises them. In addition to linguistic utterances, the recordings feature laughter, throat-clearing, singing, filler sounds, and even harmonica music. In one vivid instance, urination is onomatopoeically rendered as "*whsssht*" and compared to the noise of "the rocket's flight, sent heavenward on a gay Fourth of July".[56] Other performances work to flesh out the soundscape of their scenes. During the character Slim Hadley's visit to a brothel, the listener encounters "pioneering approaches to audio theatre" as Slim's exchanges with the proprietress and the prostitute Maud are accompanied by the sounds of knocking, doors opening and closing, footsteps, and climbing stairs – or at least audible renderings of these actions.[57] The recording gives us the mundane, quotidian sounds of a brothel as a reminder that lewd exchanges and ecstatic moans are not the only sonic ingredients of sex – much of the attendant noise of sexual encounters is unremarkable. Collectively, the recordings underscore the everyday linkages between sound and sex, using sound both as a tool to better tell sexual stories and a key part of those stories.

Amidst the variety of the compilation, one commonality is notable: all recordings are performed by the voices of white American men. Reminiscent of *My Secret Life*'s narration of the sexual experiences of diverse individuals filtered through the voice of a middle-class white British man, the authoring voices ventriloquize other experiences through their position of social power. The mockery of Irish dialect in the courtroom scene is echoed in other recordings: imitations of a German accent, the "rube" dialect of rural laborers, and the idiolect of a Black woman populate the recordings, indicative of the "reliance upon and reinforcement of ethnic

54 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 38–39.
55 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 29.
56 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 40.
57 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 30.

stereotypes" and the "mimicry of ethnic speech" endemic to American comedy of the era.[58] As in *My Secret Life*, speech within several recordings serves to buttress and perpetuate common and unequal power structures rather than trouble them.

In addition to the vocal appropriation of racial and ethnic identities, the performers adopt the voice and perspective of women in several recordings through variable attempts to change the cadence and pitch of their speech, particularly when trying to differentiate between distinct speaking characters. One recording stands out in this regard, both for its suturing together of sound and sex into storytelling and its troubling engagement with social power dynamics. "Dennis Reilly at Maggie Murphy's Home After Nine O'Clock", a tête-à-tête dialogue between the titular personas performed by one speaker, earns the distinction as "the most graphic phonoplay in the collection".[59] It begins as a scene of sexual assault, as Maggie refuses Dennis's sexual advances telling him to "stop" multiple times and asserting "Denny, don't. Don't, Denny". After Dennis forces himself on her, Maggie's response switches to an ostensibly agential one as she literally "directs" his actions: "Oh, Denny! Now a little on the east side. Now a little on the north side". As the two seemingly approach a climax they begin alternately exclaiming "Oh, Denny!" and "Oh, Maggie!," their voices accompanied by other ambiguous sounds: what could be construed as moaning, as well as sounds reminiscent of the rhythmic creaking of mattress springs.[60] Despite some unclear ambient noises, the scene is unmistakably a sonic simulation of intercourse.

As the singular performer accelerates his oscillation between the voices, the distinctions between them begin to blur. The higher pitch used for Maggie's voice and the lower pitch reserved for Dennis's reach a level of indecipherability and the tenuous illusion of two speakers collapses into a kind of vocal masturbation. With it collapses the patriarchal fantasy of rape transformed into desire and pleasure that structures the recording. The sound of a bell ringing at the door interrupts them and Dennis cleans himself on his shirt, a comic conclusion that attempts to diffuse the opening violence of the scene. The final sound – Dennis amiably chuckling – is an overdetermined insistence on the skit's humorous content. The limitations of both the performer and the technology conspire to create this anti-climax, as the former is unable to maintain his distinct vocal personas at a rapid pace, whereas the latter was "notorious" for its inability to record women's voices well.[61] The vanishing or absence of the "female" voice, then, underscores the violence of this comedy, the unreality of this fantasy. The recording, and the compilation, explicitly argue for

58 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 52.
59 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 36.
60 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 36–37.
61 Feaster and Giovannoni, 2007, 36.

the entertainment value of ordinary sexual sounds – it is funny to listen to dirty jokes, to urination, to silly people panting and moaning. Implicitly, they show the involvement of these sounds in prevailing dynamics of consent and power.

Coda

These late-nineteenth-century sexual articulations have resurfaced in our contemporary soundscape. Composer Dominic Crawford Collins has spent much of the last decade adapting *My Secret Life* into what he calls an "audiofilm", pairing original musical compositions with dramatic readings of the source text.[62] Similarly, *Actionable Offenses* made its bawdy phonographic recordings available to the general public for the first time in 2007. These Victorian voices are now in dialogue with – and part of – our own era's pervasive commodification of sexual oralities, where the "erotic effect" of sound continues to be mobilized in texts ranging from pop music to pornography, and issues of reality and fantasy remain vexed in practices such as phone sex.[63] In a time of increasing public vocalization around issues of sexual autonomy and misconduct, more analyses of "the sexual potential of the auditory sphere", and, I would add, the sonic dimensions of the sexual sphere, are necessary – particularly from diverse periods and contexts.[64] By doing so, we can craft new insights into the evolving relationship between sound, eroticism, and power in our daily lives.

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62 Collins.
63 Corbett and Kapsalis, 1996, 106.
64 Taylor, 2018, 2.

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George Catlin's *Shut Your Mouth*, the Biopolitics of Voice, and the Problem of the "Stuttering Indian"

The stutter persists as an unwanted excrescence in most cultural or critical/theoretical accounts of the voice, and sometimes even the most rigorous scholarly approaches still rely on powerful assumptions that link voices to personal or collective agency. What does it mean to find a voice for people who stutter? Sonically, stutters and stammers rupture time frames; conceptually, they do similar work halting the fluency and fluidity of histories premised on personal and collective identities, and institutional developments. Following Michel Foucault's earliest outlines of biopower and the biopolitical production of manageable populations, I argue that the modern science and therapeutics of dysfluent speech emerged in the nineteenth century through "the controlled insertion of bodies in the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes".[1] Put simply, fluency in voice became foundational to modern regimentation and training in speech and communication. In recent years, scholars such as Josephine Hoegaerts and Riley McGuire have begun to examine the material histories of stuttered or stammered speech, each positing that the "science" of speech disorders emerging in the nineteenth century was implicated in powerful cultural narratives of fluency's privilege and prestige.[2] At the core of the explosion of curative and therapeutic techniques in early elocutionary and medical approaches to stuttered speech persisted a productive fantasy of a lost "natural" voice that could paradoxically be rediscovered through biopolitical instrumentation. The fantasy of this lost voice – a voice that experts believed existed elsewhere in space and time than the "civilized" nation states of the modern West – functioned biopolitically as an impossible "normal" that nevertheless became the goal of speech training, management, and production.

As a supplement to emerging critical scholarship on stuttering and stammering, my aim here is to introduce an historical dimension to current scholarship concerning social or political/relational models of dysfluency, not so much to counter hegemonic medical models of speech and voice but to demonstrate how deeply implicated the science of speech and voice is in Eurocentric, eugenic, and

1 Foucault, 1990, 141.

2 See Hoegaerts, 2020, 129–146; McGuire, 2020, 6–9.

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fundamentally racist narratives of a “natural” vocality. More specifically, I examine a throwaway statement about stuttered speech that appeared in the appendix of a strange book that ran through numerous editions beginning in the early 1860s. I am referring to the American ethnographer, painter, and exhibitionist George Catlin’s *Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life*, which first appeared in London in 1862 as *The Breath of Life*, a hand-written (on stone) “manu-graph” reminiscent of self-published treatises and manifestos in our own times. *The Breath of Life* received harsh criticism and mockery by the periodical press in Britain and the United States. Its unabashed disorganization and promotion of a simplistic panacea for the maladies of modern life echoed the quackery of British and American elocutionists throughout the century who marketed their own quick-fix remedies to stuttered or stammered speech. Under the new title of *Shut Your Mouth,* the book went through numerous editions in the following decades.[3] In all iterations of the book, Catlin recounts his ethnographic experiences among Indigenous populations of the Americas and argues that virtually every ailment or illness of Western “civilization” could be alleviated by following Indigenous practices of ensuring the mouths of young infants remain closed during breastfeeding, sleeping, and breathing. In the appendix to later editions, Catlin contrasts the open-mouthed breathing and sleeping habits of “civilized” nations in the West to the “natural” breathing, sleeping, and articulatory habits – the closed mouths – of Indigenous peoples. Referencing stuttered speech in particular, Catlin writes, “I have never (to my knowledge) met or even could hear of, a stuttering Indian. Their lips and teeth are habitually, firmly closed; their articulation prompt, and their words clearly spoken”.[4] This passing reference to stuttering echoes a vast network of elocutionary and medical theories in the early nineteenth century about the etiology, symptomatology, and therapeutics of speech disorders, the most significant being that stuttering is the result of either improper breathing or glottal control or a “loss” of a natural habit of speech that could only be rediscovered through extensive retraining of vocal coordination. Catlin’s ethnographic belief was also by no means innovative, as numerous speech experts in the 1850s and 1860s had already begun to debate the existence of speech dysfluencies in populations worldwide, and especially Africa and Asia.[5] Unlike his contemporaries, however, Catlin posited North American Indigenous vocal and breathing habits as a panacea for the modern world’s troubles with speech, voice, and general health.

3 The text was rightly criticized in the periodical press. An anonymous short review in *Vanity Fair* even referred to Catlin’s “board-bound book” as one by which “more people are bound to be bored than any other of the season”. See “Our Book Review,” 1861, 216.

4 Catlin, 1873, 98.

5 See especially Hunt, 1870, 349–355.

Much has been written about Catlin's place in Western ethnographies of Indigenous populations.[6] Catlin's assumptions about the uncorrupted "natural" habits of speech in Indigenous populations contributes to long-standing Western romanticized – and thoroughly racist – accounts of the noble savage. Joshua J. Masters refers to Catlin as the "self-proclaimed historian of 'uncontaminated' American Indian tribes".[7] As Masters writes, Catlin's aspirations during his extensive travels were "marked by a transcendental desire to regain an imminent connection to nature: to be released from the life of the rationalizing white mind into the life of the idealized, immaculate Indian body".[8] Masters is but one of numerous scholars in the last few decades to interrogate Catlin's status as one of the foremost amateur settler ethnographers of Indigenous peoples. As Stephanie Pratt argues, Catlin's exhibitions of his "Indian Gallery" throughout Europe in the 1840s perpetuated the profoundly damaging myth of the disappearing Native.[9] Similarly, Nilak Datta examines the "micro-politics" of Catlin's touring exhibitions, in which his gallery of artworks became a backdrop to his employment of live performers. Datta writes further that Catlin's publications and exhibitions, especially of the Plains Indigenous peoples of the United States, emphasized "their 'pristine purity' now being sullied by contact with 'civilization'".[10] At the heart of Catlin's vast career as a traveler, writer, painter, curator, and exhibitionist was a sustained preoccupation with memorializing the lives, experiences, and customs of peoples that his readers and audiences perceived were on the verge of extinction.

In the extensive body of scholarship on Catlin's major exhibitions and publications, *Shut Your Mouth* remains a minor work, a rambling, dislodged, albeit sustained plea for the rediscovery of a lost "natural" habit of breathing that he believed remained pristine and uncorrupted in Indigenous breathing and speaking habits. There is something more at work – something more troubling and complicated – in Catlin's passing statement about stuttered speech in *Shut Your Mouth* than a perpetuation of racist theories of Indigenous extinction or romantic beliefs about the "uncontaminated" speech of Indigenous populations, especially considering the book's influence in British medical and elocutionary communities of the 1870s and 1880s. Catlin's theory of the uncorrupted speech of Indigenous populations both perpetuated a prominent causal theory of stuttered speech in early

6 For more critical scholarship about Catlin's ethnographies of North American Indigenous populations, see Crapanzano, 1986.

7 Masters, 2005, 64.

8 Masters, 2005, 65.

9 Pratt, 2013, 277.

10 Datta, 2018, 315.

elocutionary theories by such self-professed "experts" as John Thelwall, Henry McCormac, and Neil Arnott. In the "Introductory Essay" to *Illustrations of English Rhythmus* (1812), Thelwall argues that stammering often occurs because of a lack of "proper attention to the rhythmus" of the English language.[11] Thelwall writes further "that our native English is frequently both spoken and read unrhythmically, and sometimes written, also, without proper attention to the rhythmus [. . .] there can be no doubt; and therefore it is – that we have so much hesitation and stammering, harshness and incoherence".[12] Such early-century elocutionary beliefs that stuttering and stammering were caused by a loss of "proper" rhythm and an acquisition of bad habits of speech were by no means confined to elocutionists. Medical experts beginning in the 1840s also identified the cause of stuttered speech in a "lost" and a "natural" voice that required rehabituation through sustained and extensive retraining of speech. Catlin's title was so well-known in British medical communities that Dr. James Patterson Cassell borrowed it for his own paper on the etiology of ear-disease before the Glasgow Medico-Chirurgical Society in 1877, arguing that "shut mouths and open nostrils are conducive to good health".[13]

A simplistic and scientifically inaccurate panacea, Catlin's thesis that "civilized" societies need to reacquire a lost habit of "natural" breathing demonstrates how critically and historically complicated the most fundamental bodily processes become once we examine and interrogate them. Catlin's passing reference to stuttering – a disorder of speech that results in frequent disruptions, repetitions, and involuntary pauses in the flow of speech – reveals a broader cultural fantasy in "civilized" nations of the voice as a simple and manageable expressive medium. *Shut Your Mouth* is essentially a rambling, defensive, and repetitive book composed as a "communication" to readers for the purposes of "enjoyment and prolongation of their lives".[14] Catlin sets out to complicate the binary categories of "savage" and "civilized" through evidence from statistical accounts of life in London and Manchester that reveal a "lamentable fault" in the "sanitary economy of civilized life".[15] Catlin writes that the citizens of "civilized" nations are exceptions to the ideal "sanitary condition" required for the advancement of the human species, although "the Native races oftentimes present a near approach to it, [. . .] amongst whom, in their *primitive condition*, [. . .] diseases are seldom

11 Thelwall, 1812, viii. Thelwall's contributions to early nineteenth century elocutionary thought are well-established in literary study of British Romanticism. For more on Thelwall's contributions as an elocutionist, see Andrew McCann and Judith Thompson.

12 Thelwall, 1812, viii.

13 Cassells, 1877, 728.

14 Catlin, 1873, 1.

15 Catlin, 1873, 3.

heard of; and the almost unexceptional regularity, beauty, and soundness of their teeth last them to advanced life and old age".[16] Catlin writes further that

> In civilized communities, better sheltered, less exposed, and with the aid of the ablest professional skill, the sanitary condition of mankind [sic], with its variety, its complication, and fatality of diseases – its aches and pains, and mental and physical deformities, presents a more lamentable and mournful list, which plainly indicates the existence of some extraordinary latent cause, not as yet sufficiently appreciated, and which it is the sole object of this little work to expose.[17]

In order to prove the veracity of his theory, Catlin challenges "exaggerated accounts" of Indigenous populations ravaged by illness and excessive mortality, which lead "the world to believe that the actual premature waste of life caused by dissipations and vices introduced, with the accompanying changes in the modes of living in such districts, were the proper statistics of those people".[18] Relying on his own ethnographic observations, Catlin counters prevailing assumptions of premature mortality rates among Indigenous peoples with the double claim that "the Native Races [. . .] are a healthier people [. . .] than any Civilized Race in existence" and what evidence there is of illness and disease such as Small-pox is a direct result of colonial encounters and conflicts.[19] Such an argument sets the parameters for a lengthy and repetitive defense of Indigenous health, and in particular Indigenous practices of child-rearing.

In its historical context, Catlin's argument is complex because it desires two seemingly incommensurate outcomes: like much elocutionary thought in the nineteenth century, it posited the attainability of a "natural" habit of speech that exists *outside* the epistemologies of "civilized" cultures, but it also attempted to bring that outside within the purview of Western statistical projects. Despite its intentions to reconceptualize the lives of Indigenous populations through biopolitical data, *Shut Your Mouth* perpetuated an assumption about "natural" breathing and vocality that was foundational to the emerging medicalization of stuttered speech beginning roughly in the 1830s and 1840s. Catlin's address to the mothers of "civilized" nations, for example, echoes James Wright's theory in the 1830s and 1840s that healthy speech habits require diligent and vigilant role models in the form of parents and nurses. In *A Treatise on the Causes and Cure of Stuttering* (1835), Wright argues that "the qualifications of nurses, servants, and tutors, as far as fluency in the utterance of children is concerned, are patience, kindness, and gentleness,

16 Catlin, 1873, 3–4.
17 Catlin, 1873, 4.
18 Catlin, 1873, 6–7.
19 Catlin, 1873, 7.

combined with steadiness, firmness, and perseverance," as well as "distinctness of articulation, and slowness and deliberateness of speech".[20] Wright assumes that children learn fluency not "by rule, but by imitation," so exemplary models of healthy speech are essential as good pedagogy.[21]

Given Wright's status as one of the earliest British experts to develop a medical approach to stuttered speech, it is no coincidence that Catlin develops a similar theorization of speech modeling by positing the Indigenous Mother as the ultimate model of "healthy" breath and voice:

> When I have seen a poor Indian woman in the wilderness, lowering her infant from the breast, and pressing its lips together as it falls asleep in its cradle in the open air, and afterwards looked into the Indian multitude for the results of such a practice, I have said to myself, 'glorious education! such a Mother deserves to be the nurse of Emperors'. And when I have seen the *careful, tender mothers* in civilized life, covering the faces of their infants sleeping in overheated rooms, with their little mouths open and gasping for breath; and afterwards looked into the multitude, I have been struck with the evident evil and lasting results of this incipient stage of education; and have been more forcibly struck, and shocked, when I have looked into the Bills of Mortality, which I believe to be so frightfully swelled by the results of this habit, thus contracted, and practiced in contravention to Nature's design.[22]

Catlin believes that this fact of the open mouths of infants at rest – this "habit against instinct" – is the cause of many of civilization's ills.[23] The "smothered atmospheres" of infants in "civilized" nations require correction primarily by mothers.[24] Catlin's language is hyperbolic and bizarrely poetic, as evidenced by his claim that, while many individuals in "civilized" societies do adhere to the designs of Nature, many also develop "a second Nature" of bad habits.[25] These individuals breathe through constantly open mouths "while the nasal ducts, being vacated, like vacated roads that grow up to grass and weeds, become the seat of Polypus and other diseases".[26] For Catlin, the mother's tender affections toward an infant emerge as the "latent cause" of poor breathing habits in "civilized" societies.[27]

Catlin returns to this belief in his Appendix when he addresses the prevalence of stuttered speech in the cramped, stuffed urban environments of cities such as London. "Affectionate and doting mother," he writes, "look at and observe

20 Wright, 1835, 26.
21 Wright, 1835, 26.
22 Catlin, 1873, 18.
23 Catlin, 1873, 19.
24 Catlin, 1873, 19.
25 Catlin, 1873, 46.
26 Catlin, 1873, 46–47.
27 Catlin, 1873, 4.

the connection of the two, – see what fondness and kindness, without discretion, have done, – behold the twig that you bent and the tree that you have made".[28] Catlin's correlation between "civilization" and speech dysfluencies was common to many elocutionists, doctors, and scientists of stuttered speech. Catlin writes that, "like most of the diseases and deformities of mankind [sic], [stuttering] is undoubtedly the result of habit, and what habit so likely to produce it as the one condemned in this little book, of allowing the under jaw to fall, and to be carried in a hanging position, to be raised by a jerk (instead of being lowered) in the effort to speak".[29] Catlin was no expert on elocution or the science of speech dysfluencies, but his panacea emerged within a vast network of similar quick-fix therapeutics, such as always ensuring the lungs have a full supply of air before speaking, always ensuring that the glottis remains open while speaking, and speaking to the consistent beat of a metronome or baton.[30]

If *Shut Your Mouth* is such a ridiculous and reductionist book, why dwell upon it in this chapter, and what is its use for historical and critical examinations of speech, voice, and orality? For starters, it anticipates a foundational debate among American experts on stuttered speech in the twentieth century at the heyday of the first institutionalization of the field we now commonly refer to as speech-language pathology (SLP) or speech-language therapy about the presence of stuttered speech in North American Indigenous populations. Joshua St. Pierre and Charis St. Pierre argue that the foundation of SLP in the early twentieth century aligned with an increasing encroachment of biopolitical regimentation of bodies and voices in modern life. "Speech correction," they write, "is accordingly best conceived not as a discrete institution, but as an overlapping set of practices that both free the circulation of speech within society and integrate disabled speakers into the productive flows of communication".[31] Such overlapping practices include colonial knowledge production and the fantasies of voice that sustain them. The famed American speech pathologist Wendell Johnson published essays in the 1940s and 1950s about the supposed absence of stuttered speech in American Indigenous populations, in response to anthropological accounts reported by Adelaide Bullen in 1945.[32] Johnson argued in particular that the Bannock and

28 Catlin, 1873, 96.

29 Catlin, 1873, 97.

30 Such common elocutionary techniques for "curing" stuttered speech are present in treatises by McCormac, Arnott, and others. For a Victorian medical repost to such quack cures, see Monro, 1850, 1–20.

31 St. Pierre and St. Pierre, 2018, 152.

32 Textbook histories often refer to anthropological debates about the frequency of stuttering in Indigenous populations. For example, see Bloodstein, Ratner, and Brundage, 2021, 78–79.

Shoshana communities of the Northern Great Basin did not have a word in their language for stuttering, thus supposedly proving his theory that Indigenous communities did not stutter. Similarly, Johnson's student John C. Snidecor failed to find "one pure-blooded Indian who stuttered" in his own research.[33] Researchers and ethnographers such as Bullen, Johnson, and Snidecor postulated that stuttering was rare or absent in Indigenous communities because of what they saw as a lack of parental restrictions placed upon children, thus confirming Johnson's foundational diagnosogenic theory that parental attitudes play a significant role in the frequency of stuttering among children.[34]

Anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s eventually disproved such claims through evidence of stuttered speech in American Indigenous communities, especially among the Bannock and Shoshana and the Kwakiutl, Nootka, and Salish of the Pacific Northwest of the United States and Canada.[35] Curiously, evidence of stuttered speech in Indigenous populations, it seems, had always been known, as evidenced by American linguist Edward Sapir's research for the Geological Survey of Canada about 'abnormalities' in Nootka speech in the early twentieth century, and even further back in time in the work of British expert on stuttering James Hunt. Once American anthropologists and SLPs begrudgingly acknowledged instances of stuttered speech in Indigenous populations, Joseph L. Stewart's study *The Problem of Stuttering in Certain North American Indian Societies* (1960) attempted to address the broader anthropological and linguistic problem of stuttering across cultures. Stuart emphasizes "the need for adequate bases of comparison between cultures with respect to such complex behavior as that associated with child development and training".[36] Ann Packman and Joseph S. Attanasio's historical overview of such causal theories of stuttering link Sapir's training in the cultural relativism of Franz Boas and the development of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic determinism to Johnson's foundational theory that stuttering emerges in part through parental (and communal) diagnosis.[37]

As a disability studies scholar, I see explicit correspondences between speech-language therapy and colonialist and eugenic discourses concerning the management, regulation, and production of "normal" bodies and voices. While Oliver and

33 Snidecor, 1947, 493.

34 For more on Johnson's diagnosogenic theory of cause, see Shell, 2005, 12–14.

35 Catlin visited these latter regions of the United States and Canada in the 1850s and documented his experiences. Madonna L. Moss examines Catlin's own travels among the Tlinget, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples of the Pacific Northwest, and particularly his observations about labrets (distinctive lip ornaments) adorned by women. See Moss, 1999.

36 Stewart, 1960, 10.

37 Packman and Attanasio, 2017, 49.

Barnes argue that Edwin Lemert's study of stuttering in Pacific Northwest Indigenous populations in the early 1950s was in part foundational to the emergence of Disability Studies because it concluded that social controls and conditions are a main causal factor in "deviant" behavior, this kind of historical research still emphasizes institutional histories over the lived experiences of people who stutter.[38] Even Bloodstein, Ratner, and Brundage suggest in their latest edition of *A Handbook of Stuttering* (2021) that the "entire enterprise" of early debates about the evidence of Indigenous stuttering is "rather difficult to interpret".[39] What interests me is a second, albeit related, layer of significance pertaining to Catlin's *Shut Your Mouth* for histories of speech and voice, namely the widespread cultural promotion of simple physiological theories of cause in treatises on speech dysfluencies in the century prior to the "official" foundation of speech-language therapy. In particular, Catlin's panacea does not emerge *ex nihilo*; it is not simply a product of generalized and sporadic "quackery" in nineteenth-century thought about dysfluent speech. Rather, it reflects a broader desire in nineteenth-century elocutionary and medical theories of speech and voice to rediscover "natural" breathing or speaking, a cultural desire that is still very much with us in our own times, as evidenced by James Nestor's recent bestseller *Breath: The Science of a Lost Art* (2020). Nestor even refers to Catlin as an "adventurous artist and researcher" who essentially introduced Western populations to the "glories of nasal breathing".[40] Nestor's retelling of Catlin's ethnographic travels romanticizes this discovery of the health benefits of nasal breathing and positions him as both "chronicler" and "practitioner" of nasal breathing.[41]

We do not know what motivated Catlin to add the Appendix to later editions of *Shut Your Mouth*, but its inclusion coincided with the popularity of Hunt's editions of *Stammering and Stuttering: Their Nature and Treatment* in the 1860s.[42] In the modern age, the only way to return a "natural" vocality that people who stutter have somehow lost is to "obey" the instrumental logic of Nature's laws. The celebrated Victorian intellectual Charles Kingsley summarized Hunt's system of cure, which he learned from his father Thomas Hunt, most concisely in a review essay for *Fraser's Magazine*, arguing that stammering is the "loss of a habit (always unconscious) of articulation." Moreover, Kingsley writes, the secret of the Hunt system

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38 Oliver and Barnes, 2012, 43–45.

39 Bloodstein, Ratner, and Brundage, 2021, 79.

40 Bloodstein, Ratner, and Brundage, 2021, 46.

41 Bloodstein, Ratner, and Brundage, 2021, 48.

42 Well-known public figures who stuttered such as Lewis Carroll and Charles Kingsley were clients of Hunt's celebrated establishment at Ore House in Hastings. For more on this see Martin, 2022.

is "to teach the patient to speak consciously, as other men spoke unconsciously".[43] The binary collapses. Nature itself becomes instrumental and essentially biopolitical. Neither Hunt nor Kingsley cite Catlin's ethnographic writing, unlike some of Hunt's contemporaries in elocution and speech training. Yet the connections between Hunt and Catlin are significant, given their respective contributions to prominent debates about whether or not "savage" populations stutter or stammer. Hunt was, even by Victorian standards, a virulent racist. As President of the London Anthropological Society in the 1860s, Hunt advanced the theory of polygenesis in the study of race and racial difference.[44] Moreover, the final edition of *Stammering and Stuttering* concludes with a section entitled "stuttering among savages," in which Hunt retracts reluctantly claims he had made in earlier editions of his book that there is no evidence of stuttered or stammered speech in "savage" populations. Hunt performs a curious maneuver by arguing that new-found anecdotal evidence of disease and illness (including stuttered speech) in the West Coast of Africa does not actually refute his earlier beliefs that "uncivilized" nations do not stutter. Hunt concludes *Stammering and Stuttering* by arguing that ethnographic evidence of stuttering and general illness in Sierra Leone are not properly medical evidence of stuttering or stammering, but rather of performative imitation or mimicry of the fashionable dysfluent voices of European colonizers.[45] This strange line of reasoning anticipates theories of mimicry and hybridity in postcolonial criticism,[46] but it also complicates Hunt's most foundational belief in *Stammering and Stuttering* that dysfluent speech is often caused by a susceptible child's "imitative propensity" to mimic or mock the speech of other people who stutter. For children of "civilized" nations, poor habits of speech occur through a tendency to imitate the bad habits of speech of other stutterers or stammerers; for African populations, such poor habits are merely "affected" and "*fashionable*".[47] Like Catlin, Hunt attempts in the conclusion of his book to maintain the fantasy that the "uncivilized" do not stutter in any medical or diagnosable sense, despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary. Their respective theories of a lost "natural" habit of speech require an *elsewhere* in which that missing factor can be rediscovered.

British elocutionists and medical experts on speech and voice cited Catlin's observations as evidence for their own still-emerging claims about the etiology and treatment of stuttered speech. Despite interventions by medical experts and scientists of vocal production, elocutionary theories of breath and glottal control proved

43 Kingsley, 1859, 9.
44 See Challis, 2013, 43; Harris, 2001, 93.
45 Hunt, 1870, 210.
46 See Bhabha, 1994, 121–131.
47 Hunt, 1870, 351.

resilient even into the early twentieth century, as evidenced by the rise of the Delsarte method and related theories of vocal gymnastics in the United States. In Lecture IV of *Kings College Lectures on Elocution*, which ran through numerous editions between the 1870s and 1890s, Charles Plumptre argues that "few persons out of the medical profession reflect on the enormous space which the lungs occupy in our frames, and how all-important their sound and healthy condition is to us".[48] Citing Catlin's theory, Plumptre posits a golden rule that speakers breath through their nostrils instead of the mouth at all times, whether in the context of public speaking or not. In another lecture, Plumptre refers again to Catlin's ethnographic claims, but this time through reference to Dr. Abbotts Smith's research into stuttered speech, which suggested that diagnoses of stuttered speech were on the rise especially in European urban environments. Plumptre writes elsewhere in his lectures that various dysfluencies and ailments of the voice are the result, fundamentally, of a disconnection from the "natural" wonders of the mechanism of the human body. Echoing Thelwall, Plumptre argues that "there is a *measure* in speech, marked out and defined by a regular succession of action and reaction in the organs of the voice, just as really and truly as there is in music." Like other automatic functions of the human body, such as the beating of the heart or the "ordinary" process of respiration, speech becomes "disturbed" when a new habit – a new time-frame – intercedes. Plumptre borrows from Catlin's beliefs, and indeed in the beliefs of many nineteenth-century elocutionists, when he argues fundamentally that "the Law of Nature enjoins regular time-keeping" and any violation of this law would be "offensive and strange," especially in cases of stuttering and stammering.[49]

The broader field of SLP and scientific research into cause and cure of stuttered speech today still have not completely surmounted the problems resulting from this assumption of a "normal" or "natural" vocality. What do we make of Catlin's claim about the absence of people who stutter in Indigenous populations if we approach it through the critical frameworks of Disability Studies and Indigenous Studies? Why does it matter whether or not Indigenous peoples stutter? Lavonna L. Lovern argues that Disability Studies has yet to fully examine "Indigenous paradigms involving human difference," and when the field does perform this kind of work, "Indigenous concerns have been limited to primarily Western interpretations of Indigenous cultures and issues".[50] At the core of Catlin's *Shut Your Mouth* remains a powerful romanticization of an absence of dysfluencies in Indigenous populations, one that

48 Plumptre, 1895, 25.
49 Plumptre, 1895, 233.
50 Lovern, 2017, 303–307.

remains in our own times, albeit in skewed form as a general desire to *rediscover* a supposed lost "natural" breath and embodiment. Catlin's praise of the closed mouths of Indigenous populations ultimately perpetuates what Jodi A. Byrd calls the "processes through which the Native self has been transformed into a blank Otherness that can be controlled and consumed".[51] In setting up Indigenous habits of the mouth as a panacea for the ailments of "civilization," Catlin contributed to one of the most deliberately violent fantasies of settler colonialism. In praising the wonderful mechanism of Indigenous vocal and breathing habits, Catlin naturalized "the European order as dominant in the land by imaginatively transforming the Native Other into an empty referent".[52] Empty referents can be colonized in the same way as "empty" or "pristine" lands.

By way of conclusion to this chapter, I turn to an argument by Marjorie Fee about Indigenous "cosmopolitics" and English literacy in the Pacific Northwest of Canada and the United States. Expanding upon Sneja Gunew's argument that ethical decolonization requires that Western nations "put the world views [. . .] of the excluded at the center",[53] Fee writes that as settlers arrived in the Pacific Northwest with their insistence on teaching Indigenous communities the English language, the Coast Salish peoples adapted a story genre called the "Bungling Host" to their experiences with settlers' monomaniacal beliefs in the powers of English literacy. As Fee observes, Bungling Host stories "feature arrogant attempts by Coyote, or further north, Raven, to outdo the hospitality of various other animal-people, attempts that invariably lead to the humiliation of the boastful Bungler".[54] As stories that introduced comic relief "without direct disrespect", Bungling Host stories mocked attempts to make, in the words of the Salish peoples, "all the crooked ways straight".[55] While Fee's scholarship does not refer specifically to settler concerns about stuttered speech among Indigenous populations, such mockery of settler beliefs concerning language, voice, and speech introduce a possibility of rethinking the fundamental fantasies of fluent and homogenized communication that inform settler cultures and their communicative industries. Cultural and material histories of stuttered speech introduce their own kind of Bungling Host stories about Eurocentric monomania for

51 Byrd, 2006, 87.

52 Byrd, 2006, 87.

53 qtd. in Fee, 2019, 580.

54 Fee, 2019, 583.

55 Quoted in Fee, 2019, 583. Both Fee and Gunew wrote their scholarship as faculty members of the University of British Columbia, which sits on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. On a personal note, I first came to identify as a person who stutters in a nearby spot in the world–in the traditional, ancestral, unceded, and shared lands of the Stó:lō people and of the Qwó:ltl'el, Leq'á:mel, Matheqwí, Sq'éwlets peoples, about an hour East of Vancouver.

compulsory fluency and desires to eradicate the nuisances, maladies, excrescences, stutters, stammers, and glitches that constantly corrupt our speech. Such stories have remarkable potential to *unsettle* long-standing desires in the West for standardization in the science of fluency. Byrd writes in the Preface to *The Transit of Empire* that one of the foundational premises of Indigenous studies is that place matters, and that "in a world growing increasingly enamored with faster, flatter, *smooth*, where positionality doesn't matter so much as how it is that we travel there, indigeneity matters".[56] Byrd writes of the arrivals and transits of peoples across colonial spaces and argues that "our contemporary challenge is to theorize alternative methodologies to address the problems imperialism continues to create".[57] Historical and critical approaches to stuttered speech have the potential to temporalize what Byrd calls the "cacophonies of colonialism".[58] Catlin's decision to romanticize Indigenous habits of speech and breath removed Indigenous peoples from the transits of Empire, and thus from these cacophonies that Byrd and other Indigenous scholars and writers see as essential to the possibilities of both "rejuvenation and destruction" in a radical transformation of the world.[59] Rather than solely a malady or ailment of "civilized" populations, the stutter has the potential – especially in Indigenous cosmologies and phenomenologies – to perform the work of critically encountering settler fantasies of straight-talk or fluent/rational/homogenous communication. Like the story of the Bungling Host, the cacophonies of colonialism challenge the biopolitical production of disciplined and manageable speech and voice. Such cacophonies, bungles, and crooked modes of speech and voice also remind us that there is nothing "ordinary" that comes from our mouths.

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56 Byrd, 2011, xiii.

57 Byrd, 2011, xxvi.

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Peter J. Weise

Reading Olaudah Aloud: Elocution, the Commodity-Form, and Transverse Culture

Olaudah Equiano went on multiple book tours in the 1790s to promote his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789). The events seem to have had a theatrical air, often announced in local newspapers with quotations of Shakespeare to suggest that Equiano would arrive as an Othello with a "round unvarnished tale". John Bugg argues that Equiano was teaching his "reader how to receive his voice" at a time when Black people's testimony did not count in the transatlantic legal system and when their voices, more generally, were silenced through other forms of brutality. Bugg's larger argument is that over the course of these tours Equiano performed a political identity that could consolidate the interests of the anti-slavery movement and working-class groups in cities in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[1]

Even if we can safely assume that Equiano was talking with others, the records of the book tours indicate a general interest in Equiano's civilized performances without remarks about the voice. For evidence of Equiano's interest in the voice, we need to turn to his autobiography where he defines his name "Olaudah" as a "loud voice", and where his preface declares his intention to influence the oral Parliamentary debates over abolition.[2] A declamation in Parliament would be another embodied place for a performance of the autobiography, a possibility that Jesse M. Molesworth has entertained. Molesworth argues that Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* should be read as a speech-act, bringing about the form of speech that it seeks to perform rather than describing a life. It calls to be heard by its white readers as a form of legal testimony. Equiano wants his voice to count in the court of law, not simply use the English language in the form of an autobiography to construct a legitimate form of subjecthood in white culture.[3]

Bugg's and Molesworth's interpretations suggest a relatively stable vocal production. The legal system excludes Black voices and Equiano intervenes to perform – or

1 Bugg, 2006, 1436, 1429.

2 Equiano, 2004, 56. All quotations are from this edition, unless otherwise indicated. My argument focuses on how to voice British editions of *The Interesting Narrative* from 1789 to 1794 since the American edition of 1791 removed the author's address to British Parliament, an important piece of evidence in my analysis.

3 Molesworth, 2006, 124.

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call on a white audience to perform – an inclusion of Black voices. White and Black voices are still distinct, except a Black voice is performed as having the same legal status as a white one. In this essay, I would like to argue that *The Interesting Narrative* addresses the white voice's condition of possibility as the exclusion of Black voices and further that it troubles clear distinctions between English and Igbo oratories and phonemes. At least two pronouncements of the syllables "Olaudah" are possible, one by the white legislators who are to be influenced by this autobiography, the other by Olaudah Equiano whose first language was probably Igbo.[4] Molesworth reads "the very pronouncement of the name 'Olaudah'" as the beginning of a performative narrative logic,[5] but I am suggesting that we consider how saying Olaudah troubles the relationship between English and African languages, as well as the elocution of the white legislators. What happens to English when it includes the name Olaudah? What happens to Olaudah when written and said aloud in English? What would it have sounded like to say aloud the phonemic echo between O*laud*ah and *loud*? Besides the uncertainty over how to pronounce Olaudah Equiano, the passages of the *Interesting Narrative* with his name contain multiple references to Judeo-Christian, English, and Yoruba oratorical practices that would further complicate any voicing. These various instances of uncertainty raise problems for the eighteenth-century theories of sympathy and the elocutionary principles that informed how white legislators would have voiced, or failed to voice, his names.[6]

Another problem is how the legislators could think of their right to voice. Equiano's primary argument for white legislators to speak on his behalf invokes "God" as a universal figure to mediate their relationship.[7] But this raises questions about how to read the transfer of the voice through the term "God", a divine exchange, that enables large groups, the English, Equiano, and his African "countrymen" to be represented in the British Parliament.[8] I shall try to address how the transfers, exchanges, and translations between terms and voices are haunted by the commodity-form, a universal form of equivalence, that reduces people to their exchange values. The conclusion will reflect on how a mediation of languages and the voice with the commodity-form produces effects, as Édouard

4 It has been debated whether Equiano's description of his early family life in Africa is fictional, but even if it were, it would not erase the effects of including Igbo terms in a predominantly English text. For the debate over Equiano's birthplace, see Carretta, 1999, 96–105; and Lovejoy, 2006, 31–47.

5 Molesworth, 2006, 124.

6 For a bibliography of interpretations of the names of Olaudah Equiano and Gustavus Vassa, see Jaros, 2013, 18n8.

7 Equiano, 2004, 42.

8 Equiano, 2004, 42.

Glissant and later Ian Baucom have suggested, with "transvers[e]" possibilities for modern politics, culture, and solidarity.[9]

Declaiming Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African

Equiano's Preface for *The Interesting Narrative* declares the book's purpose to influence the oral deliberations of the "Lords and Gentlemen" of the British Parliament.[10] He writes that the autobiography is meant "to excite in your august assemblies a sense of compassion for the miseries which the Slave-Trade has entailed on my unfortunate countrymen".[11] The Preface's conclusion calls on the legislators to feel for Africans during debates over slavery: "May the God of heaven inspire your hearts with peculiar benevolence on that important day when the question of Abolition is to be discussed".[12] This language of "compassion", "benevolence", "inspire your hearts", and oral "discuss[ions]" situates the Preface in the eighteenth-century elocutionary movement, a loose grouping of rhetoricians who argue that the voice has a unique capacity to elicit an audience's sympathy. Thomas Sheridan, a prominent writer in this movement, argues that it is only with the "living voice", not "the dead letter", that one can make an audience "vibrate" together.[13] He claims that the "Disorders of Great Britain" can be resolved by reforming British education around oratory in order to produce better Parliamentary representatives.[14]

The elocutionary movement has been interpreted as a theory of media and a nationalist project. Andrew Elfenbein explains that eighteenth-century elocution can be understood as "a technology of transmission, an interface for translating one medium (print) into another (voice) for the benefit of an audience".[15] Peter De Bolla argues that this transmission is at times prescriptive, usually in regard to pronunciation; it is a form of "legislation" and "control" to produce British subjects.[16] The rhetoric and vocal medium of the elocutionary movement seeks to

9 Baucom, 2005, 309–11; Glissant, 1999, 67.
10 Equiano, 2004, 41.
11 Equiano, 2004, 41–42.
12 Equiano, 2004, 42.
13 Sheridan, 1764, 9, 229.
14 Sheridan, 1756, xxi, xxiv, 18, 22–23, 26–27, 39, 63, 68.
15 Elfenbein, 2009, 113.
16 De Bolla, 1989, 168.

produce a sympathy that binds together British subjects, by excluding some subjects, especially those with perceived aberrations of proper pronunciation and declamation, such as the Scots, Irish, and Welsh – and, most importantly for my analysis, Africans.[17] Following Lynn Festa's method, I treat "sympathy" in this context as the belief in the consolidation of a group of people around a shared identity that excludes an object, and I am interested in the rhetoric and voice that are meant to produce such a sympathy.[18]

Sheridan's origin myth for European languages draws a line between ancient Greece and Africa. Sheridan writes, "we find that the [ancient] Greeks had five vowels, when the Africans were contented with three; and each of these five vowels had two quantities, long and short, whilst those of barbarous nations were always long".[19] Sheridan, therefore, argues for a constitutive tension between Greece and Africa in any use of a European language. One hears more variety, at any time, among the languages whose 'origin' had five-vowel/short-long-accent Greek rather than the three-vowel/long-accent African languages. Even though Sheridan's theory is a fantasy, it reveals how an elocutionist comes to know European languages as different from African languages. To hear these languages as superior or inferior is to hear neither one on its own terms, but always to put them in play with each other. Within such a system of elocution, sympathy must always exclude the African and the multilingual as a means to consolidate, not only the perception of a bond with someone, but to hear one language at all.[20] Sheridan's construction of an elocutionary standard within the boundaries of England, Europe, and implicitly whiteness makes it difficult to hear sympathetically Olaudah as the name of the author and as an Igbo term.

Equiano's offer of his own autobiography as the text to inspire declamation troubles the elocutionary project. How was a white male legislator to voice the text of a Black man, especially a Black man who called himself "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African"? How was such a legislator to live up to the requirement as set by John Mason in his *Essay on Elocution* (1748)? Mason writes, "A good Pronunciation *in reading*, is the Art of managing and governing the Voice so as to express the full Sense and Spirit of your Author".[21] The legislator would need to interpret, or perhaps somehow occupy, the "Sense and Spirit" of Equiano in order to read the autobiography aloud. This is not the same problem as in

17 Sheridan, 1756, 256.
18 Festa, 2006, 3.
19 Sheridan, 1764, 175.
20 On the problem of the multilingual and slavery in the eighteenth century, see DeWispelare, 2017.
21 Mason, 1748, 19.

Festa's "sentimental ventriloquism", which refers to a white person's adoption of the "I" of the slave, as in William Cowper's "The Negro's Complaint." Cowper's poem was set to common ballad music to make it easier for people to sing it in the streets during abolitionist protests. Moreover, Festa argues that the common sentimental performance in the Parliamentary debates over abolition was a masculine affirmation of a metropolitan identity that could feel for others, but also set a limit on such feelings, in order to act to end the miseries of slavery.[22] In both cases, such oral performances do not address the moment when hearing or voicing becomes unclear as one encounters "Olaudah Equiano", moving beyond an established aesthetic and linguistic framework.

The front matter of *The Interesting Narrative* repeatedly calls on its readers to reflect on the elocutionary aesthetics of the Parliamentary debates since the names – Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa – are written on the title page, below the visual representation of the author, and as the signature at the end of the prefatory address to British Parliament. Equiano therefore breaks with the precedent set by James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw whose narrative, which he dictated to an amanuensis, uses only James Albert after the title page.[23] Each iteration of the names offers a choice between what Sheridan calls the African and the European, yet a choice modified three times by various oratorical practices. While critics often read the front matter as a sign of the author's literacy, it also refers to oratory from the Old and New Testaments, in addition to its reliance on practices of the elocutionary movement. The title page cites Isaiah 12:2, 4: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. / And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doing among the people".[24] A calling out of a singular "name" that is multiple names: "God", "Lord Jehovah", and "the Lord". This Old Testament oratorical practice suggests the possibility of the use of many names for a powerful being, one perhaps performed by the author. The author's African names are beginning to echo louder within a form of English that cannot be limited to the Eurocentric oratories, such as by the common figures of Whitefield and Cicero.[25]

The citation of the New Testament in the front matter builds on this use of one name for many names. One name enables the use of many languages during

22 Festa, 2006, 13, 162, 187–201.

23 Albert, 1775?.

24 Equiano, 2004, 41.

25 Potkay, 2001, 605–7. The front matter of Equiano's autobiography questions any stability or consistency in the linguistic sounds and meanings that would inform what Potkay calls Equiano's "Christian," "oratorical," and "colonial" world (Potkay, 2001, 602). See also Potkay, 1994, 677–92.

Pentecost. The frontispiece (Fig. 1) shows Equiano holding a Bible that is open to Acts 4:12.[26] This verse refers to Peter's response to the Sanhedrin's question of whose name has empowered him to speak in many languages. Peter says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved".[27] The image of the author represents his body as an index to this practice of speaking in tongues that is inspired by one name and to a dialogue where Peter responds to a temporal authority by invoking what he claims to be a higher spiritual authority.

While Sheridan hears in European oratory an ancient Greek origin that excludes Africa, Peter proposes in ancient Greek – but now in the English of the King James Bible – one name that inspires speaking in multiple languages to convert increasing numbers of people. When Equiano invokes God as the inspiration for the Parliamentarians to speak out against the slave trade, he contrasts the phrasing "God of heaven" with the phrase from Acts 4:12: "name under heaven".[28] The single name of "God" is meant to overcome the difficulty, the uncertainty, the slowness of a translation between languages, between all the names under heaven. Within the logic of the elocutionary movement, this would also mean overcoming the impossibility of sympathy between different languages, between Olaudah Equiano and Gustavus Vassa, between however we read these alternative names and the English of the Parliamentarians. Yet even within this revised logic, the Englishness of the term "God" is both retained and erased to function as a universal term of mediation.

Even if the name "God" circulates in this passage as a universal term for translation and sympathy, the names "under heaven" are still figured within hierarchies of significance. The author's own names may have an unequal status, perhaps explaining why Gustavus Vassa is surrounded by an instance of an African language and the term "African". This would strengthen the irony in the figuration of the British "nation which [. . .] has exalted the dignity of human nature" and created the "horrors of the slave trade".[29] The author's alternative names perform this irony, a movement between the European and the African, resisting placing Equiano/Vassa as author either fully within or outside the national assembly. This interpretation is comparable to Peter Jaros's reading of the two names as "figures that can lend person and voice to African diasporic subjects within the British Atlantic world".[30] The basis for voicing "the full Sense and Spirit of your Author" is neither entirely British

26 Equiano, 2004, 41.
27 Authorized King James Version.
28 Equiano, 2004, 42.
29 Equiano, 2004, 41–42.
30 Jaros, 2013, 17.

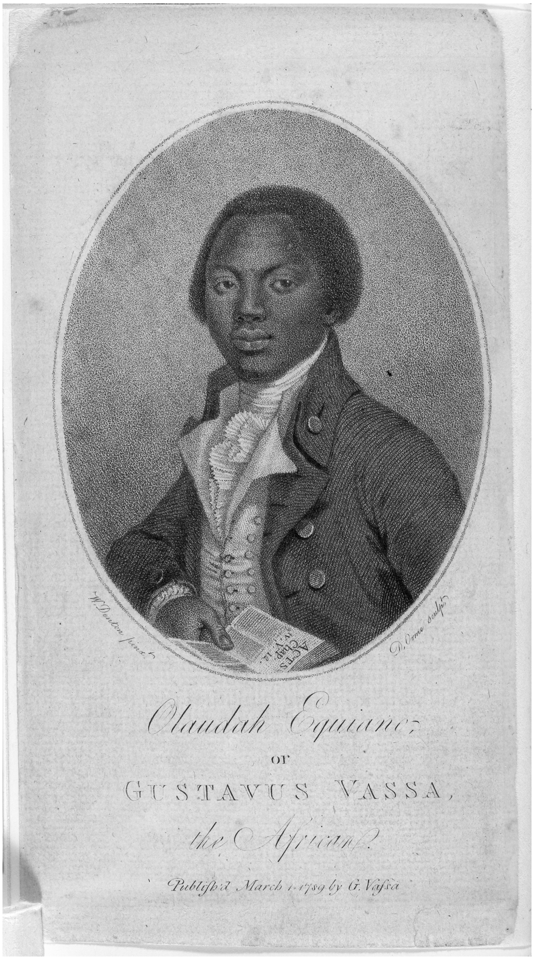

Fig. 1: Frontispiece of *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (London, 1789). Courtesy of the British Library.

nor African, enabling a sympathy between the British Parliamentarians and the African "countrymen" on whose behalf Equiano writes. The "Spirit" of the Author, in this sense, is organized around the conjunction "or" between his names, vying with the spirit of God as the "inspir[ation]" to move between terms and enable sympathy.

The Commodity-Form and Yoruba "Vicissitude" in Equiano's Elocution

The dominance of English becomes a place supposed to offer universal exchanges, a place with a "God"-like "or." A spirit, God, moves between equitable names and bodies and collects them into a group. To what extent, then, even against what Equiano perhaps desires, does this spirit of sympathy suggest the logic of the commodity-form? By "commodity-form", I mean to refer to a universal form of equivalence, a quantifiable abstraction that mediates the relationship between incommensurable objects, between Olaudah Equiano and Gustavus Vassa, between an Englishman and Equiano's African "countrymen".[31] The commodity-form, in this reading, would leave its trace in the Preface through this logic of equivalence. Its effect would be carried over from slavery for the appearance of the author's two names, but now transformed into a productive force for political equality, as well as cultural productivity. This would not mean that Equiano would seek to associate "God" or "or" with the commodity-form. I am arguing that the logic of the commodity-form comes to circulate around and through these terms. One could be called the Judeo-Christianization of the commodity-form, the other a syntagma of its form. Festa's sentimental ventriloquism would still be active in such a reading, but there would be no outside from which to speak, no clear place beyond this logic of equivalence, blurring the idea of equality/equitability in economics, politics, and cultural production. Anyone who takes up the name of God for this voicing would become a part of the commodified chain in the very act of believing oneself beyond it, among the spirits, while uttering what is, in fact, a non-universal language, English.

Yet against this reading of a logic of equivalence would be Equiano's limit on such a rhetorical performance by the white legislators. This would be to return to the hierarchies and the incommensurable objects reduced by the invocation of the spirit of God. It is not clear that the white legislator and Equiano would hold the same status in the commodified chain. Equiano figures himself as a ventriloquist for *both* European and African names, but bars the legislators from a clear occupation of Olaudah Equiano's spirit, of the African "countrymen", leaving it to Olaudah Equiano to do that work of mediation. In other words, the phrase "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African" is not exchangeable with the names of the white legislators, even if commodification is a force that informs its appearance and even if the exchangeability of the African and the European appears as a possibility on the level of language. A person beyond the names, the "spirit", once again, now would bar the white legislator from occupying it.

31 Pietz, 1993, 146.

But now there would be two spirits: How does one know the difference between this "spirit" of the author beyond the language and the "spirit" of God that flows through the white legislators and the author? A "spirit" beyond property is similar to Festa's interpretation of Equiano's "written mastery of himself", where he moves beyond the status of an object to become a "person".[32] Yet "mastery" would return to a logic of possession, as if, once again, to be a person is to possess an object and to be an object is to be possessed. Another possibility is Srinivas Aravamudan's interpretation of Equiano's "transitive role", not to be confused with "subjecthood or lack".[33] Equiano performs a movement between names, between places of culture. The problem, in this case, is how to distinguish between the "transitive" and the commodity-form. Another possibility would be to respect, trust, give credit to a mediation between the European and the African beyond what the white legislator can know. This would politicize the commodity-form in the sense that it would remain as a force one would understand as a condition for the relationship between white and Black, between European and African, for the combined names of Equiano/Vassa, yet the white legislators would give credit to a mediation between the European and African beyond their knowledge, hearing the effect of the commodity-form in a textual form that calls for an end of its use on others. This would be a form of credit that would not seek a return in contrast with the credit used to seek a return on the enslavement of Africans.

The ambivalence in the use of the logic of exchange – free-flowing versus limited – is repeated in the ambivalence over the use of elocutionary typography to elicit specific forms of voicing in the Preface. A common practice among elocutionists is to use italics to alter a reader's vocalization of a text. Hugh Blair, for example, comments that "Italick characters" mark vocal emphasis, or "a stronger and fuller sound of voice, by which we distinguish the accented syllable of some word, on which we design to lay particular stress, and to show how it affects the rest of the sentence".[34] Equiano's preface to British Parliament italicizes two phrases – a reference to himself and to abolitionism:

> I am sensible I ought to entreat your pardon for addressing to you a work so wholly devoid of literary merit; but, as the production of an unlettered African, who is actuated by the hope of becoming an instrument towards the relief of his suffering countrymen, I trust that *such a man*, pleading in *such a cause*, will be acquitted of boldness and presumption.[35]

32 Festa, 2006, 143.

33 Aravamudan, 1999, 271.

34 Blair, 1783, 1:353, 2:210.

35 Equiano, 2004, 42.

Why does it matter that "such a man" elicits a reader to use a louder voice rather than only being marked as emphasized? It seems to matter because the white legislator follows a Black man's cue on how to use his voice. Using the very elocutionary techniques that exclude Africans, Olaudah Equiano is beginning to replace the elocutionary leaders such as Sheridan to dictate how to pronounce his text.

This play with the white reader is in contrast with the way that both proslavery and abolitionist writers, such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Clarkson, respectively, perceive Black writing and speech in English. Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) is well known as using an essentialist racist aesthetic for judging Black writing as "at the bottom of the column",[36] but, as far as I have been able to find, only Clarkson's *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1786) provides an eighteenth-century description of hearing a Black person reading aloud. Clarkson reports that white people taught the African-American poet Phillis Wheatley to "speak [English] and read it to the astonishment of those who heard her".[37] Such an "astonishment" at Wheatley's speech – spontaneous or from reading aloud – relies on a racist idea of a Black person, ratcheting up the surprise as the white person plays the idea of bad Black speech against the perception of Wheatley's (white) performance, as if two Englishes are forming around whiteness and blackness.

Equiano's *such a man* works otherwise. Not only has the racialized power relationship begun to turn with Equiano's italicized suggestion for the white legislator's elocution, but Equiano's irony in the reference to himself as "such a man" reverberates with additional irony when adopted as one of the phrases to say louder by the white legislator. As others have noted, ironies abound in the autobiography.[38] Equiano's request for "pardon" is ironic since an argument from "such a man" in "such a cause" implies that the white legislators should ask his pardon for supporting the system of slavery. But who or what is "such a man"? The demonstrative adjective "such" empties the reference to himself of clear semantic content. The "Sense and Spirit of the author", then, would be an empty form of masculinity. This would be what the white legislator should say loudest. In this case, sentimental ventriloquism is still possible as a projection of ideas and feelings, but it also falls apart if one reads the emptiness of the demonstrative adjective. The white legislator is offered the possibility to say loudest a reference to

36 Jefferson, 1982, 140–41.

37 Clarkson, 1786, 172.

38 For an important example, see Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s interpretation of Equiano's autobiography as a "double-voiced" ironic text within the African-American literary tradition of "signifyin(g)" (Gates, 1988, 152–58). A longer essay could engage more fully with Gates's reading of the "Talking Book" and my focus on Equiano's production of a transverse oral effect.

another in a way that leaves open what that other is. Such a possibility still works within patriarchy. This is about a man referring to another man. And the emptiness within this masculinity may be what is left with the hollowing out of what was already the empty place holder of the white and Black subjects mediated by the commodity-form.

If the Preface's play with Olaudah Equiano and typography troubles eighteenth-century elocutionary sympathy's clear demarcation of Europe and Africa, unleashing a host of spirits moving along and away from the commodity-form, Equiano's narrative about his life supplements such practices with African ones. The narrative leaves traces for how others might use a Yoruba tradition of oratory to sound out Olaudah as an alternative to the anglophone elocutionary practices. This is to return to the echo between O*laud*ah and *loud*, to the phonemic effects among graphemes. Garrett Stewart's *Reading Voices* clarifies such effects as a consequence of graphemic breakdowns. Stewart uses an example from one of J.L. Austin's lectures recorded by his student, who noted an instance where the reader senses the phoneme, or acoustic properties of language, play over and against the grapheme, or written properties of language: "In saying 'Iced ink' I was uttering the noises 'I stink'".[39] The same phonemes produce two graphemic forms in which to interpret them. Stewart writes, "The phonic will not hold fast within the graphic".[40] Riffing on Austin's terminology of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, Stewart draws our attention to the "'dyslocutionary' tension between phonemic and graphemic signification" in such an instance.[41] Such a reading listens to "the phonemic counterpart to the spaced lettering of a text: counterpart, not content; for the phonemes are neither contained nor containable by script".[42]

Whereas Austin's example demonstrates a clear graphemic deformation into the phoneme, the problem in Equiano's autobiography is much more uncertain, signifying an unequal relationship between languages, where one language, figured in the case of "Olaudah", because of the cultural genocide in the history of slavery, never quite rises to the clear deformations that Stewart addresses. O*laud*ah, then, resounds uncertainly with the *loud* voice:

> I was named *Olaudah*, which, in our language, signifies vicissitude or fortunate, also, one favoured, and having a loud voice and well spoken. I remember we never polluted the name of the object of our adoration; on the contrary, it was always mentioned with the greatest reverence; and we were totally unacquainted with swearing, and all those terms of

39 In Austin, 1962, 123 (quoted in Stewart, 1990, 3).
40 Stewart, 1990, 4.
41 Stewart, 1990, 5.
42 Stewart, 1990, 3.

> abuse and reproach which find their way so readily and copiously into the languages of more civilized people. The only expressions of that kind I remember were “May you rot, or may you swell, or may a beast take you.”[43]

The name *Olaudah* is a linguistic site around which the forces of English and Igbo come and go. The Latin graphemes constitute the playing field for the supplement of the Igbo to appear, an instance of an African language appearing in the European graphemes that Sheridan thinks should exclude them. O*laud*ah/*loud* bounces an uncertain phoneme back and forth in languages that exclude each other *and* that together constitute the very perception of each other as one language, not the other.

The push-and-pull of O*laud*ah/*loud* is further split into at least three semantic fields: Igbo; English; and the combination of Igbo-English. This passage refers to both the definition of the Igbo name and a broader practice of pronouncing Igbo words, yet it does so with English terms and with an ironic distinction from English, one of those “languages of more civilized peoples.” I would like to speculate on how these semantic fields create choices for a reader to voice O*laud*ah/*loud*. The definition of Olaudah marks a potential context within Fon or Yoruba culture, whether from Equiano’s birthplace or the African Diaspora: “*Olaudah*, which, in our language, signifies vicissitude or fortunate, also, one favoured, and having a loud voice and well spoken”. The definition’s trajectory from “vicissitude” to “well spoken” suggests a process of interpretation that, as Henry Louis Gates Jr. has argued, is a crucial feature of Yoruba divination of one’s fate, organized around Esu, or the Signifying Monkey. There are three characteristics of this divination. The first is “indeterminacy of interpretation” (Olaudah’s “vicissitude,” but also the supplementarity of Igbo in English, as well as the ironic Igbo pronunciation, as Igbo is “unacquainted with swearing”, but he remembers “expressions of that kind”); and the second, “the tension between the oral and the written modes of narration that is represented as finding a voice in writing” (the graphemic breakdown in O*laud*ah/*loud* and the movement towards a “loud voice and well spoken”). The third characteristic is a “formal revision that is at all points double-voiced”, by which Gates means that it plays the literal/figurative and the written/oral off of each other to constitute an African-American tradition. The “double-voiced” characteristic should already be clear from the previous two points; the revision is not only to James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw’s use of the names in his narrative, but also to what Gates tracks as the Esu/Signifying tradition itself. Olaudah stands as an instance of these trickster figures who cannot be pinned down as one voice.[44] Indeed,

43 Equiano, 2004, 56.
44 Gates, 1988, 21–22.

the narrative retroactively suggests that Parliamentarians adopt this Yoruba form of elocution that performs an indeterminacy that is fundamental for "such a man" as Gustavus Vassa or Olaudah Equiano. More generally, the Yoruba form complicates the power attributed to the commodity-form for the appearance of the double-voiced, the two names. The Yoruba "vicissitude" may resist the commodity-form by beginning with and continuing to pause over an uncertain relationship between any two objects.

This Yoruba form of oratory is in tension with the elocutionary movement that can inform another way to sound out Olaudah as O*laud*ah/*loud* and as "a loud voice and well spoken". Fundamentally, the phonemic echo between Igbo and English troubles Sheridan's binaries of Europe/civilized and Africa/barbarous that float about English. Also, linking "a loud voice" with "well spoken", regardless of these binaries, fits ambiguously within the elocutionary project. Elocutionists generally advise against speaking with a loud voice. John Mason's first kind of "bad Pronunciation" is "When the Voice is too loud".[45] Sheridan writes that a loud voice destroys articulation so that "there was no hearing what [the speakers] said, they spoke so loud; for the torrent of the voice, left neither time nor power in the organs, to shape the words properly, but bore away with it clustered and uncouth masses of abortive syllables".[46] To hear *loud* in *Olaudah* is not literally to sense a loud voice, but the effect of a loud voice to create such "clustered and uncouth masses of abortive syllables", to sense how the proximity of the "Eboe" language has the power on a phonemic level to distort English, even while the predominant linguistic power is in English, its alphabet and all its paradigms of hearing and judging the value of languages and voices. Yet, ironically, the louder a reader pronounces Olaudah, the better it might sound to some of the elocutionists. To intensify a loud declamation of Olaudah is to abort the word altogether so that it deforms into a string of possibilities: a loud ah! O loud ah! aloud ah! Allowed ah! O laud ah! John Walker supports the use of "O" and "ah" for loud oratories. In *A Rhetorical Grammar* (1785), he argues that the use of the trope "Ecphonésis, or Exclamation" justifies the use of a "loud voice": "It is generally expressed by such interjections as O! Oh! Ah! Alas! and the like, which may be called the signs of this figure".[47] He explains that it "shows that the mind labours with some strong and vehement passion".[48]

Equiano's autobiography is thus crisscrossed with English elocutionary and Yoruba oratorical practices, with English and Igbo phonemes, for an uncertain

45 Mason, 1748, 6.
46 Sheridan, 1764, 85.
47 Walker, 1785, 144.
48 Walker, 1785, 144.

effect, perhaps best described as vocal "vicissitude". The autobiography can resound from multiple embodied practices, as perhaps any text can, but this openness to such practices, I am arguing, is suggested by the autobiography. Voices can resound across different European and African practices and across phonemes both within and against a dominant eighteenth-century English oratory that, as Sheridan argues, should delight with a European variety as opposed to a fantasy of monotonous African languages. Within this place of vicissitude, Equiano's text may "inspire," it may be the text with which one can breathe, vocalize, be spiritualized – and, in being spiritualized, be commodified or at least bear testimony to the effects of commodification. This vicissitude would return in saying aloud the autobiography's famous apostrophe "O ye nominal Christians!" or the declaration that the injustices of slavery "call loudly for redress".[49] Such an inspiration is an act of voicing that either mixes Olaudah with "O" and "loud" to make a new sound, or remains uncertain about their relationship with each other. In either case, the legislature begins to include other voices in its deliberative sessions.

The Transverse Culture of a Black Atlantic Acoustemology

Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* is a part of the history of the acoustic cultures of the African Diaspora. Danielle Skeehan has called for a "Black Atlantic acoustemology" that reinterprets archival records of slave ships as a way to hear, at times against the very grain of the slave ship, protests against the transatlantic system of slavery and the emergence of a Diasporic acoustic culture.[50] But it is uncertain what such an acoustemology studies when, as Ian Baucom shows, there is a numbing silence in many archives of slave ships and the broader transatlantic system of slavery. In the case of one captain and crew who kept a slave ship's log book for five months of purchasing men, women, and children from the slave fort Anamabo, Baucom writes, "For them: nothing out of the ordinary, nothing to single them out, nothing to cause the captain to record anything more about them after he has first made note of their purchase, nothing to draw the attention of the historian or the archivist to this document, this voyage, this cargo".[51] Baucom understands this

49 Equiano, 2004, 76, 126.
50 Skeehan, 2021, 58–72.
51 Baucom, 2005, 14.

silencing as the violence of making humans numerical abstractions within finance. Humans become ghosts, or "specters", in Jacques Derrida's reading of Marx's commodity-form. This form is not a substance, only leaving behind effects from an abstracted monetary relationship between two objects: man, woman, child, all made ghostly in the slave ship's logbook as signs of money.[52] The commodity-form produces the logic of the archive and empties the semantics of those who might write or speak otherwise. The archive retains traces of an acoustics of protest, as Skeehan argues, but this protest would be mediated by the commodity-form that seeks to reduce it to a confused sound without clear semantics.

Édouard Glissant's theory of transverse cultures informs both Skeehan's and Baucom's arguments. Glissant proposes "din" as the form of Diasporic culture, where "sound" and "noise", along with their "intensity" and "pitch", are "essential to speech".[53] While Baucom does not develop this acoustics of the African Diaspora, his analysis may support the idea that the "din" would be an instance of the "counterintuitive" possibilities of attending to the "loss" and the "gain" from the commodity-form. The commodity-form makes possible "'transverse' forms of culture, identity, and solidarity" because, as Baucom writes, they "emerge from the act of holding to, enduring, relating, and avowing our (present's) relational complicity with modernity's most violent scenes of exchange".[54]

Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* suggests a way to reconsider a Black Atlantic acoustemology with the problematics of the commodity-form. The "vicissitude" of Olaudah has an ambivalent relationship with this form that mediates the relationship between two objects. Is this "vicissitude" a Yoruba alternative to the commodity-form, or has it already been reduced to its logic? This very uncertainty leaves a trace of an indeterminate oratorical practice within Olaudah's text. My analysis would suggest that Yoruba oratory with its uncertainty over a "vicissitude" may constitute another way to conceptualize Glissant's "transverse forms", one that pauses, as much as one can pause, while considering uncertainty and indeterminacy rather than seeking to make the new combination. To hear the phonemic echo between Olaudah and loud, among this accumulating din, is to sense a discomforting movement between the sounds of syllables as fragments of language and oratory, both English and Igbo, and of the economic forces of slavery, never clearly one or the other, avowing the horrors of the past within the present, with a faith or credit in other forms to come.

52 Baucom, 2005, 141–45.
53 Glissant, 1999, 123–24.
54 Baucom, 2005, 311.

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Hayley Smith

Traces of the Ordinary: The Guthrie Brothers and the Voices of Victorian "Nobodies"

"In more ways than one", John Picker writes in *Victorian Soundscapes* (2003), the "Victorians were hearing things".[1] In fact, noise was inescapable; from the chug of the railways to the songs of the music halls, contemporary citizens were forced to pay attention to the symphonies circulating their world. This interest in understanding noise extended, perhaps unsurprisingly, to an investment in listening to (and replicating) voice; indeed, technologies such as the phonograph, the electric telegraph, and the microphone, for example, offered ways of accurately hearing, recording, and transcribing speech. Such devices were, as Ivan Kreilkamp has pointed out, "seen as the means by which writing might move one step closer to orality and the presence of voice", reproducing speech as animated, imperfect, and authentic as the sounds articulated amongst the streets.[2] The sounds of spoken speech were also recorded by urban journalists archiving the soundscape of the city; Charles Dickens, for instance, is even described by Steven Marcus as "a kind of written recording device for the human voice".[3] Late-nineteenth century writers similarly employed linguistic representation and experimentation to demonstrate the intricacies and imperfections in speech uttered by contemporary Londoners; or rather, the voices of Victorian "nobodies", as one contemporary reviewer in *The Academy and Literature* chose to describe them.[4]

"The nobodies", the author writes, "have come greatly to the front in literature of late years. In life they remain nobodies, in literature they are somebodies with a following".[5] These alleged nobodies – those living in the suburbs, bustling through the streets, lost within the crowds – can be, according to this article, defined as the "men and women who can be lumped together by the hundred thousand".[6] Texts concerned with the lives of these people serve as examples of "honest reporting": a phrase devised by Harold Biffen, the unsuccessful writer

1 Picker, 2003, 6.

2 Kreilkamp, 2005, 72. For more on the phonograph, see: Rubery, 2014; Read and Welch, 1976. For Victorian auditory technologies and earlier shorthand systems, see: Gitelman, 1999.

3 Marcus, 1972, 192.

4 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247.

5 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247.

6 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247.

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from George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891).[7] While this ostensibly "sordid and dull" subject seems far removed from iconic accounts of the heroic, the famous, or the marginalised, Gissing's novel – just like the fictitious record of a London clerk and his family in George and Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892) – exemplifies a recurring interest in listening to and documenting the voices, indeed the lives, of contemporary "nobodies".[8] As the anonymous author of "The Nobodies" goes on to suggest, Thomas Anstey Guthrie ("F. Anstey") and Leonard George Guthrie ("Lucas Galen") similarly commit themselves to the reproduction of the voices of ordinary Victorians.[9] Although the familial connection between the two men appears to have bypassed the author of "The Nobodies," the reviewer praises both the Guthries for their ability to capture everyday situations, characters, and conversations and imaginatively recreate them in print. "F. Anstey's" *Voces Populi*, an assortment of dramatic dialogues originally printed in *Punch* and featuring turn-of-the-century Londoners *in medias res*, is commended for striking a "new note of observation".[10] Similarly, a series of scenes produced by "Lucas Galen", called *Hospital Sketches* (1902) – the title itself evoking Dickens's journalistic *Sketches by Boz* (1833–1836) – is credited for its dedication to "honest reporting".[11] The reviewer therefore inadvertently gestures towards the Guthries' shared interest in realistically reproducing the voices of so-called nobodies residing in the metropolis.

The urban spectatorship conducted by the brothers emerges from different locations in London: for "F. Anstey", a name which swiftly rose to fame following the immediate success of Thomas Guthrie's first novel, *Vice Versâ; or, a Lesson to Fathers* (1882), speakers are found in public spaces such as parks, streets, and museums, but for Leonard – by the end of his medical career an established paediatrician and neurologist – inspiration strikes at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital.[12] By observing their subjects in these environments and recreating them in their respective writing through a combination of imitation and imagination, the Guthries provide

7 Gissing, 1891, 265.

8 "Recent Fiction", 1891, 473.

9 Thomas Anstey Guthrie was a popular Victorian writer. He published several novels as well as a handful of collections comprising of shorter contributions originally printed in *Punch* and other contemporary periodicals.

10 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247. Guthrie published two series of *Voces Populi*, the first in 1890 and the second in 1892.

11 "The Nobodies", 1902, 247. Many of the scenes found in *Hospital Sketches* were originally published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Budget* in October and November 1892.

12 Leonard worked at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital until his death in December 1918. *Hospital Sketches* was his only fictional collection. For Leonard's medical career, see: "Obituary", 1919, 28–29.

their readers with studies of a range of typical late-Victorian voices. In the 2015 colloquy, "Why voice now?", Martha Feldman suggests that "voice [. . .] may reveal us".[13] Certainly, for the Guthries, the ascription of voice to their characters serves to reveal such ordinary speakers to their contemporary world. It is this which transforms them from a "nobody" into a *somebody*; indeed, by exposing these characters not for their uniqueness but for their familiarity, the Guthries recognise and explore the existence of the individuals that constitute a vast proportion of the contemporary metropolis. In examining the work of these neglected writers, then, and bringing to light the notebooks through which snippets of overheard conversation made their way into *Voces Populi*, this chapter investigates how "F. Anstey" and "Lucas Galen" sought to reproduce the voices of their fictitious "nobodies" (and, of course, the people who inspired such subjects), thereby granting the speakers a value which their comparative invisibility previously eclipsed. In doing so, I examine how the Guthries similarly experiment with dialogue and language in an effort to record and replicate contemporary voiced speech. To an extent, the Guthries' interest in the representation of voice served to entertain and amuse their audiences. At the same time, though, this chapter also suggests that the Guthries – in their attempt to document and reproduce ordinary voice – conceptualise the metropolis socio-linguistically, consequently positioning, even pinpointing, particular voices (and people) in certain places of the city.

It is worth bearing in mind that, while often inspired by real situations and conversations, the scenes collected in *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches* and the voices contained within them were manipulated by the Guthries. This combination of invention and imitation was employed – in part, at least – for the reader's entertainment. At the same time, though, the Guthries – in listening to the familiar sounds of the streets and reproducing voice and speech – bring with them specific class filters which influence their ability to faithfully represent the voices of their contemporaries in print. Consequently, we must acknowledge how Thomas and Leonard Guthrie's conceptualisations of the streets of London are neither wholly accurate nor reliable. This is not to imply their irrelevance, though. After all, the sketches – albeit filtered by their respective author's own motivations and preconceptions – highlight the ordinary voices of those living in the metropolis, thereby providing us with an important auditory illustration of late-Victorian London.

13 Feldman, 2015, 658.

"Unseen lives": Observing London(ers)

In a re-examination of late-Victorian and early-Edwardian slum writing, Oliver Betts considers how the nineteenth century became preoccupied with "seeing and the visualisation of Victorian society".[14] While a number of genres and texts emerged from this contemporary interest in the observation of London and the translation of its sights into the visual imagination, one literary output – one with which both *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches* bear some similarities – consisted of a stream of comic monologues delivered by a middle-aged, lower middle-class woman called Mrs Brown.[15] Written by George Rose under the pen name "Arthur Sketchley", and published from 1866 to 1882, these monologues see Mrs Brown offer readers her thoughts and opinions on Victorian customs, contemporary fads, and tourist hotspots, almost as if she were a socio-cultural guide to nineteenth century England. In his posthumously published autobiography, *A Long Retrospect* (1936), Guthrie recalls the pleasure he felt on reading Sketchley's work in *Fun*, acknowledging the "uproarious delight with which [. . .] I first made 'Mrs. Brown's' acquaintance".[16] Influenced by the work of writers like Rose, the Guthries similarly present their readers with typical scenes from London, often poking fun at both the ignorant observer (or, in Leonard's case, the problematic hospital patient) as well as the affectations of Victorian society. Nevertheless, their humorous conceptualisations of London differ from Rose's as the Guthries remove the narratorial reporter from their sketches and instead position their *readers* as witnesses to these scenes. In their reproduction of real characters and conversations, then, these scenes can be best understood as "footage" which unfolds before the reader's eyes.

The scenes compiled in *Voces* and *Hospital Sketches* relied upon the Guthries' ability to record the details of their chosen speakers and conversations, albeit selectively, before imaginatively reconstructing them in print. Such a process might be recognised, then, as one that, in many cases, moved from imitation – using someone or something as a model – to mimicry: imitation intended for entertainment (that which, for example, superficially emphasises a speaker's mannerisms or dialect, and not necessarily accurately). The difference lies in the reworking of the subject; for the Guthries, it is upon the introduction of invention, inserted for the purposes of amusement, that the scene distances itself – to some degree, at

14 Betts, 2017, 259.

15 A variety of writing emerged from this interest in the documentation of London and the translation of such sights into the visual imagination, including slum fiction, social investigations, and the "Condition of England" novel.

16 Anstey, 1936, 26.

least – from its original form and moves towards a less accurate representation of reality. While both brothers reproduce the city and its inhabitants in this way, only “F. Anstey” describes the method by which he composed his “Voces” series. Recalling the first “Voces” article in his autobiography, Guthrie noted how he happened upon “a meeting of the Unemployed in Trafalgar Square”, which provided him with a topic.[17] This random encounter inspired Guthrie to regularly search for a subject for his sketches. Of course, this tactic was not always successful: in a diary entry from June 1907, for example, Guthrie wrote that, while ambling around Earl’s Court, he found “no peg to hang a sketch on”.[18] Nonetheless, Guthrie employed this method so frequently that M. H. Spielman called attention to it in *The History of Punch* (1895), to date one of the most authoritative texts on the magazine and its staff. Guthrie, Spielman writes, would visit “the needful spot, where he would try to seize the salient points and the general tone, the speakers and the scene”, sometimes combining “hints and anecdotes received from his acquaintance with his own experience and invention; on rarer occasions he would happen upon an incident which could be worked up into a sketch very much as it actually occurred”.[19] This process of imitating and reinventing characters and conversations is also mentioned in Guthrie’s autobiography. Recalling a business partner of his father’s friend, a Cockney man named Robert Pirie Shiell, Guthrie writes “[i]t was he from whom in one of my ‘Voces’ I borrowed the comment on a clock elaborately chiming the half-hour, ‘And all that for only half-past five!’”, a phrase that eventually works its way into the sketch “At the Military Exhibition”, delivered almost verbatim (“all that for on’y ’alf-past five!”).[20]

This example crucially gestures towards Guthrie’s recreation of the local and the common, of ordinary speakers and their conversations. Such reconstructions were similarly recognised by contemporary critics; indeed, in a review of one of Guthrie’s earlier novels, *A Fallen Idol* (1886) – a fantasy narrative in which the ill-fated protagonist’s life is chaotically interrupted by the arrival of a supernatural Jain idol – *The Times* wrote that “[o]ne of Mr. Anstey’s special gifts [. . .] is his extraordinary knowledge of the humours of the humbler classes of Londoners”.[21] Guthrie’s reproduction of Londoners in *Voces* similarly illuminates his ability to chronicle the lives of the masses; the ordinary men, women, and children whose “invisibility” was not to one another but to those from a more privileged socio-

17 Anstey, 1936, 179.

18 Diary of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.

19 Spielman, 1895, 398.

20 Anstey, 1892, 69. All subsequent references to the second series of *Voces* (1892) will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses following quotations.

21 “A Fallen Idol”, 1886, 10.

economic background. A reviewer in *The Speaker* shares this sentiment, commending Guthrie for acting as a "guide" to the city's inhabitants.[22] For this author, Guthrie's *Voces* enables readers to observe the interactions and dialogues of those concealed by their numerical vastness. The speakers and the people whom they represent are, therefore, individualized and imagined as "characters" with histories, feelings, and lives of their own. Rather than simply vanishing into obscurity, the speakers are instead identified as integral to the landscape. By revealing their "unseen lives" (as Guthrie puts it in a diary entry in 1907), *Voces* consequently transforms ordinary citizens from "nobodies" into "somebodies".[23]

Capturing the speaker's personality, their idiosyncrasies, and their humour were significant details in the composition of Thomas Guthrie's characters. A great deal of time was therefore dedicated to recording the most striking characteristics of those whom Guthrie encountered, and his notebooks certainly testify to this investment. On a page of a largely undated notebook, Guthrie provides a list of character sketches, jotting down observations about the ordinary men and women whom he encounters on his travels. A "[s]eedy person at restaurant", "[t]he drunken snob in Oxford St, 19 July", and "the communicative passenger [. . .] going to Scotland" are amongst those who catch his attention.[24] One note, however, must have stuck in Guthrie's memory more than others. So much so, in fact, that an argument between "[t]he drunken old gentleman & the cabman" on 20 March 1888 evolved into a "Voces" sketch called "The Cadi of the Curbstone", eventually published in *Punch* in January 1890.[25] "The Cadi of the Curbstone"– a dialogue between an elderly drunken man, his cabman, and a police officer – is recalled in *A Long Retrospect* and described as an "absolutely unexaggerated description" of the event.[26] Guthrie opens by locating the men near Hyde Park, where an elderly gentleman

> suddenly stopped the cab in which he has been driving, and, without offering to pay the fare, has got out and shuffled off with a handbag. The [cabman] has descended from his seat and overtaken the old gentleman, who is now perceived to be lamentably intoxicated. The usual crowd springs up from nowhere, and follows the dispute with keen and delighted interest.[27]

22 "First Impressions", 1892, 360.
23 Diary of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.
24 Notebook of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.
25 Notebook of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.
26 Anstey, 1936, 182.
27 Anstey, 1890, 76.

Guthrie could well be a member of this crowd, observing – with his fellow witnesses/readers – the drama as it develops. This example not only demonstrates how Guthrie's *Voces* were inspired by everyday realities, but the attempt to reproduce the scene additionally speaks to his interest in capturing and reproducing typical encounters with ordinary Londoners.

The verisimilitude of *Voces Populi* can be further identified in "At the British Museum", a scene in which readers "overhear" a selection of conversations taking place in various exhibitions of the museum. In the Ancient Egypt exhibit, an exchange occurs between a frightened governess and a young boy. After recording the attendance of these characters in his notebook, Guthrie jotted down the following snippets of speech, "I don't like seeing people so dead as that" and "[n]ot a place to bring a little boy to".[28] Guthrie's *Voces* sketch later incorporates these scraps of dialogue into the conversation; as Miss Goole, the governess, and Harry, the small child, enter the exhibit, Harry is visibly disturbed by the mummies. Shaking, he says "[n]o, I'm not frightened, Miss Goole – only if you don't mind, I – I'd rather see a gentleman not *quite* so dead. And there's one over there with a gold face and glass eyes, and he looks at me, and – please, I don't think this is the place to bring such a little boy as me to!" (55). Guthrie's notebooks and diaries consequently reveal how "F. Anstey" sought to employ a significant amount of imitation in the imaginative reconstruction of the *Voces* dialogues – like those conducted in Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, and the British Museum – arguably establishing this collection as a study into and a (re)presentation of the lives of ordinary late-Victorians living in London.

What's more, using his contemporaries as subjects in this examination of late-Victorian voice assigns the individuals who inspired the sketches a place within Guthrie's vision of London. Indeed, by observing, recreating, and pinpointing the sounds and dialogues heard throughout different locations in London, *Voces* presents itself as an aural cartography of the city – one which seeks to linguistically locate real citizens amongst the panorama. There is, of course, something strikingly Dickensian about Guthrie's mapmaking; as Alice Turner argues, *Sketches by Boz* charts the voices of London "onto a soundscape of the city".[29] "F. Anstey" demonstrates a similar interest in providing readers with an "audial map" of the metropolis, crucially employing voice to capture and record a variety of human encounters taking place throughout the city and thereby positioning his fictional "nobodies" within a dialogical map of London.[30] While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it might well prove

28 Notebook of Thomas Anstey Guthrie.

29 Turner, 2020, 59. Picker also discusses Dickens's use of voice in *Dombey and Son*, see: Picker, 2003, 15–40.

30 Turner, 2020, 74.

worthwhile, in time, to compare an audial map of Dickens's London to one of Guthrie's London. Such an investigation might help us to better understand the city through the changes to its soundscapes; indeed, it might signal the movement of voices (and people) throughout the metropolis and raise questions about the changing demographics of the city as the century progressed.

"Verbal photography": Linguistic Representation and Experimentation

Sound, Walter J. Ong argues, "is related to present actuality rather than to past or future".[31] The visual reproduction of sound – or, rather, the *illusion* of sound – similarly intends to generate such a response. Reviewers praised *Voces* for this very reason, likening Guthrie's written sketches to "a humorous verbal photography of extraordinary vividness".[32] The suggestion that Guthrie's transcriptions offered as much immediacy and realism as an image of the actual scene speaks to Guthrie's interest in recording and reproducing the familiar sounds of London's streets. Simultaneously, though, this comment points towards the reviewers' desire to recognise such sounds as accurate. Throughout the scenes in *Voces*, Guthrie attempts to mimic the dialect heard in late-Victorian London, paying particular attention to those with a Cockney accent. Consequently, such speakers are no longer dismissed by their comparative vastness, nor are their voices tuned out and absorbed into the city's soundscape. This sentiment is expressed in a contribution to *The Saturday Review*, as the author recognises how "familiar do they [the voices] sound as the oft-heard yet unregarded humours of the crowd".[33] Highlighting the attention afforded to the reproduction of (somewhat ironically) underheard dialogue, this reviewer commends Guthrie's ability to replicate the ordinary, disembodied voices of London.

Phonetic representations of the Cockney dialect were well-established during the Victorian era; in fact, one of the most influential fictional Cockneys, Dickens's Sam Weller – appearing in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836) – is described by John Forster as "being as ordinary and perfect a reality [. . .] as anything in the London streets".[34] Dickens's efforts to replicate non-standard speech – his memorable substitution of the letters *v* and *w*, for example – were applauded in the mid-Victorian era for revealing the "impropriety, ungrammaticality, and

31 Ong, 1967, 111–112.
32 Spielman, 1895, 398.
33 "Voces Populi", 1890, 465.
34 Forster, 1872, 110.

energy" of voice.[35] Yet by the last two decades of the century, the writer and publisher Andrew Tuer observed just how outdated Dickens's voices had already become.[36] Cockney, Tuer claimed, was "constantly in a state of evolution", and contemporary writers needed to keep up with these changes.[37] Instead of employing earlier conventions, then, Tuer presented some alternative ways of phonetically reproducing the Cockney dialect: a long *a* pronounced long *i;* a long *i* pronounced *ah* or *oi*; a long *o* pronounced *ow*; *ow* pronounced *ah* or *aow*; and a short *u* pronounced like a short *e*.[38] It was Guthrie's experimentation with Tuer's new phonetics and the amalgamation of old and new forms of representation for which he was given credit by his contemporaries and critics; in fact, George Bernard Shaw even goes so far as to describe "F. Anstey" as "the first author to give general literary currency to Mr. Tuer's new phonetics".[39]

This phonetic representation of dialogue, described by Peter Ackroyd as the "graphic embodiment of speech", is demonstrated throughout both *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches*.[40] In "Bank Holiday", for example, published in the second series of *Voces*, Guthrie employs linguistic experimentation to replicate the dialogue he overhears on his return journey from the Crystal Palace. In his autobiography Guthrie recalls the inspiration for one of the characters featured in the sketch, a "fellow [traveller], a noisy and far from sober ruffian, whose ditties and remarks I noted down under his drunken nose".[41] The return journey documented in "Bank Holiday" does indeed feature an "Old Gentleman", who "has come out with the object of observing Bank Holiday manners" – arguably bearing some similarities to "F. Anstey" himself – and a drunken man called "Ole Fred" (150). As Ole Fred bustles into the carriage, he causes quite the stir, and subsequently the Old Gentleman asks him to quieten down. Ole Fred replies:

> OLE FRED. Shet up, old umbereller whiskers! (*Screams of laughter from women and children, which encourage him to sing again.*)
>
> [. . .]
>
> THE MAN BY THE WINDOW. 'Ere, dry up, Guv'nor – 'e ain't 'ad enough to urt 'im, 'e ain't!

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35 Kreilkamp, 2005, 77.
36 Kreilkamp, 2005, 77.
37 It was not until the 1880s, Peter Ackroyd argues, that modern Cockney emerged, flourishing in venues like music halls, where songs and ditties offered descriptive accounts of Cockney jaunts and excursions. See: Tuer, 1890, vi; Ackroyd, 2000, 165.
38 Matthews, 1970, 65.
39 Shaw, 1898, 170.
40 Ackroyd, 1990, 125.
41 Anstey, 1936, 181.

> CHORUS OF FEMALES (*to* O[ld]. G[entleman].). An' Bank 'Oliday, too – you orter to be ashimed o' yerself, you ought! 'E's as right as right, if you on'y let him alone!
>
> OLE FRED (*to* O. G.). Ga-arn, yer pore-'arted ole choiner boy! (*sings dismally*) [. . .] Any man 'ere wanter foight me? Don't say no, ole Frecklefoot! (151–152)

Readers hardly need to strain to see Guthrie employ phonological deviations to replicate the Cockney accent. Amongst other conventions, he includes the omission, and, in an earlier interaction between Ole Fred and the Old Gentleman, the acquisition of the letter *h*, "'e ain't 'ad enough to urt 'im" and "heverythink", respectively (151). At the same time, Guthrie also replaces vowels with the letter *i*, represented in "ashimed". Tuer's new phonetics are scattered throughout this piece, too; here, Guthrie includes a long *i* pronounced *oi*, seen in "choiner" and "foight"; a short *u* pronounced *e*, in "shet up"; and – earlier in the scene – a long *a* pronounced like a long *i*, "dyes"/days (151). Alongside these phonetic deviations, Guthrie also introduces non-standard syntax, such as the inclusion of multiple negatives ("'e ain't 'ad enough [. . .] 'e ain't!"). The combination of phonetic and syntactical experimentation crucially ascribes the characters in this scene with humour, vibrancy, and energy: they are animated by Guthrie's representation of voice. This ascription of voice signals Guthrie's attempts to highlight the familiar presence of (often overlooked and ignored) speakers like Ole Fred. Simultaneously, though, Ole Fred is positioned amongst Guthrie's sociolinguistic cartography of late-Victorian London as his movement from the Crystal Palace is recorded and charted in the final scene of Guthrie's sketch.

Although laughter, singing, and speech present a disruptive cacophony to the ears of the Old Gentleman, these noises contribute to the soundscape of London. Similar aural landscapes are highlighted at the beginning of "In a Fog". At a thoroughfare near Hyde Park, at approximately eight o'clock in the evening, readers learn that there is "*[n]othing visible anywhere, but very much audible; horses slipping and plunging, wheels grinding, crashes, jolts, and English as she is spoke on such occasions*" (original emphasis, 127). Without their sight, the individuals lost in the fog rely upon their ears to construct their environment, and in doing so, they overhear the sounds of animals, of vehicles, and of speech. The details recorded in this chaotic, everyday scene demonstrate Guthrie's conceptualisation of a city "alive with sound".[42] This interest in documenting the soundscapes of the city is also found throughout Leonard Guthrie's *Hospital Sketches*. Reading rather like a diary, beginning as the doctor arrives in the morning and finishing at the end of a very arduous day, "Lucas Galen's" fictitious sketches are grounded within Leonard's

42 Preece, 1878, 209, quoted in Picker, 2003, 4.

daily experiences as a member of staff at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital. "Olla Podrida", the first of the collection, captures the soundscape of the waiting room. Recalling the name of a Spanish stew, "Olla Podrida" – translated as "rotten pot" – suggests that the waiting room comprises of an assortment of sounds, just as the dish itself contains an assortment of ingredients. "There is a constant buzz of conversation", "Lucas Galen" writes, "with a chorus of coughs and infants' wails, and the crash of bottles on the floor. [. . .] Scraps of conversation such as the following may be overheard".[43] Here, the choral coughs and cries of the infants contribute to the melody of the hospital, almost musicalizing the waiting room. Crucially, though, just as the streets of London offer "F. Anstey" numerous opportunities to record "scraps of conversation", so too does the hospital for "Lucas Galen".

In its recreation of a series of scenes from the Hospital, Leonard's sketches – some of which evoke pathos and some of which evoke humour – also commit themselves to the reproduction of ordinary voice. In "Free of the Place", for example, the scene opens as a young boy strolls into the doctor's consultation room:

> *Doctor* (with extreme politeness). "Good morning, sir; can I cut off one of your feet?"
> *Very Small Boy* (with a still broader grin). "Noa, yer just carn't."
> *Doctor*. "Well, kindly tell me who you are, and what's the matter with you."
> *Very Small Boy*. "I'm Georgie – that's 'oo I am, and there ain't nuffin the matter with me, there ain't – I've come to help nurse. [. . .] I rolls the bandages for her, and she've asked me to tea this afternoon, and sometimes I sings her songs. I'll sing yer one now, if yer like. [. . .] Yes, I'm a foine singer, I am." (41–42)

Non-standard linguistic representations are similarly scattered throughout this extract. Tuer's new phonetics make another appearance; indeed, the scene includes a long *i* pronounced *oi*, for instance, as the child says "foine". The boy also substitutes the dental *th-* for the letter *f*, changing 'nothing' into "nuffin" – a phonetic deviation which, according to Raymond Chapman, is one of several markers of the Cockney accent.[44] Leonard additionally employs eye dialect within his collection, substituting 'wos' for 'was' in a sketch called "The Hooligan-Bud" (44). It has been pointed out that eye dialect can be "socially offensive", with "such spelling act[s]" serving as "unambiguous markers of intended deviation; they are, in the representation of direct speech, thus overtly made to suggest corresponding failings in utterance, their connotative values establishing a highly effective subtext and marking out the intended divisions in social space".[45] While Leonard's

43 Galen, 1902, 11. All future references to the text will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses following quotations.
44 Chapman, 1994, 43.
45 Walpole, 1974, 191; Mugglestone, 2003, 76.

use of eye dialect likely serves to demonstrate this social division by highlighting the child's lack of education – a social issue reappearing throughout his collection – his employment of this convention nevertheless speaks to his desire to replicate the boy's speech. Crucially, though, this reconstruction of voice is necessarily mediated by Leonard: he replicates the sounds of the child's speech as *he* hears them. Thus, Leonard's use of established vocal stereotypes – just like his brother's – reproduce vocal sounds grounded in their understanding of the communities whose speech they recorded. While Thomas and Leonard (and their readers) might have considered their representations to be accurate illustrations of the speakers contained amongst the scenes, such depictions of late-Victorian Londoners cannot be considered entirely faithful or accurate because they were inevitably filtered by the selective and subjective interests of those who recorded them. Their itinerant recordings of speech and voice tell us something about ordinary Londoners' everyday speech, but say just as much about who was listening.

Conclusion: The Guthries as "Earwitnesses"

The Victorian era, Picker notes, was one fascinated by listening.[46] The Guthries, with their respective attempts to record and reproduce the voices of ordinary Victorians, certainly attest to this statement. Their imitations and imaginative reconstructions of contemporary voice crucially serve to individualize their characters (and the people they represent) and simultaneously recognise them for their familiarity, thereby revealing to audiences the overwhelming presence of these ordinary speakers. Thus, the voices of those featuring in *Voces Populi* and *Hospital Sketches* are imagined as integral to the landscape of the contemporary metropolis, ultimately transforming them from "nobodies" into somebodies. The respective conceptualisations of London created by the Guthries not only reveal the underheard voices of the city, but they also seek to map the metropolis linguistically. In their representation of ordinary citizens, both brothers position their characters (and the individuals who inspired such subjects) amongst a sociolinguistic cartography of the capital. *Voces* undeniably provides readers with the most expansive map, as "F. Anstey" covers a greater area of London, while "Lucas Galen" offers a more site-specific set of recordings within a single institution. Thomas and Leonard Guthrie might therefore be described as "earwitnesses", writers seeking to capture the soundscapes of their own places and times.[47] Indeed, by

46 Picker, 2003, 6.
47 Schafer, 1993, 8.

listening to, recording, and reimagining the voices of everyday citizens and the sounds of their environments, "F. Anstey" and "Lucas Galen" manage to provide readers with their own – albeit significantly filtered – audial illustrations of the voices of the late-Victorian capital.

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Kaarina Kilpiö and Tiina Männistö-Funk

A Shifting Swarm of Vocalities: An Assemblage Approach to PA Systems and Morning Assemblies in Finnish Primary Schools (1930s–1980s)

This chapter studies the history and uses of central public address (PA) systems in Finnish primary schools, which gradually became the norm from the 1930s onwards. They could be used to broadcast live or recorded speech, music, and other sounds from one or more sending units located in the school building to loudspeakers mounted in the walls or ceilings of classrooms, halls, and corridors. Studying the historical functions, purposes and uses as well as the lived experiences of these systems sheds light on the everyday oralities of schools: how did certain types of vocalities shape time, space, bodies, and affects at school? How did they link to material and cultural systems, and how did they change? Our attention is focused on the agencies in vocal practices of the day-to-day life at school, and how these changed during the period we are studying.

As a case study, we consider one particular practice of orality, the morning assembly. Morning assemblies were an integral part of school education in Finland during the entire 20th century, shared as a material affective experience by generations of Finns. They aimed to teach and reinforce values that were deemed important and to mark the start of the school day in a ritualized way, thus giving it a spatial, temporal, and ideological rhythm and frame. When PA systems were introduced in schools, they entered the existing material and vocal practice of morning assemblies. Through the intertwined history of the morning assembly and these PA systems, we study schools as places of organised sound that encompass different technologies of vocality, allowing for different material constellations of voiced agency.

Taking Jane Bennett's *agency of assemblages* as our main theoretical approach,[1] we concur that agency will always emerge from dynamic and changing assemblages

1 Bennett, 2010.

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that include both the human and non-human. This implies that, even in clearly hierarchical settings like schools, agency never emerges from a single human intention, but from "a swarm of vitalities"[2] which is material, spatial, and temporal, and encompasses a variety of elements. We perceive PA systems and their components to be elements in the swarms of vocal agency that make up a school's everyday vocalities. The vocal assemblage of schools includes different architectural, material and technological components, bodies in various constellations, and systemic connections at different times. By analysing these PA systems and the vocal assemblages to which they contribute, we should better understand the shaping and shifting materialities of everyday voices and vocal practices in school buildings.

As in many places elsewhere, morning assemblies have been a regular part of the school day in Finland, but research on their cultural meanings and connections is scarce.[3] Historical research on PA systems has mostly considered equipment used outdoors for political purposes or as local mass media.[4] However, by studying sound as an integral element of schools as material premises, our study is closer to the type of research that historian of technology Emily Thompson has done on architectural acoustics and the culture of listening in early twentieth-century America, focusing on spaces specifically designed for presenting and listening (e.g., auditoriums, theatres, and studios).[5] Although architecturally more commonplace, schools are culturally and materially even more complex spaces for experiencing vocality and vocal agency.

We have focused our attention on the period between the 1930s and 1980s because of two major changes. The first concerns the diminishing role of religion in schools, and the second concerns their organisation with regard to educational aims – resulting in the introduction of a nine-year comprehensive school education for all children in the 1970s. The compulsory morning assembly prevailed in spite of these changes, gradually incorporating a wider group of speakers beyond the scope of headteachers, clergy and teachers of religion. First, other teachers also began to give assemblies and then increasingly pupils did too. In her research on the early history of the Finnish primary school, social historian Saara Tuomaala defines the modern school of compulsory education as "a pedagogical and educative space, in which the child's physical and subjective identity is constructed. At the same time, the school's teaching constructs a moral and cultural landscape that is meant for pupils to identify with and feel part of".[6] The vocal practice of morning assemblies

2 Bennett, 2010, 32–38.

3 Some theses and case studies exist. See e.g., Bhattacharya and Sterponi, 2020, 181–199; Cappy, 2019, 845–876; Meriläinen and Sjöbacka, 1993.

4 See Radovac, 2015, 32–50; Fackler, 2009, 299–308; Epping-Jäger, 2018, 396–400.

5 Thompson, 2004.

6 Tuomaala, 2004, 55.

connected these elements together, but in different constellations as new agencies entered the assemblage and interacted. Distributive agency in the material assemblage thus made vocal experiences of morning assemblies more precarious.

To trace the materiality and cultural connections of this assemblage, we will be examining two main categories of historical research material. The first are documents for instruction and marketing, produced both by school administrations and the companies providing the PA technology. Their approach is strategic, and from them we can trace administrative discourses and contexts. The second category provides traces of resulting lived circumstances of vocalities in schools through public discussion materials, archived photos, and artefacts. Photographs and films are used to reconstruct material assemblages, and the more general discourse on schools as vibrant vocal spaces is followed in newspaper and trade magazines.

PA Systems and Schools as Speech Machines

Although amplifiers were already present in certain spaces and on particular occasions in Finland in the 1920s, it was not until the 1930s that their use had spread more widely to hospitals, military institutions, and private buildings.[7] PAs were named "central radios" (*keskusradio*), as they were often used to relay radio programmes from a central radio receiver into the many different rooms and spaces of a building,[8] even though the system was also used to play pre-recorded and live sound.[9]

When building was completed in 1934, the *Aleksis Kivi School* in the working-class district of Helsinki was celebrated as being one of the most modern in Finland. As it was the largest primary school in Finland at that time, it was a model for new school buildings – even being presented at the Paris World Fair in 1937. Among its modern features showcased in one film documentary was the school's central radio. "As usual, the school day begins with morning prayers," announces the narrator, as we see rows of children clasping hymn books before a large loudspeaker, "which in this school is

7 Systems from suppliers such as Fenno-radio (*Oy Fenno-Radio Ab: 1924–1949*. Helsinki, 1949, 43), Ericsson, A.E.G., and Oy Suomen Akkumulaattoritehdas "Tudor" ("Radio sairaaloissa," *Suomen Punainen Risti,* December 1, 1934).

8 Evidence of such use (e.g., in prisons and hospitals) can be seen in artefacts and photos in Finnish museum collections and newspaper reports (e.g., photo of central radio with manual in Hämeenlinna prison: RHOHL3498, Finnish Heritage Agency; loudspeakers from Tiura Tuberculosis Hospital: EKMEKMEE12810:2, Lappeenranta Museums; and "Radio sairaaloissa," *Suomen Punainen Risti* December 1, 1934.

9 For instance, "Uutisia ja tiedoituksia," *Suomen mielisairasten hoitajakunnan liiton julkaisu,* August 1, 1937.

carried out with the help of a microphone and loudspeakers". The film then shows a man speaking or singing into a microphone while another plays the harmonium.[10]

During the 1930s, central radio systems increasingly came to be seen as necessary in Finnish schools. An important factor in these considerations was that, in 1934, the national broadcasting company YLE launched "school radio" (see Fig. 1). The aim of the school radio programmes was to improve and standardize the quality of primary education throughout the country, and by 1939, almost half (44 per cent) of all primary school pupils were listening to the school radio programmes at school.[11] Media sources indicate that the PA systems in schools were used for this purpose until at least the 1950s,[12] but right from the start another important use found for the PA systems was in the morning assembly.[13]

The reasons for their use in assembly was inextricably linked to the materiality, spatiality, and logistics of school life. According to the teachers' trade journal, the PA system in *Aleksis Kivi School* had solved one of the problems anticipated with having such a large school: no precious time was wasted in moving pupils between classrooms and the assembly hall.[14]

In 1939, these practical advantages had not escaped the attention of the local education board in Viipuri either: "The board has also noted that if there was no central radio, and the shared morning assemblies were to be held in the assembly hall / gymnasium, the floor would get dirty before the first gymnastics class – especially in autumn and spring. However, with a central radio in the school, each class can take part without leaving their classroom".[15]

It is difficult to estimate the prevalence of school PA systems in Finland at any given time, as no statistics have yet been found. According to the newspapers of the time,[16] they were installed in large schools built in the 1940s and 1950s, and were already being described as "standard equipment" in larger schools – both in the city and countryside – by the end of the 1930s.[17] A PA system proved the

10 *Suomen uudenaikaisin kansakoulu,* Suomi-Filmi Oy, 1937. The loudspeaker seen in the film is a floor model, whereas all other visual material from schools shows wall-mounted models. Floor models were apparently used in *Aleksis Kivi School* during the test-phase of the system.

11 Enden and Lyytinen, 1996, 62–64.

12 *Finlandia-katsaus 167.* Suomi-Filmi Oy, 1952.

13 See for example: "Hämeenlinnan kouluoloista," *Opettajain lehti* February 24, 1939; "Oma keskusradio ja hammasklinikka Enson kansakoulussa," *Opettajain lehti* March 3, 1939.

14 "Pakinapalsta," *Opettajain lehti* November 9, 1934; "Kouluhartaushetkistä," *Opettajain lehti* February 15, 1935.

15 "Keskusradiolaitteet Repolan kansakoululle," *Karjala* September 27, 1939.

16 See e.g., *Etelä-Saimaa* October 10, 1937; *Aamulehti* September 16, 1938; *Helsingin Sanomat* March 28, 1937.

17 *Karjala* September 27, 1939.

Fig. 1: Finnish schoolchildren following gymnastics instructions from a school radio broadcast in the 1930s (photo: Kansan Arkisto).

school was modern,[18] and was often mentioned as one of its headlining features, along with a flattering description of the acoustic technology involved and how it encouraged the orderly conduct of large groups of children:

> The most wonderful thing about the school, however, is the actual hall [. . .]. Morning assembly is carried out there, so that each class stands outside its classroom in rows, with the lower years on the ground floor and the upper years on the balconies above. As in the classrooms, the acoustics in the hall are excellent, with no echo at all – this means the headteacher's announcements can be clearly heard via the central radio and its loudspeakers – which are installed at every point.[19]

18 "Outokumpu on saanut uuden koulutalon," *Opettajain lehti* November 15, 1940; "Helsingin Lapinlahden kansakoulun rakennusselostus," *Opettajain lehti* May 2, 1941; "Uudenaikainen kansakoulu rakennetaan Lohjalle," *Uusi Suomi* June 4, 1949; "Uusi kansakoulutalo vihitty tarkoitukseensa Hyvinkäällä," *Uusi Suomi* May 15, 1950; "Suolahti juhlii – uusi koulu vihitty," *Uusi Suomi* June 3, 1952; "Maamme uudenaikaisin oppikoulu napapiirillä," *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* January 24, 1953; "Upea kansakoulu Naarajärvelle," *Länsi-Savo* July 2, 1955.
19 "Maamme uudenaikaisin oppikoulu napapiirillä," *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* January 24, 1953.

A growing population meant a post-war construction boom for schools in the 1950s, though for many children – especially in the countryside – their school was still housed in small or medium-sized wooden buildings dating from the early years of compulsory primary education.[20] These wooden buildings had been built according to designs approved for use across the nation, and offered some children their first experiences of modern living standards (e.g., hygiene and lighting).[21] By the 1950s, building regulations were specifying even higher standards for heating, sanitation, and ventilation. These did not as yet apply to PA systems, however, which would explain why they are not specifically mentioned in historical overviews of the building service technology used.[22] PAs only feature in overall descriptions of how time, space, and bodies are managed, along with electric clocks, bells, and dental clinics. These technologies combine to ensure the rhythm of the school day and health and safety of the pupils.[23]

Founded in 1954, the aerial and audio company Teleste became the leading producer of the country's central PA systems for the next few decades. Teleste installed its first school PA system in 1958, and schools became its biggest customer group for decades.[24] In the second half of the 1980s, Teleste began marketing the SCS 800 – a more complex audiovisual system of communication and information with an internal telephone system and the option to incorporate internal and external data banks if required at a later date. Again, this was seen as necessary technology for tackling the logistical challenges of greater distances in the new schools.[25] Thanks to the technology, "teachers, pupils and also the caretaker are contactable anywhere on the school premises, and urgent matters can be dealt with immediately in the lesson".[26]

Teleste certainly sold some of its SCS 800 systems in the 1980s,[27] but an examination of the company's product catalogues and archival photographs from Finnish schools in the 1940s–1980s indicates that most classrooms throughout this period had simple speakers with a knob (if any) for adjusting the volume. In the photos, the

20 Jetsonen, 2020. Compulsory primary education was defined by law in Finland in 1921.

21 Tuomaala, 2004, 125–8.

22 See Sainio, 2020.

23 See: "Oma keskusradio ja hammasklinikka Enson kansakoulussa," *Opettajain lehti* March 3, 1939; Pentti Talvio, "Koulujärjestelmästä myönteisiä kokemuksia," *Teleskooppi* 3/1988: 5. In a different parallel, the PA systems of schools have been discussed during the 21st century as a way of warning pupils and teachers in the case of an armed attack, possibly by using a code word or a certain piece of music. See: https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000000491678.html.

24 Ritakallio, 2004, 14–15.

25 Talvio, "Koulujärjestelmästä myönteisiä kokemuksia."

26 Teleste, *Koulun tietoväylä SCS 800.*

27 Talvio, "Koulujärjestelmästä myönteisiä kokemuksia."

PA speakers appear as part of the vocal assemblage at the front of the class along with the teacher's desk and blackboard (see Figs. 2 and 3).[28] They are frequently seen alongside the harmoniums too, that had an important role in sung vocalities, often accompanying the communal and hymn singing during morning assembly.

This assemblage highlights the hierarchical organisation of voices and sounds in schools at the time: the loudest and most important ones were expected to come from the front of the room. This sonic hierarchy is also apparent in the PA installation instructions. The National Board of Education's 1987 regulations defined a PA system – of central unit, speakers, antenna, and microphone – as standard equipment in schools of at least 130 pupils.[29]

Fig. 2: A classroom in Pakila Primary School (1958). The schoolhouse was built in 1954 and in keeping with its modern architecture, has a modern speaker above the alphabet (photo: Helsinki City Museum/Heikki Havas).

28 See archived photographs from Espoo City Museum, Finnish Heritage Agency, The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas, Helsinki City Museum, Ilomantsi Museum Foundation, Kerava Museum, Lappeenranta Museums, Nurmes Town Museum, Porstua, Satakunta Museum.
29 Kouluhallitus, 1973, 3; Kouluhallitus, 1987, 5.

Fig. 3: A classroom in Porthaninkatu School (1972), photographed before demolition. The speaker on the wall is a Teleste made between the 1950s and mid-60s. The building dates from 1890 and earlier photographic material shows an older model of speaker being used in the 1940s (photo: Helsinki City Museum/Kari Hakli).

Rooms to be equipped with microphones were the headteacher's office, the central radio room, and the dining hall. Additional microphones were optional for the caretaker's room, main hall, music classes, gym, and outdoor areas. Speakers were to be placed everywhere in the school, except storage rooms, toilets, and the central radio room itself.[30]

The headteacher therefore had their own personal microphone and did not even have to leave their office to assert their vocal authority. Anybody else delivering general announcements or morning assembly had to use the central radio room – a locked space, the key for which was normally only available for teachers and maintenance staff. Meanwhile, placing a microphone in the dining hall betrays the logistical importance of feeding a large number of young people on a regular basis in terms of time and space. The caretaker's microphone was for a certain degree of policing and maintenance announcements, while microphones in spaces for performances – e.g., festive gatherings, music and theatre shows – were likely to be those most accessible for pupils and visitors.

30 *Sähkötietokortisto* ST 23.11.

Morning Assemblies as Vocal Practice

In Finland, morning assemblies for prayer most certainly stretch back as far as the Middle Ages, but are first mentioned in writing in an 1872 decree[31] which calls for the daily singing of hymns, reading from the Bible, and praying – specifically in a shared space and led by the headteacher. For a century the emphasis was to focus on religious content in assemblies and, though the curricula made no mention of assemblies or prayers, there were guidelines to them every now and then in circulars from the education authorities. Assemblies provided an opportunity to fuse long-term educational objectives with the notion of an ideal citizen – a mundane but vital part of young people's moral upbringing.[32]

Following the 1923 Freedom of Religion Act, morning assemblies became a part of religious education in secondary schools [*oppikoulut*]. Those pupils who were on civil (but not parish) registers, or belonged to congregations other than the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland were now exempt from morning assembly, as these were nearly all religious in nature at this time. In primary schools, however, assembly remained compulsory for all pupils. This partial sensitivity to diversity continued until the 1970s, when there was an overhaul of the whole basic education system resulting in the "comprehensive school" and upper secondary education. This reform also caused morning assembly to be further separated from religious education. Assemblies were no longer called "morning prayers" (*aamuhartaus*), but instead "opening of the day" (*päivänavaus*). Although they were still supposed to be "positively linked to religious and ethical education at the school", morning assemblies were also to cover "topics relevant to the personal development of pupils – ones relating to their lives, school, and society" and to include "the communal singing of hymns or other suitable music"[33] – this was a significant change.

The only times pupils' voices were expected to be heard distinctly was when they were supposed to be enthusiastically joining in with communal singing of hymns.[34] When they later became individual speakers in morning assemblies, this happened as a part of the school's aim to teach pupils not just how to read, but also talk in a naturally educated way like the teachers.[35] There are parallels here to be drawn with Janice Schroeder's analysis of pupils' voices in Victorian

31 Decree 26/1872 / Asetus-Kokous 26/1872.
32 Peura, 2005.
33 Peura, 2005, 14–15.
34 Väätäinen, 1986, 20.
35 Tuomaala, 2004, 192.

classrooms: schooled voices were expressions of a certain form of culture and social propriety rather than of individual selfhood or agency.[36]

During the 20th century, the Church of Finland produced several guides[37] on how to give morning assembly – long seen as a cornerstone in the Church's important relationship with schools. By the time of the educational reforms in the 1960s and '70s however, the Church was less confident and began to contact education authorities and decision-makers directly "with the aim of keeping Christianity's gospel [at the heart of] morning assembly at school".[38] Disturbing rumours such as "reading from Chairman Mao's Little Red Book, sharing food recipes, or lectures on the routes of migratory birds" reached the Church in the 1970s.[39] Even if these experimental approaches to assembly may have been only a fad, the decrease in explicitly religious content overall was not. By the 1990s, less than 20 per cent of all morning assemblies were religious in nature,[40] and the 1999 amendment to legislation further loosened the grip of the Church. Not only did assembly no longer need to make a "positive connection to the school's religious and ethical education", but advance notice needed to be given of any religious content.

The essence of the vocalities present in assembly was always multi-layered: the assembly was a mundane repetitive part of the school day, yet at the same time attempting to be spiritually uplifting. As such it was – and still is – a lasting element in the structure of the school day in nearly all Finnish schools,[41] even if its form and content have evolved over the decades. It has also become part of the ritualistic function of music teaching in schools: singing hymns and other songs thought to instil a positive sense of community has been instrumental in the celebratory practices of the school's time cycles.[42]

For those schools that had them, PA systems were – in the first decades – most commonly used for morning assembly and the school radio programmes. In 1980, the Church of Finland described PAs as "a good basis for developing the practice of morning assembly", especially with regard to music. At the time this

36 Schroeder, 2015, 31–49.
37 See e.g., Kulometsä, Nikunen and Visapää, 1974; Bösinger, 1985; Holma, Majamäki, and Nummela, 1999; Stjernvall-Kiviniemi, 2021.
38 Holma, 1999, 92.
39 Bösinger, 1985, 16.
40 Pyysiäinen, 1994, 38–46.
41 Yle Uutiset May 21, 2014 "Lähes kaikissa kouluissa pidetään uskonnollisia päivänavauksia", https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-7252972. Accessed September 28, 2021.
42 Mustakallio, 1986, 49, cited in Hirvonen, 2009, 47.

was published, it was almost as common to have an assembly over the PA as in a shared space.[43]

The same publication claimed, however, that the use of central PAs for assembly had also “alienated teachers and pupils from the experience of active participation”, giving rise to “new didactic problems”.[44] This may have had something to do with technical issues: sound reproduction could sometimes be so poor that the speakers would often get turned off.[45] Nevertheless, by 1972 a study reported that pupils had become more in favour of assemblies over the PA.[46]

Not being able to see listeners also meant no direct control over how messages were received. For adult speakers, especially those from outside of the school community, it could be a baffling experience to speak “into the void” while simultaneously being aware of perhaps hundreds of children and youths listening. As parish employees found out when making their assembly delivering rounds in the local schools, the interfaces were seldom similar between schools. School staff expected human involvement combined with adequate technology skills – and certainly not a tape sent from the congregation.[47] As the church education secretary wrote in 1985, the role of the parish visitor was not easy: “coming from outside the school community, they are particularly susceptible to criticism”.[48] They were expected to deliver the Word in a way that created trust and more or less resembled a radio programme, but in practice this often meant “a solitary morning spent in front of a microphone and, at best, the school caretaker”.[49] The gap between the goals of morning assembly and the means available for adults to conduct them also grew as youth culture gained momentum and developed new expressions and mentalities alien to many adults.

During the latter half of the 20th century, pupils became more involved in giving morning assemblies and gained new vocal roles. The change was brought on by one specific addition to the material assemblage of schools and to the everyday life of young people in general – compact cassettes. Between the 1970s and 1990s, tapes had become the mainstream technology for listening to music in Finland. Pre-teens and teenagers could now record sound, moving from simply consuming

43 Kangas, 1980, 37.

44 Karttunen, 1980, 13.

45 Bösinger, 1985, 41.

46 Innanen, 1972 cited in Karttunen, 1980, 20.

47 Bösinger, 1985, 65; Hatanpää, 1999, 97.

48 Bösinger, 1985, 43.

49 Karttunen and Tamminen, 1980, 124.

ready-made recordings and broadcasts to producing or "prosuming" their own DIY mixtapes, testing their radio presenter skills, and so on.[50]

The biggest box office film of 1980 in Finland, *Täältä tullaan elämä*,[51] ("Life, Here We Come")[52] featured a scene with a PA system (Figs. 4–6) that challenged the rigid vocal hierarchy of morning assembly in schools, where two boys (already in a special class for delinquent behaviour) secretly replace the tape prepared by the school's most authoritarian teacher for morning assembly. It starts out with the religious organ music the teacher expects, but as he leaves the PA room, it changes abruptly to provocative Finnish punk and he finds himself unable to go back in and switch it off. Chaos ensues as pupils come out of their classrooms, which gets him angry and puts him in direct conflict with the boys.

In *Kasettimuistot* – the Finnish memory data collection about c-cassette technology – morning assemblies are remembered as outlets for self-expression via taped compilations. These were sometimes experimental or subversive, but they were at the very least different from what adults produced (teachers also practised their assembly material on tapes).

Fig. 4: The PA scene in Täältä tullaan elämä. Pete is showing Jussi the teacher's cassette from the PA room which he has just switched with the boys' own prank one (photo: Courtesy of KAVI (The Finnish National Audiovisual Institute)).

50 Kilpiö, Kurkela and Uimonen, 2015, 34, 53–4, 146–7.
51 *Täältä tullaan elämä*, 1980.
52 Literal translation of the film title. The official English name of the film is "Right On, Man!".

Fig. 5: Meanwhile, the unsuspecting teacher, Kiikkulainen, inserts the wrong tape into the player, presses play and then leaves the room. It is then too late for him to get back in and stop the tape as the boys have stuck chewing gum in the lock (photo: Courtesy of KAVI (The Finnish National Audiovisual Institute)).

Fig. 6: Kiikkulainen tries to restore order, get back into the PA room, and punish the guilty pupils all at once. Meanwhile punk music is blasting from every loudspeaker – the prank has worked (photo: Courtesy of KAVI (The Finnish National Audiovisual Institute)).

Incidents like “we played Estonian punk over the school’s central PA in morning assembly”[53] probably became more frequent after the success of *Täältä tullaan elämä*. Pupils invented other uses for cassettes and PAs, such as taping a whole day’s worth of playful and entertaining “senior student radio” for the day they would celebrate their *penkkarit*.[54] PA systems carried emergent properties, allowing for new vocal possibilities – they could become tools for vocal challenging, even if not always as subversive as in *Täältä tullaan elämä*. Upon entering the assemblage, cassettes nudged the swarm of vocal vitalities into new positions.

In terms of Bennett’s theory of assemblages, vocal agency is distributed among the affective bodies present in the school’s mixed assemblage.[55] The few mentions that PA systems do receive in contemporary studies of school environments, portray them as the embodiment of a simple hierarchy – a tool for adults to control children.[56] This certainly was one enduring feature of school PA systems, part of a system for creating what Foucault has termed “docile bodies”.[57] However, when studied in tandem with morning assemblies, it became clear that more complex relations were defining and producing vocalities in schools.

Studying PA systems and their use in schools renders this shifting assemblage of bodies and material objects as a tangible *swarm of vocalities*. In this swarm, representing the voice of the school, agency, and power are not distributed evenly, but the distribution remains in flux, built on shifting connections and elements – both old and new. When studying contemporary pedagogical practices at school, Dianne Mulcahy has observed that the perspective that assemblages provide helps to challenge the discourse that concentrates on the teacher and to focus on the multitudes of connections in schools.[58] The joint history of PA systems and morning assembly is a good example of such connections. It illustrates how assemblages may change over time – connecting different components in various ways, creating new vocal possibilities, and thus making morning assemblies slightly unstable in spite of their highly repetitive character. However, studying these connections historically can be tricky, as these connections have to be read from sources that are usually focusing on something else.

53 *Kasettimuistot*, resp. 818, male, b. 1977, Kirkkonummi.
54 *Kasettimuistot*, resp. 29, male, b. 1975, Porlammi. *Penkkarit* is a traditional day of wild carnivalesque celebration for Finnish last-year students about to start preparing for their matriculation examination. See e.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penkkarit.
55 Bennett, 2010, 21–24.
56 Cullingford, 1988, 7.
57 Foucault 1995, 135–168.
58 Mulcahy, 2012, 22.

Conclusions

We set out to analyse the intertwined history of PA systems and morning assemblies in Finnish schools, as neither had yet been specifically studied as historical phenomena. The aim was to discover how certain vocalities shaped the physical, emotional, temporal, and spatial aspects of schools, how they linked to other material and cultural systems, and how these vocalities themselves changed. We found that they shifted between two levels: the administrative ideological level of educational aims, and the everyday material level of the school day.

PA systems and morning assemblies are as much a part of the vocal assemblage in schools as the pupils and teachers themselves. The vocalities produced via them are elevated from the most mundane level of vocal practices happening in the classrooms, corridors, or playground of the school. They juxtapose the material swarm of agencies that make up everyday activities in the school with the more strategic and sublime ideas of the educational system – making any changes and frictions between these levels more immediately apparent.

To assess the practicality and functional aspects of the assemblage approach, the educational researchers Tara Fenwick and Paolo Landri ask three useful questions: How and why do certain combinations come together to exert particular effects? What knowledge is produced through patterns of assemblage? How do some assemblages become stable, and what force do they wield?[59]

In our case, the combination of vitalities which make up this assemblage are the ideals, material technologies, and systems governing PAs and morning assemblies which were evolving during the period in question – some transnationally, some characteristic to Finland. The post-war construction boom also applied to school buildings, which now had to cater for a growing and increasingly urbanized population. The increased size of modern schools encouraged the use of sound transmission technology. PAs could weaken certain vocalities (e.g. substitute hymn singing with playing recorded music), but also bring new possibilities (e.g. inclusion of pupils' voices and the use of compact cassettes). The gradual erosion of religious authority as a general conveyor of values as well as the changing citizenship ideals are connected to the shifts in the material assemblage.

Knowledge produced via this assemblage enabled pupils to understand several aspects of their own vocality. They were shown a hierarchy of voices and preferred vocalities (e.g., public speaking vs. peer communication) – often made explicit by teachers in classrooms, but also in using vocal technologies such as radio or PA systems. Pupils were supposed to follow the teacher's example, and

59 Fenwick and Landri, 2012, 3.

an awareness of "modern agency" was supposed to develop. However, divergent vocalities connected with these new audio technologies emerged as well – unexpected voices in morning assemblies; glitches and breakages; intentional pranks and more.

Although PA systems were – and in many cases still are – stable material elements of the vocal assemblage in Finnish schools (as part of the building), they are also a potential element of instability. Even when silent, they remain a latent presence, running through the assemblage, vibrating as possible sources of vocal emanation. Perhaps because they bypassed visual contact, authority could be undercut when classroom speakers were turned off; broadcasts sneered at; communal singing ignored; and more individualistic, comfortable postures assumed than would be possible in a shared-space morning assembly.

Rather than seeing the distribution of power and agency as that of teachers wielding their authority in one direction over pupils, the assemblage approach has allowed us to see a more nuanced and multi-layered distribution. It has also helped us trace the dynamics and origins of change in the technological infrastructure of long-lived institutional practices. Rather than following specific intentions, these changes materialise through shifts in agency, as new elements forge new connections within the assemblage.

Studying school PA systems and morning assemblies in this manner sheds light on everyday vocal practices, and shows how their combined assemblage can create vocal spaces of social negotiation and cultural shifts. The assemblage is interesting precisely because of its mundanity: voices heard so often they become the background hum of daily life, but over time also give it shape and incorporate change.

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Rona Wilkie

Performing Waulking Songs as an Emotional Practice in Gaelic Scotland

The Scottish Highlands have long been romanticised as a mysterious wilderness populated by warring factions and ancient tales. This image, cultivated in the post-Jacobite period, boasts Walter Scott among its main proponents, with Andrew Hook arguing that "through Scott the aura of romance finally settled upon Scotland [. . .] Her loyal, valorous, and proud people, her tradition of poetry and song [. . .] now appeared in new and totally irresistible form".[1] And although this portrayal has had an immense impact on how the Highlands are perceived to this day, it does little to explore the rich and difficult lived experience of Gaels in Highland Scotland. Scott and his cohort were correct, however, to highlight the ubiquitous role of poetry and song in this region. This was (and still is to a certain extent) a culture highly engaged by the oral tradition, where song accompanied every aspect of life, from work to important rites of passage and social gatherings every evening.[2] The ethnologist John Shaw argued that "the occasions for singing were so numerous that Gaelic song [. . .] has over generations inevitably made up a large part of the inner verbal dialogue among many traditional Gaels".[3] Gaelic literature was dominated by verse, and all verse was sung. Clan bards held an important place in the political hierarchy, and vernacular song-makers were held in high esteem. To understand the perspective of Gaelic Scotland, we must listen to their songs.

This chapter will focus on waulking songs *(òrain luaidh)*, where teams of women sang as they waulked the tweed. This was the method used to shrink woollen cloth prior to making garments, and involved hitting soaked cloth off boards over several hours whilst singing. The group sang together in the lengthy refrains, which were interspersed by shorter solo verses. Gaelic scholars date the composition of the earliest songs to the early seventeenth century and the last waulkings were documented in the early twentieth century.[4] The long span and regularity of the practice have left Scottish and Scottish Gaelic archives filled with

1 Hook, 1989, 319.

2 Challan, 2012, 1.

3 MacLellan, 2000, 17.

4 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 8–10.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111079370-009

hundreds, perhaps even thousands of songs which tackled a myriad of topics – from love songs to praise songs, flytings, and to political propaganda.[5]

These songs are an ideal source in the study of the inner emotional state and desires of women in Gaelic Scotland as they appear to have provided a vital form of emotional service for women in Gaelic Scotland. Margaret Harrison's analysis of 147 songs showed that around two-thirds of the corpus dealt with dark themes such as deep sorrow, longing, and anger.[6] We also know that waulkings were the highlight of the winter calendar for many, suggesting that the opportunity afforded to express raw emotion during the process was highly valued.[7] Specifically, I will examine what the content and formal structure of these songs might reveal about the emotion work woven into the manual labour of waulking. I will first consider the practice of waulking and then the nature of the shared compositional authorship of waulking songs. This will be followed by a close examination of five songs representative of the themes found in the broader corpus. Finally, I will turn to the prevalence of traumatic themes in waulking songs with a particular emphasis on the supportive nature of waulking created by the performance context.

Around 170 songs were included in the research and are largely drawn from the J. L. Campbell and Francis Collinson collections which printed examples of songs collected from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s.[8] Further examples come from relevant modern edited collections, as well as two nineteenth-century publications.[9] Oral versions of the songs from sound archives have also been cross-referenced where possible.

The Practice of Waulking

Waulkings were truly a community pursuit. The materials were local, the work was local, and the garment was used locally. Little to no money was exchanged and instead the work was paid for with gifts of food, drink, and gaiety.[10] Though males tended to be excluded from waulkings, they provided the stale urine which was central to the process.[11] This was combined with soap or hen dung to create a solution in

5 Frater, 1994, 11.
6 Harrison, 2012, 210–211.
7 MacLellan, 2000, 17; Paterson, 1968; Shaw, 1953a.
8 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, ix–xi; 2018b, 1–3; 2019, 1.
9 Mac-Na-Ceàrdadh, 1879; Nic a' Phearsain, 1891.
10 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 11.
11 MacKellar in Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 12.

which the newly woven web was soaked before the waulking in order to set the dye.[12] Once the cloth was wet, the waulking began. Teams ranged from four to twenty women, hitting the tweed off a board as one with their hands or feet. Songs were vital to the process. *Clò bodaich* – a song-less web – was considered unlucky, and as such, songs were sung throughout, providing rhythm for coordinating the group.[13] The work dictated each aspect of the form of these songs. Given the demanding nature of waulking, the vocal range of these songs is relatively narrow, most often sung in the lower part of the singer's range.[14] Stylistically, this tone of the voice had much in common with the traditional *seann-nòs* singing, favouring an unstressed nasalised tone.[15] This type of singing is particularly sharp to the ear, cutting through the significant noise from the thud of the cloth.

Visiting observers were invariably disapproving of the singing, describing it as "very strange", and comparing it to screaming.[16] It is likely that travellers' preconceived ideas of what excellent singing should entail was shaped by the preference for soft and high-pitched female voices in genteel society, as decribed by Wordsworth in his poem 1807 "The Solitary Reaper", where he lauded the singing of a working Highland woman as "a voice so thrilling ne'er was heard/ In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird".[17] The sharp singing displayed at the waulking table, however, was far from this ideal, and which must have dashed the image of picturesque Highland peasants so prevalent in English-language culture.[18] Furthermore, we can detect racist undertones in the descriptions of visitors to waulkings. In 1831 James Logan described "the wild shrill airs" as giving "a truly savage character to the scene, and reminded me of some of Catlin's descriptions of the customs of American Indians".[19] The theories that Gaels were racially inferior to Lowland Scots pushed by the nineteenth century press are clear influences on these accounts.[20] Gaels themselves considered the singing both as practical and beautiful, often comparing the quality of performances to those heard in the highest performance arenas such as ceilidh houses and weddings.[21] As with more conventional performance spaces, there was a hierarchy of singers with those with the best voice often taking the lead.[22]

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12 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 9; MacDonald, 1966.
13 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 9–10.
14 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 316.
15 MacDonald, 1980; MacRae and MacRae, 1964.
16 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 7, 9.
17 Wordsworth as quoted in Gillies, 2005, xxiv.
18 Hook, 319.
19 Logan quoted Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 4–5.
20 Fenyö, 2000, 179; Kidd, 1995, 68.
21 Cross, 1962; MacLeod and MacLeod, 1958.
22 MacLean and MacLean, 1974; Shaw, 1953b.

The work dictated the tempo, with beats ranging from ~96 to ~160 beats per minute.[23] Refrains of vocables (words with no dictionary definition), designed to keep the rhythm of the work, alternated with single- or double-line verses. Verses were sung by a soloist, with refrains sung by the team, allowing the soloist time to rest her voice and take a breath. The verses entertained the waulkers with highly engaging narratives and subjects ranged from love to loss, gossip to traditional stories. Singing together fashioned a community unique to the time, place and task, and added considerable motivation and levity to the dirty and difficult work.[24] It was the refrain however, that was the most recognisable and important aspect of the song; dominating the opening and ending as well marking the change of topic or perspective.[25] These songs can be compared to the cloth they were intended to create – tweed. The refrains formed the base colour, constant and unchanging, but easily identifiable with verses more akin to the flecks of colour, which add depth and interest to the beauty of the tweed, but which are also unpredictable in their lack of uniformity.

Authorship of Waulking Songs

Campbell and Collinson suggest that the earliest waulking songs date no earlier than 1600, with the practice of waulking continuing across the Highlands until the early twentieth century.[26] The earliest songs share linguistic and rhetorical markers with the panegyric verse composed by professional poets in the seventeenth century.[27] Furthermore, the material culture and political framework described in these older songs are largely the life of the seventeenth-century ordinary Gaels.[28] However, identifying a single-named composer is very difficult for most of these songs. In the unusual occasion where a single author can be named, the song is exceptional as it invariably was the creation of one of the famous female bards of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries or from later political bards who used the waulking form to push their own political agendas.[29] Most composers have left very little trace in the historical record, with their names lost and their

23 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 314–316.
24 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 6.
25 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 228; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 307–309.
26 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 8–9.
27 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 8–9.
28 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 9.
29 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 94–95; Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 154–159; Gillies, 179–181; Nic a' Phearsain, 291–293.

compositions attributed to 'anonymous' or 'traditional'. Our ability to add specificity to the compositional context is further complicated by the fact that the vast majority of songs were not committed to any sort of permanent record (either in written or aural/oral form) until the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is a tradition which survived orally for generations. We can, however, analyse the text to identify a core intention and narrative voice from a composer. Many songs present one perspective whilst the consistency of the rhetorical devices, internal assonance and rhyming schemes point to a largely constant transmission across the generations. Others have confusing narrative structures which suddenly change plot or perspective, suggesting that more than one song has been combined or that verses have been lost. Anne Frater argued that these different perspectives emerged from extemporisation at the waulking table, which often used the original opening line as a "springboard" from which to create a new narrative.[30] These sudden shifts in perspective, rhetoric and rhyme must be, then, an indicator of consecutive composition.

Alongside being able to identify single or consecutive composers, these songs were also the result of composite composition. The purely oral nature of the transmission over generations undoubtedly created an uncountable number of incremental changes to the structure and content of verses. As such, waulking songs provide an excellent example of Valdimar Hafstein's theory that the "folk tradition offered an alternative to authorship: folk tradition is peer-peer, it is collaborative, it is cumulative".[31] The sometimes extensive variation between versions suggests that the singer expressed the song as she saw fit; at times she could stay consistent with the narrative she had received aurally, whereas at other times, she could vary the song, either through omission, alteration of lyrics or by changing the topic entirely.[32] The specific intention behind a performer's choice of song is unknowable and will have varied significantly from singer to singer and performance to performance. The decision to sing a song is worthy of attention however, as it is important indicator that the performer was drawn to the piece enough to invest her energy in learning and actively performing the piece. Theoretically, it has been long established by musicologists that the act of choosing how to fill a sonic space is based on conscious decisions, with musical choices, as Christopher Small argued, "exploring, affirming or celebrating a sense of identity".[33] Furthermore, on a practical level, the first-person perspective of most of these songs pushed singers to embody the lyrics and/or themes of the song during the performance, at least to some extent. This must have been a significant factor

30 Frater, 1994, 125.

31 Hafstein, 2018, 380.

32 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 44–53; 92–95; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 156–165, 216–219.

33 Merriem, 1964, 81; Small, 1994, 74; Turino, 2008, 93.

to consider when choosing which songs to perform. The addition of a first-person song perspective to one's repertoire after all, not only shows that a woman was merely interested in the song, but was also prepared to voice the narrative as though she was the protagonist. And given that waulking songs were collected almost exclusively from oral sources, often generations after their initial composition, the very inclusion of each song in the archive is a testament to dozens, if not hundreds of singers, over multiple generations deciding to represent themselves through each song. In order to demonstrate this complex authorship in this chapter, I will use two terms to describe the composers and performers of waulking songs. 'Original composer' will refer to the motivations of the composer(s) in the probable earliest stage of the song's life, whereas composer(s)/performer(s) will refer to the person or people performing the song.

Themes of Waulking Songs

Female verse in the period before 1750, the period in which a significant number of the body of waulking songs originated, is dominated by domestic concerns. During this period, political song-making was generally the province of men in Gaelic society.[34] Indeed, the act of composing verse reserved for men was considered so scandalous that the "rebellion of women in this period consisted not in a physical struggle, but in breaking the taboos of the time, most notably in their song-making".[35] Very few, however, could afford to be labelled as divergent in a society where women had the same rights as minors and were reliant on their fathers and husbands. As such, only a few female bards have left any political poetry from the period before 1750. All of these bards came from the upper strata of society and most payed a price for the compositional output by being branded as either sexually deviant or engaged in witchcraft.[36] As a result, women's song became associated with love or mourning, and was most often sung during work.[37] Consequently, these songs were exponentially more emotional than the highly structured praise poetry of the political bards, where formalised codes could stem originality of thought and perspective. In broad terms, waulking songs followed the societal norms of what women were allowed to sing about. Love and loss dominated thematically and the songs which dealt with the matters of war, diplomacy and clanship did so obliquely

34 Frater and Byrne, 2012, 21.

35 Frater, 1999, 114.

36 Ó Baoill, 2004, 141.

37 Frater, 1999, 111–114; Frater and Byrne, 2012, 23.

through these themes. Although there were political discussions, they were almost always linked personally to the composer(s)/performer(s)' lived experience and were of secondary importance.[38] Women's song, then, regardless of genre, often offers the historian a more personal insight into the emotional state of ordinary Gaels than that of the more prestigious male tradition.

The juxtaposition of formal rhetoric and of personal perspective is evident in 'Ach a Mhurchaidh Òig Ghaolaich (But, Beloved Young Murdo)'.[39] The imagery used in this song was heavily influenced by the rhetorical praise panegyric used by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century political bards, but here the composer(s)/performer(s) added a personal touch.[40] The descriptions of hunting prowess, musicality, and generosity employed through the song was a typical rhetorical choice used in the descriptions of an ideal leader and lover, or, as is the case here, the composer(s)'/performer(s)' particular desired.[41] However, there is an added intimacy in the description of her relationship through the clever use of repetition, an integral feature of waulking songs. This "incremental repetition" present in waulking songs, coupled with extensive use of negative antithesis and understatement, ensured that the song became "all the more intense when the words are sung, as each line is repeated, first as the second line of a couplet, and then as the first line of the next couplet".[42] The composer(s)/performer(s) of 'Ach a Mhurchaidh Òig Ghaolaich' manipulated this repetition to underline her love for Murchadh, starting her song with the declaration that "Ach a Mhurchaidh òig ghaolaich/ bidh tu daonnan air m' aire (But beloved young Murdo/ on my mind you'll always be)".[43] This is a powerful statement of her love in itself, but she deliberately juxtaposes it with long passages of common love imagery before cutting down the rhetoric to return to her opening statement. In doing so, the composer(s)/performer(s) appear to be mocking the very rhetorical devices they were using as the active placing of typical language next to the intimate langued implied that well-trodden love panygeric alone was inadequate to describe the extent of her adoration. We can imagine the cheers from the waulking table when the line reappeared throughout the song, as they had followed the hyperbolic and impersonal rhetoric, each repeated twice, layered on top of each other, only to be reminded that they recognised the voice of the protagonist – she was singing in the same room.

38 See for instance Black, 2001, 36–39; 182–187; Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 144–49; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 148–53, 170–172.

39 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 26–29.

40 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 26–29.

41 MacInnes, 1970, 452, 456, 478.

42 Bateman, 1997, 661.

43 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 26–29.

As with other forms of European work songs, there was a fluidity between the themes of love and of sex in waulking songs, and there is open coveting of sexual relations throughout the corpus.[44] The gender exclusivity of the workspace allowed women to voice their true yearnings without much concern of judgement from male moral authorities. At times this could render very tender verse as seen below in Figure 1.

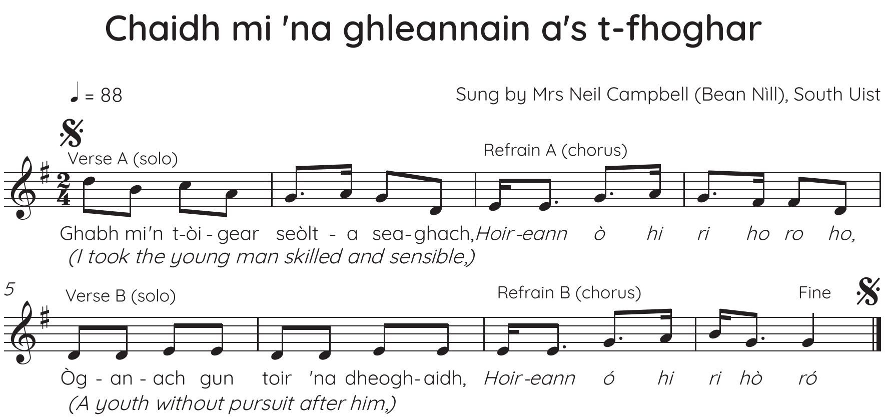

Fig. 1: From Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 290.

> 'S ruigea tu 'n t-àit' am biodh mise,
> Leaba bheag an cùl na ciste,
> Siud an leaba am biodh na gifhtean,
> Ge bè rannsaicheadh gun fhiosd i.
>
> *You'd reach the place where I would be,*
> *A little bed behind the coffer,*
> *That's the bed where the gifts were,*
> *Whoever searched it secretly.*[45]

More explicitly, the next example (Fig. 2) lists men in the community who the group jokingly imagine sleeping with.[46] The gaps in the text were filled with the names of men chosen by the waulkers and who, most likely, everyone knew.

44 See for instance: Campbell and Collinson 2018a, 114–116; Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 144–151, 172–175; 178–181; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 206–207; Pickering, Robertson and Korczynski, 2008, 229.

45 Verses 15–18 (of 21). Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 60–61. Note that spelling throughout chapter follow the conventions adopted by the cited editor.

46 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 60–61; 144–151; 172–175.
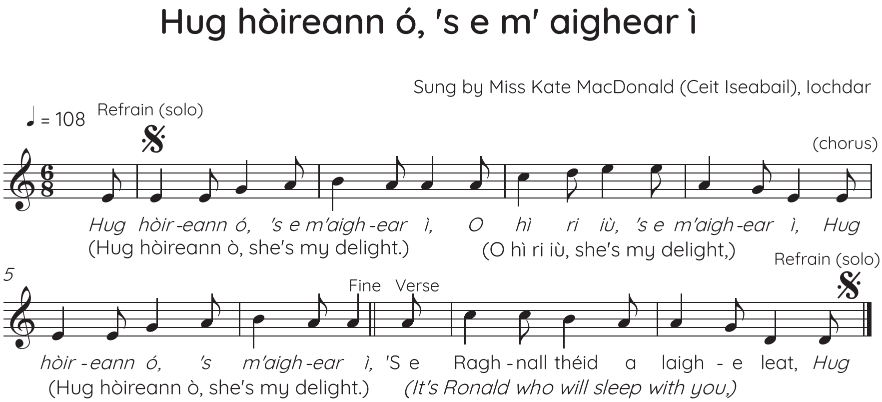
Fig. 2: From Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 414.

Hug hòireann ó, 's e m' aighear ì,
Ho hì ri iù, 's e m' aighear ì,
Hug hòireann ó, 's e m' aighear ì.

'S e Raghnall théid a laighe leat
'S e _____ _____ fhuair thu,
'S e _____ _____ a nì do ruaimleachadh
An cuala sibh có laigheas leo'?
'S e Calum a théid a laighe leat

Hug hòireann ò, she's my delight,
Ho hì ri iù, she's my delight,
Hug hòireann ò, she's my delight.

It's Ronald who will sleep with you,
It's _____ _____ who got you,
It's _____ _____ who'll roll you around,
Did you hear who'll sleep with them?
It's Calum who will sleep with you.[47]

This song (Fig. 2) was a clapping song, used at the end of the process, and appears to have been a fun game constructed to celebrate the end of the waulking and foster a sense of unity in the group.[48] However, in a society where marriage decisions were often out of the control of these singers, and where women could even be sold into marriage or returned after an unsatisfactory year and a day, asserting

47 Verse 1 (of 2) and refrain. Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 206–207.
48 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 188.

your desires over your body was not only funny, but insubordinate.[49] These songs of expecting sexual intercourse with the lover of your choice, in reality, are closely related to the numerous songs of unrequited love which fill the corpus, often as a result of a high-born man marrying a high-born woman rather than the singer at the waulking table.[50] Similarly, songs listing reasons the composer(s)/performer(s) refusal to marry were equally unrealistic.[51] Often interpreted as examples of female empowerment in Gaelic societies by modern performers, they must have been as often cries of frustration as declarations of intent.

Waulkings as a Supportive Emotional Space

The powerlessness over one's body and the indignity of violation is most evident in the songs which discuss rape.[52] In each instance there appears to have been no repercussions for the perpetrator of the assault: on the contrary, according to the songs, the women were disgraced.[53] There is a particularly blunt description of rape in the South Uist tradition bearer Catriana Campbell's version of 'Chunnaic mise mo leannan (I saw my lover)' in Figure 3.[54] While she was mostly consistent with other versions by opening with a tale of spurned love laced with Jacobite propaganda, she suddenly changed tack after her sixth verse. The following six couplets have an inconsistent rhyming pattern, only partially related to the assonance schemes of the previous perspective. These verses are rhetorically simple, with little use of the panegyric code so evident in the other versions. This disorganised verse suggests that the end of Catriana Campbell's song was made up of extemporised verse with little rhetorical or poetic development from following generations, and it was likely that the original composer was a desperate woman who had finished the original story in an example of consecutive composition.

49 Frater and Byrne, 2012, 29.

50 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 80–84; 106–109; Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 66–71; 132–135; 178–181; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 74–77; 166–169.

51 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 92–95; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 190–193; Gillies, 378–380; Mac-Na-Ceàrdadh, 175–176.

52 Black, 2001, 182–187; Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 70–73; 100–103; Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 54–59; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 156–164. Frater, 2012, 124.

53 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 100–105; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 156–165; Frater, 2012, 124.

54 There is no copy of Catriana Campbell singing, or a transcription of her melody. Other versions here: Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 156–165; MacLean, 1950.

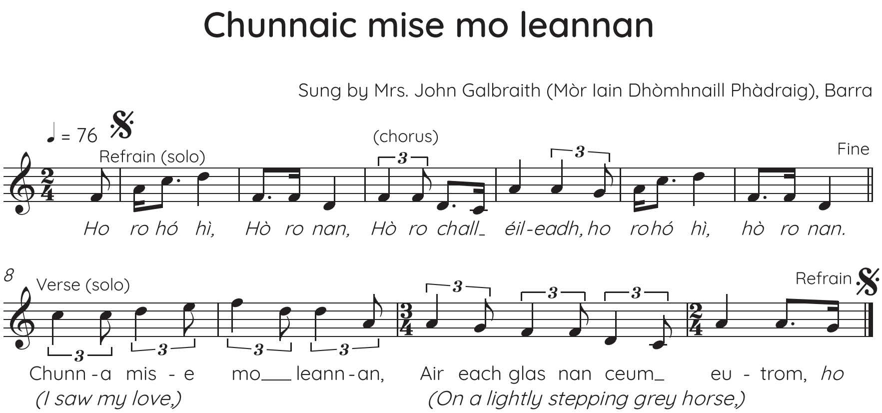

Fig. 3: From Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 396.

’S ann air bothag an fhàsaich
Thug am meàrlach mi air éiginn

’S ann am bothag a’ ghlinne,
Far nach cluinneadh iad m’ éigheachd,

’S tha do leanamh ’nam achlais
’S mi gun tacsa fo’n ghréin dha.

’S mura falbh mi as m’ òige
A dh’iarraidh lòn air gach té dha.

’S truagh nach cluinneadh mo chàirdean
Am màireach gun dh’eug mi,

Chionns ’s gun faiceadh iad soilleir
Gu robh choir’ aca fhé’ ris.

It was in the bothy in the wilderness
That the rascal raped me.

In the bothy in the glen,
Where they’d not hear my cry.

Your child is in my arms, and I am
Without a support in the world for him,

Unless I go in my youth to seek provision
From every woman for him.

It is a pity that my relations would not
Hear tomorrow that I had died,

So that they might see clearly that
They themselves were to blame for it.[55]

The composer(s)/performer(s) here viewed the women of the community as a survival mechanism for her and her child, and this female network goes some way to explain why a woman who felt near to death (either in reality, or metaphorically, in shame) was enabled to air her most intimate anxieties to this audience. She was not alone: as has been already discussed, lost partners, infant mortality, unrequited love and the fear of poverty are common themes in waulking songs. The most extreme disclosure in the corpus is the admission of an incestuous relationship. In 'Stoirm nan gobhar ri taobh na h-abhann (The noise of the goats beside the river)' the composer(s)/performer(s) defiantly demonstrated a lack of regret for her relationship with her brother, and instead concentrated on her love for her son and on her fear of punishment.[56] And although the exclusivity of gender in the waulking environment meant that women mostly felt safe to compose and sing songs of trauma, this alone fails to explain why women actively chose to perform songs with such dark themes. Nowhere else in women's song were taboos so regularly commented on, and this begs the question of what was special about the waulking table which encouraged women to discuss their most vulnerable selves.

We should first reflect on the impact of the work and the workspace on singers' inhibitions. On a practical level, one of the most notable environmental factors to consider is the loud nature of waulking. Given that the raison d'être of waulking was to subject a woollen web to prolonged beating, these sessions were necessarily noisy affairs. And this din appears to have been akin to a protective audio shield for women.[57] Angela Bourke described two female singing practices in Scotland and Ireland, waulking and keening, in which women's opinions and complaints were freely aired.[58] She convincingly argued that the significant incidental noise created by the group of fellow female performers encouraged women to make subversive lyrical choices as the detail of the song would only be partially audible in the midst of the surrounding racket.[59] The well-known singer and tradition bearer Annie Johnston also addressed the accompanying noise in the waulking rooms

55 Verses 7–12 (of 12) and refrain. Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 164–165.
56 Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 80–83.
57 Radner and Lanser, 1993, 16.
58 Bourke, 1988.
59 Bourke, 1988.

when explaining that the combined singing and rhythm-creation of waulkings created a heightened atmosphere where "the workers [were] hypnotized by the combined effects of tune and rhythm, and [would] carry on till almost exhausted".[60] John Lorne Campbell analysed her descriptions and suggested that these "semi-trance conditions" facilitated a "complete lack of self-consciousness" among waulkers. Hamish Henderson went as far as arguing that these conditions created an atmosphere in which "the whole inner life of the women comes to the surface in uninhibited self-expression".[61]

Comparisons of these accounts and analyses with modern scientific work considering the impact of singing and moving together in controlled research settings today can shed light as to why waulkings had this trance-like quality. Emma Cohen argues that "mounting evidence from the behavioural and psychological sciences now indicates a powerful causal association between synchronous group activity and social cohesion".[62] Evidence has also emerged which suggests that "when people perform the same movements at the same time, there is a co-activation of action and perception networks which is believed to blur the sense of 'other' and 'self', and this leads to the reduction of pain thresholds and an increase of trust and generosity between people inside the group".[63] Whilst equivalent studies cannot be conducted on the waulking teams of the past, the similarities between the effects spoken of by witnesses and performers of waulkings and the phenomena observed in this modern research suggest that comparable group bonding was present in both settings.

It is also useful to consider the physiological changes in singers observed by scientists in their research on the impact of social singing in building community spirit and in the treatment of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and PTSD.[64] Chemical changes in the saliva of those involved in community singing projects show an increase of Immunoglobin A, associated with positive emotional arousal, and a reduction of cortisol, an indicator of stress.[65] Although it is impossible to definitively project these findings of modern scientific research onto the waulking teams of the past, they may help in understanding why singers were so willing to explore darker themes in their performances. it would be

60 Johnson in Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 6.

61 Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 6; Henderson quoted in Pickering, Robertson and Korzcynski, 232.

62 Cohen, 2019, 145.

63 Tarr et al., 2005, 3; Tarr et al., 2016, 344.

64 Beck et al., 2000, 87–106; Garrido et al., 2015, 2; Saarikallio, 2017, 77–79; Swart, 2014, 195, 199–202; Williams et al., 2018, 1037.

65 Beck et al., 2000, 88, 97.

reasonable to suppose that, as in the modern world, singing relieved stress during the times in which waulkings were a common affair – especially when dark thematic content of the songs is taken into account. The collective singing of waulkings happened every couple of seconds during the refrains, which were built on vocables. Many scholars have called the vocables which make up the majority of these collective refrains "meaningless" when discussing the lack of lexical definition for these words.[66] In light of this research however, such terminology should be used carefully as it was during the repetition of these vocables that the reduction of stress and anxiety, as well as the building of community spirit and trust, shown to be a consequence of collective singing, would have been developed. And, it was this context that was most likely a key environmental factor in encouraging women to delve into deeply emotional content. Therefore, although vocables do not have a lexical meaning, it can be supposed that their performance functioned as a catalyst in defining the thematic choices made in the verses during the original compositional stage.

Furthermore, some songs had short phrases among the vocables of the refrains.[67] Most appear from the perspective of the soloist, and, by adopting her point of view, the group validated and comforted the leader. Given that everyone around the waulking table shared a cultural and environmental context, it is likely that at least some of the supporting singers used the soloist's song to voice their own trauma during refrains. Many of the traumatic themes covered in the corpus discussed experiences common in these communities afterall. In 'A Dhòmhnaill Dhuinn, ma rinn thu m' eugcoir (O brown-haired Donald, if you wronged me)', (Fig.4) the whole table professed their distress at the loss of sons to impressment. Whilst the specifics of losing three sons to a press gang quickly after the death of a husband were unlikely to be shared throughout the waulking team, most women will have related to the story of loss whether through missing a relative in the army or having a son drowned at sea.[68] Furthermore, the theme of impressment or sons serving in the armed forces for long periods of time became increasingly familiar to communities, as the Highlands became one of the most heavily mobilized regions in Europe in the post-Jacobite period.[69] This song, therefore, can help us draw two types of conclusions about coping with the sudden loss of sons in Gaelic society. Firstly, the original composer's voice provided a personal account of grief and frustration at the consequences of the growing militarisation of the region. Secondly, the fact that this song remained in the tradition suggests that it was representative of women as a whole –

66 Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 227–237; Frater and Byrne, 2012, 24.

67 Campbell, 1984, 144–53; Campbell and Collinson, 2018a, 44–53; Campbell and Collinson, 2018b, 90–93; Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 92–93; Gillies, 58–59; Mac-Na-Ceàrdadh, 461–466.

68 Maciver, 2018, 249–265.

69 Dziennik, 2015, 5.

both the women who joined the leader in sorrow each refrain, but also generation upon generation who felt the need to voice this story. This continued performance, therefore, is useful evidence in an analysis of the emotional reaction to loss and conscription for women across multiple generations.

A Dhòmhnaill Dhuinn, ma rinn thu m' eucoir

Sung by Mrs. Mary MacNeil (Màiri Ruarachain), Barra
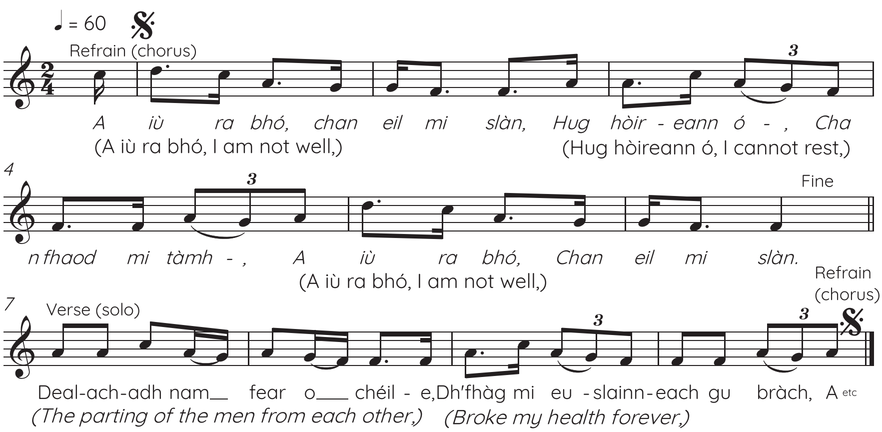
Fig. 4: Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 389; MacNeil, 1949.

> *A iù ra bhó, cha n-eil mi slàn,*
> *Hug hòireann ó, chan fhaod mi tàmh,*
> *A iù ra bhó, cha n-eil mi slàn.*

A Dhòmhnuill Dhuinn, ma rinn thu m'eugcoir
Bha mi dhut mar thé 'ile a chàch.

Ged a thug thu an gini òir dhomh
Daor an dròbh chuir mi 'n a' bhlàir.

Ged a thug thu bhuam an triùir ud,
Bha an athair 'san ùir a' cnàmh,

Dealachadh nam fear o chéile,
Dh'fhàig mi euslainneach gu bràch.

A iù ra bhò, I am not well,
Hug hoireann ò, I cannot rest,
A iù ra bhò, I am not well,

O brown-haired Donald, if you wronged me,
I was to you but as one of the rest.
Though you gave me the golden guinea,
Dear was the drove that I sent to the field.

Though you took yon three from me,
Their father was mouldering in the grave.

The parting of the men from each other
Broke my health forever.[70]

Conclusion

This volume attempts to historicize the daily grind of ordinary people, and there were few tasks which were dirtier, smellier, and more exhausting than waulking in the Gaelic world. Moreover, as has been established throughout the chapter, these songs are highly revealing about the lives of the ordinary women who held very few rights and were often from the poorer portions of society. The combination of a female workspace with hypnotic movement and songs consisting of both solo and chorus lines encouraged and enabled women to vocalise their most intimate lives. These songs can bring us into the world of women, as they communicated in an unusually open and honest environment. And scholars of Gaelic Scotland are privileged by the fact that sound archives are filled with these songs – we can actually listen to women who waulked sing and describe the process.[71] However, these recordings can only introduce us to the sonic world of waulkings. Mostly made in the mid-twentieth century by visiting collectors, the recordings offer a mere impression of what waulkings were. The young voices who had waulked have grown old in these recordings, and it is impossible to imagine the chatter, smell, or excitement of such a gathering in the midst of the dark Northern winter night. Yet, to properly understand these songs, the full context must be taken into account. A complete analysis of waulking songs must include two vital components then. First, the impact of the form must be fully acknowledged and analysed. Not only were these songs with melodies and singers, but they were used for a specific purpose. A key question could include how the structure of song (e.g. verse repetition) changed the reception of the lyric for instance. Secondly, the motivation for performance and/or

70 Verses 1–4 (of 11) and refrain. Campbell and Collinson, 2019, 148–151.
71 The hyperlinks referenced will take you to sound files to recordings of the songs and of the discussions about waulking.

composition should be central to any analysis. This calls for the contextualisation of the performance context of the original composition, and a consideration of why the song remained important enough to women to ensure its survival within the oral tradition. The benefits of this thorough contextualization is immeasurable – scholars can gain a nuanced insight into the intimate hopes and emotional lives of women whose names have been lost to the historical record.

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Susanne Quitmann

Voicing Imperial Order, Identity, and Resistance: The Singing of British Child Migrants

In June 1890, shortly after her arrival in Canada, young Annie Taylor[1] sent a letter to her matron back in England:

> Dear Madam I am always thinking of you [. . .] and all the distant friends I have left behind, from morning till last thing at night I am singing hymns, but above all the one you taught the girls, God be with you till we meet again that is one of my favorite's [sic].[2]

Annie Taylor was one of over 100,000 children[3] sent to the British settler colonies without an adult family member between 1869 and 1970.[4] In setting up government-supported child migration schemes, the British child rescue movement of the late nineteenth century drew on earlier, scattered examples of child migration. Child rescuers saw the emigration of socially and economically disadvantaged children as a remedy for social problems in Britain, a method to cope with labour shortage in the colonies, and a way to open up both spiritual and material opportunities for the children, making them productive citizens of the Empire. In Childrens Homes and farm schools, private farms and households, children trained as farm labourers and domestics. Child migration to Canada dwindled in the 1920s, but the Fairbridge scheme continued to send children to Vancouver Island until the early 1950s. Programmes bringing children to Australia lasted until 1970.[5]

Historians of childhood, in the words of Rodolph Leslie Schnell, "study one of the conspicuous mutes of history".[6] Yet, children seem mute only to the ears of the historian. Contemporaries hear children gibber, laugh, cry, and sing. In an attempt to hear these historical voices, this chapter analyses the singing practices of children

1 Given the Together Trust's privacy restrictions, 'Annie Taylor' and 'Jane Lewis' are pseudonyms.
2 Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges, Emigration Reports and Letters, Girls: 1889–1893, 1889, folder 30, GB127.M189/7/4/2, Manchester Archives (MA).
3 The legal and social definition of 'child' changed during the period studied here, and it is often impossible to identify an individual's age from the sources. My analysis focuses on individuals sent by agencies emigrating mostly youngsters between the ages of 6 and 16, and usually supervising them up to age 21.
4 Harper / Constantine, 2010, 248.
5 For a dense overview see e.g. Harper and Constantine, 2010, chap. 9; for the end date see Lynch, 2021, 146.
6 Schnell, 1982, 204.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111079370-010

sent to Australia and Canada under the British child migration schemes. In the Subaltern Studies tradition, research on marginalised actors' voices tends to understand "voice" metaphorically, focusing on its narrative dimension.[7] Attending to children's singing draws attention to the sound dimension. Sound can express more than words alone, and singing allows for different ways of framing and archiving children's voices.

I analyse the framework in which child migrants raised their voices in singing, in which these voices were recorded and archived, as well as the mindset with which I excavate them today. All of these processes, I argue, define the "voices" we can – or cannot – find in history books. Analysing voices in both their narrative and sound dimension, as well as their social frameworks makes "voice" a fertile epistemological concept to study the experiences of those who have been deemed "mute" in history. I caution against what I call the "resistance trap" and explore the limits of the dichotomy between active resistance and passive submission, thereby challenging myself to cast aside preconceived categories and personal sympathies.[8] Rather than searching for voice as an authentic expression of the self or a democratic metaphor for agency and empowerment, I am interested in the complex web of social forces behind and interpretations of children's voices and vocal practices. This concept of "voice" allows insight not only into individuals' experiences, but also into broader social dynamics. Rather than elevating the historian through the gesture of "giving back voices" to the marginalized,[9] it historicizes the gesture itself. Children's singing is accessible through different sources – almost exclusively unsounding writings. This chapter relies on lyrics and reports about singing, both contemporaneous and retrospective.[10]

Among childcare agencies such as the Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges (Refuges), which had cared for Annie Taylor and sent her to Canada, singing was a popular tool to instil imperial ideals and religious faith into the children

7 E.g. Spivak, 1988; Arista, 2009; Dusinberre, 2017.

8 Thank you to Janice Schroeder, who provided valuable feedback on this point.

9 Greg Dening, 1998, 145, for example, described his ambition as 'fill[ing] [. . .] the silence of those who [. . .] had no voice'; Martin Dusinberre, 2017, 144, countered that 'I do not think it is the role of historians to counter silence by "giving" anything,' and '[e]levation should not be for the global historian'.

10 Besides viewing various child migration agencies' published material and government files, I was granted access to the Together Trust's files of the Refuges (GB127, MA), some of The Prince's Trust's Fairbridge Farm Schools files (D296, University of Liverpool Special Collections and Archives [UOL]), and, under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, Sec. 126, to some of the Canadian Duncan Fairbridge Farm School files (MS-2444, MS-2045, MS-2121, BC Archives [BCA]); Charlotte Alexander's records are publicly available at the Library and Archives Canada (MG29 C8, Library and Archives Canada [LAC]).

in their care. They also used children's singing in their public outreach. Children like Taylor knew that a good singing voice and an affinity for music was social capital, allowing them to gain the approval of their adult caretakers. For uprooted children, music could become a way to (per)form their identity. It provided an acoustic home and a community. Besides, some children expressed their everyday struggles in contrafacta, resisting the adult order.

Voicing Order

Singing is a cultural instrument and social ritual.[11] Since the Early Modern period, English charitable institutions used music education of the poor and/or criminal as a pedagogical and fundraising tool.[12] In the nineteenth century, when the first child migration agencies were founded, music became a widespread tool to form children into devout Christians, patriotic citizens, and cultivated offspring. Schools began to teach singing,[13] congregational singing began to play a vital role in religious services,[14] and domestic music became a valued part of middle-class life.[15] Music was part of everyday life in the institutions run by the child migration agencies, both in Britain and overseas. Lilian M. Birt's assertion that "most" of the children her agency sent out with its 99th party to Canada in 1922 "have learned to play some musical instrument and are also good singers"[16] shows how widespread music training was in British childcare institutions at the time, as Birt took children from multiple agencies throughout Britain. Many agencies had boys' brass bands, which have attracted more scholarly attention than the agencies' choral music.[17] They were, however, not part of the institutions' everyday soundscape. Singing, in contrast, was the most common form in which child migrants of either sex heard and performed music.

Getting lower-class children not just physically but spiritually and culturally "out of the gutter" was a central goal of the child rescue movement. Lower-class music, non-religious entertainment music popularised in music halls, was regarded as degenerated and dangerous, prompting numerous attempts to regulate it during

11 Attali, 2004, 11.
12 MacKinnon, 2015, 239–256.
13 On the teaching of music in British schools during the nineteenth century see Johnson-Williams, 2019.
14 Tamke, 1978, 2.
15 Budde, 1994, 134–141; Scott, 2002, 69.
16 Lilian M. Birt, Letter to F. James, July 15, 1922, 1, RG 76, Volume 64, file 3081, part 3, LAC.
17 E.g. Parker, 2016; Sheldon, 2009.

the nineteenth century.[18] Music training, noted Thomas Barnardo, founder of the Barnardo's Homes, was a way to provide the desired sort of entertainment: "Children will sing, and the only question is, how shall they sing, and what shall they sing? Teach them good music wedded to innocent, sweet, noble words, and you give them a priceless heritage of beauty, of culture, of abiding spiritual possession".[19] In 1955, the Molong Fairbridge Farm School in Australia still listed music as one of several hobbies, which "should be carefully supervised".[20] Children could not be silenced. Instead, their expressions had to be guided and controlled. Music was a means to that end.

Children's public musical performances demonstrated the child migration agencies' aims: raising physically and spiritually disciplined Christian citizens for the Empire.[21] With the children of the poor seen as a threat to social order, displaying acoustic order was important to placate benefactors.[22] In 1887, Rev. H. D. Barrett described the singing voices of children leaving for Canada under the Church of England's Waifs and Strays Society to depict the children as strong, healthy, and God-fearing: "It was touching to hear the childish treble and the strong tones from lustier lungs bent, under such circumstances, in the strains of the old familiar hymn, 'Sun of my Soul'".[23]

Claiming privacy concerns, most agencies' files are inaccessible to researchers.[24] Therefore, sources about the everyday use of music and its changes over time are scarce. Public reports and later recollections indicate that the use of music changed relatively little throughout the decades. Most differences in style and use were organisation- rather than time-specific. Here, the Fairbridge Farm Schools are a case in point. Founded as the "Society for the Furtherance of Child Emigration to the Colonies"[25] in 1909, the agency had a strong imperial agenda. Its goal was to raise colonizers, physically strong and willing to work. In his founding speech, Kingsley Fairbridge explained: "In the first place, it is essential that the children should have sound health and strong bodies. For this purpose a

18 Picker, 2003, chap. 2; Bailey, 1978, chap. 7.
19 Barnardo and Marchant, 1907, 134.
20 Memorandum Re: Education and Training, September 1955, 3, D296 J3/2/18, UOL.
21 Ash, 2016, 55.
22 Cunningham, 1991, 18–20, 38–45.
23 "Our [Emigrants] (Letter from the Rev. H. D. Barrett)", *Our Waifs and Strays* 39 (New Series) (July 1887): 2f. https://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/publications/waifs_and_strays/188707_l_1.html.
24 For exceptions see fn 10.
25 The agency was renamed Fairbridge Farm Schools in 1935 and Fairbridge Society in 1949; it was dissolved after merging with The Prince's Trust in 2013.

primary place in the curriculum will be given to the claims of physical culture".[26] While the agency's 1937 annual report asserted that "[i]mportance of music in the training of children is recognised at Fairbridge,"[27] the establishment of choirs or bands at its schools in Canada and Australia depended on individual staff members' voluntary efforts. Patriotism and imperialism coloured the songs sung at the schools. Songs expressing loyalty to both the British crown and the respective Dominion framed events at the agency's schools. The programme of the 1936 Christmas Concert at the Duncan Farm School in Canada, for example, "commenced with 'The Maple Leaf,' sung by the school and audience. [. . .] 'God Save the King' closed the programme".[28] Such framing also aimed at connecting the children with their new home. In 1939, the agency's London Committee advised the principal of the Molong Farm School in Australia: "Effort should be made to detach the children from their English roots and to give Australian colour to all their work and paly [sic]. They should, for instance, sing Australian songs".[29] The results of such efforts were mixed, as I will show later.

Most agencies' repertoire was dominated by Christian hymns. By moulding children's voices in singing, the agencies hoped to form their minds and souls.[30] Hymns' metre and verse made religious teachings more memorable;[31] tunes added an emotional dimension. In this regard, hymn singing responded to the emergence of a new theological focus on individual emotion in the Christian experience.[32] In the 1880s, children at the Refuges sang *We've Sighted the Golden Gate*.[33] The hymn expresses feelings of joy and gratitude ("Our hearts are filled with joy today", "Our God, with grateful heart to thee").[34] In 1940, the Duncan Fairbridge Farm School chapel choir sang *On Our Way Rejoicing*.[35] The hymn expresses ("On our way rejoicing") and rejects ("Is there grief or sadness? / Thine it

26 Kingsley Fairbridge, *The Emigration of Poor Children to the Colonies: Speech Read Before the Colonial Club at Oxford, October 19, 1909*, 6, https://archive.org/details/emigrationofpoor00fair.
27 Fairbridge Farm Schools (Inc.), *Annual Report 1937*, 18, NW 630.717 F165, BCA.
28 "Enjoy Concert At Fairbridge", *The Cowichan Leader*, December 31, 1936, D296 K1/1/5, UOL; for an example from the Australian Molong Fairbridge Farm School see Dorothy Smethum, "Annual Meeting and Prize Giving", *Fairbridge Family Chronicle* 2, no. 1 (Summer 1941), D296 J3/5/2/3, UOL.
29 Gordon Green, Letter to R. R. Beauchamp, January 1939, 1, D296 K1/3/2, UOL.
30 MacKinnon, 2015, 245.
31 Clapp-Itnyre, 2016, 26f., 58f., 127f.
32 Dibble, 2017, 388f.
33 Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges, Emigration Reports and Letters, Girls: 1885–1888, folder 32, GB127.M189/7/4/1, MA.
34 Whittle, 1885.
35 "Bishop H. E. Sexton Dedicates the New Fairbridge Chapel", *Daily Colonist*, April 21, 1940, D296 K1/4,UOL.

cannot be!") different emotions.[36] In the collective ritual of hymn singing, the children practiced emotional norms.

Recently, emotions have come into focus among historians of childhood.[37] The sound dimension holds clues about individual children's emotions, but recordings of this type are rare. One example is Annie Macpherson's description of a goodbye scene in Montreal, the boys being about to leave for their different placements: "[F]or the last time as a little band singing, as we looked over the city, the sweet hymn, 'Shall we gather at the river?' In parting many of their voices became like my own – very choking".[38] About to leave the group they had travelled with for several weeks for unknown places, several boys' emotions affected their voices and compromised the hymn's otherwise light-hearted, optimistic sound.

Institutions' anthems – short and easy compositions for all children to memorise – drew on music's power to create and demonstrate community. The Australian Northcote Farm School's anthem, the *Northcote Song*, written by two cottage mothers, exemplifies not just the school's but also the students' use of such anthems to both bond and segregate. When the wartime suspension of child migration led to a decline in student numbers at the Northcote and the Fairbridge Farm Schools in Australia, all Northcote children transferred to the Molong Farm School in December 1944.[39] One way in which the Northcote children coped with this situation was by clinging onto each other and things they knew from their previous school. When the *Fairbridge Family Chronicle* printed the *Northcote Song*'s lyrics in its 1946 Christmas edition, it noted: "The Northcote party of children often sing it among themselves".[40]

Other songs written by child migration agencies for the children in their care focused on the children's role as members of the community of the British Empire. *Songs of Christian Life and Work*, a songbook compiled in 1877 by Thomas B. Stephenson, founder of the National Children's Homes, included *Far, Far Upon The Sea*.[41] Stephenson added two stanzas to Charles MacKay's ballade, which described the children's journey to Canada. The second stanza depicts the British Empire as a unity under one monarchy ("Our good Queen pure and true / Rules the old land and the new") and one God ("The Sabbath songs are sung / By the old

36 Monsall, 1863.

37 Alexander, 2015, 123; Olsen, 2017; Vallgårda et al, 2018.

38 Macpherson, 1870, 25.

39 Gordon Green, Letter to the Dominions Office, January 1945, DO 35/1138/4, National Archives.

40 J. Thorogood and V. Odgers, "The Northcote Song", *The Fairbridge Family Chronicle* II, no. 2 (Christmas 1946), D296 D4/6/2, UOL.

41 Stephenson, 1877, no. 84.

land and the young."). Fostering the bond between the motherland and the Dominions was one of the purposes of child migration.[42] Child migration organizers' personal experiences with the British Empire – moving within the eclectic circle of imperial English elites – may well have been one of unity. Many child migrants' stories and their choice of music, on the other hand, account for the children experiencing alienation and exclusion, homesickness and loneliness. Music, however, could mitigate such feelings.

Voicing Identity

In singing, adults tried to control children's voices; but in singing, children also raised their voices on their own terms. Scholarship has struggled to bring these poles together. Alisa Clapp-Itnyre portrays singing as a source of empowerment for children.[43] While her work is an indispensable contribution to the research on children's hymn singing, it gives little insight into children's perspective on and specific uses of singing.[44] Analysing British childcare institutions' brass bands, Nicola Sheldon found that "music provided the opportunity for creativity and self-expression".[45] Unfortunately, Sheldon does not reflect on the framing of her sources – letters the boys wrote after leaving the institutions, published in the institutions' public reports. Modern historians tend to consider resistance as more authentic behaviour and more worthy of study than norm-conforming behaviour.[46] I try to avoid this resistance trap by not only analysing child migrants' adversarial uses of singing but also uses in line with adults' expectations.

I do not search for children's voices as an authentic expression of childish selves.[47] External and self-motivation build a complex web of forces, central to the being of any social individual.[48] When child migrants participated in musical

42 In 1915, the Fegan Homes wrote about child migration: "From a patriotic standpoint it is very important that we should strengthen the ties between Canada and the Motherland in every way possible" (The Red Lamp 9 [1915], in Fry and Stratford-Devai, 2003).

43 Clapp-Itnyre, 2014, 75–114; Clapp-Itnyre, 2016, chap. 2 and 5.

44 The body of contemporary writings by children and adults' recollections, which Clapp-Itnyre uses to underpin her findings, is very limited: Clapp-Itnyre, 2016, 254–268.

45 Sheldon, 2009, 756.

46 E.g. Smith. 2019; cf. Chappell, 1995.

47 David M. Rosen, 2007, shows how the search for the "authentic" child is coloured by researchers' notions of childhood.

48 On "The myth of the individual child", cf. Oswell, 2013, 263f. My thanks go to the anonymous reviewer who recommended this book to me.

performances, they did not necessarily believe in or emotionally feel the lyrics. Something, however, motivated them to play along. Flo Hickson remembered that the girls in her cottage at the Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School in Australia gave singing and dancing performances for their cottage mother, who had promised them toffees for it.[49] The modern understanding of agency as rational and independent decision making runs counter to a conception of children as irrational and dependant. Few, however, would argue that aiming for sweets was an inauthentic behaviour for a child, or that singing in order to get them was irrational. Yet, the social hierarchy between the girls and their cottage mother is undeniable. It is not my intention to say that the girls' behaviour was authentic, rational, or exhibited agency, but that binary categories are of little epistemological value to understand children's experiences.[50]

Several former child migrants have happy memories of the pastime and prestige their involvement in bands and choirs provided. Walter Henry Miles described it as "a welcome change" when he was chosen as a choirboy for the local church while at a Home run by the Waifs and Strays Society prior to his emigration to Canada in 1913.[51] Roderick Donaldson, a Duncan Fairbridge Farm School student in the 1940s, recalled that "you did everything you could to get involved in that [the band] because that meant that you could get away".[52] Besides diversion, being in a choir or band gave the children prestige among adults and children alike. Gaining adults' favour was particularly important in settings where numerous children fought for caregivers' attention, or where child migrants competed with their employers' biological children. John H. Atkinson, who came to Canada from one of the Barnardo's Homes in 1910, recalled: "My school marks and my ability to sing at public functions and in church made my foster family proud of me".[53] In turn, the rejection of one's musical expressions could be particularly hurtful. Patricia Skidmore wrote about her mother Marjorie Arnison's experiences at the Duncan Fairbridge Farm School: "[D]uring choir practice, her teacher had said, 'You don't have a very good singing voice, Marjorie. Why don't you just mouth the words?' [. . .] Ever since then, her voice was stuck and she could not sing at all".[54] Arnison was denied adult recognition and excluded from the children's singing community. Dilys Budd, who grew up at the Catholic Nazareth House in Wales before emigrating to Australia in 1947, recalled in an interview: "[O]ne of the

49 Hickson, 1998, 59f.
50 On "The myth of the social agent", cf. Oswell, 2013, 269f.
51 In Harrison, 1979, 168.
52 21 November 2018, Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, 2020, 29.
53 In Harrison, 1979, 121.
54 Skidmore, 2018, 69.

girls who came over with me [to Australia] [. . .] used to sing as flat as a tack. And they'd never let her in the choir. Well, we used to pick on her for that. You know, the, that was, that was something that . . . uh, you're not much good, 'cause you can't sing".[55] Particularly in Catholic Homes, hymn singing constituted an important part of everyone's religious duty, and if a child's voice did not conform to the ideal of the sweet voice, it was a serious taint.[56]

After leaving the Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School in 1935, Hickson remembered filling "many lonely moments" singing carols she had learned at the School.[57] While many child migrants cherished singing as a pastime, strict regimes could restrain such a use. Annie Cairns remembered singing popular songs on her journey to Canada from the Middlemore Home in 1928, but the first family she was placed with did not allow such amusements: "I was [. . .] not allowed to sing popular songs, just hymns. [. . .] when I would be scrubbing the floors, I would start to sing them but that was soon stopped".[58] Hickson also recalled that the Fairbridge children sang "crude cockney songs" on their journey to Australia, adding, "woe betide us at Fairbridge if we were ever heard singing aloud those words".[59] The children knew the appropriate ears for different songs in their repertoire. I will explain how this has shaped the historical record below.

While forbidden fruit often tastes the sweetest, songs approved by their caretakers could also have an important meaning for child migrants. Hymns could speak to children's spiritual needs. Hickson remembered enjoying hymn singing, as she felt "an affinity with this spiritual life".[60] The belief that "God be with you till we meet again" could be a great comfort for child migrants like Annie Taylor, feeling lonely and alienated. Child migrants also found comfort in the sense of acoustic belonging certain songs instilled in them. Music helped others settle into their new homes. Frank Kennedy, a former Molong Fairbridge Farm School student, credited the school headmaster for "play[ing] a big part in getting us over our initial homesickness through his ability to get us interested in our new country. The first song he taught us was Waltzing Matilda, so we quickly learned the

55 Dilys Budd, Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project, interview by Ann-Mari Jordens, March 9, 2010, 1st session, 00:29:22, ORAL TRC 6200/7, NLA.

56 The idea of children's "sweet" voices echoed biblical angels' singing: Göttert, 1998, 174.

57 Hickson, 1998, 111.

58 In Staples, 2003, 73.

59 Hickson, 1998, 14.

60 Hickson, 1998, 76.

meanings of jumbuck, sway, swaggie, billabong etc".[61] Singing helped Kennedy build a vocal connection with Australia.

Many children, however, favoured songs they had learned back in Britain. Letters like Annie Taylor's, quoted in the introduction, suggest that the children cherished such songs as acoustic memories. Child migrants knew that their letters' recipients at the agencies would appreciate their interest in these songs. However, music also served an important function for the individual child. Music can connect individuals to their roots and help them (per)form their identity.[62] While child migrants had to leave behind their material home and belongings,[63] they could take the songs along with them. Music evoked memories of home and could console those feeling homesick. In 1887, Jane Lewis wrote a letter to the Refuges. Despite writing that "I have got such a good home [in Canada], and such a kind Master and Mistress",[64] Lewis expressed feelings of homesickness: "I do love having letters from all my dear friends who are so far far away [. . .] O to think that I may never see you again so far away". Besides asking for photographs as visual keepsakes, Lewis wrote: "O I often sing that song which we learned at the dear old Refuge".[65] John Lane recalled that the boys at the Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School sang popular English, Scottish, and Irish songs in their free time.[66] The boys' choice of music ran counter to the agency's plan to bring the children closer to their new home through the singing of Australian songs. Facing prejudice and alienation, the songs child migrants had learned back in Britain or during their time in an institution abroad could remind them that they were nevertheless part of a community. This connecting power of music could last decades. Budd described that when she got together with friends from Nazareth House, "at the drop of a hat, we can sing the songs that we sang in the home".[67]

61 Frank Kennedy, "Obituary: Gordon Dodd", Old Fairbridgians' Association Summer Newsletter (December 1984): 6, D296 D4/6/4, UOL.
62 Istvandity, 2017, 232; DeNora, 2000, 46.
63 On child migrants' agony about leaving behind personal belongings, see e.g. Patricia Carlson, Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project, interview by Susan Marsden, September 29, 2010, 1st session, 00:51:34. ORAL TRC 6200/23, NLA; Hickson, 1998, 13.
64 Censorship by the child's employer could have shaped this account. On the prevalence of censorship affecting child migrants' letters in Canada, see Parr, 1980, 72–74.
65 Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges, Emigration Reports and Letters, Vol. 1: 1883–1885, folder 9 (emphases in original), GB127.M189/7/3/1+2, MA.
66 Lane, 1990, 99, 141f.
67 Budd, 2010, 3rd session, 00:06:33.

Voicing Resistance

In acknowledging and analysing the variety of factors motiving children to sing in line with adults' expectations, I have tried to avoid the resistance trap. This does not mean that children's advisarial use of singing should be neglected. Sung resistance was an equally important strategy in children's repertoire of coping mechanisms. Resistance voiced in singing could take different forms. Singing could change its meaning depending on the social setting. As "sound out of place", singing could be noise.[68] Singing would become an act of rebellion, even if adult caretakers otherwise approved of the songs sung. Hickson remembered that during the weekly film nights at the Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School, the film usually broke down once or twice. During the ensuing pause, the impatient children teased the adults: "[T]he fun was in the noise we made waiting for it to start again, such as singing. Our noise often became too much for the adults running the show and we were made to stop".[69] Staying silent when singing was construed as a rebellious act.

Another adversarial form of singing was children's contrafacta. Some child migrants took well-known tunes and added their own lyrics. Contrafacta has a long history,[70] and child migrants likely knew the practice from religious hymns,[71] nursery rhymes,[72] and popular songs.[73] Such contrafacta usually developed and survived where several children stayed together for some time, as they did in childcare institutions. In their contrafacta, the children expressed themselves, shared their anger, and defied adults' expectations. The majority of contrafacta I found revolve around food, indicating that it was a major issue on these children's minds. Children at Nazareth House in Wales made up a song celebrating the ritual of buying treats with the pennies stolen from the corpses, which the nuns of the Home took care of.[74] Mostly, however, food was an issue because of its absence, its bad quality, or because it signified the hierarchical difference between staff and children. All such contrafacta I encountered use the tune *Happy Land*. The hymn *There is a Happy Land* praises God's "bright" kingdom,[75] making the parodic character even more

68 Echoing Mary Douglas' definition of dirt as "matter out of place", Peter Bailey, 2004, 23, defines noise as "sound out of place".

69 Hickson, 1998, 66.

70 McIlvenna, 2015, 48, fn 5.

71 Clapp-Itnyre, 2016, 105, 114–119; Clapp-Itnyre, 2016, 261–263, also found evidence of children parodying the hymns they had learned.

72 Opie and Opie, 1962, 3.

73 Bailey, 1978, 31f.

74 Budd, 2010, 1st session, 00:50:25.

75 Young.

apparent. Since *Happy Land* was a particularly popular tune,[76] its repeated use could be a coincidence. It is possible, however, that children from one institution brought the idea and the tune with them as they moved to another institution. Two of the contrafacta are from the Middlemore Homes, in which many children resided prior to their emigration to the different Fairbridge Farm Schools, where such contrafacta were also known.

While the contrafacta from the Middlemore Homes focus on the lack of food ("eggs we never see / that's why we're fading / gradually fading away";[77] "eggs and bacon we never see / life is short of misery"[78]) the contrafactum developed at the Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School addresses the discrepancy between the children's and the staff's meals:

> There is a Dining Hall not far away,
> Where all the Matrons sit three times a day,
> Oh you should see their eyes when they see the pudding rise,
> Oh you should hear their cries: 'I want some more.'[79]

At many child migration agencies' institutions, the staff ate their meals separately from the children and were served different food.[80] The caretakers were, of course, not supposed to hear such mocking songs. Hickson remembered that the children "always knew it was safe to do so [sing such songs] when they were eating".[81] The secrecy surrounding the contrafacta was also a means of distinction between children and adults, strengthening the students' sense of community. The secrecy prevented children from recording the songs at the time. As much of children's culture, they were only transmitted by word of mouth.[82] Fortunately, several contrafacta survived in individuals' memories, but individuals and their memories are mortal. From the earliest decades of the child migration schemes,

76 Clapp-Itnyre, 2012, 71; Clapp-Itnyre, 2016, 250–252.

77 The song was passed on to the Australian Child migrants oral history project by former Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School student John Cooper and quoted in Rosalind Crawford, Child migrants oral history project, interview by Rob Willis, October 19, 2006, 00:06:17, ORAL TRC 5746/3, NLA.

78 Neil Morrison, Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project, interview by Rob Linn, August 25, 2011, 1st session, 00:46:05, ORAL TRC 6200/92, NLA.

79 Hickson, 1998, 28.

80 Senate Community Affairs References Committee Secretariat, Parliament of Australia, 2001. sec. 4.51; on Pinjarra Fairbridge Farm School in particular: Caroline Kelly, Child Migration: A Survey of the Australian Field, 1944, 34, A436, 1945/5/54, National Archives of Australia (NAA); former Pinjarra student Marcelle Duquette O'Brien's testimony in 28 February 2017, IICSA Inquiry, 2017, 16.

81 Hickson, 1998, 28.

82 On children's oral culture in Victorian Britain, cf. Jordan, 1987, 196–198.

few memories were recorded. While child migrants' recollections enable us to hear otherwise unrecognizable silences in the archives, they are also selective in their existence, content, and perspective. They offer an adult's perspective on childhood memories.[83] Usually, memories are semantical, not verbal.[84] Linking words and sounds, however, songs can be remembered and recalled verbatim even decades later.

Excavating Voices

Singing, as this article has argued, was a way in which children raised – and were made to raise – their voices, and a way in which their voices left an imprint on the historical record. To analyse child migrants' singing as an expression of their voices, historians need to analyse how it became part of the historical record: the contexts in which child migrants sang, in which their singing was recorded and archived, as well as the circumstances under which it is excavated by historians today. I was in danger of stepping into the resistance trap. I found the rebellious contrafacta more intriguing and expressions of discontent easier to believe than sung expressions of religious faith and patriotism. However, this must not lead me to brush aside sources indicating children's joy in performing under adult direction or comfort found in hymn singing. Furthermore, I must not overestimate my ability to understand these children. Romantic notions about the universality and transcendent nature of music can be tempting, but are misleading.[85] Precisely because music evokes emotions and memories in all of us, we must not forget that these differ across time and space, and from individual to individual.

Child migration agencies understood that children could not be silenced, so guiding and controlling children's expressions became a constant effort. Singing exemplifies child migration agencies' attempts to form the sound and narrative dimension of children's voices to instil religious faith and imperial order into them. For the child migrants themselves, singing could be spiritually comforting; songs became cherished memories, expressions of community and identity. At the same time, some child migrants used the convention of singing to resist, to express themselves against adults' expectations in their contrafacta, through the strategic use of singing as noise, or through silence. Analysing child migrants'

83 On memory and oral history in research about institutionalized childhoods, cf. Swain, 2015; Murphy, 2010; Edwards, 2017.
84 Cf. Neisser, 1981.
85 Cf. Hall, 2009, 417f.

singing enables historians not only to learn more about the social construction of the child, but to listen to children's voices, to learn about their culture, their notions of home and belonging, and what they cared about.

Abbreviations

BCA	BC Archives
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
MA	Manchester Archives
NLA	National Library of Australia
UOL	University of Liverpool Special Collections and Archives
NAA	National Archives of Australia

Archives

BC Archives, Victoria, B.C., Canada
Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ont., Canada
Manchester Archives, Manchester, UK
National Archives, Kew, UK
National Archives of Australia, Canberra et al., Australia
National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia
University of Liverpool Special Collections and Archives, Liverpool, UK

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Paula Muhr

The Speechless Patient: Charcot's Diagnostic Interpretation of Vocal, Gestural, and Written Expressions in Hysterical Mutism

Beyond the medical discourse, the dominant cultural stereotype of a hysteria patient is that of a woman screaming, crying, or producing other emotionally charged vocalisations. Multiple humanities scholars attributed the emergence of this stereotype to the image-based hysteria research that the nineteenth-century neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot conducted at the Parisian hospital Salpêtrière.[1] They argued that the photographs of Charcot's female patients in the throes of hysterical attacks – included in the medical publication *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* and then widely disseminated – "did much to fix the image of hysteria in the public mind".[2] Such accounts posit that Charcot enticed his female patients into performing the dramatic image of hysteria he imposed on them.[3] Moreover, we are told that Charcot was disinterested in listening to his patients' utterances and focused exclusively on visualising their bodies to produce a "full pictorial record" of hysterical symptoms.[4]

Such dismissive accounts mainly address Charcot's image-based investigation of hysterical attacks in female patients. Admittedly, the hysterical attack stood at the centre of Charcot's early hysteria research, conducted when the Salpêtrière housed only female patients. However, after 1880, Charcot shifted to studying other hysterical symptoms in female and male patients, arguing that hysteria was identical in both genders.[5] One seemingly less dramatic hysterical symptom that

1 Bronfen, 1998, 198; Rose, 2005, 114; Showalter, 2014, 147–150. Besides his highly publicised hysteria research, Charcot concurrently studied and provided groundbreaking insights into many other neurological disorders, such as multiple sclerosis, amyotrophies, locomotor ataxia, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's chorea (see Goetz, Bonduelle, and Gelfand, 1995, 99–133).
2 Scull, 2009, 123.
3 Bronfen, 1998, 190–203; Didi-Huberman, 2004, 104; Gilman, 1993, 345–346; Scull, 2009, 122–123; Showalter, 2014, 151–154.
4 Showalter, 2014, 155; see also Bronfen, 1998, 199; Rose, 2015, 114.
5 Charcot, 1889a, 221. For Charcot's introduction of male patients into the clinic, see Goetz, Bonduelle, and Gelfand (1995, 200–205). For Charcot's study of diverse hysterical symptoms, see Muhr (2022, chapter 1).

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occupied Charcot's attention in the late 1880s was mutism.[6] Patients with this symptom had lost the ability to speak despite the absence of any detectable organic damage.[7] And although Charcot dedicated multiple clinical lectures to hysterical mutism, humanities scholars have ignored this aspect of his research.

As this chapter will show, examining Charcot's research on hysterical mutism is instructive for two reasons. First, we will gain insights into how Charcot instituted this, at the time, controversial symptom as a clinical entity by determining its diagnostic specificity and postulating its underlying neurophysiological mechanism. Second, through this examination, I will propose a more nuanced view of Charcot's hysteria research. I will do so by challenging the dismissive accounts according to which Charcot's approach was limited to investigating only the visual aspects of hysteria while suppressing the patients' voices. Based on close reading of his lectures, I will argue that Charcot established hysterical mutism as a distinct clinical entity by attentively listening to his mute patients' non-verbal utterances, reading their written answers to his questions, and interpreting their communicative gestures.

This chapter will focus on the seminal 1886 lecture during which Charcot presented a male patient with typical clinical features of hysterical mutism. The transcript of this lecture was published in the third volume of Charcot's *Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System* and accompanied by an extensive appendix that summarised several other cases of mutism from Charcot's previous lectures.[8] Analysing this lecture, I will trace how Charcot attributed diagnostic significance to vocal outputs that mute patients could still produce and those they could not. Finally, I will discuss how, based on the distinctive clinical features of hysterical mutism that he identified, Charcot made inferences about this symptom's neurophysiological basis. But before turning to Charcot's research on hysterical mutism, we must first examine his earlier studies of language disorders of organic origin. As I will demonstrate, these studies are significant for our discussion because they provided a conceptual framework for Charcot's subsequent research into hysterical mutism as an isolated loss of spoken language.

6 Charcot, 1886, 34–35; Charcot, 1889b, 247–252; Charcot, 1889f, 360–373; Charcot, 1892, 257–261, 264–274.

7 Charcot, 1889f, 360.

8 Charcot, 1889f, 360–373; Cartaz, 1889, 410–433.

Charcot's Research into the Neurological Basis of Language

In 1885, when Charcot turned to hysterical mutism, he had already spent the previous two years systematically studying and lecturing on various forms of language disturbances jointly referred to as organic aphasia, a topic he would continue to research throughout the 1880s.[9] But even before 1883, Charcot participated in aphasia studies that had been inaugurated in 1861 by his colleague Paul Broca.[10] In the early 1860s, Broca relied on a series of autopsies to correlate a form of language disturbance, which he initially termed aphemia, with structural brain damage to the third convolution of the left frontal lobe.[11] This particular type of aphasia was characterised by patients' inability to produce articulated speech. Through autopsies, Broca thus identified a circumscribed brain region – i.e., a cerebral centre – that controls the production of articulate speech. His discovery, in turn, gave rise to the paradigm of cerebral localisation in neurological research. According to this paradigm, the brain is not a homogeneous organ but consists of multiple specialised centres that each "possesses its proper function, though each one remains in the most intimate connection with the others".[12]

Charcot shaped the early aphasia research, first by providing Broca with six autopsy cases that confirmed the localisation of the speech centre in the left frontal lobe and then by reporting several autopsy cases that appeared to contradict this localisation.[13] However, from 1865 to the early 1880s, Charcot stopped actively studying aphasia.[14] Instead, during the 1870s, he focused on the localisationist investigation of cerebral motor centres and hysteria research.[15] By the time Charcot returned to aphasia, significant new insights had been won in this vibrant field. In 1874, Carl Wernicke discovered sensory aphasia, "in which speech remains fluent but not meaningful," and linked it to the lesion of the left temporal lobe.[16] Three years later, Adolf Kussmaul divided Wernicke's sensory aphasia into word-

9 Charcot, 1883a; Charcot, 1883b; Charcot, 1883c; Charcot, 1884; Charcot, 1889c; Charcot, 1889d; Charcot, 1889e. For a succinct overview, see Anonymous (1884, 593–595) and Marie (1888, 81–84).

10 Jacyna, 2000, 14. For a detailed discussion of the different phases of Charcot's decades-long aphasia research, see Gasser (1995, 119–214).

11 Finger, 2005, 137–154. In 1864, Armand Trousseau introduced the term aphasia to designate language disturbances (Gasser, 1995, 119).

12 Charcot, 1889e, 162–163.

13 Gasser, 1995, 119–134.

14 Gasser, 1995, 134.

15 Goetz, Bonduelle, and Gelfand, 1995, 128–129.

16 Finger, 2005, 150.

blindness and word-deafness, and in 1881 Sigmund Exner identified a cerebral 'centre for writing'.[17]

In his 1883 lectures, drawing on the paradigm of cerebral localisation, Charcot combined and expanded his colleagues' different findings to develop a general theory of aphasia and of the neurological basis of language.[18] First, synthesising the work of other researchers, Charcot posited the existence of four "fundamental forms" of aphasia, each of which, in theory, entailed a selective loss of a particular language faculty.[19] Besides Broca's motor aphasia (the loss of spoken language), the other forms included agraphia (the inability to write), verbal blindness (the inability to read despite intact vision), and verbal deafness (the inability to comprehend spoken language despite intact hearing).[20] Next, based on clinical observations of his aphasic patients, postmortem analyses of their brains, and the review of findings published by other neurologists, Charcot tentatively linked each of the four basic forms of aphasia to a structural lesion of an anatomically distinct brain region.[21]

Charcot thus postulated the existence of four independent yet mutually physically interconnected cerebral language centres that jointly controlled the production and comprehension of language (Fig. 1). He conjectured that in each of these centres, specialised partial memories – or commemorative mental images – of a particular motor or sensory aspect of words were physiologically engraved.[22] The "commemorative auditive image" acquired by repeatedly hearing a particular word had its seat in the auditory centre for words that controlled the comprehension of the spoken language.[23] Visual memories of words, which underpinned the individual's ability to comprehend hand-written and printed texts, were imprinted in the specialised visual centre for words. Apart from these two sensory language centres, Charcot distinguished two motor language centres – Broca's centre of articulated language and a centre of written language – that stored motor images of articulation and graphic motor images, respectively. The first type of motor image was "developed by the repetition of the movements of the tongue necessary to pronounce a word, the latter by a repetition of the movement of the hand and fingers necessary in writing".[24]

17 Gasser, 1995, 137–138.

18 Gasser, 1995, 134.

19 Charcot 1889c, 131.

20 Charcot, 1892, 266. Whereas Kussmaul introduced word-blindness and word-deafness as medical categories, the term agraphia was first used by William Ogle in 1867 (Gasser, 1995, 136).

21 Marie, 1888, 82–83. For alternative models of aphasia by Wernicke, Kussmaul and others, see Hakosalo (2006, 276–310).

22 Charcot adopted the concept of partial memories from the French philosopher and psychologist Théodule Ribot (see Charcot, 1889e, 151–152).

23 Charcot, 1889e, 161.

24 Charcot, 1889e, 161.

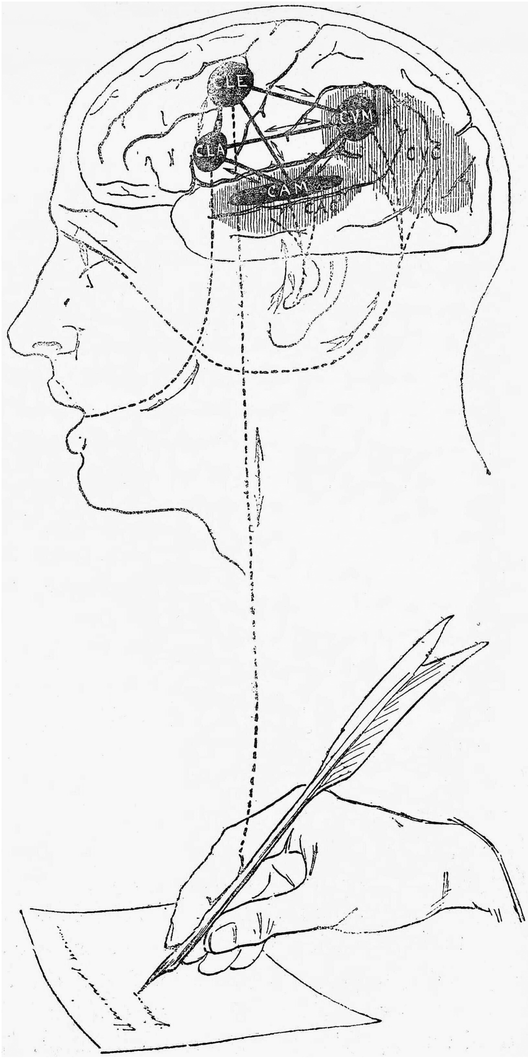

Fig. 1: The tentative localisation of the cerebral language centres according to Charcot: CVM – visual centre for words; CAM – auditory centre for words; CLA – centre of articulated language; and CLF – centre of written language. Also visualised in the figure are: CVC – centre of vision; and CAM – centre of hearing. From: Marie (1888, 82).

According to Charcot, the coordinated activity of the four language centres underpinned each individual's ability to translate their thoughts into words and then communicate them. Conversely, in theory, the "isolated suppression" of one of the four forms of verbal memory resulted in one of the four fundamental forms of aphasia – motor aphasia, agraphia, verbal blindness, or verbal deafness.[25] However, Charcot repeatedly emphasised that cases of selective language loss were extremely rare in clinical praxis. Instead, most patients exhibited mixed forms of aphasia in which all four language faculties were affected simultaneously, although to a different degree.[26]

Moreover, Charcot contended that, despite being robbed of language, aphasic patients could still form thoughts in a neurophysiologically separate process of ideation, which transpired in its designated centre.[27] But because of the illness-induced language suppression, these ideas could not be associated with their verbal representations, so the patients' thoughts lacked a concrete form.[28] Without words, thoughts remained vague and imprecise. In Charcot's interpretation, language loss unavoidably affected the patients' abilities to exercise their intellectual faculties. Unsurprisingly, Charcot claimed that organic aphasia correlated with some weakening of the patient's intellectual power.[29] Thus, although thinking and speaking were two neurophysiologically distinct processes for Charcot, he regarded them as functionally interrelated. Disturbances of one process were linked to disturbances of the other.

Establishing Hysterical Mutism as a Genuine Affliction

Whereas by 1885, organic aphasia was an acknowledged medical category, hysterical mutism had not yet been established as a distinct diagnostic entity. Charcot emphasised that cases of hysterical mutism were not rare as they were "mentioned in all writings devoted to hysteria".[30] But unlike aphasia, in hysterical mutism, no structural brain lesion could be identified through postmortem analyses. Hysterical mutism thus appeared to lack a physiological basis, a view that Charcot contested.[31]

25 Charcot, 1889e, 152.
26 Charcot, 1889c, 140.
27 Charcot, 1883c, 523. Charcot argued that the four independent language centres were hierarchically subordinated to the higher-order centre of ideation whose anatomical location he did not specify (Anonymous, 1884, 593).
28 Charcot, 1883c, 523.
29 Charcot, 1883c, 523.
30 Charcot, 1889f, 362.
31 Charcot, 1889f, 360.

Contrary to his colleagues, Charcot did not regard hysterical mutism as a single symptom. Instead, he argued that it was a clinical syndrome consisting "of a very characteristic group of [simultaneous] symptoms" whose distinguishing diagnostic features were unrecognised in the medical community.[32] Due to their ignorance, doctors thus either dismissed patients with hysterical mutism as malingerers or erroneously attributed their symptoms to speech disturbances caused by permanent organic lesions of the central nervous system.[33] Typically, doctors confused hysterical mutism with organic aphasia or with bulbar palsy, a progressive form of labio-glosso-laryngeal paralysis arising from permanent damage to the motor centres in the brain stem.[34] In his seminal 1886 lecture on hysterical mutism, Charcot set out to resolve this problem by delineating the chief clinical features that distinguished hysterical mutism from malingering and from speech loss due to structural brain damage.

To that end, Charcot presented to his audience a thirty-three-year-old male patient who had suddenly become mute after "a laryngitis of only a few hours' duration".[35] According to Charcot, this patient presented all the classical features of hysterical mutism, including the sudden onset of speech loss. However, Charcot also asserted that this case might appear unusual since the mutism was the patient's only hysterical symptom. Typically, hysteria patients had multiple concurrent symptoms, such as seizures, contractures, tremors, visual and sensorial disturbances, and pharyngeal anaesthesia.[36] But Charcot explained that hysterical mutism "may sometimes be met with completely isolated" as a monosymptomatic manifestation of hysteria.[37] Such cases were considered challenging, yet Charcot insisted that doctors familiar with the distinctive features of hysterical mutism could easily make an accurate diagnosis.

First, to demonstrate how to differentiate hysterical mutism from intentional simulation, Charcot prompted the patient to speak. The patient, however, was unable to comply. After Charcot's continued prompting, the patient gestured with his hand towards his throat "as though he would tell us that the difficulty lies there".[38] Charcot asserted that this gesture was characteristic since many patients with hysterical mutism have a subjective feeling of constriction in their throat,

32 Charcot, 1889f, 360.
33 Charcot, 1889f, 368.
34 Charcot, 1889f, 360.
35 Charcot, 1889f, 370.
36 Charcot, 1889f, 367.
37 Charcot, 1889f, 367.
38 Charcot, 1889f, 370.

which they think causes their mutism.[39] Since simulators could not know this, they were more likely to gesture towards their mouth or head. Charcot thus instituted a simple hand gesture with which hysteria patients communicated their inability to speak into a differential diagnostic sign.

However, Charcot warned his colleagues not to rely on a single diagnostic sign to exclude the possibility of simulation. Instead, he instructed them to attentively examine multiple aspects of the patient's communicative behaviour during the clinical interview. He underscored that a "legitimate mute" always remained completely silent whatever the doctor said or did.[40] Even if startled or made to laugh, the patient would not emit a single sound. Just as importantly, patients with hysterical mutism were fully aware of their speech loss and thus tended not to waste time on "useless attempts" at verbal articulation.[41] Instead, if asked a question, they responded without hesitation using either non-verbal gestures or, if given the opportunity, by writing down their answers on paper. Charcot stressed that the patients avoided unnecessary gestures and aimed to communicate as clearly and efficiently as possible. Conversely, simulators tended to add "all sorts of embellishments" by performing superfluous, meaningless gestures or producing inarticulate sounds, thus failing to remain silent.[42]

Notably, the salient diagnostic features that, according to Charcot, differentiated hysterical mutism from malingering could not be identified through physiological measurements. Instead, to exclude simulation, doctors had to judge the intersubjective, relational aspects of the speechless patient's behaviour during the clinical encounter. What mattered was the quality of the patient's silence. But the silence in itself was not sufficient for diagnosis. The doctor also had to interpret the patient's non-verbal gestures. The unspoken implication of Charcot's instructions was that the crucial diagnostic difference between hysteria patients and malingerers lay in the disparate motives underpinning their non-verbal gestures. The malingerers' exaggerated gestures were meant to convince the doctor that their fake muteness was real. Their gestures thus focused on demonstrating their purported speechlessness. Contrary to this, genuine patients experienced their mutism as an inconvenience they tried to circumvent by communicating their thoughts as economically and as distinctly as possible through non-verbal gestures and writing. Their gestures focused on the message they wanted to convey. Hence, to diagnostically distinguish hysterical mutism from malingering, doctors not only had to assess the quality of the patients'

39 Charcot, 1889f, 369.
40 Charcot, 1889f, 369.
41 Cartaz, 1889, 431.
42 Charcot, 1889f, 368.

silences, but also to infer the communicative motives underpinning the patients' non-verbal gestures.

Differentiating Hysterical Mutism from Similar Organic Disorders

Having excluded malingering, the doctor still had to determine if his speechless patient was suffering from an organic disease. To show how this is done, Charcot introduced a seventy-one-year-old male patient with advanced bulbar palsy. He then compared him to the thirty-three-year-old patient with hysterical mutism to "accentuate the contrast and to bring out the distinctive clinical characters of the two afflictions".[43] But before highlighting the differences between the patients, Charcot first delineated their shared features. Although deprived of speech, each patient "preserved the power of conversing by gesture to perfection".[44] Moreover, both understood everything that was said to them and could write.

Beyond these resemblances, there were multiple diagnostically salient differences between the patients. Unlike the sudden onset of complete speech loss in hysterical mutism, speech difficulties caused by bulbar palsy developed slowly and progressively.[45] Moreover, patients with bulbar palsy, which was always fatal, never entirely lost the ability to articulate words. As Charcot demonstrated, his seventy-one-year-old patient with advanced palsy could still feebly "pronounce some indistinct words".[46] This indicated that his speech difficulties were due to paralysis of the lips and tongue. The paralysis, in turn, had been caused by the destruction of the motor centres in the brain stem.[47] In other words, the patient with palsy still knew how to articulate words, but could not move his lips and tongue. To support this claim, Charcot drew attention to the patient's facial expression: his mouth was widened, his tongue immobile and atrophied, and his lips hung loosely.

By contrast, the patient with hysterical mutism retained the ability to move his tongue and lips "perfectly in every direction".[48] Charcot tested this by asking the patient to put out his tongue, then purse his lips and blow out the air. The thirty-three-year-old hysteria patient fulfilled these requests without difficulty. Charcot noted

43 Charcot, 1889f, 361.
44 Charcot, 1889f, 361.
45 Charcot, 1889f, 371.
46 Charcot, 1889f, 371.
47 Charcot, 1889f, 371.
48 Charcot, 1889f, 371.

that another efficient way to test the integrity of patients' lip movements was to ask them to whistle. Patients with hysterical mutism could whistle, whereas those with bulbar palsy could not.[49] Thus, in this context, a seemingly meaningless non-vocal output, such as whistling, acquired diagnostic salience by allowing the doctor to distinguish hysterical mutism from bulbar palsy.

Yet, unlike the patient with bulbar palsy, the hysteria patient could not pronounce a single word despite the unrestricted mobility of his lips and tongue. Furthermore, even when trying his best, the hysteria patient could not "imitate the movements of articulation which he sees [being performed] before him".[50] Drawing these facts together, Charcot concluded that the patient with hysterical mutism was unable to perform the coordinated movements required to produce articulated speech. Simply put, the hysteria patient seemed not to know how to move his lips and tongue in order to speak. Although a comparable inability to execute specialised movements underpinning the speech production was a recognised characteristic of Broca's motor aphasia of organic origin,[51] Charcot assured his colleagues that it was just as easy to diagnostically distinguish hysterical mutism from organic aphasia as it was from bulbar palsy.

To articulate the diagnostic differences, Charcot stated that patients with hysterical mutism were mute in a stricter sense than those with organic aphasia. "[E]ven in the most complete organic motor aphasia the patient is able to call out, to enunciate a few syllables in a loud voice, even to pronounce a few words, albeit not appropriate ones, but perfectly distinct".[52] However, patients with hysterical mutism could pronounce neither a single word nor a syllable. Furthermore, Charcot declared that, compared to aphasic patients, those with hysterical mutism were even "*more than mute*".[53] Aphasic patients could shout and produce loud, inarticulate sounds with their larynx.[54] Yet patients with hysterical mutism were entirely aphonic – they lost their voice. As his thirty-three-year-old patient demonstrated, the only sound he could emit was a short, feeble grunt. Charcot foregrounded the hoarseness of this restrained grunt and how effortful it was for the patient to make it.[55] Hence, both the sonic quality of the patients' inarticulate vocal outputs and the physical effort required for their production attained diagnostic significance.

49 Charcot, 1889f, 363, 366.
50 Charcot, 1889f, 363.
51 Charcot, 1889f, 364.
52 Charcot, 1889f, 364.
53 Charcot, 1889f, 363, emphasis in original.
54 Charcot, 1886, 34.
55 Charcot, 1889f, 363.

However, Charcot cautioned his colleagues against reducing hysterical mutism to aphonia by assuming that the "patient is mute because he has no voice, because the larynx and the vocal cords do not vibrate properly".[56] Instead, he noted that aphonia caused by the weakness of the larynx was a frequent symptom of hysteria, even in the absence of mutism. But in such cases, although they could no longer produce loud sounds, patients could talk in a low voice or whisper. Charcot clarified that during whispering, the formation of vowels and consonants depended on the coordinated movements of the tongue and lips, whereas the larynx and vocal cords remained motionless.[57] Thus, in cases of simple aphonia, hysteria patients were voiceless but not speechless. Conversely, the distinctive feature of hysterical mutism was that patients were both voiceless and speechless, thus also unable to whisper.

Next, drawing on his previous research into organic aphasia, Charcot postulated that patients with organic motor aphasia and those with hysterical mutism could neither talk loudly nor whisper because they were deprived of the motor images (i.e., partial memories) "necessary for the calling into play of articulate speech".[58] In both afflictions, the loss of the designated mental images resulted in patients' inability to execute specialised movements required to articulate words. The implication entailed in this statement, which, as we will see later, Charcot elaborated at the end of his lecture, was that disturbances of the cerebral centre of articulated language underpinned both afflictions.

But at this point in his lecture, Charcot focused on further explaining how to diagnostically differentiate hysterical mutism from organic aphasia. He reminded his audience that, as stated in his previous lectures, cases of pure motor aphasia were exceedingly rare. In most clinical cases, the loss of articulate speech was accompanied by the patient's inability to communicate by gestures and some level of verbal blindness and verbal deafness.[59] Moreover, most aphasic patients could not write or did so only imperfectly and effortfully. By contrast, patients with hysterical mutism had no difficulties understanding the spoken or written language and were apt at expressing themselves through non-verbal gestures.

Even more characteristically, patients with hysterical mutism had a perfectly preserved writing faculty. Charcot emphasised that they wrote quickly, effortlessly, and with "singular readiness".[60] All this could be established by observing the patients while they wrote. However, Charcot did not stop at that. He carefully

56 Charcot, 1889f, 363.
57 Charcot, 1889f, 363–364.
58 Charcot, 1889f, 364.
59 Charcot, 1889f, 364.
60 Charcot, 1889f, 365.

analysed the content, orthography, and style of hysteria patients' written responses to his questions, noting such detail as the presence of humour.[61] He also compared the patients' written responses to examples of their writing from before they had fallen ill. He thus concluded that, unlike aphasic patients, individuals with hysterical mutism remained capable of rendering "their thoughts in writing exactly as they could before the development of the disease; that is to say in a style and with an orthography quite in keeping with the education" they had received.[62]

Based on the quality and complexity of their written responses and the clarity and communicative efficacy of their non-verbal gestures, Charcot forcefully argued that patients with hysterical mutism had "lost nothing, absolutely nothing" of their intelligence.[63] In other words, Charcot claimed that whereas some weakening of intellectual power accompanied organic aphasia, the intelligence of patients with hysterical mutism remained unaffected by their disease. While aphasic patients had problems associating their thoughts with verbal representations, patients with hysterical mutism did not. One Charcot's patient pointedly expressed this by reporting that he understood everything others said, and the words immediately came to him to answer, yet his tongue refused to move.[64] In Charcot's view, the swiftness with which hysteria patients translated their thoughts into words was hysterical mutism's most distinctive diagnostic feature.[65]

In sum, by systematically comparing hysterical mutism to malingering, bulbar palsy, and organic aphasia, Charcot demonstrated that this surprisingly complex manifestation of hysteria had a distinct clinical character. In the process, he taught his colleagues that to diagnostically identify hysterical mutism, they had to listen to the quality and extent of the patients' silence, assess the materiality of the seemingly senseless noises, analyse the patients' facial expressions and non-verbal gestures, and pay attention to the accuracy, consistency, and style of their written responses. Based on such analysis, Charcot identified six principal symptomatic features that, as he argued, jointly defined hysterical mutism as a distinct clinical syndrome. These comprised: first, complete loss of articulate speech, including the ability to whisper; second, complete loss of voice; third, preservation of the general movements of the lips and tongue; fourth, absence of verbal blindness and verbal deafness together with the preserved ability to communicate by gestures; fifth, fluency in writing; and sixth, intact intelligence.

61 Cartaz, 1889, 417.
62 Charcot, 1889f, 361.
63 Charcot, 1889f, 365.
64 Charcot, 1892, 293.
65 Cartaz, 1889, 431.

In effect, Charcot's description of this distinctive symptom clustering revealed the paradoxical character of hysterical mutism. Patients with hysterical mutism suffered a more excessive loss of both voice and spoken language than patients with comparable language disorders of organic nature. However, the language loss in hysterical mutism was selectively limited to speech, whereas other language faculties – and the patients' intellect – remained intact. As Charcot repeatedly insisted, such clear-cut dissociation of otherwise mutually interrelated language faculties rarely occurred in organic diseases. Yet, as we are about to see, instead of regarding this paradoxical aspect of hysterical mutism as medically inexplicable, Charcot drew on it to postulate a neurophysiological mechanism underpinning hysterical mutism.

Linking Hysterical Mutism to a Reversible Localised Brain Dysfunction

While Charcot's seminal lecture on hysterical mutism focused on identifying this syndrome's diagnostic specificity and establishing it as a clinical entity, the insights won in this process had an added benefit. They allowed Charcot to make inferences about the potential neurological basis of hysterical mutism. Thus, the unambiguous diagnostic differentiation between hysterical mutism and malingering was epistemically significant because it indicated that hysterical mutism, as a genuine affliction, had to have a physiological basis. But to identify the syndrome's underlying neurophysiology, Charcot reverted to comparing hysterical mutism to bulbar palsy, organic aphasia, and hysterical paralysis.

By contrasting clinical features of hysterical mutism and bulbar palsy, Charcot posited that the loss of articulate speech in these two disorders relied on different mechanisms.[66] He thus excluded the possibility that, like bulbar palsy, hysterical mutism was caused by the paralysis of the facial nerves. Next, as mentioned earlier, Charcot conjectured that in organic aphasia and hysterical mutism, patients suffered from the suppression of partial memories of speech articulation. Since, according to Charcot, such partial memories had their seat in the specialised language centre of the brain, he thus effectively designated hysterical mutism as a brain-based disturbance. He then turned to specifying the presumed nature and location of the underlying brain disturbance.

66 Charcot, 1889f, 371.

To that end, Charcot outlined the syndrome's peculiar temporal dynamics. Whereas the speech loss in organic aphasia was permanent, in hysterical mutism, it was not. Not only was the onset of hysterical mutism sudden, but also its duration varied considerably.[67] In some patients, the mutism lasted a few hours; in others, several days, months, or even years. In most patients, hysterical mutism disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared, although the speech recovery was initially partial. Before fully regaining their speech, patients underwent a transitional period of a few days or weeks. During this period, the recovered speech lacked fluency and was characterised by "a peculiar stammering consisting of the frequent repetition of the same syllable".[68] Yet even after complete recovery, relapses were frequent, with many patients experiencing recurring spells of mutism.

Because of the volatile, transitory nature of hysterical mutism, which all hysterical symptoms had in common, Charcot conjectured that the underlying brain disturbance had to be "of a purely dynamic order".[69] Unlike structural damage to the cerebral language centres, which caused different forms of organic aphasia, the "dynamic lesion" in hysterical mutism was unrelated to any permanent pathological changes of the brain tissue.[70] Instead, Charcot posited that the dynamic lesion in hysterical mutism – similarly to dynamic lesions that, as he claimed, underpinned other hysterical symptoms – consisted of a temporary disturbance of function of a particular brain centre. In a series of lectures he held in 1885, Charcot attributed hysterical arm paralysis to such a dynamic lesion, which he argued was located in the cortical motor centre of that arm.[71] According to Charcot, in hysterical arm paralysis, the dynamic lesion was equivalent to the functional inhibition of this centre, which rendered the centre incapable of producing the mental image of movement necessary for initiating voluntary movements.[72] A year later, Charcot extended this hypothesis by claiming that a comparable functional inhibition of the designated brain centre underpinned hysterical mutism.[73] Because of this functional inhibition, the patient could not recall the memorial images of words and became speechless.

As discussed previously, Charcot had already attributed hysterical mutism to selective suppression of the motor images of articulation. In his aphasia research, Charcot had argued that motor images of articulation had their seat in Broca's

67 Charcot, 1889f, 362.
68 Charcot, 1889f, 363.
69 Charcot, 1889f, 360.
70 Charcot, 1889f, 373.
71 Charcot, 1889a, 278.
72 Charcot, 1889a, 310. See also Muhr, 2022, 156–178.
73 Charcot, 1889f, 373.

centre, which occupied the third convolution of the left frontal lobe. Drawing these insights together, Charcot suggested that the dynamic lesion that caused hysterical mutism was limited to Broca's centre without affecting any other cerebral language centres.[74] He emphasised that such functional selectivity was a typical feature of dynamic lesions, whereas structural lesions usually occupied multiple neighbouring brain centres, regardless of their different functional specialisations.

Notably, because the dynamic lesion amounted to the centre's disturbance of function without any accompanying destruction of anatomical structure, it was potentially reversible. Put simply, in hysterical mutism, the motor images of articulation were not obliterated from Broca's centre, but merely inaccessible to conscious recall. Thus, through the influence of other cerebral centres to which it was structurally connected, Broca's centre could spontaneously become disinhibited, and the patient would immediately regain the ability to recall the motor images of articulation. After a transitional period, during which the motor images of articulation were sufficiently revived through repeated recall, the patient recovered fluent speech. Thus, although in clinical terms, hysterical mutism entailed a more extensive loss of articulate language than organically caused mutism, in Charcot's final analysis, this loss was temporary. The patient could regain speech because the underlying neural basis of hysterical mutism was a highly selective, transitory disturbance of brain function.

Conclusion

In sum, I have shown that to establish hysterical mutism as a distinct diagnostic category, Charcot attentively listened to his patients' silences and to every type of acoustic utterance they could produce. He systematically tested whether his speechless patients could enunciate single syllables, pronounce consonants, utter loud sounds, or whisper. In this context, seemingly meaningless noises, such as feeble cries, low-pitched grunts, and whistling, acquired diagnostic relevance. But to become diagnostically relevant, non-verbal acoustic outputs and instances of silence had to be interpreted in relation to the patients' facial expressions, communicative gestures, and other salient aspects of their behaviour, such as the preserved ability to understand spoken words and to write.[75]

74 Charcot, 1892, 267–268.

75 Because the patients discussed in this chapter were all men, some might suggest that Charcot's willingness to listen was limited to male patients. However, due to his conviction that hysteria was identical in men and women, Charcot applied the same diagnostic categories and

I have highlighted how, during his diagnostic encounters with mute patients, Charcot assessed the material quality of patients' vocal outputs, the expressive quality of their non-verbal gestures and written responses, and the physical effort they invested into communicating. He also evaluated the content and consistency of the patients' non-vocal responses, the accuracy and style of their writing, and their willingness and motives to communicate with him. In doing so, he took note of their humour, appraised their intelligence, and inferred their education level. Based on such comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the patients' missing as well as preserved language abilities, Charcot identified the distinctive diagnostic features of hysterical mutism and postulated the syndrome's neurophysiological basis. Moreover, he demonstrated that patients with hysterical mutism were neither malingering nor was their speech loss necessarily permanent. As suddenly as it appeared, the underlying localised brain dysfunction that caused hysterical mutism might spontaneously disappear, and the patient could speak again.

Charcot made these wide-ranging discoveries by jointly interpreting his patients' silences, seemingly meaningless noises, gestural expressions, and written statements. Admittedly, his listening did not encompass enquiring about his patients' subjective experiences of their illness. Such information did not seem diagnostically relevant in his neurophysiological approach to hysterical mutism, which, as we have seen, was informed by his previous aphasia research. While listening, Charcot thus selectively focused on those vocal, gestural, and written expressions that he could incorporate into this interpretative framework. Despite its limitation, his approach was epistemically productive as it generated new medical insights into a previously contested affliction.

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procedures to both genders. He thus diagnosed and photographed hysterical attacks of male patients according to the criteria he had initially developed for female patients (see Muhr, 2022, 56–87). To diagnose hysterical mutism, Charcot used the same procedure, which entailed attentive listening and communication assessments, with male and female patients (see Charcot, 1892, 273; Charcot, 1889b, 247–250; Charcot, 1889f, 369–370).

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Arlette Farge (translated by Liesl Yamaguchi)

Speak, Shout, Beseech – Making History in the Streets of the Eighteenth Century: Afterword

In the eighteenth century, to live is to speak. For the masses who live outside, mostly without any privacy, the essential vehicles of all communication are vocal: quick, dense, jumbled conversations, malicious banter, speaking, shouting, reading aloud. Women and men "are what they say", although it bears noting that writing inserted itself into their daily lives as well, and that they had a particular fondness for it. Speaking, reciting, shouting, poking fun, insulting – these are acts of necessity: moments that make and break lives. They are also the makings of history. In the eighteenth century, there is no such thing as a crowd without voices, neither in the street nor on the corner, in the garden, in the workshop or even at church. Public attitudes, opinions, and dispositions first take shape as vocal sound: a historical fact before which the historian remains helpless. The stumbling block is not the absence of voices (chroniclers and commentators are forever remarking on the 'thundering clamor of the voices of Paris'), but the absence of their tone. Figures of the period, such as Louis Sébastien Mercier in his *Tableau de Paris*, often comment on this noisy Parisian atmosphere, writing about the constant stream of speech flowing from windows, carriages and reckless coaches; from merchants who, peddling their wares, are forever breaking out in song in the streets and along the river banks; from processions and religious ceremonies, not to mention the cabarets, taverns and salons where conversations break out, sparked by lively proposals and impassioned arguments for and against. If ordinary voices and everyday speech are frequently mentioned and described, it is because they form the bedrock of the popular classes, their various forms of assembly, and the life of the public space.

These ephemeral voices fell silent long ago, to be sure, and they will never be fully restored. But they were expressed once, and they left many a trace. Police archives (in which official complaints, testimonies, and interrogations are held) offer records of their speech, revealing the complex dynamism of a world composed of voices, gestures, attitudes, and emotions, social and political opinions often tinged with devastating details.

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Police reports collect whispers of the popular voices concerning to the government.[1] Under-cover officers haunting public spaces and cafés would listen in on “the murmurs about town”, their reports reaching the King himself within the week. The anonymous voices overheard by the police are of capital importance: the King refers to them derisively as “the frogs’ croaking”, but he is also obsessively preoccupied with their tone and contents. The reports clash and coalesce, inviting consideration alongside the speech of children – who play a key role in their neighborhoods as the bearers of news – as well as that of convicts, prisoners, and the insane, whose pained, broken voices pierce the clear, Parisian nights.

These so-called lost voices are full of demands, so much so that in recovering them one comes to realize that each one bears meaning: meaning that has been obscured by time, but which is nonetheless present. Our knowledge of the past can also be constructed by means of these voices, as there can be no doubt that they too have constructed our presence.

I Everyday Voices of the People

So difficult is it to get one’s bearings in the midst of the people’s voices that some observers use the word “cacophony” to designate them. Indeed, ordinary voices are interspersed with song, tolling bells, town criers, representatives of the crown reading out royal decrees, and so forth. Sounds and voices circulate, going this way and that.

1) Between Childhood and Adulthood

Generally speaking, children begin working as apprentices between the ages of ten and fifteen. It is a complicated moment, as youth come up against the brutal command of masters, often accompanied by severity and mistreatment. The archives offer a trace of such a case in little Joseph Langlois, aged eleven, apprenticed to a jeweler in 1753.[2] Mistreated by his master, he whimpers often and occasionally cries out. His mother lodges a complaint with the superintendent of the local police department, specifying that “it’s made the child lose his voice and made him so upset that he no longer speaks”. This example is far from unique. In depositions to defend their children, parents insist on the extent to which children in cases like

1 Archives de la Bastille, Ms-10155–10170.
2 Archives de la Bastille Ms-10096.

these lose their ability to speak and communicate. It must be added that at the time, there was no school system to assist children in learning to speak, read, and write.

The apprentices do seek to defend themselves, however, and it does happen that they band together by night, singing “despicable songs” under the window of some malevolent master. It is a sort of oral vengeance on the part of those who must assemble to regain their communal voice – or else borrow that of the pamphleteer. A great uprising takes place in 1750, as the so-called “naughty children” – children of artisans for the most part – are taken into police custody on the charge of disturbing the peace. Police officers (often under-cover), emerge from carriages, rounding up children at intersections and in public squares and taking them to prison. An uprising stirs, bubbling up with fury as the children who escaped abduction shout out in alarm, rushing to tell all the neighborhoods of Paris why they are hearing abducted children screaming from passing carriages. The police archives make it possible to “hear” these voices, those of the parents, and those of the children sounding the alarm. Over three days of riots, it is children’s voices that alert the people, who waste no time in mounting a response.

2) The Voices of Lovers’ Banter

Most of the time, these meetings take place in the street, around the neighborhood, in the parks or along the banks of the Seine. People live outside because they have hardly any private space. Lovers often call out to one another, chat, and caress before any and all: voices are heard, gestures observed. Thus, in the popular classes, lovers’ discourse assumes quite specific voices. Women’s voices are often described by writers and philosophers, but recovering the words and voices of lovers’ speech as pronounced in the open street is nonetheless no easy task. In aristocratic circles it is far easier, especially if one considers that in salons, witty remarks prompt laughter; laughter becomes the gauge of romantic success. One still recognizes the virile seducer and the response of the woman said to be “delightfully conquered”.

In reading through the police archives, one finds cross-examinations of women who, seduced and abandoned, lodge formal complaints against the men who promised to marry them only to leave them when they became pregnant. The words of seduction are then repeated to the officer: words pronounced “gently” some women report. He who seeks to accomplish his goal by means of “smooth words”. This is according to the confession of Denise Richard, chambermaid, aged 21, whose lover came to see her every day. Most of the time, the “smooth words” seek to charm, poke gentle fun, or entertain. These are what the women call “provocations”. It’s a polite word that reveals all the mischief lurking in an exchange whose aim is seduction. It's a sparkling, light-hearted melody made up of sounds pronounced like little bells. The seduced woman may then be so moved that tears muffle the sounds of her response. Some men turn to books, reading a few passages to their partners. However, as soon as the complaint reported to the officer touches upon the theme of abandonment following the period of seduction, the rhythm of the words composing the account makes itself felt. Here the report starts to thrash about, vengeful, flashing with anger.

The cross-examinations of men brought in to account for seductions undertaken to obtain sexual relations are fairly uniform, unlike the complaints lodged by women, which are very detailed. More or less all of the men are in denial, finishing off their statements with expressions of anger or even insults rather shocking in tone: they declare that in the end the woman is nothing but a tramp, a "soldiers' girl". Even better, sometimes they add that these women were "mesmerized" by their syrupy claptrap, holding them prisoners of their words. Such are the portraits of women whose voices are stigmatized in order to accommodate a convenient ruse: a specific, soothing pronunciation with light lisp or stutter that seeks to seduce them.

The lovers' dialogue itself employs particular vocal sounds, soft and enchanting as the babble of infants. Between laughter and tears, vocal melodies and puzzling stuttering lie particular sounds that are often very attractive, and which clearly do not escape the ears of the chroniclers and writers who describe them (Marivaux, Restif de la Bretonne etc.).

3) Disputes and "Bacanals"

No city, street, or cabaret along the banks of the Seine is without its conflicts and skirmishes. In this oral society whose members are obliged to exist in close proximity, voices ring out, are overheard, rise up in argument. It is a part of everyday life, an inevitable rather than elective aspect of "being in the world". Relations are negotiated in the middle of the public space as a general rule.

Arguments are everyday occurrences in Paris. They break out, unannounced, over the slightest incident. One could cite the quarrels in marketplaces and cabarets, or the arguments emanating from workshops and coaches crossing town. In truth, these disputes almost always index some social issue (which is to say, some political issue). Disputes amongst women are very frequent, and their shouts frighten the neighbors. But their raised voices are so habitual that their arguments do not garner any attention from the police, hence the proverb "Disputes amongst women don't count."

The real ‘bacanal’ arises when serious conflicts erupt between boys, workers, and journeymen, and these are quite frequent, all things considered. They can put the whole neighborhood on alert, along with all the streets of Paris. For example: the archives of Officer Hugues (1757–1778)[3] at the central market Les Halles feature a remarkable number of conflicts between workers. The working population rises up against masters or guild jurors of their community deemed offensive. The reports written up by the police depict neighborhoods echoing with enraged voices, cynical and angry. These bitter voices are the arms of the King’s subjects raised up in opposition to the authorities. Indeed, the voices’ function is to signal and affirm the collective position that has been taken. The year 1763 witnesses a long, drawn-out plot amongst the cobblers. They go from workshop to workshop, street to street; yelling, they throw their tools (a form of sacrilege in the artisan world), hurling countless violent insults and abominations.[4] The collective clamor of these very violent, contemptuous voices puts the entire population on alert. The popular ear is very keen, and all disturbances amongst workers attract massive crowds. Here, the social and political stakes are completely “legible”, or rather audible, and they alert the authorities to the gravity of the situation. The cobblers’ rallying cry of “*Houet! Houet!*” is familiar to all, and the brevity and sharp accents of its pronunciation put everyone on alert. Shouts of “*Aya!*” emanate from the windows in expressions of solidarity and satisfaction. As for the on-call officers brought in as reinforcements, they rush in shouting “Beware! Beware!”, prompting the people to ask them emphatically to quit making such a “racket.”

4) Raised Voices and Rows on the Main Thoroughfares

The main roads, towpaths, and riverbanks overflow with a walking world that, most of the time, is searching for work. Within it, one must know just how to cross paths with others, just as one must know the proper way to enter and leave a cabaret. The botched crossings that erupt in rows are particularly visible in the requests for pardon submitted to the King at the moment of coronation. Here the accounts are very precise, punctuated with the sounds and shouting of roadside arguments, as well as their violence. One can hear the shouts, the “*holà!*”s of the aggressors, the howls in disputes of honor, the quarrels about encroaching on someone else’s property, etc. Remarked above all are accusations of smuggling,

3 Archives Nationales Y 10 000–11 004.

4 Archives Nationales, Y 11 004 A, 7 mai 1763.

street fights, suspected arsonists, and problems concerning vagrant soldiers or deserters.

The detailed accounts of those seeking pardon are punctuated with noises, sounds, and vocal expressions very typical of those living in the many forms of homelessness found in the countryside.

The inn is without question the site of greatest conflict, between the drunkenness, the attempts at seduction, the unexpected encounters, the deafening discussions of hiring, and the "sweet, hoarse voices of young ladies", in the words of Restif de la Bretonne.

II When Riots Break Out

When riots break out, they break out in voices: voices intensely feared by the authorities. Words uttered in anger prompt rebellious mouths to shout particular insults and exclamations, bringing the anxiety of the monarchy to its highest pitch. Take the example of the Revolt of 1775 (The Flour War), when the hungry people rise up thunderously. The furor is enormous. The demand for bread takes the form of a symbolic event: someone steals the bread with great fanfare before a crowd that, cheering its approval, demands that the thief escape arrest. Public outcry ensues, women are enraged, ringleaders harangue the authorities. These shouts are also calls to arms: hearing them, the crowd gains momentum, building up steam. Some of the accused endeavor to defend themselves, like the 47-year-old porter Francis Coret, who explains "that he does not remember anything, though having been drinking during the day, he may have done more shouting than he thought, but it was hunger that drove him to it". A hunger that drives a man to scream . . . some of the rioters are accused of possessing voices that ring out over the others, voices "capable of inciting revolt" and used to do precisely that.

In the case of riots, women's' voices are very present, even essential, and characterized as extremely abrasive. Chroniclers pounce on the opportunity to castigate these sharp, piercing voices. When women of "the lower classes" are upset, one notices that the police archives retain their voices, and their remarkable vociferations, if only to underscore the presence of imminent danger. The chroniclers call it "the belly scream", or even "the scream of the womb" (*le cri du ventre*), though without ever noting the collective, social aspect of the women's' actions. "Women can only make noise" – discourse is denied them.

III What Does it Mean to "Say" Badly? Translated by Liesl Yamaguchi

For those who live primarily in the street, sound provides the first opening into society. All voices are not equal, however: there is little equality – and significant difference – between the voice of the King, the voices of the salons, the voices of those who have left this world (the Convulsionaries, for example), and the voices of the suffering and the oppressed.

1) One finds the voice of the people assigned to its underprivileged condition, bumbling about with provincial accents, so-called vulgar outbursts, damaged by work, degraded, even dangerous. All while condemning this voice and characterizing it as animalistic and inept, the elites fear it. After the Revolution of 1789, some would prefer that the Nation speak with but "a single voice". This means that the people must be instructed, assisted in the use of punctuation and kept from being led astray by expressions one hoots rather than pronounces.

A police inspector tasked with collecting the "vulgar expressions" in use in the city (that the King be kept abreast of them and hear their sounds), explains that the people never cease "muttering". He listens on street corners and in public squares. The 18th-century police often write at considerable length about the strength of conviction in this popular speech, and of its vehement sound. In the police leaflets in which all of this street speech is collected,[5] one finds numerous allusions, such as: "certain individuals belonging to the coarse classes employ merciless sound inflections, speaking with excessive passion and bias, rife with abuse".

And to cite a few more of these voices: "this bloody King's been leaving us to starve to death from the moment he was born"; "you've always walked all over the poor, we'll return the favor when you get back, which is tomorrow, right? Why not?"

2) Still more reported speech is to be found in the complaints brought before the police superintendent and in the interrogations of the accused. The court clerk, of course, learned his trade before taking down actual sentences. This is why many of the complaints display identical expressions and syntax. The court clerk summarizes the plantiff's first words, then delves into the heart of the speech by inscribing it as it was spoken. Here we find inflamed outbursts that defy summary. The complaints take on a particular coloring: they are pictorial, full of images, rife with very specific vocal sounds. Reading them today, one cannot help hearing

5 Archives de la Bastille, M. 10 155, 1725.

the vocal timbres and 'seeing' the bright colors of their intonation slipped into writing. Melancholy, tenderness, hate, gentleness, "nastiness", a sense of loss: erything comes pouring out and the court clerk takes it all down. Here is life in its own words. In June 1765, a jealous young man sees his mistress being courted at the cabaret. Caught between anger and woe, he loses himself before the police officer, describing the man attempting to seduce his beloved: "so here's this goddamn pretty-face prince trying to make off with my lady";[6] this is not the invention of the court clerk. The words' brutality echoes with an impassioned energy, full of rage. Another man, hoping to punish his wife, wants to "skin her character" while a certain Mr. Leroux yells vehemently at the police officer, "I know she's a woman for the dirtiest use". A stunning and dramatic expression.

It also happens that people speak just as vehemently about the person of the King. After the Damiens' attack on Louis XV in 1757, the people are interrogated in the interest of getting a "feel" for how they are thinking, as the police lieutenant puts it. Some of the responses might as well be shouts: "If France had two eyes less today, everything would be restored". Another man in the King's service does not hesitate to say that he "would very much like to give him a swift kick in the ass since the King is a waste of space and really none too good looking with that long nose of his". All of these words provide verbal scansions that allow us to infer the sound of the voices that pronounced them.

The emotions that imbue these voices transform their syntax, coloring comments on all levels, be they phonic, grammatical, or lexical. The words taken down by the court clerks distinguish utterances of a single breath, identifiable vocal units that are completely colored by often extreme affects: astonishment, torment, defiance. The emotional qualities perceived in an utterance often form part of its message, as in the expression "*Jame la vite*", which means "No way" (*jamais de la vie*). It's a very frequent turn of phrase in the popular classes who are obliged to defend themselves as spontaneously as possible against whatever accusation may be thrown their way, which means condensing everything into a sonic exclamation one can throw like a punch: "*jam lavit*" means "No way", but also "How could you possibly think that I [. . .]"

3) The sounds of suffering resound through other voices still. The archive does not transmit sound, but one can listen for snatches of words moaned: expressions of suffering that emanate outward. Hoarse, husky, broken voices bearing the traces of work, illness, and imprisonment. They lend themselves to being heard as the end result of hardships endured. Or, to go further still, one might say weakness and misery rob the body of its voice. In his *Tableau de Paris*, Louis Sébastien

6 National Archives, Y 9713, June 1765.

Mercier often describes the sound of suffering voices; he describes their intonations as “pained,” “plaintive,” “mournful,” and “heartbreaking”. It is generally in discussions of the areas around hospitals (*Hôtel-Dieu*, for example) that the two writers Mercier and Restif de la Bretonne are fond of describing the wounded, heartbreaking melodies of extreme suffering. It is worth pointing out that these terms rarely appear in the conversational or philosophical discussion, which would appear to be completely oblivious to the fact that these aural invocations, in their infinite multiplicity, express the unbearable disfigurement of men and women who have been subjected to bodily harm. The fury in these voices is drowned out by an exaltation of suffering: the voices make history, as well, because it has been confirmed (by L.S. Mercier) that riots did take place right next to Bicêtre, in 1763 for example, when the screams of the famished, defiant prisoners attracted a scandalized crowd.

To Conclude?

This text was written out of a desire to “recover the impossible”, which is to say, the voice-object. To draw out what will never again be heard, but which left its trace, allowing others to capture the inaudible and gain a new foothold in the world of the penniless whose language was stigmatized because it failed to correspond to the norm. The oralities of the past live on in ours, and the “flesh” of the voice constitutes both event and history. Today we must make these voices resonate within us because they are of the present every bit as much as they are of the past. We must hear them all, including the countless number that we have devalued, as they form the link *par excellence* to popular expression.

Bibliographical Note

The cases referred to in this essay have been drawn from the police archives of Paris, now held at the Archives de la Bastille (part of the national archives). Further sources include

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Further Reading

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