Radio Relations

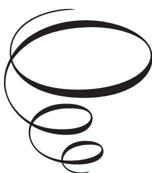
Radio Relations:

Policies and Aesthetics of the Medium

Edited by

Grażyna Stachyra, Tiziano Bonini and Madalena Oliveira

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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This book is dedicated in memory of Professor Guy Starkey –
an outstanding radio Scholar, a great Teacher
and a generous Friend.

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Introduction

Grażyna Stachyra, Tiziano Bonini and Madalena Oliveira

The main theme of the book – Radio Relations condenses what radio actually is: a medium created to connect two different places at a distance, and therefore, a relational and involving medium. Subtle but pervasive, simple but graceful, unpretentious but suggestive, radio is about creating affective relations – either between listeners and the world or between listeners themselves through the emotions suggested by the spoken word. The word *relations* is conveniently plural. It suggests the idea that radio is both an economic activity – *related to* technology, production, working routines and business – and a cultural industry – *related to* aesthetics, art, social interaction, education and politics. The word *relations* is, on the other hand, deeply dynamic. Sociologists use it to refer to what is vibrant and interactive. So it also suggests the idea that radio is still a pulsating sector, resilient at least. The word *relations* is, likewise, relevantly human. It not only means causal associations (in the way the word functions in the field of biology and the natural sciences) but also emotional engagement. It suggests, therefore, the idea that radio appeals to personal commitment and can reinforce a sense of community.

In 2017, the World Radio Day emphasised that "Radio is You" by stressing that "radio is still the most dynamic, reactive and engaging medium there is, adapting to 21st century changes and offering new ways to interact and participate." UNESCO also acknowledged that "where social media and audience fragmentation can put us in media bubbles of like-minded people, radio is uniquely positioned to bring communities together and foster positive dialogue for change".

The diversity of these analytical perspectives from which the sender-receiver relationships in radio can be analysed, reflects interdisciplinary and unconventional paths in the analysis of the content of radio broadcasting. That is why chapters in this book are different in nature:

In our first part, *Radio broadcasting aesthetics and sound decoding practices,* we present three chapters. Human beings as transmitters and re-

ceivers, "constantly looking to express themselves in relation to what surrounds them", interacting as co-performers in a sound work, is subject to analysis by Seán Street who applies the perspective of sound as the continuum to his research. The Author shows how we give in to the sound even involuntarily. In a moving and poetic way Street describes the sound around us and the sound of ourselves.

The radio feature as musical composition is examined here by Ben Horner who gives the examples of the conceptual and phenomenological similarities between musical and radio feature compositional practice, and uses this basis to highlight the discrete nature of research work in these areas. Based on Andrew Crisell's framework of the four 'codes' of radio – speech, music, sound and silence – relevant and comparable pieces are highlighted and explored here.

As the third chapter of this section Katharina Smets dedicates her own research to connections in building the audio story. Her idea is to define a narrative through characters acting. Smets describes a personal search for new ways to tell audio stories marginalizing the issue of threads and using both journalistic and artistic tools. Confronting statements of scholars with her colleagues podcasters experiences and own practice she uncovers new storytelling possibilities and reveals "fresh narrative ground not yet cultivated".

The second part titled *Audience behaviours and the programs design in the context of cultural and technological change* is opened with Enrico Menduni's chapter written as a keynote speech for the Radio Relations ECREA Conference, held in Lublin in September 2017. Menduni aims at reconsidering the history of radio under the frame of a cultural analysis of its many technological changes. A cultural history of radio and its main features as the first of real time, ubiquitous and personal medium were correlated by Menduni with multiplication of contemporary communication aided by activating the listeners to become co-creators of the medium.

Daniel Gambaro introduces the concept of Audiovisual Design. He describes it as a workflow of processes for planning , production and analysis of radio programmes under the light of new technologies of communication. This methodology results from the crossing of theories from Audience Studies and Computer Sciences, more specifically Human-Computer Interaction. Gambaro assumes that communication studies alone are not sufficient to fully explain the audience's behaviours in relation to the digital media environment. Audiovisual Design is presented here as a viable tool both for producers and researchers of convergent radio.

Ewa Nowak-Teter researches ingredients of women's role models presented in radio discourse, and ask the questions what these ingredients and perspectives tell us about women's role models in Western and Eastern European contexts, especially by selecting female issues and communication perspectives applied in radio communication. With empirical data (2016) from women's radio broadcasts in different parts of Europe: *Woman's Hour*

of the BBC Radio Four and *Matka Polka Feministka* of Polish Radio Channel Three Ewa Nowak-Teter brings closer the world experienced, shared and communicated by women in radio broadcasts

In a chapter dedicated to the theory of *parasocial interaction (intimacy at a distance*) in communication practices of contemporary radio Grażyna Stachyra uses the theoretical framework introduced by Donald Horton and Richard Wohl to juxtapose the conclusions of the originators and followers of the theory of "intimacy at a distance" with the opinions of public radio presenters on such relations expressed in in-depth interviews. The article attempts to answer how contemporary public radio enters into "parasocial interactions" with the audience and whether "intimacy at a distance" takes place in radio.

The ethnographic studies of two Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Radio current affairs programs, one in the early 1990s and the other in the early 2000s is taken into account by Graham Cook, who attempt to answer the question how internalized journalistic values shaped the workplaces and program content. In both cases, the workplaces were gendered and racialized, and this was also reflected in programming. Cook reveals the idea of future studies of CBC Radio current affairs that should look at how radio producers deal with contemporary resource constraints.

In the third part, *Radio broadcasting policies and social transformations,* we present six chapters. The section opens the research dedicated to the regulation of privately owned local radio stations in France. Maria Holubowicz shows here the principle of pluralism as the key factor in the process of selecting candidates for frequencies for local radio stations by the Territorial Audiovisual Committees. Holubowicz's aim of research is to show pluralism "in the making" bringing to light procedures and "the art of doing" that enables this principle to be effective in compliance with applicable law in the domain of radio media.

The commitment to solidarity on Spanish public radio is taken into account by Carmen Marta-Lazo and Patricia González-Aldea, who attempts to answer the question how the programme "Solidaridad" on Radio 5 reveals the idea of social commitment thanks to the various activities by NGOs or one-off actions, which are valuable in our society, because of catastrophes, floods or cataclysms. Marta-Lazo and González-Aldea show that nowadays this practice tends to be used to achieve certain results, e.g. "solidarity marketing", which links the image of a company and does not contribute to either raising awareness or changing minds.

From the chapter by Urszula Doliwa we can find out about the status of private stations in Poland in the early 1990s, which broadcasted illegally, mostly because of the lack of a legal framework. Doliwa studies the time frame set by the dates – June 4, 1989, when there were the first semi-free elections to the Polish Parliament and 1994, when the first radio licences were issued. Her aim is to show that local private radio stations in Poland began

functioning as non-commercial and community oriented and were similar to some extant to pirate radios operating in the 60s and 70s in Western Europe.

Céline Loriou researches why history programmes regularly broadcasted on French airwaves since the end of the 1940s, are far from identical. Loriou offers an overview of these programmes, classifying them by formats and showing that the approach they favour, ranging from academic history to anecdotal history, is often influenced by the identity of their producers, who come from various backgrounds. After briefly analysing these programmes, the chapter discusses the impact of these forms on historians, listeners and radio stations.

Artur Trudzik poses the question about the origin of the introduction of popular music to Polish radio broadcasting in the Polish People's Republic (1950s and 1960s). He highlights that during the era of the Communist regime of Poland the ideological dogmas based on the depreciation of the capitalist world and the justification for the superiority of socialism deprived the trends in culture, art and music emerging in the West of the right to exist in the press, radio or television. However, in the Polish radio broadcasting (4 programs of the Polish Radio and the Scout Radio Station), practically from its beginnings, attempts were made, and later fights were fought to find a place in the ether for music considered harmful, i.e. in the first stage of rock'n'roll (big beat), jazz, and then rock and its variations.

The last part of the book ends with Stephen Westlake's research. He describes the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 as an inspiration to the formation of transnational networks of human rights groups which arguably contributed to the collapse of Communism in Europe and the end of the Cold War, and the role of the BBC External Services (BBCXS) in both contributing to and reflecting this transformative process. Westlake analyses the BBCXS Central European Department's audience research and policy material to establish what they can reveal about how the Helsinki Accords, and the movements which they informed or inspired, were received, understood, and responded to, both within the community of the BBCXS itself, as well as among its listeners within the Communist states of Central Europe.

The technological capabilities and the cultural context of communication requires a different intensity of activity on the part of the listeners and constant flexibility of the broadcaster. Communication in radio as a multifaceted issue has encouraged us to analyse its many dimensions. This book is evidence of the discursive diversity of a medium which remains at the margins of academic debate, in particular where qualitative analysis is concerned, and is beyond the focus of most researchers. We hope you will find interesting the chapters presented here as they show radio's capability to communicate to people realising the essence of Ong's "secondary orality".

Part 1:

Radio Broadcasting Aesthetics and Sound Decoding Practices

Chapter One

Sound, Silence and Identity

Seán Street
Bournemouth University, UK
sstreet@bournemouth.ac.uk

Abstract
We are transmitters and receivers, a system of call and response. As we carry our own song through life, we are constantly touching other tunes, and frequently we are required to improvise the expression of our self in relation to what surrounds us, interacting as a human being like a musician. We are co-performers in a sound work. In seeking to catch the sonic moment as it passes, we capture the instant and making it singable, as a painter tries to paint water. Sound is a continuum; with a picture we are left to imagine what happened before and after. Yet both a photograph and sound play with time; one catches an instant of it, while the other walks alongside us for a while, as the sense of sound from words on a page, heard silently in the mind are absorbed and processed by the senses. Sound touches us beyond literal meaning. Even in stillness the air rings.

Keywords: sound, silence, poetry, radio, identity

The Sound of Self

In 1996, the novelist Penelope Fitzgerald published a book called *The Blue Flower*. It's a story about the student life of Georg Phillip Friedrich von Hardenberg, the German poet who became known as 'Novalis', and in particular, about his meeting with and love for his young and doomed muse, Sophie von Kuhn. In the book, there is a conversation between Hardenberg and Joseph Hoffmann, the painter he has commissioned to paint Sophie's likeness. Hoffmann tries – and fails – to do so, and in a memorable passage, they have this conversation, in which Hoffman explains:

> "Hardenberg, in every created thing, whether it is alive or whether it is what we usually call inanimate, there is an attempt to communicate, even among the totally silent. There is a question being asked, a different ques-

> tion for every entity, which for the most part will never be put into words, even by those who can speak. It is asked incessantly, most of the time however hardly noticeably, even faintly, like a church bell heard across meadows and enclosures. Best, for the painter, once having looked, to shut his eyes, his physical eyes though not those of the spirit, so that he may hear it more distinctly. You must have listened for it, Hardenberg, for Fraulein Sophie's question, you must have strained to make it out, even though, as I think very probably, she does not know herself what it is.'
>
> 'I am trying to understand you,' said Fritz.
> Hoffmann had put his hand to his ear, a very curious gesture for a young man.
> 'I could not hear her question, and so I could not paint' (Fitzgerald 1996, 124).

Sophie, we discover, is soon to die.

Sound – heard and made – and its relationship with who we are, and with how we communicate with the world through which we move. *Sound Poetics* – I link sound and poetry. The two things have been partners throughout my life. So yes, this is about poetry and sound and/or radio because of the commonality between them. The poetry OF sound. We create images in our mind from the clues black words on a white page give, or from the words and other sounds that come out of the darkness. The key is that WE make the pictures.

Hearing is the first sense to awaken in us, and the last to leave us. Throughout our lives, we are defined by sound: the sound around us and the sound of ourselves. Our Self. We may close our eyes, but we cannot close our ears. Sound exists not only because it is created, but because it is heard. It affects us at a subliminal level, by-passing our emotional and cultural filters, seeping under the Radar of prejudice and going to the core of our being. Even if we encounter physical hearing problems in our lives, there is never a time when absolute silence takes over our being. We participate in sound in voluntary and involuntary ways. It is part of the fabric of our world, and it is inherent in our being. Reading in an apparently silent room, the words tranlate themselves to sound in our mind, and images sing in our aural imagination. Underlying all is the beat of our bloodstream and the hum of our nervous system. Stepping into the street, the stereo soundscape of the world rushes in on us, and immediately we become a part of the improvised jazz of life's sonic environment, adapting our personal ‚song' to our circumstances. As we do so, our memory bank grows, identifying and storing new sounds, absorbing their meaning for future reference, learning to live in and with the changing music of life. It is a continuous process, going on around us and in spite of us, a process in which we participate. We have no choice. And it begins in the womb.

No one sense provides me with all the evidence I need to interpret the world; I move through an immediate set of circumstances where sight,

smell, taste, touch and sound offer multi-dimensional clues from which my brain creates a presence for itself, and to which it responds. It is all linked together in a dance, and sometimes the dancers touch one another, at other times they go solo. Sometimes one of the dancers takes over completely and the others simply observe, before resuming their weaving and cross--hatchings of meaning. Electronic airwaves provide possibilities that feed into the immediacy of my localised environment, even in what I have come to call ‚dead air', (a fallacy because how can air ever be dead?) Broadcast silence allows ‚the possibility for a silence that is not dead, a silence re--presenting a presence whose essence is actualised even when its sonorous potential is not'. Of all sensual moments, it is that kind of silence that is a starting point, a moment of infinite possibility, analogous with the moment the lights go down and before the curtain rises in a theatre, the hiss of a needle on shellac or wax cylinder, as the phonograph turns, or the disc revolves, before the ghost in the machine speaks. Only one sense, but a sense capable of activating all the others through the power of the imagination. The phonograph of memory crackles its audio sepia, and through the horn or the speaker, the voices of the dead come back. A 'living' voice evoking a mortal being, once a possessor of the same senses as I, speaking one-to-one with me across all the dimensions in which I exist, including time.

Sound – as an imaginative as well as a concrete construct – frames and shapes our identity, and our relationship with the world in which we live, through which we move and by which we are formed. I argue that sound is itself a poetic concept; the root of our modern word, 'poetry' is *Poïesis* , etymologically derived from the ancient Greek term meaning literally "to make". In its beginning it was a verb, an action that transforms and continues the world. Thus *poïesis* reconciles thought with matter and time, and is a fundamental part of the connection between a human being and existence. With Jean-Claude Nancy I would ask, "What secret is at stake when one truly listens, that is, when one tries to capture or surprise the sonority rather than the message? What secret is yielded – hence also made public – when we listen to a voice, an instrument, or a sound just for itself? What does to be listening, to be all ears, as one would say ‹to be in the world› mean? What does it mean to exist according to listening, for and through it, what part of experience and truth comes into play?'' (Nancy 2007, 5)

The music we make when we speak can carry as much meaning – often more – than the words themselves. Robert Frost and Edward Thomas, walking in the Gloucester Countryside just before the first world war, talking about Frost's theory of the Sound of Sense, that voices tell you their meaning through sound alone. Eleanor Farjeon was with them, and she noted the conversation in her book, *Edward Thomas, the Last Four Years*:

> "Robert was talking of what he called the 'cadence' in the human voice, which accompanied the speech that came natural to it; as the speech native

> to his New Englanders north of Boston followed the cadence which changed it into poetry...While we walked, we saw across two hedgerows a man's figure standing against the skyline on top of a cart; he had a fork in his hands with which he attacked some load, corn or manure, pitched from below. Frost stopped and shouted a question across the fields – it might have been, 'What are you doing there this fine afternoon?' but whatever the words, the man couldn't have heard them. He too shouted some answer that rang through the air, and it was impossible for us to distinguish what he said. But the cadence of the answer was as clear as that of the question. Robert turned to Edward. 'That's what I mean,' he said" (Farjeon 1997, 90).

Sound defines us. We cannot escape its influence and affect, just as we cannot but be shaped by our background and formative environment. We carry our own song with us, expanding it and extemporizing as we live, but based on a small but vital pattern of sound that sits at the core of our being. We are transmitters and receivers, a system of call and response powered by a leitmotif that, although unheard at a conscious level, is capable of being triggered to either sympathetic or antipathetic reactions by sounds heard physically or 'silently', that is to say through the imaginative stimuli of a text or a thought. It begins and ends in and with the Self.

The Silent Sound of Text

When we read, we 'hear' suggested sound through imagination and memory. In May 1819, the English romantic poet John Keats wrote a poem that's as full of sound as any that came from his pen. The key to the poem, the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' however is the juxtaposition of silence and clamorous sound. It is a meditation on the embossed images on a Greek vase, possibly one he saw in the British Museum in London. It begins

> Thou still unravished bride of quietness.

When first published, there was a comma after the word 'still which changes the meaning:

> Thou still, unravished bride of quietness.

Keats, or an editor, subsequently removed the comma, so it becomes 'thou still unravished bride of quietness', in other words, the mean becomes changed to 'you, the vase continue to be undefiled by time.' We may be in a noisy echoing gallery, as perhaps Keats was, but the silence of the witnesses portrayed on the object draw us into another world. And yet once in their world, Keats takes into another place of noise, an orgy in every sense:

> What men or gods are these? What maidens loth,

> What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
> What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstacy?

He brushes his fingers over the braille of the vase, and the result is the noisiest poem he ever wrote, and as we read, we hear those sounds too, silently, within the mind. The sounds inside the imagination are there forever. In a perfect quatrain, Keats sums it up:

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter, therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
> Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
> Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone...

This is the silent sound we create when we read, when we view a work of art, or indeed when we mentally interact with the world in general around us.

Conscious Listening

Sound IS a poetic form, and poetry was sound before it was print, spoken by troubadours and minstrels...which takes us to the voice, a fundamental part of our identity by which we are perceived and judged throughout our lives. Sound, speech and reading are linear. Unlike a photograph or a painting, these forms move through time, and as they travel through our mind, they create or recreate codes that the brain learns to recognise. It is about the sounds we make to link ourselves to the world, but more, much more, it is about the art of listening, the consciousness of listening. It can be taught in ourselves. Deep listening. Pauline Oliveros said 'Listen to everything all the time, and remind yourself when you are not listening' (Oliveros 2010, 28). We have eyelids, but no earlids, our ears are always open and because of that, we can zone out. We need to refocus, recalibrate the ears in partnership with the mind in order to receive signals that we might otherwise miss, the sound under the sound. Sometimes the tiny sound in the raucous world can be the most important thing.

It is the voice that is our aural brand, timbre, pitch, pace, pause dialect and language. But it can include or exclude us, label us and it can become the cause of prejudice. Voice in the socio-political sense is about more than just speaking. Society doesn't always listen to what's being said by an individual or a group because too often they hear a voice and they judge that voice – the accent, the grammar, the tone – and so they do not hear the message.

We are a kind of music, and music is the art of the hope for resonance. News and general media often communicate through 'the perfect voice' just as our newsreaders are perfectly groomed and dressed. There may therefore be a temptation to relegate and marginalise the ordinary voice, the voice that is less than 'perfect.' Society may put pressures on us to sound a certain way, just as it throws us images of the 'perfect' body or

face. Voice is one shared expression of the self, but ultimately it must be listening beyond superficial first impressions that we should focus on.

Is there ever silence? Listen to the room you are in now, this moment? Listening can be as interactive as transmission; we affect the space we're in, simply by being in it, just as a particular set of circumstances within a space creates performances of John Cage's 4'33"

For sound specialists working in the English language, it is a happy coincidence that the word 'Silent' is an anagram of the word 'Listen', but silence itself at least is the same in any language, the bed upon which sound is laid, listening for the voice, which may not be human, but which may reflect our humanity.

At the start of Tim Robinson's remarkable trilogy of books, Connemara, there is a wonderful exercise in listening. It is in the first book, *Listening to the Wind*, and it is salutary because we all hear a mix of sounds that merge and become amorphous every day, but the trick is to hear the sounds under the sound. He describes a storm to illustrate this:

> "As a wave or wind breaks around the headland, a wood, a boulder, a tree trunk, a pebble, a twig, a wisp of seaweed or a microscopic hair on a leaf, the streamlines are split apart, flung against each other, compressed in narrows, knotted in vortices. The ear constructs another wholeness out of the reiterated fragmentation of pitches, and it can be terrible, this wide range of frequencies coalescing into something approaching the auditory chaos and incoherence that sound engineers call white noise: zero of information-content, random interference obliterating all messages... a metaphysical horror made audible" (Robinson 2006, 2).

There is a huge engine driving all this, but it is made up of many minute working parts as landscape shapes itself through elemental forces. As Robinson says:

> "Going here and there in thought through the pandemonium, only the most analytic listening can disengage its elements: shriek of sedge bent double out on the heath, grinding of shingle sucked back by the reflux, slow chamfering of a stone's edge blown by sand grains" (Robinson 2006, 2).

Listening is a poignant animal thing. Whenever we open a window or an external door, we break a seal on the barrier between internal sound – be it domestic or otherwise – and the world outside. If we are fully sighted and with hearing intact, we experience a blend of impressions, often led by the visual. We take in huge amounts of information at a glance: the weather, traffic, other people, light, dark, time of year and so on. It is part of a survival system that goes back to our birth as a species. We are deep-wired to assess our environment for danger, risk and possibility. Listening is a part of this ancient in-built scanning system, but the nature of the ear's

relationship to the brain means it has to be tuned, or calibrated. Opening the external door or the window with closed eyes can be instructive; we find in ourselves an aural awareness that was previously masked by the dominance of the eye's impressions. There is a whole sound world rushing by, amorphous, a mix of noises coalescing into one murmur or roar, depending on our location. The weather plays a major part in this; for example rain defines the contours of our immediate environment, plays the percussion of its surfaces, gives its otherwise silent inanimate shapes a sound. Wind gives us trees, but this can be ambiguous; the rushing of leaves may sound like water, a torrential downpour, so our brain computes what it hears and comes to a conclusion. John Hull, losing his eyesight at the height of an academic career, noted the value of weather in this way, giving as it did, a sense of shape and perspective to his surroundings. In fact, going further, he found himself wishing that 'if only rain could fall inside a room, it would help me to understand where things are in that room, to give a sense of being in the room, instead of just sitting on a chair' (Hull 1990, 27).

Occasionally one sonic event, either through volume or frequency, waves at us, demands our attention, but it does so through a bed of seemingly opaque audio formed of almost infinite components, some huge and many tiny. The swish of a bicycle passing us on a wet road may seem to be virtually lost in the general hubbub, but it, in its way, it is also contributing to the soundscape, a small ingredient in the overall mix of sound that surrounds us, whether we like it or not, and through which we must negotiate our own sonic selves, taking from it or rejecting according to our needs and emotions.

Positive and Negative Silence

Silence – stillness – peace; something we so often strive for in the noise of our world. But there is the silence that longs to be broken. There is negative silence, spiritual sonic numbness. Thomas Hardy wrote a poem that explores the various species of silence:

> There is the silence of a copse or croft
> When the wind sinks dumb,
> And of a belfry–loft
> When the tenor after tolling stops its hum....

Further on in the poem he writes...

> But the rapt silence of an empty house
> Where oneself was born,
> Dwelt, held carouse
> With friends, is of all silences most forlorn...

As David Toop has said:

> All silences are uncanny, because we have become estranged from absences of sound. An uncanny silence falls when it envelopes or drifts down into a sounding world, like snowfall muting an otherwise noisy city, as if the presence of nothing can soak up noise, a white blotter that retains its whiteness no matter how much ink is absorbed. Then silence is heard more clearly, like fog, through whatever faint shapes can be discerned within... there are many species of silence (Toop 2010, 182).

Sound is always disappearing because it is temporal, as are we. The loudest sound only emphasises the silence around it, so in its bleakest incarnation, sound is a memento mori. Looked at this way, the tolling of a bell, which on one level we may see as a bridge between the material world and that of the spirit and imagination, may also be heard as a metaphor for life, death and the passing of time. Depending on where you stand on the permanence or mutability of the life-force, the absence of all sound represents an end of all things; the silence of God, the silence of death. We may keep our radios on as background sound for the reassurance they bring us, to break the silence and act as a distraction to introversion and loneliness, and to connect us to the world, because while there is an inner silence that may be equated with chosen solitude, there is also a silence within that is the epitome of loneliness and abandonment, a stillness that intensifies as the gregarious noise of the world around us increases. The juxtaposition of outer sound with inner silence can be devastating, and the interaction between the visual and the aural can sometimes provide a disconnect that is surreal and frightening.

This dichotomy is one which film makers exploit to great effect; the visuals may tell us one story, but the soundtrack sends another message entirely, while remaining connected, however obliquely, to the overall narrative, and creating an effect which is both illogical and strange. The film director Chu-Li Shewring once told me of just such a juxtaposition from a walk in West London. In the shadow of Chelsea Football Club's Stamford Bridge ground lies Brompton Cemetery, the final resting place for thousands of former citizens of the capital, some famous, others now forgotten. To walk through the graveyard on a Saturday afternoon, with Chelsea playing at home, is to experience this disconnect in an extraordinary way. The roar of the crowd pours over the silent gravestones, and the contrast between the living and the dead is never more poignant. For Shewring, intent on the inscriptions on the stones, the sudden burst of sound from the adjacent football crowd was shocking in the extreme: 'I wasn't aware of the stadium, but I suddenly became aware of this huge roar, a shower of sound all around me, unseen and so disconnected. Being in a cemetery and hearing all this life – so visceral – made it very haunting and strange.' Hearing the voices of the still living, and seeing the evidence of what we become, made the ultimate silence of death even more total in the imagi-

nation. The negative property of stillness but 'no peace, no silence' in the words of Ovid is the barrier many seek to overcome in a quest for meaning and spiritual fulfilment (Street 2017,82-3).

Remember that chilling moment in Orson Welles' 1938 CBS *War of the Worlds* broadcast, when the DX-er calls but gets no response? It can be terrifying in its loneliness, when we can't break a silence, be it sonically, socially or culturally. Alienation, physical deafness, dementia – being cut off from everything – a spiritual silence too, even in the loudest places: isolation. Somewhere within us there may be a still centre, but when the signals that link us to the world stop, we seek a sound that breaks in on the emptiness, sound that either puts us at our ease or confirms our fears. We fear sonic darkness. The radio drama producer Donald McWhinnie (1996, 89) wrote, in the context of radio, 'during silence, things happen invisibly.' Worse is the fear that things have ceased to happen altogether. We are all creatures of interaction. Some years ago, I was making a programme about sound conservation at the British Library, and I interviewed Cheryl Tipp, Curator of Wildlife and Environmental Sounds. Cheryl played me a recording made in 1983 in Hawaii by John Sincock, of a bird called Kaua'i O'o. This creature can no longer be found on the planet. So here was a profound expression of sound poetics, a recording, not only of a bird that has now ceased to exist, but actually the final living example of its species; ornithological studies showed that previously two were known, but one had died in a recent hurricane. It is easy to anthropomorphise of course, but the fact remains, this is a recording of the last of its kind, calling out for its mate and receiving no answer, calling forlornly to a world where there was nothing left that understood or spoke his language, and that is a bleak concept in any terms. Like the sound man in *War of the Worlds*, the existential loneliness of the question that receives no answer is the hardest thing to contemplate.

Universal Voices

The 'live' event passes and is gone. We may record it, but we only get one chance at the first impression as it brushes our mind on its way elsewhere. So we return to the voice, that illusive voice that like so much in the world, relies for many of us on a translator to relate it across cultures and boundaries. Yet, as we've seen, the sound itself can transcend such barriers. Some sounds – vocalised sounds: a cry, a laugh, a sigh, a scream – cross time, space and cultures. Many writers describe the attempt to bring the world into language as itself an act of translation. This tiny poem by a ninth century Japanese monk called Kukai suggests to us in just four lines that in the beginning, language started as a single syllable expressing wonder:

> A hand moves, and the fire's whirling takes different shapes,
> Triangles, squares: all things change when we do.
> The first word, "Ah," blossomed into all others.
> Each of them is true.

We are what we hear, and the voice – spoken, written and cultural – with which we seek to engage the world in interaction affirms that. We are also made of our own sound. For now, it's best we begin with ourselves, listen critically, carefully and compassionately, and express ourselves through sound that remains faithful to our unique human essence, part of the world, but a world in ourselves at one and the same time. We live in the moment, and in concert with the moment, we sing.

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Chapter Two

Music/Radio: The Radio Feature as Musical Composition

Ben Horner
Canterbury Christ Church University, UK
ben.horner@canterbury.ac.uk

Abstract
This chapter aims to outline the conceptual and phenomenological similarities between musical and radio feature compositional practice, and uses this basis to highlight the discrete nature of research work in these areas. Using Crisell's (1994) framework of the four 'codes' of radio – speech, music, sound and silence – relevant and comparable pieces are highlighted and explored, using the work of theorists from both sides of the philosophical divide. These pieces are drawn from both avant-garde and more accessible musical practice in order to highlight clearly observable correlations. The findings of this research offer broad possibilities for future developments in the work of the radio feature, and possible implementation difficulties are noted as well as a solution offered utilising new digital opportunities.

Keywords: radio, feature, composition, music, phenomenology, research

Introduction

Amongst radio theorists and practitioners there exists a general agreement over the type and usage of audio material which may be included on the radio for meaningful expression (Crook 1999, 70-81 and 209-218). Perhaps that which offers the most concise classification is Andrew Crisell's four 'codes' of radio: speech, music, sound and silence, of which speech is deemed the 'primary' code, able to lend context and meaning to the others in the most explicit manner (Crisell 1994, 42-63). The radio feature documentary, however, resides in a special territory within, but discrete from, the bulk output of mainstream music and talk radio broadcasters, and is therefore both beholden to and removed from this classification. Since

early practitioners such as Olive Shapley began developing the form in the 1930s the essence of the feature has been to use on-location interview material with the skillful addition of field recordings, music and a creative editing credo. This paper aims to argue that it is the use of such techniques which places the audio documentary feature beyond the simple classification of Crisell's four codes and nudges it firmly in the direction of musical practice in both more accessible and avant-garde forms, thus illustrating that the boundaries between music and radio practice are a great deal more blurred than much current radio scholarship would suggest.

Radio analysis, hierarchy and the feature

Through the collected works of radio scholarship a number of key thinkers have sought to classify and distil the essence of their medium's substance. The semiotic and symbolic meaning of the use of sound broadcast for a listener base and how that listener base might receive, interpret and understand those electronically mediated elements is a central conceit of academic interrogation. A good deal of work has been done towards the development of a vocabulary of radio, taking into account the work of scholars of semiotics such as C. S. Peirce and Raymond Firth (Crook 1999, 77) leading to the development of radio-specific maxims by the likes of Andrew Crisell (1994, 42-63) and Lance Sieveking (1934, 64-68) amongst many others. While these works usefully build on the psychoacoustic and cultural markers of the appreciation of sound for the service of radio the approach is often limited to confronting the medium strictly within its own limits of consideration, and though this is understandable it is a possible contention – and one that is proposed here – that one cannot extend an analysis of the mechanics of radio practice without a working understanding of the vocabulary of musical practice also.

Crisell's four codes of radio – speech, music, sound, silence – offer an insight into the broad approach of radio content classification: four discrete elements forming a jigsaw of components from which the stuff of broadcast can be assembled. This radio-centric approach has offered many excellent insights into the topic, however it sets up a hierarchy with the complete *radio* product presiding over its component semiotic fragments. Further scholarly work has been done to subdivide the codes and interrogate them in more depth, for example the application of Chion's film-informed use of spoken language to radio (1994, 172-176) and, predating Crisell's codes, Sieveking's work on sound semiotics which offers a scaffold to support his theories (1934, 64-68). This situation begs an interesting question of perspective: presuming the destruction of such an assumed analytical hierarchy and the levelling of the subdivisions of these research areas, we might begin to question, could radio analysis be modelled in a different manner

in order to offer further interpretation of the medium? Does all radio output conform to this model, and does the model offer the best insight for all broadcast forms?

It is easy to see how a substantial swathe of radio output - music radio, current affairs and talk radio, for example – can be sliced to fit this representation and appropriately interrogated: these types of programmes are demonstrably the sum of their parts. Of his four, Crisell proposes speech be the primary code with its ability to lend context to the remaining three aspects, privileging the radio presenter as an all-but-omnipresent embodiment of this. The enshrinement of speech may seem an obvious assessment of its status given the widespread prevalence of these types of programmes, but it is proposed here that this framework begins to look fragile when considering the radio feature.

Speech is significantly less privileged when considering sound, music and silence as co-constituents in the feature. This format is a domain where no voiceover is necessarily obligatory and as such the absence of the divine presence of the presenter might leave a vacuum where the semiotic weight and relevance of Crisell's other ingredients suddenly gain a more equal share of listener attention. Perhaps more so than in any other radio form the skill of the producer comes to the fore with compositional abilities akin to that of the musician; as Alan Hall notes, "Sounds on their own aren't enough … they need a composer, a producer, a feature-maker. If these elements are well composed … a kind of alchemy takes place, a transformation of base materials into gold" (2010, 102). With the role of the producer as creator of a pre-recorded soundwork for radio broadcast the philosophical line between music as an element of radio in its own right (as Crisell would have it) and the feature can be seen to be blurred. Radio scholarship tends to draw a line where music analysis is concerned, leaving musicology to its own academics; nevertheless a chart hit cued for playout is just as self-contained a box of ready made structure, rhythm, sound and emotion as the 30-minute feature due for broadcast as a piece of (quasi-) factual entertainment. Further disturbances to radio and music study can be seen when considering the semiotic qualities of different sounds and construction in both (be they instrumentation, spoken or sung language, use of structure) and how these can be seen to overlap between radio and musical research.

Music: sound, speech, silence (and structure)

It is suggested that looking at the broad areas of each of Crisell's codes offers a helpful format for comparing musical and radio practice in each, as well as considering other scholars' work in these fields as they contribute to wider discussion.

Sound

Luigi Russolo and the Futurist movement are counted among the first whose work suggested that all sound might be considered music (Cox and Warner 2007, 10). Taking inspiration from the factories of the industrial revolution and campaigning against the standard traditions of musical composition and instrumentation he advocated to "break out of this circle of sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds" (*Ibid.*, 11). To this end Russolo constructed a raft of new noise-making instruments he termed the '*Intonarumori'* (literally translated as 'noise-tuner') though it wasn't until after the Second World War, with the advent and accessibility of advanced recording and playback equipment, that the full meanings of this path of thought could be articulated.

Pierre Schaeffer, a radio engineer and experimental musician, worked under the influence of Husserl's phenomenology theory and used edited and manipulated field recordings to compose *musique concrète* (concrete music), featuring edited, looped, slowed and stretched sound clips in an effort to conceptually separate the experience of auditory sound from its physical source (Cox and Warner 2007, 76). While difficult to acknowledge as mainstream entertainment, pieces such as Schaeffer's 1948 *Étude aux Chemins de Fer* (Railway Study) serve to offer an early suggestion that field recordings, when properly treated with a creative approach, may be composed into a shape which infers meaning other than simply its source information. His work suggested that sounds have semiotic content of their own which can be bent into shapes to fulfil the composer's creative message just as musical instruments are used. From a radio perspective, a foundation of the skill of a features producer is their ability to carefully infuse field recordings into their programmes to offer a sense of presence to the listener in a given scene. Creative addition, sudden removal or simple sonic framing of a setting using field recordings is a well worn trope of the feature and can offer a sense of realism, abstraction, hope or loss depending on how these sounds are artistically treated.

First aired in 1978, *The Revenge* is a radio drama written by Andrew Sachs featuring no spoken word material, aiming to tell its story through the use of composed sound alone. Radio scholars and practitioners at the time were dismissive, one BBC writer denouncing it as a "wordless sequence of noises … a well-puffed curiosity" (Raban in Shingler and Wieringa 1998, 53). The absence of speech, as Crisell's denoted primary code, apparently risks leaving radio devoid of any meaning. Despite extensive literature on the semiotics inherent in sound – for example, LaBelle's work on the acoustic signifiers in the urban soundscape (2010), or the pioneering work by the Canadian acoustic ecology movement (of which R. Murray Schafer's *The Soundscape*, 1977, is part) – it seems that radio as a wordless audio-musical compositional practice in itself is strictly off-limits, at least for mainstream consumption.

Why this should be is something of a mystery when one considers the semiotics of radio and musical sound side by side. Sieveking's cataloguing of the use of sound in radio (1934, 64-68), for example, suggests the 'confirmatory effect' amongst his list of sonic signifiers whereby an audio clip is employed to acknowledge a given place or state referred to in radio speech; this concept is mirrored in Schafer's work, here termed a 'soundmark' which may include such aural pointers as the London Underground railway announcements or the scraping of metal chairs on café floors (1977, 240). Equivalents of all of Sieveking's laws can be found in Schafer's writing viewed from a musical perspective – indeed he notes, "The three-stage plan of the radio technician [being 'immediate', 'support' and 'background'] corresponds precisely to the classical layout of the orchestral score with soloist, concertino group and tutti accompaniment" (*Ibid.,* 157).

Music and speech

If it appears obvious that radio requires the inclusion of speech to be fully understood, perhaps the examination of the use of the voice in music may serve to problematise this belief in regard to the radio feature.

Music, when heard without lyrics or vocals, employs carefully chosen and combined sounds to inspire the full human range of emotions in the listener, and as listeners we are aware of its power and how we respond to it – we don't need to have a melancholy lyric to inspire a wistful response. Film composers know this. Kevin Donnelly makes much of the audience's Pavlovian response to sweet-sounding strings or horror-inflected violin squawks to illustrate this point (2005, 6). We can appreciate the majesty of a Verdi opera without speaking Italian or the hooky melancholy of Nena's *99 Luftballons* (1983) (translated as 99 Air Balloons but known as *99 Red Balloons* in the English language release) without speaking German. Through the use of major and minor chords, scales, structure and melodic progressions, music unequivocally transcends verbal language.

Perhaps what Crisell infers when he places speech atop the codes of radio is its specificity. Music can carry the listener aloft on a cushion of emotion but any detail in the songwriter's topic can only really be discerned through the use of an anchorage of words: language adds context, a compositional intent and allows empathetic access to the casual or non-musical listener. It could be seen that Sachs removed a form of interpretable certainty when he removed speech from his radio drama.

This could be accepted as true if one does not bring the *content* of lyrics under scrutiny. With their need to scan to a musical meter, lyrics follow a great deal of poetic creative practice and are seldom openly obvious in their meaning, often being considered artistically deficient if they are overtly so. At the lighter end of pop music words are more often chosen

for their enunciated sound than their poetic connotation. In a UK music radio station poll Des'ree's pop single *Life* (1998), for example, has been harshly derided as having perhaps the most banal and intolerably empty lyrics when existential musings were reflected upon using the couplet "I never want to see a ghost/I'd rather have a piece of toast" (BBC, 2007). Good quality lyrics and poetry deliberately employ simile and metaphor to conjure imagery in their listeners and readers. The non-specificity of music is not wholly resolved with the use of words, and so it is with the radio feature.

While being a key component of the format, the speech used in features can be seen to be comparable to the use of lyrics in song, with the crucial conceptual difference of the apparent transparency of expectation. The feature, as a form of documentary, purports to offer some version of truth, a misapprehension easily countered when it is understood that programme narrative is more often than not constructed in the editing suite from a mass of collected interviews and sound (Hendy 2000, 76). Whereas footage taken for the use in features is of course in plain speech, the artistic remit of the producer is much like that of the songwriter, as both are beholden to the form: it is an alchemic artistic aspiration that drives the feature-maker, as noted above, and just as in songwriting, too plain a narrative takes the joy out of the finished product. It is not only the interviewed contributors being edited and composed, either – in features where a voiceover is included the script is carefully written and delivered: see presenter Jarvis Cocker's voiceover work in BBC Radio 4's *Wireless Nights* for an example (2014-present).

Bringing the inclusion of speech even closer to musical practice are music artists such as Talking Heads with *Once in a Lifetime* (1980), a song with a spoken delivery of its verses; *Thou Shalt Always Kill* (2007) by electronic musician Dan le Sac with spoken word artist Scroobius Pip's poetry-as-prose delivery, and David Byrne and Brian Eno's album *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1981), a record that eschews lyrics altogether in favour of samples of pre-existing spoken word clips dropped into the music. Other examples include the Baz Luhrmann 1998 single *Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)* and the entire output of UK sample-based guitar band Public Service Broadcasting. Most notably blurring the lines between the radio feature and music is Steve Reich's 1988 album *Different Trains*, a work which takes interview footage with Holocaust survivors and sets it to a musical backing which mimics the rhythms and cadences of both the spoken word and a train in motion to comment on the contrast in rail journeys on mainland Europe and the USA in the early 1940s. The similarity between this example and radio feature tropes is striking.