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Introduction

New Sonic Approaches in Literary Studies

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Introduction: New Sonic Approaches in Literary Studies

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THE SOUND OF LITERATURE is now discernible as never before. This emerging discernibility inciting new sonic approaches to literature is due, in the first instance, to digitized audio assets and online environments that make previously analog collections of literary recordings more readily available and useful for research and study. Beyond this important infrastructural condition, the heightened discernibility of sonic approaches to literary culture has arisen from a quite recent interaction and convergence of methods between literary studies and sound studies as a broad, interdisciplinary field. This continuum that now grants context for literary scholarship that focuses on sound did not exist to the same degree even fifteen years ago when Louis Cabri and Peter Quartermain produced their special issue of *ESC*, “On Discreteness: Event and Sound in Poetry,” a collection of scholarly work that focused primarily on the “one-hundred-plus sounds, derived from forty-plus phonemes—spoken English” as “part of poetry’s sonic dimension” (Cabri 1). Most notable in that issue was its generic focus, which made it most exciting and meaningful (and innovative from the perspective of methods) to scholars of twentieth- and twenty-first century poetry. This parabolic focus on sound in poetry, arguably going back to the importance of literary prosody in New Critical close-reading methods

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of the mid-twentieth century, also characterized some of the influential edited collections that approached the relationship between sound and literature published in the 1990s, such as Adelaide Morris's *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies* and Charles Bernstein's *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*. Bernstein's work, in particular, is singled out by Cabri (in 2007) as having been "largely responsible for the re-emergence of sound as a value for critical attention" in literary studies (3). The fact of Bernstein's pioneering significance remains true to this day, even as an entire interdisciplinary field of research known as sound studies has blossomed without much direct awareness of these works on literary sound that were focused, for the most part, on expanding our understanding of prosody beyond page-based metrics to include the prosodic features of poetry when spoken. That these "early" works in the recent wave of sound-oriented literary criticism were organized mostly around avant-garde poetic examples, and were generated by scholars who were, in some cases, also poets and performers themselves, suggests that our discipline's recent entry into sonic approaches to literature came from an already developed set of ideas about literary prosody as it might be reimagined and applied in new ways to poetry, now understood as an intermedial artform produced and circulating in differential formats through complex networks and in diverse contexts.

The critical points of reference for Morris in *Sounds States* were Walter J. Ong, Marshall McLuhan, and Friedrich Kittler, as well as Richard Lanham and George P. Lanham, together suggesting the extant context for literary study as "a web of power, technologies, and signifying marks" (Morris 1). Morris defined the sound state of literary studies in 1997 as tin-eared, underdeveloped, nascent: "With the exception of New Critics trained in prosody, even our best close readers have not also been close listeners" (2). Her own conceptual preoccupations at the time were with relationships between orality and literacy and, with reference to Garrett Stewart's then recent *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext*, between the "graphotext" and the "phonotext." The sonic dimensions of poetry as considered in this work did not stray far from the printed page.

Bernstein's influential "Introduction" to *Close Listening* presented a fugue of ideas about the implications for literary studies of listening to poetry in performance. Along the way, Bernstein stressed (but did not really outline as a practical method) the importance of possible ways of doing close listening as a critical practice. He made a number of key points about what attending to sound in the interpretation of performed poetry might do, observing that such a critical disposition implies a resistance to

the synthetic unity of any literary work (9–10). It frames the poetry reading as “its own medium” and consequently mediates our understanding of all manifestations of literature (10). It foregrounds the audio-acoustic text of the poem (12). It demands a conceptual distinction between the oral (the sounds of language in speech) and the aural (what the ear hears) (12–13). In Bernstein’s mind, this last distinction worked to formalize the nature of “the audiotext” (12) and to have us focus on its formal sonic features, thus separating the poem from the identity and speech culture of the poet (14). Further, Bernstein rightly argued that close listening as a critical approach to the performed poem demands the introduction of a new critical vocabulary for describing the sound of poetic performance—what he dubbed “sounds shapes” that include intonation, pitch, tempos, stress—and that close listening thus demands a new aural prosody for literature (13–15).

Bernstein’s idea of close listening as a critical method attends to what performance does to the literary work: how it stresses parts counterintuitively, how it brings out subterranean sound patterns and creates chordal textures, how it foregrounds polyvocality, dialogism, registers, rhythms, and voicings that are at odds with the written text (15–18). An implication of the method is that it also inquires (with cognitive poetics [18]) about what makes sound patterns expressive and how sound enacts meaning beyond the semantic code of the printed text in speech (21). Poetry readings are listened to as a performance of the carnality of language (what Bernstein calls poetry’s “*animalady*” [22]). So, for Bernstein the goal of close listening is to move beyond the semantic layer and listen to the sheer noise or music of language. While Bernstein’s primary idea of close listening pertains to engagement with the sonically formal elements of the performed poem, his introduction ends with brief reference, “beyond all of these formal dimensions of the audiotext” to “the social character” of the “performed word” (22), gesturing toward, without elaborating upon, the performed poem and the recorded performance of literature as a subject that encourages research into theories and contexts of literary production, transmission, reception, circulation, and community. It is this kind of move, away from analysis and hermeneutic interpretation of the literary sonic form in relation to the semantic text, to considerations of the critically interesting conjunctions between sound, literature, and culture as informed by the methods commonly used in the field of sound studies, that will inform the approaches of a number of studies published over the next two decades.

When we revisited the *ESC* special issue from 2007 we realized how much had changed from the scholarly context and frames informing the

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critical concerns of Cabri and Quartermain. What has changed most for thinking about literary sound has been the emergence and impact of sound studies as a field that explores sound (literary and otherwise) as a culturally complex phenomenon and object and explores listening as a range of well theorized, defined, and self-reflexive methodologies.¹ As Jonathan Sterne puts it, “to think sonically is to think conjuncturally about sound and culture” (“Sonic” 3). In making connections between culture and sound as conceived in the broadest sense, and in a number of frames—as phenomena, as metaphors, as concepts, as ideologies, as experiences, as artistic and political practices—contemporary sound studies introduces, explores, and mixes a diverse range of methodological approaches for the study of sound in the world. Sterne has observed that sound studies in its recent manifestations is a body of thought that has arisen from greater permeability between established disciplines of knowledge and from a general sense that there are problems concerning what sound is and does that can only be approached and solved by thinking collaboratively across disciplines (3). He notes in his introduction to *The Sound Studies Reader* that the qualities of the field arising from this disciplinary permeability include a pronounced reflexivity on its core concepts and objects of study, a deliberate consciousness of its own historicity in relation to earlier disciplinary methods of studying sound, and an implicit element of critique that makes work in sound studies not just information or practice about sound but thought about the study of sound (5).

The contents of Sterne’s anthology (one of the first of several readers and edited collections that have emerged to help define the field)² is

1 Here, we could also trace the developments in work that focuses on sound as voice in literature by pointing to, for instance, Leslie Wheeler’s work historicizing poetry performance in the United States in *Voicing American Poetry: Sound and Performance from the 1920s to the Present*; Raphael Allison’s more recent study of the 1960s poetry readings, again in an American context in *Bodies on the Line: Performance and the Sixties Poetry Reading*; and to Angela Leighton’s *Hearing Things: The Work of Sound in Literature*, which thinks about sound in print works, with a particular focus on “voice” in literature.

2 Other collections that have worked to contribute to the definition of the field of sound studies by committee include, *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, edited by Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld; *Digital Sound Studies*, edited by Mary Caton Lingold, Darren Mueller, and Whitney Ann Trettien; *Remapping Sound Studies*, edited by Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes; and *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, edited by Michael Bull. Suggesting a “current” wave of sound studies by adding the word “contemporary” as a descriptor, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Sound Studies*, edited by Julian Murphet and Helen Groth, will be out in the coming year.

indicative of the range of disciplinary approaches that have been mobilized by scholars and researchers to engage in this kind of sound study, including Acoustic Ecology (R. Murray Schafer), Anthropology (Stefan Helmreich, Charles Hirschkind), Architectural Acoustics (Emily Thompson, Barry Blesser), Black Studies (Michael Veal, Alexander Wehellye), Cultural Theory (Jacques Attali, Jody Berland), Cinema and Film Studies (Rick Altman, Michel Chion, James Lastra), Disability Studies (Mara Mills), Ethnic Studies (Richard Rath), Linguistics (Mladen Dolar), Literary Studies (Jonathan Picker), Musicology and Music Culture (Steve Goodman, Shuhei Hosokawa, Louise Meintjes), History of Technology and Media History and Theory from analog to digital (Michael Bull, Kate Crawford, Lisa Gitelman, Friedrich Kittler, John Mowitt, John Durham Peters, Jonathan Sterne), Philosophy (Andriana Cavarero, Jacques Derrida, Don Ihde), and Semiotics (Roland Barthes). This is a very partial list of the range of disciplines, questions, methods, and work represented in Sterne's field-defining collection, and, in most cases, the individuals named in this list are already interdisciplinary scholars working across and beyond the disciplinary names of their home departments and so could have been identified with more than one of the disciplines mentioned. Despite this diversity of disciplinary approaches, there is a strong sense of common and collective critical attitude and endeavour in the work Sterne collected. As Sterne says of the interdisciplinary field of sound studies in the making, "all disciplines begin as interdisciplines" (5).

An important more recent step toward further discerning sound studies as a broad yet coherent disciplinary field has been achieved in the essays collected in David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny's *keywords in sound*. This book invited scholars from a somewhat less diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds to establish a critical lexicon for the concepts most useful in the cultural study of sound. With keywords ranging from such expected terms as "Hearing," "Listening," "Music," and "Noise," to less immediately obvious words like "Body," "Religion," and "Space," this collection of short definitional chapters, each of which is grounded in a case study from a specific discipline of knowledge, underscores the degree to which sound studies is a mode of critique that explores sound by pushing the boundaries and conditions of any form of disciplinary method. The chapters in the collection are illuminating for the rich concepts they unpack and define and for the field-specific reports on how such definitions of keywords in sound were arrived at through specialized modes of research and critical inquiry. While there are twenty chapters in the book, one could imagine the project as an ongoing, ever-expanding collection, with

scores more concepts added and concepts already included rewritten by researchers exploring a term from other disciplinary frames using different approaches. In other words, the common ethos of self-conscious critique that informs the different kinds of work that define the field of sound studies is extremely useful for exploring critical presuppositions, biases, and limits of established disciplinary methods from the inside of a discipline. As Novak and Sakakeeny (ethnomusicologists who are affiliated with a wide range of other disciplines) observe in their introduction to *keywords in sound*:

Metaphors for sound construct perceptual conditions of hearing and shape the territories and boundaries of sound in social life. Sound resides in this feedback loop of materiality and metaphor, infusing words with a diverse spectrum of meanings and interpretations. To engage sound as the interrelation of materiality and metaphor is to show how deeply the apparently separate fields of perception and discourse are entwined in everyday experiences and understandings of sound, and how far they extend across physical, philosophical, and cultural contexts. (1)

With contributions from anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, media historians, and music scholars, none of the keywords in this field-defining collection is unpacked by a literature scholar. And the only literature scholar represented in Sterne's reader (if you don't count Kittler, who uses literary examples mainly for the purpose of generating media theory, or Douglas Kahn, who is writing about sound art) is the selection Sterne excerpts from John Picker's *Victorian Soundscapes*.

Picker's book represents an early and important example of what we are calling literary sound studies. *Victorian Soundscapes* combined the methods of acoustic ecology developed by R. Murray Schafer as articulated in *The Tuning of the World* with inter-discursively contextualized close readings of aural and sonic metaphors and situations in literary texts. Where the primary goal of Picker's book was to explore the affordances of "phonographic reading"³ as a method for interpreting Victorian literature, the book is organized around historical case studies defined by wider problems of sound in culture, such as the informing influence of Hermann von Helmholtz's theory of sympathetic vibration in acoustics on

³ For a definition of the "phonographic reading" as a mode of literary interpretation informed by the critical ethos of sound studies see Camlot, "Hearing *Trilby*," 203–05.

fictional representations of sympathetic encounter between characters of different religious background (and in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* in particular), or the noise generated by mid-Victorian London organ grinders as it informed the cultural identity of "silence-seeking professionals whose living and working spaces overlapped" (43)—a theme of sound moving across private and public spaces that resonates with renewed significance since our experience of private and work-space overlap during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The many other recent critical works that fall within this category of literary sound studies are characterized by a wide range of scientific and critical methods and the exploration of diverse cultural contexts for the study of sound in relation to literary culture. The impact of sound studies approaches can be found in Jennifer Stoever's *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening*, which reads American literature for how it categorizes sound in terms of racial identities and the power relations between racialized communities. Stoever's ideas of "the sonic color line" and "the listening ear" (as a culturally informed filter of relationality and power) provide a vocabulary for the analysis of both printed works and audiotexts as examples and agents of instantiating and resisting dominant listening practices. (Stoever is also the co-founder and editor-in-chief of the highly influential and interdisciplinary *Sounding Out!: The Sound Studies Blog*.) Literary analysis converges with data analysis in the approaches of Tanya Clement, Marit MacArthur, and Chris Mustazza, who have introduced methods of machine listening for the analysis of digitized audio signals of recorded poetry readings.⁴ Katherine Robson's *Heartbeats: Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem* explores the extensive influence of memorization and recitation as a form of cultural formation in nineteenth-century Anglo-American pedagogy. Matthew Rubery's *The Untold Story of the Talking Book* provides a historical account of the practical development of the audiobook as it emerged over time through multiple institutions and myriad imaginings of what a sonic book might be. Lytle Shaw's *Narrowcast: Poetry and Audio Research* situates mid-twentieth-century American poetry in the context of New Left poets' uses of tape recorders for sonic field research even as the CIA and FBI performed tape surveillance "research" of their own on these same poets. And Jason Camlot's *Phonopoetics: The Making of Early Literary Recordings* explores the history of early spoken cylinder and flat disc recordings in relation to

4 See, for example, Clement, "When Texts of Study are Audio Files," MacArthur, "Monotony," and Mustazza, "Machine-Aided Close Listening."

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emergent categories of “the literary” by examining interactions between the first phonographic speech genres, media formats, and literary forms in the production of sound-recorded audiotexts. These works represent a new wave of sonic approaches to literary study that explicitly engage in and reflect on diverse methods in critical, cultural, media historical, and technical research in ways that are characteristic of sound studies research.

As the field continues to evolve, sound studies scholars work to situate sound within expansive theoretical, aesthetic, socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts that resonate with adjacent fields.⁵ And while sound studies does not posit literary sound as its primary object of concern, the work of such sound studies scholars has increasingly been in dialogue with literary criticism and has influenced it. The result of this convergence is that literary sound no longer refers only to the sound of literature as vocalized (although of course it means that too). Rather, literary sound is a protean siren constituted through a multitude of emitters and mediations—social, technological, and affective, to begin with—that influence how one hears its sonic form and how one understands the concepts, spaces, and networks by which it signifies and functions in the world as sound.

Speaking from our immediate research context, sound studies has had a significant impact on SpokenWeb (SSHRC Partnership Grant), a large, international network of researchers working on the preservation and study of audio collections that document literary events and activities in Canada since the 1950s. With over one hundred expert participants from literary studies, libraries and archives, communications and media studies, digital humanities, computation arts and design, computer science, and many other fields, the collaborative and interdisciplinary ethos of SpokenWeb has created an ideal milieu in which to examine and push the horizons of literary methodologies through engagement with sound artifacts and concepts. Within this context, many of our explorations in sonic criticism have emerged through practice-based methods of study and critique. As editors, we can attest that the current special issue would not have taken shape as it has without our regular engagement over the past five years, as SpokenWeb researchers, in various collaborative forms

⁵ The recent works we have in mind are: Sterne, *Diminished Faculties: A Political Phenomenology of Impairment*; LaBelle, *Sonic Agency*; Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music*; Furlonge, *Race Sounds: The Art of Listening in African American Literature*; Ouzounian, *Stereophonica: Sound and Space in Science, Technology, and the Arts*; Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*; and Voegelin, *Uncurating Sound: Knowledge with Voice and Hands*.

of sonic curation, performance, and critical practice. These activities have included the nearly fifty guided listening practices SpokenWeb has hosted since 2019 (half of them pursued online during the COVID-19 pandemic period);⁶ the Ghost Reading Series that experimented with methods of creative transcription and established a space to practise listening through acts of making, doing, and collaborative reflection on listening;⁷ the “Performing the Archive” events we organized in which poets read alongside their past archival selves;⁸ our own performance of archival remixes that combined audio sampling of poetry recordings from the 1960s and live tape manipulation as an improvised score for flamenco dance;⁹ our co-production of podcasts and critical articles about engaging in such forms of sound-based scholarship;¹⁰ our co-organization of scholarly conferences, readings, workshops, and launches on sonic themes;¹¹ and our collaboration on the writing and editing of our co-edited collection, *CanLit Across Media: Unarchiving the Literary Event*, in which the ideas behind many of these practice-based experiments are theorized and explored critically.¹² In short, this shared research context has enabled experimentation with a number of iterative, practice-based approaches, and it has inspired creative and critical reflections on the methodological implications of those approaches for the study of literary sound. It inspired our call to learn about the research and practices of other scholars at work on making connections between sound, literature, and culture.

Our call for papers (CFP) for this special issue of *English Studies in Canada* invited submissions that “pursue sound-focused studies of literary works, events and performances, and that explore connections between the fields of literary studies and sound studies.” From the outset, “the literary” was an intentionally expansive concept, and that has translated

6 For example, Camlot and McLeod, “SpokenWeb Literary Listening Practices.”

7 “SpokenWeb Concordia Has Launched Ghost Reading Series.”

8 For example, “Daphne Marlatt & Diane Wakoski: Performing the SpokenWeb Archive.”

9 Camlot and McLeod, “Performing the Archive: A Remix.”

10 See, for example, Camlot and McLeod, “How Are We Listening Now? Signal, Noise, Silence” and “Pandemic Listening: Critical Annotations on a Podcast Made in Isolation.”

11 For example, “Sound of Literature in Time: An International Graduate Student Conference” (16 to 17 May 2022); “Listening, Sound, Agency: An International Symposium in Literature and Sound Studies” (18 to 23 May 2021, online); and “Can Lit Across Media Conference: Archiving the Temporal Literary Event” (5 to 6 June 2015).

12 Camlot and McLeod, “Introduction: Unarchiving the Literary Event.”

into the formal range of case studies (from archival objects to live performances) used by the authors of the articles we received and selected for inclusion in this collection. Our emphasis on works that explored connections between literary studies and sound studies was explicit and emerged directly from our planning and execution of the symposium “Listening, Sound, Agency” (18 to 23 May 2021), a series of plenaries, talks, workshops, and performances that put literary researchers, sound scholars, and literary and sonic practitioners in intensive dialogue with and audition of each other. As a call seeking current explorations in sound, with a focus on the definition of literary sound studies, it included a set of questions assuming a familiarity with the interdisciplinarity of the field, such as: What does literary history sound like? How does the sonic literary archive suggest alternate literary histories? What can literary and sound practitioners and literary and sound theorists learn from each other? We asked that contributions explore fundamental questions about sound, voice, media, and performance as related to literary and other kinds of cultural contexts, situations, and formations. The special issue that has resulted from these recent years of interdisciplinary exploration aims to frame the development of a new and transformative convergence of literary and sound studies.

In the opening article, “The Afterlife of Performance,” co-written by Jason Camlot, Annie Murray, and Darren Wershler, a single archival entity, a reel-to-reel magnetic tape recording of poet Allen Ginsberg performing in Montreal in 1969, serves as the boundary object for analysis of how the afterlife of an event is produced, managed, held, circulated, and maintained as steps in the elaborate process by which a performance may accrue literary and archival value. As a second case study in the affective dimensions of archival afterlife, Julia Polyck-O’Neill’s contribution, “Archives, Intimacy, Embodiment: Encountering the Sound Subject in the Literary Archive,” takes us into the Simon Fraser University Special Collections where she engages with audio recordings of poet Lisa Robertson to reflect on the embodied researcher’s affective response to archival sound and to theorize this experience as an uncanny form of self-encounter. Next, Michael O’Driscoll’s “‘Collage With Jackhammer’: James Reaney, the Art of Noises, and the Paraphonic Sound Collage,” listens to a 1969 recording of poet James Reaney delivering a classroom lecture in which he demonstrates and explains the practice of sound collage. In describing Reaney’s collage work as a “paraphonic” form of sound art, O’Driscoll proceeds to explore precedents for this paraphonic mode as a sonic method that restores human speech to a non-hierarchical station as noise within its

constitutive soundscape. In “Listening Queerly for Queer Sonic Resonances in The Poetry Series at Sir George Williams University, 1966 to 1971,” Mathieu Aubin posits a listening practice of attending to sound affected by queerness as it may be heard through articulations of intimacy, politics, and sexuality in the extra-poetic speech of an audio-documented poetry series. In resistance to extractive modes of listening and surveillance used by the RCMP to monitor queer people during the period in question, queer listening aims to amplify queer lived experiences and to incite feminist dialogue about the socio-cultural realities of marginalized participants in the series that might not otherwise have been heard or recognized.

In his article “Voice(ing) Appropriations: Sounding Found Poetry in 1960s Canada,” Jason Wiens approaches archival recordings (some documenting the same reading series discussed by Aubin and Camlot, Murray, and Wershler) to explore the ethical issues surrounding the sound of appropriation in the performance of “found poetry” as it may *not* have been heard or understood by settler colonial writers and audiences in the late 1960s. Wiens argues for the usefulness for making a critical distinction between “appropriative” poetry versus “found” poetry. In positing this distinction as a frame for listening to the performance of such poetry, he opens up a method for listening to and between historically-informed ethical frameworks of performance and reception. As an article still focused on archives and frameworks for listening, Klara du Plessis’ article, “‘do you read me?’: Kaie Kellough, the Words and Music Show, and a Self-Curated Series Within a Series,” analyzes recurring recordings of poet Kaie Kellough to advance a theory of “self-curation” as a curatorial mode of poetry performance. Kellough performed seventeen times over a seventeen-year period in the Words and Music Show poetry series. In her consideration of the dynamic curatorial nuances of Kellough’s performances across time and space, du Plessis traces how the curatorial agency of a performer can form temporal and dialogical bridges across and against the grain of an organized reading series.

A co-written article by Kate Moffatt, Kandice Sharren, and Michelle Levy, “Modeling the Audio Edition with Mavis Gallant’s 1984 Reading of ‘Grippes and Poche’” asks what an audio edition of a literary recording might sound like and how the theories and methods of book history and textual scholarship may be usefully adapted to instances of literary audio recordings. Through analysis of spoken asides and interpellations audible in a recording of Mavis Gallant reading her story “Grippes and Poche” in relation to manuscript and print versions of that text, Moffatt, Sharren, and Levy revisit bibliographical concepts such as paratext, copy-text, ver-

sioning, and documentary editions, with an ear to making them relevant as a form of audiographical analysis and criticism. The next two articles perform phonographic readings by focusing on questions of sound and listening in sonic interpretations of novels: In “Listening Queerly to *Telery* and *Trilby*,” Victoria Roskams reads two late-Victorian novels that had very different publication contexts—one a privately published and circulated work, the other a bestseller—by attending to their representations of musical performance as a situation that opens queer possibilities. Challenging the idea that music and scenes of musical performance offered authors a way to explore and represent queer desire in coded ways, Roskams shows how a sonic approach that pays particular attention to coteries of production and afterlives of reception can restore muted resonances in these novels for the contemporary reader to hear. Kelly Baron’s “Aural Memory in Madeleine Thien’s *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*” crafts an argument about the significance of music as essential to intergenerational memory in a novel by Madeleine Thien, interpreting the novel’s treatment of intergenerational trauma in Asian Canadian communities resulting from the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Baron’s reading explains the novel’s depiction of music as memory-work, shows how it works as a representation of sensorimotor memory, and elucidates the ways music can explain how the novel’s structure helps express the nature of the trauma represented.

Katharina Fürholzer’s techniques of listening to semantics and phonology in the poetic works of UK poet Chris Ireland deconstruct assumptions about language in her article, “Noisy Nuisance: Chris Ireland’s Aphasic Poetry.” This article treats aphasic poetry as an intersecting rhetorical style with pathological symptoms, argues that aphasic poetry unseats neurotypical standards and assumptions undergirding language, and concludes with discussion of an ethics of genre that arises when typifying aphasic poetry. In “The Child’s Stuttering Mouth and the Ruination of Language in Jordan Scott’s *blert* and Shelley Jackson’s *Riddance*,” Daniel Martin “reads” dysfluencies to unpack the learned representations of language itself. Asking, first, how we read and write about literary representations of stuttered speech through other means, Martin shows how stuttering in literature and critical theory often errs between pathology and romanticization, and he reads the work of Scott and Jackson as a path toward reimagining the critical romanticization of disfluencies and communicative breakdowns. And, in “Un-Sounding: A New Method for Processing Non-linguistic Poetry”—the final article in this first section of the special double issue—Kristen Smith works to develop an audile technique for

listening to non-linguistic, page-based poetry. Noting, first, how the seeming absence of sound in non-linguistic poetry seems to thwart traditional reading practices and literary analysis that depend on the relationship between sound, language, and meaning, Smith demonstrates how some visual poems can be interpreted as sonic graphs, charts, or scores when contextualized using para-graphic devices. Together, the twelve full-length articles that constitute the first part of our special issue offer a wide range of sonic approaches to literary works as culturally resonant phenomena.

While the subject matter and approaches presented in the articles are distinctive and sometimes experimental in their orientation, they share a common interest in explicit reflection on sound as it relates to critical methodology. We feel it is worth noting that this coherency is due, in part, to the fact that we worked to integrate listening and response into our process of building this special issue. While the articles were being written, we held online Zoom meetings with each contributor to establish a conversational (listening) and interactive editorial process from the outset. In those meetings, we encouraged contributors to include space in their articles for reflection on how their work on/with sound positions them in relation to their primary discipline(s) of research and even to share a narrative about how/why they came to work with sound in the first place. We also invited our contributors to consider a series of questions related to this kind of self-reflexive positioning as a listener informed by experience and disciplinary training. We asked them:

Which methods from literary studies relate to, or are troubled by, your engagement with sonic concepts and objects? (That is, how is their approach to sound still in some sense shaped by, or a modified form of commonly recognized literary critical methods?)

Why is your selected content or archive useful for the explorations of your methodological questions? What is it about your examples that lend themselves to thinking sonically? (That is, how does working with sound, or sound-oriented texts, materials, or content inform and help form the critical methods of literary sound studies?)

In asking our contributors to be “thinking sonically” as we put it, we asked them to write from their perspectives as listeners. In other words, we asked them to enact a conflation of literary studies and sound studies—to *do* literary sound studies—and to do so while attending to what it means to

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be a listener in the context of their discipline.¹³ Disciplinary listening, as we came to call it, took on an increasingly important role in this special issue and inspired the idea to develop a forum for experts from different disciplines who work on sound to reflect on how they listen and how working with sound has altered their relationship to the disciplinary methods in which they were trained. We asked them to think about how they have learned to listen and to consider what work listening accomplishes for them as scholars and critics. We asked these questions of Brandon LaBelle, Tanya Clement, Kim Fox and Reem Elmaghraby, Kristin Moriah, Mara Mills and Andy Slater, Nicole Furlonge, Nina Sun Eidsheim and Juliette Bellocq, Gascia Ouzounian, and Ellen Waterman, along with asking this question of ourselves, and the eleven responses constitute the Forum on Disciplinary Listening as a resonant and reverberant conclusion for this collection.

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13 For a recent collaborative project that explores questions of disciplinary listening, see the various phases of "Listening Across Disciplines" directed by Salomé Voegelin from the University of Southampton.

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