Techniques of Listening and Acoustic Orders

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ABSTRACT

Contested interactions between social acoustic spaces and the appropriate methods of listening within them are pervasive in everyday life. This dissertation answers two questions within this expanding field of inquiry. How are sounds phenomenologically interpreted into perceptual categories? Why are these private categories reflected in shared acoustic space, configuring the possible conditions for future sounds? For the first, I propose a phenomenology of audition within which sounds are categorized into three modes: affective, symbolic, and excessive. This classification technique enables the perceptive listener to objectify, parse, interpret, and respond to the sounding world. Second, I argue that these categories are projected and reflected in the socio-political concept of 'acoustic orders'. Organizations of sound in social space emerge from the tensions between interpretive agents and pre-existing acoustic configurations; in return, the habits and techniques of auditors are fundamentally influenced by these acoustic orders. Henri Lefebvre's spatial theory will be utilized to develop this descriptive framework. The reciprocity outlined between listener and context suggests dual theoretical revisions. In the first part, phenomenology is shown to benefit from the inclusion of its socially generated influences. Alternately, I argue that acoustic orders exist in part because of spatial actions intended to resolve excessive perceptions into a unified experience.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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Chapter 1
Introduction and Summary

This introductory chapter is a summary of the main arguments and trajectories of the dissertation. Since multiple theoretical traditions will be pursued along the way, I will be situating and contextualizing the disciplines and arguments in the chapters that follow rather than immediately at the start. This introduction can be read as a condensed version of the dissertation as a whole, albeit without the detailed arguments and documentation that the chapters themselves offer. I will save edifying examples and more complex explanations for the body of the dissertation, using this initial space to recite the main theoretical conclusions to follow.

It is especially important in this project to prefigure an ambition of the final point to be reached, since I will be taking a lengthy and bifurcated path to reach this end. At the beginning, then, let me anticipate the eventual climax. I argue that we can explain the generation and organization of acoustic practices by observing phenomenological modes of interpretation. Tensions inherent within phenomenological techniques of listening arise from a general intention to resolve all excessive perceptions into unified experience. Sounds interpreted as noises, silences, or environmental indeterminacies are manifestly unstable for the phenomenological subject; they seek resolution in affective or symbolic categorical modes. This nervous relation between perceiving subject and perceived object becomes the motivation from which acoustic space is constrained, authored, and appropriated. Acoustic orders develop in an interstitial social space, comprised of numerous agents with conflicting ideals and goals. Thus, the contestations apparent within many areas of auditory life, from noisy streets and pubs to quiet theaters and libraries, can be attributed to variances in phenomenological intention within the everyday experience of listening.

In other words, what this dissertation achieves is an explanation of the production of acoustic orders through an examination of auditory consumption habits, routines, and techniques. Sounds are transformed into perceptual objects and thus become commodities to be exchanged within intellection (as ideas and memories) and beyond (as ideals and appropriating principles). Once released from the confines of private experience, these public ideals become organizing principles for ordering aural and sonic practice. Returning to the individual now as social forces, these *acoustic orders* affect subsequent categorical interpretation.

This line between individual perceptual experience and its extended social product is the thread which ties together two initially distinct discussions. Phenomenology has been the domain of philosophers; social theory the province of sociologists. I, however, draw no division between these intellectual pursuits. Beyond the scope of auditory practice, I believe it is clear that each discipline benefits from participation with the other. If a theory of social constructivism is to be taken seriously, it requires a story of individual agency and incentives for such action. If Phenomenology is to survive as a science of epistemology and ontology, it must take various factors of social, cultural, and political influence into consideration. These systems clearly coincide in everyday life; thus, we must develop reciprocal theories which represent this coherence of practice and context. This dissertation is merely one attempt at such a vast integrative project.

<div align="right">Audition : Metabolism</div>

I will begin the discussion by drawing an analogy between audition and digestive metabolism. Taken as metaphors of fundamental processes, these two activities are shown as parallel in some intriguing ways. In this context, the juxtaposition is merely intended as a literary device to introduce some of the main problems with the act of listening and thus prepare

the reader for theoretical developments throughout the dissertation. A primary target at this stage is the so-called 'Cartesian self.' This view of subjectivity, in a rough sense, is a concept of the subject existing autonomously from the world it inhabits. The metaphor of digestion complicates the relation between these two constitutive elements through the process of incorporation. In brief, the Cartesian self as detached from material processes is reinitiated into its material and social foundations. In a similar way, the listener in my account is not taken as an autonomous auditor, capable of interpreting sounds prior to or beyond the configurations and limitations of its perceptual context. Instead, the listener is inherently implicated within various sonic and aural structures, or what I am more generally terming 'acoustic orders.' These orders configure appropriate means and capacities for interpreting sound.

Beyond my preparatory purposes in this dissertation, the similarity between metabolism and audition nevertheless suggests a more fundamental and general relation between the subject and the objects (material or symbolic) it appropriates in the world. While I will restrict my discussion of this complication for the sake of clarifying my principal argument, I think it would be valuable in another context to pursue this relation more carefully. If sounds do not exist except in the 'ear' of the listener, and if food is edible only because it is deemed to be so by the eater, one might develop a phenomenology of everyday life in which these common perceptual and ingestible objects are understood as phenomena *as well as* socio-political facts. I am pursuing this line of reasoning in the dissertation only for the question of audition, though there is no apparent reason why the same argumentative logic could not be applied to food, smells, visual objects, or any number of perceptual topics.

The metabolism metaphor contains four stages: ingestion, affection, dissemination, and expulsion. Ingestion, the moment of entrance into the system, marks a general admission of

objects to be received. Determined by external (the food available) and internal (the food as satisfactory) factors, ingestion is not capable of discriminating between objects upon initial reception; it is a physical, mechanical event. It is, nevertheless, the initial gateway to the process by which received objects are made meaningful to the subject.

Affection, occurring in the mouth as well as the stomach, is a neuro-biological, embodied event wherein substances receive attention and acceptance into the digestive process. If ingestion occurs with the open mouth, affection is marked by the open throat. Through taste, smell, and other body signals, foods are given right of passage. The affective stage differentiates only at a basic level according to rough principles, many of which are reflexive (and, thus, pre-conscious). However, all food must pass through this test, must affect the body and senses in a certain way, to be received into lower and more vulnerable regions.

Now given access, digestible objects pass beyond the range of explicit sensibility (for the stomach cannot taste) into a more refined and ex/abstractive stage. In dissemination, objects are analyzed, classified, and exploited for their nutritive potential. Ingested objects become meaningful to the body, used as fuel, entertainment or medicine. No longer independent from the body itself, foods are incorporated into the very structure of the organism. This integration of the external and the internal then prefigures future capacities and habits of metabolism.

Finally, once digestion completes its course of judgment and disclosure, metabolized objects are released back to the world in altered forms. This alteration occurs by and for the processing subject. Initially receiving objects from the external context, the activity of the subject then influences the structure of the external from which it gains its sustenance. This reciprocal process of affects and effects displays the ecology of metabolism which extends before, through, and past the digestive individual; integration occurs in both directions.

This sketch of the process of metabolism serves as a systematic structure on which the 'metaphor' of listening can be mapped in a unique way. Often, listening is understood too simply as the reception and cognition of sounds in the world. In a physical explanation, the ear sympathetically receives vibrations; in a neuro-biological explanation, the vibrations become signals and electro-chemical channels of reaction; in a psychological explanation, perceptual information elicits certain behaviors or states of consciousness in the individual based on its particular qualities.

However, from a social or a phenomenological standpoint (or what I will later argue, the socio-phenomenological), these explanations neglect crucial steps in the listening process. Mapping this process onto the metabolism metaphor assists in exposing some of these considerations. This is merely an activity for understanding problems in theories of listening; on their own, analogies do no constructive work except as hermeneutical devices of interpretation.

The moment of ingestion in an auditory sense is the physical transfer of energy to the listening organ: the ear, the jaw, the cochlear implant, or any other sympathetic part of the body. Not yet a sound, though received into a system which will make this energy 'sound,' this point of contact is largely determined by externalities beyond the intentions of the listening subject. The world emits an infinite number of possible sounds, acquisitioned according to the relative placement of the subject and its receptive capacities.

Once transduced from energy to signal, a sound begins to take shape in the phenomenological auditory process. Here, in the affective stage, sounds enter the body and are responded to on a visceral level. Abstracted as objects in the system, but not yet represented symbolically, sounds initiate automatically sympathetic or discordant responses in the listener. This process, too, is partially determined by habitual factors and prior exposure. Introduced at

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this stage, as well, are the intentions of the subject inasmuch as it desires to receive or reject certain stimuli. Thus, the affective stage is both an embodied response and an assessing gateway for sounds to be considered in higher levels of auditory processing.

These higher levels, the cognitive appropriations of sounds into symbolic categories, align with the dissemination stage of metabolism. Not all sounds reach this point; indeed, most sounds remain unattended to in experience. However, sounds which are chosen as intentional objects of perception are parsed, compared, and represented as symbols in a highly intricate system of auditory interpretation. The phenomenological concept of *intention* plays a more significant role here. In what ways does the listening subject orient itself toward a sound, thereby objectifying and qualifying that sound according to varying techniques and dispositions? How are certain sounds made meaningful and memorable in this process while others fade into obscurity? The stage of dissemination is the incorporation, and thus the implication, of external stimuli and internal processes.

Finally, sounds are responded to by way of external reactions. The agency of the listener not only exists within experience, as the ability to effectively interpret sounds; agency is also evident in social acoustic practice by way of sonic organizations, aural training programs, architectural formations and the like. It is the tension between preexisting auditory categories (when sounds align with phenomenological intentions) and excessive perceptions (when sounds exceed the ability of the listener to effectively interpret them) which leads to the projection of auditory intentions onto the world. In other words, when the world does not align with our intentions, we refashion it to do so in the future. As a stage of metabolism and audition, expulsion is the projection of excess back to the world from which it originated (albeit in a revised form).

How does this analogical sketch reconfigure a theory of listening? In terms of approaching listening as a problem to be addressed theoretically, the analogy situates our questioning in terms of active subjects, flexible environments, habits of consumption, and in general the dynamics between internal processes and external appropriations. In sense, 'you are what you *hear'*; in turn, *what* you hear is determined by where and how you are situated in social space. This suggests two fields to be considered in this discussion: the phenomenology of auditory perception and the sociology of everyday acoustic spaces.

First, the themes of *incorporation* and *appropriation* throughout the listening process fundamentally reorient the subject/world relation. In an overtly solipsistic account, sounds are objectively received into the experience of a stable subject who remains relatively unaffected. As we move toward an integrative perspective, sounds and the contexts from which they originate essentially change the structure and quality of the subject itself. Just as food affects the constitution of the body on multiple levels, so sounds affect the characteristics of the listening subject in an ongoing development of auditory techniques.

Additionally, the analogy stresses the implication of the subject within a broader foodscape/soundscape structure of society. The production and consumption of these objects occurs in reciprocal and reflexive economic space, influencing the subject and being influenced by intentional practice. To avoid examining the spatial situations which enable the world to sound as it does, and thus the listener to listen as it does, is to drastically cut short a constructive account of audition and social acoustics.

<div align="right">Definitions</div>

This is precisely the trap into which certain phenomenologies have fallen, I argue. Don Ihde's account in *Listening and Voice* exemplifies the type of *epoché* that procedurally neglects

the role of training, development, and social constraint in the phenomenological exposition. In my ensuing critique of Ihde's methodology, I show how the addition of this social perspective clarifies and at times contradicts the individualist phenomenology that he, after Husserl, espouses. This is not a full rejection of Ihde's project, but rather a continuation and expansion of it.

Before I am able to embark on such a review, however, a few crucial terms must be defined. The definitions put forth here are applicable throughout my theoretical development, thus adding a small but coherent vocabulary to the emerging field of Sound Studies. The initial distinction between *technology* and *technique* represents a slight revision of their common usage in an attempt to delineate clearly their unique roles in phenomenological and social practice. Other definitions, of *phenomenology*, *intention*, *category*, *sound*, *aesthetics*, and *acoustics* correspond more closely with accepted conceptions but still benefit from further clarification.

Here I will simply outline their definitions in brief to aid in this introductory chapter. More elaborate explanations and comparisons are detailed in my third chapter.

Technology: the logic of objective practice. This abstraction may remain immaterial or be embedded (by practical agents) in material artifacts.

Technique: the actual practice of a technologic by an intentional subject, intellectually or materially.

Phenomenology: the philosophical tradition wherein perceptual, intellectual, logical, and other experiences are isolated and interpreted through the method of intentional subjectivity.

Intention: the disposition of the subject toward a specified object. Technique is a specific type of intention; namely, one that corresponds with a certain objective logic.

Category: the result of intentional ordering of objects within experience. The process of

categorizing may be pragmatic or representational; either way, it is an

organizational technique of the subject and thus a technology of ordering.

Sound: the phenomenological product of auditory techniques. Sounds need not first exist

in the external world as material (arti)facts in order to exist in the experience of

the listening subject. Thus, vibrating air is not a sound unless it is listened to by

an auditor. Technically, the world does not sound; we sound the world.

Nevertheless, in order to comply with general usage of the word, I will use the

term 'sound' loosely to refer to both sonic/aural stimuli and the corresponding

phenomenological object within perceptual awareness.

Aesthetics: contested orderings of sound suspended between affective and symbolic

categories of interpretation. Aesthetic classifications occur within private aural

experience and public sonic expressions; these often develop into appropriated

cultural codes of beauty, harmony, and dialect, as well as their corresponding

opposites.

Acoustics: the configuration of possible sounds in shared material and symbolic space.[1]

Beyond the explicit architectural conception of acoustics as the sounding qualities

of a constructed material space, I include within the definition various

organizational technologies (habits, rituals, bureaucracies) and

enabling/constricting limitations (regulations, orders of practice), all of which

influence the types, qualities, quantities, and interpretations of sound produced in

social space.

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[1] 'Space' is conceived along dimensions outlined by Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*. I will cover this issue more precisely in Chapter 6.

With this preliminary vocabulary in hand, I now begin to chart a revised phenomenology of listening. The difficulty in this project is to conform to and inherit the historical forms of inquiry that phenomenology has taken at the same time that new considerations are implemented. Phenomenologies of the past, from Kant through Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others, carry with them various preconceptions of the object of inquiry, the subject participating in that project, the role of the phenomenologist in detailing such a science, and the delimited conditions within which this science is given legitimacy. Understanding apprehension/intellection, the foundations of logic, the ontology of nature, and the habitual processing of stimuli are only a few of the most obvious ambitions in phenomenology's history. It would be impossible, and not even preferable, to maintain each of these motives in this revision.

Instead, I aim to chart a perceptual phenomenology that remains keenly aware of the generative process by which the subject is enabled to perceive (sounds) in particular ways. I argue that listening is an intentional process of categorizing diverse aural stimuli. Categories of interpretation, as organizational technologies, function in perception according to habituated techniques of listening. The goal of this type of phenomenology is to detail the technologic behind this everyday occurrence; it is an intentional theoretical structure with the purpose of pragmatic application.

The categories I outline are not taken to be necessarily conscious constructs of the individual. Thus, I am not claiming that listeners are generally aware of their auditory classifications along symbolic or other lines. Instead, these categories represent the various stages of representation which occur while listening. They are neither transcendental nor universal; these categories are, instead, abstractions from practice that enable us to understand

more clearly the practice of listening as an active process of interpretation. In short, I am arguing that an embodied phenomenology of listening parses sounds by way of threshold references. The *volume* of phenomenological intention will be a key component in developing this theory.

This will more clearly understood once I have presented the categories through which I outline this phenomenological practice. Doing phenomenology is itself a technological practice. As an interpretive science, the phenomenological method attempts to isolate key components of experience and reduce them to their logical (and perhaps even necessary) forms. Phenomenologies can proceed quite differently in this regard; transcendental preconditions, psychological statistics, and first-person narratives are all used to concentrate the explanation toward further refinement.

My methodology is slightly different than these historical forms. Because I take the individual subject as a product, producer, and consumer of social space, I believe it is necessary to incorporate social conditions of subjectivity at the forefront of the account rather than as endnotes to be considered in future research. The categories of interpretation I outline, while originating in the experience of the auditory, nevertheless consistently reference the interplay between this subject and the world-which-sounds. Even though, epistemologically and ontologically, this externality need not be an explicit element of the auditory experience, as phenomenologists we have a responsibility to include such conditions in our accounts. Again, this can only be made comprehensible through an exposition of my auditory categories of interpretation, so it is to these I now turn.

The theory being developed here has three primary categories of interpretation, the last of which has three sub-modes. These represent stages of phenomenological appropriations of

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sound. Recalling the metabolism metaphor here might help to situate their placement in a progression, though such a reference is not necessary for this argument. Also, keep in mind that the quality of a 'sound' changes depending on the intentional stance of the listener. There are no essential sounds, but only auditory techniques and their objective effects.

The first category is that of the *affective*. Aural sensations produce physiological, neurological, psychological, cognitive, and a host of other responses in different individuals at different times. What the affective category highlights is the phenomenological state of experiencing sound prior to any representation or symbolism one might attach to it. This state can but does not necessarily arise from or reflect itself in a materially observable state of the subject, and thus is not within the domain of these other sciences. Instead, affectivity is an intentional disposition of a subject toward sound in such a way that the sound is taken on its own terms. It affects the embodied subject in what might be called a primal, simple, or unsignifiable moment.

Affectivity in an auditory sense and beyond is a particularly difficult phenomenon to discuss, since the evidence for it can only be expressed in a representational form (of which affectivity itself is not). This indistinct description takes on a clarified structure when we consider the necessary connection between body, cognition, and the drive to unify experience. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is crucial here to stress the necessity of embodiment and, corresponding to this incorporation of consciousness and epistemic context, the primal reaction to stimuli as a precondition for more elaborate interpretations.[2]

Affectivity can be considered an objective category even as it is limited to non-referential meaning. A sound is heard through a certain technique of listening; it may be a bird in the woods, the waves on the shore, or a bell in the distance. If the listener hears the sound

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[2] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception.*

affectively, however, it is not to any of these facts that the sound is referentially attached. Instead, it is the sound itself in the way that it interacts with the various characteristics of the subject (the body, aesthetic systems of listening, communal responses) that is the full content of the experience. To remain in the affective state is extremely difficult or, arguably, impossible for any sustained period of time. As listeners, just as in nearly every other area of human life, we tend to objectify, compare, and classify our experiences in representational modes. The affective state is a state of pure phenomenological embodiment; in practice, however, we constantly shift between it and other categories.

The second basic category, and that which takes up the majority of discourse and taxonomies of sound, is the symbolic. In the most basic sense, a sound interpreted within the symbolic category is taken to be a signal of some other object or event. The bird, waves, and bell are now inferred from the prompting of the sound, which is understood as an effect emanating from these other objects. When you say "I heard the boat," what you mean more precisely is, "I interpreted a sound in such a way that the sound indicated the presence of another object, namely a boat." The technique of symbolic listening is the most pervasive and well-recognized form of listening even though, I argue, its fundamental operation is often confused in description.

Studies of listening and cultural sounds often conflate the 'sound' with the thing it represents. The common usage of the term takes for granted the phenomenological techniques by which sounds are made intelligible and meaningful for the listener. Of course, the general public need not consider phenomenological accounts in everyday language. As sound researchers, though, we must be acutely aware of the distinctions between physical facts, neuro-

biological responses, phenomenological processes and objects, cognitive considerations, cultural aesthetics and the like. In each of these formulations, 'sound' means something quite different.

The phenomenological category of the symbolic is limited, therefore, to the basic interpretation of sound-as-signal. Other developments, such as aesthetic ideals, occur only following this precondition. In the same way that the affective category can be considered in its pure sense (for the purposes of this exposition) but rarely accomplished as such in practice, the symbolic always contains elements of affectivity even as it is a distancing from this initial moment of contact and interpretation. The abstraction of signification attempts to, but can never fully, escape the embodiment of actual subjectivity.

Additionally, the symbolic begins an economy of sound wherein sounds take on *meaning* through references to other sounds and systems. Sounds are exchanged in successions of representation which correspond to the trained intentions of the listener. Meaning is distinct from the pleasure, pain, or other affective qualities by which sounds are valuated for the subject; instead, it is the objective, comparative procedure that enables meaning (in another word, significance) to arise. This requires a theory of objectivity and its consequences.

My theory of objectivity is set in terms of the object as a simple delimited thing. Other possible definitions conceive of the objective as a destination (a teleology) or an unbiased stance (and therefore related to a 'truer' epistemic position). I am merely interpreting the object in its constructed thingness as a formal condition of interpretation. As I've said, sound only exists upon its emergence in the listener. This emergence is, more precisely, an act of limiting experience (through intention) in such a way that boundaries develop within which judgments can be made. In Kant's terms, a "blooming, buzzing confusion" is unintelligible. Constraints

and distinctions within experience are necessary to enable intentions to be exercised; this is the

act and aim of objectification.[3]

From this basic concept of objectivity much can be drawn. Sound-objects are the basic

unit of exchange in the auditory perceptual process. Even in the affective category, sounds are

received and accepted within the bounded confines of the body; in a rough, non-cognitive sense,

they are objects consumed by the embodied listener. Once in the symbolic category, sound-

objects have a life span which far exceeds their momentary material effects.[4] As symbols and

signs, sounds extend beyond themselves to access other objective realms: emotional, rational,

ritual, aesthetic. Stored and recalled in memory, either in a personal mental sense or as a cultural

product, the meaning of symbolic sounds is constructed through a network of relations to other

objects. For a sound to be significant requires its comparison and attachment to other systems of

meaning beyond the simple affectivity of the sound itself. It is now an object to be exchanged

for other values in intellectual, cultural, or political domains.

These two categories are, in a sense, temporarily stable accomplishments of

phenomenological practice. As such, they represent a very incomplete account of the actual

process of listening, wherein sounds are not always so efficiently interpreted, accepted, and

appropriated into systems of objects. We must, in addition, account for the marginal activities of

the auditive subject. The third category of the *excessive*, and the distinctions within it of *silence,*

noise, and *environment*, complete this fundamental classification of sounds into

phenomenological modes. They characterize the temporary failures of the intentional subject in

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[3] Throughout the dissertation unless otherwise specified, my use of the term "objective" refers to the object in a technical relation to a subject. This might be contrasted with "objectivity" in a normative epistemological sense, as a "true" perspective, though I generally do not intend such an association in this discussion.
[4] Affectivity is not merely material. In relation to the "body" in a phenomenological sense, sounds taken affectively may be part of the physical body but more importantly must contribute to a sense of unity in the whole perceptual experience. This, again, was Merleau-Ponty's prime contribution to the field, and a principle I fully adopt in this project.

attempting to make the whole world intelligible and, thus, confined within a definite system of representation. This sets the stage not only for a more accurate portrayal of individual practice but also for a social account of acoustic order. As I mentioned at the start, it is by way of the attempts by the subject to resolve excessive perceptions that the acoustic order is configured. First, we must understand the root of these excesses and why they are so problematic for the phenomenological listener.

Excessive perceptions are those which do not align with current perceptual intentions in some way. In the case of the first form of auditory excess, it is the intentions themselves which extend beyond the capacity of the listener to fulfill. The phenomenon of silence is the result. Silence is the intention to listen to a sound without objectively accomplishing this goal. This lack of perceptual ability may be a feature of the listening apparatus, wherein varying stages of deafening correspond to unfulfilled desires to hear what is expected to be present. Varying stages of deafness are always a part of listening because of necessarily limited perceptual horizons.[5] Alternatively, it may be the context from which the sound originates which that causes a masking effect, concealing the sound and thus rendering it silent. In its most common conception, a state of silence occurs when sounds are too 'quiet' to be heard.

Quietness is not a factual state of affairs in the world, however; degrees of quiet and loudness are necessarily tied to context and the aural ability of the hearer. Even in professional audio engineering, loudness levels correspond to average perceptions of volume rather than impartial physical measurements.[6] In a similar yet less material way, silence as a phenomenological state depends on a variety of subjective factors and must always be explained in terms of the subject. My conception of silence is defined in relation to categorical intentions

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[5] Ihde's discussion of auditory horizons is crucial for this, which I discuss in Chapter 4.
[6] This is the difference between dB SPL (Sound Pressure Level in decibels) and dBA (decibels of certain frequencies weighted to take into account the human ear's sensitivity to certain frequencies)

which the subject places onto the sound; the lack of the sound to fulfill this expectation leads to an unstable attribution of silence to the sound.

This determination is unstable, as with the other excessive perceptions, for two main reasons. First, because it occurs in degrees. As is often repeated in sound studies literatures, there is no place or perception of pure silence. Our perceptions constantly flutter between intending a certain perceptual situation and negotiating these intentions according to what we encounter in experience. The result is a shifting degree of realization and remainder (silence being one form of this remainder).

Secondly, and related to the first point, these perceptions and resolutions occur in time. As will be especially important in the discussion of environment, the ability to parse experience into different moments creates varying states of intentional determination. What was just a silence now becomes symbolic, perhaps in the sense of one's isolation in an anechoic chamber. Excessive perceptions often do not remain as such for very long, for the same reasons that affective states do not often maintain their pre-representational form. I will return to the discussion of the temporality of audition at multiple points in the dissertation, as it is a primary component of individual perception, cognitive reflection, and social projection.

Noise, as the second mode of the excessive category, is a much talked about but rarely clarified concept. It is variously described as unwanted sound, irregular or aperiodic sounds, or even more essentially related to specific causes of sounds (jet noises, traffic noises, party noises, etc). This confusion, as with the common understanding of silence, often happens because of a lack of awareness of the subjective foundations of this determination. Noise is not a detached state of affairs in the world; it is the experienced lack of intentional categories to contain a sound within predefined boundaries.

Understood in this way, noise is the converse of silence- where silence expects too much of a perception, a noise surpasses the intentions of the listener. This does not necessarily correspond to empirical loudness. Experimental sound art, for instance, often strikes the listener as noisy because it does not correspond to accepted aesthetic procedures of music and harmony. Much of the last century (at least) of Western music is a series of contradictions and revolutions against accepted categorizations of how music should sound. These revisions are regarded as noise until a sufficient cultural movement coalesces around them, thus bestowing upon them a temporary acceptance and appropriation (at which point they become the new standard to rebel against).[7]

A common definition of noise is considered in terms of the desirability of a certain sound; a noise is such because it is undesirable to the listener.[8] This is close to, but not identical with, my argument. For me, noise is undesirable because, in a broader sense, it is excessive and therefore does not conform to expectations. As perceivers, we desire to make the world intelligible through categorical techniques. When a sound, smell, or any other perception does not align with these intentions we attempt to find ways to resolve this difference. The desirability or undesirability of sounds is not limited to the excessive category, however. A sound may be interpreted firmly within affective or symbolic categories but remain intensely unpleasant to the listener.

This distinction is important because it situates noise not in terms of aesthetic preferences (which will be discussed shortly), but rather in terms of the phenomenological process and its discontents. This is particularly useful for understanding the roots of cultural judgments and

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[7] See *The Rest is Noise* for a brief and excellent history of such aesthetic movements. (Ross, *The rest is noise: listening to the twentieth century.*)

[8] Though he attempts to critique this attribution of noise, Keizer's account of the social production of noise ultimately reinforces this basic dichotomy. (Keizer, *The Unwanted Sound of Everything We Want.*)

restrictions, which in my account occur because, at a core level of perception, certain sounds are currently unable to be constrained within habitual categorical techniques. As we all know, what is noise to one is music to another, silence to another, and so on. No sound is essentially any one category just as no person is able to immediately resolve all possible perceptions. We are trained according to our contexts, limiting and allowing sounds according to acoustic customs and routines.

The final mode of the excessive category, *environment*, displays more clearly the temporality of phenomenological audition. The world always provides us with a multitude of possible sounds to perceive. Even within a single 'sound,' volume, timbre, attack, decay, reverberation and a host of other qualities can be distinguished.[9] Attention, however, is limited. While we may be aware of other sounds to be processed at will, we cannot attend to each and every one simultaneously. Thus, within the horizon of listening (which largely determines the thresholds and thus the possible attributions of silence and noise) there is also the ability to queue and delay the acute interpretation of certain sounds. This may be for the purpose of future categorization, such as when we pick out certain instruments at certain times in the orchestral performance. It may also be for the purpose of comparison- the musician hears the 440Hz of the tuner, but attends more precisely to the slightly sharp A string of the violin. Such displacements of interpretation are still excessive, in that they are not fully categorical, at the same time as they may be willfully accomplished, which is most often not the case with silence and noise.

This distancing of sound into recessed listening enables the recognition of relations and contexts of sound. The environmental mode is necessary, therefore, for aesthetic determinations to develop. It is in this sense a form of auditory memory that occurs in time. Environmental

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[9] The French CRESSON research group has done extensive research on such perceptual effects (Augoyard et al., *Sonic experience: a guide to everyday sounds*.)

space[10] is also a precondition for objective determinations within it. In order to form definite boundaries, there must be recognition of the space existing within and without. Phenomenological intention requires a field within which it partitions and judges perception; the excess of environment (i.e., beyond specific objective categories) provides such a functional field.

Again, these categories all occur within the space of the subject's experience. It need not correspond with any external state of affairs in the world, or be reducible to neurological or psychological descriptions. These categories are the forms of experience, the techniques (willful or subconscious) by which sounds become objects, symbols, and ideals. The socialization of such techniques occurs prior to and following this phenomenological operation.

At this stage it may appear that the three categories are obvious and yet too-neat descriptions of experience. I have been arguing that social factors of technical training must be taken into account at the start of a phenomenology; but where are they here, in these tidy distinctions?

The line of analysis from personal experience to transcendental principle goes through multiple necessary stages. For phenomenology generally, the methodological *epoché* limits this discussion for the sake of logical clarity. Experience is considered in its formal elements alone, which then lead the inquirer toward necessary principles upon which the experience itself is built. Most often, such a bracketing intentionally overlooks social and cultural developments. Indeed, if the goal in a transcendentalist phenomenology is the discovery of universal principles of experience, how could contingencies be anything but a distraction from this end?

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[10] I am not referring here to the environment as Nature, but rather as perceptual context. Of course, the space of nature would be a possible context as well.

Nevertheless, such contingent socio-cultural factors are the *only* means, I argue, by which the phenomenology *itself* could exist as a self-aware science. In similar terminology to what I've set forth in the auditory categories, for phenomenology to transcend an affective state of awareness and enter into a representational, symbolic state requires codes of appropriate techniques. Such techniques are outlined throughout the writings on how to practice, write about, and interpret phenomenology itself.[11] The training of the scientific mind[12] is neither automatic nor 'primal.' The phenomenologist is fully aware of the artificiality of the *epoché*, and thus should be equally aware of the social generation of this methodology.

I have been speaking from the perspective of the phenomenologist as scientist, engaged in the willful procedure of writing a phenomenology of sound (for instance). Nevertheless, this argument extends to the level of everyday practice. Techniques of listening do not emerge readymade in the mind and consciousness of the infant. Just as with the other senses and cognition itself, it is through interaction with the structure of the world, through being affected and responding to such stimulation, that audition takes on a particular form. The contingencies of one's spatial situation in all its dimensions (material, social, political, etc.) influence such a development. In turn, and as the second part of this dissertation outlines, these spatial situations are themselves partially determined by the reactions that individuals have to their structure. The negotiation between phenomenological intentions and spatial structures is the defining moment in the development of acoustic orders.

In order for this account to remain consistent with my own critique of the asocial trends in phenomenology, I must prove that it escapes the solipsistic pitfalls of prior investigations. To do so will require a brief history of the tradition leading up to its current condition in relation to

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[11] For an application of the methodology in a quite distinct field (religion and health care), see: Dukes, "Phenomenological methodology in the human sciences."

[12] Bachelard, *The formation of the scientific mind*.

auditory studies; namely, my critique of Ihde's *Listening and Voice*. The trajectory shows how

the roots of phenomenology in transcendentalist logical investigations were not adequately

surpassed by its inheritors. Despite Heidegger's insistence on temporality, Merleau-Ponty's

contribution of unified embodiment, and Ihde's own application of the tradition to audition in

particular, the lack of identifying social configurations within phenomenological practice

remains a glaring omission.

For my own theory, it is evident that it is only by investigating the nature of this social

dimension that we are able to incorporate it into the phenomenology. I do not take

phenomenology as analytically or necessarily prior to sociology. In an integrative science, both

are understood to affect the other; thus, by clearly displaying the points at which they intersect

(for example, in acoustic orders) we allow for cross-dialogue between the traditions. This rich

exchange leads to new and unpredictable results. It can only be stated fully at the temporary end

of such a project, once the social has been exposed, how the phenomenological account I have so

briefly outlined here is fully imbued with social, cultural, and political contingencies.

Before moving on, I'd like to situate aesthetics and, in particular, the status of music

within my project. Unlike many other discussions of sound and audition, my account does not

center on the musical experience as the epitome of the listening activity. While it is true that

music offers a relatively clear portrayal of the listening process because of the self-awareness

common to this form of audition, to begin with such an accomplishment obscures the

background functions which made it possible. This is why I have only mentioned it after laying

the foundation in the affective, symbolic, and excessive categories.

Within this matrix, a specific aesthetic ideal develops as a tension between affective and

symbolic categories of interpretation. Music is merely one form of aesthetic discrimination;

appropriate codes of sonic and aural conduct are apparent throughout many different social activities. From noise curfews to riotous festivals, diverse ideals and preferences for particular types of sounds emerge and interact. The establishment of culture through these aesthetic projections is another way of explaining the existence of acoustic orders, albeit one that is more theoretical and less practical than the co-generative account I will be setting forth here.

Music, as a specific and nervous determination of the value of sound, is necessarily connected to both the affective and symbolic states. If purely affective, music loses its significance and relation to tradition; if purely symbolic, it becomes either mathematics or simply a historical fact of the organization of sound at a particular time. It is music's ability to move both the body and the mind through sound that affords it such a prominent place in cultural traditions.

I have intended my account to lay a foundation for, but not specifically describe, a phenomenology of music and other specific aesthetic forms. By situating music as a tension between affect and symbol, I also enable an understanding of why certain aesthetics are so fiercely guarded in cultural restrictions and appropriate codes. The constant threat of the excessive is dangerous because it exposes the constructed (non-essential) nature of aesthetic preferences. The revealed contingency of authority undermines political justification for control and constraint, enabling challenges from subcultures to rise to the fore.[13]

Thus, while this dissertation is not explicitly musicological it certainly can be integrated in such cultural discourses. Even so, here I want to focus on the phenomenological and socio-material organizations that support such superstructural effects. In the process, I develop a

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[13] Attali's work speaks to musical aesthetics' ability to prefigure political movements and revolutions. (Attali and Massumi, *Noise: The political economy of music.*)

theory of acoustic orders to integrate such descriptions into a unified narrative of sonic and aural practices.

<div align="center">Soundings of Everyday Life</div>

The constitution of society is not determined merely by material conditions or the explicit intentions of actors within them. Orderings of practice in space are temporary and contested results of an immeasurable array of factors. To claim to write a theory which encompasses this full range of influences is preposterous; to compose a theory which remains as open as possible to such novel interruptions is, on the contrary, necessary. In the same way that the phenomenology of listening I just outlined was as abstract and flexible as possible while allowing for clarified distinctions in experience, it is important in moving toward the social that we maintain a similar plastic disposition.

Listening is implicated within various technological structures which organize sonic and aural practices. I develop the concept of *acoustic order* to show a clear line between these various techniques and technologies of sound. If it were merely an 'aural' order, we would be caught within the experience of individuals as they interpret sounds. This is the framework within which I work in the first half of the dissertation, yet always with an eye toward the second part: sonic practices. Sonic activities, in distinction to aural techniques, refer to the generation of sounds either willfully or indirectly. Technologies of sound (re)production are equally efficient in this account as the techniques of the subject who intends to make sound. As I outline in the basic theory of technology, we can see a direct link between logics of practice (technologies) and the practices of those logics (techniques).

The aural and sonic coincide in the acoustic, as the spatial foundation and effect of such practices. In these terms, the acoustic carries within it latent and manifest functions of

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ideologies, preferences, rituals, and other abstractions from auditory techniques. Additionally, it necessitates the consideration of the material field within which the social is actualized, even as it does not limit the analysis to strictly material effects. This is, perhaps, where I extend the common usage of the word (referring to the reverberations and other reactive sonic characteristics architectural spaces) to include the prescription and constriction of certain types of sounds within those spaces. The designations of a space for musical performance, quiet contemplation, or loud conversation are all forms of acoustic regulation. Such directives are never total; the observation of negotiations between appropriate activity and the reappropriation of space (by those who lack significant property authority) is one of the key investigations enabled by a theory of acoustic orders.

The term 'order' must be clarified. In this sense, orders refer to the various configurations of practice embedded in social spaces. Practices are enabled and constrained by such implicit and explicit structures that are themselves partially formed by prior intentional activities as well as other environmental conditions. The hazard of using the terminology of 'order' is that it can imply the existence of a total logic which exclusively operates in a given field. This can be remedied through the consistent focus on the multiplicity of orders which overlap at any given time. While individual orders can be isolated in analysis, they can never be said to act unilaterally or hegemonically; they will always be compromised if only because of the various listening techniques of auditors reacting to them.

The word 'order' can be interpreted in multiple ways, none of which are excluded from this study. It may imply the organization of objects or practices. This is the sense in which I predominantly use the term. Alternatively, an order is also a directive given by an authority to the subjects within its dominion, as a prescription for future action. This de/prescriptive tension

pervades the discussion of how acoustic spaces and auditive practices emerge in a reciprocal relationship of a/effects. Other available terms, such as 'ecology'[14] and 'territory,'[15] fail to capture the simultaneous phenomenological, social, political, and material aspects of sonic, aural, and acoustic configurations. While they remain helpful in their relative fields of development, the theory I propose here is meant to be a unifying discourse within which these more specific topics can be considered and situated.

How are we to investigate such a field, especially in a way which remains relevant to the lived experiences of individuals in common situations? I will be utilizing Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau's theories of everyday life as models for understanding the relationships between phenomenological categories, residual social structures, and the means of modifying such institutionalized practices. Their writings, though originating in political contexts, nevertheless offer a coherent methodology for outlining the generation and maintenance of social orders, acoustic orders being one type among many.

I will save a full treatment of Lefebvre and de Certeau for the body of the dissertation[16] and continue to use this introductory space for summary conclusions. In *The Production of Space* and elsewhere, Lefebvre outlines a three-tiered theory of spatiality which seeks to account for different moments and stages of social structures. Each form of space is distinct from the others in theory yet synchronous in practice; they are layers of reality without being inter-hierarchical. As I've been mirroring in my own development of acoustic orders, Lefebvre's notion of space incorporates the material, ideal, political, and practical in the same analysis. Where Cartesian space is pure extension, Lefebvrian space adds multiple dimensions of human practice to this primary (in common terms, material) analytical matrix. This places him firmly in

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[14] Atkinson, "Ecology of sound: the sonic order of urban space."
[15] LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*.
[16] See Chapter 6

a (post)-Marxist theoretical position, attempting to outline the workings of the politic through alternative explanations of production, consumption, and structure. The employment of his theory in this project invites a consideration of these tendencies and patterns in techniques of listening and acoustic orders.

Lefebvre's spatial modes[17] correspond roughly to three stages of audition and its effects. As well, they recall the metaphorical stages of metabolism with which I opened this discussion, though they do not proceed in such a linear analysis. However, as we will see, it is still instructive to consider the reciprocal processes of each set of metaphors. Indeed, the purpose of juxtaposing these three explanations is to show the interdependence of each stage of listening with one another; the metaphors of metabolism and spatiality are, in this project, merely instrumental toward this end.   This will be clearer with a short description of these divisions (and extensions) of space.

Spatial Practices correspond most directly with spaces commonly understood. This is the field within which action is accomplished, where technical intentions are exercised upon observable objects. This is a material space, though not exclusively in a physical sense; it would better be expressed as a pragmatic mode of activity wherein material objects, intentional subjects, ideologies and institutions coalesce.

Representations of space, on the other hand, are the articulations of organization, bureaucracy, law, and other regulations of social practice. Conceived in spatial terms, we can begin to chart topographies of authority, relations of control, and cultural codes of appropriation alongside more commonly observed features of social life such as traffic patterns, education systems, and ritual festivals. As with each of the three modes, while principles and structures from one mode may bleed into the other, these properties of space can also remain interior to the

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[17] Lefebvre, *The production of space*. 33-41

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system from which they originated. Thus, a system of government begets the laws by which the system replicates itself. Managers are given authority because the management proclaims it. Even so, these regulatory abstractions are directly effective within spatial practices; they are the organizing principles of action.

Representational Spaces, however similar the terminology may be to the former mode, are quite distinct from representations of space. Representational spaces do not necessarily correspond with or regulate spatial practices directly. This is the space of the imaginary and the simulated. Seemingly independent of material conditions or institutional configurations, representational spaces emerge as quasi-realities in their own right. The order of these ideal spaces can begin to challenge current configurations of power, but only by being translated through representations of space to spatial practices.

Lefebvre intended these articulations of space to illustrate the connection between social structures on ideological and state levels and the practices of everyday people living common lives. His three-part *Critique of Everyday Life*,[18] written over the course of forty years, is a sustained exposition of the necessity to include particularized actions and reactions in a theory of the political at large. For the purposes of this dissertation, Lefebvre's divisions of space and the perspective of everyday practice enable a theoretical foundation through which auditory techniques can be placed in the context of broader acoustic configurations and regulations.

The phenomenological categorization of sound corresponds to representational spaces in this explanation. These categories, however functional they may be in the process of perceptual interpretation, are constructed schemas by which sounds are classified in an ideal[19] organization.

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[18] Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*; Lefebvre, Trebitsch, and Moore, *Critique of everyday life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*; Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life: From Modernity to Modernism*.

[19] As in, operating in the realm of ideas rather than in the sense of a determination of perfection.

Individual experience need not coincide with material or governmental facts about the world. For example, the 'music' that the band thinks it is playing may be merely noise to me in the audience, or symbolic of money for the owner of the venue, or merely affective for the uninitiated child. These interpretations all occur within phenomenological space, which is a form of representational space.

Once these categories are established for the individual they are able to be projected onto social space. To do so, they must be translated to a representation of space. In acoustic terms, the categories of auditory interpretation must become prescriptions of proper sonic and aural practices. This application and projection of individual experience is the foundation for understanding the generation of acoustic orders from subjective intentions. In a literal sense, laws of noise regulation display most clearly this correspondence between the internal process of audition and the external projections of preferred categories.

In spatial practice, moreover, such abstract regulations may or may not be effective. Here, as in representational space, the activities of individuals need not be consistent with intended behavioral codes. Spatial practice is a constant confrontation between conventional routines and subjective reactions against them. This is the space of acoustics and sonic practice. These are the responses to phenomenological experiences. In the metabolism metaphor, this was the stage of expulsion, the reaction to objects formerly ingested, affective, and disseminated. Nevertheless, this reactive space is also the beginning of a new cycle of structural influences upon future experience.

Michel de Certeau expanded Lefebvre's spatial theory, which was admittedly a 'meta'-theory, into very specific contexts of everyday life. In the process of describing what could very well be termed phenomenologies of cooking, walking through the city, and skyscrapers, de

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Certeau further developed the distinction between social *tactics* and *strategies*.[20] Strategies are appropriated spaces and correspondingly appropriate forms of behavior: the sidewalk to walk upon, the cookbook recipe to follow. Largely determined by institutional configurations that surpass the intentions of any one person, strategies can seemingly become hegemonic in their power to organize social practices.

However, for de Certeau, strategies are never as dominant as they first appear. Individuals and subcultural movements are always challenging such established 'property' relations. These tactics of those who lack significant property, the inappropriate, saturate social actions in a constant practical/ideological confrontation. This is the defining characteristic of everyday life and, with Lefebvre, a valuable critique of the Marxist materialist tradition: individuals have a crucial role to play in the formation and maintenance of dominating social structures. While strategies are top-down efforts to, in a capitalist sense, *own* social life, tactics are bottom-up (we might now call it 'grassroots') revisions and contestations of such intentions

This political perspective is especially helpful in this project to highlight the necessarily shifting field of acoustic orders. While these orders do organize sonic and aural practices, they never do so without being constantly amended by the listener in practice. Through new aesthetic interpretations, spatial arrangements, or merely the emotional disposition of the auditory at that time, a description of a sound and the context within which it sounds is never universal or transcendental. This dissertation is an attempt to outline the categorical process by which sounds are appropriated, objectified, and technologically utilized in practice; it is not a prescription of the proper method of listening or an ethics of correct acoustic construction. Such specific judgments might be made following this preliminary theoretical account, and therefore be subject to the phenomenological and socio-spatial contingencies outlined therein.

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[20] De Certeau et al., *The practice of everyday life.* 29-30

With these spatial modes in mind, we can now understand more clearly the culmination of the theories presented in this dissertation: that social acoustic orders arise through techniques intended to minimize excessive perceptions. This rather simple pronouncement is exceedingly complex to chart sociologically. Nevertheless, I argue that it is through this lens of minimizing social risk and maximizing intentional projections that the generation of acoustic orders and their effects can be observed.[21]

Phenomenologically, the ambition of audition is the complete and orderly interpretation of aural-perceptual objects. This perceptual system works to categorize sound in such a way that the intentions (as dispositions) of the individual are aligned concisely with the stimuli it receives. As I've outlined, these categories of interpretation parse sound into distinct classifications based on their intentional congruence with the subject; affect, symbol, and excess are the technological means by which sounds make sense, or fail to.

Intentions, of course, certainly do not always correspond with the status of the world. Sounds occur in settings not fully controlled by the subjects who seek to appropriate them. The unpredictability of the acoustic field, because of nature as well as society, leads to tensions between the ways we *desire* the world to sound and the way it *does* sound. Even so, by remaining within an analysis based on the interpretations of individuals rather than a detached physical measurement of sound levels and characteristics, we can see that both phenomenological intentions and the corresponding 'sounds' of the world can be altered in an

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[21] The visual metaphors of 'lens' and 'observe' are especially apt here considering the ocularcentric tendencies of philosophical and social theories. In this context, I am outlining on paper in linear grammatical form a process which actually occurs in the synchronous space between individuals and social configurations. Such fields can be mapped in acoustic, sonic, and aural terms, though these representations take on very different qualities once subjected to visual-spatial metrics. I am not denying the sustained visuality of theory in this project; I am maintaining, however, that the actual practice of listening does not proceed along such apparent paths. The phenomenological experience of auditory categorization, though linear in description, is synchronous and peculiarly embodied in practice.

instant based on affective perspective, categorical revision, and spatial position. Auditory interpretation is always experienced in the plasticity of temporal and spatial situations.

The excessive category is the key explanatory component for understanding the reasons why individuals seek to control acoustic spaces. I mentioned earlier that the goal of this type of phenomenology is pragmatic application, and here is where we see the first fruits of such a construction. If sounds are fully interpreted into affective and symbolic categories, the subject has achieved the goal of full interpretation. In this case, nothing about the sound is more or less than the subject expects or desires it to be; therefore, it fits perfectly within whatever specifications the subject is currently intending for it. This is nearly, if not completely, impossible in practice. Even in the most controlled environments, as in the oft quoted observation of John Cage in the anechoic chamber[22], we are still interrupted by qualities of sound which exceed in some way our capacity to contain them in such a neat classification. The excessiveness of sound, as silence, noise, or environment, is a constant quality of auditory experience. It is, quite literally, an unintentional remainder.

This is unacceptable to the phenomenological subject who automatically seeks the resolution of all perceptions into intentional categories of interpretation. As pervasive as excess is, so are the attempts to limit this phenomenon. Individuals and institutions do not seek to control acoustic space merely through *positive* programs of aesthetic construction or preference. Additionally, they desire to *negate* risks and unpredictabilities inherent in interstitial social space. Indeed, by looking at the various types of acoustic controls in use, such as walls, stereos, and noise regulations, we see that technologies and techniques which limit sonic interruption are at least as prevalent as those which propagate a particular aesthetic preference. We often play acoustic defense, minimizing external contingencies and attempting to establish control over the

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[22] Cage, *Silence: lectures and writings.* 8

spaces within which we temporarily dwell. Once in control of our spaces, we often produce less sound than we do prior to such successful appropriation.

A fine starting point to apply this theory is the space of the home, the dwelling. Next to the workplace, which often involves institutional factors largely outside the control of the individuals who operate within it, the home is the place where we commonly spend most of our everyday lives. It is also apt for consideration here because of the relatively high levels of control that individuals have over such space in comparison to other social situations. In fact, it is this friction between the appropriated space of the dwelling and the lack of control over nearly all spaces external which enables a clear view of the type of phenomenological projections I have discussed thus far.

It remains my objective to outline and refine this theory of audition and acoustics and the example of the dwelling illustrates this rather well in this introductory chapter. Nonetheless, it is not an empirical case study wherein new social facts are discovered regarding trends in listening habits, technological uses, or other overt behaviors. This project remains an abstract phenomenological and social theory, an explanation of the processes and logics which remain implicit in individual actions and social configurations. Thus, this discussion of the dwelling is merely a first and hypothetical step in applying such a system to the world. It remains to be seen, through a comparison of the structure of my argument with past and future empirical research, where such a conception of audition is most useful: in philosophy, sociology, architecture, psychology, neurology, or elsewhere.

To begin to fashion this abstract example, let us imagine a person sitting in his otherwise quiet living room. He has a normal capacity for hearing, the room is familiar to him, he owns the physical property and thus has full jurisdiction to change it as he sees fit. Now, although he does

not initiate it, he hears a 440Hz sine wave in the room. What are the possible interpretations and reactions he might have to this event?

First, he might be shocked by the sound entering this private space unannounced. This interruption of his intended listening space (the quiet room) is a type of phenomenological excess, namely *noise*, since it surpasses his expectation of what he should hear or was listening to in the prior moment. Whether in loudness, attack, tone, or timbre, unintentional sounds are often first experienced as environmental noises. In this case, it is because the sound has not yet been categorized and therefore objectively interpreted within a meaningful context. The experience of noise does not merely occur at this preliminary stage of listening: any sound which is experienced as exceeding the bounds of the listener's intention is, in a phenomeno-categorical sense, a noise.

Perhaps he is so engrossed in something else that the entry of such a sound is not startling or disturbing, but unperceived. This does not mean that the sound could not be heard, but rather that it is not yet directly attended to in his experience. It might be that he hears it but decides at the moment not to ascertain its source or meaning. In such a situation, the sound is *environmental* since it is displaced to the margin of experience, queued in the waiting room of perception. This sound remains excessive because it has not been made an explicit object of perception, even as it has entered within the horizon of listening.

The sound may never enter this perceptual field, remaining forever beyond the limits of his awareness. This might occur because the sine wave is played at too low of an amplitude to be heard by his normally functional ears, or he is so engrossed in another activity that he pays little attention to any sound whatsoever. Or, in another scenario, perhaps his threshold of hearing has fallen below a normal level because of a form of deafness (ear infection, tinnitus, etc.). In

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either case, if he intends to hear a sound but is unable to, he enters a state of phenomenological *silence*. Phenomenological silence is not the lack of sounds existing in the world; it is the disposition of the subject as it intends to listen to a sound but fails to satisfactorily perceive it.

This revision of the concept of silence enables a new perspective on deafness and deaf culture. It is when a sound is intended to be heard but is not, as in the transition to late-deafness experienced by many as they age, that a distressing silence emerges in perceptual life. In the case of someone who does not intend to hear, as in those born deaf, no such intentional lacking exists; the world of the deaf is not silent, but is instead filled with a rich variety of other intentional phenomena.

Our living room listener may, conversely, simply listen to the sine wave as a tone, allowing it to permeate his perception without interpreting it as a symbol, signal, or any other representation. This sound is objective because it is received and accepted as an experience, but it is not yet detached as an object distinct from its effect on the listener. This purely embodied listening, in the *affective* category, is incredibly difficult to sustain in practice because of the propensity to judge and relate perceptions to one another. Affective listening is still a technique even though it does not treat the sound as an object to be used for some other purpose. Nevertheless, this type of categorical listening happens throughout our lives, in waking and sleeping, often in alternation with symbolic categorizations. For example, if his interpretation of the sound is musical, as an aesthetic determination, it would quiver between these affective and symbolic categories.

If merely symbolic, however, his interpretation of the sound takes on increasingly cognitive and disembodied relations. He could interpret this sound as the doorbell chime, or the fire alarm, or the note by which an as yet invisible orchestra is about to be tuned. In these cases,

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he has objectified and situated the sound within systems of meaning. If his intentional interpretation is sufficient, as would be the case if the visitor, fire, or orchestra appears, there would not necessarily be anything excessive or affective about the sound anymore. As a mere symbol of some other event taking place in the world, the perception of sound within the symbolic category quickly displaces the mechanisms and uncertainties of audition.

Although I've treated the symbolic category singularly in definition, the range of possible symbols and referential systems within it is infinite. This study does not claim to document such specific manifestations of symbolic attribution, but instead seeks to establish a foundation for talking about sound at phenomenological and, in turn, social levels. *This is a logical-structural analysis concerning the (pre)conditions of auditory experience.* Nonetheless, it remains practical in that it provides further research with a coherent vocabulary and methodology for explaining sonic and aural practices. Refining our hypothetical situation will illustrate how the phenomenological categories of audition can be appropriately applied.

Our figurative listener has, undoubtedly, been trained throughout his life to interpret stimuli in certain ways. As we just saw, there are multiple interpretations of a 440Hz tone. Which one will be made this time? Such determinations depend on an exploration of the various other contingencies of his environment, emotional disposition, and developed habits of listening. For the sake of this example, let us construct a more detailed story of his current conditions.

The listener grew up in the countryside. Other than the sounds of trees in the wind, animals, and the creaking house, his auditory life was largely controlled by himself and the few other people around him. Nights were quiet, days were filled with proximate sounds, and thus his awareness of this limited acoustic field was rather acute. As a child, he reluctantly learned to

play violin. The tuning of the A string by a tuning fork represented the oppression he felt by being forced to play against his will. He hasn't played in many years.

He recently moved from the country to the city. He now rents an apartment in a large building, nearly surrounded on every side by thin walls and neighbors. Nights and days are filled with city sounds, as far as the ear could hear and beyond. He is usually overwhelmed by such externalities but is slowly learning to acclimate to these new acoustic conditions. While he hasn't augmented his apartment with any real acoustic damping, he often wears earplugs or runs a fan in order to drown out unexpected noises.

Now, enter the 440Hz tone. He is at first startled, as he hasn't heard such a piercing clean tone in his apartment before. He first checks the appliances and alarms to see if something is trying to notify him, yet finds nothing. He is rather annoyed at this point, as he cannot place either the source of the sound nor its purpose. The earplugs and fan are incapable of drowning it out, so he sits down again. Upon reflection, he realizes that this tone is the same by which he used to tune his violin. At first, this is an undesirable memory, as it was always so grating to his ears as a child. Nevertheless, it represents in his current conditions a return to his youth and the comfort of home. Now, his listening changes from desperation to comfort. He sits absorbed in the tone itself, alternating between memories of childhood and the sheer simplicity of the tone's effect on his experience.

This interpretive sequence exemplifies a few different moments of categorization. First, in his first moments of listening to the tone, it is noise since he did not expect such an occurrence, and thus had not yet adjusted to its presence. Next, he attempts to find the 'source' of such a sound, as if it were a signal emanating from an object or person. This symbolic intention remains incomplete, however, since he finds no such source; thus, his interpretation

returns to noise and resulting attempts to control it (the earplugs and fan). Once he remembers his association of that tone to his youthful violin tuning, the symbolic category is fulfilled.

At this stage, a small clarification must be reiterated about the status of noise as an excessive category. The attribution of noise in this analysis does not signify the desirability or undesirability of particular sounds. Instead, it refers to the intentions of the individual as they attempt to appropriate sounds into objective categories of interpretation. A sound can be unwanted and still not be a noise. To be a noise is to exceed perceptual intentions, not aesthetic desires. I will discuss this distinction more fully in Chapter 5.

His interpretation of the symbolism of the sound makes him forget, momentarily, about his quest to find the source of the sound. This type of symbolism is more explicitly an intellectual association than a material attribution (although both are of the same intentional form of the symbol). As he transitions from disgust to nostalgia, he is able to connect his current conditions (in his apartment) with his memories (in the country). In doing so, he approaches the affective mode of listening, where the familiar symbolism of the sound enables him to embrace it. In a sense, he is now listening musically to what was once a noise, a spatial signal, and a memory-symbol.

Of course, this is merely one possible scenario. It is intended here to preliminarily clarify the categories of interpretation so that we can move on to discuss the ways in which social configurations of acoustic practices are involved even in such an intimate listening practice. With such a goal in mind, we can begin to see how the living room listener's interpretations become effectual in a spatial sense, beyond the interiority of his immediate experience. Indeed, such interiority is never nearly as isolated as we might at first suppose. Audition is a reciprocal process of metabolizing and regenerating sounds; this incorporation of self and world exposes

the mechanisms by which sounds are generated, restricted, and organized. Even in the privacy of the dwelling, micro and macro acoustic orders are evident throughout auditory practice.

To extend our discussion, we can consider acoustic orders in two different stages in relation to our listener. First, in the various ways that orders are already present in his experience and context. Such an account is not yet a genealogy of these spatial and practiced configurations, but is merely the recognition that they actually do exist. This ontological fact is an essential preliminary toward a discussion of the strategies and tactics by which they come to be. These two stages of explanation, the presence of acoustic orders and the causes of their generation, still necessarily involve the phenomenological at the root of the analysis.

We return to the listener, but not yet to his explicit experience of the sound. Before that, and always surrounding auditory practice, we can observe more general habitual and spatial practices through which his aural experience takes form. Within his dwelling, the basic configuration of his material-acoustic space is perhaps the most immediate example of an acoustic order. Ceilings, carpet, and furniture establish a primary resonance of the room regardless of the specific sonic or aural activity taking place. Additionally, the walls, doors, windows, and other such gateways to other acoustic territories[23] are the orifices of possible intrusion to the privacy of his dwelling. This physical architecture, as I mentioned before, is the most common interpretation of the concept of acoustics. In no way do I deny its validity, but it must be expanded. Acoustics is not merely a physical-spatial phenomenon, but also a product of social technologies.

One such technology to consider is law. Inasmuch as laws are ideal concepts translated into prescriptive objects, they are technologies which intend to change or maintain a certain type of practice. Of course, such practices (the 'technique' of law making or abiding) often contest

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[23] LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*.

the limits of such intentions. For our listener, regulations specific to sound production will obviously affect the types of sounds present in the environment as well as the expected interpretation of those sounds, such as city-wide noise regulations and the particular sound codes of the apartment complex, The effects of law on acoustics surely do not end there, however. Traffic laws and bike lanes, building codes (both for construction and the structure itself), the proximity of highways and airports, various exceptions for emergency vehicles, regulations concerning the required efficiency of appliances and other machines (and thus the length of time they need to be in operation), licenses for clubs and other venues, and many other practical laws all have consequences in acoustic space. Though mostly unintentional, the ways we govern ourselves and control society greatly affect the type of sounds present in shared spaces.

Beyond these explicit prescriptions and much more pervasive in everyday life are various social routines, rituals, and mores which more subtly organize the ways we make sounds and listen to them. Spoken or unspoken, such codes are instrumental in establishing our sense of the social appropriateness of certain sounds, whether we make them or hear them. Informal discussions with neighbors about noise, scheduled sonic events like concerts or sporting events, or even a short but sinister glance following a particular sound are some of the more obvious ways in which sounds are socially conditioned. The perceived volume level of speech in a restaurant, the awkward shuffling and body noises at a quiet concert, and the hushed tones of romantic whispers are other ways that sound is controlled, though not explicitly prescribed. These few examples merely hint at the countless techniques and technologies of social control exerted over the even the minutest sounds of the everyday.

Thus, our listener operates within a field of listening fully permeated by such orderings of acoustic practice. Architecturally, socially, culturally, and perceptually, the way he listens is

prefigured by prior experiences in similar auditory situations. Even without conscious awareness of these orderings, the phenomenological categories of perception, the way he is able to parse aural stimuli into discrete modes of listening, are formed by such social interactions. This, as I've stated, is one of the central arguments of this project: that phenomenology must take into account its social generation.

My second assertion, that socio-spatial theory is imbued with phenomenological intention, can be made clearer by looking at the second type of acoustic ordering present in our example: the listener's spatial reactions to sound. These responses partially explain the existence of acoustic orders themselves, especially inasmuch as they are the products of attempts to constrain sounds within the defined stable phenomenological categories of affect and symbol. The generation of acoustic orders, as social-spatial systems, can be traced back to the phenomenological problematic of perception.

As the listener heard the tone, he went through multiple stages of interpretation between category and excess. If we take each of these stages on its own terms, we can imagine possible reactions he might make if stuck in a single one for a significant length of time. If, for instance, the tone persistently interrupted his space as a noise (drippy faucets often have this effect in a quiet room), he might have been more inclined to seek out the source within or outside of his apartment. Upon discovering a source, and thus changing his mode of listening from noise to symbol, he is likely to attempt to put a stop to the sonic event through material modification of the environment (turning off the appliance, for instance). But why?

One explanation would be that he does not prefer the sound, that it is grating to his ears, and therefore he desires to only listen to those sounds which are pleasant and appropriate to his aesthetic. This description relies on multiple factors I've already discussed in this introduction:

the establishment of aesthetic codes in personal and social life, the existence of sounds which please or disgust the listener at affective levels of experience, and the ability of the individual to shape auditory experience through acoustic manipulation. This simple conclusion, however, is missing what I take to be the most significant element of this study.

In addition to conscious aesthetic preferences of auditory *taste*, which undoubtedly and universally affect the experience of listeners and the aesthetic institutions, it is the tension between the phenomenological category of *excess* and its resolution in stable categories of perception that explains even the generation of these aesthetic prescriptions. Why do listeners modify their environments to suit their sonic preferences? Because, *prior to developing such preferences, the listening subject intends to unify all experience within secure categories of interpretation.* Sounds which fall outside of these bounds must be constrained both in a material sense (to put an end to the sound or investigate its source more precisely, thus putting an end to its mystery) and in a phenomenological sense (by cultivating aesthetic dispositions that account for the sound and thus appropriate it into a perceptual system). In order for sounds to be desirable, disgusting, musical or otherwise significant, they must be successfully contained within the affective and symbolic categorical modes.

Thus, we have two complementary explanations for why acoustic orders emerge through everyday experience. First, and primarily, individuals react against acoustic situations which cause excessive perceptions. These reactions often take the form of inquiring about a sound's source, which might then lead to greater interest in the sound, as would be the case if a good song is heard while walking past a concert, or a desire to eradicate the sound from experience if it is unpleasant. This second explanation, as a more refined phenomenological intention than merely the elimination of fundamental excess, still relies on the horizons of interpretability (and

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thus the threat of excess) constraining the affective and symbolic. Both of these forms of

auditory reaction are attempts to objectify and control the current and future exposure to certain

types of sounds; one might be considered primal and the other aesthetic.

For our listener, and in further investigations of acoustic practices, we must be highly

attuned to this distinction between 1) resolving excess and 2) aesthetic preference. While they

often operate simultaneously in experience, and thus are difficult to parse in explanation and

analysis (phenomenological or sociological), they are nevertheless two discrete forms of

perceptual interpretation. The implications of such an analytical awareness are significant. In

the case of analyzing environmental sounds in various contexts, whether in urban spaces or

natural areas, we can observe more clearly the difference between sounds that are habituated and

those that are foreign to experience. In doing so, various acoustic practices come into relief. The

city-dweller's ability to withstand high levels of acoustic complexity is understood as the result

of habitually incorporating sounds into intended phenomenological categories. The country-

dweller's corresponding inability to make sense of the city-noise is not, therefore, a result of the

city being an *a priori* unhealthy sonic environment, but instead is seen as a product of perceptual

training and the particular forms of intention developed through this.

We escape, then, an overly simplified account of sounds, noises, and silences as essential

things to be universally propagated (like Western tonal music) or despised (like the sound of

traffic). There are no sounds that are necessarily noise, just as there is no perfect music. All

sounds must be interpreted according to phenomenological processes involving incorporation,

objectification, appropriation, and reaction. While we can extrapolate from these individual

experiences and talk about the way that acoustic orders are created from them, we cannot make

the leap toward universal categorical prescriptions of what specific sounds are beneficial or

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detrimental to the good life. For musicology, acoustic ecology, sound regulations, artistic

curiosity, and a wealth of other contexts, this freedom from transcendental prescription offers

both an opportunity and a challenge to revise theories of audition and appropriate sonic practices.

<div align="right">Summary of the Argument</div>

We can now review this dissertation's main themes from a broader position, to

understand the arguments presented within it and their mutual support toward its end. I began

with an analogical metaphor of metabolism. Through this, we recognize audition as part of a

system of incorporation and representation. Sounds are not static entities existing with qualities

apart from those attributed to them by listeners; sounds must be integrated into experience in

order to be considered as sounds at all. Only then do they become valuable and exchangeable in

perceptual and aesthetic economies.

From there, a theory of technique/technology clarifies the ways in which we can begin to

talk about sounds as objectified within phenomenological systems of perception. Without such a

foundation for understanding the role of the subject with the object, and their reciprocal

influences upon the other, a theory of audition could easily be undermined by an unnecessary

distinction between sound-objects in the world and autonomous subjects as perceivers.

Techniques of listening are the ways in which we metabolize sounds, categorically, so that they

become elements within general perceptual and cognitive systems. Additionally, this theory of

technology makes no absolute distinction between the techniques of individuals on the

phenomenological level and the activities of artifacts and institutions as they manipulate sounds

in the world. From auditory perception to musical instruments to factory loudspeakers and legal

pronouncements, we find a necessity to recognize diverse techniques and technologies of

acoustic control.

One form of these controls is evident in the phenomenology of auditory perception. I have only attempted to outline one element of this phenomenology; namely, the process of objectifying and categorizing sounds into discrete moments of categorization through a logic of thresholds. The technology of the category and the technique of being able to categorize are logical operations which are directly analogical to the ways that sounds are represented in the external world: in aesthetic musical codes, audio recordings, and prescriptions of appropriate sonic activities generally. The categories of affect and symbol provide a base structure for understanding the way we can interpret sounds as embodied perceptions and abstract representations. The category of the excessive, on the other hand, exposes the problematic that sound, like all perceptual objects, poses for the intentional individual. Sounds are not always interpreted so neatly within experience; undeniably, even familiar sounds go through stages of recognition and habituation which have allowed them to become familiar at all.

From this problem of the excessive in perception, I have begun to chart how acoustic orders are projected from phenomenological experience. There are many ways that acoustic orders emerge, none of which should be considered as a totality. Material configurations, conscious aesthetic projects, and the phenomenological process should each be considered in depth when attempting to 'read' the configuration of an acoustic space. My contribution here is to argue more strongly for this last consideration, especially inasmuch as it aids in recognizing the role of individual subjectivity in everyday life negotiations. This is where the parallel between this discussion and Lefebvre/de Certeau is most pertinent. The political ramifications of phenomenological processes need not be transcendental, as the history of phenomenology has often attempted to conceive it. Instead, I believe, phenomenology renders the socio-political

sphere even more disjointed at the same time that it provides a coherent account of how such power relationships are established.

In the end, mutual links between phenomenology and social spatial theory can be detected. I do not intend this dissertation to be a direct argument for correspondence, but instead act as a preliminary example of how such collaborations could benefit each discipline. This evidence comes through a discussion of auditory perception and acoustic projection, which in itself must be taken to further stages in order to convince these established traditions of the need for internal revision.

This introduction is merely a first step toward establishing a persuasive case for the existence of phenomenological categories of listening and social acoustic orders. In the chapters which follow, a detailed account of the theory as well as more explicit examples will be provided toward this end. Chapter 2 highlights the problematic of listening through the metaphor of metabolism, suggesting a basic model of incorporation and embodiment instead of the subject/object detachment of pure intellection. Chapter 3 covers the theory of technique/technology which is crucial for moving forward with an active, subject-based theory of audition and acoustic response. The clarification of these and other terms allows for their coherent and consistent use across multiple discussions. Chapter 4 initiates the phenomenological exposition of the categories of auditory interpretation through a look at historical phenomenological developments. I will be critiquing Ihde's *Listening and Voice* as a too-solipsistic account in need of social generative recognition. I will also show how a revised phenomenological approach enables a clearer understanding of key terms in sound studies discourses which are often used inconsistently, such as noise, silence, affect, and others. Chapter 5 explains my phenomenological system in depth. Relying upon the theoretical developments in

prior chapters, the models of *volume* and *threshold* will be used to chart a basic and potentially universal phenomenology of perception in both stable and unstable modes.

Chapter 6, borrowing directly from the prior chapter's foundations in the everyday phenomenological experience of the listener, begins to discuss the concept of 'acoustic orders' as projections of perceptual intention. This is meant to augment other social, political, and cultural discourses on the organization, constraint, reproduction, and propagation of sounds by focusing on the role of individual agents in shaping such structures. Finally, Chapter 7 brings together these discussions and directs them toward my main thesis, that acoustic orders are generated through excessive resolution. I conclude by reflecting upon the importance of such a conclusion in a brief analysis of noise regulations in Nashville, TN. I show there how the methodological terminology developed throughout the dissertation can be applied directly to real-world situations and policies. This sound study extends beyond itself to become not only a coherent phenomenology of audition but also a critical sociology of acoustics.

Such an interdisciplinary gesture is indicative of the type of scholarship that the ASPECT program intends: to begin between disciplinary walls and, in turn, challenge the necessity of such boundaries. Not surprisingly, sound itself often takes on this same characteristic. It is generated and distributed in interstitial social spaces, permeating walls and the unsuspecting ears of others, laying claim to territories otherwise private and secure. The study of sound in this way is a nascent field, open to opportunities to theoretically explore the acoustic world at the same time that this investigation can return to change entrenched theories traditions. It remains to be demonstrated, in this dissertation and beyond, the extent to which sound studies can transform our understanding of the human condition in phenomenological and social-spatial terms. In music, speech, and the delicacy of the natural world, the familiarity and permeability of sound is

omnipresent. This study intends to systematize such a world without limiting its poignant and

meaningful place in our shared experience, to 'sound-out' the space between noise and silence in

everyday life.

Chapter 2
Sound for Thought: Listening as Metabolism

What is the embodied relation of the listener to perceived sound and, in return, to itself? How might we observe this relation less as subject/object discernment and more as a process of interpretation and assimilation into a unified experience? And what would be the benefit of doing so, particularly if the method of analysis is analogical rather than strictly literal? In the current chapter I outline an analogy between a metaphor of listening and the corresponding logic of permeation and integration found in the metaphor of metabolism.

This chapter is intended to initiate a critique of overly-reductive assumptions about sound and listening. In these everyday, ordinary conceptions, sound-objects are understood as existing out in the world waiting to be statically heard and simultaneously understood by the rational listener. While the sound may permeate this listener in the material process of hearing itself (the sympathetic reverberation of the listening organ), beyond this the individual is maintained in detachment and disaffect. Additionally, such a disembodied story of listening neglects the role of bodily, social, and psychological congruities which are not only affected by the intrusion of sound into experience but, in response, help to determine which sounds are available to be heard at all. Listening is not merely reception; listener and listened are co-emergent in a process of affect and sympathy. The digestive metaphor affords us a dynamic portrayal of listening by illustrating discrete moments in this process.

Furthermore, these metaphors speak to a specific history of discussion concerning issues of temporal subjectivity, oral othering, and affective perception. Edmund Husserl, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Luc Nancy will be posed as alternately relevant interlocutors in this conversation. At the moment, this space allows only a cursory suggestion of the consequences

and usefulness of the digestive shift in our conception of the listening self, particularly in relation to these ongoing philosophical discourses. The chapter will begin with an outline of the problem of listening as determined by these preceding authors. Then, a four-stage metaphor for listening will be proposed in relative order: ingestion, affection, dissemination and expulsion. Finally, a few reflections will be given to recall the problem and reassert the significance of this analogy for a more coherent theory of listening. In relation to the dissertation as a whole, such a discussion prefigures an integrative perceptual phenomenology and the necessary ties to social-spatial relation it implies.

<div align="right">Predecession</div>

This discussion is mainly concerned with the phenomenological problem of a subject's relation to perceptions and to itself. Sound, as one form of perception, is not interpreted here merely in its material form: the product of a disturbance of an otherwise static medium, producing vibrations and wavelengths which are then capable of transmission to a sympathetic receiver. While very important scientifically, the material aspect of sound, in its analytical position of exteriority from the individual's experience of it, is largely out of place in this type of discourse. Instead, I will consider sound as a phenomenal event, operating in the space between affect and intelligibility. This is not to contradict the material account of sound as objective energetic force; instead, it locates that discourse as posterior to a more essential contemplation of sounds as subjectively heard and known.

Lest we might assume that this subject takes the form of the classic Cartesian knower (with the sound-object as its detached known), Husserl highlights for us a way of separating sounds-as-available from sounds-as-apprehended. Within his more general phenomenological approach, characterized by intentional intellectual bracketing toward the exclusion of extraneous

or unpostulated data, he portrays consciousness as operating necessarily within a linear temporal sequence. His metaphor for consciousness, the melody, displays the way in which this temporality pervades every perception; the differentiation of our conscious moments is made through extension and retention of prior experience. His use of sound in the explanation of retention is pertinent here:

> The real content of the now-consciousness includes sounds which, if the occasion should arise, are sensed; in which case, they are then necessarily to be characterized in Objectifying apprehension as perceived , as present, but in no wise as past.[24]

At this stage of his argument, sound perception is taken as a particularly present phenomenon which illustrates the logical capacities of memory and distinctions within time-space. Not yet past, as perhaps with other senses, sounds present themselves presently. To take this account as accurate is to accept a few basic entities: the perceiving subject as central within perceptual analysis, the existence of sounds available external to this subject, the ability of the subject to interiorize these available sounds through possible sensation, the objectifying nature of subjective perception, and the ability to retain and recognize these perceptions in order to assign them a logical order in experience. All of these, in turn, rely upon what Husserl labels "the primordial temporal form of sensation."[25] This capacity of the subject to constitute duration within experience enables the "mode of objectivity," which is essential for all subsequent consciousness. Additionally, Husserl describes "the content of every primal sensation as individual [*Selbst*]."[26] This will be crucial to remember later in our discussion concerning the peripheral integration and deconstitution of identity within the process of auditory perception. Husserl maintains that sensation or perception can, in phenomenological analysis at least, be

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[24] Husserl, Heidegger, and Churchill, *The phenomenology of internal time-consciousness.* 54
[25] Ibid. 92
[26] Ibid. 93

taken as a unique instance or event; as he meticulously describes, it is unified and constituted within the "actual now" of the subject-position and therefore bounded by the linear representation of time.

What if, on the contrary, we allow for no such *a priori* subject to maintain this auto-affection within temporal experience? Without such a centering subjectivity, how could we ground a phenomenology of perception on anything but a myth of reciprocal symbolic exchange? For Derrida, the fiction of the pre-constituted self lies at the heart of Husserl's account. Rather than centering presence within the individual, Derrida proposes that the immanent subject, so vital in Husserl's phenomenological description, is only existent and known as a play of differance and comparative signification.

Derrida's critique of Husserl's theory of primordial presence concentrates on the latter's account of hearing one's own voice. For Husserl, this auto-affection marks the ground for self-presence and, therefore, consciousness and objectivity. Because vocal sounds both emanate and terminate within what appears to be the interior of my private body, there is no perceived distance between my own intentionality and the perceived sound. Thus, the Husserlian speaker simultaneously produces, hears, and understands oral/aural expressions, offering a seemingly "transcendent dignity with regard to every other signifying substance" through an appeal to the supposed simplicity of phenomenological interiority.[27]

What Derrida proposes, in contrast, is to unhinge the self from this apparent auto-affection, from Time as given. Rather than an immediate closing. "*the temporalization of sense is, from the outset, a 'spacing.'*"[28] He goes on:

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[27] Derrida, Allison, and Garver, *Speech and phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs.* 77

[28] Ibid. 86 (italics in original)

Hearing oneself speak is not the inwardness of an inside that is closed in upon itself; it is the irreducible openness in the inside; it is the eye and the world within speech.[29]

His popular notion of *differance* attempts to hint at the way in which words, and therefore subjects, are composed through an inherent internal tension. Never complete, never original, always becoming made and simultaneously unmade, the Derridian subject is a metaphor and trace of prior associations ("spacing" being elemental in this process). Voice, then, is othering rather than identifying. Of course, this project does not simply result in a refutation of the voice as primary within phenomenological theory; for Derrida, this represents a rejection of the predominance of *logos* itself, the toppling of the authority of the subject position.

The aim here is not to contradict the conclusion that writing is less centered than vocal enunciation and thus preferable for deconstructive purposes. However, prior to that judgment, we are speaking in similar territory when discussing the phenomenological basis of subjectivity, specifically in the case of determining to what extent and in what ways the subject is constituted by the very process of perception itself (audition, in this case). And, as we will see in the fourth stage of the digestive metaphor, speech becomes not the origin but the product, even the discarded emission, of a course of auditory processing by a sympathetic subject.

Finally, in this same trajectory, let us take into account the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, particularly his recent text entitled *Listening*. Again working with audition as an avenue toward understanding the problem of subjectivity more generally, Nancy identifies the self as "nothing other than a form or function of referral."[30] With a focus on the echoing, responding and sympathetic body as the site of sonic penetration and interpolative tension, the subject only

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Nancy and Mandell, *Listening.* 8

"appears" or is understood as a resonance of prior (both logically and temporally) intensive forces.

Along with Derrida and against the "pure" subjectivity of Husserl and others, Nancy admits the temporality of the self but insists on its inherent instability, always being separated from itself in time. Thus, the grounding of the self as referral and resonance is a constantly shifting field, never able to support a unified identity; it is a "sonorous place... that becomes a subject insofar as sound resounds there."[31] The subject is not a prior intention waiting to express itself; it is a place of echoing evocation where the very sense (of sound) emerges prior to signification or rationality.[32]

A theme that emerges in Nancy's writing, hidden between lines of intellectual deference and musical reference, is the nature of the body as architectural. Before phenomenology, he claims, we must admit a structure (however invisible or metaphorical) capable of sympathy. With Deleuze, he suggests that this body is pre-purposive and begins non-functionally, though remains as a potency or potentiality for reverberation.[33] This "given body" is, in the first and last instance, timbral.[34] With metaphors not too distant from a literal physics of sound, the nature of the resonating body determines the timbre of the sound itself. Even further: over the course of time, even the structure of this body reconfigures according to patterns of acoustic energy (e.g., the well-aged violin).

This given body, however, is not auto-generated; yet, in Nancy's account this developmental problem is not encountered. He continually speaks of the openness of the body, even the penetration and incorporation of externality within the core of subjectivity. Despite this,

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[31] *ibid.*, 17
[32] *ibid.*, 20, 31
[33] *ibid.*, 78, footnote 10
[34] *ibid.*, 40

the discussion remains within the order of the body as presently constituted rather than as an artifact of prior affects. While it may be assumed within the text that contingencies of one's spatial situation, precedent experience, or disciplinary training might be efficient components to describe such possible origins, this seems to be a crucial issue to consider directly. For if the body is architectural, a "resonance chamber," it requires a story of generation. This cause would not necessarily be understood as the architect or prime builder (for then we would return to the very problem of subjectivity from which we have been running all along); instead, we might look at the patterns of prior influence to trace an emergent history of the listening subject.

This is precisely where the digestive metabolism metaphor enters. Rather than starting with the experience of sound or music per se as a metaphor (whether Husserl's melody, Derrida's spacing silences, or Nancy's open timbre), the digestive metaphor enables a meta-categorical, dynamic portrayal of the subject as hearer, listener, discerner and reproducer. The phenomenological experience of sound or voice is not taken for granted as immediate. Rather than sounds being seen as objects observed by an autonomous and rational individual, sounds operate within the same order as the subject that perceives them. The subject is therefore implicated in a process rather than being in control of an objective situation. Through its four stages the metaphor suggests processes of incorporation and reflexive determination which situate the subject and body as results, not givens, of material and symbolic exchange.

An issue of logic presents itself as a critique before we proceed. Put simply: how can we consider a process as reciprocal or determinable without first admitting a subject-object identification or distinction? Does our analysis not fall apart as soon as one of these pieces is abandoned? An answer, which remains to be further fleshed throughout the dissertation as a whole, is that such a question neglects (like many such logical objections) the irresolvable

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factors of time and variable identities. The subject considered at the beginning of the listening

process is not identical to the one found at the end; thus, in repeating the process through the

course of at least two phases we find an unstable yet affected functionality taking shape. We

need not assume any autonomous stability in order to understand this reciprocal exchange, for

the act of exchange transforms the nature of the objects involved at each occasion.

<div align="right">Ingestion</div>

We recognize the danger of orifices, those marginal regions of permeation and intrusion;

yet, into what do they afford entrance? Perhaps the orifice is merely the site of the exterior

inescapable from the interior, a conjoined boundary susceptible to exquisite types of

exploitation.[35] Or, in the case of digestion (and, arguably, audition), it is the beginning of a

circuit of permutations whereby forms beget and destroy one another in cycles of becoming.

This question cannot be answered except by probing the depths of this opening to discover

whether or not a cache lies beneath it: some teleological finality, something worthy of protection

and preservation.

What we find, in the course of digestion, is another hole that opens back into the world

again. The digestive track is marked, of course, by two orifices; any finality to be found is

through a return rather than a contained end. Thus, the search for that which is threatened

through the aperture of the mouth ends as ephemerally as it began. Douglas reminds us, in

relation to the concept of bodily pollution, that, "[a]ny structure of ideas is vulnerable at its

margins."[36] It is this threat of permeating destruction that we should exploit in our first step: to

understand the initiation of the subject through a formative encounter with the world.

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[35] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.
[36] Douglas, *Purity and danger*. 150

It is, on the other hand, also necessary to look at this effective world within which the subject is assumed. An analysis based only on the subject's internal protection and process neglects the larger story of structural influence. The social, or that which *others* the self, must be taken into account at the beginning and not merely as a final decision of participation or extension. The contingencies of one's situation enable and limit the types of objects one can be influenced by. This pedantic assertion, nevertheless, precedes the formation of the subject in relation to it. Through conscious decisions and external persuasions, the subject is formed within very specific conditions of appropriation.

In oral ingestion, choices among available foods partially determine the effects of eating; we would not deny the essential tie between dietary choice and physical nutrition. Nutrition, in turn, structures the developing body through its own adaptive reactions: insulin production, long term energy storage, muscle formation, etc. Introduction into the system of digestion immediately dissolves the boundaries between the material world and the material self; the process is one of incorporation, not objective observation.

The open ear, traditionally even more so than the mouth, is vulnerable to such breaches of the world/self frame. Having no flaps or lids, all material force is given admission into the canal unless otherwise restricted. These restrictions, however, are paramount and ubiquitous. Not limited to fingers, earplugs or headphones, we must consider architectural and environmental structures as efficient limitations of aural access.[37] While the ear might itself be open, as is the throat, we have nonetheless established various social codes (noise regulations) and material fortifications (most simply, the walls of our homes) to partition and control our

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[37] See Mary Thompson for a detailed discussion of such intentional acoustic ordering. Thompson, *The soundscape of modernity: architectural acoustics and the culture of listening in America, 1900-1933*; As well, Michael Bull explores the use of speakers and headphones to fully transverse one's aural space. Bull, *Sounding out the city: Personal stereos and the management of everyday life*.

acoustic spaces. These laws and doors are the functional tongues and lips of our ears, actively

shaping the world to suit our sensory preferences.

To understand ingestion more broadly is to observe the social world as structured in such

a way that objects are available to the desiring subject for appropriation and integration. The

apparent openings of the mouth or ear are always mediated by these externalities. However, a

fully constructivist stance is as useless as the essentialist one for defining the formation of the

subject. If external structure (material, discursive, or otherwise) is solely responsible for

development, the concept of agency is merely transferred from inside to out. In order to question

or refute this we need to admit a reciprocal system of affects.

<div align="right">Affection</div>

Hence, the second stage, that of affection, begins the work of the subject in its interior

modality. This interior, however, is not only vulnerable to the intrusion from the outer but is

constituted only through its relations with this "foreign" presence. A theme of opposition, from

Empedocles to Said, states loosely that objects are defined negatively according to their

opposites or orientation to "others;" this takes on new dimensions when applied within the body.

In sight or touch, the property of distance precludes immediate identification and enables a sense

of objective detachment (if merely in a Kantian form). With digestion or auditory perception,

such distance is impossible; the process occurs through contact and sympathy.

This stage of affection, however, carries with it an assumption: that the material or force

that enters the system is even attended to. It is possible, alternatively, to ignore or reject the

substance at hand. In digestion, the triggering of choking (in the throat) or vomiting (from the

stomach) represents this kind of direct rejection of affect; before becoming incorporated, the

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object must pass a preliminary stage of acceptance and attention. Only following this evaluation is it deemed acceptable material for regeneration.

Similarly, neurological attention (conscious or not) marks the passage of auditory material into the affective realm of the subject. If only because of necessary cognitive efficiency, we cannot process all sounds that are made accessible to the auditory system; a certain threshold of intensity, frequency, or significant structure must be reached. And as some have "stronger" stomachs, capable of handling a variety of beneficial or noxious substances, so certain ears at certain times are attuned for loud, quiet, conversational or disengaged listening. The threshold or horizon of sound varies according to these intentional conditions.[38]

Affection is a concept often confused with simple or direct influence, an implication that I am not suggesting here. We might start with Brennan, for whom affect is a "physiological shift accompanying a judgment."[39] Distinct from feelings or emotions, affects are neuro-physical phenomena dependent on a "faculty of discernment." Brennan identifies the problem of a binary judgment between sense and intellect as one resulting from confusion of the subject.[40] In other words, in order to perceive the sense as separate from the cognitive perception one must abstract from the combined experience of passion and reason. This requires the feature of memory or, less consciously, that of habit and training. It is important here for us to keep in mind that the affective stage and the next, the stage of dissemination, necessarily function together. Their codependence is yet another indicator of the subject as coterminous with the object of its perception and analysis.

Once past the initial acceptance of penetration, now authorized for full integration, food or sound are ready for basic treatment and influence within the subject. In the stomach, this

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[38] Ihde, *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, vol. 2. 108
[39] Brennan, *The transmission of affect*. 5
[40] Ibid. 20

refs to a preliminary acidic breaking-down of diverse substances and a minimal absorption of nutrients. A similar *acidic* cognitive effect happens in listening by the parsing of sounds into categories for further discernment and interpretation. In a way, this is still part of the stage wherein a stimulus is judged to be acceptable; however, the categorization of affects also transitions us into types of analysis more traditionally associated with modes of listening: noise, speech, music, or other symbolic association. Criteria of acceptability require categories of appropriation. Even before we have made a perception intelligible, these constructed categories of discrimination prefigure a possible response.

We should recall from our discussion of Nancy's listening subject the notion that to be affected phenomenologically is to be a resonant body. In his words, we notice the "timbre of the echo of the subject.[41] Again, however, the issue of a formed (if hollow) subject reasserts itself. To account for the generation of this body is to observe the reciprocal influence of categories and the content placed within them, particularly as this content serves to challenge the clear divisions between affects. This requires the activity of cognitive comparison, through both quality distinction and memory.

Dissemination

This parsing activity, in increasing detail, signals the third stage of these parallel metaphors. Let us begin here with listening and then move toward the digestive, for this stage is perhaps the most familiar and recognized form of auditory perception. It constitutes two steps: precise categorization and distribution into memory. The activity of mental categorization is not precise because sounds are incapable of such distinct classifications; it is instead the work of the subject to deny sounds their ephemeral and temporally determinate character. A momentary return to Husserl highlights this issue.

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[41] Nancy and Mandell, *Listening.* 39

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Continuing the explication of the subject within his lectures on *Time Consciousness*, Husserl names the instance of the "now" as a "temporally constitutive flux."[42] Rather than being presented as a linear array of objects available for perception, the sensory field instead presents itself in a moment of shifting constitution without succession or even simultaneity. To be objective is to be made an object within this "lived experience of actuality," providing a "primal source-point and a continuity of moments of reverberation."[43] The subjective present, then, does not afford us a quantified or qualitative metric for perceptual analysis; this method of phenomenological interpretation must be introduced by the subject. While not quite on the given level of Kant's transcendental logic, Husserl nevertheless maintains the capacity of the subject to distinguish adequately or even accurately between significant moments of experience. Though the perception of time itself remains a sequence of instants, the subject is not confined to this singular moment in the act of interpretation. The limitation of temporality, for Husserl, provides the opportunity for establishing logical conception and analysis.

Before leaving Husserl's work again, we should glance at his theory of retention and the primacy he places on this portrayal of *memory* to ground his project. He calls retention the "fundamental phenomenological principle," even the "principle of principles."[44] The idea of retention allows us to account for the changing givenness of sense appearance while maintaining an exact focus upon what is given. In order to account for the essential variability, the flux, of appearance, the subject creates continuity by retaining former impressions and comparing these to other impressions (also retained, for the immediate moment of phenomenological appearance allows no space for such analysis). For Husserl, the consciousness of time is metaphorically

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[42] Husserl, Heidegger, and Churchill, *The phenomenology of internal time-consciousness*. 100
[43] Ibid. (we notice here in Husserl's "reverberation" (*Nachhallmomenten*) an explicit precursor to Nancy's *resonance*)
[44] Husserl and Gibson, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. §24

perceived as a *flow*, within which "objects" of sense are presented as unified but simultaneously capable of differentiation.

Without accepting Husserl's complete analysis or the later consequences of it in perfecting the logical subject, we now have a model for understanding the reciprocal roles of discernment and memory inasmuch as they concern auditory perception. The subject responds to particular sensations within a field of prior experiences, retained for their categorical significance, which function to catalog this new sensation and thus interpret it within a system of once-present associations. Recognized within this matrix, impressions become memories which in turn effect the categorization of all future perceptions. This training of the perceptual faculties, the tuning of the ear, occurs both above and below a threshold of consciousness. While the listening subject may be aware of certain intentional comparisons, the majority of associations (particularly negative associations: "this is not that") function well out of one's range of conscious activity.

A catalog of perceptual memories, like any organized body, requires techniques of circulation to remain accessible and relevant to future experience. Upon recognition, a perception disperses into its assigned place in the subject's memory to be stored and retrieved according to the expected requests of the next moment. This is the internal technical process that constitutes the subject/body, operating within a field of technological significations. Though the subject exists as a function of this perceptual process, it is only because of these former moments of perception and their subsequent intentional organization that this perception could be interpreted. Each new perception thus inherits the systematic consequences of prior experience and can only be understood within this temporally constructed subjectivity.

To extend this metaphor to the third step of digestion requires an analogy between lower digestive processes and higher cognitive functions. The former extracts nutrients from the source material and then channels these into appropriate regions of the body. The higher auditory functions, on the other hand, determine how sounds are appropriated and categorized by the mind in order to make one's world intelligible. The lower intestine, like the intentional perceiver, identifies and disseminates significant matter to its appropriate region of the body where it can later be recalled to perform some function.

Admittedly, there is a potential flaw in this portion of the analogy: material digestion is a filter for what is already substantially present whereas auditory perception, I argue, constructs its filtering mechanisms through experience and (non-Platonic) recollection. However, if we take digestion to also be a dynamic process, where the attributes of the food we eat partially determine the body's metabolic functioning, the analogy regains composure. The explicit suggestion here is that mental recollection is a process not only of storage-recall but also of categorical construction through distinction, diffusion and circulation. Memory is regulation within the metabolism of perception, appropriating and retaining sensory impressions for intentional utilization by a now-forming subject.

Expulsion

We are intimately familiar with and often disgusted by the fourth stage of digestion, the automatic ritual cleansing of the gut. The anal orifice becomes another site of vulnerability, this time in both directions: anything in or out is unclean. Excretions are flushed, buried, or otherwise hidden from sense, to be rejected and forgotten.[45] Where the open eating mouth, the critical stomach and the circulation of the intestines act to control the intrusion of foreign

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[45] A final observation of the material might be called for, a cross-cultural question pursued in Žižek's comparison of Western toilet styles Žižek and Zizek, *The plague of fantasies*. 4

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substance in the body, the anus primarily functions to limit the degree of our intrusion upon this outer world. Fecal display is to be relegated to a private, invisible, silent, and non-fragrant realm.

Consider, then, the open mouth used for its other common function: speech. Vocalization represents the last stage in the auditory metaphor. Having arrived through the process of hearing, attending, and interpreting, the subject is now prepared to express itself as a response to former conditioning. Not merely mimesis (though perhaps in Benjamin's sense[46]), the emission of voice constitutes an ex-claimation, setting forth into the world what was once classified within the self.

This brings us back to Derrida's critique of Husserl's auto-affection of the listening self through voice. In a sense, this analysis is a reversal of the primordial voice of Husserl; but also, it is a revision of Derrida's continual reliance upon the essential tension within subjectivity. While the phenomenon of simultaneous speaking and hearing may start with Derrida's interior/exterior confusion, it ends with a synthetic (though not fully unified) return as voice. Thus, while not quite evidence of a fully "constituted self," it nevertheless is not held as the center point of an anxious, merely differential subjectivity; some efficient unity exists. The uttered voice as consequential expression is taken as evidence of functionality: the necessary defecation of an earlier phenomenal process.

It is clear that the voice is a site of both power and subjection. The role of Rhetoric, at least since the ancients, has been to constrain and discipline the voice, to make it appropriate for a full display of human potential (and, conversely, to reject the expression of irrational particularity). The psychoanalytic model of expression/repression speaks to this problem more

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[46] Benjamin and Demetz, *Reflections: Essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings.* 333-336; See also Kahn's brief discussion of Benjamin's mimetic faculty in relation to audition. Kahn, *Noise, water, meat: a history of sound in the arts.* 26-31

explicitly: anal repression becomes the means toward understanding proceeding forms of aberrant psycho-social development. The open speaking mouth corresponds to the released anus, the expression of which can never be properly received again by the tentative self.

To address a possible objection: "Surely not all oral expression can be considered as a result or response, intentional or not, within the listening process. What of the involuntary first cry of the newborn?" To answer, we might turn to the ever popular "tree falling in the woods" allegory, an appeal to metaphysics through a phenomenological trajectory. The mere fact that a material vocalization occurs, in this case for the first time in a young child's initiation to the world, does not therefore mean that this was predetermined by nature or *in vitro* as expression. Upon recognition of one's own voice, through the process of listening I have suggested, a response is possible; prior to such impression, retention, and recollection, however, I see no grounds for accepting this primal moment as an exception to the general system.

To dispense with the substance of one's former impressions through the voice or other sonic implement is taken here to be a technique of the intentional body. Nancy's passive *resonance* takes a more active form here as an empathetic rejoinder to the conditions of experience. This activity need not be voluntary; indeed, it appears that most of what is spoken in common communication requires not much if any conscious forethought. Nonetheless, to neglect the processes behind such capable symbolic expression (vocal or otherwise) is to remystify the subject's epistemological position.

Faced with a sounding world, the listening individual finds itself evident through a reciprocal and formal exchange of sound for sound. This response need not take the form of rejection or negativity, just as anal expression need not be cause for loathing or disgust. Silence as the withholding of speech, also a recognized form of expression, is no less significant in the

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final stage of listening. I consider this to be a response through further attention, expressing former affect and solidifying one's phenomenological relation of the listening self to the subjected sound. The fourth stage is thus simultaneously a finalizing of prior events and a preparation for subsequent experience.

<div align="right">An Analogy of Metaphors</div>

The analogy between the digestive and auditory metaphors presented here is not intended to be clever or merely superficial. On the contrary, I believe it outlines a method for interpreting perceptual and bodily processes which often get confused within subject/object binaries. Just as ingested food becomes the material for the body itself, and listened sounds become the catalysts through which we form vocal expressions, so the subject is only known as a function of a metamorphic process. Interpretation cannot be seen in this analysis as the application of given categories to prior objects; rather, it is a significant exchange of the outside and inside, a contribution of each to the ordering of the other.

An analogy, however, cannot do much productive work on its own. Only by further explicating the derivative metaphors of digestion and listening, even on their own, will the analogy between them take a more fruitful theoretical form. What I claim to have introduced here, nevertheless, is an outline of their similar logics and a few possible consequences that comparison may have. By conceiving the subject-body as a site of significant incorporation and reciprocal affect, the subject as immediately present is shown as an atemporal fiction (despite the reliance on temporality in its description). Instead, the boundaries between perceiver and perceived are dissolved in the process of interpretation; categorization determines both parties differentially in its constructive role.

Alternatively, the response of the subject in the dispensed voice does not preclude an understanding of the phenomenological subject as an efficient unity. Merleau-Ponty's embodied perception[47] attempts to amend earlier phenomenologies' lack of cohesion and therefore applicability to the lived experience of individuals. I have adopted here the same sentiment, if not the precise formulation, in order to chart an ongoing development of the subject without recourse to a primal moment of identification or pure difference. In between these and only as a practice of integration the subject emerges both existentially and socially. I also hint at and aim to further develop a speculative theory on the relation between the phenomenological subject and social orderings. By noticing the categorical operations evident within perceptual processes, socio-technical structures and other modes of organization are able to be explained through emergent configurations and with unusual attributions of agency.

In regards to this analogy as a response to Husserl, Derrida, or Nancy: it certainly is not a refutation of their conclusions or diverse projects. A mere analogy simply does not hold that much intellectual weight. However, it is intended to be a suggestion toward a theory that amends what I have attempted to identify as their deficiencies. For Husserl, digestion as outer assimilation cancels the automatic operation of self identification. Derrida's *differance*, on the other hand, is shown to be too fixated upon alterity and dispersion; it lacks any unifying procedures by which functional subjects are allowed to be identified, even inessentially. Nancy, the closest of the three to my own project, benefits in this analysis from a generative account of the resonant subject. While there is a lack of consideration of this in his reflections on listening, it is by no means contradictory to his story of perceptual architecture; rather, it is intended to be complementary.

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[47] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception.*

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Gustatory metabolism and perceptual listening are not the same process, nor do they follow precisely the same types of logics within the body. Surely, metabolism is quite distinct from neuro-psychology. In this context, however, I have treated both as metaphors in order to display their mutual influence on the construction of the subject-body. In the course of digestion the lines between self and world are dissolved through the incorporation of externality into the very operation of the body in rhythm, form, and content. Observing this process metaphorically, even within the body itself, is to admit the continuing presence of metaphor within scientific explanation, a point I hardly make alone.

My goal, however, is to illustrate auditory perception as a feedback process and a technique in itself. Metabolism is neither a perfect complement nor a complete one; it does, nevertheless, provide us with a recognizable model of recognition and assimilation of the external to the internal. Simultaneously, the distinction between these two spaces is called into question as a result of this same process, bringing the subject/object distinction into the foreground as a problematic assumption. The phenomenological subject, formed by the very course of interaction it intends, emerges in this unifying tension; it only becomes figural as a functional harmony, not as a prior given formation (whether immediate or deferred). To listen is, in this sense, to metabolize sound: to ingest, affect, disseminate, and later expulse in response.

<div align="right">Initiation</div>

As a preliminary to the rest of this dissertation, the metaphor of metabolism and the accompanying integrative perspective it affords presage my claim that social structures, technical procedures, and phenomenological habits work simultaneously in the process of listening. Because of this correspondence between perspectives, it is necessary to construct a meta-theory capable of sorting each operation into its appropriate place. Most theories of listening approach

it from one *or* another perspective: as a physiological response, a neurological system, a psychological effect, a conscious aesthetic construction, or a socially-determined organization which constrains and enables sounds to be heard. Each perspective is valid as a specific explanation of the process of listening, but the ability to talk between them enriches each one.

This interdisciplinary motive pervades the dissertation. I am focusing here merely on the association between phenomenological perception and social orderings of sound. While very specific from the broadest perspective of listening studies, it nevertheless is a collaboration which requires significant rethinking of some basic assumptions about the experience of sound. The analogy with the metabolism metaphor enables such a revised foundation without abandoning the valuable work that has already been done in these fields. To rethink is not to reject, but to interpret the text differently. This imaginative process is initiated through the somewhat playful device of the analogy, however literally the incorporative logic may be shared between the two concepts.

Moving forward, I will be shifting away from this opening suggestion and speaking more explicitly about audition as a phenomenology and a social system. Nevertheless, this continues to be a description of the *metaphor* of listening, in that it remains a theoretical, representative system for talking *about*, but not actually experiencing, such phenomena. It is a silent, written dissertation, but it invites the reader to live aurally in novel and creative ways.

De Certeau, Giard, and Mayol, in their *Practice of Everyday Life Vol. II: Living and Cooking*, discuss what they call two complementary "motifs": living in the neighborhood and cooking in the home. This sequel to de Certeau's first volume of the same name makes more explicit the intersections of individual agency and established social customs in light of these familiar and private practices. They "establish the plural language of stratified histories, of

multiple relationships between enjoyment and manipulation, of fundamental languages spelled out in everyday details."[48] The general similarity between these everyday practices should be unsurprising yet, as I've attempted to illustrate here, their specific correlations illuminate how human practices are never autonomous events. For instance, "the growing intolerance in the contemporary city to the noise of neighbors, the odor of their cooking,"[49] should not be interpreted as independent events in themselves but instead are indicative of broader systems of appropriation and representation in the social order.

Thus, by exposing more general trends in aesthetics and various phenomenologies, we need not rely on a direct correspondence between activities to see how they participate in unified experience. In other words, we need not focus on the auditory phenomena associated with cooking and eating in order to understand that both might be informed by similar cultural/individual dispositions and thus operate synchronously toward desired ends. This analogy, while suggestive, also invites similar investigations of how perceptual, social, and political life is necessarily interwoven in practice.

Brandon LaBelle utilizes a similar methodology in his *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*.[50] From the politics of the Underground in wartime London to the sounds of the suburban shopping mall, LaBelle traces multiple parallel vectors of auditory culture which can be observed in the transition between everyday contexts. Such a study, broad in scope yet specific in content, further solidifies the place of Sound Studies in social and political discourses. Quite a few texts have recently been released which look specifically at the way that sound permeates our experience of any activity. For LaBelle and others, sound

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[48] De Certeau, Giard, and Mayol, *The practice of everyday life: Living and cooking.* 3
[49] Ibid. 146
[50] LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life.*

becomes a way of reading the boundaries of social landscapes. It is a new acoustic cartography, an inventive way to demarcate often subtle systems of human, animal, and institutional practice.

In his first *Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau speaks of walking through the city as writing a text with one's footsteps. He argues that, "the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered."[51] This inversion of the value of walking, as it forges a new path rather than merely retracing (reading) old ones on the sidewalk or the hallway, is parallel to the way that listening is not merely a passive reception but instead is a constant technological activity. In metabolism, further, we can see that such a process relies on conscious decisions and material situations (in choosing which foods to eat); at the same time, these operations which occur within the body and the intentions of the individual are often hidden and implicit in the process.

In order to understand listening in this integrated way, we must first clarify the terms by which a theory of active, technical listening can be expressed. Without this precision, we might easily fall right back into an essentialist account of objective listening. Indeed, I see the need for this dissertation as a response to reading incoherent and even contradictory accounts of listening, even within the emerging Sound Studies literature. The establishment of grammars which can be used across multiple fields, within auditory research and beyond, is crucial in continuing these valuable investigations. The next chapter begins this process by transitioning from metaphorical suggestion to terminological foundation. Only after this can we return to the socio-phenomenological problematic I've just set forth.

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[51] De Certeau et al., *The practice of everyday life*. 97

Chapter 3
Technical Definitions

If listening is not merely an automatic operation of the body but instead an active participation of the subject in perception, we must develop a terminology which can encompass such an integrative and dynamic technique. To this end, I would like to define a few key terms which will be useful throughout the following dissertation. These terms have been used many times before and in quite different ways. It is my intention here, nevertheless, to clarify them in order to develop consistency in my argument. While I do believe that the definitions themselves could be useful beyond this project, such an application would have to consider more directly the ways in which these terms differ from their common and often haphazard usages.

For now, I am establishing this vocabulary for the sake of a coherent theoretical structure to follow. The most prominent terms, *technique* and *technology* will be considered first. While this dissertation does not pursue a classically technological topic (for instance, hearing aids), it does aim to show how technological processes are evident even in the operation of perception, phenomenology, and aesthetic construction. From there, a more immediate (in time and separation) line can be traced from these processes to the more explicit uses of technological artifacts.

Beyond these terms, it will also be helpful to examine a few other basic concepts including *intention* and *sound*. While many other terms will be refined in later chapters, such as noise, silence, symbol, and order, these preliminary ideas set the stage for such developments. Without a clear understanding of how a category is technology, for instance, we cannot take the further analytical step to claim that categories of auditory perception and their excesses are translated into acoustic actions through further technological intentions. In a sense, the

connection between intentions, techniques, and social consequences is the core logic of the dissertation, maintaining itself even beyond the investigation of audition in particular.

<u>Problems of Technology</u>

It remains to be shown what role a theory of technology has in a project such as this. The goal here is to understand and critique the various modes of listening to which we are accustomed. It might appear that technology plays an ancillary part in this explanation, coming onto the scene only after the basic cognitive processing has been accomplished. Or, we might place technology in a mediating role, distancing the subject from the source of the sound and thus disfiguring an accurate representation in perception. To assume the immediate detrimental effects of technology is a misinterpretation of the fundamental position that technologies and techniques hold in the human experience.[52]

And yet, this is the common rhetoric in many philosophies of technology. In Heidegger's conclusion, technology not only disfigures the world but also the ontological relation of the individual to itself.[53] The instrumental rationality of making objects into tools, or even subjects into objects into tools, is an inherently destructive force in an ontology which places the careful 'call of being' at the center of the human experience. Heidegger is certainly not neglecting the subject and the role of *Dasein* in the interpretation and formation of the world; nevertheless, he maintains that the *earth*[54] remains as an uncorrupted source material. This origin, the wellspring of all human value, must be preserved in its pure state. To do so, he argues, we must limit the role of technologies (as central as they may be to the human experience), lest they become the only motivators for action. In other words, if the teleology which utilizes technologies has as its

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[52] Jonathan Sterne makes a similar point in his discussion of the myth of fidelity. (Sterne, *The audible past: Cultural origins of sound reproduction*. 215-286)
[53] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. 33
[54] Heidegger and Hofstadter, *Poetry, language, thought*. 46

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end the unabated use of technologies themselves, Heidegger believes we have lost significant human value in the process.

One of Heidegger's preoccupations is the distinction between the everyday technological use of objects and the automatic and self-perpetuating inclination of technologies as they threaten the intrinsic value of *Dasein*. As he states early in *The Question Concerning Technology*, "the essence of technology is by no means technological."[55] His following judgment of certain advanced technological forms rests upon, I argue, an arbitrary line between natural technologies and artificial ones. However, if we are able to position these opposing instrumentalities as coordinate, it may be that the operations of humans working at core functional levels (swinging a hammer, speaking in grammar) are analyzed concurrently with the proliferation of material technological systems and the development of global militant capitalism. If technologies can be observed even at the level of perception, such sweeping judgments against technology as such would be undermined. It appears that this unified conception of technological activity was Heidegger's intention, between the anthropological and the instrumental; yet, his exposition confuses the topic through unnecessary metaphysical complexity and his own proprietary terminology.[56]

Heidegger is certainly not the only philosophical critic of Technology's precarious form. There has been an influential resurgence in Science and Technology Studies which indicates both a celebration of the many achievements of modern industrialism as well as doomsday warnings of the rise of uninhibited technological determination. The battle between these positions takes for granted the unification of technological forces into what ends up being, in the

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[55] Hanks and Heidegger, *Technology and Values*. 100
[56] While I don't agree with the full rejection of Heidegger's terminological project, I do sympathize with the relative incoherence of his texts compared with relevant alternatives. (Pitt, "On the philosophy of technology, past and future.")

structure of their theories, the subject-agent of Technology itself. This embodiment of

technological determinacy and the culture-forming or destroying power it is given provide an

alternately apocalyptic or utopian air to the debate. Here, as in Heidegger, the machines have

turned against us and have attempted a coup. Ironically, it is only through the rejection of these

totalizing instruments (for the pessimists) or the further development of more responsible

technologies (for the optimists) that the situation might be mended.

The basic structure of these arguments is flawed on two primary levels. First, they

assume that technologies, whether as artifacts or bureaucracies, are able to stand alone and act

intentionally. In no way do I want to deny that there is an organizational logic of practice in

every technology that partially determines its functioning, even without the constant reification

or maintenance by a human agent. Surely, technologies enable automatic and even hegemonic

consequences.[57] Nevertheless, it is also clear that human agency, whether it is through habit, a

lust for money, or a revolution, is the sole provider of a technology's origin and aim.

Technologies operate by and for human purposes. The factory worker decides daily to work the

machine in order to pay her rent. The factory owner decides daily to allow that same machine to

keep working, to fill his bank. In no way, however, does the machine decide anything different

than the original intentions it was programmed to execute. Unintended consequences pervade

every intentional system,[58] but these are consequences of human intentionality and not the

emergence of some alien form of technological agency or autonomy.[59]

The second flaw of these technological accounts is to neglect the necessary role of

everyday operations for and against hegemonic technological systems. As is evident through the

discussion of Lefebvre and de Certeau, operations of power on macro levels depend on the

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[57] Feenberg, *Transforming technology.*
[58] Pitt, *Thinking about technology: Foundations of the philosophy of technology.* 45-60
[59] Pitt, "The autonomy of technology." 94

continual functioning of that same logic in micro contexts. However, a system is never total, and individual people living local, situated lives are perpetually negotiating with hegemonic expectations. To find an explanation for the march of Technology, even as a neo-Hegelian Historical Reason, in the macro system alone misses the fundamental reason why such operations exist at all: for and by the specific intentions of living human agents. It is common form in these theories to ascribe far too much credit to the logic of technological operations themselves, even to assume a degree of future inevitability. This masks and even undermines the true agents behind the machine, as well as the social inequities sustained through the continuation of such dominating technological systems.[60]

It is not my objective here to engage in a thoroughly Marxist project of undermining the legitimacy of these prior claims in favor of a technological or anti-technological revolution. This would merely reconstruct the dichotomy I have just attacked. Also, it is unnecessary because the theory of technology which lies behind these prophetic accounts lacks coherence in the transition from human intention to human action. Thus, my goal in this section is to propose a slightly revised terminology, one which charts a clear and consistent operation between subject, object, and context.

Before I do so, and especially before the Heideggerians' claim I have unjustly severed the thrust of their father's theory, I should note something about my theoretical methodology and at times reluctant affinity with the Heideggerian system. It is true that one of Heidegger's main purposes was to revise Husserl's solipsistic and excessively logical account of human subjectivity in favor of self/world congruence. As should be evident throughout my project, this is a revision with which I wholeheartedly agree. Nevertheless, I take Heidegger's approach as

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[60] Marcuse, *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*; Marcuse, "From ontology to technology: fundamental tendencies of industrial society."

unworkable (or, more charitably, outdated). It may have been true at the time, for various

reasons including political pressure,[61] that it was necessary for Heidegger to devise a somewhat

cryptic terminology and logical method in the pursuit of his theoretical objective. I even go so

far as to say that he was successful in accomplishing his ontological goals.

However, there is no need to maintain this somewhat mystical vocabulary and

methodology, for two reasons. First, it is readily apparent that Heidegger was not the first to

make these types of criticisms. We might trace his basic mode of reasoning back to Aristotle, for

whom the world exists independently as a storehouse of knowledge waiting (or, even, calling

forth) to be found by a knower. The Heidegger/Aristotle connection is historically accurate;

Heidegger taught on Aristotle's texts for decades. Nevertheless, I am surely not claiming a full

correspondence between their theories, but simply a return in Heidegger's works to the

implication of the subject in the given nature of the world.[62]

Secondly, Heidegger's disruption of basic philosophical terminology obscures the many

similarities between his theory and those that developed before and after. There have been many

disruptions since, particularly in the post-structuralist literature. The accuracy of Heidegger's

vocabulary, once one has become fully initiated into his worldview, is arguably coherent as an

independent system Nevertheless, in philosophical dialogue we seek not only internal coherence

but external correspondence, if only for the purpose of continuing scholarly dialogue. As

demonstrated in the clear divisions between Heideggerian philosophy and other Continental or

Analytic traditions, the sub-culture of Heideggerian grammar remains inaccessible to a large

portion of the philosophical community. For that reason alone, translation and a return to

common clarity is necessary.

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[61] Nicholson, "The politics of heidegger's rectoral address."
[62] For a look at this relation from an explicitly visual perspective, see: McNeill, *The glance of the eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the ends of theory.*

I only aim here to target the definition of technology and the role of individual agency at the core of it. In relation to my overall project of explaining a phenomenology and sociology of sound, this definition serves as a manifold for understanding the relationships between sound, auditor, and context. I shall continue with a non-auditory, concrete example.

Let us reconsider the case of creating a dwelling, though from quite a different perspective than I assumed in the introductory example. This will also be helpful later in the discussion of establishing private auditory space through phenomenological projection. For an organism to establish a home or shelter of any kind, a few necessary conditions must be met. First, there must be the capacity for movement from internal volition. Even for Aristotle, this is what established the categorical difference between the vegetative and the sensitive souls, between plants and higher organisms (animals and humans). This volition presupposes a basic concept of intention, though not of higher forms of existence such as self-conscious reflection.[63] Nevertheless, intention implies a range of other capacities, not the least of which is the conception of use-value. In other words, to be intentional is to be able to conceive of an object as something to be useful toward another end than merely its independent existence (and, its independent existence need never be considered).

Of course, to merely intend an object to be a particular thing does not make it so. I can intend for this coffee mug to be my shelter, but still be unable to enact my intention (except, perhaps, metaphorically).[64] To create a dwelling, then, one must be able to put into action a particular intention toward a sympathetic object. Let us define the two primary terms in my equation, which should be taken as two polar forms of the same operation: *technology* and

[63] Aristotle, *De Anima*, II 3
[64] Gibson, "The theory of affordances."

technique. Technology is the structure of intentional practice; technique is the intentional practice of that logic.

In the case of a basic dwelling, multiple technologies are at work. First, we might consider the very idea of shelter as a technology, as a way of using objects toward an end (the safety or privacy of the organism). This is a practical logic of organizing space to serve a particular instrumental goal. Second, the material artifacts used toward that end, be they caves, claws, or concrete, are also technologies in the form of useable objects. While there are many distinguishing characteristics between organizational codes, material tools, and parts of the body of the organism itself, this basic definition of technology includes them all.

It is valuable to make the concept of technology spacious enough to include these diverse elements so that we do not unduly limit the analysis of technological agency. If we only take material tools into account, we will miss the essential ways that the hands guide the tools and the reasons why the tools are implemented in the first place. A technology need not be a conscious or abstract construct; it is, instead, an intentional logic that guides the subject in practice. The technological artifact embodies this logic, but the logic itself is not reducible to particular manifestations of use. A technology is merely hypothetical until put into practice, but this instrumental hypothesis is a necessary precondition for guiding such practice (or, in Ihde's formulation, *praxis*[65]). This leads us toward technology's corollary: technique.

A technique is the disposition of the subject as it acts technologically. As I discussed earlier in this section, we run into a danger analytically when we ascribe undue agency to technologies themselves. Neglecting the action and the technologically disposed actor assumes that technologies create and sustain themselves in potential isolation. This is clearly inaccurate, even by the definition of the Greek *techné*, which refers to the method and art by which

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[65] Ihde, *Technics and praxis.*

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objectives are realized and not to a principle of the self-generation of technologies independent of this active subject. In the opposition between *techné* and *episteme*,[66] technique is aligned with the lived practice of this objective activity. Technologies can exemplify either concept. If a technology is simply the implicit intention of the technique, as would be the case in a non-conscious activity, it is more like *techné*. However, if technology takes on the form of a conscious, explicit ideology, if the logic is taken as a theoretical principle in itself, it can become an *episteme*. Epistemes can take on independent and auto-generative forms if set in motion;[67] nevertheless, this initial motion requires the intentional subject, and thus does not escape human agency.[68] This is no less a logic of practice, but because of its abstract development it is capable of social and political influence that extends far beyond individual actions. Inasmuch as it is a principle and not merely a code for activity, it is able to extend across a range of activities.

Now abstractly defined, let us bring this discussion back to a familiar level of analysis and reconsider the establishment of the dwelling. Dwelling also implies a technique or a habit of the subject. One must *live* in the house to make it a home.[69] This living, as a practice of everyday life, is the volition of habituating one's environment. Similarly, the method of organizing building materials to create the home is a technique. This aligns with the common conception of technical aptitude; no one denies that the craftsman's technique is as necessary as

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[66] "*[E]pisteme* is disclosure for its own sake, while *techne* has an ulterior motive beyond mere disclosure." Rojcewicz, *The gods and technology: a reading of Heidegger.* 58-60

[67] Foucault, *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences.* xxiii-xxiv

[68] This is often confused in discussions of the rise of Industrial Capitalism, for example. The value of a classical Marxist perspective, which in some ways Foucault revises and ambiguates in *The Order of Things*, is to target the agents who set such a system in motion. If capitalism itself is a technology of economic organization, we can chart the generation of this technology in the micro and macro activities of humans themselves. It is inaccurate, however, to say that capitalism could generate and maintain itself, as if it held an internal intentionality. Let us not confuse a system which has been *built* to sustain itself and an organism which *intends* its own continued sustenance. (In spite of my conclusion, Lefebvre offers this metaphor: "Capital does not construct. It produces. It does not edify; it reproduces itself. It simulates life." Lefebvre, Elden, and Moore, *Rhythmanalysis: space, time and everyday life.* 53

[69] For Bachelard, this inhabiting changes the house itself into a uniquely human space: "A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space." (Bachelard and Jolas, *The poetics of space.* 47)

the material technologies (the tools, the wood, the blueprint). These definitions align both meanings in a single functional line, the only division being *techné* either as abstracted logical structure (technology) or as subjective practice (technique). These are mutually dependent concepts.

As I will discuss later, this also corresponds with Lefebvre and de Certeau's work on the constant negotiation of space according to dominant and appropriated positions; in other words, between the standard, accepted logic of practice and the actual implementation of that at the level of lived experience. Again, Technology should not be taken as a hegemonic determiner of individual practices; in the same way, techniques are not merely determined by subjective intentionalities. Both must be formed in relation to the other: the appropriate to the appropriated, the code to the deviance, the form to the matter.

The dwelling thus implies the intentionality and volition of a subject, a set of relations between this subject and the objects it uses toward its ends, and a more general system of accepted use (either as technology or episteme). This does not imply that the subject then attains universal control over the objects. No, it is only insofar as the subject places itself in relation to the object that the object is able to serve its function, for functionality is an intentionally constructed outcome of a subject. Actions and reactions certainly exist beyond the range of subjective intentionality. A person living in a house does not preclude the possibility of a rodent also living in the house, or of the government levying taxes against the house, or of the house falling down because of wind or a poor design. The synchronicity of intentional forces (and unintended consequences) will always operate on a spatial site. Indeed, for Lefebvre, this is the

very condition of spatiality itself: the tension and connection between these multiple active and implicit energies.[70]

We can now consider an example of audition which is actually not so distinct from the basic form of the dwelling. One common aspect of living in a space is appropriating the sonic environment toward one's private intentions. There are many forms of this activity, whether or not we are conscious of them. First, we build walls and other barriers. While these serve many functions, one of the primary ones is to maintain a certain level of privacy, even sonic privacy. We want to keep outdoor sounds out and indoor sounds in. In establishing these walls we form the very concept of indoor/outdoor and thus a condition of privacy. The degree of sound isolation of a structure is often taken as a particular selling point, for example in the current marketing of older (pre-1960's) apartments and houses where thick plaster or stone was a normal building material. The replacement of this by plywood and drywall significantly affects the effectiveness of the sonic barrier for the inhabitants.

Another ubiquitous example is the home stereo system. This represents a powerful appropriation of one's acoustic space, often masking other deficiencies of the acoustic environment such as noise from neighbors, the refrigerator, or even the occasional unwanted silence of effective sonic privacy. The technology of the sound source, in the record or radio, is matched by the technique of using such resources toward the goal of comfortable habitation. In other cases, as with car stereo systems, it is not merely the appropriation of one's private space but also the appropriation of public spaces that are otherwise inaccessible to the individual because of a multitude of socio-economic systems.[71]

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[70] Lefebvre, *The production of space*. 143
[71] Michael Bull's work is often centered on this theme, though not specifically on the social inequalities aspect of acoustic spatial appropriation. (Bull, "Automobility and the Power of Sound"; Bull, *Sounding out*

Here we have two basic examples, walls and speakers, which represent forms of technological manipulation of sound: isolation and propagation. They must, of course be put in practice according to norms of use- a thin wall does very little to isolate sound; the speaker system which is silent does nothing to control the acoustic space. The issue of control also arises in the case of noise regulations, which usually involve this very dialectic between source and diffusion. Codes of acceptable sonic activity are sometimes intentionally broken, as in the case of loud car stereos in the city or when the police are called to quiet an outdoor concert in an otherwise calm neighborhood. Other times, codes of appropriate conduct are imposed on acoustic spaces that do not otherwise carry this same ideal, such as a city-wide noise ordinance that punishes particular sub-culturally accepted sonic norms.[72]

In these examples, the only distinction to be made between technologies and techniques is on the level of real practice. The technology exists as an ideal precondition of possible use; the technique emerges as this logic is made manifest. This reciprocal definition takes into consideration the internal structure of a technology (its logic of instrumentality, often embedded within artifacts[73]) as well as the intentional use to which it is put in practice (also a logic of instrumentality, but external to the technology itself). Another example may suffice to explain this important distinction for now. The vinyl record player, particularly the Technics SL-1200 developed in 1972, was developed specifically for extremely accurate audio reproduction. The electronics and other components of the table suited this use well, though they also allowed for a quite opposite use: the production of music through the reversal of its operation. Instead of the needle merely reproducing the music on the face of the vinyl, the needle simultaneously

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the city: Personal stereos and the management of everyday life; Bull, *Sound moves: iPod culture and urban experience*.)

[72] Smilor, "Cacophony at 34th and 6th: The noise problem in America, 1900-1930." Also, see Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

[73] Baird, *Thing knowledge: A philosophy of scientific instruments*.

inscribes a new sound upon this source through scratching and other DJ techniques. The

practiced use of this turntable as an instrument within the hip-hop tradition represents clearly the

distinction between a technological invention (the turntable as artifact) and the technique as an

innovative use (as an instrument of production, not merely reproduction).[74]

The common usage of the term 'technology' is clarified, then, by differentiating (in

analysis only) between logic and practice. This does not leave out the possibility of calling a

particular material artifact a technology as well, even though it is neither a concept nor a practice

in and of itself. For instance, a microphone is, under any standard account, certainly a

technology. It functions to achieve some goal (the capturing of sound) according to an internal

structure and an appropriate application. Beyond the ascription of it according to these

intentional terms, however, it is merely a piece of metal and plastic in a particular shape. It can

sit on the shelf unused and *still* remain a technology; but how? This is the crucial juncture of a

theory of technology: what happens when the artifact is no longer in use?[75]

According to my definition, it is the logic of practice that determines the status of

something as technological or not. My use of the term 'logic' acquires a unique ontological

status. In effect, I am claiming that logics can exist in parallel within the minds of subjects,

within the structures of material artifacts, and even within social systems and organizations. As

will be more evident later in the discussion of acoustic orders, the logic of perceptual practices

becomes in another sense the order of social behavior and configuration. Order is an extension

of logic, incorporating elements beyond the intentions of individuals and institutions. The logic

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[74] Clay, "Two turntables and a microphone: Turntablism, ritual and implicit religion"; Snapper, "Scratching the Surface: Spinning Time and Identity in Hip-Hop Turntablism."

[75] The question "what is an innovation?" encounters the same problem. An innovation seems to shift according to the context within which it is presented. We might say that users determine the ascription of innovation at particular times and places. Thus, the spread of the telephone throughout the developing world resulted in countless "innovations" in local practices. However, we might also want to say that an innovation has a definite root; for example, Bell's laboratory. Whether as mere technology or innovation, my methodology seeks to correct for this disparity.

of the microphone as an abstracted ear, for example, prefigures various emerging social orders and habits of sonic (re)production. At the same time, such a logic would be meaningless, or at least irrelevant, without the practice of actually using microphones and corresponding audio instrumentation.

Therefore, this theory of technology is meant to enable a linear analysis which extends directly from the perceptual functioning of the subject (the categorization of sounds in experience) to configurations of space (in social acoustics). In order to achieve this and maintain consistency with generally accepted terminology, all that needs to be done is to stretch the ontology of instrumental logic to the extent that it can become a meta-system within which these various operations are performed. This is actually a simplification of more complex theories of technology and carries with it a crucial benefit: it demands that we investigate the actual practices of techniques in order to determine the status of a technology. While not reducible to the moment of technical operation, my theory makes it epistemologically impossible to discuss technologies except through the lens of these often everyday practices. Thus, we escape the predicament of over-generalizing the agency of Technology. When we focus on intentions, spatial situations, historical configurations of practice, and the like, technologies are seen not as autonomous threats to human flourishing but instead as the essential way of human existence in the world.

<div align="right">Other Definitions</div>

A few words must be said about the concept of *intention* following its fundamental use in this definition of technology. I am approaching this term from a phenomenological basis. Whereas psychological intention might refer to a conscious willing or an attribution of goal-setting, phenomenological intentionality does not require such an explicit operation. Instead,

intention refers to the disposition of the subject toward an object in perception, intellection, or material. Each of these venues of intent provides unique opportunities to see the connections between subjective states of being and interactions with the world.

Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, argues against Kant's seemingly limited conception of intention, wherein the "transcendental field" is articulated according to a maintained assumption that a transcendental world exists elsewhere and more generally.[76] Without denying the existence of this so-called external world, the attempt is to refine a methodology wherein the subject is not only an epistemological position in a larger landscape of existence, but the precondition for talking about existence at all. Perceptual intention within the classic Kantian framework[77] is therefore limited because it denies the immediate embodiment of the subject in favor of the necessity of reflection and intellection.

Husserl provides two options for how phenomenology might approach intention. The first, the *intentionality of act*, refers to the explicit judgments and rational operations of the subject. The degree to which consciousness is a necessary condition for such actions is contested;[78] nevertheless, it is undeniable that intentions exist in reflective states of subjectivity. The real question is whether or not it can exist independently of these explicit actions. It is here that Merleau-Ponty seeks to ground his unified phenomenology in the body and its embedded relation to its own world.

In the introduction to *Phenomenology of Perception*, where he makes most clear his indebtedness to Husserl's phenomenological groundwork, he claims that it is Husserl's

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[76] Husserl, *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy*; Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception*. 71
[77] As unified apperception, Kant's argument targets logical conditions rather than subjective states of directedness. (Kant, Guyer, and Wood, *Critique of pure reason*. 240)
[78] Kriegel, "Is intentionality dependent upon consciousness?"; Kriegel, "Intentional inexistence and phenomenal intentionality."

contribution of "operative intentionality" which aids most in understanding, "that which produces the natural and antepredicative unity of the world and of our life."[79] Merleau-Ponty's explicit goal of unifying the perceptual body with the perceptual mind finds its foundation here, in the ability to automatically and in an embodied sense present the world prior to reflection or intellection. In other words, it moves away from a phenomenology of reflection and intellection toward a phenomenology of comprehension.[80] By doing so, the question of whether or not intentions construct the world (for the Idealist) or reflect the world in cognition (for the Naturalist) is itself negated. Phenomenology need not assume or deny the existence of the world beyond the subject. It is the subject's relation to itself, and its relation to objects through itself, that is the primary objective of this phenomenology.

Thus, perceptually, intention need not refer to a state-of-things beyond the individual's experience of its own object of perception. This may appear to be ontologically circular, but only if we insist upon the existence of and access to a world beyond these states of being. If no such world is devised, the phenomenological methodology is internally coherent and helpful for understanding the structure, if not the construction, of reality. With Brentano's original formulation, we can assert that mental phenomena (including perceptions) "contain an object intentionally within themselves."[81] While phenomenology may be applied elsewhere in search of correspondences between these mental states and shared observations of the world, as in a general science, we need not start with a preconceived status of the world in order to study the structure of these phenomenal states.

In reference to the discussion of technology/technique, we can see that intention itself relies upon implicit applications of technical logic. Whether conceived in the relation between

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[79] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception. xx*
[80] Reuter, "Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Pre-Reflective Intentionality." 71
[81] Brentano, Kraus, and McAlister, *Psychology from an empirical standpoint.* 89

subject and object (therefore making the object an instrument for one's intention) or between the subject and itself (by intending toward an object, the subject is realized as a technical force), *intention is a technique of subjective practice*. This is what makes the transition between phenomenological states and social actions so interesting. The fact that we can identify technical logic at the core of human functioning as well as at its horizons in the technological future enables a seamless explanation of agency which does not rely upon free-will/determinist arguments. Experience and the intention which enables it are considered independently in a phenomenological sense from a corresponding 'truth' of the state of the world beyond it.

The phenomenological methodology, additionally, is a technique of consciously isolating one's intentions, habits, and interpretations in experience. As we will see in the next chapter, such a science permits us to differentiate various categories of perceptual interpretation based on the subject's relation to the object of its perception; this relation, as stated, results because of certain intentionalities inherent in subjectivity. Thus, the phenomenological method intends to isolate intention. This is a double intentionality, a technical rationality of making one's own experience the object of one's current experience.

In phenomenology or outside of it, each of these forms demonstrates that the subject is in categorical expectation of the object at hand. The subject intends (or, in another vocabulary, *desires*) to put the objects to use in some way, even merely to organize experience to achieve some degree of rational intelligibility. The modes of such relations can be conceived of in phenomenological categories. This is the type of analysis I will be doing in the discussion of the subject's relation to sounds perceived. However, what is this type of category, one that does not rely upon conscious construction?

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As I've said, phenomenology is a science of technologically investigating the aspects of one's own experience. To do so, one must limit preconceptions in the *Epoché*. Additionally, there must be some type of definitional differentiation between states in order to claim that this phenomenological state is unlike this other one. In this project, I am approaching such a problem by asking how the subject relates to sounds at various times. Thus, in this phenomenology of audition, various technical modes of listening are isolated based on the quality of the relation between subject and auditory object. A category, in classic Aristotelian form, is an intentional ordering of the world. I argue that this occurs both at the perceptual level and at the phenomenological-scientific level. The goal of the latter is to make the phenomenological exposition correspond with the process occurring at the level of perception.

The *categories* to which I refer in my analysis, then, are actually phenomenological representations of *modes* or *techniques* of listening. A phenomenological description is once removed from the experience itself because of the instrumental way that it references individual experience, through memory, and thus cannot claim to be synchronous or identical to such experience. For this reason, I have chosen to refer to my phenomenological exposition of audition in terms of categories, even though the experience itself may not be strictly categorical prior to a phenomenological investigation of it. Nevertheless, I hold that it is technological because of the instrumental relation between subject and object. Thus, categories of audition need not be conscious in either their construction in practice (at which point they may remain modes or simple techniques) even though their representation in phenomenology *is* a conscious scientific activity.

Put simply, my use of categories in this project is an attempt to represent coherently the phenomenological process of audition. I do this without claiming that such a process is identical

to physiological, neurological, material, or even pre-conscious experiential conditions of the subject. I am limited by the tools I use to investigate, yet also aided by their unique strengths. As the next chapter demonstrates, phenomenology allows for an explanation of audition which is coherent within these defined limits. From this coherence, then, applications can be made beyond the mere description of the experience itself. This is the transition I chart in the theory of acoustic orders.

For a study of sound and audition, an analysis which starts in phenomenological intention can explain this process in a linear logic. While operating in different contexts, pre-conscious perceptual intentions align with conscious categorical modes of listening which are then reflected in acoustic actions and orders. This not only clarifies the often haphazard terminology of listening effects (noise and silence being the most widely dispersed in meaning), but also provides a story of how intentions are translated into social structures.

Before beginning the phenomenological exposition, I'd like to define one other term to clarify my domain. Perhaps most fundamental to this project, the idea of what constitutes a *sound* varies greatly depending on the investigative context. For the physicist, a sound is an observable vibration of a material medium. It would not make sense for the physicist to talk about sounds exterior to these conditions. For instance, even if studying the acoustics of music, a strict physicist of sound would not be concerned with the musicological qualities of the sound or the neurological reaction to them in the brain of the listener. While legitimate perspectives in themselves, and certainly useful in an interdisciplinary study of such phenomena, it remains helpful to delimit strict fields of inquiry in order to precisely discuss the object under consideration.

My definition of sound is not intended to encompass all of these possible venues. Indeed, it is quite the opposite. Because I am charting a peculiar path between the phenomenology of audition and the social organization of sounds, two fields normally considered in isolation and containing their own definitions of sound itself, my own terminology must be coherent enough to withstand this transition. I have chosen, therefore, to begin within a phenomenological definition and continue that type of investigation toward the sociological. In other words, *sound* is the phenomenological product of auditory techniques. As a product and object of perception and intellection, the qualities it takes on in the subject's experience determine its existence and significance.

My discussion of sounds beyond this interiority of subjective perception remains determined by this foundation. Thus, as I refer to the acoustic order, the organization of sounds in society, the ways that sounds affect us in our dwelling spaces and public streets, it is in the sense that such phenomena exist *because there are auditors to listen to them*. This is also how I foresee phenomenology benefiting sociological research: by understanding the roots of subjectivity, and thus the basis for individual responsive agency, we can be more precise in explaining the generation of various orders and configurations of practice.

In the case of a study of sound, such a goal often takes the form of aesthetic constructions such as music and noise regulations. These explicit organizations of sounds in contexts could not occur, however, without a foundational motivation resulting from the actual experience of individuals. Phenomenology, when applied outside the confines of its own methodology, can provide such a constructive narrative. In return, we can better understand the nature of auditory techniques when we consider them in the context of these external conditions. Phenomenology

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cannot account completely for itself; it must be situated within determined fields in order to draw

its demarcations. In its own terminology: the horizon of phenomenology is the social.

Chapter 4
Intentional Volume and Thresholds of Stability

Phenomenology is a science concerned with questions of perception, cognition, intellection, and ontology. The starting point for a phenomenological reduction of experience is the notion that the world cannot be accessed by us in any other way than through the structures of our perceptual intelligibility. To observe the brain scan, to see the behavioral reaction, to describe a metaphysic: all of these are seen as posterior to a more fundamental/existential human experience.[82] This experience, moreover, can be carefully observed through the intentional bracketing of assumptions about how the world is on its own (the 'natural attitude).[83] *Epoché*, in Husserl's methodology, is this reduction which enables a form of Cartesian clarity[84] concerning the object of investigation.

Formulating a phenomenology of sound presents unique difficulties, particularly because much of the literature has focused upon visual data at the expense of the other senses.[85] For example, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology contributes a wealth of insights concerning the operations of subjects in unified, embodied states of perception, even in auditory forms. However, his discussion of the auditory is often anecdotal toward his general argument concerning the unity of all perceptual experience.[86] He remains a valuable source for my conception of phenomenology despite this legitimate, i.e., traditional, bias.

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[82] Jennings, "Husserl revisited: The forgotten distinction between psychology and phenomenology.."
[83] Lübcke, "A Semantic Interpretation of Husserl's EpochÉ."
[84] Overgaard, "Epoche and solipsistic reduction."
[85] This ocularcentric bias and its criticisms are well documented in: Jay, *Downcast eyes: The denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought.*
[86] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception*; Jay, *Downcast eyes: The denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought.* 298-328

Don Ihde's account of the phenomenology of sound in *Listening and Voice*[87] remains the foremost treatment of its type in English. I will be providing an overview and critique of it shortly. Though I owe much to its analysis, particularly in the way that Ihde is able to summarize and supplement historical phenomenological theories, I do not identify my theory with either the structure or conclusion of his. Basically, Ihde depends too much on a form of phenomenology that relies on personal reflection without taking account of the broader social influences and external structures which impinge upon this 'immediate' experience.

This point is one that I will maintain throughout my phenomenological construction. I do not take it as a given that phenomenology has access to an interior state of human experience that can be sure of itself. In order to sustain its methodological relevance, I would like to investigate the ways in which social training and habituation have developed the individual in such a way that phenomenal experience becomes intelligible (and thus analyzable by the phenomenologist). I argue that Ihde's analysis does not go far enough in this direction.

The phenomenology I would like to use for this project is one that incorporates into its initial structure of interpretation categories of intelligibility which are presented in the orderings of social life. This requires, as I discuss in Chapter 6, an understanding of these orders along simultaneous social, political, and phenomenological lines. Phenomenology has not maintained itself as a transcendental account, as an inquiry into the 'essence' of things. This had been its preoccupation since Descartes, through Kant, Husserl, Heidegger and others; it is also the theme that Ihde maintains in his text. Nevertheless, I argue that any study of human experience cannot merely 'bracket' and neglect the role of social constraints/enablements which allow for the very emergence of subjectivity that phenomenology takes as its foundation.

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[87] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.*

My method of selective revision of the tradition might be placed somewhere between Bachelard's and Galison's. From Bachelard, I take a general skepticism concerning the adoption of traditions and other metaphors that hinder "scientific mind"-fullness. To be scientific is, in this sense, to deny essentialist (substantialist) explanations.[88] From Galison I conversely relish the creation of new methods and terms by which problems are addressed in the space between accepted categories. I am, in a sense, refining a pidgin language[89] between phenomenology and sociology within this project. While these two progenitors' influences may *prima facie* seem opposed, they actually fit quite well together. In both we abandon tradition if it ceases to be useful; in both we create new modes of investigation and expression by which phenomena can become intelligible and scientifically translatable.

My phenomenology also directly incorporates the theory of technology I previously set forth. This occurs analytically in two stages. First, I assume that all experience is mediated by the techniques which have been established to interpret, categorize, and organize perceptual phenomena. These techniques are responsible, then, for the generation of 'primordial' experience. Thus, I deny a pre-technical natural state of things because of the generality of my definition of technique, which includes the often subconscious processes of intelligibility. Even Kantian logical categories, in their *a priori synthetic* form, would fall within the purview of technique.

Secondly, the practice of doing phenomenology as a science assumes a particular technological intentionality towards one's own experience. Experience is extracted from its implicit operational state and made explicit as an instrumental means toward achieving the goal of self/world knowledge. Again, many attempts have been made to argue that this can occur

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[88] Bachelard, *The formation of the scientific mind*. 47, 116
[89] Galison, *Image and logic: A material culture of microphysics*. 46-47

transcendentally, or at least expose and support universal truth propositions. I do not outright deny this transcendental possibility, but I think more work needs to be done to investigate the influence of social forces upon the development of these mechanisms. Once recognized, I do not deny that it might be possible to achieve universal propositional status; I am simply arguing that we cannot regard the habitual processes that have been bracketed in the *epoché* as non-instrumental toward this end. Again, Merleau-Ponty agrees with this sentiment to some degree and is particularly helpful in my theoretical formulation.

Explicitly in an auditory sense, my phenomenology is centered upon the experience of sound as it is constructed as an object of perception. As I defined in the previous chapter, I do not assume that 'sound' exists outside of the context of a listener.[90] Surely, there are discourses on sound which take as their objects the acoustical vibrations, statistical data, and neurological representations of sensory affect. I, however, want to discuss the interpretation of sound in the context of individual experience (which, again, necessarily implicates socio-political spatial concerns). This cannot be reduced to a material phenomenon in the same way that it is not merely a mental/ideal construction. We do not 'imagine' sound any more than we 'dream' reading this page. What is at work here is a complex symbolic-material exchange; the phenomenological disposition is one epistemological window to this process.

Thus, as a methodology, phenomenology affords me a necessary but not yet sufficient view of the problematic of acoustic orders. Sound is observed through the lens (or the microphone, to use a more appropriate metaphor) of the listener. I interpret auditory events, on both mental and political levels, as indicative of the phenomenological operation of

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[90] This is similar in form to Barthes' thesis in the famous "Death of the Author" text, in that I believe it is unproductive to look to the physics, fidelity, or even the intention of the originator of the sonic source if we are attempting to explore the "meaning" of a sound, which exists for and by the listener. (Barthes and Heath, *Image, music, text*.)

intelligibility. This does not preclude other forms of analysis that could be equally applicable for very different yet legitimate reasons.

But this definition of sound-as-listened-to merely indicates the role of the individual in analytical isolation, a situation never actually achieved. Here we begin to see the tensions evident in the question at hand. On the one side, a top-down conception of acoustic order is seen as qualifying individual interpretations according to hegemonic aesthetic categories.[91] On the other side, a wholly agent-centered view places undue power in the hands of individuals as interpreters. Not surprisingly, it is my contention that individuals have agency *and* that social structures maintain appropriate norms that can dominate micro-sites of power. I claim, along with Lefebvre and others, that these are mutually constitutive spaces of power which operate simultaneously. My choice to view them first within the bounds of phenomenology before transitioning to a social explanation should not be seen as a bias toward one or the other explanatory extreme.

In review: my auditory phenomenology is an essential component of a larger explanation of listening as a simultaneously individual and social occupation. Phenomenology, within the perceptual and mental limits to which it claims epistemic access, describes the world in such a way that interpretations and events are seen from the unique perspective of human experience. This must be constantly set against a view from the other end: events as socio-political struggles of power between institutions, discourses, and identities. The tension between these two explanatory modes is a necessary reflection of how audition and acoustics themselves are essentially dependent on each other.

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[91] This is Adorno's stance on the sociology of music and aesthetic theory more generally. In this theory, the domination occurs over not only *individual* interpretation but even a *natural* aesthetic sphere which is at risk of extermination. (Adorno et al., *Aesthetic theory*; Adorno, Mitchell, and Blomster, *Philosophy of modern music.*)

Phenomenology has significantly diverged from its Kantian and Husserlian roots of a science of intelligibility[92] and logic[93]. Heidegger and Sartre extended this method into an existentialist ontology[94] and ethic[95]. Merleau-Ponty[96] forwent metaphysical and ontological explanation for an investigation of cognitive perception as a fuller psychology. Derrida[97] revised Husserl's fundamental principles of auto-affected logic[98] to disperse phenomenology into textual nihilism. And most recently, cognitive science has appropriated phenomenological language in order to bridge the epistemic divide between material/computational data and lived human experience.[99]

What, therefore, can we call 'Phenomenology' in its current state? I will outline briefly, and merely for my purposes, the specific type of phenomenology I will be utilizing in this study of auditory interpretation. It draws from each of these former developments without aligning with any one in full. If phenomenology, in the most general sense, is a study of the way the world is presented to us in experience, then there need be no universal method but instead a flexible set of tools by which particular problems (in this case, the problem of auditory interpretation) can be addressed.

Phenomenology exists as a precondition for the emergence of acoustic orders in practice. In other words, an account of individual experience is required if we are to assert later that sociological orderings are partially the result of individual agency. As a precondition, however, I do not expect to find a unified or auto-generative grounding in the individual (as, arguably,

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[92] Kant, Guyer, and Wood, *Critique of pure reason*.
[93] Husserl, *Logical investigations*.
[94] Heidegger, *Being and time*.
[95] Sartre, *The transcendence of the ego: An existentialist theory of consciousness*.
[96] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception*.
[97] Derrida, Allison, and Garver, *Speech and phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs*.
[98] Husserl, Heidegger, and Churchill, *The phenomenology of internal time-consciousness*.
[99] For example, see: Di Paolo, "Editorial."

Husserl attempts[100]). Instead, the individual becomes a function within social processes at the same time as the social is recognized as the material by which the individual emerges as such. This requires significant clarification.

Phenomenology is a science of perception, cognition, intellection, and ontology. As a science, its domain is limited to the objects it purports to observe, namely the describable phenomena of human experience. With the constant threat of solipsism at its heels, phenomenological explanations tend toward the personal or biographical at the same time as they attempt to expose universal logics of experience beyond this individual description. This is not entirely different than other empirical sciences (within which we might include psychology, astronomy, and physics); yet, phenomenology takes as a fundamental principle the rejection of an external world which, by itself, can impose its nature upon individual perception. In this sense, it carries forth Husserl's "radical empiricism" by not assuming as fact what we cannot observe clearly in experience.[101] To isolate the conditions of these phenomenal facts, the individual is taken to be the necessary function by which external realities are manifest. This manifestation extends beyond the epistemological, a point of agreement with most sciences, toward the ontological and otherwise metaphysical. Thus, the notion of external reality is not taken as a given prior to its construction within the deliberate experience of subjectivity.

In brief: from Kant I take the logic of intellection as an internal process which refines and categorizes *Gegenstand* into *Objekt*,[102] as well as the foundational principle for the unity of experience in apperception.[103] This point is later developed, in a revised Kantian manner, by

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[100] Derrida, Allison, and Garver, *Speech and phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs.* 79-82
[101] Husserl, *The Paris lectures. xix*
[102] Vanzo, "A Correspondence Theory of Objects? On Kant's Notions of Object, Truth, and Actuality."; Heidegger, *Kant and the problem of metaphysics.* 224
[103] Kant, Guyer, and Wood, *Critique of pure reason.* 247

Husserl in his *Ideas*.[104] The distinction intentionally neglects the world as it is unto itself for the world as it is unto a subject. This is helpful for avoiding traditional metaphysical pitfalls, but of course it poses its own in the process. In what sense are we to conceive of the external world, the world that we 'stand against', if not either as a reality fully formed or as a fully reconstructed Schopenhauerian flux?

Husserl, in setting forth the attributes of Phenomenology that became instrumental for subsequent theoretical developments in the past century, focused on the logic of internal experience and thus the way that perception, intellection, and cognition can be analyzed as a fully ordered system. With 'time' as a foundation, subjectivity is understood as a logical chain of intentions. By carefully establishing boundaries of investigation through his careful theory of *Epoché*, Husserl believed that such intentions could be clarified, analyzed, and systematized; in other words, made into a pure science of logic. This is the prime distinction, carried through with other phenomenologists, between phenomenology and psychology: where psychology looks at the evidence for certain behaviors and qualities of experience, phenomenology attempts to find the logic of experience itself. This may or may not be observable in practical terms, thus extending beyond psychology's field of evidence.

Heidegger's work often speaks back along the Kantian divide, attempting to find a way to express the tension between the phenomenal constructs of intentional subjects and the affective, uncanny externality of the World.[105] The World here is taken as an ungraspable yet necessary whole that frames individuality in much the same way that my version of the 'social' frames perceptual subjectivity. As a student of Husserl, Heidegger never fully accepts the externality of the world without first looking at its logical relation to subjectivity. This centering on the subject

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[104] Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. Xv, 113, 231
[105] Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. 352-4

hints towards Merleau-Ponty's embodied unity of all perceptual experience,[106] though

Heidegger's formulation does not require an empirical body as much as an existential unity of

subjective action. He calls this intention of the subject "care" and famously grounds it within a

necessarily temporal framework of Dasein.[107]

As mentioned, Merleau-Ponty's work focuses on perceptual phenomena, primarily in

terms of the visible rather than the auditory.[108] Nevertheless, his continual assertion that all

perception must be unified as a whole experience, implicating body, world, and self, is an

especially apt framework for understanding the fullness of auditory experience. Whether we

speak of the horizon (as Heidegger does) or the space within this field (akin to Merleau-Ponty's

body-space), phenomenological limits impose themselves not as restrictions but as openings and

conclusions of continued experience.[109]

Derrida is not often recognized as a phenomenologist, yet his work on Husserl in *Speech

and Phenomena* is essentially a revised phenomenology of self-awareness. Husserl's auto-

affective generation of the phenomenal-temporal order in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time

Consciousness*[110] depended upon the moment of hearing oneself speak. For Husserl, this

immediate transference of intentionality and reception represents a "primordial," pre-temporal

moment. Derrida maintains, against this, that the awareness of oneself in speech is actually a

dis-closing, or an opening of the subject into a void of otherness. The ghost of one's own voice,

if attended to, does not lead to subjectivity but instead to a "spacing" of consciousness and

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[106] Crossley, "Merleau-Ponty, the elusive body and carnal sociology"; Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception.* 440
[107] Heidegger, *Being and time.* 416
[108] Merleau-Ponty, Lefort, and Lingis, *The visible and the invisible: followed by working notes.*
[109] This will be helpful later in the discussion of how acoustic orders return to the subject as constraining/enabling forces.
[110] Husserl, Heidegger, and Churchill, *The phenomenology of internal time-consciousness.* 92-93

perception.[111] Thus, Derrida's phenomenology does not hold the same essentialist foundation for science that many other phenomenologists continue to seek. Perhaps because his stated aim was the problematic of authorship/readership relations, the full ontological weight of his argument was implicit in the project. Regardless, I take this as a helpful corollary to the (at times) positivist-style optimism of rigorous phenomenologists.

<div align="right">Ihde in Particular</div>

Don Ihde's *Listening and Voice*, originally published in 1976 and updated in 2007, remains the most significant book on the classical phenomenology of listening to date. His formidable weaving of Husserlian and Heideggerian works on subjectivity and perception enabled him to construct a theory of audition which not only looked at the listener as receiver but also as producer of sound and meaning. This text has been significant for my own development of a phenomenology of listening, as I'll now show. Additionally, my critique of Ihde's work rests on the lack of discussion of the social-structural influences which impinge upon the listener in perceptual training. While not crucial for phenomenology historically conceived, I nevertheless take it as beneficial for us to include such technological factors in our account of the listening self.[112]

Ihde begins the text with a critique of the dominant visualism of historical philosophical traditions and a call for "an ontology of the auditory"[113] to speak to the "invisibility" that preoccupies so many contemporary investigations. Assuming a methodological space between Husserl and Heidegger, he initiates an *epoché* of auditory experience in order to reinterpret the

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[111] Derrida, Allison, and Garver, *Speech and phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs.* 86

[112] Ihde's later work, it should be mentioned, is predominantly concerned with the phenomeno-technological, though no longer in auditory terms. (Ihde, *Bodies in technology*; Ihde, "Philosophy of technology"; Ihde, *Technology and the lifeworld: From garden to earth.*)

[113] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 15

common-sense relation between the listener and the sound. In doing so, as a strict Phenomenologist nonetheless, he displaces what I take to be of crucial importance in understanding the experience of sound: the disposition of the subject *within* socio-spatial configurations. This critique can only be understood once we've seen the full project Ihde sets forth.

In his "first" phenomenology, following Husserl, he seeks "to uncover, once the field of primary evidence is isolated, the structures, invariants, and essential possibilities of that field;" in other words, to develop a "statics of experiential presence."[114] This is a description, not an explanation, of experience; therefore, the phenomenologist (Ihde, at the moment) must maintain at once a critical distance from assumptions of *why* an experience is happening at the same time as he must remain present to himself and his experience in order to describe them at all.

This simulated presence, projected through the *epoché*, is fundamentally problematic because it assumes that self-awareness can be developed through a representational methodology. Many phenomenologists following Husserl recognize this contradiction at the same time as they maintain quasi-transcendentalist ambitions. Indeed, it could be argued that my own project falls into this supposed trap. However, if we see this tension between self-presence and universal logical system as an uncertain bridge between two related fields rather than an insurmountable contradiction, we might gain clarity through an investigation following these lines. It will be made clearer shortly how I conceive of the social to augment this phenomenological exposition; in short, it is by observing the reflections of experience through social structures that I believe we gain a clearer picture of implicit phenomenological structures. Therefore, my own auditory phenomenology will only be complete following an understanding and investigation of acoustic orders.

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[114] Ibid. 26

As Ihde continues to take Husserl at his word, he recalls a distinction which is particularly important for my own phenomenological system. There is a difference, he claims, between intentions which can be fulfilled and those that are merely imaginative or "suppositional." Within these bounds of possible fulfillment, we can observe varying levels of accomplishment. "Certainty," in a Cartesian sense, is considered to be less fulfilling than "adequacy," wherein the intentions of the individual are completely resolved in the experience.[115] As Ihde points out, such a condition is next to impossible given various contingencies of experience and the sheer multiplicity of intentions simultaneously at play. Nevertheless, this limit of fulfillment is a necessary possibility if we are to pose degrees of categorical experience, a task I will undertake in the next chapter.

I agree with Ihde, and against Strawson,[116] that audition is spatial in character. As Ihde puts it throughout the text, sounds are experienced within a field defined by the phenomenological horizon, or the limits of possible perceptions. As he charts the "shapes" of particular sounds, and thus the shaping of audition itself, he maintains that shapes can be considered beyond merely visual considerations. Nevertheless, he also goes to lengths to compare the two types of perception which results in a judging of the auditory against the presupposed primacy of the visual.[117] Despite his efforts to surpass this bias, his account lacks a full distinction between the possibility of hearing sound-objects themselves and, on the other hand, attributing these sound-objects to events in the world (which might be accountable through a visual or otherwise sensory test).

I attempt to answer this lack in a few ways. First, by approaching audition through a technological orientation, sound-objects are preliminarily analyzed apart from their

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[115] Ibid. 34-35
[116] Strawson, *Individuals: An essay in descriptive metaphysics.* 65-66
[117] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 61-71

correspondence with the world otherwise ascertained (by way of essential qualities or identities, for instance). Second, my distinctions between affective, symbolic, and excessive modes of listening provide means of understanding transitions between experiencing sound itself and the attributions we might make to its source, environment, or significance in our lives. One other revision, of Ihde in particular, I believe clarifies the terminology and makes it more familiar with primal auditory experience.

As mentioned, the concepts of auditory *fields* and *horizons* are pervasive throughout his project. Thus, the shaping of particular sounds happens through negative definition within this already delimited space. Again, despite Idhe's goal to extend beyond Cartesian assumptions, the terminology and its accompanying assumptions persist. The field of listening demands that "both surroundability *and* directionality must be noted as copresent" as a "'double' dimensionality."[118] In his diagrams and descriptions of how sound penetrates our awareness, he seems to think mostly in terms of a two-dimensional plane of the sounding world. It is true that our ears, being horizontally situated on the head, are most perceptive of differences on this two-dimensional plane. We hear right, left, forward, behind, close, and far. However, does this fact of the physiology of hearing correspond with how we actually experience a sound as an object, prior to such contextual determinations?

As Dufrenne puts it, this distinction is one between implicit and explicit spatialization.[119] Where explicit spatializations place sounds into defined relations (and thus distinctions) in the context of subject and world, implicit spatialization is a pre-determined product of embodiment wherein the sound first fills the subject's experience before it is interpreted as existing in other external capacities. It is from this grounding that I would like to focus on *volume* as the key

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[118] Ibid. 77
[119] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience.* 271

fulfillable intention which identifies and qualifies the sound object. This is not to deny that sounds are experienced within a field delimited by a horizon; instead, it extends these metaphors into a fluid conception which is, I think, more representative of the full intensity of the auditory experience.

Conveniently, the term *volume* has two primary meanings, both of which are quite useful in this context. In geometric spatial terms, volume represents the capacity to contain within a defined space. At a minimum, this fundamental yet abstract spatiality must be conceived in the third dimension. If we consider the fourth, that of 'time' in common parlance, the filling and receding of this potential volume can be imagined beyond a static permanence. We do not escape spatiality, though we do enable a concept of spatiality that does not rely primarily on "surface" level analysis. As Ihde puts it, we "*hear* interiors"[120] as a type of resonance; as Nancy describes, this resonance may be of our own body and not merely an external event.[121] Thus, in its first definition, volume offers us a space within which sounds present themselves to us in a necessarily substantial manner. Where the horizon or the field can be taken as flat occurrences, much more amenable to linear and detached rational observation, the filling of volume more aligns with the type of embodied phenomenology that Ihde intended to achieve, again following Merleau-Ponty. The expectation of sounds and their fulfillment in experience occurs first in this interior body space and then as a body-world relation.

The second meaning of the term, certainly applicable to a study of sound, refers to factors of sonic intensity and, correspondingly, the perception of loudness. The volume of a sound usually refers to the magnitude at which it is presented to us. Whether measured in electrical amplitude or decibels of sound pressure, the attack, sustain, and release of sounds are familiarly

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[120] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound*. 70
[121] Nancy and Mandell, *Listening*.

related in this conception of volume. How distinct is this formulation than the other, however? In phenomenological experience, it may be that the potential filling of an intentional auditory space (as an ideal expectation) is nearly synonymous with the intensity of sounds in relation to these intentions. The dual conception of volume as a space and an intensity, then, might correspond quite nicely with a categorical phenomenology of auditory perception.

Pierre Schaeffer's (1910-95) highly influential (in the European context) book entitled *Traité des* Objets *Musicaux* (*Treatise on Musical Objects*)[122] requires mention here. Schaeffer, the founder of the *musique concrète* movement in composition,[123] was heavily influenced by Husserl's methodical phenomenology.[124] In this text on the nature of listening to sound objects in musical and other contexts, he developed a particular terminology and approach which is, in fact, quite similar to my own. Unlike my relation to Ihde's text, however, my own theory was developed without explicit reference to Schaeffer's work and from a quite different context. Schaeffer's musicological approach contrasts with my phenomeno-perceptual methodology, significantly altering both the content and intention of the theory. While I would like to pursue such correspondence in the future, I have chosen to set such comparisons aside for the sake of space in this dissertation.

Concept = Percept + Reflect

In the next chapter I will describe in more detail three primary categories of auditory interpretation: affective, symbolic, and excessive. I am not proposing that these are natural, transcendental categories of phenomenological interpretation; instead, I suggest that they are useful as hermeneutical tools for understanding the way we organize acoustic spaces in

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[122] Schae er, "Traité des objets musicaux."
[123] Landy, *Understanding the art of sound organization.* 77-79
[124] Kane, "L'Objet Sonore Maintenant: Pierre Schaeffer, sound objects and the phenomenological reduction."

contemporary (post)modern life. Taken as concepts, they are evident throughout behavioral and institutional activities. Symbolic sounds orient us in traffic (car horns), speech (phonemes), medical diagnosis (mediate auscultation), and countless other situations. The interpretation of a perception as symbolic, as significant of some other event or state-of-things, is a technical activity of phenomenological interpretation. It becomes a concept once it is reflected upon in consciousness and reapplied as a metric for future interpretations (once it becomes a language)[125].

No less a concept, the category of the affective is necessary in accounting for the full range of auditory experience. Here affective refers more literally to the sensual affect of sound on the listener. Sound received without reference or recourse to other objects beyond itself can be interpreted in this aesthetic way. The vibration of thunder, the singing of orchestral strings, or the rhythmic chirping of birds can all be felt aesthetically if one is disposed toward the sound in this way. These examples can, as with all sound sources, be interpreted in other categorical modes. I use these examples because they are often taken as sensual ends in themselves rather than indicative of other symbolic events. There are no sounds that could be universally classified in to one or another category of interpretation; nevertheless, we are disposed and conditioned to classify certain types of sounds according to accepted conventions. We may believe in some sense that the birds are chirping symbolically to one another; for us, unable to decipher such a code, the sound may become simply aesthetically (or viscerally) pleasing in the rising and setting hours of the day.

In the same way, this sound could become excessive. As noise, the sound is unable to be contained within the individual's current auditory scheme. This is highly dependent on the

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[125] This is related, but certainly not identical, to Saussure's classic distinction between *langue* and *parole*. (De Saussure and Bally, *Course in general linguistics*. xi-xv)

intentions of the individual in shaping one's acoustic space, rather than being seen as a deficiency. Thus, noise is not essential, but is merely an excess beyond a highly contingent technique of interpretation. Similarly, interpreting a sound as silence marks a moment of lack. This is another form of excess, though in a negative sense. When a sound becomes so pervasive as to be placed intentionally (again, not necessarily consciously) outside of either a symbolic or aesthetic category, or recedes so far into the background as to become unintelligible because it is masked by other more dominant sounds, we are left with the sound as silence. Finally, in the third form of the excessive category, the sound of birds chirping, for instance, can recede just enough into the background of interpretation that it takes on an environmental characteristic. Occurring in the temporary space between various auditory concentrations, this blurring of categories further complicates the horizon of listening[126] which sets the stage for more precise determinations within it.

As categories, these modes of interpretation can operate merely to objectify perceptions (in a technical but subconscious manner) or manifest themselves as articulated aesthetic concepts. This is the cycle of acoustic ordering which begins and returns analytically in the phenomenological interpretation of sound. To do phenomenology in this way is to set the logical system within which auditory perceptions can make sense to the subject. At the same time, through excessive perception, it also illustrates the ways that such sense-making falls apart. Through failure and lack, the subject fashions intentions toward agency and social change. In order to understand the phenomenological roots of such motivations, we must first discern between stable and unstable perceptions. I am using the logics of *volume* and *thresholds* as themes to describe this transition. Like the metabolism metaphor which opened this dissertation, the concept of the threshold of volume is meant as an analogical tool of analysis and not as a

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[126] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 52; 103-114

literal (neuro-physical, for instance) fact. Nevertheless, this dynamic view of the auditory

process allows for a quite simple and concise starting point for describing the correlation

between phenomenological and socio-spatial systems.

Chapter 5
Modes and Categories of Audition

As a proposed hermeneutic of perceptual experience, my assertion of phenomenological categories is not strictly accomplished through the traditional (Husserlian) phenomenological method. First, I am not supposing that these categories are universal or transcendental. They are logical inasmuch as the subject relates to them technologically, as a system of appropriation and perception; they are not, however, taken to be *necessary* for any auditory perception whatsoever. Surely there are experiences which fall outside or completely neglect such categorizations. However, it remains to be shown how this might occur, and I remain open to such revisions.

Secondly, I have no pretense that these categories were derived through the type of explicit self-awareness that supposedly accompanies a pure application of the *epoché*. Without denying that such precision is possible, I do hold such a requirement in doubt and therefore do not claim to have accomplished it in this study. Nevertheless, as a phenomenological description of experience, these categories do correspond with my own experience of sound as closely as I can approximate it. Every phenomenological description is particularized to the subject under investigation (myself, in this instance) at the same time as it attempts to be generalized beyond the individual. My hope is that by investigating not only my own experience but also the corresponding organization of sounds in social spaces, my phenomenology will hold more than merely autobiographical weight. Such a determination must be made by the reader as he or she applies this theoretical construction beyond the limits of this dissertation.

This is why I have labeled my system categorical instead of modal. I take it that we do operate in particular modes in practice; however, in an explicit phenomenology such distinctions occur as representations, as categories. While merely a terminological dispute, it reminds us

that we are dealing in theory and not in practice. Phenomenology is not a perfect reflection of human perceptual process, but an approximation. Thus, as a generalized simulation of practice, it functions independently even as it seeks correspondence with the "real" process it represents.

Third, as a reiteration: when I speak of these categories of sounds, I refer only to the interpretation of sound and not to the sounds "themselves." There are no essential categories of sounds, even as there may be logical categories that can apply to the interpretation of various sounds at various times. As I defined it in the Chapter 3, a sound only exists as such because of technical procedures of listening. To say, then, that the jackhammer is an essentially noisy sound is to jump too soon to common social prescriptions. While it may be true that jackhammers are usually associated with noise, this need not be the case. For example, in artistic appropriation such sounds can become aesthetic and even invigorating. When the BBC approached artists Gudrun Gut and AGF to document sounds from Berlin's construction sites, the pair remixed and reformed apparent "noises" into a carefully crafted industrial-pop album.[127] One man's noise is another woman's music, it seems.

<div align="right">Affective Listening</div>

To listen affectively is to experience a sound in the simplicity of non-representation. This attached, embodied listening is a precondition for later attributions of meaning and symbolic interpretation. In its pure form, however difficult or impossible this may be to achieve, an affective categorization of sound does not even expect such developments. It is to listen in full rapture of the sound, absorbing and incorporating it wholly in sensuous experience.

If this sounds like a dream, it is because we are used to thinking of sounds immediately as symbols and not in a direct relation. The [bang] is a hammer or a knock at the door; it signifies the existence and presence of something else. Affectively, the [bang] is an immediate intensity

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[127] Greie Gut Fraktion, *Baustelle*.

which engages me in a perceptual moment, an event. By remaining simple and attached to the subject's "body,"[128] the category of affective listening is always elusive and indescribable; for as soon as one begins to explain the experience, systems of representation are required to relate the sound to other sources of significance. An aesthetic attribution in most instances involves the affective but is not reducible to it; aesthetics occurs in the tension between affect and symbol.

Affective techniques of listening place sounds in conjunction with the subject itself. This is a technological process like any other form of listening, even as it does not *use* this object beyond the space of subjective perception. Nevertheless, the sound is concentrated upon and allowed to affect the individual in such a way that it becomes objective, if invisible.

While any sound can be interpreted affectively, it is in music that people most often identify such perceptual moments. In those times when the context of the sound's production fades, when you close your eyes at the concert or in the living room, forgetting both the source and environment within which you are listening; when the instruments, lyrics, and production are insignificant in any particular way to your current state of listening; when the sound takes over your perception, filling you with its presence- it is here that we can approximate most familiarly the affective category. Nevertheless, music most often contains elements which are significant to us beyond merely being an impressive sound, thus distracting us from a pure affectivity. The aesthetic constructions of music and other acoustic orders emerge from negotiations between these categorical techniques.

On the face of it, there is an inherent difficulty in talking about the intentionality of audition in standard phenomenological terms because of the differences between listening and sight. Whereas we can move our eyes and bodies around in order to direct our *gaze* toward one

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[128] When I refer to body, I mean the phenomenological unity of the subject and not the physiological constitution of the individual.

object or another, our ears remain open to unexpected sonic surprises. While it is true that our ears have no distinct lids, we nevertheless direct our auditory *attention* toward one sound or the other. Attention is direction, and there need not be a physiological accompaniment to the movement of auditory attention in order for it to be effective at focusing upon some sounds and masking others. This is where phenomenological intention is helpful, as long as the concept of intention remains open enough that we are not necessarily expecting one particular sound, but instead intend a certain capacity for a sound to be heard within.

The developing concept of volume is especially useful in the analysis. Affective listening intends a certain type of perceptual event, one where sounds are directly incorporated into the body experience, filling a personal space. If this intentionality is conceived as a specified volume, waiting to be satisfied by an auditory perception, it takes on a form of expectation and desire that often accompanies accounts of listening. This is not to say that this volume is necessarily fulfilled, but that the subject continually constructs expectations of how the world should be sounding and judges auditory perceptions according to these intentional conditions.

For instance, right now you are sitting somewhere reading this text. You have most likely grown accustomed to the sounds occurring around you. Whether it is the drone of the air conditioning, the voices of neighbors, the wash of the cars driving past, or the whistle of the wind in the trees, you have developed environmental expectations of how your current acoustic space does sound. Assuming you are comfortable enough in these conditions to be reading this text undisturbed, we can say that your intentions are aligning with your experience. In other words, your listening technique corresponds with the sounds presented to you. Metaphorically, to consider volume in an explicit sense, you have developed various thresholds of appropriate sounds. Within these bounds, your sonic environment remains comfortable, interpretable,

invisible, or enjoyable. It may even be that you are momentarily overwhelmed by the sounds around you. This often happens to me in coffee shops, where the general din is, for brief moments, an affective experience. These parameters of listening, the voluminous intentions you have habituated in this space, determine the type of experience you will have there.

It makes very little difference, at a general level, what types of sound sources are involved or the decibel levels of them. Again, we are approaching listening from the intentions of the subject, not merely the objective environmental conditions. Volume is both a spatial condition (how fulfilling is the sound relative to the specified intention) and a degree of intensity (how forceful or satisfying is the sound in its various qualities). This concept applies across each of my defined categories, though with the affective we can understand it in its most basic formulation. If I maintain an open intention toward listening, if the expected volume is sufficiently flexible to allow for sounds to penetrate and integrate into my body experience, I listen affectively. The volume of affective listening is therefore rather amorphous; it is recognizable while remaining elastic,

Before moving on to symbolic and other categories, perhaps another narrative example will be helpful in delimiting the affective experience. As I've said, affectivity cannot be explained without resorting to significant elements beyond the experience itself; nevertheless, we can speak around it to the extent that we should each be able to identify moments in our own experience when this has occurred.

Imagine you are in an acoustic space where you have complete control over the sounds presented to you, to the extent that if you will a sound to happen, you hear it. What sound would you choose to hear, and why? Your identification of the sound would be immediate, so there would be no motivation to hear a sound in order to remember it; remembrance would be a

condition of the sound appearing. So, the symbolic nature of the sound would only be significant for you to hear for some other reason. That reason, perhaps, is the effect that the intended sound has upon you. Whether it is Bach's cello sonatas or your mother's voice, there is a sense in which the sound is desirable because it moves you in a certain familiar, personal way. Though we all have bodies and varying capacities to listen similarly, affective listening is an intensely private experience because of the unique ways that each of us is able to attach immediately to certain sounds. In this way, affectivity is not concerned with the significance of the sound itself for any other reason than that it permeates and moves you in a distinctly non-representational manner.

Surely, this purely blissful (or wholly painful) experience cannot be sustained. Inevitably, we begin to reflect upon experience, further objectifying and abstracting it until it becomes memory and symbol. If we refer back to the metaphor of metabolism, the affective state is like the stomach- it is not long before this initial contact containment gives way to more complex mechanisms of interpretation and dispersal. The fullness of the stomach following a good meal and the embodied fullness of the subject in an enraptured state of affective listening inevitably fade as digestion/interpretation proceeds.

<div align="right">Symbolic Listening</div>

Symbolic listening is at once antithetical and intimately connected to the affective mode of listening.   Both categorical techniques share the same basic technological structure: to interpret a sound as an object in some intentional capacity (what I have been calling volume). The main differentiation between these first two categories concerns the degree of abstraction the subject holds in relation to the sound perceived. To begin with the affective rather than the symbolic was not to imply that such a category is more natural or essential than the other. It may

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be simpler in theory, but it is no more "accurate" to listen to sounds affectively than symbolically. Whereas affectivity allows the sound to move the subject in various states of physical, emotional, and cognitive arrest, symbolic interpretation places the subject in control of how the sound will be experienced.

This is done by detaching the sound from its original affective state in the body and, in return, placing various qualities upon it to differentiate it not only from the immediate experience but also from other sounds. These distinctions, as well, enable memories to form and be related to one's current experience. The "identification" of sound is normally a symbolic activity, a tagging and cataloging of auditory objects according to whatever characteristics the auditor deems appropriate. Symbolic listening is thus an appropriating activity, a technique of making sounds into objects to be stored and exchanged; it commodifies sounds as forms of capital. Without such a procedure, we would be caught within the mere moment of affect, unable to parse and distribute our auditory interpretations.

Symbolic listening clearly evidences the intentionality of the listener and the ability to change the interpretation of any sound according to these expectations. Whereas in affectivity there is a certain giving over of the subject to the impressionable quality of the sound itself, symbolic intentions prefigure the type of experience one has in relation to the sound. The correspondence between sound and symbol must be more precise. In the terminology of volume, symbolic categorization places further restrictions on the particular qualities of the "vessel" of the auditor. Whereas an affective intention may remain flexible to varying shapes and intensities of the sound, still within certain objective limits, symbolic intentionality demands that a sound conform to its exact dimensions. Metaphorically, this is the difference between holding a fluid in a bag and storing a typewriter in a carefully constructed case. In both instances, we are

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dealing with volume; nevertheless, in the latter we have much more carefully constructed the conditions within which containment is appropriate or even possible.

This symbolic technique can be discussed more explicitly than the affective, particularly because we have now entered into discourses of representation wherein we normally speak of sounds being this or that. In other words, to ascribe identification to sound beyond its mere existence as a feature of our experience is to attach a symbolic quality to it, making it ready for objective and aesthetic exchange. When we speak of hearing this or listening to that, we are speaking from an experience of symbolic categorical listening.

If I am sitting on a street corner and you ask me to attend to the sounds I hear and relay my experience back to you, my first inclination will probably be to say that I hear a truck driving over a sewer grate, or a child's mother beckoning to continue, or the beeping of the pedestrian signal at the traffic light. In increasing order of abstraction, these examples represent sounds as significant of some other event: an occurrence, a linguistic intent, or a code of appropriate behavior. Along with this increasing abstraction, the precision of the sound generated increases. It makes little difference to me whether the truck is a Ford or a Mack: it is a truck, and thus fulfills the degree of specificity I seek in listening to it (mostly because I would be unable to differentiate between these two variations on truck sounds because of personal lack of training). The specific language or dialect of the mother, however, might give me additional cues for description. Judging by her voice alone, I may be able to assume various characteristics of her childhood, current cultural associations, or emotional states. Finally, the precise beep of the traffic signal indicates quite clearly what I am to do, as long as I have been initiated into the social system wherein such indications make sense. To change that beep even slightly could drastically change my interpretation of it; as it is, it remains a highly controlled sonic symbol.

Symbolic listening may bypass affective states of listening or even sensuous audition itself. Through the abstraction of representational exchange in subjective mental space, symbolic sounds need not be physically manifested at all. Right now, as you read, you create an inner, imaginary voice. As Ihde describes it, such a voice may be your own or the authors, if you are familiar with him or her.[129] The words that you read/speak, however, are referential toward other objects in the world. Seldom do we speak merely to evince non-representational sounds; while lyrical singing and poetry approximate this, they most often occur within system of established symbolic relations, namely music and verse.

It is within symbolic techniques of listening that sounds become *meaningful*. Such an attribution requires an intentional, technological distancing of the subject from the sound object. I argue that the sound object, interpreted affectively or excessively, is meaningless in such non-representational proximity. I am defining meaning as a system of reference and relation. However much affective audition may be pleasurable, painful, or even valuable for the subject, it remains too closely bound to the body to be detached and exchanged in aesthetic systems of representation. While the symbolic does not deny the experience of the affective, the qualities it places upon sounds often make it very difficult to return to this primal listening state.

For example, when we listen to a new piece of music, particularly if it sounds strange, we might at first be unable to identify the specific instruments used to create it. The sounds are presented to us and we receive them directly, affectively. However, once we begin to discern the piano, the drums, the synthesizer, etc., we at least momentarily lose immediate access to the sound. We project away from the experience of listening into representative realms wherein drums make a certain sound and mean a certain thing, where vocals signify males, females, love,

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[129] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 137-142

anger, ecstasy, etc. It is not the sound's effect on our body that we now listen to, but instead the sound's ability to recollect these constructed meanings.

Though it is not the explicit aim of this dissertation, this is the moment where musical aesthetics occurs. Aesthetics is a temporary construction between experiences of affect and symbol. Music is a particular form of such a negotiation whereby this oscillation takes on particular rhythmic, tonal, and cultural significances. To determine music without affect is mathematics; to feel music without meaningful representation of some type is animal. One might return to a musical reflection once this phenomenology of categorical listening is complete, for music plays a vital role in the ways that we order and configure social acoustic spaces. It is not, however, the central or foundational mode of listening to which we could reduce this analysis. For that, we must investigate the boundaries of affective and symbolic categories to find the generations and failures of auditory interpretation.

Excessive Audition

It is a standard preoccupation in discourses on sound and listening to concentrate on the terms "noise" and "silence." These elusive and dangerous categories of sound seem to threaten our familiar and often invisible security in auditory experience. Precisely what these terms mean, however, is continually reasserted in often contradictory ways. Noise is most often characterized as "unwanted sound,"[130] an "aperiodic" sound source,[131] "disturbance"[132] or "annoyance"[133] in relation to a particular sound or soundscape. Indeed, on national and international levels the problem of noise is increasingly viewed as a public health issue.[134] The

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[130] Stansfeld, *Noise, noise sensitivity and psychiatric disorder*. 3
[131] Kryter, *The effects of noise on man*. 583
[132] Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig, "Soundscape analysis in a residential area: An evaluation of noise and people's mind."
[133] Schulte-Fortkamp, "The meaning of annoyance in relation to the quality of acoustic environments."
[134] Stansfeld and Matheson, "Noise pollution: non-auditory effects on health"; Ising and Kruppa, "Health effects caused by noise: evidence in the literature from the past 25 years."

supposed essential negativity of noise, by these definitions,[135] conceals what I take to be an alternately challenging and constructive phenomenon.

The same might be said in discourses on silence. Perhaps the most famous quote, and often recited in sound studies literature, is from John Cage. As written in *Silence*,[136] he recalls stepping into an anechoic chamber in the 1940s and yet hearing something- the sound of his own blood and nervous system. Shocked by such a presence of what was formerly unknown in his experience,[137] Cage asserts that 'true' silence does not exist; instead, we varyingly attend to sounds presented to us. Much of his music and writings are occupied by this theme of bringing to the forefront the often neglected or repressed sounds of the world.[138]

Beyond Cage, silence is often conceived as the preferred alternative to the excessively loud world. Silence supposedly marks the accomplishment of control or property (and thus propriety), giving the listener or the speaker[139] authority over the restrained possibility of sounds in space. The professor and judge's imperative of "silence" demonstrates this clearly: by first establishing a quiet space, the individual or institution gains power over the subjects and sounds within this acoustic territory. Silence, in these general accounts, is commonly related to decibel levels, and thus is often equivocated with quiet. Nevertheless, the role of political power in the description and institution of silence is more pronounced than when one talks merely of a "quiet" locale, which seemingly holds a more natural status.[140] Either way, silence is generally regarded as an achievement over and against the chaos of noise in public space.

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[135] Though certainly not all. For example, for a Benjaminian take on the role of noise in contemporary music, see: Link, "The Work of Reproduction in the Mechanical Aging of an Art."
[136] Cage, *Silence: lectures and writings*.
[137] Losseff and Doctor, *Silence, music, silent music*. 122
[138] De Visscher, ""There's no such a thing as silence…" John Cage's poetics of silence."
[139] Jaworski, *Silence*. 87
[140] Brambilla and Maffei, "Responses to noise in urban parks and in rural quiet areas"; Wrightson, "An introduction to acoustic ecology"; De Coensel and Botteldooren, "The quiet rural soundscape and how to characterize it."

I would like to approach these topics quite differently, and in line with the type of phenomenological analysis with which I have been working. I do not want to assume that noise is detrimental and that silence is beneficial to human health or functioning. Such a predetermination, I believe, disfigures the experience of various sounds in alternate contexts. As I've been saying, sounds do not have essential characteristics in subjective experience. However, and in a way that undermines the type of specificity that sound research aims toward, the attribution of noise and silence to particular types of sounds (airplanes and crickets, for example) evokes an essentialized account of sounds before the subject or context are even understood.

My aim continues to be to establish a methodological vocabulary by which sounds can be elementarily classified in phenomenological experience. The categories of affect and symbol represent the most basic stable interpretations of sound, as either an embodied fulfillment or a denotative reference (which is, again, an abstract fulfillment). The categorization of sound as *excessive*, on the other hand, holds no such intentional satisfaction. It is here, on the margins of perceptual experience, that the boundaries of intentionality and fulfillment are played out. Noise, silence, and environmental displacement become, in this analysis, much more basic in definition. As such, I believe they become more useful as phenomenological concepts than they have been as vaguely desirable or undesirable archetypes.

This perspective requires a resituating of the analysis from the sounds themselves to the subjective intentional state of the listener. More specifically, we must be able to discern disparities between these intentional states and the potentially fulfilled experience of listening. It is not the case that phenomenological intentions always align with the eventual experience. We are, instead, always negotiating with spatial situations in order to achieve satisfactory

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interpretation for ourselves and others. I want to hear you speak, and you want me to hear you

speak; the burden of communication rests on these intentionalities. Failures of transmission,

whether from noise (acoustically or informationally understood), silences (varying states of

deafness), or environment (as either inattention or distraction) define the limits and thus the

appropriate space for communication.

More generally, in listening to the world we attempt to gain an awareness of what is *actually*

going on in a given situation. Though we are never afforded unmediated access to such external

conditions, we nevertheless rely on provisional approximations in order to function in the

pragmatics of daily life. The echo of a voice down the hall or the ringing of the alarm clock

indicates to us that something is happening beyond the interiority of our bodies. In order to

interpret the source or event, we must parse the signal from the noise, to put it commonly. In my

terms, we must stabilize the auditory event by resolving excessive elements of our perceptions.

This may be accomplished by changing our intentional disposition toward the sound or by

changing the structure of the acoustic space and thus the sound source itself. Here, as a

preliminary view of the category of phenomenological excess, I will begin with its basic modal

structure before investigating such active interventions.

What is excess? How might techniques and technologies of listening be determined by such a

concept or experience? In this context, in terms of a perceptual phenomenology, excess refers to

objects of experience which extend beyond the intentionality of the subject. Whether

overwhelming, insufficient, or displaced, excessive modes of listening transgress the perceptual

boundaries the subject seeks to place on the sounding world. The fact that we cannot contain the

world in neat, stable categories of perception, that we must constantly readjust our intentions to

fit an as-yet unknown condition of the world beyond us, gives rise to a phenomenology of

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excess. As an unstable category, the subject cannot rest in excess; in some way, excessive perceptions are always settled into stability (affect, symbol) or outright neglect. To illustrate this rather simple idea, let us recall both the metabolism analogy and the developing concept of volume.

Metabolism depends on correct portions, or proportions, between the subject and the object to be appropriated into the system. The body requires a certain amount of sustenance to maintain itself, and, on the other hand, it has a top limit on the amount of food it can digest at one time. Within this range, we might measure the health of the subject in terms of energy, stability, or comfort. Too little, and the person starves; too much, and the body simply (r)ejects the food. Thus, in an admittedly cursory sense, the amount of food ingested must align with the volume/capacity that the subject is willing or able to contain. Beyond the simple amount of food, the type of food matters as well. An excessively harsh dish leads to discomfort or illness, particularly if the eater is unaccustomed to such fare. The concept of volume, concerning different characteristics of food, applies not only in capacity but also intensity. The expectations of the body and the subject prefigure a possible necessity to eat and a particular response to certain types of food.

As I've suggested, listening can be analyzed according to this same logic. The subject is disposed toward certain types and intensities of sound. Not merely in the physiological limitations of the ear (the thresholds of possible physical audition), but also in perceptual intentionality, thresholds of interpretation enable the subject a preliminary window of listening. Like Ihde's horizon of sound, these thresholds of perception establish limits; hence, the margins of possible audition. There is a minimum threshold, beyond which there is silence (privation, like starvation); there is also a maximum threshold, beyond which the subject experiences noise

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(indigestion, to extend the analogy). The threshold of temporality also applies: we can only interpret so much at a given time. The focal elements of listening[141] apply only to particular sounds within the auditory field. While attending to one sound, others must be put in reserve. This environmental displacement, where sounds are waiting to be attended to even though they are within the horizon of possible listening, is still an excess in terms of the subject's attention (focused intention). The limitation observed in this distinction is one of time, not merely space; we must break the acoustic "meal" into manageable bites, into sound objects.

As useful as this analogy may be in sketching the outlines of a theory of excessive audition, let us now be more specific for each sub-category of excess. Again, by simplifying the terminology through this phenomenological reduction I aim to clarify general discussions of listening, which nearly always include reference to excessive perceptions in often contradictory ways.

<div align="right">Noise</div>

I begin with noise because, as a phenomenological surplus, it is easiest to attach to common conceptions of excess in other contexts. If I have a container of a certain capacity (volume) and I continue to pour a liquid into it beyond this maximum threshold, the remainder is literally uncontainable. If, similarly, I have a container of a certain shape and I attempt to put an object within it of another shape (the square peg in the round hole), the excess dimensions of the object make it unable to be situated within the container.

The container in these examples is the subject's perceptual intention, its disposition, toward the sound to which it attends. We listen *toward*, and by doing so we prefigure a possible interpretation of the sound based on the specific stance we take in this process. When a sound is incongruent in some way, it is excessive. Specifically in the case of noise,

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[141] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 74-77

when a sound surpasses the intentional bounds we have set for it, the remainder becomes immediately uninterpretable. This is neither an essential condition of the sound object nor a permanent condition of the perceiving subject; it is temporary and flexible inasmuch as the subject is able to readjust its intentions to align with the peculiar structure of the sound.

Of course, the sound itself could change, and indeed does in nearly every circumstance. The world is constantly sounding forth in variation; very rarely does a single sound maintain itself precisely for very long. In this phenomenology, moreover, the subject is even more fickle. As Husserl maintains, variations in intentional focus on an object lead to adumbrations of interpretation.[142] By attempting to probe various aspects of a perceptual object, we change our stance toward it and "view" other angles. Such a change in intention modifies the very attributes of the object in our experience, which finally changes the mode of listening (in this case) within which we are operating. Intentions flutter until landing upon something stable; excesses most often do not last very long before we acclimate and appropriate the perceptual remainder.

In the instance of noise, whether in terms of loudness, timbre, attack, decay, or any other quality of the sound which exceeds the expectations of the listener, we must be careful to distinguish between surprises and excesses. When listening to a new piece of music, for instance, our intentional frame is quite flexible. Even though we cannot anticipate the details of the next passage, we often willfully remain open to such surprising possibilities. Indeed, such moments often constitute the reason why we listen to music: to be entertained, enlightened, or inspired. The musical style we choose to listen to plays a significant role in shaping our expectations. The blaring of a siren in the middle of Bach's etudes would be surprising and quite unwelcome, perhaps even constituting a moment of noise for the

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[142] Madary, "Husserl on Perceptual Constancy." 4-5

listener; if, on the other hand, the same siren was heard in the midst of a dub-step song, such an event would be quite normal. The siren, or distorted guitars, or screeching tires, or factories are not in themselves noisy; they are categorically interpreted as noise only because of the intentions of the listener.

As with other auditory excesses, this cannot last long. Noise is essentially transitory because of its inherent instability in the subject's perception. Perhaps five seconds into the siren's intrusion of Bach, we begin to make sense of it. It is a fire alarm, or a prankster in the audience, or a ringing of the ears from last night's dub-step concert. This transition from excess to stable categories of audition (affective or symbolic) marks the moment of resolution through which, I argue, acoustic orders are transformed. The next chapter details this argument.

Noise, as long as it is maintained as such in experience, is the inability of the subject to contain a sound within intended categorical structures. The denotation of 'excess' is placed on the sound; as we will see, it is the converse in the case of silence. However, a problem here emerges: does this attribution to the sound exemplify a return to essentialism, to some sounds (like jet noise) being inherently noisy? No. We are only dealing in the realm of perceptual dispositions. The sound need not "exist" in the external world at all in order to be perceived. This phenomenological principle, set forth by Husserl in the rather complex notion of the *epoché*, asserts that we need not inquire as to the fact or fiction of the "source" of a perception. Instead, the phenomenon within subjective experience is evidence enough of existence. Heidegger's challenge to this, that the World can impinge upon this solipsistic experience in such a way that the subject's self-integrity is existentially challenged, approximates in a different (much more generalized) context how noise operates

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in auditory experience. Not the sounding World as a whole, but the sound object in its extension beyond the bounds of the subject at the moment of intention, impinges upon and challenges the authority of the perceiver.

Noise, then, does carry with it an essential quality: that of being more extensive than the current intentions of the listener. Beyond this basic logical assertion, however, I wish to make no general pronouncements as to the specific qualities or contexts of noise. This restrictive and minimal definition is meant to counter the haphazard use of the term in general use. If we are to establish a coherent and useful phenomenological terminology, we must be careful not to overdetermine the defined object before experiencing it in context. As I discussed in Chapter 3, we would then lose sight of how perception is structured according to technological/objectifying modes.

Because noise is often described according to metrics of either (un)desirable aesthetics or scientific measurement, the actual experience of noise is rather confused. If it is unwanted sound, its determination must constantly reference not only the individual who desires or detests the sound, but also the systems of aesthetic construction which would enable such a preference to arise. Some sounds, noisy or not, seem to have direct effects on the body. Such e/affectivity in the neuro-physiological sense could provide a foundation for establishing an embodied aesthetics of listening, the limits of which would determine which sounds are essentially noisy. Even if such an investigation is possible, it is outside the realm of this discussion. To resort to either physiological considerations or, more likely, to emotional or behavioral states of the individual is to confuse phenomenology with psychology or even psychotherapy. My definition of noise requires no such reference.

Alternatively, to discuss noise in terms of decibel levels of certain sounds, particularly of machine or other industrial origin, is to predetermine the range of possible experiences of noisiness. For example, while it may be true that jet noises pose a significant threat to the acoustic ecology of both the countryside and the city, it is not necessary to preliminarily restrict even the common definition to such specific sources. Any piece of music could easily be noise in another context or to the uninitiated listener. The distinction between volume in the sense of physical acoustics (the absolute intensity of a sound measured in decibels by instruments) and loudness as a response (the intensity of the sound in perception based on frequency responses in the listener) could potentially confuse the current discussion. It is not my intention to change these terms as they are used scientifically or even in general use. My use of 'volume' in the phenomenological sense is metaphorical, hence the suggestion of its double meaning (intensity and capacity). One of the ideas I am explaining, in terms somewhat distinct from what is normally put forth, is the phenomenological threshold of loudness. However, my reason for approaching this in these terms is as follows: I am not *merely* talking about loudness as amplitude (as in: "this sound is too loud"), but also equally allowing other factors of the sound such as timbre, attack, sustain, predictability, and spatial contexts to be taken into account.

Volume, in this more general sense, refers to the subjective capacities for listening to sounds. The various qualities of sound all feature in this ability to perceive and stabilize perceptions. The concept of thresholds operates throughout this theory. To conceive of the listening subject as a capacity waiting to be filled with sound is to circumvent an unaffected perceiver in favor of a necessarily implicated one. In terms of digestion, the hunger-toward sound is a precondition for normal listening just as the hunger-toward food is a precondition

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for normal eating. In this discussion of excess, however, we see this process in its failure. In a phenomenology of noise, we are no longer hungry. Full and overflowing, we are left unable to process sounds received.

An alternative approach to understanding the category of noise is in terms of electronic logic, particularly audio-processing devices. This metaphor conveniently juxtaposes the first, metabolism of the organism, with the machine. Nevertheless, in this context, the three (the listener, the metabolizer, the electronics) share a very similar logical system. In each case, I argue, thresholds determine the ability of the system to incorporate and process objects (sounds, foods, signals). In the case of the digital-to-analog (D/A) converter, the characteristic of the signal input determines its ability to clearly boost this signal for the output. I do not want to pursue this analogy fully just yet, for fear of overdetermining the human subjective experience by way of the machine-technological.

I do think it is helpful hermeneutically, however, to pursue this explanation in simultaneously subjective, metabolic, and mechanistic terms. To push the D/A example a bit more will expose a basic notion of noise excess that we can then identify within the subjective experience. Basically, if the input signal to the converter from the digital source is too extreme in various ways, the circuit will be overwhelmed and incapable of accurately representing the signal in electric current. The *distortion* which happens at this point is a type of noise, especially since noise in my account is a phenomenological state and not a feature of the sound itself beyond this subjectivity. More generally, the 'noise' caused by electronic circuitry is often blamed for the *noisiness* of music, culture, and general acoustics throughout the 20th century to now, in analog (the guitar amplifier) or digital (bit-crunching)

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forms. In the simplest terms: when the electronic circuitry cannot support the intensity of the input signal, noise is produced.

This intensity is most easily conceived in terms of amplitude, or how powerful the signal is when received. However, for my purposes, we might also want to consider the structure of the waveform itself and the ability of the electronic circuitry to respond to it. By doing so, we can approximate similar limitations of the human listener when approaching sounds. A sine wave, as a pure tone, is rather easy for electronics to receive because of its linear and smooth transition between high and low amplitudes within the wave. A pure sine tone, in theory, would be a perfectly linear waveform. Thus, within limits, the sine tone allows for a relatively easy appropriation and integration by the analog amplifier.

Sine wave   Square wave

Figure 1.

Waveform Types

We might consider the square wave as the 'opposite' of the sine tone. The square wave has a perpendicular slope between the top and bottom amplitudes of the waveform. This is impossible for analog electronics to replicate perfectly, since they operate linearly and thus must transition between high and low amplitudes gradually. The square wave demands that such a transition happen immediately, which is better accomplished with transistors than tubes but remains restricted by the physicality of the current. The ear itself is subject to similar restrictions; from the eardrum to the cochlea, the physical elements of

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the ear must respond linearly to sound. It cannot be in one place and then another without passing through the in-between.

Digital electronics are immune to such limitations. Until being transduced into analog signals in the D/A converter, in the digital realm sounds can be synthesized according to such hypothetical objectives as the square wave. While the ideal square wave cannot be replicated in an acoustic space, it can nevertheless be hypothesized and approximated in a digital hyperspace. Like the auditory imagination, or arguably phenomenological intention in simpler terms, the digital is a space within which any possible sound can be synthesized even if it cannot be heard materially.

Though it may not appear so on the face of it, this enables us a better view of the operation of noise in subjective experience. When the converter receives the signal of a square wave, it cannot contain it within the linear causality that is an analog electrical signal. The impact of the waveform itself is too extreme; its slope is excessive. Thus, the converter approximates its form according to parameters within which it can remain stable. The excessive slope of the waveform is bent into a slope which can be processed. Even on the level of the waveform, thresholds of possible appropriation exist. Whether in the amplitude of the waveform at its peaks (the high and low points) or in the slope of its attack (shown in the distinction between the sine and square waves), qualities of sound are shown to be varyingly accessible to the subject (in this case, the D/A converter as technological subject).
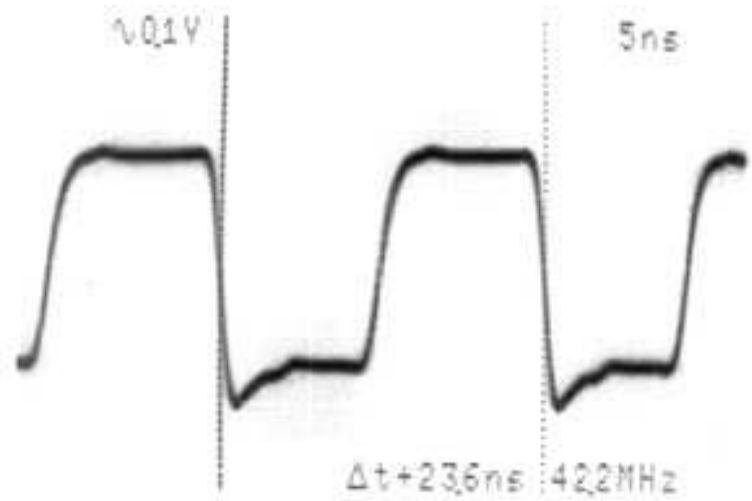
Figure 2.

Analog Square Wave

Here we see a graphic representation of a square wave following a digital-to-analog conversion in a high-end CD player, the PrimaLuna Prologue Eight. (this picture is reproduced from http://www.primaluna.nl/images/graph2.jpg, 2010, modified). It is a very good approximation of the original signal, but cannot perfectly emulate it because of the finite limitations of analog circuitry.

It has been my contention throughout this dissertation that phenomenological subjects operate according to technological intentionality. Perceptions are as such because the subject appropriates the world objectively in experience, determining possible finite experiences according to various modes of intention. Perception is highly flexible in the ways that it can adapt to certain circumstances; this reflexivity is crucial in theorizing the ability of the subject to move seamlessly between various modes of listening from one moment to the next. What is noise at first contact becomes, nearly immediately, approximated into stable perceptions. Just as the D/A converter takes an excessive square waveform and immediately translates it into something it can process (changing its objective

structure through this operation into something which is no longer a square wave), the listening subject in general transforms sounds into objects able to be incorporated into the listening system. In the case of phenomenological audition, this takes the form of renegotiating intentions and expectations in order to correspond with the structure of the sound. Alternatively, it can also mean changing the physical source of the sound in order to correspond to the intentions one wishes to maintain. This is effectively similar to turning down the input signal to the amplifier, or processing the square wave prior to its reception in order to make it appropriable in the system. *Dithering* is one way to enable such a compromise. The process of dithering makes the original sound 'tremble;' it literally adds noise to the signal to smooth out the often impossible output of digital electronics and make them accessible for analog instruments.

Much more could be said about dithering as a metaphor for phenomenological adjustment, though I will hold off here for the sake of space and clarity. Similarly, the logic of compression, equalization, and nearly every electronic manipulation of sound can be seen as an extension of preexisting intentionalities in subjective experience. This dissertation is not intended to illustrate such creative projections, however. There is still much to cover in order to find our end (the generation and maintenance of acoustic orders), so I will leave such explorations for future writings.

However, one last explanation can be offered to make sure that the concept of noise I have here outlined is not confused with other, more common definitions. Excessive sound is not something that can be experienced in itself; if it is, then it would no longer be excessive, but rather at least temporarily stabilized within a system of perception. Instead, excess is the phenomenon of being aware that a sound exceeds your ability to perceive it completely. In a

sense, *it is the perception that your perceptual intention is lacking.* Distortion is one way of marking this moment, particularly in terms of electronic excess. The headroom of a particular device determines the level at which it clips and, therefore, distorts the signal. We cannot know through the machine what the qualities are of the signal beyond this headroom; all we know is that the signal is now distorted, and that sounds exist beyond the capacity of the instrument to contain it. Similarly, in human perceptual terms, we are not aware of the nature or qualities of sounds which exceed our perception, but only *that they do* exceed. By adjusting our intentionality toward these sounds, in effect changing the specifications of our listening machine, we might be able to minimize this distortion and appropriate the sound within a stable experience. Phenomenological excess is, at its core, the trace of subjective limitations in reference to particular systems of appropriation.

The phenomenon of noise is then an uncanny, unstable event which occurs because of incongruences between the listener and the sound. 'Noise' in terms of noise music, or the description of a certain sound as 'noisy,' might spring from this experience but is not in itself the experience of noise. This is, rather, the creation of an aesthetic system; for instance, to make sense of a former experience of noise in terms of music or tone. However, sound itself is not noise; an experience of a sound might be noise, but the experience cannot be reducible to essential qualities of a particular sound. This is rather difficult to express, though perhaps a return to different common conceptions of noise will clarify the distinction.

We can identify three main concepts of noise in general use. In no particular order, the first might be a scientific conception of noise as a sound which includes all frequencies within a certain bandwidth and at certain frequencies. White noise is a sound with all frequencies at equal amplitudes; pink noise amplifies in inverse proportion to frequencies, thus aligning closely

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with the frequency response of humans (a 3dB decrease per octave); Brown, blue, red, violet, and other noises all refer to specific logarithms which produce the sound.[143] This definition of noise is often used to measure the acoustic response of a space in order to achieve accurate reproduction, to tune the room for precise listening. This relates to my concept of noise only peripherally: by making a sound which exceeds any particular tone, we are able to measure the limits of the acoustic space by noting the way that it responds both positively and negatively. The relative amplification or attenuation of certain frequencies is measured in correspondence to a very finite threshold of listening. In other words, these technical noises are used as precise measurements of discrepancies in the way that the world sounds and the way that we would prefer that it does sound. Once we have registered such distinctions through the equipment, we change the equalization of the room in order to have it correspond with our intentions.

The second concept of noise refers to unwanted or undesirable sound. Noise in the sense of annoying sounds depends on an affected subject who can respond emotionally to perceptions. This concept of noise is obviously contingent upon a great many factors: the specific disposition of the individual at certain times and places, the aesthetic system within which the subject has chosen to interpret certain sounds, the expectations of how a certain environment *should* sound (its acoustic order)… all of these must be taken into account when using the term 'noise' in this manner. Regardless, and most simply, this is a subjective-psychological attribution. It extends far beyond my concept of noise as exceeding an upper threshold of listening because it relies on cognitive and aesthetic judgments. Such determinations certainly factor into a general phenomenology, but I argue that they rely upon my more foundational logic of perceptual thresholds and excess.

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[143] Johnston, *Measured tones.* 335-6

Third, noise is often characterized as a disruption or distortion of communication. This hints at the general issue of *fidelity*, which I would generally like to neglect. Fidelity relies on the assumptions that sounds could be pure in themselves, that the medium could potentially carry a signal perfectly, and that the listener could somehow receive a sound without fundamentally changing its character. I have rejected each of these assumptions throughout my project, so it is obvious that I would not want to reintroduce them at this stage. However, it is true that noise is often referred to as a lack of precision in the transmission of a signal, be it linguistic, electronic, or otherwise. Again, I refer to my fundamental description of excess based on thresholds of listening. In this sense, it is the particular characteristics of a signal (its tone, its meaning, its volume) which are isolated as important and worthy of preservation/transference. Interference in this signal causes noise, but this interference is in a very basic sense an addition of something more than what was expected from the signal; it is excess in precisely my definition. The problem of fidelity discussions, however, is that they refer hypothetically to the pure signal without any such interference. Simply put, this is impossible within my system since I rely on these threshold boundaries to determine the (in)stability of the perception. Because of this, I could never conceive of a pure signal or sound without also recognizing its excessive boundaries.

Thus, as I've just shown, my basic concept of noise is a foundation for discussing more complex and multifaceted concepts of noise in general usage. Each of these three notions rests upon the fundamental idea that there are thresholds of listening by machine, desiring subject, or the intentional communicator, which determine the bounds within which sounds can be appropriated. To mark a noise within such a system is to note the exceeding of certain boundaries of acceptable sounding.

To sum up the excessive category of noise for now, I return to the explicit voluminous character of audition. The subject expects a certain range and type of sound. Such a range can include aesthetic constructions of appropriate sounds (the siren, the cello), amplitudes of comfortable listening (in a quiet living room or a loud basement concert), preferred predictability of the sound (the eccentricities of experimental music or the familiarity of pop music). Any time the subject cannot contain a sound within these parameters, when there is a recognized remainder of any quality of sound beyond perception, we have an instance of phenomenological noise. Said in this way, noise is omnipresent in experience, as we can never fully contain sounds within our limited perceptual modes. A phenomenological attention to listening illustrates this ever more: the more we attend to sound, the more we recognize that it is always beyond our grasp. The amplification of sound in this attentional intentionality always leads to distortion. The listening subject is the source of all auditory remainder; we are the generators of all possible noise.

Silence

It is unsurprising for me to claim that the opposite of noise is silence; but how? It is not immediately evident that such a relation exists between these ideas, and I think it is even farther from standard intuitions in the specific sense that I mean it. If I were to describe noise as loud sound, and silence as quiet sound, perhaps it would be obvious. However, since I have rejected these physicalist descriptions, we must pursue a different path toward their correlation.

My basic argument is this: noise is an instance where phenomenological intentions are inadequate to contain a sound. Sound therefore exceeds the voluminous capacity of perception. Silence is the reverse operation, wherein the subject's intentions exceed the 'sound' perceived. Again, as with noise, the actual phenomenon is not of hearing the sound itself, as a stable

audition, but instead a notice of a lacking, a trace of a possible but unattained sound. The subject reaches toward the sound but cannot grasp it.

It does not matter, therefore, whether the sound 'exists' or not. The phenomenon of silence can occur in a very loud setting, as in the classic "cocktail party effect,"[144] or in an environment with very few, quiet sounds. Even though such factors can be influential in developing this phenomenon, ultimately the description of silence depends upon the listener's intentions of volume and not an objective fact of sounds existing physically or not. The perceptual expectations of how and when a sound should be present determine its categorization as silence.

How is silence excessive, though? It is easy to characterize noise as excess because of its rather obvious link with loudness. Silence, however, is excessive in a lacking sense; by remaining beyond the field of the subjects' audition, it remains unstable and excessive as a deficiency. This instability, moreover, is understood in terms of unified experience. To acknowledge that something exists beyond the range of one's perceptual horizon is to admit that such boundaries exist. These limitations of the subject's ability, noticed acutely in the phenomenon of silence, potentially threaten more than just the perceiving of a particular sound. It can, especially in various cases of deafness, affect the subject's ability to feel connected and in control of the general world beyond particular sounds themselves.

Here, a return to Ihde can facilitate an expansion of the notion of the phenomenological auditory field. He discusses this auditory field as the implicit, situating, surrounding, eidetic boundary within which we orient all auditory judgments. Without such a field (like a geometric plane) we could not experience both the surroundability and directionality of particular sounded objects. This is especially important as we consider the implications of alterations to this field

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[144] Pollack and Pickett, "Cocktail party effect."

for the subject. The attention to different features of the sound, such as its volume, rhythm, attack, etc., alters the "attentional intentionality"[145] or, in other words, the stance one takes toward the object. This enables discernment between sounds and thus the ability to parse distinct objects in the world.

Ihde posits, after Heidegger, that "sound reveals time"[146] and that this time is presented at the "horizon"; thus, "the World transcends my opening to it."[147] The concept of the horizon functions here as a metaphorical entry into the perceptual field, at once a boundary and a passage. I am arguing as well that the temporality of sound is manifested most clearly in silence, the hidden absence of sound, the edge of the horizon. Ihde's concept of silence is only a dimension of the horizon, however, for at every moment of attended audition we are "waiting" toward the horizon and expecting the next intrusion of sound. I do not claim that in actual experience we continually wait upon sounds and thus *always* experience a silent phenomenon. Variations of auditory experience are significant because they change our actual experience of the world. Though certain logical categories, as I've outlined, can be present at different times, I do not think that they are necessarily a feature of experience universally. Additionally, and for Ihde, by claiming that we all have an auditory horizon upon which sounds and thus the World are presented to us is not to make a metaphysical claim about the nature of sounds' existence but instead to describe the way that the world becomes apparent to us in 'mere' experience. In other words, this ontology is a thick description from the perspective of human contingency.

In his account of diminishing auditory perception, or a lack of sensitivity in varying degrees of deafness, Ihde claims that the "focus" of perception is displaced from the ears to the other senses. This peripheral move maintains his centered account of hearing regardless of

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[145] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 90
[146] Ibid. 102
[147] Ibid. 107

sensory capability, since hearing is for him a global bodily experience rather than an isolated sensation through the ear alone.[148] The mechanical-sensory principle behind both hearing and touch supposedly allows for this shift without a necessarily profound loss. In Ihde's words, the deaf listener "'hears' essentially differently than the normal listener."[149] The focus is replaced by the normally fringe aspects of hearing such as tactile vibration, thus compensating for this lack through substitution. Listening, however, is preserved.

While this description of sensory exchange may be adequate for the profoundly deaf, especially the pre-linguistically deaf, it does not apply immediately to the post-lingually deaf and hard of hearing. Surely we can describe this phenomenon with such optimism: that the perceptual abilities of the person are preserved through a type of adaptation rather than simply being unavailable, completely beyond perception. Nevertheless, doing so leaves out the importance and difficulty of this transition along with the possibility (felt or actual) that no focus conversion might occur. For those who are deafened late in life, gradually, temporarily, or otherwise, the trauma of the experience of the loss itself often outweighs the potential to adapt to an extraordinarily altered world. In these cases, the very experience of sound, so long trained in association with simple auditory perception, disappears. The subject then suffers a reduction of its experienced body, both in capability and intentionality. The listener is alienated by a pervasive silencing of the world.

This may or may not debilitate the individual in respect to language. Ihde's analysis of inner speech takes into account that such linguistic operations are "contingent" upon one's perceptual and expressive capabilities.[150] While not precluding the deaf from thought itself, of course, he claims that the embodiment of language which is normally tied to an inner auditory

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[148] Ibid. 102
[149] Ibid. 44
[150] Ibid. 135

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sense is simply embodied "in different ways." Again, the concern here with the late-deafened brings a different set of issues. Most importantly, what happens when the only voice one hears is one's own thoughts, detached from expressive or perceptive mechanisms? For in the case of the late-deafened, linguistic ability and thus a cognitive sense of inner speech is highly developed and then later isolated. This isolating moment, so often represented in empirical studies of late deafness,[151] speaks of an experience of simultaneous loss and strong presence: the loss of interaction and the immediate, overwhelming presence of oneself as alone. In a more general sense and beyond language in particular, silence is the experienced isolation from an intended and/or desired presence. The lack is not merely felt as something which is not there, but as an object that *should* be there but for some uncanny reason is not. In this sense it disrupts the unity and consistency of experience, and thus the integrity of the individual's perceptual subjectivity.

Ihde's account seems to provide us with a detailed and valuable picture of normal human audition. The "normal" subject interprets auditory sensations as emanating from a horizon on which these sounds present themselves from a distance, yet are received immediately. The internalization of the sound object allows for a reflection upon a phenomenological relation of self to world, both in proximity and difference: the internal reflection enables an externalized awareness. We thus anticipate the presence of sounds in order to, through a type of echolocation where the echo is our own consciousness, project ourselves onto the world and form it through our situated activity. This is both a process of spatialization and self-awareness, integrated in the reflective intentionality of the listener.

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[151] Smith and Kampfe, "Interpersonal Relationship Implications of Hearing Loss in Persons Who Are Older."; Kampfe, "Functional and Psychosocial Aspects of Late-Onset Hearing Loss"; Barlow et al., "Living with late deafness: Insight from between worlds"; Aguayo and Coady, "The experience of deafened adults: implications for rehabilitative services."

Thus far, it appears that we have a workable schema for understanding the role of the phenomenal subject in both receiving and reforming the auditory experience. A problem arises, however, when we assume that this process can be, or even automatically is, successfully adjusted when one or more senses fail. We are all familiar with temporary sensory substitution: feeling one's way around in the dark, watching a friend's lips speak in a loud environment, or hearing the dull ring of the stud knocked through drywall. In these cases, we reorient ourselves rather effortlessly to accommodate varying degrees of relative sensory ability, often with prior knowledge of the spatial or symbolic conditions within which we currently find our selves. Because of the short temporal frame of most of these scenarios (we soon turn on the light, walk outside, or pound the nail through the wall anyway), there is simply not enough time or continuity for a reconstitution of the self from these modified environmental stimuli.

This scenario changes drastically, however, when we start to consider cases of intransient sensory loss, whether gradual or instantaneous. The relative permanence of such conditions initiates a profound change in the type of interactivity, and thus the intentionality, that the subject is able to pursue in everyday life. Additionally, the motive for adapting to these changing circumstances through sensory substitution is radically different. Whereas in our former examples the external environment called for a quick and temporary adjustment, in the case of the permanently deafened, blinded, or otherwise impaired, the catalyst for change is internal to oneself. This, of course, demands a much more thorough and foundational re-approach to the world.

While there may or may not be a sense of guilt or blame for such a condition, it nevertheless affects the degree to which one is willing to adjust to these new circumstances. It is widely reported that there is a high rate of resistance to admission of late-deafness as well as a

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lack of acknowledgement that adaptive care would be beneficial.[152] Such denial often leads to even greater isolation for the individual amidst a growing, yet potentially unrecognized, sense of being cut off from the world. I would like to explore this effect through a further refinement of our discussion of auditory loss, particularly as it affects one's capacity to place oneself in relation and response to the world as perceived.

To do this, we might start with the question: what is it that is lost when we say that one has lost a sense? For Merleau-Ponty, a sense is a functional constituent of the body even though it cannot be reduced either to an object as pure and detached nor to an irreducible function of the body as essential. Instead, the senses allow us to "rediscover ourself, since [...] the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception."[153] Rather than a simple receptivity to a given material effects, the senses emerge from curiosity and sympathetic resonance which together help form the body as a synthetic core, a responsive center or fulcrum. The intent here to problematize the relations between body, self, and world enables us to theorize beyond a unified *cogito* toward a complex yet structured interplay of incorporation and responsivity. Additionally, this allows us to identify the point at which a loss might occur from a former chain of perceptual associations.

This point of loss is introduced when a prior ability, known through memory as well as through habitual dispositions for interpreting one's environment, is experienced as absent. There are a few key observations even at this stage of the discussion. First, the *experience* of absence is necessary for loss. There are many situations where one finds oneself privileging one sense over the other without the experience of lacking other possible sensory experience. Perhaps the option to use these senses is held in reserve, or even never developed (such as acuity for the

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[152] Carson, ""What brings you here today?" The role of self-assessment in help-seeking for age related hearing loss."
[153] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception.* 239

olfactory identification of *terroir* in wine). There is a profound difference between such inattention and a situation in which one finds oneself unable to evince a prior acknowledged ability.

Second, there must be a disruption of the effectiveness of one's intentionality in relation to the resulting sense received. In other words, the normalized process of being attentive is not able to reach its intended conclusion in hearing or seeing the object at hand. This of course relies upon a prior association between the "gaze" and the ability to perceive objects, but the mark here is that ordinary chains of affect are no longer effective. Again, like the experience of absence, it is necessary for a characterization of loss for there to be an experience of failed perceptual process. However, it is not clear that one must be aware either of the specific process that has failed or the possible perceptions that are no longer accessible through this process. The substitution of senses to account for a complete world image often masks the breakdown of certain perceptual processes. For example, the increasing use of visual cues with the onset of late-deafness often hides the fact of sensory loss from the subject. Again, the synthesis of senses is able to make up for particular flaws as long as there is in the end a satisfactorily *holistic*, embodied experience.

Third, there is a noticeably reduced size of one's perceptual world. The gradual loss of auditory function diminishes the spatial dimensions that one is able to recognize and decipher. For example, the sound of an approaching object, such as an ambulance, carries with it an explicit spatial dimension as its reverberations echo the surrounding environment. This ability of sound to provide simultaneous foreground and background spatial characteristics of an environment enables one to experience the breadth and depth of one's field of perception. The

loss of such detail does not merely blur the object in question but also gives less dimension or volume to experience, which might be described as a reduced perceptual horizon.

It could be argued, in similar form to my second point yet in seeming contradiction to this third one, that the world would only be as large as one's ability to perceive it; that one expands what perceptions one is given to fulfill a totalized experience. This could roughly be characterized as Ihde's position on aural hearing loss. However, of systematic importance in this phenomenology of sensory loss and excess is the recognition that what had formerly been a normal process of sensitivity now presents itself as an absence. One is aware that the world to be perceived has not diminished, yet one is aware that the ability to perceive has been reduced. Thus, the field of possible perceptions, one's *territory* in property discourse, decreases relative to the memory of prior horizons.

Within auditory phenomenology I understand the perceptual horizon, per Ihde, as the limit of possible experience, the stage from which sounds present themselves to the subject. However, I would like to extend this analysis through the observation that a modified ability to effectively sense restricts the dimensions of the horizon, in turn imposing limits upon perceptions contained within the space set by this horizon as boundary. This modification of sense and perception is not merely a physiological disruption, but occurs in normal experience as well. We constantly adjust intentions to changing circumstances, but our adjustments do not always correspond to the world. We are often deaf to sounds which present themselves directly to us, even at times when we are able to hear them quite well.

In a direct discussion of deafness, the dynamic of memory and intentionality of the individual who seeks experience is crucial. The point at which deafness occurs, and thus the established habits of listening which have been developed, greatly affect the phenomenon of lack

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and silence. Age or other accidental factors might induce a correlative diminishment of sense and cognitive ability, but these two are not essentially linked. The existential isolation of silence can result in a profound feeling of exclusion, in deafness or other perceptual disruptions. In other words, by diminishing the perceptual horizon of the individual without in turn diminishing that person's cognitive range or expectations, inner-perceptions become greater in proportion to outer-perceptions. This observation might account for the sense of isolation and loss of social belonging that often appear in empirical investigations concerned with the effects of late-deafness on psychology and personal interaction.[154]

One of phenomenology's preoccupations, especially since Heidegger's *Being and Time*, has been the necessary yet implicit relation of death to the immediate experience of the world. In a common formulation, death is the limit of possible experience that allows us to reflect on our current condition, both perceptual and existential. As important as a consideration of death itself may be to the phenomenological project, as phenomenology moves toward areas of cognitive science and media theory that there is a growing need to understand the condition of the subject prior to the severity of facing death as a precondition for existential awareness. The value of such modal inquiry may remain, nevertheless, if we continue to discuss limit conditions of experience without seeking the extreme form as death. Or, in an auditory discussion, a notion of pure deafness. Again, pure deafness is impossible because of the sensory adaptations, often kinetic, one makes when losing the aural sense of hearing.

My brief discussion of late-deafness here is intended to be just such an investigation, also in service of the larger discussion of phenomenological excess. Instead of a total annihilation of self into "nothingness" or some similar totality, we see evidence of a particular experienced loss

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[154] Heine and Browning, "The communication and psychosocial perceptions of older adults with sensory loss: a qualitative study"; Webb and Weber, "Influence of sensory abilities on the interpersonal distance of the elderly."

of familiar function. There may be similar symptoms, such as despair, confusion, or denial;

nevertheless, by looking at these specific cases of sensory loss we are able to situate our

discussion into a larger and more detailed story of self-becoming. In doing so, this

phenomenological method might be beneficial beyond itself, as a valuable and reliable tool for

other disciplinary pursuits. To understand the dynamic limits of experience is to expose the

possibility for a "normal" experience within those boundaries. Perceptual thresholds become the

outlines of phenomenological subjectivity.

Here I have only sketched what I consider to be the most significant aspects of directions

that such examinations might explore. Before continuing, I would like to stress that a theory of

phenomenological loss is not intended to extend the scope of phenomenology to include such

events as the death of a loved one, disasters and other social tragedies, or the anguish over

misplacing one's car keys. Instead, I have tried to identify this type of sensory loss as

foundational for a full understanding of the traditional phenomenological method itself. To be

faced with one's limits in actual experience, rather than merely the hypothetical of death, is to

develop a richly grounded understanding of the phenomenal capabilities and existential

responsibilities that we hold in everyday human experience.

How does this view of loss, within the discussion of excess, offer us a new perspective on

phenomenological research more generally? By understanding the consequences of losing a

prior ability, such as isolation, confusion, or lack of self-reflection, we might gain access to a

new interpretation for those who have not yet lost. For the able, the knowledge that senses are

frail and defeasible provides a novel analysis of the current range of one's field and horizon in

relation to past and possible future limits. This does not merely add complexity to an already

duplicitous system of divergent subjective accounts; on the contrary, it deepens our analysis to

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include an implicit feature of perception. Sensory loss is a phenomenon everyone undergoes to some degree in a lifetime. Yet, as with many life process and gerontological issues, philosophy seems to lack a framework for interpreting the relative value of life phases and accompanying shifts in human experience. While I am not proposing that a phenomenology of loss is sufficient for such a goal, it appears to me to offer a helpful starting position to understand the transitions that take place in aging, traumatic events, and dynamic personal identities.

This discussion of loss is intended to inform the more precise phenomenology of silence. It should be noted that I have avoided explicit descriptions of silent situations, for example sitting alone in one's room or in the depths of a cave. Such situations can certainly be silencing for the individual; however, my concept of silence includes any moment wherein the listener is unable to achieve a stable auditory perception because of an excess of intention. The silence of a person's voice from across the room, if we try but are unable to satisfactorily perceive it, is just as phenomenologically silent as an uninterpretable breathless whisper.

<u>Environment</u>

The third type of excess I propose is quite distinct from the first two. Noise and silence refer to threshold limits of a single sound; in particular, the qualities of that sound such as loudness, attack, or timbre which may or may not correspond with intentional capacities of the individual. Environmental excess, however, is an acknowledgment that sounds often occur in a multiplicity which is impossible to contain within a single perceptual moment. The queuing of sounds, to attend to one and the other within a given situation, is what I am terming environmental listening.

This mode of audition is excessive for the simple reason that there is an awareness of objects existing beyond the current attentional intentionality, or beyond the focal field, of the

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subject. Like noise or silence, it is marked by an experience of lack and not a direct experience of the sound objects themselves. If it were to be an experience of multiple, unified sounds at once, it would no longer be excessive. Indeed, harmony is just this experience put in aesthetic terms. Thus, I am not arguing that we are incapable of listening to more than one sound at a time. Instead, I am stating that there are times when more than one sound presents itself to us and we are unable either to parse them into discrete experiences or to unify them within a single perceptual moment.

Perhaps the most common experience of environmental excess is the simple case of a sound which surprises. One of the central arguments in this dissertation is that we constantly attempt to maintain order and minimize risk in auditory perception; we seek audio-stasis. While this can be accomplished materially, it also occurs on the level of perceptual attention. In everyday acoustic situations, we are predicting what sounds will occur next based on preceding experiences or other expected cues. If we walk into a library, we expect it to be quiet with the occasional cough. In a train station or airplane we will have quite different expectations. To walk into such a situation and experience sounds from another context (car horns in the library, for instance) would be a jarring interruption from our predictions. This is often accomplished in film to great effect.[155]

The fact that sounds *can* surprise us provides basic evidence for the category of environmental excess. Were we able to predict every sound presented to us, no such intrusion or violation of expectation would exist. The iPod user, for instance, attempts to achieve a great degree of control over his or her environmental sounds. By blocking out external noise and creating sounds for the individual alone to hear, the headphones and portable music player provide one technique of controlling acoustic space so as to minimize environmental

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[155] Chion, Gorbman, and Murch, *Audio-vision: sound on screen.*

interruption. Through subtraction (of the noise of the world) and addition (of an aesthetically

preferable alternative) the listener gains control over which sounds are presented in perception.

This example is not merely in reference to environmental intrusions, however; technological

interventions can be used as controls in response to any of the excessive perceptions, or to

provide willful stable experiences for their own sake.

Taken as interruptions and multiplicities, environmental excesses are explicitly temporal

phenomena. Because the individual experiences sound *in time*, a theme sustained in

phenomenology from Husserl through Heidegger and Ihde, we must consider the presentation of

sounds on this threshold as well. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all sounds are

surprising and thus environmentally excessive. We can, and certainly do, successfully predict

sounds in our surrounding acoustic environment. These sounds are only excessive in the

moment that they appear without prediction, thus displaying again the fallibility of

phenomenological intentionality. Like the lacking of the silent, or the surplus of noise,

environmental listening places the subject in suspense and vulnerability to experience sounds

beyond intention. In a compromise between Husserl's auto-affective self and Derrida's pure

alterity, I argue that the listening subject is predicable on such disjunctions between the stable

perceptive self and the volatile sounding world.

<div align="right">From Phenomenology towards Sociology</div>

These categorical modes of listening pave the way for a much broader discussion of

acoustic order and practice. Thus far I have been describing phenomenological categories as

given modalities of experience. In the next chapters I will show how this model, based on the

logic of thresholds, permits a subject-centered account of the organization of sounds in social

space. By grounding agency in the projected resolution of excessive phenomenological

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moments, what is normally taken to be a strictly socio-political discussion necessarily involves the lived experiences of individuals in everyday circumstances. Thus, through the problematic of acoustic orders I argue that phenomenology and sociology fundamentally contribute toward the other's perspective. I am not pursuing such a correspondence as merely a cross-disciplinary gesture; rather, from the margins of each (the isolation of philosophical phenomenology; the abstract generality of social theory) the connection arises quite naturally. Indeed, through a spatial turn within the socio-political theories of Lefebvre and de Certeau we see the beginnings of phenomenology as a unifying method within quite different contexts: the philosophy of perception and the sociology of spatial order. Furthermore, this perspective allows for a description of subjective and social agency along analogical lines. The proceeding chapter paves the way for this conclusion, which will be finally realized in the last.

Chapter 6
Acoustic Orders

This chapter is a theoretical preparation for the concept of acoustic order, which in the next chapter will be shown in relation to the preceding phenomenological developments in this dissertation. I do not want to abruptly assume that such orders exist at all, or moreover are influenced by phenomenological processes. Therefore, to conceive a social argument such as this I will be setting forth definitions of organization, a theory of everyday life, and the role of habitual skills as foundations for a logic of socio-phenomenological ordering. The next chapter will develop, finally, the correspondence between the technical listening process, its limits in excessive perception, and the spatial configurations of sounds in social terms.

Organization and Phenomenological Projection

The concept of the acoustic order relies upon a theory of organization on simultaneously social, political, and phenomenological lines. I contend that certain orderings of practice are, in some ways, analogous between these levels; three possible interpretations of the term 'organization' inform this idea. "Organization" in general references a certain *organicity* beyond mere instrumentality,[156] as opposed to *order* which could remain a purely rational quality or description. As I transition into a sociological narrative from the phenomenological, the embodiment thesis I relied upon in the first part requires a counterpart. This is, for socio-political discussions, largely a concept of organization. Thus, to tackle that concept first allows for the development of a fuller notion of *order* which could transcend the subjective and objective descriptions.

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[156] Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between immanent and transcendental (organized) "planes" of analysis could be helpful as a suggestion, though I have not pursued such an explicitly metaphysical discussion here. (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?* 142)

To begin, organization could be seen in the context of social movements, wherein individuals and groups are formed as collectives for intentional action. Whether as labor unions, governmental regulatory bodies, or community action initiatives, these forms of organization are based on specified motives and visions of the end result to be achieved. Such initiatives do apply in sound studies, but at a later stage than my discussion assumes. I am seeking to describe the roots and origin of acoustic orders in reciprocal practice between phenomeno-logy and socio-logy. Purposeful programs are most certainly a part of this formulation, but only in the context of the other (phenomenological, conceptual, social-structural) considerations.

For example, R. Murray Schafer's works on *soundscapes*[157] have been influential for decades now in the emerging study of 'acoustic ecology' and noise regulation initiatives. Beyond merely a theory of auditory interpretation and acoustic patterns in society, Schafer's work provides a program for preserving and encouraging healthy sonic spaces. His approach has been refined and emulated throughout the world, often toward the explicit end of changing noise policies to promote healthier urban spaces.[158] This is one type of social organization, which arises from a purposeful theoretical goal and results in policy and behavioral change. It is not the primary concern within my project, but Schafer's method and influence would not be irrelevant to my own formulation.

Social organization could also be, in a second sense, the arrangement of social patterns as a more functional, but not necessarily as deliberate, company of agents. A coffee shop or library arranges social behaviors in such a way that acoustic orders are made manifest in social space

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[157] Schafer, *The tuning of the world*; Schafer, *The new soundscape*.
[158] Irvine et al., "Green space, soundscape and urban sustainability"; Genuit and Fiebig, "Psychoacoustics and its Benefit for the Soundscape Approach"; Papadimitriou et al., "Cartographic Representation of the Sonic Environment"; Adams et al., "Sustainable soundscapes: Noise policy and the urban experience"; De Coensel and Botteldooren, "The quiet rural soundscape and how to characterize it."

(and many other types of orders, of course).[159] Individuals then go about their various activities

by reproducing or violating these norms of the spatial organization.[160] Identities are formed

depending on this tension, as are roles and states of belonging which influence future action.

Here, the *organism* of society at a structural level is exposed. This, as I've stated, is crucial in

my project. While I am not exclusively pursuing a structural-functional account of social

interaction, such a formulation is certainly not rejected in this analysis.

Finally, social organization can be read as an emergent association and configuration of

various regulatory forces: visible, symbolic, or implicit. This is the general type of organization

which I am targeting in this project. It is also the broadest conception of the term. It is not

necessarily a call to deliberate action or a 'real' structure necessarily supplying the logic for all

social action; it is, instead, a way of explaining social interaction, states of awareness, categorical

concepts and political forces along the same methodological arc.

I take it that part of the goal of interdisciplinarity is to allow the subject matter a great

deal of flexibility in determining the structure as well as the content of the investigation. Too

often, and in traditional disciplinary contexts, the methodological rules of engagement are set

forth before the subject is even pursued. In Philosophy, the subject must be logical and reducible

to rational principled arguments. In Sociology, social forces are translated into objective facts

which are then quantified and qualified depending on the researcher's program and training. A

discipline is, after all, the regulation of method to ensure reproducibility within the field (and, in

turn, the reproduction of the field itself).

As I pursue an interdisciplinary, or trans-disciplinary, project in sound studies, I have

tried to extend my definitions as widely as possible at the start so that I don't unnecessarily limit

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[159] Pheasant et al., "The acoustic and visual factors influencing the construction of tranquil space in urban and rural environments tranquil spaces-quiet places?."
[160] Childs, "Sssh! The quiet revolution."

the scope of the objects I purport to study. This wide casting of the nets is frustrating at first because it does not lead to immediate conclusions. For instance, when I claim that technology is the logic/system of intentional practice and that technique is the practice of that logic, we cannot immediately conclude what happens when a hammer is swung. If my definition were stricter, for instance that technology is a material artifact made into a tool and used toward a constructive end, we could then immediately say that the hammer in use is a technology. However, this definition would preclude various forms of bureaucracy, logical mental techniques, symbolic systems of representation in language, and countless other orderings of practice that I take to be just as technological as the hammer.

The concept of social organization (and the development through it of acoustic order) falls under this same wide-net initiative in definition. In no way do I want to be unclear in what I take to be forms of social organizations in theory and practice. A broad definition is not necessarily ambiguous, but only temporarily vague. Clarity is gained not in the initial definition but in the intellectual pursuit of exploring the specific site of analysis. My aim is to not over-determine this end result from the outset. In my case, 'acoustic orders' need to be observed and explicated as unique configurations of perception, concept, and action. As a type of social organization, acoustic orders are susceptible to a range of similar theoretical explanations to which other organizations are subject. Thus, my supporting theorists, though they do not necessarily discuss acoustics or audition directly, nevertheless pursue comparable systematic logics in their own studies of social orders.

To reiterate: social organizations, in my analysis, are configurations of practice on multiple socio-phenomeno-spatial levels. Acoustic orders are specific forms of social organizations which are defined by the focus on auditory, aesthetic and acoustic factors. I have

chosen 'acoustic' as the primary term, rather than the other two options, because it represents the broadest conception of sonic practice. Acoustics, as a reverberatory metaphor, spans dimensions of phenomenological, sociological, political, architectural, and many other fields.[161]

Thus, the identification of acoustic orders presumes that social organization of some type occurs more generally, which I will define according to Lefebvre's three modes of spatiality. The existence of acoustic orders displays the essential heterogeneity of social arrangements. This confirms the impossibility of their singular unification in theory (society cannot be reduced to a single matrix of interpretation) as well as the more general correspondence between different social-spatial realms. The fact that social acoustic practices are reciprocally related to phenomenological techniques and excesses of audition, which is my central assertion in the dissertation, merely hints at the multiplicity of factors that need to be taken into account when attempting to outline such a complex social phenomenon.

<u>The Order of Investigation</u>

What, more specifically, can be said about the relationship between acoustic orders and social organizations? There are multiple ways of conceiving formations in society. I do not want to assume that society is a self-regulating organism by which logical principles of action are continually sustained. This places too much weight on some form of invisible agency in the structure of society itself, a type of Hegelian rationality. On the other hand, I do not want to assume that society is necessarily degenerative or nihilistic. This seems to be a tendency in poststructuralist literature, where all condensations of meaning are seen as ripe for deconstruction and dispersal. As my critique of Derrida's critique of Husserl's auto-affection

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[161] Nancy's work on listening highlights the phenomenological nature of audition as a *resonance*, which is helpful in viewing the subject as partially determined by, but all the while contributing to, the production of acoustic orders. (Nancy and Mandell, *Listening*.7; 21)

suggested, when taken too far a deconstructive skepticism simply becomes unworkable in intellectual practice.

Therefore, it is somewhere between these poles that I have been operating in this project. I do want to search constantly for orderings in social practice and the categorical conception/perception of sound. However, I do not want to assume that these traits *necessarily* exist in the site of analysis or that they exist *at all* apart from their construction in the researcher's investigation. My theoretical and practical approaches in this dissertation, then, contingently frame the conclusions I draw.

For example, in a philosophy of technology, the designation of a technological artifact as an innovation arises as the result of the structure of a particular investigation. This does not preclude another researcher, or the same one at another time, from observing a wholly different set of qualifications and deciding upon a quite different determination. For instance, by returning to the example of the introduction of turntablist techniques we can see that the innovation occurred not necessarily because of a different set of material artifacts, but because of a different logic of practice. This is an analysis done from the perspective of the DJs and audiences, taking their values as qualifiers of innovative activity. On the other hand, we could pursue a research trajectory from the perspective of the manufacturers of the material artifact, for whom the introduction of new techniques of playback/reproduction made little to no difference in their technological activities (at the time). Thus, from that perspective, turntablism would not be considered an innovation but rather simply one of the many potential uses to which a mechanism can be put.

I am continuing this same argument in the dissertation, to the extent that it is from the outlined perspective of the project at hand that certain *orders* arise in observed socio-

phenomenological practices. The various qualifications to be observed in auditory practice constitute the outlines by which acoustic orders are manifest. I do not claim, then, that such orders exist in any other form than as hermeneutical constructs of this type of project. This is not a thoroughgoing relativism; it is a constructivist/pragmatist position on the ontological status of research objects.

Can I then maintain that order exists as more than an analytical fiction? Just like 'function', the concept of order is created by and through the process of analyzing a situation. The opposites of these concepts, in disorder and dysfunction, would be equally appropriate as analytical tools.   The order/chaos binary, to put it dramatically, is an extreme formulation. According to what I've just set forth, whether we call it "order" or "discordance" is somewhat arbitrary. Both rely on a methodological system by which these terms make sense. These terms gain meaning and applicability depending on how that system is constructed, not as an absolute judgment. Within my system, the concept of *order* is simply a more productive framework than its correlative negation in the concept of *disorder*.   Nevertheless, in my discussion and reliance upon the problem of excessive perceptions, the disorderliness of experience remains an instrumental and reciprocal generator of any present orderings. Impositions of orders in space are the responses to disorderly, excessive experiences.

Thus, the concept of order presumes differing degrees of solidification and stability. Acoustic orders emerge in practice along with innumerable other orders, some acoustic and most not. The contradictions between these spaces of practice assure that no one order can become completely hegemonic and, consequently, that all orders are only effective relative to competing orders in the same a/effectual field. I am utilizing the hermeneutic of order because I think it is a productive way to study the ways we make sound meaningful on individual and social levels,

especially when it is seen as the result of excessive, disordered perceptions. In de Certeau's terms, these negotiations between stability and instability are the strategies and tactics which produce the current formation of socio-cultural practices.

<div align="right">What Constitutes the Everyday?</div>

De Certeau brings us to considering this notion of everyday life and the broader consequences of such an analysis. For him and Lefebvre, the multiple overlaps of practices from government regulations to household routines are taken to be effective in the same schema. Rather than seeing cultural and political ideologies as distinct from homespun customs, he puts them side by side to expose the pervasive influence of both in each. Similarly, I am using a singular metric to study acoustic orders on phenomenological and social-structural levels to try to expose their similarities and shared genealogies. By starting the analysis in everyday contexts, and even more specifically in the phenomenological experience of these spaces, I aim to reform common conceptions of acoustics through a ground-up examination.

Yet, if this all refers back to a practice of everyday life in its specificity, we must be clear as to what exactly constitutes such a field. Certainly, everyday practices are distinct from institutional practices even if we evaluate them in the same way. Though institutions must operate in spaces of practice which themselves operate in the everyday (the factory is, after all, a material artifact as well as an organizational principle), there is supposedly a nature of transcendence in principles such as capitalism, ethical codes, aesthetic constructions and other ideals. This is why we claim that these ideologies extend so pervasively throughout socio-political space, for good or ill. Is there such an assertion of transcendence in the everyday life of individuals as well? And if not, might we reevaluate our assumptions about how institutions are effective on this ground level?

Even if we validate everyday life activities as worthwhile sites of analysis, as central sites in a political theory, they remain by definition difficult to study in context. One feature of the everyday is its privacy, its separation from the visible public. While providing the necessary material foundation for all social activity, 'everydayness' implies invisibility in the light of more manifest structures and patterns. As a researcher, to view the public doesn't necessarily change that public's disposition; to view the individual in the solitude of the living room almost certainly does. Thus, to study incidents of private acoustic ordering, particularly when we take the phenomenological position toward a social end, becomes very difficult. This begins the discussion of 'evidence' towards my conclusions, a discussion I will defer for a moment. The site of analysis (the everyday) must be delimited before the logical systems within it (acoustic orders) can be recognized.

Leaving Lefebvre and de Certeau momentarily aside, I'd like to briefly describe my own conception of the everyday as it applies to this project in particular. Sounds of contemporary life, familiar or alien, increasingly bombard our senses and categorical-aesthetic traditions. Attempts to appropriate this profusion of sound flourish; for example, the category of "world music" is often used in order to interpret other traditions as music rather than automatically as noise (and, of course, profit from this exotic appraisal). Individuals and institutions require increasingly complex tools to overcome the din of modernity, itself partially produced by these new mechanisms of control. The headphones mask the Muzak which must drown the voices attempting to be heard over the roar of traffic in the street, all with a background environment filled with jet noise, air conditioning fans, and refrigerators. The ideal of isolating oneself in a private, intentional acoustic space becomes especially difficult the more one integrates oneself in

a shared material space. This often takes the form of a cycle of compromises between equally undesirable states of noise and silence.

The 'everyday' is constituted in the tension between intentionality (as volition) and affordances[162] (in terms of spatial conditions). It is *not* a primordial or nostalgic reality set apart from modern society, a historical way of life lost in a hyper-technologized world. The everyday arises necessarily in the conjunction of individual and structure, neither of which can operate independently of the other. This marks the potential difference between everyday analyses and purely institutional/systematic explanations. In the latter, the concept of intentional agency is seen as a reactive force, if it is seen at all. Individuals or groups are given agency in this scheme merely in response to ideological and material configurations which order society toward their own ends. This overdetermined system is taken to be self-sufficient and even detached from other more mundane material conditions of life, however much it is claimed to impinge upon them.

In the former account, everyday agents (not merely as individuals, but as some type of provisional unity) are intentional with or without hegemonic social forces being imposed upon them. In the full analysis, intentionality is only understood in the context of its action in the conditions of these structural realities; nevertheless, intentionality is also understood on its own as a generative principle in society. Ideologies and market forces do not emerge spontaneously without the agency of people to guide their development. Individuals, on the other hand, do develop intentionalities because of their constitutive unity of experience.[163] As Merleau-Ponty states:

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[162] Gibson, "The theory of affordances."
[163] Merleau-Ponty and Smith, *Phenomenology of perception.* xix-xxii

What distinguishes intentionality from the Kantian relation to a possible object is that the unity of the world, before being posited by knowledge in a specific act of identification, is 'lived' as ready-made or already there.[164]

Extending from the traditional Kantian account wherein the subject's unity is supposed through apperception, Merleau-Ponty claims that the unity of experience is a world-unified phenomenon from the start. The ontology of the everyday assumes, from this embedded foundation, that experience must be brought within a system of intelligibility that prefigures the world as unified (in a Kantian sense) as well as lived or practiced *already as* a coincidence of self and world in experience (in Merleau-Ponty's terms). To analyze the world as distinct from the operations of individual experience, or to attempt to isolate experience without the necessity of its practice in a given world, is to construct a too-convenient theory that is simply inapplicable to the pragmatics of actually living.

This interactivity of intention and structure is the focus of the everyday analysis, even though it is recognized as never being reducible to the neat outlines of a theory. Nonetheless, an attempt is made to constantly expose the contradictions and negotiations in this field. This is why the 'everyday' methodology is so pertinent to this project. It combines analytical worlds too often taken in total distinction. Phenomenology has operated as a subfield of logic, epistemology, and ontology. As a philosophy, it has often tried to assume a transcendent role in the generation of universal knowledge. Sociology, on the other hand, has been both an empirical science and a theoretical project of explanation. Even within cultural studies and discussions of social change, sociologists frequently neglect to pursue an understanding of how deliberations and actions are generated in the context of individuals' intentions. For the general practice of sociology, social effects are reducible to social causes. This cyclical explanation might be

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[164] Ibid. xix

internally coherent, but it is unsatisfying as a general theory of how the world fits together and performs.

I seek to show how the correspondence of these theories is mutually beneficial for both fields. Social forces which act upon phenomenological experience should be taken into account in the *epoché*. Phenomenological processes of interpretation and awareness are crucial for understanding the generation of social orders, both teleologically and in material action. For the sake of sound studies, this represents a starting point for interpreting patterns of sonic behavior, interpretive practice, and acoustic configuration. Such understandings are often implicitly assumed in the literature; I aim to refine an explicit theory of socio-phenomenological agency in terms of auditory intentionalities and their reflections in acoustic orders.

These two options represent the fields I am attempting to make relevant to each other. On a social-structural level, orders do emerge as habits and routines of practice. They may or may not be deliberately constructed, and thus their generative spontaneity is possible as an epiphenomenon of other practices. In other words, acoustic orders may be unintended consequences of other practices, knowingly concerned with the auditory or not.

Order-making is also, and non-contradictorily, an essential part of subjective listening itself. In explicating my phenomenology of listening, one of the central assertions is that all interpretation of sound relies upon techniques of categorizing perceptions. This process of parsing auditory space, like the spontaneity of more explicitly social orderings, does not depend upon conscious reflection by the listener. Categorization is a feature of perception and may later develop into a conscious conceptual awareness; however, consciousness is not a requirement to claim that sounds are organized and reproduced according to intentional frameworks and classifications. I am forming a rough outline of this process from a very particular angle and not

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to the exclusion of many other types of studies of this same process (neurological, psychological, mechanical, etc.).

Part of this outline, as well, is the corroboration between these social and phenomenological spaces. The formation of acoustic order in mental space is habitually projected onto social space, thus influencing the development of these more general patterns of behavior. Amalgamations of individuals' perceptual preferences and regulatory gestures coincide with pre-established acoustic routines and rituals to form acoustic order in the most general/abstract sense.

Evidence, Falsification, and Generalizability

The ambition of this project must continually be tempered in order to remain applicable to both the theoretical traditions from which I draw as well as auditory procedures practiced at a lived level. Part of this concerns the extent to which observed practices are taken as confirmation of the hypothesis; in this case, that phenomenological auditory practices are projected onto society through practice and form into what I have termed acoustic orders. As I've already covered, I began with phenomenological interrogation as a first step toward understanding the conditions of auditory experience. Now I would like to transition toward a social account, informed by this prior phenomenology, to observe the forces which act upon the listener from 'outside' the interiority of phenomenological (an internal 'representational') space. This internal/external shift is one of the primary contributions that this study claims to add to discussions of auditory and acoustic practice.

Still, it remains to identify the evidential factors which would prove or refute this theory. It could be asserted that the concept of acoustic order is self-affirming. If my assumption is that all auditory techniques contribute to the formation of acoustic orders on both perceptual

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and social levels, then it appears that the concept of order is a universally determined quality. Such a conclusion would be irrefutable and thus unworkable when attempting to outline the bounds of such activities.

If 'order' were the only quality at stake in this analysis, such a criticism might apply. However, I have not described order in terms of an eventual full ordering of society according to certain appropriate codes, leading to a holistic realization at some end of history. Instead, order is continually contrasted with disorder, misinterpretation, and negotiation in the context of lived practices. Indeed, I claim that it is through excessive perceptions, existing by definition outside of stable rationality, that such orders are generated in human intentional practice. Order cannot be understood here as anything other than a temporary configuration of intentions and affordances which allows for contingent action. This is a way of reading soundscapes, ambiances,[165] and the process of audition which can, but need not, be taken to a universalizing conclusion.

Another way to approach this question: what does *not* count as evidence? What lies outside the bounds of this investigation because it does not direct us toward concluding the hypothesis in any way? I refer to my discussion in the section just prior to this regarding the construction of the object of investigation. Evidence, like order, is something that arises because of the way that an investigation has been structured. Evidence does not exist outside of a determined system of meaning or the framework of methodological interpretation. I can only speak, therefore, to the types of evidence I will be considering in this project. I cannot universally deny that certain features of the world seemingly unrelated to my own study (the expansion of the corn industry in the American Midwest, the government structure of 5th century

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[165] The Ambiance(s) Network, recently formed alongside the CRESSON research project, attempts to reconsider architectural and urban spaces along multi-sensorial lines. ("www.ambiances.net.")

China, the mating habits of South American parrots) would be *a priori* inapplicable to another study of sound within a different context. Indeed, each of these examples could easily be translated into a study of auditory ecologies. The polluting noise of agricultural machines, imposed restrictions on speech and song, and the destruction of silent airspace as a precondition for hearing mating calls from a distance could all be undertaken as legitimate concerns within a sound study.

For example, the lived space of the dwelling, reflected upon by Bachelard, Heidegger, and others, could provide a particularly clear situation for explaining a theory of intentional acoustic practice. Because dwellings necessarily occur in the context of public and environmental spaces, the boundaries of such structures become the contested outlines of an acoustic order. The home is a site of privacy, control, and appropriation in opposition to unruly and cacophonous public space. Additionally, because it operates so directly in the lives and psyche of individuals, it is a particularly evident example of the transfer between intentional phenomenological states and material projections of these intentions.

A second example takes a more explicitly technological approach by investigating the use of new portable technologies which enable the individual to extend the acoustic control normally exercised in appropriated spaces (such as homes or concert halls) into public spaces not normally associated with such 'performances'. The iPhone app "RjDj" and similar applications, which receive, manipulate, and reproduce environmental sounds as intentionally aesthetic representations, are becoming commonplace in urban acoustic practice. These technologies are the next step in a line of mediating artifacts, from the telephone to the hearing aid to the walkman and iPod, which enable listeners to achieve ever-greater power over the type of acoustic space they desire to inhabit. The techniques and habits of such technologies, moreover,

represent new forms of real-time musical responses to an increasingly loud world. Whereas playback of prerecorded songs in headphones allows the individual isolation from public acoustic space, these interactive technologies incorporate that shared space into the reproduction itself. This, like the revision of record playback by early DJs, is considered as an innovation in auditory practice and indicative of a new intentionality operating upon and within the music device.

As evidence toward the existence of acoustic orders, neither of these fields would provide a complete account. The concept of acoustic order is proposed as a way of reading and understanding auditory practice. It may have no metaphysical existence beyond its use as a grammatical tool in my study. Nevertheless, I suggest its usefulness in this limited hermeneutical sense. The dissertation is, of course, merely a preliminary stage of my research. I intend the development of the concept here to continue in future projects, wherein diverse collections of data can be taken as further supporting evidence of the multiplicity of auditory techniques.

Sound studies, in its diversity and youth, currently allows for this type of flexibility. As more texts are released in the field, there will surely develop channels and paths within which proprietary vocabularies will emerge. At the moment, these are mostly appropriated from distinct prior disciplines. In my case, phenomenology and sociology provide the accepted disciplinary toolkits; however, their integration in this project distorts some of the methodological clarity they presuppose on their own terms. I think that this is a necessary step toward revising each discipline to be more congruent with the other. My primary goals are to outline a theory of audition that takes into account the influence of socio-cultural customs as well as to develop a theory of acoustic order that relies upon the interpreted categories of habituated

auditory practice. By exposing the reciprocal sympathy between two fields often considered in isolation, I hope to provide individuals, institutions and scholars with new means of understanding, respecting, and exploring the sounding world. The evidence within this project is, in a limited sense, the coherence of my vocabulary and explanatory logic. Its future application within specific fields of inquiry, such as particular dwelling spaces or portable technologies, would represent an empirical test of my theoretical structure. Nevertheless, in this project I am restricting such evidential qualifications to the judgment of my theory as logically coherent and useful for rethinking audition in spatial contexts.

From a phenomenological perspective, I am indebted to and must continually reference common perceptual interpretations if I am to remain relevant to a general public. While I intend to interpret these phenomenological observations beyond themselves, particularly as social effects, a potential neglect of the common sense pragmatics of perception would be detrimental to this project in both form and application. The relevance of the project therefore depends on the types of evidence I am willing to accept in the argument. I am as open as I can be to such varied foundations at the same time as I have considered it necessary to identify particularly useful sites for this research. In the end, it is my intent that the theoretical construction I undertake in this project be able to extend across these multiple contextual spaces, becoming useful in my own research beyond the dissertation as well as in the more general development of sound studies.

<div align="right">Shaping the Margins of a Theory</div>

Edward W. Soja, in *Thirdspace*[166], suggests that Henri Lefebvre wrote *The Production of Space*[167] as a musical composition rather than a book in the traditional sense. This metaphorical

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[166] Soja, *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places.* 9
[167] Lefebvre, *The production of space.*

construction of theory as a fugue is, as he puts it, a "a way of spatializing the text, of breaking out of the conventional temporal flow of introduction-development-conclusion to explore new "rhythms" of argument and (con)textual representation."[168] Indeed, he speaks beyond this particular work of Lefebvre's to the majority of his compositions. Soja's treatment of Lefebvre in the book, as a creative explorer rather than merely an academic laborer, implies a celebration of a type of critical inquiry that takes as its starting point, as well as its conclusion, the multifaceted nature of all social, textual, and spatial constructs.

I have continued this attitude and assumption within my work. I do, however, have one significant revision to the method that Soja and others (including Lefebvre himself) employ. The problem is generated by the de-centering poststructuralist conclusion as it wraps back into theoretical explanation. When the world is taken to be the product of various discursive structures, be they individual, academic, institutional, governmental, or aesthetic, and we are then inclined to write about such circumstances from our various disciplinary perspectives, the writing itself becomes infected with a type of creative abandon. We, as poststructuralists of various sorts, relish the puns and ironies which hint toward, but are never allowed to directly inform, the state of affairs we have accepted as given. This proclivity was infamously exploited by Sokal[169] in *Social Text* in the same year Soja published *Thirdspace*. Two years later,[170] Sokal went on to explore the 'affair' and its consequences. While he remains unduly critical of a field he admits to not understanding, I take his primary argument to be that we must be continually mindful of the pragmatic consequences of our theoretical discourses. When a text becomes a mere celebration of its own wit, it loses scientific validity and thus academic interest beyond rhetorical construction techniques.

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[168] Soja, *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places. ibid.*
[169] Sokal, "Transgressing the boundaries: Toward a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity."
[170] Sokal, "What the social text affair does and does not prove." 17

Thus, I have attempted to avert this intellectual trap in my work at the same time as I have been appropriating literatures to which this criticism could apply. I am speaking to a field (Sound Studies) which remains, to date, methodologically unorganized. If anything, it is parasitic upon various other established disciplines to the extent that it seeks a foundation for establishing a vocabulary beyond itself. Political Science, History, Philosophy, Musicology, and many other disciplines are tapped for their intellectual resources and academic capital to prove that we are operating in a legitimate space of inquiry. This interdisciplinary methodology is responsible, nevertheless, to respect the disciplines from which it derives at the same time that it reformulates them for its own purposes. In moving toward a theory of socio-phenomenological order, we must be particularly careful when appropriating works out of context and content.

It is also necessary to discuss the shift between acoustic "order" and "orders." It is my intention to formulate this concept as an "order" only in the sense of identifying particular instances of such sonic organization and manipulation. However, to speak of order as a singular event would misconstrue the concept in any practical sense because of the essentialization and universalization it implies. There can never be one monolithic acoustic order, even in one locale. While we may be able to isolate a specific order (as a noun), become aware of an ordering (as a verb), or even (as an adjective) describe a situation as dis/ordered, our determinations are not total. The focus, philosophically or sociologically, on a particular site of analysis brackets but does not negate the existence of an innumerable host of other simultaneous sites.

I am formulating the term "acoustic orders" in my title and analysis in order to continually remind the reader of the polymorphous construction of these auditory sites. I am neither seeking a universal logic of acoustic organization nor reducing it to the phenomenological extension of isolated individuals. Acoustic orders exist in a space between

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technological structure and technical practice, between the institutions that enable the means of their production and the individuals who qualify the ways of consumption.

In terms of the current discussion of social organization, acoustic orders are ways of identifying coagulations of auditory practice; I do not consider it necessary that they refer to deliberate projects of group formation or determined ends. An acoustic order might have no other end than as an emergent structure resulting from motives quite distinct from anything concerning the auditory. For example, the orders created in the marginal spaces between various sections of the urban landscape (alleyways, rooftops, bridges) are no less taken to be fully acoustically ordered than the symphony hall or the prison cell. Intentionality operates in each of these situations in ways that in/directly condition the sounds liable to be heard and interpreted there.

I utilize this concept of order as a constructive principle, though not as a necessarily positive statement regarding the configurations of auditory practice evident in society. I do not ethically privilege 'order' above 'disordered' or 'anarchic' aesthetic preferences. I see all of these as various formations of a more general concept of organization, categorical projection, and the subsequent ability of the individual to interpret sounds along symbolic, aesthetic, or excessive threads. The concept of acoustic order does not, therefore, imply unity, purpose, or beneficence. It is an analytical tool by which habits and customs are understood as operating within and external to individual phenomenological processes.

Acoustic orders emerge in the tension, and at times the contradiction, between the meaning-making activity of listening and the more generally appropriate procedures of aural organization in the social environment. This constant nervousness between tactics and strategies generates both the conditions of intelligibility (by solidifying categories of interpretation on

social levels) as well as the means for their revision and dissolution. Again, I hope that this project exposes ways for individuals to understand and reclaim acoustic territory against the proliferation of uncontrollable noise; often, this is unintentional (the spontaneously generated noisiness of modern life) and yet significantly restrictive (issues of free speech taken to aesthetic and artistic ends would include freedom of sonic expression more universally).

Acoustic orders are only isolated when we consider them analytically. This should not be confused with an 'actual' state of affairs in the world, where multiple orderings overlap in a blooming, buzzing confusion. I have intended to describe the phenomenal auditory realm in such a way that individual experiences can be isolated at the same time that they are situated within competing regulatory practices and codes. To explain the possibility of multiple acoustic orders, we must start with an investigation of a single order to which others can be applied and affected thereafter.

An *acoustic order* is a social product of the projection of individual auditory experience onto a spatial, material-symbolic world. This definition contains three essential components, none of which should be divorced from the conception of the others. These factors are the social, the phenomenological, and the political. I have spent the majority of the dissertation thus far discussing the phenomenological, so I will let that account stand and take this opportunity to further develop the other two fields.

<div align="right">The Social</div>

Because many of the resources upon which I draw have their roots in the Structuralist/Post-Structuralist tradition, I would like to pursue a discussion of the social primarily through these terms. To conceive of the social in terms of a structural account is, as Durkheim puts it, to do a science of social facts. Social facts "[consist] of manners of acting or

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thinking, distinguishable through their special characteristic of being capable of exercising a coercive influence on the consciousness of individuals."[171] Thus, to identify such forces that operate upon individual behaviors we must take as evidence the variation of behaviors between different *real* social situations. Structuralists, whether in sociological or linguistic formulations, are determined to unearth this latent functionality[172] that they take to be the foundation for manifest social effects. In its semiotic formulation, the classical Saussurian distinction between signifier and signified displaces intended linguistic meaning from the mechanics of its dispersal.[173] In both cases we see the attempt, by the researcher, to parse the world into discrete units of analysis and thereby subsume it within a definite system of interpretability. More specifically, these units or facts need not be directly observable (because, as 'social' they operate in a forceful space between individual observations) even as they must be methodologically clarified.

In a structural account of the social, the scientist is primarily concerned with the articulation of principles of operation within the field of inquiry. Moreover, Structuralism has surely not passed; we might even say it is resurging following (and as a reaction against) postmodern excesses. For example, in a body of literature which influences my development of categories of audition, the French Center for Research on Sonic Space and the Urban Environment (CRESSON) has been working meticulously to chart various "sonic effects" that emerge in the interaction between the listening self and the sonic environment.[174] Drawing upon acoustics, phenomenology, urban planning, and other fields, their work describes in detail effects

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[171] Durkheim and Lukes, *The rules of sociological method.* 43
[172] Merton, *Social theory and social structure.* 90
[173] De Saussure and Bally, *Course in general linguistics.* 66-67
[174] Augoyard et al., *Sonic experience: a guide to everyday sounds.*

such as resonance, phase, harmony, and distortion in such a way that underlying structures of experience can be mapped, categorized, and applied elsewhere.

This is a helpful guide, both theoretically and pragmatically. My three categories of phenomenological interpretation are intended to complement, albeit at a different analytical and experiential level, such descriptions of auditory experience. The CRESSON work represents, for the current argument, an indication that structuralism has maintained a privileged position in various sciences, even for those who have been known to diverge from its core principles. It is to the poststructuralists that we now turn to see how different, or similar, their approaches and conclusions have developed.

Without attempting to outline a full history of poststructuralism, we must recognize that as a social theory it cannot be understood without recourse to the political theoretical writings of the Marxist tradition. It was, in many ways, the rebirth of Marxist thought in critical French intellectualism that spurred the critique of structuralism as a social model. Althusser,[175] Marcuse,[176] Lefebvre,[177] and Baudrillard[178] all contributed significantly to this movement, though it has been Foucault, Barthes, Derrida, and Lacan who have been most influential in bringing this thought to English speaking discussions. Abandoning much of the overt Marxist language of their predecessors, the latter four integrated the critical political edge of the neo-Marxists with the content of the structuralists (namely, systems of language and interpretation). This led to a vision of the social as a field of force relations, as both of the former traditions had maintained, at the same time as they denied that any single explanatory system (an order,

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[175] Althusser, Balibar, and Brewster, *Reading capital*; Althusser, *For Marx*.
[176] Marcuse, *The aesthetic dimension: Toward a critique of Marxist aesthetics*; Marcuse, *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*.
[177] Lefebvre et al., *Henri Lefebvre: key writings*; Lefebvre, Trebitsch, and Moore, *Critique of everyday life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*. (particularly the introduction)
[178] Baudrillard, *The system of objects*; Baudrillard, *The mirror of production*; Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*.

grammar, or ego) could be universally applicable. Indeed, any universal system became suspect

or essentially dismissed as an ideological/hegemonic fiction.

Poststructuralism is not merely the critique of structuralist accounts; it is, as well, the

injection of a particularly critical methodology which actively speaks against the suggestion of a

totalizing epistemic narrative. Simultaneously, however, it establishes a new regime of dispersal

and irreconcilable difference. Baudrillard, for instance, can thus conclude: "Our all-too-beautiful

strategies of history, knowledge, and power are erasing themselves... the social in its systematic

extension creates fatal conditions for the social itself."[179] We are left with a destructured

phenomenology, a return to an ontology relative to infinitely particularized interpretation rather

than systematic or scientific pursuit.

I'd like preliminarily to take the moderate position between these supposed extremes, to

deny both that the structuralist can find a universal system and that the poststructuralist can

productively continue with such a fracturing conclusion. However, as will become clear, I lean

toward the poststructuralist mentality at the same time as I investigate the possibility that

categories, as a logical parsing of experience, might still apply to the organization of our social

(particularly auditory) space. It is not unfruitful to pursue a logic of categorical

phenomenological technique that makes sense of our perceptual experience by way of general

frameworks of interpretability. The transcendental Kantian categories of intelligibility

notwithstanding,[180] I have proposed that it is still possible to outline modes of experience which

can apply across a wide (if not universal) range of human experience.

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[179] Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication.*
[180] Kant, Guyer, and Wood, *Critique of pure reason.* 212

In the case of auditory perception, a limit experience to this universality is deafness.[181] We cannot universalize audition as a necessary sense, and there should be no motivation to do so within the current project. It is within the range of the hearing, to whatever extent that can be applied,[182] that this discourse is intended to speak. As I discussed at length in the preceding chapter on excess, audition even in a normal sense is always susceptible to excessive intrusions and instabilities. The categories of auditory experience are normalized only insofar as we must make analytical interpretations of such experiences; in no way is this meant as a prescriptive conclusion to be applied beyond itself (for example, as a program for resocializing the deaf[183]).

A social account, as a corollary to this phenomenological restriction, attempts a broad interpretation of implicit operations which act in some way upon individuals.[184] At the same time, it must continue to recognize the inherent problem of generalizability from any one set of data or conclusion drawn from it. With what are we left after this limitation? Again, between the structuralists and poststructuralists there is a way to pursue rigorously order at the same time as one recognizes the epistemic constraints imposed upon the research itself, the constant threats of ideological colonization, scientific fact-mongering and other institutional hegemonies (even within the Academy itself).

I take the social to be the emergent space between the actions of individuals, institutions, ideologies and environments. This 'space', as we will see most clearly with Lefebvre, is politically neither singular nor neutral; however, in its social formulation (rather than a political

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[181] See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of late-deafness in terms of silence.

[182] Nancy's work on listening and its relation to touch complicates this discussion. For now, let us take audition as a functional sense in and for itself rather than as a sub-sense of a general touch paradigm. Szendy, Nancy, and Mandell, *Listen: a history of our ears*; Derrida and Irizarry, *On touching, Jean-Luc Nancy.*

[183] For a brief history of such programs, particularly with A.G. Bell, see: Sterne, *The audible past: Cultural origins of sound reproduction.* 36-41

[184] Again, for Durkheim this action is predominantly felt when the individual acts *against* established norms or patterns of behavior. Otherwise, social facts and forces are largely unnoticed. (Gilbert, *On social facts.* 245)

one) we are not immediately concerned with questions of power, exploitation, or the like. Instead, a social logic pursues an explanation of characteristic operations. Of course, this distinction is subtle and perhaps even trivial, since 'operations' are both influential (in a social sense) and powerful (in a political sense). Nevertheless, to conceive of the political without the social is to neglect the ground upon which such forceful actions are taken, however ephemeral (and extra-material) this ground may be. I will be discussing shortly why I have chosen in this project to focus on this social analysis rather than start with a political one. In short, it is to pursue a logic of operations that applies across multiple possible powerscapes rather than being determined by any particular (actual) one.

Specifically, I am investigating the logic of projecting one's categorical interpretations of sound onto the surrounding world. I began with a phenomenology of listening in order to understand processes which are occurring internal to the subject at the same time as they are consistently influenced from without. The world formerly projected upon, or originating from some other source, returns to reinforce the current experience of the listener. While in my final account such a process is seen as a continuing cycle, we must start analytically with an understanding of this internal process in logical isolation. Otherwise, we run the risk as researchers of tautologically defining experience as the reception of the external world, and the external world as the projection of experience. By isolating perception as a subjective operation, and yet never denying its embeddedness and interest in socio-political realities, we might escape this logical fallacy so often committed.

There are countless discussions concerning the limits of poststructuralist ontologies. Foucault, because of his current influence across multiple fields, is often used as a linchpin in

this opposition. For example, see Reed[185] for an argument against the Foucaultian model on the grounds of critical realism. Al-Amoudi's[186] response then utilizes this same critical realism in support of Foucault, claiming that critical realism was the implicit framework of social ontology throughout his later writings. Critical realism, as an ontological theory of the socio-political, is not far distinct from my own working theory. The only major difference is that I'd like to maintain a separation between the social and the political, if not in reality than merely in explanation.

<div align="right">The Political</div>

This project is not a political one insofar as I am not engaging in a particular examination of contentious sites. While I aim to set forth the ana-logic of auditory technique and acoustic ordering, it would be a much further stretch to claim to expose any specific political reality that currently operates in the world.

Nonetheless, the concept of the political in an abstract sense is necessarily infused throughout this investigation. I usually term this abstraction 'the social' because of the generalized character of my discourse, even as I maintain that any actualization of such social logics immediately transitions into the political. The social is an abstraction of practice; the political is the actualization of this abstraction. This distinction is the basis for my claim that this project remains within the socio-phenomenological rather than transcending into other and more substantial realms. It should be clear to anyone familiar with political theory that the distance I have set between social and political theories is somewhat arbitrary; again, I do this for the sake of simplicity within the argument and not as a reflection on an actual-state-of-things in the world

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185 Reed, "The limits of discourse analysis in organizational analysis."
186 Al-Amoudi, "Redrawing Foucault's Social Ontology."

(or in intellectual theory, for that matter). As an integral part of my theory, however, it remains to be said what role the political plays, even as a pre-empirical abstraction.

I identify the political as a spatial material-symbolic world. This reflects my former comments to the extent that the political is an implication of communal, institutional, and environmental factors. As these forces are brought into the same space, the tensions, constraints, and varying dominations of each can be observed. Indeed, the concept of 'space', both theoretically (as phenomenological auditory volume) and actually (as the field of acoustic orders), is a central preoccupation within my project and the main reason why both Lefebvre and de Certeau are given such prominent positions in defining the acoustic order. An introduction to their contributions is called for here.

Lefebvre, as previously discussed, can be identified as one of the primary figures in the critical French theoretical movement that became poststructuralism. In terms of his political position, his work starts in a thoroughgoing Marxism and, throughout his career, takes on a subtle but pervasive critique of its ideological framework. His direct participation in the French events of 1968 put him in a central position with regards to political activism. This further cemented his place as a theorist not only of a critical tradition, but also of a practical reaction to lived circumstance.[187] It is not surprising, then, that much of his work focuses on concerns of common existence and the space of individual transcriptions of power.

His relevance for my project as a constructive political theorist is threefold. First, he spends a great deal of time setting forth a theory of *space* as a social hermeneutic and a site of power/resistance, symbolically and physically. In *The Production of Space*, he provides an important tripartite distinction (a "conceptual triad"[188]) between modes of space, all of which

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[187] Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life: From Modernity to Modernism.* xvi-xxi
[188] Lefebvre, *The production of space.* 33

overlap in application. *Spatial practice* refers to the formation, cohesion, and operation of a specific site. The focus here is on the ways in which individuals, symbols, and institutions are brought together in a functional working manner and what real (or "lived") relations are developed therein. The concept of *representations of space* is a view of the orders and codes of production, what he terms "frontal relations." In a sense, this steps away from spatial practice to observe dynamics of various forms of capital which have organized labor (taken generally) in particular ways.

To illustrate the difference between the first two, we might simply (and perhaps too traditionally) think of spatial practice in terms of the factory floor whereupon laborers, managers, machines, and products are each given assignments to do real work. Representations of space, on the other hand, might refer to the investments, business schools, training programs, employment regulations, and economic necessities which have driven people and products to this particular location. In order of abstraction, then, we arrive at the third distinction of space: *representational spaces*. Here, and in a seeming relation to Baudrillard's principles of social hyperreality and simulation,[189] representations are not seen as modifying a particular (material) space but, instead, representation *is* the space itself. Or, in Deleuzian terms, it is a distinctly *virtual* construction and operation.[190] As a simulation or an extant realm unto itself, representational space is "'lived' rather than conceived... no sooner is it conceptualized than its significance wanes and vanishes."[191] In the factory example, representational space might be the

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[189] "The hypermarket is already, beyond the factory and traditional institutions of capital, the model of all future forms of controlled socialization: retotalization in a homogeneous space-time of all the dispersed functions of the body, and of social life (work, leisure, food, hygiene, transportation, media, culture); retranscription of the contradictory fluxes in terms of integrated circuits; space-time of a whole operational simulation of social life, of a whole structure of living and traffic." Baudrillard, *Simulacra and simulation*. 76

[190] Ansell-Pearson, "The Reality of the Virtual: Bergson and Deleuze."

[191] Lefebvre, *The production of space*. 236

experience of doing one's menial job while listening in headphones to a rock anthem (thereby becoming a delusional hero); or, less extreme, the lunch break as a private oasis.

On a material level, we can identify the presence of acoustic orders only within the final stage of social practice. Nevertheless, I argue that the ordering of sounds occurs in every stage through various technical means of appropriating and objectifying sounds according to systems of aesthetic representation. Techniques of listening are influenced by technologies of aesthetic and material control, but are not reducible to them. In other words, to be an agent in the acoustic order, to associate with or stand against established archetypes of auditory experience, is to oscillate between these three related modes of operation: the phenomenological, the aesthetic-conceptual, the socially ordered.

The use of space as a theoretical tool is highly valuable as a model for acoustic orders, particularly so that these orders do not necessarily (but may) exist in all types of space at once. This is why they are not merely architectural, auditory, or otherwise technological. Instead, acoustic orders are the various spaces created through this incorporation of sonic practice, codes of appropriate listening, and aesthetic categories of reappropriation. Again, it is my intention to stretch the term *acoustic* to allow for such flexible appropriation.

This brings us to the next reason why Lefebvre's work is applicable to this project. It might be possible to describe acoustic orders merely in the frame of dominant structures, or even norms, of socio-political organization. One could highlight the typical historical usages of sound to maintain[192] or manipulate[193] particular populations and practices. Lefebvre's helpful contribution here is to center his analysis upon the individual agency in light of, and at times in opposition against, these dominant ideological forces. As he puts it in *Rhythmanalysis*, relations

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[192] Corbin, *Village bells: sound and meaning in the 19th-century French countryside.*
[193] Goodman, *Sonic Warfare.*

of force are constantly attempting to impose a certain universal rhythm onto a social field. This negotiation is always only enabled, however, by the reaction or resonance of the affected in isorhythmia (a full correspondence), arrhythmia (dissonance) or, in a 'normal' state of affairs, a varying state of eurhythmia (the functioning of a healthy body).[194] Thus, a focus on the performance of individuals in the midst of multiple spatial forces lays the foundation for a fuller political account. For my project, this point is precisely related to the cooperation between phenomenological categories of interpretation and the established 'rhythmical' orders already present in social life.

Finally, Lefebvre deftly injects a critical eye onto a subject that could be (and is, for instance, with Goffman[195]) sterilized beyond ethical judgment. Instead of merely recounting the varied symbolic exchanges by which individuals inscribe and interpret identities, Lefebvre provides a bevy of tools to not only explain but to evaluate socio-political conditions of life. His aim within the *Critique of Everyday Life* series, and within many of his other publications, was to account for the complex interactions which occur between individual and institution from the perspective of the subjective (a hitherto neglected approach). This final point remains a possible politicized trajectory for the project I have set forth, though I do not intend to explore it in this research.

In de Certeau's introduction to the *Practice of Everyday Life*, he admits (in an endnote, nonetheless), that Lefebvre "constitute[s] a fundamental source,"[196] in his own development of how "procedures and ruses of consumers compose the network of an antidiscipline."[197] This 'antidiscipline' is a significant, however brief, argument against Foucault's excessively

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[194] Lefebvre, Elden, and Moore, *Rhythmanalysis: space, time and everyday life*. 67-68
[195] Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*. 169
[196] De Certeau et al., *The practice of everyday life*. 205
[197] Ibid. xv

hegemonic portrayal of governing apparatuses[198]; yet de Certeau, with Lefebvre, argues that such operations of power are never as total as they might appear in such macro-analyses.[199]

His partial critique of Foucault aside, de Certeau offers a valuable portrayal of how Lefebvre's conception of spatial inscription can be manifested as a very practical theory. From his recasting of New York architectural relations from the top of the World Trade Center[200] to his discussion of how the open-air market contributes to the near-anarchistic agency of the cook within the kitchen,[201] his vernacular method ties together beautifully the insights of theory with the celebration of the ground.

Specifically, de Certeau's insistence that *strategies* and *tactics*, a revision of Lefebvre's tripartite spatiality, necessarily operate in any social encounter, is particularly helpful as I describe the tension between individual interpretation of sound and the constraints of preexistent modes of interpretation. Strategies refer to 'appropriate' techniques, whether imposed from an authoritarian position or merely by social norm. This proper/appropriate/property location is then contrasted against the tactics of those without such a defined space. For example: the conductor of an orchestra or a train intends a certain product and privacy in regards to their established domains. The concert hall is to be silent except for predefined instruments; the train is to be vacant save for those who have paid the toll. In both cases, we can easily identify resistances (intentional or otherwise). Predictably, someone coughs in the concert or the listens from the alleyway; the hobo hops the train to California or the subway ticket booth to get downtown.

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[198] Foucault, *Discipline & punish*.
[199] De Certeau et al., *The practice of everyday life*. 45-50
[200] Ibid. 91
[201] De Certeau, Giard, and Mayol, *The practice of everyday life: Living and cooking*. 107

Finally, de Certeau's concept of 'heterology' maintains the necessary multiplicity of socio-cultural explanation.[202] Never reduced to a linear meaning or action, he calls for us to interpret social spaces as sites of contention operating between center and margin. This marginality within de Certeau's work, both in his content and in his scholarly reception,[203] lends a peculiar personal and critical perspective that should refine the concept of 'order' at the same time as it complicates it beyond repair.

Phenomenology's Role, Briefly

Without going further into the history or varied trajectories that phenomenology has taken, a theme I covered in Chapter 4, I'd like to reflect upon its import in regards to the definition at hand. As I stated, acoustic orders require a generative story. I do not argue that they are natural or that they are completely intentional. Conveniently, most phenomenologists agree with these simple points. Perception, at the core, is not a fully conscious process. While we can carefully attend to various aspects of it, training ourselves in its methodological *epoché*, there are always marginal spaces of excess beyond this scientific intention. If, then, acoustic orders are not wholly natural (and thus beyond the scope of human intervention) nor are they wholly intended (and thus fully within this scope), their genealogy must include multiple simultaneous origins: material, aesthetic, intentional, political, and so forth.

Phenomenology sits in this narrative as an individualist node, a character. The social, as discussed, provides the 'neutral' stage (only in the respect that it can be considered non-politically). As I just discussed, the political, with its multifaceted struggles, condensations, and reverberations, is the applied contextualization of this three-tiered dramaturgy.

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[202] De Certeau and Massumi, *Heterologies: discourse on the other.*
[203] Terdiman, "The marginality of Michel de Certeau."

Phenomenology, finally, gives us the characters on this stage: the logic of their actions and their very capacity to act, but not yet their purpose or plot. These characters are not actually independent from socio-political operations. However, inasmuch as phenomenology can clarify its project as a science of logic, we might allow for the temporarily isolated analysis which phenomenology offers. Despite this inclination, I have suggested that phenomenology benefits from the social and political accounts. But how exactly?

As I discussed in my brief critique of Ihde's *Listening and Voice* in Chapter 4, phenomenological inquiry has proven to easily fall into explanations which neglect the social roots of perceptual habits. Whether this is deliberate (as a scientific epoché) or theoretically convenient (to keep the theory simple), I think it is a significant defect in the tradition as well as an opportunity to revive it. When disciplines are forming, they often build walls in order to develop a legitimate space for themselves, in academic contexts or elsewhere. However, in the process their flaws are exacerbated. If current reappropriations of historical phenomenologies are to be taken as evidence,[204] we no longer simply seek a finite logic of universal experience. As a method, phenomenology now extends beyond its naval-gazing past toward applied ends. This dissertation is once such example of an application.

I believe that phenomenological explanation is not only beneficial but necessary if we are to understand more fully the generation of social orders. In this context, acoustic orders are configured by individual practices, which are themselves understood as projections from phenomenological experience. In laying this causative framework, I am not claiming that phenomenology holds the keys to primordial or transcendental experience. Quite the opposite:

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[204] Dura, "The phenomenology of the music-listening experience"; Verbeek, "Cyborg intentionality: Rethinking the phenomenology of human-technology relations"; Annas, "The phenomenology of virtue"; Gallese, "Embodied simulation: From neurons to phenomenal experience"; Dreyfus, "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment."

phenomenological process is itself dependent upon historical and habitual orderings of practice which are necessarily social, political, and spatial. Though my own phenomenology of listening in three categorical modes may appear at first glance to be a transcendental account, it is only a temporary construction in order to facilitate what emerges next: a thick description of acoustic practice which extends far beyond the privacy of individual perceptions.

<div align="right">Redefining Acoustic Orders</div>

Following this explication of the terms within the definition of acoustic orders, we are now able to return to the concept as a whole with an enriched sense of context and purpose. The 'social' provides a formal abstraction for understanding dynamics of symbolic exchange, agency, and constraint. Phenomenology offers a window into the experience of individuals within this framework, as both a generation of intent and a description of affect. The 'political', here used merely as a hypothetical toward a possible future application, constructs the social in such a way that relations of power are brought to the fore. The political integrates the former two perspectives into an actual, spatial problematic rather than merely a representational logic.

Thus, any actual acoustic order exists within all three accounts simultaneously. I have chosen to privilege, for the majority of my project, phenomenological concerns and their projections onto the social. The reason for this is an observed lack of clarified discussion within Sound Studies literature concerning the role of intentional auditory interpretation. Generally, norms of such interpretations are seen as emanating from established social patterns and rituals (for example, the history of musical aesthetics[205]) or hegemonic institutions (Adorno's foundational sociology of music[206] is relevant here). I have wanted to steer clear of an immediate focus on music as the central site of audition and, instead, explore the background

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[205] Ross, *The rest is noise: listening to the twentieth century*; Attali and Massumi, *Noise: The political economy of music*.
[206] Adorno, Mitchell, and Blomster, *Philosophy of modern music*.

processes by which sounds can become classified as music, speech, noise, silence, environment, etc. To accomplish this, the phenomenological process of categorization has been highlighted from the start. I approached it in this manner so that it cannot be seen merely as a reaction against detached ideological interpretations, where a profound lack of subjective explanation might lead us toward disproportionately critical accounts.

As a product, then, of the projection of phenomenological categories of interpretation (themselves dependent upon former training by historical formulations), acoustic orders are both implicated within and constitutive of social auditory techniques. These techniques, as practices by agents sharing a particular space (one or all of Lefebvre's three types) and operating through continually varying levels of appropriation (de Certeau's strategies/tactics), become technologies inasmuch as they sediment themselves as 'orders' in this contested space.[207]

The situation created by such activities exists between material, symbolic, and phenomenal fields. Acoustic orders become effective in practice; my intent is to outline their possible generation as the result of various socio-phenomenological agencies. This will be accomplished theoretically by aligning Lefebvrian social space, phenomenological categories of audition (particularly the excessive), and de Certeau's analysis of structured negotiations in everyday culture. To further answer this current question on the nature of acoustic orders beyond the theoretical background, I will now provide a narrative example that illustrates the full cycle.

There is no beginning to the process of generating acoustic order; no external origin by which we might fix an appropriate system, law, or teleology. Arbitrarily, then, I will begin with the material individual as a listener. Setting aside physiological and neurological issues of

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[207] To recall from Chapter 2: technology is the logic of practice; technique is the practice of that logic.

hearing,[208] as well as concrete concerns about the merely physical propagation of sounds, the listener begins as an affected subject. I have treated a sound in this sense as something already perceived, as a technical object of the perceiver. As previously discussed, the question of the reality of the sounding world beyond a perceptive subject is simply beyond the scope of my argument. Thus, I aim to stay within the epistemic bounds that phenomenology outlines as accessible to the subject, however contentious the ability of phenomenology to accomplish this may remain.

As a brief review, for this was already outlined in detail in the first half of the dissertation, the subject conditions sound according to intentional modes of interpretation. Namely, the categories of aesthetic, symbolic, and excessive. These three classifications of sound correspond to three different orientations or dispositions (what phenomenologists generally label *intentions*) of the subject toward the sound. This aspect of phenomenology may or may not be a decidedly scientific approach; arguably, phenomenology is only capable of such scientific specificity because it is able to describe an everyday lived process that occurs pre-scientifically. In other words, the phenomenologist (as a scientist) assumes epistemic access to a phenomenal realm (as a subject) which existed prior to scientific construction.[209] Regardless, conditioning the sound is simply the ability to catalog experience according to certain intentional structures.

For example, you hear a knocking sound. In any real setting, you might quickly and pre-consciously determine the source of this sound. Let us, before setting up this context, explore a few possibilities. It may be someone at the door, symbolically attempting to grab your attention. It may be a loose plumbing fixture, letting you know (again, symbolically) of an issue under the

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[208] These are highly important, but anterior to my current analysis.
[209] This is where phenomenology and poststructuralism diverge, in that poststructuralism generally treats all science as constructed discourse rather than as capable of access beyond itself.

floor. It may be a feature of the music you turned on, as a drum or other rhythmic element in the

composition. It may, on the contrary, be an unidentified sound that currently impinges upon

your intended acoustic order, such as a listening space for your music, plumbing diagnosis, or

waiting-upon a friend. In this case, it represents an excess as noise or environment. It may,

alternatively, go unnoticed in the din of other identified sounds (as the drip of the faucet

eventually disappears from awareness), a silence within a recognized environmental space.

Thus, depending on your intentional stance, the sound is categorized in a range of

possible manners. This phenomenological process occurs because of prior experience with

similar sounds and the "ear"-training previously received. Now interpreted, the sound as

perceptual object can be judged. It is this turn of judgment that enables the transition to acoustic

ordering.

There are times when the complexity of philosophical pursuit can mask the pragmatic

simplicity of the concept at hand. This alternation between phenomenological order and social

order is, I believe, one of those moments. Put simply, intentions are projected onto social space.

Indeed, social space can be conceived as the interaction between intention, capacity, and history.

In this case, interpreted sounds are judged and responded to by other means. Answering the

door, fixing the pipe, turning the music on or off, and moving toward or from a source of noise

are all ways to control our auditory spaces.

Heterogeneous acoustic orders are the result of these and countless other projections,

however temporary or dysfunctional these orders may be. The individual's intentions may

operate aptly within mental space (or Lefebvre's 'representational space'); however, the

projection is always mediated by constraints external to these intentions. I may prefer a quiet

space to work; yet, there will always be mitigating factors beyond my control (assuming I do not

have an anechoic chamber at my disposal). The pipes will go unfixed; the knocked door keeps knocking for the absent neighbor, etc. I can *intend* to change these circumstances, but may not have the full material capacity to realize this intention. In Lefebvre's terms, I have a 'representation of space' (a regulation) which I am trying to realize in 'spatial practice' (my material conditions). Each circumstance will be different according to the relative resources at play: the accumulations of capital in walls, stereos, and other isolating/propagating techniques.[210]

Still, to identify an order amidst this negotiation might be problematic. There are two extremes of what 'order' could mean in this context. First, it could be any intentional action which seeks to control or manipulate the subject's surroundings. This would be a privileging of the verbal ordering above the effects of such action. These effects, these acoustic orders, might be taken in social terms as social facts, forces, traces, or institutions. Once established as such, they return as influential operators upon individuals' perceptions. The excessive development of this concept is the second extreme interpretation of 'order': the finite accomplishment (not merely the intent) of a particular organization of sound.

An order in this second sense corresponds to the successful constraint of all other factors which might interrupt the clear transference between intention and actualization. I argue that this is never wholly possible, and thus a theory of order that relied upon such achievement would be inapplicable to everyday life, to the real political. Even though we must recognize that a degree of efficient capacity is necessary to realize an effective influence upon social order, we must not go so far as to require *full* control over the environment to designate something as ordered. Between these extremes of intent and control lies every instance of acoustic ordering we can identify. Indeed, it is this very tension and contradiction between individual agency and

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[210] G.Weheliye, *Phonographies*.

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established norms that characterizes the emergence of acoustic space and the various orders latent within it.

Reflecting upon the Foundation

The definition of an acoustic order has been left intentionally flexible. I see this as a necessary point of departure so that in theory we do not limit what is, in practice, a much wider phenomenon than a more specific definition would allow to be observed. Specific acoustic orders, like the dwelling-space,[211] are forged and maintained according to the regulatory intentions of individuals and small groups. Institutions, particularly in capitalist forms, also have an interest in maintaining a certain acoustic order within their spaces and extending beyond.[212] Similarly, governments also pursue the ordering of acoustic space for quite different purposes: keeping peace, making war, settling disputes, or reviving patriotic fervor.[213] Each of these agents operates with intention at the same time that the effects of their actions result in quite unintended consequences. For example, the regulation of noise in urban environments can unintentionally discriminate against certain race and class subcultures.[214]

This last example hints toward an important point: we should never neglect the ways in which acoustic spaces and the orders reverberating within them are continually subject to refinement, revision, and rejection. To be ordered is not to be static; especially in the case of such an ephemeral, temporal medium as sound, no such finality could exist. When categories are realized as concepts in ideals and practice, they become effective as regulators of auditory spaces. Categorical concepts and their boundaries are necessary components, then, in the

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[211] Bachelard is be useful in this context, though from a quite different text than his scientific writing. (Bachelard and Jolas, *The poetics of space.*)
[212] Sterne, "Sounds like the Mall of America: Programmed music and the architectonics of commercial space"; Lanza, *Elevator Music: A surreal history of Muzak, easy-listening, and other moodsong.*
[213] Bijsterveld, *Mechanical sound: technology, culture, and public problems of noise in the twentieth century*; Adams et al., "Sustainable soundscapes: Noise policy and the urban experience."
[214] Crawford, "Car stereos, culture and criminalization."

production of acoustic orders (both in constructive and critical modalities). They emerge through the process of perception as well as the interactions between the subject and norms of interpretation already established in social space.

The coincidence of interpretation and acoustic ordering cannot be reduced to either the agency of the individual or the domination of the determined acoustic space. It functions between these poles as well as in the space of conceptual (aesthetic) construction, which in an ideological turn reinscribes itself in the former two spaces. This tripartite distinction is influenced by Lefebvre's own three spaces. The interior moment of phenomenological interpretion is similar to a 'representational space' in that it operates as a 'perceived' spatial mode. Categories of interpretation once conceptualized become 'representations of space,' able to regulate individual and social practices. The manifestation of these concepts in material-symbolic space becomes the lived, 'spatial practice' of social existence.

<u>From Phenomenology to Acoustic Order: Mental, Material, and Aesthetic Problems</u>

How do phenomenological listening techniques contribute to ordering auditory/acoustic space? Three formulations of a problem emerge from this question. First, the distinction between attentive listening and passive hearing must be defined. Such agency need not be conscious to remain effective in individual interpretation and social change. Second, and quite related to the first, the role of habit and training in the listening process is brought to the fore in my analysis. In what ways, then, is the subject able to become aware of or modify these social norms of perception? As I've argued elsewhere, acoustic orders serve as reflections of such customs as well as the basis for this social condition of phenomenological interpretation; the interactive dynamic of this concept is crucial, therefore, for understanding the mutually constitutive roles of the subject and social. Finally, a particular form of acoustic ordering occurs

as an intentional aesthetic construction. This aesthetic, I contend, occurs in both mental and social ontologies. Additionally, aesthetics is not relegated to the musical; there are aesthetics of dwellings, work environments, solitude, and others. Determining the structure of these various spatial regulations enables a fuller, though still incomplete, understanding of the relation between subject and sound.

Thus, acoustic orders can be maintained in three conceptions: as a phenomenological event, as an emergent social order, and as a projection of auditory aesthetic concepts. The second form is pervasive throughout all auditory explanation because of the material basis of social interaction. In other words, when describing an acoustic order in terms of the material conditions of hearing, organizing, and constraining sound, mental and aesthetic determinations are merely latent in the description (though never absent in the actual condition). Therefore, all three operate simultaneously. This is the basis for my argument concerning the synchronization of phenomenological and social accounts in the study of listening.

Listening and Hearing Sound Differently

Throughout my text, I have been using the term 'listening' in distinction to 'hearing' for multiple reasons. My definitions of each show their difference. Listening is an attentive process by which the individual is able to receive, interpret, categorize and respond to sounds as perceptual objects. Hearing is a material, neurological, and psychological function of the auditory system by which material vibrations (or other stimuli) are transformed into sensations for the organism. Of course, both often happen simultaneously. When you hear a car drive past the window, your ears are responsible for the transmission of that sound to your consciousness. From there, your cognitive mechanisms of perception identify that sound as symbolic of the 'car outside.' In a sense, you have listened to what you have heard.

Yet, they are not mutually dependent procedures. Our ears are constantly susceptible to stimulation; we always hear in a minimal material sense. The relative pressure of the sonic medium (usually air) always fluctuates around us, causing sympathetic reverberations in the ear and consequential reactions in the brain. Nonetheless, we are certainly not always attentive to these variations within our environment. Intelligibility rests on the assumption that experience is selectively attended to rather than allowed to continue as an infinite mess of change. Listening, the attentive procedure by which sounds are refined and reduced to perceptual objects, is an active process of intelligibility.

Listening can even occur in the absence of hearing, as in the case of listening to imaginary sounds.[215] Right now, a sort of "inner voice" of imaginary speech is enabling you to read this text, the language of which we interpret aurally.[216] When a song is persistently stuck in your mind, you can do nothing else but listen and attend to it (much to your agitation, which only seems to fuel its determination).

Within every normal situation where multiple stimuli are present simultaneously, it is the selective and intentional process of listening which enables the isolation of auditory focus. 'Ordinary hearing' is a background process that often (but not necessarily) enables 'active listening'. It is in the active parsing of the listening process that phenomenology is able to expose the influence of acoustic orders and intentional revisions of such systems by perceptual agents. Phenomenological activity, in a general sense, does not necessitate consciousness, but is at least a prerequisite for subsequent conscious reflection.

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[215] This might be challenged from a strict neurological/reductive materialist perspective, which necessarily reduces cognitive activity to the operation of brain states. Thus, perceptions on the mental level are merely epiphenomenal in relation to material electro-chemical exchanges. I am not refuting this argument, even as I maintain that a phenomenological account holds a quite different ontological structure. Phenomenology is concerned with the meaning, not merely the objective or detached description, of human experience

[216] Ihde, *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound.* 137-144

The concept of 'sound' changes according to the mode of analysis. If sound is understood as the object of *hearing*, it is a physical, forceful, external factor in a functional process of affect. For example, in architectural acoustics, sound is often studied as a reverberative component within the structure, as a potential sonic space to be realized in material construction. Here, sound is taken as an object that stands apart from any particular interpreter; it is a given of the environment along with dust, electromagnetism, and light.

Alternatively, I am studying a type of social acoustics that begins from a quite different foundation; namely, the listener rather than the material structure. Without denying that materiality has a necessary effect on the listener's affect, I center my analysis on the process of *listening* as a phenomenological and social technique. By doing so, sound itself is conceived quite differently. It is not merely a feature of one's environment waiting to be perceived in the truth of itself; instead, it is an objective[217] construct that emerges in the process of auditory intelligibility. Simply put, a sound does not exist prior to being perceived as such. The various techniques by which sounds are constructed, interpreted, and projected remain the principle objects of my investigation, even in spatial contexts.

<u>Habit, Reflection, Self-Awareness</u>

As I begin to inject a sociological account into the traditionally phenomenological, I intend the focus of the inquiry to shift away from a pursuit of universal and essential truths. Instead, what emerges is a story of the generation of everyday life in social perceptual forms. In particular, I see auditory perception as a constantly shifting technique based on skills, habits, education, environment, etc. Some of these influencing factors remain forever implicit. For example, we habituate sounds from our home environment into our experience without

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[217] 'Objective' here is in relation to the formation of the 'perceptual object' rather than in the sense of an 'unbiased' investigation.

consciously trying to perceive them. The 60 Hz drone of the refrigerator or fan is an unknown

backdrop to much of our indoor activity. We work around these sounds, however unapparent

they remain. Nevertheless, they become part of the fabric of our familiar acoustic lives.[218]

Alternately, other forms of training are intentional on our parts and others'. Musical

education is a prime example of such an explicit habituation. Appropriate aesthetic codes are

routinized institutionally, perpetuating themselves by force. While this process is conscious in

the sense that people intend to educate or be educated, it is also evident that various habits within

the process develop unintentionally at the same time.[219] Habits, such as musical practice, are

enacted for a purpose; unintended consequences of this habituation abound, such as the critical

ear once trained now turned toward many other non/musical sounds.

What I'd like to highlight in this discussion is the ability, but not the necessity, of the

individual to reflect upon these habituating experiences. I would like to continue the intention of

Bachelard's concept of "phenomeno-technology", where the procedure of phenomenology itself

proceeds through an avowedly technological disposition.[220] This, potentially, can be used as a

basis for agency. Here, agency would be the result of a conscious process of critically engaging

one's life and context, intentionally revising certain elements on a principled level, and then

changing certain routines or behaviors to suit this new ideal. However, I do not require such

conscious intention to enable a theory of agency. Because of the broad understanding of

'intention' within phenomenology, as well as the often subtle techniques by which changes are

made to spatial practices, a theory of agency can forego the requirement of conscious reflection.

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[218] Jacobson, "A developed nature: a phenomenological account of the experience of home"; Russon, "Embodiment and responsibility: Merleau-Ponty and the ontology of nature."

[219] WEISS, "Can an Old Dog Learn New Tricks? Habitual Horizons in James, Bourdieu, and Merleau-Ponty."

[220] Bachelard, *The new scientific spirit*. 13

What is the substitute, then, for this rational ego? In my conception of the acoustic order, it is the coordination between phenomenological categories and social organizations of sound that enables an often hidden dynamic that changes both subject and world in turn. In short, I am formulating a theory of social change based on individual agency that is not based upon a rational, self-aware subject. Self-knowledge is certainly not precluded in this account and is required during the phenomenological analysis; yet, it is not observed as required in the actual generation and modification of social norms. The dynamic of social change is most often invisibly automatic, however much it is mediated by technologies set in place for various other motives.

To speak specifically about the topic of acoustic orders and the role of reflection in the maintenance/avoidance of them, let us draw an example in a quite different context than we have heretofore considered: the space of the sound recording studio. It is here that sound is isolated in order to produce a highly particular, controlled result. The acoustic architecture of the room, placement of microphones, baffles, and other technological implements are all used in the construction of an instrument- the studio itself. To 'play' this instrument requires a skilled engineer, a range of highly complex recording devices, and of course a sound generating source. However, in this analysis of the studio itself we are less concerned with the musician or other source as we are with the process of intentionally creating a space for capture. The sound source is seen as an initial moment, but not the end result, of the recording process. Instead, what is focused upon in this process are the mechanics of recording itself. It often takes much longer and much more attention to prepare the space for recording than it does to set up the space for simply playing music.

In this procedure, the skill of the engineer is constantly relied upon. As a habit, learning to be a recording engineer requires years of careful training of the ear and coordination of auditory intention with sound-manipulating instruments to achieve the desired result. The habit of recording, in the development of skill,[221] becomes more implicit and hidden the more skilled the engineer becomes. What was once an explicit process of education (reading the owner's manual to the soundboard) becomes a subconscious technique (mixing levels automatically based on listening to the filtered sound in the studio monitors). This, like Benjamin's *aura* of the work of art,[222] is a process that can only happen through and by the technical apparatus of representation. The engineer requires the machine; the machine is only realized technologically by the habitual skill of the engineer.

Thus, changes within this setting occur because of this relation. Neither party, the technology nor the subject, can unilaterally effect a complete change. Whether as a self-aware change ("Move the mic a bit to the left to capture the snare") or a concealed skill (snapping one's fingers to find a sweet-spot in the room), the tension between habitual auditory practice and acoustic order is always a negotiation between real and ideal intentions. This is why I have chosen not to rely on conscious intention of subjects in the affirmation or avoidance of substantiated acoustic orders; to do so would neglect not only the effectiveness of the order in reifying itself, but also the significant relation that occurs between order and subject in practice.

From a different angle, this same example of the studio can be used to illustrate the third tension between the perception and conception of auditory space. Here we look to the studio as a site of intentional aesthetic production. Perception, as I've outlined, can occur subconsciously or attentively. Phenomenological categories are at work regardless of conscious intent. It is in the

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[221] Antony, "How to play the flute: A commentary on Dreyfus's "Intelligence without representation""; Dreyfus, "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment."
[222] Benjamin, Arendt, and Zohn, *Illuminations*. 217-251

concept of aesthetic construction, however, that these categories become overt representations of what is otherwise a covert logic of intelligibility.

<div align="right">Toward Excessive Projection</div>

This chapter, by showing the margins of the theory of acoustic orders, has set the stage for the next chapter's exploration of how phenomenological excesses contribute to altering such configurations of practice. I have outlined a theory here which remains abstract, and intentionally so. I believe it is important to clarify terms and analytical logic in addition to doing empirical research. It remains to be seen, in future investigations, if the concept of acoustic orders is useful as a hermeneutial tool for interpreting acoustic practices and systems. Of course, I believe that it will be, particularly after the following chapter's causal argument. In it, I provide a more practical model for understanding why and how acoustic orders are (re)formed. Relying upon the socio-political developments in this chapter, from Lefebvre, de Certeau, and others, I extend the phenomenological into what has traditionally been dangerous territory for its individual-centered approach: the space of everyday life practice and the agency of the auditor to fundamentally shape acoustic contexts.

Chapter 7 –
Music City: Excesses and Orderings

This chapter brings together the various discussions and qualifications I have been arguing throughout the dissertation. It is here, finally, that I integrate disparate themes of techniques and technologies of the auditory subject, the problematic metabolism of sounds, the phenomenological disjunction between stable and excessive auditions, and the spatial configuration of sounds as acoustic orders. While each of these principles can stand alone analytically as important perspectives regarding the process of audition, it is in their cohesion and reciprocal determinacy that they become valuable and effective toward my thesis; namely, that through techniques of listening we change acoustic orders in attempts to reclaim stable perceptual auditions.

In order to expose this rather complex conclusion, I will be relying in this chapter upon the lengthy preparations I have discussed in previous chapters. Often, throughout this dissertation, I have proposed arguments toward the development of concepts (for instance, of the technological nature of auditory phenomenological intention) and merely hinted at their application in the project as a whole. It is here that such contentions are made relevant beyond isolated theory-building or terminological clarification. Before pursuing a short case study of Nashville's noise current noise ordinances, I'd like to briefly summarize the main synthetic moments in the dissertation as a whole.

From Excess to Order

The multifaceted influences which impinge upon the development of acoustic orders/orderings must be treated both individually and as emergent syntheses in spatial practice. Various material and descriptive formulations of these moments, such as sonic phenomena,

audible events, acoustic signals, and auditory opportunities, can begin to chart the various expressions of order. Beyond that, these expressions become the effects by which orderings are made ontologically present and observable to the researcher.

Phenomenological excesses are crucial for understanding the ways that subjects form and revise perceptual intentionalities in addition to spatial sonic practice. It is obvious enough that we change the way we listen to the world on a moment-to-moment basis. One second we are listening to someone speak, the next we hear footsteps, the next we listen to music, and so forth. Even in a single, rather simple acoustic situation there are a great many sounds to which we attend in sequence. Similar to the way the eye dances around an image in order to comprehend its various parts, our auditory attention flutters among sounds to gain an acoustic image of the whole. It has been my goal to illustrate more clearly and cohesively the logic behind the motivation to change auditive dispositions and categories of listening, in response to and for the generation of acoustic orders.

By discerning between stable and unstable modes of perceiving sounds, we can further understand how sounds become objectified and technically appropriated in experience. Each category of listening is objective to varying degrees. Affective listening takes the body and the embodied response as the object of perception. Symbolic listening abstracts from the sound as affective toward the sound as referential, thus creating a simulated object to be represented. These stable modes of listening, when achieved temporarily, sustain rather than threaten the unity of the listening subject.

In excessive modes, such clear objectification is not yet accomplished. The sound object in the phenomenon of noise is without defined form or content, experienced as a surplus beyond intentional capacity. The clear alignment between intention and perception is fractured, creating

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an opportunity for the subject to revise its stance in order to correspond and regain composure. In silence, a similar process often occurs, though it is the intention which is made explicit as an object in its inability to seize the sound. Again, we expect a sound, we are not able to hear it, and we respond by modifying our expectations. To continue to intend a perception which is impossible, to reach toward a sound while failing to achieve it, is inherently destabilizing and thus unsustainable. Noise and silence, as phenomena, often do not last but a few milliseconds before we adjust our listening mode to accommodate their excesses. Again, the impossibility is a temporary result of a misalignment of intention and object.

Environmental excess works in a slightly different way because of its temporal unpredictability. Certain modes of listening, particularly creative ones such as musical intentionality, are able to accommodate a very wide range of sounds while maintaining a stable disposition. The musical aesthetic, as Ola Stockfelt has described, offers particularly "adequate" modes of listening wherein certain intentional flexibility is achieved at the same time that critical engagement is able to parse sounds into discrete moments, affects, or genres.[223] Beyond this type of aesthetic disposition, however, we usually have quite strict expectations as to which sounds are appropriate in certain contexts. The development of analog and, especially, digital reproduction of sound has changed our expectations drastically. We do not flinch, for instance, if we pass by a radio playing a sound we would otherwise not expect in a room or street corner. It is common, in the age of mechanical and digital reproducibility, to confront sounds entirely out of context and recontextualize them almost immediately.

Thus, it could be argued that environmental excess is on the decline. We are exposed to so many different types of sounds now at any moment of the day that we have become accustomed to an almost infinite variability of the sounding world. Such an expansion of

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[223] Stockfelt, "Adequate Modes of Listening."

auditory flexibility has been pronounced throughout the 20th and 21st centuries; however, we still have a great many situations within which certain sounds are inappropriate. Indeed, it could also be argued that the profusion of mechanically and digitally reproducible sounds has only extended environmental excess. We now have a variety of beeps, ringtones, and drones which constantly accompany and interrupt us in everyday life. Compared to the largely forgotten quietude of the countryside, even in rural settings, our lives are filled with unpredictable sounds that may or may not be incorporated securely within a stable auditory experience.

This awareness of the historical and technological determination of sounds and their appropriateness in contexts requires a more thorough explanation than I am able to give here. Additionally, it suggests that there may be more to the interpretation of sound than an isolated phenomenological explanation can provide. Indeed, my assertion throughout the text that phenomenology requires a sociological investigation of its generation is in line with this assertion. What other elements have been left unsaid which might be crucial for delineating the idea of acoustic orders?

The most significant issue which I have intentionally avoided throughout this project is that of the desirable or deliberate aesthetic; specifically, such cultural preferences as music and language. I have focused on the syntax of audition at the expense, one might argue, of the semantics of auditory practice. Surely it is the case that individuals develop preferences toward certain types of sound because of desirable or undesirable characteristics. They then create acoustic orders, as I have defined them, because of these *positive* preferences. My contention, then, that acoustic orders are primarily generated out of a *negative* process intended to resolve excessive perceptions may seem to be taking the wrong approach.

It is precisely this turn, however, that I think makes this project valuable. It would be trivial and nearly uncontestable for me to argue that humans change their worlds, acoustic or otherwise, to suit their intentional preferences. The development of such preferences, whether from physiological, psychological, cognitive, or political sources, is standard analysis in a range of humanistic, social scientific, and other aesthetic disciplines. My contribution to these analyses, resting on the sources I've given throughout the dissertation, is to approach acoustic agency through the hermeneutic of perceptual excess. The challenge of such inappropriable events, as problematic eventualizations of phenomenological subjectivity, technological objectivity, and spatial correspondence, is a challenge to the integrity of the subject itself. Without becoming a universal existential thesis, I argue that such a confrontation prompts the auditor to action. This is a root of auditory agency, in response to the threat of disintegration and disembodiment, which I argue is at least as effective toward acoustic change as the positive aesthetic type.

Indeed, I would like to argue that such aesthetic constructions and enactments themselves are predicated upon this excessive intimidation. To return to Attali: the history of Western music can be traced through the development of capitalism and therefore, in slightly different terms, the accumulation of various forms of capital which protect individuals and classes from the threat of extinction.[224] The minimization of this general economic risk can, and often does in contemporary contexts, take the form of solidifying cultural, aesthetic arrangements to maintain configurations of power.

It is therefore in the pursuit of a positive construction that I pursue the negative intentionality of excessive resolution. As in the initial discussion of the vulnerability of orifices in the metabolism metaphor, there are inherent dangers in leaving oneself open to aural intrusion.

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[224] Attali and Massumi, *Noise: The political economy of music.*

A principle of homeostasis rests at the root of subjectivity, even in perceptual terms. A certain balance and coherence between various phenomena is required to maintain an integrated and stable self-subject. The ears are merely one entrance into this literal personal space, though the permeability of sound and its direct effects on emotion and meaning (especially through music and language) affords it a prominent place in such discussions.

The metabolism metaphor does not merely describe internal affective states of the subject, however. It also illustrates the connection and correspondence between the maintenance of this subject and the various social structures which enable its sustenance. Once cannot eat without a source for food, even if it is beyond the individual's knowledge. One cannot listen except in contexts of sounding, denoted and cataloged through acoustic ordering. It is not surprising that industrialization has significantly altered our relation to the *source* of both food and sounds; by abstracting each from its "original" context, we are now able to have bananas for breakfast and Hungarian folk dances for dessert. The ability of the individual to accommodate and flourish within such diversity is further evidence of the flexible appropriation of ingestion/perception. This marks a type of socio-stasis which underlies what would otherwise be an inherent frailty of acoustic orders. Not only do we seek inner coherence and stability, but we refashion our intentions and worlds in analogical alignment.

For the topic of sound in particular, what might be called *audio-stasis* emerges in conjunction with acoustic orderings of practice. I am not suggesting that sounds become stable in any absolute sense; this seems antithetical to the ephemeral nature of all sounds. Instead, the congruence between intentional states of perception and resulting structures which form the sounding world relies on a dialectical process theory. Audio-stasis necessarily refers to both of

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these operations at once, assuming that each affects the other while remaining quasi-independent in other ways.

This is one way that Lefebvre and de Certeau become particularly helpful in this analysis. By rethinking the relation of the individual and political sub/super-structures in everyday contexts, transitioning theoretically from hegemony to particularity, they fundamentally alter the perspective of critical theory. I don't think it is too much of a stretch to claim that they pursue socio-phenomenological methodologies while remaining intensely political in content. Such a revision marks a spatial turning point and enables a quite elaborate understanding of the role of individual agency in (re)forming social structures that once seemed inevitable. If, for example, walking through the city is an *actual* reconfiguration of its structure and not merely a surface narrative, then the individual becomes much more effective than in prior theories to change social patterns and power relationships.

In the same way, I am arguing that acoustic contexts need to be reconsidered in light of a fundamental aesthetic agency inherent in the phenomenological auditory process. By taking into consideration that aesthetic codes exist prior and external to the subject, and therefore that this subject does not have full dominion over acoustic orders more generally, we nevertheless can chart a path by which everyday listening practices become instrumental in changing general social orderings and practices. This dissertation is merely, though necessarily, a methodological preliminary to such empirical studies.

We return, now, to the fundamental concepts of technique, technology, and perceptual objectivity which I claimed set the methodological grounding throughout this dissertation. The dividing line between the first two concepts, arbitrary beyond its role in analysis, rests on the distinction between intentional logical and practice. Taken phenomenologically, such a

distinction need not rely upon material manifestations of practice, though it can certainly be extended to such domains. Because of this flexibility (or, perhaps, universality) in the definitions, techniques and technologies can share the same logic between individual perceptual modalities and material social orders and artifacts. For instance, I previously drew an analogical line between the phenomenology of the perceptual subject in terms of thresholds of noise and the functioning of certain electronics, namely digital-to-analog converters, which operate according to similar basic principles. From there, I argued that we can extend even further into more general social practices which also carry traces of this same threshold logic. For example, private listening techniques which utilize audio technologies such as mobile phone headsets restructure expectations about what sounds are appropriate in public spaces. To see someone walking and talking with no one else in view would, under non-technological circumstances, signify some potential psychological disorder. With an explanation of the mobile headset, however, we accommodate to this curious public behavior. The appropriateness of ringtones, moreover, varies greatly depending on the context and authoritative rules therein.[225] The fact that prescriptions need to be stated at all ("Please silence your cellphones") is evidence of the various contestations between personal appropriation and public appropriateness of certain sounds.

The fact that acoustic orders can be incrementally changed through these everyday activities speaks to the permeability of social customs and organization rituals. Techniques of listening enable subjects to organize and employ sounds for various intentional purposes. By objectifying sounds into discrete experiences, the subject gains temporary authority over a sound's qualities and significations. While one may attempt to impose this personal acoustic order onto a social situation, such projections are rarely accomplished without negotiation or

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[225] Uimonen, "'Sorry, can't hear you! I'm on a train!' Ringtones, meanings and the Finnish soundscape."

outright offense. The instrumentalization of sounds as determiners of social relations exposes acoustic orders as potentially significant conditions in much larger discussions of political life.

We can begin to see through these considerations how a view of socio-political relationships bears back upon the phenomenological process. Acoustic habits and routines certainly influence auditory practices; as I've argued, these interpretations can be fruitfully explored through a phenomenological parsing of perception into discrete categories. The fact that these categorical techniques occur necessarily within a *spatial* context implies that we must take such elements into account even at the start of phenomenological investigation. My logic of *thresholds* does just this. To assume that thresholds have any significance in changing perceptual practice, one must also assume that the subject is not in full control over the sensations given to it. In a word, the subject can merely voluminously intend what the world then fills (or does not, in excessive cases).

Thresholds of audition, like authoritarian prescriptions in Lefebvrian/de Certeauian social spaces, hardly represent what actually takes place in experience. We can intend to listen to a sound in a certain way, or we can intend a space to sound the way we would like it to, but we are continuously interrupted by structures and agents beyond jurisdiction. What we hope to be a stable alignment between sound and listener most often requires continual adjustment or, in some cases, completely fails to harmonize.

A brief return to Lefebvre's three spatial modes will help to demonstrate how these intersections between phenomenological self, objectified sounds, and the volatile world are reciprocally problematic. As discussed in the previous chapter, these spatial modes represent overlapping elements of the same lived space which may but usually do not fully align with one

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another. I propose that we map three stages of acoustic ordering upon these analytical moments, in hopes that their simultaneity and peculiarities are more precisely observed.

I will start with the most abstract, though by no means the most universal, mode of representational space. Here, as Lefebvre describes, is where the subject lives amongst significations of meaning and attributions of value. Objects are exchanged in this 'pure' space of representation, though along conceptual and figurative lines rather than material ones. This is as close as we can get within his model to the ideal space of the phenomenological activity of perception. Indeed, perception continually references and is affected by the world beyond it while remaining detached, at least temporarily, in the subject's experience. Representational spaces, as well, develop characteristics which are affected by but can operate independently from traditionally 'material' conditions of political life. Whether shared or private, this exchange of symbolic objects is an effective activity in its own right.

It is upon these metaphysical foundations that phenomenological realism rests. If we are to take seriously the categorical modes of listening for which I've been arguing, we must admit that there is a space of ideal exchange wherein such operations are manifest. While I do claim that these categories are projected onto the material world, I have not assumed that they are themselves material. I have been saying throughout the dissertation, rather, that they embody a 'logic' which transcends any particular perception or sound itself. This a claim rests upon the existence of a representational space such as Lefebvre provides.

Lest we fall into pure idealism, and thus the relativism of perception and the refutation of my argument for social acoustic ordering, let us move onto the other two spatial modes. Representations of space, we recall, are the prescriptive mappings imposed upon and embedded within social spaces. Maps, diagrams, practical laws, and behavioral customs all reside

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predominantly in this regulatory space. This space is the hardest to conceive, I think, because it does not follow the standard material/ideal split that historical forms of spatiality have supposed. Instead, it suggests that political effects are themselves real and spatial entities worthy of a distinct ontology. To accept the real existence of political forces fundamentally changes the way we map social relations. Previously considered in terms of sedimentations of practice and historical material configurations, representations of space now equip us to take seriously the dialectic systems and processes by which these orderings coagulate and materialize. This dynamic perspective also places various agencies (individual, governmental, ecological) at the center of the analysis rather than as merely reactionary observers of an otherwise preformed reality.

It should be unsurprising, given the trajectories I have pursued in this project, that I take technological representations of space to be fundamental in explaining the concept of acoustic order. While I see the various logics of acoustic orders pervading each of these spaces, at times simultaneously, it is in the moment of acoustic prescription that they are most active in my theory. If excessive perceptions are to be resolved through a disciplinary technique of modifying either self-intention or world-sounding, it is through representations of space that this can be accomplished. Here, the establishment of a new technological system takes form to replace the prior, unstable perceptual one. The inherent normativity of representations of space, the way that they not only parse the world into discrete realms but also dictate hierarchies of value and power, provides a clearer view of how individuals are active, everyday agents in reforming acoustic practices. Once classified in phenomenological process, sound-objects (and reactions against excessive perceptions) become organizational technologies to be applied beyond this initial moment of reception. As ideal representations of sounds, rather than sounds-in-themselves or

sounds-for-the-perceiver, they become technologies to be wielded against the 'natural' world of unpredictable sounds. However (in)effective such projections from phenomenological experience may be in actually changing social-spatial practices, I argue that this is the primary means by which such systems, as acoustic orders, are altered in the aggregate.

Representations of space, moreover, point to the sedimentations of practice and political milieus beyond this everyday subjectivity. As I've claimed throughout, phenomenology is merely one method of understanding how sounds are interpreted and organized in experience. The social and political dimensions of listening are necessary considerations to take into account, even to inform what was previously an isolated phenomenological method. With the recognition that representations of space are effective configurations of practice, we have a metaphysical explanation for where and how acoustic orders exist: embedded in social practices and maintained through a multitude of overlapping political agencies.

Acoustic orders need not be enacted at every instance of their affectivity, however. If spaces were limited to representational (ideal) and representations (normative) forms, perhaps we could claim that it is merely 'constructed' at the time of practice and therefore 'relative' to every single instance of sounding and listening. This would short-circuit any theory of generality for which I have been arguing, reducing the explanation to a simple statement: that a sound contains only the qualities and characteristics that an individual imparts to it at the time of listening. No more general qualifications or attributions could be made based on these grounds, since the only metaphysics we would be allowing would be pure ideality. If, however, we take spatial practices to be real, material events, we can permit a much richer and more fruitful explanation of social acoustic practices.

This is hardly a return to outright materialism or realism, since the first two modes of spatiality still apply to every degree of spatial practice.   We might think of the simultaneity of spatial modes like we do various sensorial qualities of a particular object. When experiencing an object, we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste various qualities. While these rely on material conditions such as light, air, chemicals, etc, we analyze them in discrete sensory parts even though we might interpret them finally as a whole. The parts of an object, as discrete sensations, are isolated only temporarily and in service of understanding the object more fully. Similarly, Lefebvre's conceptual triad offers three perspectives from which space can be understood; to focus on or neglect any one of these is necessary for analytical precision yet detrimental to a holistic spatial account.

Spatial practice, as the most material of the three modes, is thus necessarily imbued with determinations from other spatial elements. Lefebvre's main critique of historical materialism follows these lines: by focusing too heavily on material 'means of production,' critical theorists ignored other necessary elements of power relations which were equally, but not identically, effective. For my purposes, such reasoning applies to how we conceive of standard acoustical practice. If, in a traditional view of acoustics, we look merely at the material reverberation of buildings or other structures, we miss other essential elements of such spaces: the habits, routines, patterns and regulations of practice, as well as the private experience and revision of expectations that individuals perform within such a space. Spatial practice, then, is a highly complex amalgamation of ideal, normative, and material factors operating concurrently within a 'space' more generally conceived.

If my project is one which rethinks the materialist assumptions of acoustics, it does so particularly through a more precise understanding of individual qualification within acoustic

sites. While this individual is necessarily listening within much broader contexts and norms, I argue that it does so through a peculiar phenomenological agency. Habituation within an environment requires not only individual action but also social training and political enabling. We do not listen in isolation, even in private spaces; instead, we bring with us the residue of auditory and acoustic practices we have metabolized from prior experience. Again, to return to my initial metaphor, it is necessary even at this stage to focus on the *incorporation* at the root of audition. Sounds, techniques of listening, and prescriptions of practice do not stand alone as material objects or isolated internal processes; each necessarily affects the other in series of reciprocal relations. The following illustration, without prescribing a beginning or direction of such effects, provides a visual representation of what is actually a much more complex spatial arrangement of practices.

Acoustic Ordering

(Representational Space)

Phenomenological
Interpretation by
Category:

Symbolic
Affective
Excessive

(Representations of Space)

Articulations of
Categories as Aesthetic
Concepts in
Phenomenological and
Socio-Political Space

(Spatial Practice)

The Social
Manifestation of the
Projection of
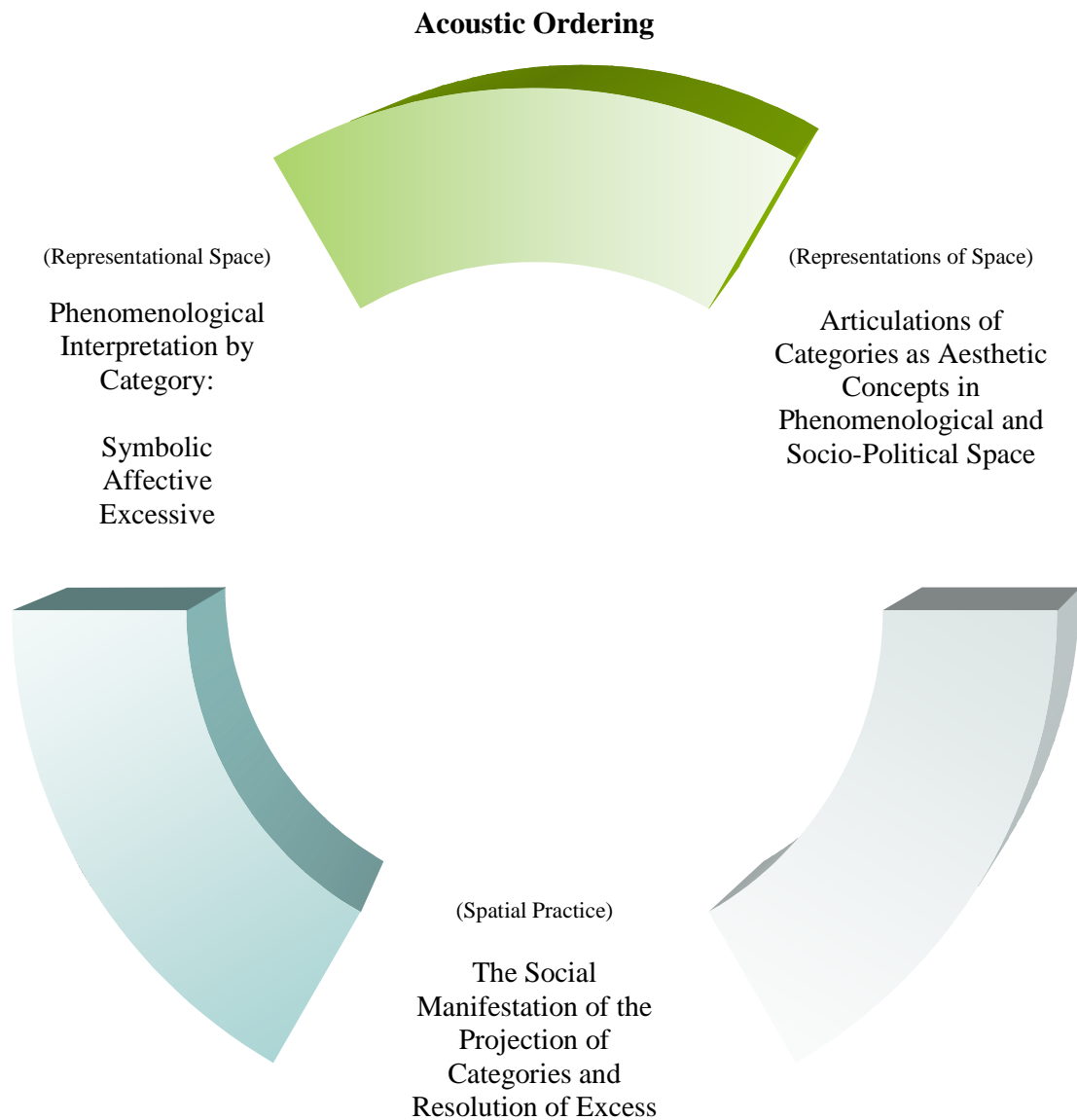Categories and
Resolution of Excess

Figure 3.
Lefebvre's Three Spatial Modes as Reciprocal Moments of Acoustic Ordering

<u>Nashville and "Noise" Regulations</u>

Explicitly, I have argued in this dissertation that various acoustic orders, be they aesthetic

preferences, sonic-spatial configurations, or auditory habits of awareness, can be traced to a

fundamental technique of the subject to resolve excessive perceptions into stable categorical objects. In each stage of my argument thus far I have isolated various logical systems which I take to be, in various degrees, analogous to the others: the incorporation of food/sound into the body-system, the objectification of technological processes, categorical interpretations as primarily affective, symbolic, or excessive, and acoustic orders as temporary spatial arrangements of practice. From this theoretical trajectory, I'd like to conclude with a discussion of how this study is useful beyond its internal development as a methodological vocabulary. By speaking toward fields and disciplines with established objects of inquiry, I believe that the frameworks I've drawn in this dissertation will be useful as models for revision and reconceptualization.

Within the phenomenology I set forth, affect and symbol were posed as temporarily stable categorizations of perception. By being situated either in the embodiment of the individual or the abstraction of representation, these dispositions toward interpreting sound become a foundation for constructing aesthetic codes and establishing familiar, habituated spaces. While never beyond the threat of excess which, as I said, is inherent within the margins of stability itself, these categories are nevertheless the bases of identifiable auditory experiences. In fact, within this system, these stable categories are the only access we have to perceptions as such; in excess, such distinctions only occur as experiences of indefinable surplus, lack, or multitude. Thus, affects and especially symbols are the standard approximations by which auditory experience presents itself to us, in the body, mind, and word.

When these modes of listening are juxtaposed, we can observe the development of aesthetics as an emergent tension. Never operating in merely one field or the other, aesthetic codes and practices necessarily reference both the embodiment of experience and the meaning

attributed to it. Despite whatever doubts we might have as to the 'authenticity' or political

motivations behind such cultural determinations,[226] we can nevertheless trace a clear line to the

phenomenological experience of individuals as they attempt to make sense of music, art, and

other intentional creations. To do so provides not only a richer account but also a further

ontological justification as a groundwork for a general theory of aesthetics' existence.[227]

Fields of aesthetics (most notably in this context, Musicology) benefit from a theory of

acoustic orders inasmuch as it provides a coherent account between individuals' experience and

cultural codes of appropriate activity.[228] If, as I claim, the same organizational and categorical

logic applies from phenomenological interpretation to social configuration, pathways of

influence and power can be traced consistently from one discipline to the other.

For example, I take this general situated theory of aesthetics to apply equally to

traditional music artifacts (songs, compositions) as to spatial determinations in everyday life (the

acoustic aesthetics of the living room, for instance). Such habituations of practice often

correspond to the types of motivations to which I have referred throughout: the establishment of

stable phenomenological perceptions through the reduction of excessive situations. While music

or art may often push the boundaries of such appropriate codes, it nevertheless remains stable to

the degree that it can be cataloged as an aesthetic object or project at all. Similarly, the

individual in attempting to appropriate the private habitat of the home will go to various lengths

to control the acoustic environment: through stereos (positive aesthetic construction), entrances

(doors and windows as acoustic orifices), insulation and earplugs (negative aesthetic

construction), or isolation (proximity as spatial response). Depending on the aesthetic desired by

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[226] Baudrillard, "The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Texts, Interviews."
[227] Clifton, *Music as heard: a study in applied phenomenology*; Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience.*
[228] Jung, "Phenomenology and body politics."

the subject, or the excess to be negated, differing orders are developed as *tactics* of auditory practice. Thus, I am making the case that the determination of a piece of music as music, as a genre or other formulation, is analogical to the construction of a particular acoustic environment into a stable habitat and dwelling-space. Orders of aesthetic response pervade these diverse auditory/acoustic customs.

The idea of acoustic orders as tactical operations brings us back to de Certeau's distinction between strategies as appropriated spatial codes and tactics as the practices of individuals as they attempt to navigate such regulated spaces. Without abandoning Lefebvre's tripartite spatiality, we see here a further move to illustrate everyday agency at the root of social activities and structures. While there may be condensations and sedimentations of practice in various laws, parameters, or customs, these are always negotiated in practice. No less in acoustic space than the visual, standards of appropriate behavior are made apparent throughout various social locations.

Take, for instance, the peculiar case of noise regulation in Nashville, Tennessee. In 2008, two ordinances were passed specifically targeting the central downtown area which is famous for its honky-tonk bars, tourist attractions, and general nightlife every day of the week. Walking on Broadway or 2nd Avenue at night is a unique auditory experience even without entering any particular commercial space. Along these streets, you hear two primary types of establishments. The first type, iconic to Nashville's image as Music City, is the country and bluegrass venue. On each side of the road, bands are stationed onstage, often with their backs to the passerby's on the sidewalk, their music spilling out into this public space. Especially on warmer nights, when the windows and doors are opened, the music can be quite loud outside the venue to the extent that sustained conversation is affected in the immediate vicinity. Nevertheless, part of the goal is to

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entice spectators into the space to support the business. Operating continuously since the 1960s, the honky-tonk bars are cultural markers of Nashville's reputation; tourist nostalgia supports what remains a contemporary and relevant musical scene even beyond these bars. Many of the musicians on this circuit are also the studio performers or artists recording on Music Row, where many of the record labels and recording studios reside.

The other type of business which often makes itself audible on the street level is the nightclub, disco, or karaoke bar. These are predominantly on 2nd Avenue, which is the street perpendicular to Broadway and close to the riverfront, and on other side streets from Broadway. Playing mostly prerecorded hip-hop and dance pop music, these clubs sometimes have speakers on the outside as well as the inside of the building. In the case of karaoke bars, the prerecorded music is only half of the equation; amateur singers' voices, now broadcast into the street, affects the classification of such music as prerecorded. In a nearly identical marketing strategy to the honky-tonks, the disco seeks to attract passerby's attention through an audio invitation. Architecturally, these establishments often do not have windows on the front; the only indication of what the club offers is through the sign, the speakers, and the bouncer at the door.

Unsurprisingly, these two types of venues often attract quite different clientele. Honky-tonks generally cater to middle-to-older generations as well as tourists, whereas the nightclubs are filled predominantly with various youth cultures. Both socio-economically and in the cultural identity of Nashville, the former are favored and protected explicitly by noise ordinances. I'll mention two specific examples which are instrumental in illustrating this distinction set in recent legislation.

Ordinance #BL2008-259, passed in September 2008, added a condition to the existing downtown noise regulation[229] which specifies that sounds must not be "plainly audible" at particular distances from its source in a venue, business, motor vehicle, or other location such as a special event.[230] This subjective determination of the *audible* replaced what was previously an 'objective' 55 dB(A) limit. This amendment also retained the exception for downtown Nashville for particular permitted establishments. What is most interesting for my purposes is the shift from objective determiners to subjective approximations, a point to which I'll return momentarily.

Only five months later, Ordinance #BL2008-306 amended this further to include more specific restrictions as to which types of music and therefore which establishments would be regulated. Keep in mind that these regulations are pertaining to a specific city blocks of a downtown area, and thus are targeted precisely at certain businesses and their contribution toward the identity that Nashville policy-makers wish to encourage or discourage. Specifically, this updated ordinance resets the decibel as the legal unit of measurement, stating in section B-3 that,

> All prerecorded music shall be limited to the 85 Decibel limit (A weighted), regardless of the source including, but not limited to: vinyl records, compact disks, digital video disks, digital audio players, hard drives, solid state memory, tape drives, radio sets or television sets. Such sound measurement shall be taken at street level fifty linear feet from the outside wall of the structure within which the noise is produced. Notwithstanding the foregoing, live music is expressly exempt from the 85 Decibel limitation. Live music shall mean that musicians, instruments and singers will not be prerecorded.[231]

This distinction is quite important for determining this urban space according to authoritative strategies. To utilize my concept of acoustic orders, we can see how multiple

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[229] "ORDINANCE NO. BL2006-1138."
[230] "ORDINANCE NO. BL2008-259."
[231] "ORDINANCE NO. BL2008-306."

overlapping agents are contributing in various degrees to the sonic makeup of the city. This is a
noise ordinance; more specifically, an amendment to the "Excessive Noise" section 11.12.070
within the Nashville Metropolitan Code. As such, it prefigures the interpretation of these public
sounds toward regulation. This code restricts certain sounds in public spaces, regardless of the
intent (capitalist or aesthetic) of the originator, based on a negative, excessive attribution. What
is a Michael Jackson hit within the karaoke bar now becomes noise pollution a few feet into the
street. The juxtaposition of even these two acoustic orders, fifty feet apart, is a crucial example
of how tenuous such organizations of sounds can be.

This Nashville situation is much more complex than merely a restriction against
particular bars and clubs, however. A slightly longer quote within Section 1 of the ordinance
displays the intentions of the legislation more explicitly.

> The purpose of this ordinance is to protect and improve the organic, live
> music product of Nashville, which has made the city synonymous with Music
> City worldwide, while providing for effective means of communication,
> consistent with constitutional guarantees. Additionally, the regulation of sounds
> and noise will have a positive impact on traffic safety, police enforcement and
> enjoyment of the community.
>
> Music City attracts more than 11 million visitors each year, who
> collectively spend $4 billion a year. […] The experience downtown is carefully
> calculated, with venues that promote true live music – in both voice and
> instrument – purposefully not charging admission and frequently opening doors
> and windows so that the live sounds can be easily enjoyed by passers-by. [The]
> downtown district has become a haven for live music enthusiasts and the
> ambiance of the live performance continues to be an anticipated and expected
> sound in the area.[232]

A few key elements stand out in this statement. First, we see the direct
privileging of the "live music product" of Nashville and the importance that holds for the
city's identity and tax revenue. This product is a very specific one, utilizing various

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[232] Ibid. §1

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aesthetic standards which are taken to be legitimate (country and bluegrass, for instance) while excluding many others. Second, the welcome accommodation for particular businesses to be sonically projected into the street "so that the live sounds can be easily enjoyed by passers-by" further exhibits the preference for a particular musical and acoustic aesthetic. These are live sounds to be enjoyed, not noises to be constrained. Consider this in relation to the following remarks, which target the clubs and bars of the second type.

> The Metro Nashville Police Department has a history of calls to bars and clubs that broadcast music/sound using outdoor speakers. The noise levels from the outdoor speakers are a safety issue for Police Officers. These noise levels create hazardous conditions, as the Police have difficulty maintaining public peace and safety. […] Due to the levels of music/sound volume from outdoor speakers, the Officers are unable to hear or talk on their radios. Officers are unable to give commands to individuals or crowds as they are unable to yell loud enough to be heard over the speaker volume. Often, the noise is so loud even an Officer's whistle cannot be heard. Crime victims, fight victims nor the general public are able to communicate with Officers, including hearing, talking or yelling due to the noise level. These occurrences are not rare. The Police Department's actual number of calls for 2008 to just 3 of the clubs with outdoor speakers are: Buckwild 131 calls, Faded 115 calls, Fuel 114 calls.[233]

Notice at the beginning of this section the distinct shift in terminology from "live music product" to "music/sound." This "broadcast" creates "noise levels" which are explicitly dangerous to police officers and various potential public victims. What is on one street the sweet sound of music and tourism dollars is, on the other, a dangerous weapon which threatens public welfare and safety. To be clear: both projections of sound are considered to be "music" according to the proprietors of these establishments, though only one is deemed worthy of protection under the law. The other is explicitly targeted, even by name (Buckwild, Faded, Fuel), as problematic and therefore worthy of further regulation.

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[233] Ibid.

It may be the case that more public complaints and violence occur in such areas. What concerns me here, however, is the rhetoric by which the legislation seeks to categorize and varyingly restrict certain forms of sonic expressions in the urban public space. The ordering of street acoustics is brought to the fore in this example, though not merely as an arbitrary distinction. Local economics, cultural and racial preferences, residential and commercial interests, and histories of aesthetic traditions are just a few of the factors which come to bear upon this issue.

I'd like to read this situation through the methodological trajectory I've been pursuing throughout the dissertation as a whole. The case of Nashville's downtown noise regulations provides evidence, in multiple spatial dimensions, for the kinds of auditory and acoustic techniques I have been describing. It demonstrates the applicability of the concepts of excess and acoustic orders beyond their preceding hypothetical construction. Though brief, this analysis offers a preliminary view of how the vocabulary I've set forth can be applied to a specific acoustic site and space.

I am claiming that the Nashville noise ordinances are explicit manifestations of acoustic orders. They are not, however, the only acoustic orders operating in that space. The experiences of the individuals who habituate this environment, from the police to the passer-by to the resident upstairs to the owner of the club to the musicians and DJ's themselves, constitute some of the multiple motivations for regulating such spaces. Yet, from this short list of actors in this spatial practice, we can easily see that quite contradictory perspectives and abilities to enact change. Who 'holds' the power in this milieu is unclear; the fact that various actors are capable of shifting practices and laws necessitates a dynamic understanding of how acoustic orders are negotiated in everyday situations.

In a fundamental sense, the theory of phenomenological thresholds and excesses applies throughout this case. Whether in terms of the structure of the law ("plainly audible" or 85 dB as thresholds) or in the lived experience of residents in the vicinity, contestations of interpretation depend on differences in aesthetic preferences and degrees of tolerance. To interpret the sound emanating from an establishment as beneficial music or harmful noise is to determine the limits of appropriate expression; in other words, acoustic orders are essentially property relations on various personal, economic, and governmental levels.

The alignment I outlined earlier with Lefebvre's three spaces allows for a particularly rich account of how acoustic orders overlap and entangle. The activities of individuals in spatial practice as sound producers and auditors cannot be divorced from the prescriptions of law, or representations of space. Not only does the law predetermine which sounds are appropriate, but it favors specific sounds over others in terms of a largely *economic* benefit to the "city" and the preservation of a certain reputation. Additionally, representational spaces abound in such an environment; the tourist industry is, to a large extent, dependent upon such constructions of meaning and nostalgic significations. To walk along Broadway at night is to constantly inhabit such contradictory fields of practice.

In terms of phenomenological excess, furthermore, we should be careful to discern between the various roles that individuals play in these scenes. The tenant in the apartment above the honky-tonk, for instance, expects a certain type of sound every night: guitars, drums, banjos and harmonic voices. These venues have been in constant operation for many years and thus provide a stable, predictable acoustic order. On the other hand, a tenant living above a new nightclub who just installed external speakers on the building now has to cope with an unpredictable 'intrusion' into what was hitherto considered private acoustic space. Though the

decibel levels may be the same between the honky-tonk and the club, the effect is apparently quite different if the law is taken as an indication of the local public's will. The clubs represent an excessive presence in terms of aesthetics (the particular type of sound), even though it is regulated in terms of loudness. Though the preparation of the ordinance states clearly the bias toward the live-music tradition, the letter of the law itself takes it as a matter of fact that such distinctions are justified.

The proprietors of these establishments, however, have quite different motivations than the apartment dwellers. To be silent is to be bankrupt, literally on the bottom line. In a way, both the honky-tonks and the clubs are attempting to be explicitly excessive in order to draw in new customers. By "broadcasting" their respective musics onto the street, they advertise the unique experiences offered within. Again, the law discerns quite differently between their styles; the honky-tonk represents a legitimate, even strategic, operation whereas the club must resort to surreptitious tactical moves. In de Certeau's terms, we can observe the strategies shared between lawmakers and honky-tonk owners as evidence of a certain hierarchical ordering of acoustic practice in the urban space. Nevertheless, such alliances are never completely effective at regulating this space. This is why these laws were introduced recently; a change in practice on the street level prompted the laws' adjustment through the agency of residents, the police, and of course the lawmakers themselves.

Thus, we can see two primary forms of excess at work simultaneously and in opposition. The silence that the venue owners feel by keeping the sound indoors causes an acoustic move to be enacted: open the doors and windows, install external speakers, etc. In response, other agents reconfigure their reactions to these various acoustic practices. In the case of the honky-tonks, the sound is received largely as a legitimate feature of downtown Nashville. As such, it remains

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within the aesthetic sphere between affect (the enjoyment of the music, for instance) and symbol (the sound as representative of a certain urban identity). In the case of an interpretation of these sounds as noise, however, residents shut doors and windows, call the cops when they feel violated by particular sounds, or move to create laws against the sounds' propagation in the first place.

I am arguing that these techniques of appropriating acoustic space extend from various individual interpretations and actions into the public space of legislation. The law is certainly not representative of the desires of all those involved; the owners of Buckwild and Fuel, for instance, surely would prefer a different code. Nevertheless, these ordinances are evidence that acoustic contestations are significant enough to warrant such specific spatial and cultural regulation. The maintenance of acoustic order, as the negation of excess, necessarily excludes those outside the strategic mainstream.

More specifically in terms of musical production, these laws prescribe what form of instrumentation is appropriate through explicit reference to (re)productive technologies. Whereas, "[l]ive music shall mean that musicians, instruments and singers will not be prerecorded,"[234] within which standard acoustic and electric instruments are categorized, it remains unclear what the status of non-traditional instruments would be. Earlier I mentioned the case of the DJ turntable, where a reproductive technology is transformed into a productive instrument. According to the ordinance, "vinyl records" are considered prerecorded music and thus fall within the 85 dB limit. Might there be an inconsistency here, or at least an overt bias in favor of standard musical practice and against innovative or artistic sonic expression?

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[234] Ibid. Section B-3

The determination of Nashville as "Music City"[235] thus carries with it explicit cultural codes of appropriate acoustic practice. Even merely in this example of downtown noise regulation, such disciplinary controls are quite apparent. The excesses and responsive orderings on the street provide a fascinating example of how phenomenological thresholds of audition correspond not only to material acoustic practice but also to prescriptions at the legal level. Perhaps most interesting in this example is not that the city merely regulates loud sounds, as most cities do to various degrees, but that it is so explicit in its preference for certain sounds to be constrained and others to be encouraged to disseminate throughout the local space. Acoustic orders, however temporary, hyper-local, and antagonistic they may be, nevertheless reflect strategic ideologies and sedimentations of cultural practice. They are never total or completely stable, always open to excessive tactical revision. The individual, as auditor or sound producer, finds itself simultaneously absorbing and reappropriating for its own use the fleeting sounds of such dialectical spaces.

We come full circle, then, to the auditor as embodied metabolizer. Necessarily embedded in social contexts, receiving and habituating sounds in phenomenological and spatial practice, and redetermining future conditions for sounds to occur, the listening subject is always threatened by various auditory and acoustic excesses. Whether on the level of the person as organ-ism, the business as an organ-ization of capital, or the organ-ized city, the tension between stable sounds and those which cannot (yet) be incorporated is more than apparent throughout everyday life. To resolve excess in order is a temporary and unstable activity, much like the transience of all sounds, subjects, and spaces.

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[235] For a comparison of this terminology to Austin, Texas' similar slogan, see: Porcello, "Music Mediated as Live in Austin: sound, technology, and recording practice."

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