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Voices

Micro-editions of Readings by McClure, Marlatt, Rukeyser

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You can read this micro-edition on the [*Scholarly Editing* website](#).

Introduction

The audio recordings included in “Voices: Micro-editions of Readings by Daphne Marlatt, Michael McClure, and Muriel Rukeyser” represent select moments of performed poetry. In 2019, at the “Performing the Archive” event hosted at Milkcrate Records in Kelowna, Syilx Territory, Daphne Marlatt reads from her first collection of poems, *leaf leaf/s*,¹ alongside a 1969 recording of her reading from the same collection. Michael McClure reads from his book *Ghost Tantras*² at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, on June 16, 1976. Muriel Rukeyser reads a poem-sequence that shares a title with her poetry collection *The Speed of Darkness*³ at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in 1969. In each case, we have chosen to include recordings of these performances because rendering what we find resonant for listeners highlights aspects of the literary record that print editions may never reproduce.

Our micro-editions mark how we listen and what we hear in these performances just as editorial choices and marginalia mark how and what editors find significant in specific versions of manuscript and printed texts. At the same time, the theory of resonance⁴ that we describe below shapes our choices. This theory includes an element of dialogism—or a conversation between different ideas and tones—rather than the utterance of a singular authoritative voice. The dialogism corresponds to the particular situated practices of listening we present and invite through these editions. To listen is to participate in meaning-making with a speaker. Our readers are also listeners who will be engaging with the editorial decisions we have made (as listeners ourselves) and the digital apparatus (including transcriptions, time stamps, annotations, and index terms) we have created.

In our attempt to be transparent about our principles of selection and other editorial choices represented in the apparatus, this introduction identifies **how and why** we are using the digital, playable, editorial apparatus of these micro-editions to represent how we listen and what we hear when we listen to “voice” as a resonant feature in these performances. We begin with a brief introduction to resonance and the editorial theory behind our choices. We describe the significance of “voice” as a concept that helps us uncover expressive meanings of utterances in these performances that are irreducible to direct transcription. We introduce the work of these poets and explain how annotating voice in these recordings may offer new understandings of the poetic practices performed. We conclude this introduction with a description of our transcription choices (what sounds we have included or ignored) and an explanation of the interface.

Resonance

Conventional approaches to literary audio presume that when we hear the performance of a poet’s work we are engaging with a preexisting artwork whose primary mode of access is private print reading. But literary audio represents a new and complex literary-historical event with its own pressing, situated claims on the attention of a live audience. Close listeners to poetry’s audio archives have long understood that sonic media turn up the volume on the “fundamentally plural existence”⁵ of text. Close listeners have not, however, always been clear just what can be done with that messy, mediated plurality, which includes both the various instantiations of a poem and the myriad layers of observation entailed by the study of the historical audio record. Jason Camlot has dubbed this plurality “phonopoetics” or “the emergence and making (poeisis) of literary speech sounds (phono).”⁶ In addition, it is quite difficult to simultaneously hold in mind what Tanya Clement terms the “resonant dissonances” of the audio archive—those difference-making “material, contextual, and political details of audio recordings”—that “coexist in clamorous superimposition.”⁷ These micro-editions are our attempt to make possible the co-presentation of text and sound and to enable the identification and exploration of these dissonances, that cacophonous context that informs any phonotext.

We use the term “resonance” purposefully. Clement describes resonance as a double awareness of matter: it is a mindfulness about what signifies to whom and also through what material conditions.⁸ Media specificity in literary analysis is not new. A concern for media indicates a “mode of critical attention which recognizes that all texts are instantiated and that the nature of the medium in which they are instantiated matters.”⁹ Similarly, an attention toward the material condition of texts has become a typical practice in editorial theory. According to Jerome McGann’s theory of text, a text’s rationale is a consideration for its social condition, a condition which is made

apparent through the materiality of the text and what matters to the writer and reader or “the dynamic structure of a document as it is realized in determinate (artisanal) and determinable (reflective) ways.”¹⁰ Clement’s “rationale of audio-text” plays on McGann’s “The Rationale of Hypertext”—which in turn draws from the 1951 “Rationale of Copy-Text” by W. W. Greg—to take into account the publishing and social systems that surround processes of documentation (both analog and digital) in information scholarship to make similar claims about social-text editing with digital audio texts.¹¹

Attuned to these resonant (material and significant) features of the recordings, our micro-editions include the editors’ annotations on the personal and situated mode of meaning-making that necessarily responds to the complexities of listening to these recorded performances. We consider the aural and temporal aspects of a singular performance of a previously printed text recorded and played back on older media to a historical audience alongside the digital apparatus that makes these performances accessible to current listeners and readers here and now. Accordingly, these micro-editions make sense in dialogue with preexisting printed, published versions, but also with old and new recording, playback, and storage machines (including tape recorders, tapes, audio files, and media players). Our micro-editions are documentary in the sense that each edition is one recording of one performance of a text.¹² However, because these *are* performances for an audience, our micro-editions are also very much concerned with the tenets of social-text editing where reception or the listening experience is foregrounded. We are mindful that we are engaging historical and real-time listeners with the recorded performance. As such, what ties these three micro-editions together is that the representation of the textual experience can never be holistic, even in its most basic conception.¹³

Creating digital editions of audio performances that are attuned to the less-than-holistic aspects of textuality requires multiple levels of double awareness. Of concern, then, is the extent to which creating an audio edition is similar to or different than creating a scholarly print edition. What do we mean by an audio-text edition in the first place? Kate Moffatt, Kandice Sharren, and Michelle Levy provide a model of an “audio edition” using Mavis Gallant’s 1984 reading of “Grippes and Poche,” which is comprised of two podcast episodes. One episode includes the recorded performance and the other includes the critical apparatus with introductory material, notes, and appendices.¹⁴ Their concern is that critical print editions of literary works are “imbue[d] ... with institutional value,” and “approaching a sound recording through the lens of scholarly editing practices both appropriated that institutional value and raised questions about the print-based assumptions embedded in those practices.”¹⁵ We have similar concerns. We are aware of how these assumptions reflect a power dynamic within a very old field and that our micro-editions are pushing the boundaries of what has typically been published in this journal. Our micro-editions are necessarily hybrid (text- and AV-based) and cybertextual (of print-based and interactive, digital traditions).¹⁶ They are imbued with historical media (print and recorded media) and institutional values that depend on print and recorded media as authoritative texts. But, as we explain, the digital composition (audio files, text, and an interactive interface) of these micro-editions allows us to annotate and make accessible what resonates for us in the dialog between their material and social conditions.

By addressing material and social conditions, this thematic cluster of scholarly micro-editions takes into account standards for reliable texts that are “accurate, adequate, appropriate, consistent, and explicit”¹⁷ as well as “the ideological structures and material processes that shape the creation, transmission, reception, production, and interpretation of texts.”¹⁸ It is situated by a rationale for audio textuality¹⁹ in which extratextual, meaning-making signifiers such as “voice” are at play, realized in a digital information system that provides playback alongside

contextual metadata and annotations. The micro-editions gathered here are especially invested in the audible nature of context. Annotation has been a methodology in the humanities for adding contextual information to texts since the Middle Ages, but it is also an important aspect of digital information technologies, providing structures and frameworks that influence how texts appear and how readers, viewers, and listeners perceive and use them.²⁰ In a digital edition like “Voices,” both kinds of annotations are present. Annotations like transcriptions and notes function as commentary and explanation to facilitate understandability, but tags are also annotations that classify and categorize commentaries and explanations to ensure search, indexicality, and discoverability. In “Voices,” annotating is a sociotechnical, scholarly methodology that facilitates other humanities methods such as discovering, comparing, referring, sampling, illustrating, and representing.²¹

Significantly, while Moffatt, Sharren, and Levy are concerned with establishing a “copy-text” and call the performed poem a “version” of the text, we seek to apply Al Filreis’s theory of paraphonotextuality in our micro-editions by staying attuned to what he calls “the full phonotext”²² of poetry performances. For Filreis, the full phonotext includes (1) the “poetic voice” or “the totality of sounded significations”; (2) the written poem (sometimes the published version) as “script” for the performance; (3) “accidental ambient noises, made by audience and by the room itself”; (4) evidence of the media and medium of recording; (5) “vocal interpolations by the poet that are not, but can seem to be, part of the text-as-score as delivered.” Before we explicate *how* we are representing the full phonotext in these micro-editions, we must first attend to why these particular recordings of these poets reading these poems bring a double awareness of the text’s material and meaning-making features.

Performing the Archive—Daphne Marlatt Reads With Her Younger Self (Emily Christina Murphy and Karis Shearer)

In July 1969, twenty-six-year-old Canadian poet Daphne Marlatt (1942–) read aloud her first collection of poems *leaf leaf/s* (Black Sparrow Press, 1969) cover to cover, to an audience of one: her former professor, Warren Tallman. A prolific recordist, Tallman registered the reading—bookended by his conversation with her—on a quarter-inch open reel in his living room. The literary audio record resonates in both formal and embodied ways: the overall form of the poem on the page, particularly its short lines and caesuras, can be heard through Marlatt’s tone, speed, stress, pitch, and pauses. Biographical resonances also surface; her young voice bears strong traces of a foreign accent, evidence of her family’s English heritage. While her accent does not readily connect her to her birth country of Australia or to her childhood home of Malaysia, it does nevertheless identify her as an immigrant to Canada, an identity that would shape the concerns of her poetry over her lifetime.

To fast-forward fifty years, this micro-edition presents a live 2019 reading event—“Daphne Marlatt: Performing the Archive” at Milkcrate Records in Kelowna, British Columbia—in which Marlatt read alongside the 1969 recording of her voice, her past and present voices exchanging turns reading, this time in front of a live audience of over seventy people. The event was styled after the “Performing the Archive” series, founded in Montreal by Camlot. “We’d bring those individuals back,” explains Camlot, “and have them read live alongside their archival selves, so the event would be a mix of readings that had happened fifty years earlier and are happening now in the present.”²³

While Marlatt’s voice and reading style have evolved over five decades—her English accent faded and her reading style became softer and less clipped—the transitions between past-Marlatt and present-Marlatt are almost

seamless. Marlatt remarked later: “I was very, very glad that [audio engineer Craig Carpenter] would key me in because I didn’t want to read the poems as I [was listening to] them. I didn’t want to read them on the page; I wanted to hear them.”²⁴ The rhetorical listening Marlatt describes makes this event compelling in part, as Camlot explains, “because half of the reading event [is] a performance of listening.”²⁵

Out of the Cage—Michael McClure and *Ghost Tantras* (Matthew Kilbane)

In this micro-edition, American poet Michael McClure (1932–2020) reads from his book *Ghost Tantras* (1964) at the Naropa Institute on June 16, 1976. The poems in *Ghost Tantras* dip in and out of what McClure calls “beast language,” an ecstatic register of leonine nonsense that mimics the guttural growls and roars of large mammals. Beast language was McClure’s attempt to activate “the biological bases of poetry,”²⁶ a practical application of what he dubbed “Meat Science.” “For McClure, humans are meat,” writes Michael Davidson, “and one’s expression—in its ideal state—is an incarnation of one’s mammal nature.”²⁷ Rather infamously, McClure read a selection of these poems to lions at the San Francisco Zoo, an escapade captured in a 1966 episode of the documentary series *USA Poetry*, developed by poet and Beat associate Richard O. Moore.²⁸

Ten years later, during a whistle-stop retrospective of Beat history with Allen Ginsberg at Naropa, McClure makes a show of his hesitancy to read “Ghost Tantra 49,” one of the very same poems he had triumphantly declaimed to a cage of lions the decade prior. On the recording, McClure explains his newfound resolution to read the poem by pointing to his recent experience reciting the poem in an isolation tank. There McClure was surprised to hear his own voice as if from inside his own body, by means of his “inner organs of perception.”²⁹ So interiorized is this mode of listening that McClure demurs at any suggestion of materialization. In his essay “A Mammal Gallery,” he describes listening to a tape recording of a snow leopard’s performance—“more beautiful than any composition of Mozart.”³⁰ And he studiously declines to privilege its preservation or mediality: “The tape is a work of art as we listen. But we have no desire to add it to the universe of media and plastic artifacts. We see, hear, feel through the veil. WE are translated.”³¹ Likewise, in this recording of his reading from *Ghost Tantras*, the passage from English to beastly nonsense and back performs the extreme dissolution of the Cartesian split. Beast language exuberantly infuses body, meat, and muscle with capacities for expression while the digitized recording that allows its translation or interpretation and is preserved as a micro-edition belongs to that “universe of media and plastic artifacts.”

Silence and Spaces in Muriel Rukeyser’s “The Speed of Darkness” (Trent Wintermeier)

Muriel Rukeyser (1913–1980), an American poet, essayist, and political activist whose work focused on topics such as labor, war, feminism, politics, and science, wrote that there are “two kinds of poems,” the first being “the document, the poem that rests on material evidence.”³² In contrast to the document are “the poems of unverifiable facts, based in dreams, in sex, in everything that can be given to other people only through the skill and strength by which it is given.”³³ On the 1969 recording at Sir George Williams University included here, Rukeyser introduces her poetry reading and reads her thirteen “poems” as separate stanzas, titled “The Speed of Darkness.”

During her reading, she explains that she will present the spaces that appear on the pages of her collection as pauses. Listening to these spaces in their audible form contrasts with what Rukeyser says is the material poem, which includes the visual, physical form of blank space on a page that separates one stanza from the next. Instead, the audio recording exhibits “The Speed of Darkness” as a poetry collection of “unverifiable facts” that is developed through Rukeyser’s spoken-word performance. The audio recording of her reading these spaces as pauses lacks the material evidence of a visual space, which allows Rukeyser to practice how materiality (even as absence) continues to shape poetic listening practices.

The micro-edition of Rukeyser’s reading of “The Speed of Darkness” facilitates a new way of interpreting the poem that is shaped by listening to the silence and spaces that only come through in the audio-recorded reading of the collection. In her introduction and reading of “The Speed of Darkness,” Rukeyser engages with space and silence as poetic practice. In the introduction, she speaks about the lies of human activity, queerness, and what gets forced into spaces of silence. Her use of social voice here expresses how a politics of silence can create new poetic forms, such as in the “Speed of Darkness.” These preceding moments are transcribed and annotated in detail (1:40–1:42 and 3:55–3:57) to inform the remainder of the recording. Overall, listening to both “The Speed of Darkness” and the moments preceding this series of stanza-poems demonstrates how poetic listening practices and their annotation in the edition are both bound up with the audibility of space.

Voice—Speaking, Reading, Situational, Social

Given the complexities inherent in the social conditions of these texts, our reliance on the concept of “voice” may seem reductive. It might seem to represent a narrow preoccupation with the speaking subject and transcriptions that could signal a disregard for all the noise and interference—the stutters and patter, the roomy echoes, the uncomfortable silence, the audience laughter, the missing high frequencies—to which critical listeners pay attention just as intently. Yet, our “voices” include these meaningful sounds. An example outside our editions to which we can point is Warren Tallman’s introduction to the “Charles Olson Memorial Reading” from March 14, 1970,³⁴ as it provides an example of how we can attend to paraphonotextuality or the social, embodied, and poetic norms that are audible on a tape. Listeners can hear the dialog between Tallman (the event’s host) and his responsive audience as evidence of a warm and close relationship among the poets gathered at the memorial. One can hear the sound of the room, the institutions and histories that shape the gathering, made audible through murmurs that echo against walls and conversations shouted across space and half-captured on the recording. On this recording, like the ones in our micro-editions, sounds and voices often overlap. The conception of “voice” we are advancing here includes these nonsemantic and nonhuman sounds—it is not merely “para” to the phonotext as Filreis’s term might suggest. For us, the virtue of using the term “voice” to describe these sounds lies precisely in how its use emphasizes the central importance of overlapping and simultaneous sounds of performers, printed texts, rooms, audiences, and technologies that render audio recordings such vivid and vital documents of embodied and material literary history.

The simultaneity of the voices we mark means they are not easily distinguishable. In the micro-edition “Performing the Archive—Daphne Marlatt Reads With Her Younger Self,” for example, Marlatt’s changes in voice indicate how sound carries experiences on audio recordings to continuously build meaning over time. For Marlatt,

this overlap means that she often signals the contextual and temporal changes that she perceives to her person and her voice as she listens to an older recording of herself nested within the recording to which we listen on the micro-edition. Bringing sounds of the past to the present allows us to hear the different social contexts bump up against each other and the changes of the embodied voice over time. Bringing a biographical reading to the edition allows us to interpret audible changes in Marlatt's voice, and while these changes are not always easy to mark or to access, in the attempt to do so, we make the possibilities and the impossibilities of the task apparent.

The heuristic framework we are using to make these contexts perceptible include four conceptually distinct tags that we use to label and animate the often simultaneous but varied layers of the audio record. These labels for voice, which are included in a tag group "Voice," are "Speaking," "Reading," "Situational," and "Social." These four labels map to and differ from Filreis's ideas about phonotext in the following ways. What we are calling the *speaking* voice refers to what Filreis calls "vocal interpolations" or "the paratextual aspect of a poem as performed during a live poetry reading," including prefatory or side remarks made by the performer. Attention to the *reading* voice, by contrast, strives to restore the difference made by the dynamic relationship between the performative voice and the printed page. To invite listeners to pay attention to the recited text by acknowledging the reading voice is to mark the written poem as what Filreis calls the "script" that guides the performance. The *situational* voice, meanwhile, attunes us to the live relation between performer and responsive audience. These are what Filreis calls "ambient" noises made by the audience, the room, or the recording itself. Instead of marking these as ambient or background noise, we note these sounds, like audience laughter or applause, as sounds that situate the performance and its recording in place and time. Finally, in the *social* voice, we listen for the sonic attributes that Filreis associates with the delivery of the poem in his definition of the total sounded significations that make up "poetic voice." Listening for the social voice requires paying attention to the grain of address and its expressive physiological textures, but we argue it is also and always in response to the perceived audience. With the "social voice," we are marking tone, accent, emphasis, or speed, for example, or how the performer seeks to present the compacted social histories those textures might index for this audience, from a speaker's age and gender performance to their cultural location in time and geographical space.

By categorizing voice in our micro-editions, we're able to mark moments differently by sorting and indexing according to the contextual and temporal changes that these voices engage, including their barely present and almost-missed acoustic elements—their regularity, their almost omnipresence lurking in the background of the verbal, spoken, and sounded. Differentiating and marking the multiple voices (speaking, reading, social, and situational) one hears in the audio record allows for layered observations and interpretations across a single time axis or, as is the case when listening to Daphne Marlatt, across multiple moments in time simultaneously. These sounds might include Marlatt's use of tone, speed, stress, and pitch; McClure's growls and roars; and, for Rukeyser, the important spaces made with silence.

The Speaking Voice

How the performer speaks *in situ* about the poem they are performing becomes a significant paratext for the listener's interpretation of the poem being recorded. On the 1976 recording in the micro-edition "Out of the Cage —Michael McClure and *Ghost Tantras*," McClure mentions his hesitancy to perform "Ghost Tantra 49," despite having read the same poem to a cage of lions ten years earlier:

I was always afraid to recite this other one. Although I knew it by heart, I was afraid to recite it because I thought I might not be able to stop. It's very mantric. And I thought I'd be giving a reading and they'll carry me away at the end. I'll still be going Grahhr! Grahhr! So, recently I was in one of John Lilly's isolation tanks and I thought, what a perfect time to do this thing I've always been afraid to do. [Audience laughs] What difference would it make here? So I did, and I did know it by heart, but I think I'll read it here anyway. (1:00:30–1:01:01)

John Lilly was a neurophysicist and countercultural celebrity famous for his work with dolphins and his invention of the water-immersion isolation tank, a therapeutic means of probing interior experience by cleaving mind from body. "The method allows one to become free [of the body] within a few minutes," Lilly trumpeted.³⁵ And yet, the zoological expression of McClure's beast language precisely refuses any distinction between the mind and body. "I knew that consciousness was part of the physiological body," insists McClure.³⁶ Listening, we ask: Why should the experience of floating in an isolation tank, designed to banish the body, license McClure's reading in beast language before the Naropa audience in 1976? One possibility is that Lilly's tank strikes an illuminating counterimage of what is interpretatively salient in what actually happened at Naropa; the mention of the isolation tank creates a foil for that set of difference-making material contexts to which critical readings of the audio archive might attend.

Similarly, in the micro-edition "Silence and Spaces in Muriel Rukeyser's 'The Speed of Darkness,'" Rukeyser details how she will read and delineate between stanzas in the "group" of poems that make up "The Speed of Darkness." Rukeyser prefaces her reading of the poem sequence by simply explaining that "The poem [she will] read this evening is a group. The group is called 'The Speed of Darkness.'" Later, at approximately the fortieth minute of her reading, she adds an important detail: "They're short poems and I'll just pause between poems. There should be numbers going up in back of me. One, two, three. I'll just pause." ("The Speed of Darkness" [40:11–40:27]). The audience laughs at her remark. Her humor points to the numerous aspects of the complexity of space in space and time. A gap on the page is typically ignored, but remains meaningful in poetry that relies on printed space as a marker of a gap in time or sound. Yet, gaps are more easily discerned in their visual, textual form. What was visually "brought into relation with the other through juxtaposition"³⁷ becomes mixed up, confused, and complicated in the audio recording of Rukeyser's reading until she remarks on their presence in her comments. Told to pay attention to pauses as markers that orient us to the printed page, we juxtapose the sense of the poem on the page with the sense of the poem provided by "the skill and strength by which it is given."³⁸ Rukeyser's remarks orient a listening practice that may disrupt or inform interpretations of the poem and illuminate different senses of doubleness found within, between, and across each stanza.

In the micro-edition "Performing the Archive—Daphne Marlatt Reads With Her Younger Self," the speaking voice has quite a different effect. Whereas in the 1969 archival recording of Marlatt reading *leaf leaf/s* the speaking voice is entirely absent during the reading of the poems, Marlatt's 2019 reading offers paratextual remarks that draw attention to the material conditions in which the poems were written. She comments on the poem "lynne who has been shoveling snow": "In Bloomington we were living in Pigeon Hill, which was a very poor part of town. It was the only part of town that as graduate students we could afford to live in" and "Lynne was a little girl who lived across the street in a house that only had a dirt floor. The house was eventually torn down, and this was a poem for her and her curiosity about typing. I don't think she'd ever seen anyone type before." Highlighting the precarity of her life in Bloomington yokes past and present as Marlatt stands reading in front of a large eviction

notice for the event venue Milkcrate Records, which was forced by its landlord to close just ten days after “Daphne Marlatt: Performing the Archive” took place.

The Reading Voice

In all these recordings, the performer’s *reading* voice presents the poems in ways that are often in conversation with the printed text. For instance, there are thirteen silences in Muriel Rukeyser’s reading that expose the materiality of the poem’s printed form.

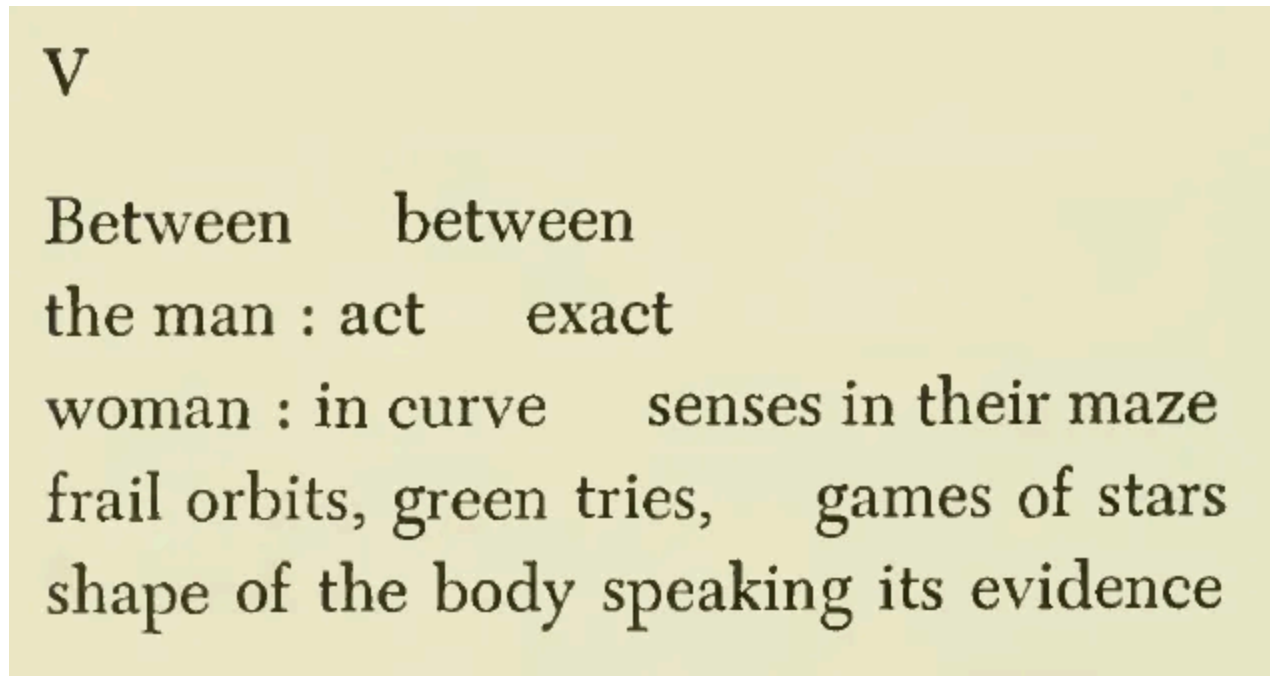


Figure 1: Stanza five of Muriel Rukeyser’s poem “The Speed of Darkness.”

To affirm a sense of “doubleness” during her performance, her voice holds sonic space between and within stanzas, much as the page might display printed space. An example of the printing of the fifth stanza in “The Speed of Darkness” is illustrated in Figure 1 and may be compared to minute 42:34 in the audio recording. In visual form, these spaces are material and recognizable. However, in Rukeyser’s sonic reading of these spaces, they take on new meaning through their unverifiable, unlocatable, and immaterial nature within an audio recording. Spaces, in her recorded reading, communicate the more subjective and dreamlike meanings that are sometimes obfuscated in visual form. Rukeyser’s exaggeration of syllables and the length of pauses that separate “between” and “between” during her delivery of the first line of the above printed page amplify the “doubleness” at the root of her poetry. The unverifiability that emerges through sonic space is why Rukeyser suggests that numbers should appear behind her on a presentation slide. In the micro-edition, annotations mark these spaces in her performance of the poem, such as between seconds 40:48 and 40:51, where the pause is annotated “Rukeyser pauses between the first and second stanza while reading ‘The Speed of Darkness.’” Similarly, the annotation “Rukeyser pauses between the second and third stanza while reading ‘The Speed of Darkness’” marks the space between 41:08 and 41:11. While

these spaces are recited in pauses, it's our marking of Rukeyser's use of "reading voice" that communicates new and more subjective ways to create meaning within these audible silences.

Another affordance of the category of "reading voice" is the incorporation of printed materials into a listener's transcriptional practice. For instance, in the case of McClure's *Ghost Tantras*, editor Kilbane defers on matters of spelling and morphology to the printed text of the poem, McClure's script for performance. Listeners can hear, in the poet's performance of a line like "Grahhr! Grahhr! Ghrahhr! Ghrahhr! Grahhr" (01:01:38–01:01:47), McClure's own performative fidelity—or lack thereof—to the transliterated words of his published page.

Toward the end of "Daphne Marlatt: Performing the Archive," we hear the reading voice begin to overtake the speaking, situated, and social voices. It may be that Marlatt is perhaps more comfortable in front of her audience. But what we hear is also the ways that written poetry, which she holds in her hands, becomes her object of attention. It would be tempting to interpret this shift within a conventional approach to literary audio, given primacy to the preexisting textual artwork. However, we think instead that we hear the material object of the poem begin to shape Marlatt's performance and embodiment. The mediated object of the written poem is shaping the action of reading, not just the sounds that Marlatt articulates, but her situatedness within a room and her relationship to the audience.

The Situational Voice

The *situational* voice attunes us to the live relation between performer and responsive audience. Introducing the concept of "Performing the Archive" to her contemporary listeners, Marlatt explains to the large audience that she and her 1969 voice will alternate reading poems from *leaf leaf/s* starting at the beginning of the book and ending with the final poems, but—she assures them—she's "not going to read all of them!" The suggestion the poet might read her entire book to them, an action which would break with contemporary public reading conventions and likely test the audience's patience, generates laughter from both Marlatt and her audience. But, we suggest, the audience is not entirely in on the joke: unbeknownst to them, Marlatt *did* in fact read the entire book in the 1969 recording. The incongruity that generates laughter in the contemporary moment, however, points us to the fact that it was not unusual, at least on the West Coast of Canada in the 1960s and '70s, to voice one's entire book at a public reading, as poet George Bowering and even Marlatt herself had done.³⁹

In her introductory remarks to McClure's reading, Anne Waldman shares a brief account of McClure's friendship with Allen Ginsberg, beginning with their first "official meet[ing]" at a party for W. H. Auden in 1954 and extending to previous collaborations between McClure and Ginsberg. These included readings together in 1965 during the Berkeley Vietnam peace protests and in the 1967 "Be-in" in San Francisco, "with Suzuki-Roshi [Shunryū Suzuki] on the stage," as well as a host of other "Timothy Leary benefits" and "om orgies" (00:00:28–00:01:56). The present occasion brings them full circle. Ginsberg begins his reading by intoning a selection from "Howl" and McClure by reciting "For the Death of 100 Whales," two poems that were debuted in 1955 at the famous Six Gallery reading in San Francisco. McClure plainly relishes drawing laughter and applause from the audience at Naropa, and his ease at the podium points to the performative prowess of Beat poets like Ginsberg and himself, as well as their playfulness and affinity for hijinks. At one moment, just after announcing his intention to read "a couple of poems in Beast Language," McClure begins reciting the opening of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The*

Canterbury Tales, drawing guffaws from the audience and at the same time implicitly dignifying his own experiments with the English language (00:58:57–00:59:14).

Similarly, Rukeyser creates moments of dialogue between her and her audience that illuminate how silence is used to challenge, or sometimes even refuse, the reception of conventional poetic forms focused on spoken word. When she draws laughter from her audience with her subtle remark about the performative nature of her reading, the audience laughter indicates that they are complicit: they understand how performing a pause is an inadequate but necessary stand-in for the betweenness Rukeyser hopes to express in her aural performance of space on the page. In this moment, they will participate in the betweenness, and, further, the audience response helps to co-create the context of inadequacy or betweenness for the micro-edition listener. At another moment, the audience laughs again when Rukeyser describes poets as “odd.” She queers the act of writing poetry: “If a man does it, he’s sexually questionable; if a woman does it, she’s sexually questionable” (1:20–1:42). This remark, and the laughter it elicits, is equally informed by Rukeyser’s own queerness and how she uses silence to create moments that voice oddity or betweenness. Laughter marks the co-creation of the performed poem for the micro-edition listener.

The Social Voice

In marking the *social* voice, we have sought out the aspects of sonic texture that allow for a listening to the connections between recorded sound and the political import of vocal performance with a live audience. Empirical research into vocal performance has begun to recognize these connections, too, providing insight into the vocal performance of woman-identified and queer poets across time and context. For instance, in their 2018 study, Marit J. MacArthur, Georgia Zellou, and Lee M. Miller demonstrate how different backgrounds and contexts can cause significant changes between speakers’ pitch, speed, acceleration, and dynamism in poetry readings. Women poets born before the 1960s, including those of similar age and background to Rukeyser and Marlatt, have a “wider pitch, faster pitch speed, slightly faster pitch acceleration, and greater dynamism” than women poets born after the 1960s.⁴⁰ Sexuality, too, intersects with gender in vocal performance. While nonheterosexual men poets have very little difference in intonation compared to heterosexual men poets, nonheterosexual women poets demonstrated a slightly wider pitch range than heterosexual women poets.⁴¹ These findings suggest that women poets “are attempting to sound more masculine and thus more authoritative” and will continue to adopt “a less Expressive style of reading, associated with male poets, as long as that is the norm for male poets.”⁴² As the poets featured here are heterosexual and nonheterosexual women and a heterosexual man, the grain of address—the expressiveness and pitch, the dynamism and the silence—suggest the political and social valence of what can be heard and tagged in an audio edition.

Marlatt’s micro-edition suggests that the physicalities of motherhood and age, too, may affect the social voice. When Marlatt read aloud in July 1969, she had given birth to her son Kit less than three months earlier. As she commented in 2013, she was “still in that pre-birthing, nursing hormonal storm. There was a distanced quality to [the sound of my voice]; I think that was the effort in it to keep the voice level.”⁴³ Katarzyna Pisanski, Kavya Bhardwaj, and David Reby corroborate Marlatt’s observations in empirical research, noting that “on average the voice pitch of new mothers dropped by more than 5 percent, or the equivalent of a half step on the piano ... their highest pitch on average dropped by more than two steps. New mothers also had less variation in their pitch.”⁴⁴ The young Marlatt makes a particular effort to work in her new temporary drop in pitch. The older Marlatt,

moreover, is still concerned in 2019 with “the physical state of the body at the time of recording,” albeit less explicitly.⁴⁵ On the recording, she turns to a discussion of language in which she performs the poetics of embodiment that her poetry would come to be known for—the drawn-out vowel sounds in verbs that stretch the rhythms of her speech and then condense into direct and indirect objects. What Marlatt performs here is a retrospective narrative of her development as a poet, away from objects and toward what language and bodies do.

The social voice establishes the crux of Rukeyser’s performance of “The Speed of Darkness.” Adam Mitts writes that “Rukeyser suggests a more active form of silence, one which is part of sound, and thought, and communication, as surely as space is part of the page” (2015). Mitts explains that Rukeyser suffered a stroke four years prior to publishing *The Speed of Darkness*, her book that shares the title of the collection she read at Sir George Williams University. Her use of spaces and pauses challenges how communication comes through illness—sometimes not in spoken word but in the silences, the flinches, and the gestures that bring words together and signal the betweenness that is central to the poem’s meaning. Explaining the embodied role that silence can play, Rukeyser reads a stanza from “The Speed of Darkness”: “No longer speaking. Listening with the whole body. And with every drop of blood. Overtaken by silence. But this same silence is become speech, with the speed of darkness” (40:51–41:08). Rukeyser describes how silence marks a communicative form of becoming where the absence of language invites the listening audience to fill the gaps between spoken words, to interpret silence as a kind of speech or a communication of meaning. Marking how the audience engages with her social voice activates silence as a signifier in her performance of the poem.

In the micro-edition featuring McClure, listening for the social voice attunes us to the performative tension between the nonhuman sounds that McClure strains to produce and the social data, the lived history, conveyed by his embodied voice. As we can hear in his comments between poems, McClure’s speech is the liquid instrument of an avid performer, one that betrays no especially particular regional distinctiveness save perhaps the slightly nasal, subtly ironic casualness of his generational milieu. When his poems slip into beast language, which they do gradually, after the listener has McClure’s own voice firmly in their ear, the poet can be heard bending or tuning his voice to accommodate the harsher consonants and longer vowels of its own animal potential. In the poem that begins, “I Love to Think of the Red Purple Rose,” for instance, the first word that McClure recites in beast language is “star”: “Each blot of sound is a bud or a stahr” (00:59:32–00:59:36). By tentatively distending its vowel, McClure opens the bud of the word, in effect turning a star into a flower as he himself playfully transgresses the boundary between man and beast. “We are served by machines making satins of sounds” (00:59:27–00:59:31), McClure writes, well aware that his eminently recordable voice garbs language in a satiny smoothness. The poems themselves take delight in rending that fabric for the “ear’s vista”: “The machines are too dull when we are lion poems that move & breathe” (00:01:00–00:01:06).

Editorial Apparatus

Like Moffatt, Sharren, and Levy, “we [question] the distinction between text and paratext in a phonotext and the principles that should govern their presentation in an audio edition.”⁴⁶ In order to frame these questions around the recordings, we used the application [AVAnnotate](#) to create the initial drafts of this edition. AVAnnotate is open-source software that leverages the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) standard for AV materials

and GitHub in a minimal computing workflow.⁴⁷ It is a free-to-use application that helps researchers and educators create standards-based, online scholarly editions and projects by affording users the ability to annotate snippets of time on a recording and create context.⁴⁸

As described above, we used AVAnnotate to develop drafts for our micro-editions. We used AVAnnotate to layer observations and interpretations across the recordings and to present commentary that enables and encourages close listening to the multiple, simultaneous voices one can hear in the audio record (shown in Figure 2). As a result, the annotations we describe above took four forms: (1) long-form text for transcriptions and notes that are more like the marginalia one might find in a print scholarly edition (see the text beginning “I’m going to read a couple of poems”); (2) index terms or “tags” such as those we use to describe voice (e.g., “Reading,” “Situational,” “Social,” and “Speaking”) that facilitate organizing, searching, and visualizing types of annotations and important concepts; (3) tag groups to further facilitate filtering groups of tags (e.g., by grouping types of text annotations such as “Transcription” and “Notes” under “Type” and types of voices under “Voice”); and (4) time stamps (e.g., 58:42–58:53) that situate or affix the notes and index terms within time-based audio and video media (see Figure 2).

Moving from using the AVAnnotate interface for drafting and editing to the *Scholarly Editing* apparatus required some changes to the way annotations are displayed and organized. For our micro-editions, transcriptions were produced by the editors and represent their interpretation of words spoken as well as other nonverbal, paratextual sounds, including when the audience is laughing or coughing or when McClure growls. Transcriptions form the central body of the annotations with notes in the right-hand sidebar. Time stamps still situate transcriptions and annotations to the player, and tags still provide context about the voices with tags “Situational,” “Speaking,” “Reading,” and “Social.” “Audience” is a tag on editorial notes to indicate when the audience reacts audibly. The Marlatt micro-edition includes “Daphne Marlatt 1969” and “Daphne Marlatt 2019” to help the listener differentiate between the moments when Marlatt is listening to a recording of herself from 1969 and when she is reading in 2019.

Out of the Cage - Michael McClure and Ghost Tantras
 U.S. poet Michael McClure (1932-2020) reads from his book *Ghost Tantras* (1964) at the Naropa Institute on June 16, 1976. Transcripts and editorial notes by Matthew Kilbane.

00:00 / 1:28:17

Annotations

58:42 - 58:53	I'm going to read a couple of poems in Beast Language which are actually from the early '60s and not the '50s, and the	Speaking Transcription	Filters Tags ☐ Voice ☒ Reading ☒ Situational ☒ Social ☒ Speaking ☐ Type ☒ Notes ☒ Transcription	lines before oetry g at Naropa, t,
58:57 - 59:14	McClure reads the first three and a half lines of Geoffrey Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> , drawing laughter from the audience public performances of <i>Ghost Tantras</i> . The gesture "suggest[s] the origins of his poetry in early English verse," as Mich episode at the San Francisco Zoo, McClure also recited Chaucer to the tree kangaroos, for whom "beast language was on November 25, 1976, McClure recited from the opening of Chaucer's prologue on stage at San Francisco's Winterlan immortalized in Martin Scorsese's <i>The Last Waltz</i> (1978).	Situational Notes		
58:58 - 59:07	Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote The droghte of March hath perced to the roote, And bathed every veyne in switch licour Of which vertu	Reading Transcription		

Figure 2: Annotations from the “Out of the Cage—Michael McClure and Ghost Tantras” micro-edition..

How and why the recordings are divided into transcribed sections is the result of each editor’s interpretive focus. Stanzas and line breaks have been retained in the transcripts of Marlatt’s poems to ground the 1969 and 1999

readings with the published poems. In the case of McClure's recording, each poem is just one stanza, and each line of the poem receives its own time stamp. For Rukeyser's recording of "The Speed of Darkness," each stanza is given a different time stamp, and pauses and silences are annotated separately, inviting the listener to interpret where lines and stanzas might occur in the published version. Using the AVAnnotate interface, we marked dimensions of the audio recordings that could potentially be subordinated in printed versions.

Conclusion

Michelle Comstock and Mary E. Hocks explain that "voice, like music, is vibration," and that the "vibrating vocal chords in the body create the sounds that *become* a voice" (our emphasis).⁴⁹ The reading, speaking, situational, and social tenors of these voices—these are all parts of this "becoming." Not only in terms of the relationship between the speaker, audience, and their environment—such as in spatial and temporal circumstances—but also in what the material recording itself makes intelligible and recognizable. The voice categories we have chosen invite critical reflections about these definitions of voice across these recordings because they mark these becomings. Using voice as a theoretical framing, and marking those moments on the recordings, reveals how individual recordings will trouble or expand the categorization of voice into overlapping speaking, reading, situational, and social ranges. As we listen to what is inlaid in and between these voices, the generally ignored and unnoticed spatial and textual aspects of the recordings take on new interpretive potential.

Insofar as these voices belong properly to the historical audiotext and not to any discrete speaker captured on the record, and insofar as these voices are always "heard" by a listener self-conscious of their position vis-à-vis the archive, describing them necessitates a strategic scrambling of the boundaries between edition and annotation, observation and interpretation. These are critical adjustments enforced by the nature of audiotexts themselves. In this way our use of AVAnnotate resonates with the work of scholars like Clement, Ana María Ochoa Gautier, Jonathan Sterne, Nicole Brittingham Furlonge, Jennifer Lynn Stoeber, Tom McEnaney, and Jessica E. Teague, who have been keen to stress listening as a social practice that is constitutive of its objects. Lending an ear to the types of voices we annotate (speaking, reading, situational, and social) means restoring the sonorous difference that adding context creates when making meaning with scholarly editions of recordings of poetry performances.

Acknowledgments

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