NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Ototheatre: Learning to Listen and Perform in Sonically Augmented Spaces

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Theatre and Drama

By

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EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

December 2017
Abstract

Ototheatre: Learning to Listen and Perform in Sonically Augmented Spaces

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This dissertation explores a form of performance I call “ototheatre,” which is a mobile and participatory audience experience executed with portable sound technology. Ototheatre is an emergent artistic form that sits at a convergence of contemporary technologies and audience consumption habits. Case studies, including smartphone applications and new theatrical works incorporating novel uses of sound technology, reveal the antecedents and characteristics of this form of theatre. I explore the methods by which these works create intimate, interactive theatrical experiences that extend modes of audience experience.

Podcasts are a new media practice that have multiple theatrical antecedents and ototheatrical potential. I analyze a particularly theatrical podcast, choreographer Hofesh Shechter’s EveryDay Moments, to show new possibilities for individual modes of performance scripted by podcast artists for solo listening. I trace a genealogy that includes the théâtrophone, radio drama, and the downloadable podcast to demonstrate how the recorded voice has long been creating remote theatrical experiences for audiences through the use of mediatized sound technology. While radio has been called a “theatre of the mind,” I argue that podcasts can create an intimate, post-humanistic theatre of the body.

I examine artistic sound works that are related to the audio tour to explore ways of mapping space with sound. The case studies I have chosen attempt to help participants to see hidden social, historical, or spatial layers of an unfamiliar site. My research explores how audio walks allow users to create mental maps of memory, history, and experience that engage the user
with a place. I argue that sound augments the mapped space for listeners, transporting them into the space rather than placing them outside as observers. I analyze two theatrical audio “tours.” The first, *As If It Were the Last Time* by Circumstance, pulls the participant into the experience of a busy New York street. The second, *Sights* by Trickster, guides participants around the city of Bern to telephone booths where they listen to site-responsive stories from people who are blind. I then conduct an analysis of my own sound art project, a sonic map of London that uses binaural recordings to guide listeners through my memories of discovering London by foot and underground train in order to push the experience of the audio tour to a virtual realm. I connect all three case studies by focusing on the power of sound technology to help participants create affective maps of urban spaces.

An audio drama/fitness application called *Zombies, Run!* uses mobile sound technologies to create embodied role play for audiences. In a survey of *Zombies, Run!* fans, I found that users shifted their interpretations of the work based on how they wished to engage with it, showing how participants in sound-based theatre individualize their experiences as audience members based on how they synthesize prior knowledge of related media forms. I posit a new mode of theatre performance made possible through a combination of open and serial narrative, embodied and individualized engagement through sound, and easily distributed fan content through internet forums.

I connect the fields of sound studies to theatre studies, and I outline the individual, embodied, and interactive ways that theatre can engage audiences through sound-based technologies.
Acknowledgments

It is with great humility that I acknowledge the role that each of the following people played in the development of this project and of me as a scholar. Without their support and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this project, nor might I have attempted it.

My deepest thanks go to my advisor, Tracy C. Davis. She found a way to bring out qualities I didn’t know I had, as she seems to do with all her students. She is patient and calming, and she helped me to clarify what I was thinking when I couldn’t find the words. She has the gift of guiding the way toward a whole project out of the loose collection of ideas that a graduate student begins with. She was dedicated as an advisor and generous with her time, especially at the beginning. Every conversation that we had left me inspired and excited. She saw connections in my work that I didn’t see and brought an encyclopedic and eclectic knowledge to her advising that took my work in unexpected and fulfilling directions. Her adventurous spirit—reflected in her performance as Lady Catherine de Bourgh, her co-founding of the Summer Institute in Cologne, her Yoga for Scholars—is infectious and exciting. It has been an honored privilege and an absolute joy to work with her.

I give enthusiastic thanks to my committee member Jacob Smith from the Department of Radio, Television, and Film. Jake introduced me to sound studies and fueled my interest with his passion for the discipline. His enormous contribution to sound studies at Northwestern directly supported my work and the work of a new, eager community of artists and scholars. His
generosity with his time, insights, and feedback has been vital to the development of this dissertation.

I am forever indebted to D. J. Hopkins of San Diego State University for the role he has played in my development as a scholar. He has guided me during each step of my career, beginning with recruiting me into and advising me through the rigorous MA program that inspired my research interests and gave me the confidence and skills to pursue a PhD. I appreciate his continued mentorship, which has included serving on my dissertation committee and giving helpful feedback on my writing. I will never forget his part in creating the many opportunities I have had in the last decade. Without his friendship and encouragement, I would never have taken the first step along this path.

I thank Northwestern University, particularly The Graduate School and the School of Communication, for providing funding that made this work possible, including support for travel, research, and childcare. I gratefully acknowledge Huey Copeland for giving me the opportunity to work as his assistant for a year, which was a great help financially in addition to teaching me about the day-to-day work of a scholar/administrator.

Thank you to my IPTD cohort—Christy Simonian Bean, Carla Della Gatta, Megan Geigner, Jessica Hinds-Bond, and Ira S. Murfin—who have each been wonderful friends and excellent colleagues. I could not imagine a better group with whom to charge through this academic adventure. I reserve special thanks to my writing group—Christy and Jessica—for such helpful
feedback and effusive encouragement. And I give extra special thanks to Jessica for her additional expert editing work.

I thank the Tully-Doyles, especially Dennis and Juli, both of whom model the extremes of marshmallow kindness and hard-as-nails toughness.

I am filled with love and thanks for the Becks. My parents Carol and Richard Beck have always been my biggest fans and have supported my every endeavor with unfailing enthusiasm. I credit them with the intellectual curiosity, love of reading, and respect for the arts necessary to devote myself to beginning and finishing this project. They have always made me feel that they were proud of me, and I hope that I can make my daughter feel the same way.

Thanks to my daughter, Iris, for being a complete delight for her first year on earth.

Finally, I thank Ryan Tully-Doyle who ten years ago first gave me the idea to pursue a PhD and who never doubted I could do it. I don’t know how anyone writes a dissertation without his pep-talks, brainstorming discussions, and any-time-day-or-night-on-call editing work. I wish everyone could have a Ryan. I am so grateful to have benefitted from the bountiful generosity of this gifted scholar and teacher who is also my partner. I can never thank him enough for his love and support.
For Mom and Dad
Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................................................... 3
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................................................ 5
Chapter One—Ototheatre: An Introduction ......................................................................................... 11
  The Theatrical Event ................................................................................................................................. 16
  Sound Technologies and Listening Cultures ............................................................................................ 22
  Mobile Sound ........................................................................................................................................... 26
  Spaces: Actual and Virtual ...................................................................................................................... 30
  New Media ............................................................................................................................................... 38
  Chapters ................................................................................................................................................... 42
  Methods and Methodologies .................................................................................................................. 45
  Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................ 47

Chapter Two—Performing the Podcast: Public Listening in Private Spaces with Hofesh Shechter’s
Everyday Moments ..................................................................................................................................... 49
  The Podcast ............................................................................................................................................. 50
  Fuel Podcasts ........................................................................................................................................... 55
  Hofesh Shechter’s Everyday Moments .................................................................................................... 57
  Acting, Doing, and Performing Everyday Moments ................................................................................ 63
  Summoning Theatre .................................................................................................................................. 66
  Intimacy .................................................................................................................................................... 70
  Virtual Sites of Performance .................................................................................................................... 72
  The Posthuman Audience ....................................................................................................................... 74
Chapter One—Ototheatre: An Introduction

Theatre is always about both the individual and a public, intimacy and connection, and conscious constructions of spaces within other spaces. In the twenty-first century, theatre has seen a convergence with artistic and entertainment forms, primarily in relation to new media technologies. Theatre artists have begun experimenting with technologies and formats that they have borrowed from videogames, audio tours, and social media, while makers of videogames, audio tours, and other entertainment and educational works have borrowed from theatre, radio drama, and other older forms. As genres, media, forms, and formats converge, they allow a new type of spectator/auditor/consumer. This person is comfortable navigating virtuality, actuality, and a hybrid of the two. This person also desires individualized, embodied, and participatory experiences. One emerging group of diverse yet connected works relies on mobile audio devices that transmit audio narratives designed for listening while walking, running, and even dancing. I collect these works within a new, comprehensive theatrical category defined to explore particular ways of being an audience in the early twenty-first century.

This dissertation is concerned with this amorphous media form. I have coined the term ototheatre to encompass mobile, sound-based works that create individualized theatrical experiences for participants. Prefixing theatre (“seeing place” from Greek) with oto (“ear” from Greek) is intended to emphasize the importance of the audio recordings in framing the theatrical events. However, I also use oto because of its homonymic connotation of auto, or the self. I define ototheatre as a self-sufficient theatrical work that can be both enacted and viewed by one person who makes use of a scripting audio recording. Ototheatre allows for spontaneity and individualized experiences, providing participants with a virtual and portable theatrical frame in
which they synthesize information from the physical sites, the recordings, and themselves to ultimately enact the performance. By analyzing ototheatrical works and the participation of audience members, we can reimagine theatrical practice in an age of mobile technology.

Foundational ototheatrical artist Janet Cardiff made her first experimental audio “walk,” Forest Walk, in 1991. She has continued to make audio walks that augment reality and turn listeners into performers. In more than one of her walks, Cardiff instructs users to “follow the sound of my steps,”1 encouraging the audience to attempt to experience the world through her body. Cardiff and her partner, George Bures Miller, use binaural recording to create the walks, recording sounds through microphones placed just inside the ears of a dummy head. When the recordings are played back through earphones, the audience hears the sounds as they were “heard” by the ears in the dummy head, providing a remarkably realistic, multidimensional sense of moving through an absent place. Cardiff and Miller layer this realistic virtual space onto the physical world through which their audiences walk. The recording and playback technology has a significant impact on the reception of the walks. Cardiff and Miller’s audiences are transported to a hybrid space that blends history, fiction, and reality through the realistic binaural recording. The dummy head that Cardiff pushes through Central Park in Her Long Black Hair, for example, records an experience that audiences relive in conjunction with their own walks through the park. Her inclusion of additional recordings also manipulates the “aural architecture”2 that her audience experiences. Cardiff established some key elements of oto theatre that I explore in this

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dissertation. I will return to how mobile sound augments reality, encourages embodied role play, and alters the experience of time and space.

I demonstrate that ototheatre comes in many forms and is made for varying purposes. Some ototheatrical works have already been categorized as audio tours, games, installation art, and theatre, but I argue that by separating them we ignore the shared ways that they impact the theatre arts. I describe some general characteristics they share: all ototheatre makes use of recorded sound. Listeners usually access the recording through a mobile device such as a Walkman, MP3 player, or smartphone, although some artists use listening stations like telephone booths. The audiences of ototheatrical works usually—though not always—listen in locations chosen by the artists. The locations, their histories, and their inhabitants become material that is augmented and made theatrical through the layering of recorded sound. Audiences become performers, embodying and enacting the works by listening and responding to direction or narrative. In some cases, no other performers of the work are present at the time participants listen and enact the work. Sometimes, artists provide additional elements such as maps, videos, augmented-reality applications, actors, or GPS tracking that guide participants and further hybridize spaces and times.

In a 1983 issue of *TDR*, Chris Hardman published a three-page manifesto called “Walkmanology,” in which he stated, “The walkman is the backbone of a new kind of theatrical experience.” Hardman and his theatre company, Antenna, began experimenting with the Walkman in productions only a year after the device was released. He says that he purchased his first Walkman to alleviate boredom on a transatlantic flight but found that he “was in rapture

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combining Wagner with Köln’s cathedral and baroque trumpets with Parisian streets.”

In his theatrical experiments with the Walkman, Hardman discovered that portable sound technology combined with headphones had the power to “warp the physical surroundings” and make the “audients” feel “unsure as the boundaries of [their] mental space.”

Hardman’s theatre company was most likely the first to use the Walkman in the making and performing of theatre. However, despite Hardman’s manifesto and theatrical experiments with the Walkman, Walkmanology did not take off in the 1980s.

In the nearly forty years since the invention of the Walkman, the device and others like it—the Discman, the iPod, and the smart phone—have been transmitters of music, audio books, audio tours, and other audio genres. Many of these genres provide ways for listeners to take on a new role and to see the world around them differently. Some mobile audio works are created by artists, many of whom consider themselves to be theatre artists. Scholars from various disciplines including theatre, geography, and sound studies have analyzed artistic sound works like those that I study here.

However, there have been no extended scholarly works on what I call ototheatre. I have amassed a series of case studies that use sound in varying ways. Some of the artists create theatrical experiences intentionally, and others quite unintentionally. Despite the

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 45.
labels that creators of ototheatre place on themselves, I argue that their works contain a theatrical core that audiences access based on their prior knowledge and experience of theatrical forms. In describing ototheatrical performances, even those that were not intended by the creators to be understood as theatre, I employ the language of common theatrical devices, such as directing, choreographing, and scripting, to describe the ways that these works construct a theatrical experience. I argue that a sound recording presented through a personal listening device is an ideal scripting mechanism. I demonstrate how these recordings have been used in multiple contexts to either intentionally or unintentionally create individualized theatrical performances, often in public spaces not intended for use as performance spaces. Participants perform actions according to the directions given in the sound recording and may even play different historical or fictional characters. The theatrical framework constructed by the sound recording also allows participants to take on the role of audience members—both of the recording itself and of the surrounding world, which has been perceptually altered by the sound recording.

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The Theatrical Event

Ototheatrical works supply material that can be used by participants to create a theatrical event. Though theatrical events take many forms, I argue that they meet the following criteria:

1. They occur within an interval of time, one that has a beginning and an ending.\(^8\)
2. They contain one or more human beings who perform and witness.\(^9\)
3. They occur in a hybrid space that merges a physical environment with a virtual world.\(^10\)

These criteria are broad enough to include more traditional forms of theatre—for example, actors performing a written play on a stage in a commercial theatre for spectators who sit quietly in the audience—and yet also cover newer forms of theatre that use technology to blur the boundaries between performers and spectators and sometimes between the present and the past. Ototheatre and its precedents may differ in their function and effect on the user. They may educate or entertain, serve as artistic or commercial products, and engage users in game play or tell a story.

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\(^10\) According to Keir Elam, theatre is the “complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction.” *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 2.

Augusto Boal explains that “theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that, in this act of seeing, it can see itself—see itself in situ: see itself seeing.” *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (London: Routledge, 1995), 13.

The staging of written plays is a clear example of a fictional world that is actualized in the theatre. However, not all theatre is fictional. In such instances Hans-Thies Lehmann claims that even when theatre resists the dramatic or the representational, it is “a place where a unique intersection of aesthetically organized and everyday real life takes place.” *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006), 17.
They all create virtual spaces for listeners to become performers who enact the work for themselves (and sometimes others) in a live event.

**Performers and Audience**

My case studies do not feature live performers (other than the performing audience members), though some ototheatrical works do.\(^{11}\) I have made this choice in order to demonstrate the complex ways that performances manifest in ototheatre. Prerecorded audio tracks—even those performed by trained actors—are not generally categorized as theatre performances. More often, theatre scholars might call these tracks traces or remains of past theatre performances that took place “live.”\(^{12}\) My work in this dissertation is concerned not with whether the transmission of the recording to the listener is a theatrical event but rather with the idea that listeners are the performers or the enactors of the work that the artists script. In this case, the terms *audience*, *spectator*, and *listener* are not quite enough to convey the work in which these participants engage. Misha Myers has coined the term *percipient* for the participant of a mobile audio work. This term holds connotations of *participant*, *performer*, and *perceiver*, one who creates meaning through embodied sensorial engagement.\(^{13}\) Josephine Machon agrees that new terminology is needed for immersive performances that require more active engagement from audiences. She explains that practitioners are using terms such as “‘visitors,’ ‘audience-participants,’ ‘playing-

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11 An Australian theatre ensemble that calls itself “one step at a time like this” makes ototheatrical works that feature live performers who interact with listeners. I experienced one work in Chicago called *Since I Suppose*, which featured many actors who performed around the city in conjunction with aural performances (played through headphones) and video performances (viewed on smartphones carried by the listeners).

12 According to Philip Auslander, there could be not “live” performance until there was mediated performance. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 54.

audience,’ and ‘guest performers.’”¹⁴ From this point forward, I will use the term *audient* to describe an audience member who participates in ototheatre. I borrow this term from Chris Hardman partly to honor his vision for the potential of “Walkman theatre.” Also, I find the homonyms *audience* and *audients* to be productively confusing. The distance between a theatre audience and an individual ototheatre audient is ever shrinking as immersive forms, game structures, and participatory technologies become more commonly used by theatre artists.

In deciding how to label something as theatre or performance when a work may not be easy to define, some scholars have asserted that intentionality on the part of the creator, performer, or spectator should be sufficient. Herbert Blau claims that performance is designated by a “consciousness” of performance.¹⁵ The understanding that what audiences are experiencing is separate from the real world can be made clear through the framing of the proscenium in traditional theatre, yet there are other ways to frame theatrical events. Ototheatre designates a virtual space of play within the real world through immersive sound that presents a fictional scenario with, perhaps, a new set of rules in which audiences often feel free to play. The theatricality of ototheatre is emphasized by the different experiences that participating audients have from non-audients going about their business at the same time and in the same place. In her essay on theatricality, Josette Féral explains that a performance becomes a performance when it is interpreted by an audience as a performance.¹⁶ Féral says that spectators encode a situation with theatrical meaning with their gaze. In the case of ototheatre, the artist creates a portal to

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enter a theatrical world within the everyday world, and the audient chooses when to access that theatrical world. It is the ambiguous role of audient whose fictional gaze leaves the world of the everyday. This player is not quite an actor and not quite a spectator but rather a little bit of both. In contrast to Ferál, Marvin Carlson allows for the performer to decide whether something is a performance. Carlson states that performance lies in the “attitude” of the performer.\textsuperscript{17} For example, in his book \textit{Performance: A Critical Introduction}, Carlson uses Eleanor Antin’s autobiographical fantasy photographs to show the way that role play allows one to explore the self. It is not the spectator who determines whether Antin is photographing herself or fantasy versions of herself. According to Carlson, only Antin can make this distinction. Here, the playing is primarily enacted by the artist/actor. The spectator can enter the world of play through an invitation from Antin but can only play by imaginatively applying roles to his or her own consciousness.\textsuperscript{18} In ototheatre, both Ferál’s and Carlson’s designations of performance apply. While the artist who created the ototheatrical recording may intend for a performance to occur, the recording is merely a script until it is taken up by the participant who serves as both audience and performer, enacting and designating a theatrical event. As an audient myself, I designated my own listening experiences as theatrical performances. By analyzing them as such, I have created an analytical framework with which to research the performances of other audients, regardless of whether they are conscious of theatricality in their performances.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 163-64.
Ototheatrical recordings, like play scripts, have no materiality until participants bring the recordings to life as works of theatre. Audients are expected not only to listen to the works but to enact them in some way. Sound becomes a scripting mechanism for action. Theatrical participants of ototheatre make artistic choices about their actions, their roles in the creation, and the ways that they carry out the events. For example, in audio tours, audients will be asked to walk (or move by other means) through spaces and to particular locations. In works like the podcast *Everyday Moments*, audients are told to think in certain ways and then to respond with movement, creating a dance piece. In the smartphone app *Zombies, Run!* that I discuss in chapter four, audients listen to an audio drama in which the voice actors address the audient as a character in the story, asking her or him to engage in actions relevant to the narrative.

Ototheatre relies on both physical and virtual realities. A key argument of this dissertation is that sound heard through headphones is a technology that augments the physical reality of the listener, making ototheatre possible. Augmented reality is understood today as technology that enhances the real world, generally by overlaying digital information onto what appears in physical space. Smartphone users can download augmented reality apps, software that typically allows images or other visual information to appear over or alongside objects or locations viewed through the camera. These applications are used for games, tourist attractions,

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19 According to Alice Rayner, theatre actualizes something that has no materiality. *Ghosts: Death’s Double and the Phenomena of Theatre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xv.
20 The term augmented reality was coined by Tom Caudell and David Mizell who developed software to assist builders of aircrafts. Subsequently, Ronald Azuma developed a definition of augmented reality that included the following criteria: it must combine the real and virtual, it must be interactive in real time, and it must be registered in three dimensions. Gregory Kipper and Joseph Rampolla, *Augmented Reality: An Emerging Technologies Guide to AR* (Boston: Syngress/Elsevier, 2012), 8–10.
and education, among other uses. Augmented reality as a technical industry is primarily concerned with visual phenomena, though there are sound-based augmented reality applications. My use of the term *augmented reality* is based on its emphasis on digital, mobile, and personalized technology. However, I deviate from the highly specialized meaning of the term as only relating to computer software. I use the term in a less technological and more experiential sense. I am concerned with the way that sound alters a listener’s perception of, engagement with, and emotional response to a physical space. This use of the term *augmented reality* is built upon Lev Manovich’s definition of *augmented space*, a physical space that humans have overlaid with dynamic information.21

Matthew Causey claims that “theatre has always been virtual, a space of illusory immediacy.”22 He notes that one of the primary concerns with the idea of the subject in contemporary performance is with the ways that technology can extend, challenge, and reconfigure the material body.23 Theatre, even in the digital era, is founded on presence and interaction. But the way that audiences understand these concepts changes based on their experiences with new media technologies. Gabriella Giannachi claims that “virtual theatre takes place through the viewer’s ‘performance’ of the work.”24 In oto theatre, it is not the artist’s

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21 Lev Manovich, “The Poetics of Augmented Space,” in *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, ed. Anna Everett and John T. Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2003), 228. I am satisfied with the word *augmented*, though my usage is similar to Adriana de Souza e Silva’s *hybrid space*, which she defines as, “a conceptual space created by the merging of borders between physical and digital spaces, because of the use of mobile technologies as social devices.” “From Cyber to Hybrid: Mobile Technologies as Interfaces of Hybrid Spaces,” *Space and Culture* 9, no. 3 (2006): 265.


23 Ibid., 16.

product itself but the moment of performance by the audience that makes theatre. While traditional theatre creates virtual realities set apart from everyday reality, ototheatre augments the everyday world.

Sound Technologies and Listening Cultures

This dissertation is concerned with listening practices today—in the first quarter of the twenty-first century—and with how our listening culture interacts with our desire for and consumption of mobile, individualized, interactive, and networked art and entertainment. I argue that our own relationships to recorded sound are built upon inherited ways of listening that have been transformed as new technologies and styles of sound arts develop. Listening culture changed dramatically in conjunction with new technologies that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Architectural design and electronic amplification effected control over how sound could be isolated, clarified, and distributed in space. Sound could also be separated from space (with the telephone and radio) and from time (with recording and playback technologies).

The highly controlled soundscape of symphony halls and opera houses and the ability to listen to radio and the phonograph at home accompanied new understandings of listening and being an audience member. Private listening at home coincided with more private modes of

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25 Emily Ann Thompson discusses how architects Wallace Sabine and his contemporaries at the turn of the twentieth century designed the inside of buildings to create efficient, clear, and nonreverberant sounds that conveyed the mastery of the human over acoustical phenomena. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

listening in public settings. As Jonathan Sterne points out in *The Audible Past*, by the 1920s, formerly chatty and rowdy audiences of the early twentieth century began to quiet down at concerts, operas, plays, and films.\(^{27}\) The expectation of listening quietly at plays, symphonies, and films has continued; today, ushers encourage audiences to open cough drops ahead of time, and actors call out audience members for cell phone use during performances. The ototheatrical experience as a personalized, private theatre of one is a logical extension of increasingly private artistic experiences. Since the advent of portable sound devices, audiences have become increasingly accustomed to private listening in public places.

As recordings became higher in sound quality, private listening became further idealized. Advertisements for phonographs and radios in the early twentieth century emphasized that their products could bring the experience of the opera or the symphony into the home, even challenging the listener to tell the difference between the live performance and the recording.\(^{28}\) The quest for natural, true sound recording continued with the high-fidelity movement in the 1950s and 1960s. In a quest for sound definition, sound engineers used equalizers to balance the quieter and louder sounds, and they placed microphones close to the sound sources. Critics argued that these techniques falsified the musical experience, presenting listeners with a very different musical performance than they would have heard had they attended the same live performance.\(^{29}\) The result was the development of a new kind of recorded sound experience—


\(^{28}\) Ibid., 30.

one that could only exist in the virtual space of the recording. High-fidelity audio led to the construction of a new kind of personal soundscape. Being able to hear the “heavy breathing from a singer . . . or the click of fingernails against the ivory” led to an intimacy of which critics heartily disapproved.\textsuperscript{30} Allison McCracken details the origins of the crooner, explaining that Rudy Vallee’s “tender pleading love songs, sung softly into a closely held radio microphone, defined the romantic crooner image of the day and made \textit{crooning} a household word in 1929.”

Ototheatre often utilizes a clear recording of someone speaking in a quiet voice directly into the ear of the listener. This can enhance the audient’s sense of intimacy, as when Hofesh Shechter directs the movements and emotions of his listener in \textit{Everyday Moments}. It can sound like Shechter is speaking directly in your ear or like his voice is your internal voice.

In addition to fostering intimacy, high-fidelity recording provides intense dramatic or cinematic experiences through the careful use of volume control, stereo recording, and multiple speakers. In 1959, Decca Records produced a high-fidelity recording of Wagner’s opera \textit{Das Rheingold}, arguing that a high-fidelity recording of a performance provided a “theatre of the mind” that allowed audiences a much closer experience to the music than they would get by seeing “grease-painted actors before cardboard rocks.”\textsuperscript{31} Recorded sound was understood as a way to stimulate the imagination, allowing it to create a virtual world of artistic experience that surpassed that which could be created in the actual world.

“Theatre of the mind” was a phrase also often used in reference to radio drama. The connection between theatre and radio was made early on; presenting dramas over the radio was

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 138.
practiced nearly as soon as the public had access to radio instruments. People attempted to transmit performances of plays over the air as early as 1914. As radio stations became established, they began transmitting dramatic narratives: for example, Chicago’s opera radio station KYW began in 1921, and Newark’s WJZ invited an entire company to perform Mozart’s opera *The Impresario* live over the radio. During this early period of radio broadcasting, audiences would have had to develop new modes of listening by accessing their prior knowledge of listening to music and narratives, both in public and in private. Radio historian Susan J. Douglas says, “Radio required . . . people to develop a repertoire of listening styles and emotional responses depending on the programming and site of listening.” Neil Verma agrees that the theatre of the mind had to be built, though he credits the creators of radio drama who worked to position listeners in complicated, aurally constructed, imagined listening spaces. Some ototheatre is similar to radio drama in that it utilizes narrative, voice acting, and sound effects to create theatrical experiences. A key difference is that ototheatre does not ask audients to project imagined scenarios in the mind; rather, it asks them to incorporate the fictions into the actual world. In *Zombies, Run!* for example, listeners of a serialized narrative about a zombie apocalypse are expected to run in whatever location they choose—the city, the suburbs, parks, forests, and so on—and imagine the merging of their actions and their setting with the actions of the protagonist and setting of the story.

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Ototheatrical works like *Zombies, Run!* rely on portable and discreet sound technology. While a smartphone usually facilitates ototheatre today, important antecedents include the transistor radio, the Walkman, and the iPod—all of which made sound highly portable due to their small size, durable materials, and headphone jack. In the early days of radio and the phonograph, the devices were large, fragile, and dependent on electric current from an outlet. The invention of the transistor radio reversed these characteristics; radios could now be made small, durable, and battery powered. The portability of radio allowed for a degree of customization in the soundtrack of an individual’s everyday life. The addition of the boombox in the 1970s allowed for high-quality, stereophonic sound and the ability to play recorded music with cassettes tapes. Portability, affordability, and personalization reached new heights with the development of the Walkman. The Walkman is a cultural phenomenon that has been the topic of numerous academic studies for the way that it altered people’s thoughts about, feelings toward, and behavior in public space. The Walkman was ideal for use in public space due to its small size, battery power, and wearable headphones. Yet, paradoxically, it was also a very intimate and personalized device. Unlike the portable transistor radio, the Walkman could provide customizable content; users could carry a variety of cassette tapes, including home-made mix tapes. Unlike the boombox, the Walkman was discreet; the content of the recording could be heard only by the Walkman’s listener, and the device could be stowed out of sight.

**Mobile Sound**

Over the past thirty years, artists, entertainers, educators, and institutions have used increasingly miniaturized, mobilized, and networked sound technologies in new applications.
While these applications result in works across a wide range of genres with a broad set of intentions, they share elements that can create a new type of audience experience.

An early precedent of ototheatre is the recorded audio tour,\textsuperscript{35} which has enhanced the educational experience of visits to museums and heritage sites, while providing more freedom than an in-person guided tour. Audio tracks that accompany tours are designed to give information about the objects with which the participant will come into contact while moving through a location. These recordings can provide factual information, hypothetical narration, or ambient noise to give the listener a sense of another time or of the culture of a place. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, has audio guides available for rent that explore the history and meaning of works currently on display.

The ubiquity of personal portable sound devices has allowed the dissemination of individually created works as well. Again at the Met, many unofficial guides have been created by both professional and amateur art critics and posted to the internet for downloading. For example, Lee Siegel created and posted to Slate.com his “Unauthorized Audio Tour of the Met,” in which he shares his opinions on the overrated and underrated works of the museum.\textsuperscript{36} Members of an art class at Marymount Manhattan College recorded their own highly individualized and stylistic tours that they called “Art Mobs.”\textsuperscript{37} These alternate tours play with

\textsuperscript{35} I consider a subset of audio tours as ototheatrical work in chapter three.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
the construct of the authoritative voice of the audio tour, and they guide the listener toward questioning the relationship between what is heard and seen.

Other audio tours explore active, urban sites. Visitors to the Bronx can download “The Bronx: Birth of Hip Hop” from Detour.com, in which early hip hop figure The Original Jazzy J narrates the origins of hip hop while playing music by Jazzy J, Afrika Bambaataa, and The Mighty Zulu Nation. Jazzy J encourages the listener to walk like him and “put a little cool” into his or her steps.38 Here, the participant adopts the physicality and attitude of the perceived social character of the neighborhood in order to attempt to experience the Bronx from the perspective of a local. This type of audio tour asks a listener to embody a connection between sound and site.

Among the vast array of games for smartphones exist a growing number of portable audio games. Dimensions is an augmented sound application for iPhones that uses input from a device’s microphone to play back altered sounds from the participant’s environment. The game employs locational data from the Global Positioning System and uses sound cues to create a game narrative in which participants hunt for digital artifacts. The company behind Dimensions, RjDj, is committed to designing works that turn stressful urban noise pollution into harmonic environments.39 Portable games like Dimensions introduce listeners to the way that their listening devices can serve as augmented reality machines.

Other apps use sound to inspire listeners to engage in physical activity. Software developer Six to Start has created two apps that cast the listener as a character in serialized story segments and that encourage exercise in response to the narrative. For example, in Zombies,

*Run!*, characters yell at the listener, warning that zombies are closing in, encouraging her or him to run as fast as possible. Similarly, in *The Walk*, Six to Start constructs another disaster-based narrative set in the near future, in which the listener is encouraged to walk long distances to complete the story-based mission; the listener is periodically rewarded with more chapters of the story. These are two exceptionally crafted versions of a form that has become increasingly popular among smartphone users while they exercise. Like running on a treadmill in front of the television, the apps provide entertainment while exercising; however, they also include the immersive, virtual qualities of new media forms.

The audiobook has seen new life in the age of the smartphone. Audiobooks were developed for the blind in the 1930s, when books read aloud were recorded on phonograph discs. They became commercially popular with the advent of the cassette tape, their popularity then declining with that of cassettes until the advent of downloadable digital audio files. Now audiobooks are popular enough to support dedicated businesses. Audible, a company that sells downloadable audiobooks, created an advertising campaign with the slogan, “Stories that surround you.” In a 2016 television advertisement for Audible, people going about their daily activities are immersed in the stories they listen to on their portable devices. For example, a woman listening to her audiobook on the bus is suddenly also riding a horse-drawn carriage through a haunted mountain pass, and a man on a jog becomes one of the soldiers charging into battle while still running on his suburban street. The advertisement emphasizes an important experiential component of audio books—the way that they provide a virtual overlay to everyday life. Rather than merely being a different mode of content delivery, audiobooks offer a different way of relating to the book. Similarly, audio drama has flourished with the growing popularity of
the podcast. Creators of new audio dramas make use of the technology of the podcast to create serialized episodes that are regularly delivered to a listener’s phone. Because listeners of audio dramas are frequently on the move, they may find themselves immersed in a layered reality similar to that experienced by listeners of audiobooks.

Spaces: Actual and Virtual

This dissertation relies heavily on understandings of space. I discuss how ototheatre occurs in and transforms space. Space refers to structured environments both actual and virtual, public and private, interior and exterior, and concrete and fluid. Like Michel de Certeau, I understand space as “a practiced place.”⁴⁰ Places are of importance to this dissertation in the way that ototheatrical works transform them. A suburban park, a city street in Bern, an audient’s bedroom: these places and more become augmented spaces that audients perform within.

Most of the works I analyze take place outdoors, frequently in urban locations. Urban space is interesting both because of the many people who are potential audience members for intentional and accidental theatre and also because of the vast sensorial possibilities that exist in urban space. The size and shape of the space, the objects within it, the crowds that ebb and flow depending on the time of day, and the smells that change with the weather all provide material to interact with the sound recording. In my study, sound does not become less important because it is one element among many stimuli. The sound recording is given infinite possible lives through the shifting environment in which it is placed.

Space can be public and private. This is understood by multiple factors: is the space open or closed? Who has access to the space? Who controls access to the space? How many people are in the space? I will argue that sound can augment a space, possibly changing how that space is interpreted by those who inhabit it. Though listeners may know and recognize that they move through an urban and thus public space, the experience of that space can be made very private by the soundscape to which they listen through headphones. It carries this emotional weight.

Michael Bull is a scholar of mobile sound technology who discusses intimacy and distance between people. Bull describes the way that urban dwellers have used the Walkman and iPod to change the way they experience their relationships to other people in urban space. He claims that people use iPods to isolate themselves from others, creating private “bubbles” in which to travel untouched through urban space. Bull sees space as either “warm” or “chilly” based on the interactions between people.41 In a “warm” space, people foster personal connections. In a “chilly” space, people withdraw into themselves and ignore those around them. Bull says that iPods create a simulated “warm” environment for individuals through their self-created, mood-altering music playlists.42 In his articulation, the listeners and non-listeners in a single physical environment have different perceptions of the warmth of that space.

Bull’s scholarship has served as a basis for scholarly conversations about the role that mobile sound technologies plays in the construction of personal space within urban environments. David Beer qualifies Bull’s isolating bubbles, claiming that it is more accurate to say not that sound technology removes listeners from urban environments but that it helps them modify those

42 Ibid., 13.
environments, helping listeners “tune out” the physical world “in favor of the virtual.”⁴³ Allan Watson and Dominiqua Drakeford-Allen add to Beer’s argument by suggesting that mobile sound technologies allow listeners to “tune in” to their surroundings as well.⁴⁴ Watson and Drakeford-Allen also note that since the time of Bull’s and Beer’s scholarship, the smartphone has allowed listeners to access the internet, allowing them to listen to nearly any song, “creat[ing] customized personal ‘soundtracks’ to their day-to-day lives and in accordance with their mood and emotions.”⁴⁵ Geographer Toby Butler has suggested that the soundwalk helps urban dwellers resist Bull’s bubbles and tune in to their immediate surroundings because it slows the pace of walkers and redirects their attention.⁴⁶ I contend that the designers of audio recordings have the power to play on that complex relationship, either prompting audiences to engage with their surroundings or isolating them in individualized audio bubbles.

Other sound scholars describe the way that sound generates private spaces of experience within physical spaces. Jonathan Sterne analyzes an advertisement for headphones from 1925. He explains that the ad encourages users to use a headset when listening to the radio so that they can create a private acoustic space that will both block out other noises that might distract from the sounds coming from the radio and not disturb others who are in the same room and do not wish to listen.⁴⁷ Not only are there two experiential spaces within the same physical space for

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1036–7.
those in the room, there is also the virtual space of the location of the radio broadcast that has travelled to the ears of the listener.

Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter are a writing team who combine Blesser’s knowledge of sound engineering with Salter’s knowledge of the arts and sociology to develop a theory of the way that people understand space through sound. Blesser and Salter discuss the ways that sound helps audiences determine *proxemic distances* between themselves and the sound source. This sense or perception of distance can be manipulated through electronic means. For example, a listener can hear the whispering of a distant speaker through headphones. Without this form of electronic manipulation, this act would require a very short, intimate distance between two people. However, with technology, intimate spaces can be created in a *virtual* fashion. Ototheatrical artists create different kinds of proxemic distances between audiences in their scripting tracks. When narrating her audio walks, Janet Cardiff speaks in a quiet voice that sounds like she is a voice in one’s head. Frances Dyson describes one’s “inner voice” as “anechoic, anaerobic, and static.” Cardiff’s voice emulates this unbreathing, steady, placeless aspect of the voice in one’s head with the use of recording technology. This is the ultimate dissolution of distance. Other artists, conversely, use technology to establish a greater proxemic distance between the performed character and the audience, signifying a particular relationship. Trickster employs telephone booths in *Sights* to establish an intimate yet separate relationship between the audience and the blind performers (see chapter three).

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48 Blesser and Salter, *Spaces Speak*, 35.
I argue that my case studies use sound technology to create theatrical environments with complex virtual spatial structures. Dyson argues that sound can create environments that are immersive, three-dimensional, and virtual. She explains that virtual denotes immateriality while also indicating “a liminal domain wherein existence can take place and where users can ‘be.’” The concept of space becomes key to understanding embodied presence in virtuality because it acts as a bridge between the actual and the digital. We can see “the ‘space of the screen,’ the ‘space of the imagination,’ ‘cosmic space,’ and literal, three-dimensional physical ‘space’” all as places to inhabit, whether physically or imaginatively.

The space of the city has been considered as a place to overlay with virtual sound worlds. Thibaud explains that Walkman users navigate multiple worlds at once. The world of sound is a parallel virtual space that exists alongside city space. This virtual space has also been referred to as a network. Brandon LaBelle says that this network is created as “the city and the body intertwine.” He goes on to say that “the geographic contours of urban life are thus networks between material environments and the intensities of perception, imagination, and fantasy, creating a feverish topography.” What I will demonstrate through my analysis of ototheatrical

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50 Immersion is “a process or condition whereby the viewer becomes totally enveloped and transformed by the ‘virtual environment.’” Ibid., 1.
54 Ibid.
works is that there is no divide between actual and virtual; rather, an augmentation of reality renders them into one blended space.

Blesser and Salter coin the term *aural architecture* to describe the aural condition of an environment based upon its size and shape and the objects within it. They explain that people can sense aspects of a space because of the way that sound waves interact with the surroundings. They note that most of us can tell the difference auditorily between a cathedral and a chapel, or a bathroom and a living room.55 Blesser and Salter explain that we can also make sense of imaginary or virtual spaces in the same way. Additionally, they interpret the emotional and behavioral qualities of the space and respond to them.56

Sound can change listeners’ relationships to space by altering the way their other senses respond to stimuli. I borrow from film scholar Michel Chion to understand how recorded sound that is layered over visual content changes the way audiences interpret the reality of the space they see. Chion’s book *Audio-Vision* is about the way that sound works in film; though it is not explicitly about space, it details the ways that sound helps movie audiences perceive of the world on film. Chion states that when sounds are synced to images, people perceive them as connected: regardless of whether the audience sees the floor as carpeted or stone, they will believe it to be whatever the sounds indicate. Chion explains that sound and music in film can be vectorizing, a spatial understanding that gives the film a forward projection.57 If a film is played backwards, one might not necessarily notice right away; Chion gives an example of a short scene in which a

56 Ibid., 13.
woman dozes in a rocking chair while leaves flutter and wind chimes move in the breeze.\textsuperscript{58} The sounds of the film, however, would sound absolutely different if played backwards. It is for this reason that sound can vectorize images; one can always tell that sounds move from past to future. Sound can also create continuity when films make dramatic changes in time or place. While drastically different images presented one after the other may not make sense on their own, a continuous sound track can tie the images together. There are many similarities between cinematic sound tracks and ototheatrical sound tracks in the ways that sound alters the audience’s perceptions of what they see. Chion explains that we do not see the same thing when we hear, and that sound manipulates what we think we see.\textsuperscript{59} If we hear a door opening, for example, we may later think that we saw the door open.\textsuperscript{60} Chion uses the term \textit{materializing sound indices} to describe the aspects of a film’s sound track that make spaces feel certain ways, such as concrete or ethereal.\textsuperscript{61} The same spaces can be understood as being materially and texturally different based on sound. Similar techniques can be used to give material sense to spaces, such as added footsteps—does the floor now appear to be wood, carpet, or stone? I contend that Chion’s observations and arguments about the power of sound to indicate the qualities of a space in film can be reasonably applied to ototheatre. Artists have great power with their audio recordings to alter the perception of real, everyday spaces, including those with historical and cultural significance. Adjusting perceptions of the physical qualities of a space can also affect the

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 18–19.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., xxvi.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 114.
ototheatre audient’s perception of the relationship of her or his own body and the bodies of others within that space.

The ototheatrical recording transforms urban dwellers into urban performers. They are performing for themselves—the only ones who have access to all the artistic stimuli—as well as for other urban dwellers. Location and social expectations also inform the actions of the audients. Their behavior can affect the mood, behavior, and actions of those nearby. Thibaud explains that when pedestrians hear music, sounds, or narrative through their headphones, their mood and affectations are altered. Their gait, stride, style, pace, facial expressions, and the shortcuts and detours they take are all modified by the audio content, and they “contribute a new tonality to city streets.”

62 In her book *Music in Everyday Life*, Tia DeNora uses the concept of *entrainment*—“the alignment or integration of bodily features with some recurrent features in the environment”—to explain the ways that bodily movement is tied to space and sound.63 She also notes the ways that entrainment can regularize physiological states such as heart rate. She argues that sound can regularize and reproduce bodies and bodily states over time.64 Therefore, in addition to receiving directions from ototheatrical recordings, audients alter their behavior in less explicit ways due to tone, pacing, mood, and musical content. Additionally, it is possible for the recorded sound of ototheatre to affect even those people in the space who cannot hear the sound. The sounds change the mood of the audient, which changes the behavior of the audient, thus changing the space through the audient’s resulting actions. For example, if terrifying sounds scare an audient, he or she may look frightened and glance around quickly. Others may pick up

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62 Thibaud, “The Sonic Composition and the City,” 329.
64 Ibid., 79.
on this energy of fear and apprehension, mimicking it and passing it on. Non-participants do not hear the ototheatrical recording and yet are affected by it as audients contribute to the tonality of the streets.

According to Stankievech, the stethoscope allows someone to listen to the sounds inside the human thorax and then recreate the structures of that space in the mind. He says that headphones become a tool that similarly allows listeners to map a sound field virtually within the head. What he describes is similar to Blesser and Salter’s concept of auditory spatial awareness. They explain that when people hear sounds, they create an interior space in the mind in which they understand the physical attributes of a space. Stankievech’s and Blesser and Salter’s theorization of sound fields within internal sound fields within people’s heads is useful in working out the ways that ototheatre listeners blend the sights and sounds of the world in which they walk with the sounds they hear in the headphones. Their external environment is created in their heads through a synthesis of all available sensory information. The various case studies I analyze in this dissertation use different audio, narrative, physical, and virtual strategies to augment space.

New Media

The existence of ototheatre is predicated on the existence and availability of portable sound technologies as well as a popular interest in the individualized, introspective, and interactive journeys created by artists and authors. Ototheatre is part of a genealogy of old and

65 Stankievech, “From Stethoscopes to Headphones,” 56.
66 Ibid.
new media forms and practices such as radio drama, audio tours, theatre, podcasts, video games, and augmented reality applications. The ways that audiences listen are constructed over time through changes in cultural understandings of sound and interactions with these sound media. It would be easy to simply claim that new technologies lead directly to a change in artistic products or audience behavior. Media scholars warn against implying a causal relationship between the development of technology and a change in audience behavior. The cumulative effect of the evolution of consumer and entertainment technology and the social practices surrounding their use has been to prepare audiences for ototheatrical experiences. Listening practices that are increasingly personalized, immersive, and mobile are both impetus for and product of ototheatre.

While an essential assumption of my dissertation is that portable sound technology (like a Walkman) is all the technology needed to create ototheatre, I argue that the audients’ experience of digital and networked technologies, especially mobile devices like smart phones, give audients a familiarity with and a desire for mobile and individualized theatrical experiences. I study ototheatre because I see it as an ideal performance form in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. New media technologies are developing at a rapid pace, and consumers are regularly confronted with new digital and physical products that alter the ways that they communicate with each other and the ways that they understand themselves in space and time. Artists continue to

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develop ideas and strategies to make new work that responds to the new set of challenges and understandings around the changes in social relations. Theatre artists and theatre scholarship have become more and more concerned with the digital and the virtual.

Dennis Kennedy notes that the ideal theatre for modernity is one that is director driven and easily mass-produced and distributed.\textsuperscript{68} Lev Manovich has said that as we move deeper into the postmodern era, works of art have become more individualized in a way that has been made possible, in part, by new technologies.\textsuperscript{69} The term \textit{new media} implies, in addition to individualization, a series of qualities such as immersion, interaction, and virtuality. Dyson explains that “three rhetorical maneuvers” accompany ideas of new media. First, “the shift from ‘looking at’ to ‘being in’ that [virtual reality] inaugurated; second, the conflation of ‘being-in’ a virtual environment with ‘being’ in general; and third, the equivalence between ‘digital’ and organic being.”\textsuperscript{70} Dyson argues that new media is “the accumulation of auditive technologies of the past”\textsuperscript{71} and that “sound, technology, and culture have combined to create a rhetorical structure through which prior notions of embodiments, materiality, humanity, art, and science are assembled for deployment in the information age.”\textsuperscript{72} Dyson claims that our understandings and experiences with sound technologies have paved the way for us to explore new ideas of embodiment and presence.

\textsuperscript{68} Dennis Kennedy, \textit{The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.
\textsuperscript{69} Manovich, “The Poetics of Augmented Space.”
\textsuperscript{70} Dyson, \textit{Sounding New Media}, 2.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 7.
While theatre in the twenty-first century is drawing on new media technology and audiences’ experiences with them, new media works—it can be argued—are always drawing upon theatre. Audiences need interpretive tools to understand newer works and can draw on older forms for this purpose. Theatre offers a particularly powerful precedent because it (often) possesses the qualities of presence, community, and narrative. Interestingly, while some theatre has become more interactive and immersive by adopting new media technologies, new media works, through their interactive and immersive properties, have allowed audience participation to become more theatrical.

The descriptor *intermedial* and its nominal form *intermedia* has been a key category for me in situating ototheatre among other works. Jens Schröter explores four types of intermedia, the first being *synthetic intermedia*. He defines this mode as “a fusion of several media into a new medium . . . that is more than the sum of its parts.” He relates this type of intermedia to the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and artistic movements of the 1960s such as Fluxus. I argue that ototheatre is a form of synthetic intermedia that cannot be divided into several media forms. Rather, the hybridity is one that is fused to become something new and whole. Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt have discussed the importance of the idea of *in-between* when it comes to intermediality. They explain that “the intermedia is a space where the boundaries soften and we are in-between and within a mixing of spaces, media, and realities” as well as in-between “performer and audience . . . theatre, performance and other media . . . and conceptual

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frameworks and artistic/philosophical movements.” Another kind of in-betweeness is explained by Alan Kaprow, who claims that intermedia, “implies fluidity and simultaneity of roles.” By this, he means that “art is only one of several possible functions a situation may have.” The intermediality of ototheatre underlies both its artistic potential and its diversity of form. The ototheatre that I explore includes new artistic forms similar to installations, audio walks, “films without cameras,” and other works that use technology to create interactive, immersive, and intimate experiences. However, not all the works are primarily works of art or theatre. I argue that audio tours, audio games, and the difficult-to-categorize fitness application Zombies, Run! (see chapter four) function as artistic theatre works and yet are simultaneously non-artistic products.

Chapters

The body of this dissertation is divided into three main chapters. I have ordered the chapters based on the level of complexity of the spaces that audients navigate in their performances. I begin with a chapter that focuses on one work that takes place within a private, interior space. I follow that chapter with one that explores outdoor, primarily urban works. I then conclude with a chapter that focuses on audients who extend the performance space to the internet.

76 Ibid.
In chapter two, “Performing the Podcast: Public Listening in Private Spaces with Hofesh Shechter’s Everyday Moments,” I introduce oto theatre as a form that can summon the public mode of theatre to private spaces and create a new role—the audient—that blends performer and audience member. I examine choreographer Hofesh Shechter’s podcast Everyday Moments, which guides each audient to create her or his own personalized dance piece for which he or she is the performer and sole audience member. This chapter details theatrical antecedents of the podcast, tracing a genealogy that includes the théâtrophone, the radio drama, and the downloadable podcast to demonstrate how the recorded voice has long been creating remote theatrical experiences for audiences through the use of mediatized sound technology. I guide the reader through my own experience of performing Everyday Moments. I do not seek to generalize an ototheatrical experience by sharing my own; rather, I demonstrate how Everyday Moments works internally to create an individualized performance for one. My intent is to demonstrate the ototheatrical possibilities of the podcast form by detailing one experience of one particularly ototheatrical podcast. I assert that Hofesh Shechter has employed the theatrical possibilities of the podcast, using the form as a scripting mechanism in a way that can be further employed by other theatre artists. Everyday Moments is an ideal case study to begin this dissertation because it is, in essence, the most simple and self-contained form.

Chapter three, “From the Audio Tour to the Panaurama: Mapping Urban Space with Sound,” explores ways of mapping space with sound. I focus on artistic sound works that are related to the genre of the audio tour. The case studies I have chosen all attempt to help audients see hidden social, historical, or spatial layers of an unfamiliar site. My research explores how audio walks allow users to create mental maps of memory, history, and experience that engage
them with a place. I argue that sound augments the mapped space for the users, transporting them into the space, rather than placing them as outside observers. I closely analyze two theatrical audio “tours” based on my own experiences of them. I traveled to New York City’s Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg to enact Duncan Speakman’s *As If It Were the Last Time*, which pulls audiences into a poetic encounter with a busy shopping district. Trickster’s *Sights* uses telephone booths to provide audiences with the narratives of blind city residents that give them a new way to understand the city throughout their walk. I traveled to Bern, Switzerland, to follow a map to the various booths, listening to the German-language version of the work. Finally, I conduct an analysis of my own sound art project, a sonic map of London that I call a *panaurama*, which uses binaural recordings to guide listeners through my memories of discovering London by foot and underground train. I examine this work to find ways to create entirely virtual sites to experience ototheatre.

In chapter four, “Exercising the Imagination: The Theatre of *Zombies, Run!*,” I explore a case study that was designed as a fitness app but that could also be called an audio drama or a game. These three forms, however, cannot contain the various interpretive codes and modes of behavior in which audiences engage with the work. I argue that the *Zombies, Run!* app serves as a script for audiences to create their own performances—for themselves and even for unknowing passersby. Additionally, fans of the work perform for other fans in the world of online digital commons spaces by creating fanfiction, videos, costumed photography collections, and other works that exhibit their own interpretations of the characters and stories of the app. In *Zombies, Run!*, the serial narrative, active engagement, and online communities extend the possibilities for ototheatrical performance.
Methods and Methodologies

An individual’s experience of an ototheatrical work is specific to her or him. The actions of the audient, the place of performance, the way that each body responds to the sensory stimuli, and other production-specific factors make it impossible to generalize an experience based on a sample size. I believe that the most enlightening method of displaying how ototheatre works through an audient is by providing one highly specific description of one experience. I can offer no greater specificity of the moment-by-moment intellectual and affective response than my own. The primary methodology is thus autoethnographic: I rely on my personal experiences of ototheatrical works, while giving alternate real and hypothetical descriptions where necessary.

In their article “Autoethnography: An Overview,” Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner detail the effectiveness of an autoethnographic approach to research, explaining that personal experience illustrates facets of cultural experience and makes these characteristics familiar to others. My detailed descriptions of my encounters with ototheatre are less about analyzing and conveying my experience, and more about sharing one of many possibilities for experiencing an ototheatrical work, which I hope will illustrate the complexity of these works and their potential for generating highly individualized performances. As Ellis, Adams, and Bochner endorse, with my autoethnography, I consider the possible varied audiences of this work and seek to further a conversation.

My identity as a performance scholar is crucial to my analysis. I define these works as ototheatre and categorize them within the domain of theatre so that I can analyze the ways that

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78 Ibid., 282.
theatre artists are changing in response to their cultural contexts and experiences with mobile, digital, and networked technologies. My position as a theatre scholar foregrounds the reliability, validity, and generalizability that Ellis, Adams, and Bochner require in an autoethnographic work. It does not matter if the works I describe are theatre in any objective sense, but rather that I believe them to be so and can convince a reader that this is a valid point of view that he or she could adopt. My work is not generalizable in the “traditional, social scientific meaning that stems from, and applies to, large random samples of respondents.” Rather, as Ellis, Adams, and Bochner explain, “the focus of generalizability moves from respondents to readers,” as these readers attempt to take my specific experiences and relate them to their own experiences, those of others they know, and those other cultural processes of which they are aware.

In each of the three main chapters of this work, I provide detailed accounts of my experiences as an audient. My analysis of these works demonstrates how they function theatrically and how audients activate them. In chapter three, “From the Audio Tour to the Panaurama: Mapping Urban Space with Sound,” I serve as artist-researcher in addition to the role of audient-researcher. I recount the development of an ototheatrical product of which I am the sole artist and (as of yet) audient. The process of creating and listening to the panaurama served to interrogate the possibilities of using recorded sound to create affective maps of spaces and experiences. In chapter four, “Exercising the Imagination: The Theatre of Zombies, Run!,” I supplement my autoethnography, expanding my data set to include a survey of over one hundred fans to determine how they perceived their own role in engaging with the app and how they

79 Ibid., 283.
80 Ibid.
worked as performers and audients. This change in method reflects significant differences between *Zombies, Run!* and my other case studies. *Zombies, Run!* is an ongoing serial narrative work. Audients listen to “missions” while running, playing the role of the main character in the narrative. The app is thus something that fans of the work return to over and over, sometimes daily. Serial works—soap operas, comic books, and novel series, for example—encourage invested fandom. Fans of serial works often turn to communities, such as online forums, to discuss and fill in gaps in the narrative with their own creative work. Due to these communities, the experience for active fans is not necessarily the isolated, internal experience of an audient but rather a communal experience as performer for and member of a wider audience. The different ways that fans participate in the online fan community change the way that they and others interact with the app and understand the narrative.

**Conclusion**

I have coined the term *ototheatre* to provide a comprehensive category within which I can demonstrate fundamental links between different types of mobile audio work. An audio tour, a podcast drama, a soundwalk, a fitness app, and a sound installation may all have been created by artists, educators, and designers with different skills and intentions, but they share similar experiential components that transform space and provide multiple ways for listeners to act as audiences and performers for themselves and others. Some of the works that I examine may be easily categorized as theatre, and others may take a stretch of the imagination to see as such, but I demonstrate that they all take part in a long theatrical lineage that has recently converged with

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new media forms and experiences. Ototheatre takes advantage of listeners’ knowledge and skills relating to the use, consumption, observance, and enactment of theatre, sound, and digital media. I pay particular attention to what listeners bring to each work, how they learn to listen to and perform ototheatre.

Ototheatre can be very complex to make, taking a team of highly skilled writers, musicians, and computer programmers, or it can be as simple as a recording made by someone with a cell phone app. But no matter the complexity or artistic value, all ototheatre has the power to serve as material for audients to make reinterpretations and reconstructions of spaces they inhabit. Thus, my dissertation seeks not only to analyze current uses for and performances of ototheatrical content but also to look toward future possibilities for this type of work.

I examine the individualized and agentive components of ototheatre in relation to theatrical performances and styles that involve audience participation, choice, and individualization to situate them within a continuing practice of participatory creation. I show how public space, recorded sound, and audients’ individuated movement construct layered narratives. Ultimately, I argue that ototheatre, by augmenting reality with sound, differently activates spectators than traditional theatre, prompting them to reevaluate and experience anew spaces and cultural ideas about space. The ongoing evolution of works (in theatre, games, and art installations) that implement ototheatrical practices points the way to a vibrant, engaging, and socially relevant theatre of the future.
Chapter Two—Performing the Podcast: Public Listening in Private Spaces with Hofesh Shechter’s *Everyday Moments*

“You are inside your body, you are outside your body, you are inside your body, nobody can see us, you are outside your body, you are inside your body, outside your body.” The voice in my ear begins to fade and the music gets louder. I am lying down on a bed in a dark room, my bedroom. I am out of breath and disoriented. I have just experienced a theatrical event that I performed with and within my own body. I was able to experience this private and intense work through a fifteen-minute podcast that I listened to with my smartphone and a pair of earphones. When discussing his podcast for the series *Everyday Moments*, choreographer Hofesh Shechter says that the work gives the listener an opportunity “to experience their own body from the inside.” Shechter makes use of the technological, physical, and social characteristics of the podcast form to create a nearly seamless virtual experience of the space of the dancing body. *Everyday Moments* revives and reinvents the audio drama for a mobile and networked listening audience. Although audio dramas heard by radio or podcast generally offer narrative and characters, positioning the listener as audience, Shechter’s work provides a script that positions the listener as performer, auditor, and viewer of a theatrical dance piece.

While most of the case studies in this dissertation take place in public spaces, often in cities, I am beginning the body of my discussion of ototheatre with a work that takes place completely alone and in the most private of spaces. By beginning in this way, with a work that seems the antithesis to the way that most would define a theatrical work, I highlight the ways that

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ototheatre summons theatricality, augments spaces, and transforms listeners into performers. This chapter focuses on one podcast as a representative example of the ototheatrical potential for the form.

The Podcast

In 2004, Susan J. Douglas published a history of radio in the United States in which she mused,

[I]t remains to be seen whether the modes of listening that defined overlapping generations throughout a century will be allowed to vanish or whether somewhere, when the suits aren’t paying much attention, some defiant rebels, old or young or both, will revolutionize radio yet again and cultivate new modes of listening and new discourses yet to be imagined.²

The podcast was just beginning to take hold as an established and recognizable form when Douglas wrote these words. Contemporary writers were just beginning to argue that podcasting was the “future of radio.”³ I argue that the podcast has reinvigorated older radio forms by putting them in a context that gives them new possibilities and capabilities.

In the 1990s, technology developed to support widespread use of podcasting.⁴ In 2000, a new version of RSS (Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication), which was used to

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² Douglas, Listening In, 357.
⁴ Several simultaneous developments in technology converged to support the podcast. The MP3 format spread on the internet in the late 1990s, enabling manageable file sizes for audio. While portable digital audio was invented in the 1980s, the first popular consumer MP3 player was released in 1998. The iPod followed in 2001. File downloading, which was possible even in the early internet, became much easier with the explosive growth of the World Wide Web following the introduction of graphical web browsers such as Netscape and Internet Explorer in the mid-1990s. Finally, blogging, a textual precursor to the podcast, became popular with the release of hosted platforms like LiveJournal and Blogger.com in the late 1990s.
subscribe to newsfeeds and blogs, was developed to gather audio files to a user’s RSS feed. Andrew J. Bottomley claims that podcasting came of age in 2005 after a series of software developments made podcasting accessible to an everyday, nonexpert audience.\footnote{5}

Podcasts were originally listened to primarily at home. Steven McClung and Kristine Johnson report that in 2008, two-thirds of podcasts listeners used their desktop computers to listen.\footnote{6} The second-generation iPhone came out in 2008 as well, vastly surpassing the first-generation (2007) model in sales.\footnote{7} In 2007, only 1.4 million iPhones were sold worldwide. In 2008, that number rose to 11.6 million. By 2015, the number sold would skyrocket to 231 million.\footnote{8} The consumer smartphone, first the iPhone and then many other competing models, created an ease of podcast access as well as increased mobility of listening opportunities that affected the number of people who listened to podcasts and also the ways that people listened. McClung and Johnson note that in another survey conducted in 2010, more than two-thirds of podcast listeners were doing so through portable media devices.\footnote{9} While new types of software, iPodder for example, made it easier to download content to a mobile listening device, the advent of the smartphone allowed content to be directly accessed at any time and in any place, either by using a dedicated podcast app or by simply streaming from a website. Just as the Walkman and

\footnote{7}{Other smartphones were available in the early 2000s, though these were primarily for business use.}
\footnote{9}{McClung and Johnson, “Examining the Motives of Podcast Users,” 88.}
the iPod changed the way that people listened to music, bringing private and personalized listening experiences into public spaces, the always-accessible podcast brought forth new as well as old styles of non-musical, talk-based content.

Prompted by the popularity of the 2014 podcast *Serial*, which was downloaded by 77 million people, critics began to declare that we had entered the “golden age of podcasts.”

*Serial* also helped mark the podcast as something that anyone could access, even the stereotypically Luddite senior citizen. In a 2014 video made by Ira Glass, creator and host of *This American Life* (the radio program/podcast from which *Serial* is a spinoff), Glass asks eighty-five-year-old Mary Ahearn to explain how to access the podcast. Ahearn simply states, “The first thing you do is go to the website. That you know.” She then shows the screen of her tablet, which features the *Serial* website. She says, “When you get there, this is what you will see on the screen. And there’s a little arrow over there. You press it and, congratulations, you’re listening to a podcast.” This demonstration serves to make it clear to audience members unfamiliar with the methods of listening to podcasts how easy it really is. Perhaps the tone is even meant to shame late adopters for not trying something that anyone who has the ability to visit a website can do.

Those who study podcasts differ in opinion on whether podcasts should be described as a *medium* or a *practice*. In his introduction to the symposium, “Podcasting: A Decade in the Life of a ‘New’ Audio Medium,” Andrew Bottomley refers to podcasting as a medium, though he notes in a footnote that this is to conform to the terminology used by other contributors to the

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10 Bottomley, “Podcasting: A Decade in the Life,” 165.
12 Ibid.
symposium. He explains that he prefers the term practice to medium when describing podcasts, citing Sterne, Morris, Baker, and Freire’s 2008 definition of podcasting as “a group of connected technologies, practices, and institutions.” A medium generally consists of a stand-alone format such as painting or film. Theatre is another form that is generally accepted to be a practice that incorporates a variety of media and practices. Chiel Kattenbelt calls theatre a hypermedium—a paradigm of all arts that incorporates all other media and arts. I argue that if the concept of medium can be inter- or hyper-, then medium and practice can become similar concepts. Podcasts are related to many other artistic and entertainment media, and listeners make use of multiple interpretive codes to access them. Therefore, while I am comfortable using the term medium in relation to podcasting, I agree with Sterne, Morris, Baker, and Freire’s definition.

Podcasts, like radio programs, come in many formats—interviews, audio blogs, advice shows, news programs, and audio dramas are only a few examples. However, podcasts have a different relationship with liveness than radio. Early radio was always live and broadcast to the masses. Even radio dramas, like Comedy of Danger, would not have been prerecorded. In that sense, radio drama and the théâtrophone were closely linked to live theatre. Part of the appeal of the podcast is that it is not broadcast live; rather, listeners can access the content when they feel like it. However, there is still a desire for listening experiences that feel live or communal. Some podcasts are always recorded in front of a live audience. For example, The Moth is a popular

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podcast that presents recordings of live events during which people read personal stories in front of an audience. In addition, some podcasts that are usually recorded in a studio occasionally hold live events for fans of the show. One example is *This American Life*, the NPR radio program/podcast that holds quite elaborate live shows, one of which recently featured music composed especially for it by Philip Glass. These events often feature visual content, such as dance segments, that listeners can watch online, presumably after they listen. Another popular podcast event is Dan Savage’s *Savage Lovecast*, which is a sex advice podcast related to Savage’s written sex advice column for *The Stranger*. In his live shows, Savage engages in his usual activities—answering questions submitted by listeners (in the case of the live show, questions submitted by attendees) and interviewing guest experts—while also presenting other segments like bringing audience members up on stage for various comedic interludes and inviting musicians to perform. Another example is *Welcome to Night Vale*, a serialized, fictional audio drama podcast presented as a local news program in a supernatural setting. Interestingly, the work is created and produced by members of the New York Neo-Futurists, a theatre company that started in Chicago. The audio drama podcast has become extremely popular, frequently appearing in top lists of the most downloaded podcasts. The *Welcome to Night Vale* team takes the show on tour, visiting cities all over the world and performing new, exclusively live episodes to sold-out houses. The audio content of the live shows is available for purchase (unlike the regular podcast episodes that are available for free). These live performance events demonstrate a crossover between recorded audio and live theatre. The liveness of these episodes offers desirable content for podcasts that are available to listeners after the event. What makes podcasts as live events so desirable and logical? For listeners to the recorded live event, what makes the
podcast so satisfying? I posit that the recorded live event contains a charge of the live made by the reactions and excitement of the audience.

The podcast is an audio form that is highly suitable for the creation, delivery, and consumption of ototheatrical content. Podcasts are easily accessible, listened to on demand through mobile devices, and increasingly popular with the public. The form is already being used for theatrical productions like radio drama and live performances. The barrier to entry for artists both for creation and distribution is low as well. While the podcast has not been used extensively for ototheatrical works thus far, I argue that ototheatrical podcasts exist that point the way toward a union of the two practices.

In the work that is the focus of this chapter, *Everyday Moments*, Hofesh Shechter makes use of the qualities of the podcast form to create a theatrical event that is intimate, immersive, and unequivocally live—a work that radically refigures theatre performance and spectatorship.

**Fuel Podcasts**

Fuel is a London-based producing organization that was founded in 2004 by Louise Blackwell and Kate McGrath. They describe Fuel as “an initiator, a driving force, a producer in the original sense of the word.”¹⁶ They state that they support artists in any way that they need, “from fundraising to moral support, tour-booking to being a sounding board for ideas, dramaturgy to photocopying.” In 2011, before the “golden age of podcasts” and yet after podcasts were an established form used primarily on smartphones, Fuel teamed up with the

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Guardian’s Culture Podcast to present *Everyday Moments*, a yearlong, monthly series of podcasts, conceived of by Fuel and created by artists, authors, poets, musicians, comedians, choreographers, and theatre and performance artists. According to the official podcast, each work was “designed to be listened to in its own specific place, at a specific time of day—site-specific performance with a twist.”¹⁷ Thus, the expectation was that listeners could and would be mobile.¹⁸

In 2011, Fuel commissioned podcasts from artists, asking each to create a work based on an everyday moment. Fuel desired a degree of site specificity in the works, requesting that artists design their podcasts to be listened to “at a particular time and in a particular place.” On the company website, Fuel writes, “Imagine there was a soundtrack to those small moments when you find yourself alone, brushing your teeth, in the bath, watching the rain stream down your living room window, or when you’re tucked up in bed unable to sleep.”¹⁹ Some of the pieces do function in this way, as a backdrop and soundtrack for everyday mundane activities. Each of the works, however, differs greatly. There seems to be no connection between them, other than that many of them deal specifically with “everyday moments” like drinking coffee while listening to the radio, shopping for groceries, or taking a bath. Each promotes a different type of listening experience and a different relationship to the narrator, the space in which one listens, and the


¹⁸ The next year, in 2012, Fuel produced another series of podcasts called *Body Pods* in which each commissioned artist collaborated with a scientist to make a podcast about a part of the human body. In 2013, Fuel produced their next podcast series, *While You Wait*, a collaboration between artists and academics.

listener’s own self and body. Most of the twelve episodes of *Everyday Moments*, I would argue, are not site specific.

There are many definitions and criteria of site specificity in relation to theatre, dance, and installation art. However, the site-specific podcast has yet to be defined. Many of the podcast episodes in *Everyday Moments* are site specific in the same way that the radio drama *Comedy of Danger* was site specific. Richard Hughes, the author of *Comedy of Danger*, hoped that listeners to the radio drama would close their eyes or listen in the dark so that their environment would mimic that of the setting of the drama. In *Everyday Moments*, artists suggest a setting for audients that is similar to the performance site (actual or virtual) within which the artist performs. Some of the artists ask their listeners to inhabit a space that will do more than illustrate the fictional space of the podcast. These artists use spaces of listening as entry points into the virtual performance, allowing listeners to perform the podcast.

**Hofesh Shechter’s *Everyday Moments***

The fifth installment of *Everyday Moments*, created by Hofesh Shechter, premiered on May 20, 2011. Shechter, a London-based Israeli choreographer, designed the work to be “heard late at night, with headphones, in a completely dark room—with some space to move.”20 This improvisational dance podcast was arguably the most participatory and theatrical of the series. In

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20 The voice that opens all the podcasts in the series introduces each work by stating the name of the creator and indicating the time, place, and manner in which the listener is intended to participate. Hofesh Shechter, “Everyday Moments 5: Audio Drama for Private Performance,” The Guardian UK Culture Podcast, May 20, 2011, accessed July 1, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/audio/2011/may/20/everyday-moments-podcast-audio-drama.
the following section, I introduce you to Hofesh Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* podcast by offering a walkthrough of my experience. I describe my thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations in response to my performance of the podcast. By focusing on one detailed individual experience, I demonstrate the highly internal and personal nature of the work.

Late one night, I sit in my dark bedroom, wearing headphones, as per the instructions. I hear music playing. It begins as swelling static that resolves into an orchestral chord. Then after a quiet pause, Shechter’s deep voice quietly and slowly says, “I’m not going to tell you what to do. I’m just going to tell you what to think. Or what not to think about. Which is kind of the same like telling you what to think about. But don’t worry about it; just don’t think about it.”21 He speaks quietly though his voice is almost loud, as if he is speaking directly into my ear, as if he is already inside my ear. His voice is breathy, almost sensual. This is a personal and intimate exchange. Shechter continues his monologue in which he describes movement as “a question that can’t be answered.” He then issues a directive: “Stand up… Think about your body… Don’t think about me.”

At this point, in the first minute of the work, I am still unsure as to what I will be doing or what my role will be, but I am immediately under the impression that I will be following directions. I sit on the edge of the bed in the bedroom and look around, trying to decide if it is dark enough or if it is too dark. The recording of Shechter’s voice comes from no recognizable location, by which I mean it was not recorded with a binaural technique meant to place the voice in a virtual space. Rather, the voice seems to emanate from my own head, confusing the sense of

21 All of the quotations from the work in this section are from Hofesh Shechter, “Everyday Moments 5.”
who is in charge of my thoughts and movements. As he instructed, I stand up and try to “think about [my] body.” This introduction to the work sets the expectation that I will be focused on my body, while I let Shechter guide my actions.

Shechter instructs, “Feel your body being very light. Being empty, like an empty plastic bag. It starts moving because it’s so light and empty.” As he continues to describe the floating, rattling movements of the bag, I begin to experiment with small movements. I create shapes and movement patterns that attempt to respond to Shechter’s instructions. There is a meditative quality to the experience, similar to guided meditations that attempt to create an awareness of the body and breath. Shechter goes a step further by adding improvisatory movements to the meditation.

Shechter instructs me to feel the floor underneath me, to “feel how soft the floor can be, how soft [I] can feel with the floor.” He says, “Your body is empty. There is a sensation of euphoria taking over.” These instructions and new visualizations change the quality of my movements. I find my body making new shapes and moving at a different pace. Shechter again instructs me to think about my body. He says, “Feel your body from the inside, the inside of your body.” The focus of the piece is drawn further inward, as the listener is pressed to concentrate on bodily sensations and the movements that those inspire. The darkness of the room keeps vision from dominating the focus, while attention is continually drawn to sensation and movement.

In this transitional section, my awareness begins to shift from the space in which my body resides, to my body within and connected to that space. Rather than feeling a self-conscious attempt to follow directions and perform the work correctly, I begin to feel as if I am naturally responding to the piece, as if I have always been a necessary part of the piece. My awareness is
further and further drawn away from the room, pushed toward the trajectory of my movements as they unfold in response to the music and Shechter’s voice.

Shechter then begins the second section of the piece. He asks me to connect to the feeling I had about the rattling of the plastic bag that he introduced earlier. “Everything starts to tumble; your body is tumbling.” He describes my body on a boat being moved by waves, and my body filled with wet sand tumbling inside. The movements that I create in response to Shechter’s prompts in this section are more active. Rather than stretching upward and staying somewhat in the same place in the room, I begin to move across and throughout the room, filling the space with my movements. Though it is dark, I find my way around easily. I do not find that the bed gets in my way. Rather, it serves as a structure that I can use to move onto and around in creative ways. No thought or planning is necessary for the dance I improvise. The movements tumble from my body easily in response to the guided imagery Shechter provides.

Through this section the music has sustained a tense, quavering chord. Now an echoing howl rises in the background. Shechter says that I should begin to feel a jumpy, “hoppy” feeling that emerges from the tumbling feeling, like there is a fire beginning to burn inside me. While the first section was calm and soothing, meditatively connecting me to my body and the space, this next section builds tension and potential energy. My confidence rises and my movements become larger and faster.

Shechter’s voice becomes more intense, a little louder and faster. He says:

These waves are filled with urge, with need, with something like hunger, with a drive, something we don’t entirely understand and don’t entirely control, but we let it happen all the same. And it starts to take over your body from time to time, it sort of creates a wave of movement like a wind of movement is going through you, (a static sound almost like wind fades in) the movement is faster it’s more intense it’s surprising and just takes over every two three four seconds—
Suddenly I hear a loud Bang! that sets me on edge. Shechter continues:

More and more is bubbling inside you, there is this urge, you have surprising attacks of fast quick movements, wah! Something that comes from somewhere that you don’t know and you don’t care as well. It’s a sort of anger, a sort of crave. It’s a sort of optimism, a sort of power, energy, life, call it whatever you want…

Shechter creates a new emotional state for the listener in this section. Rather than a relaxed, meditative state, Shechter encourages a frenzied, highly reactive state. The music, the banging sound, and Shechter’s ever louder and faster direction pushes me to move with quicker, larger movements. The way his sentences run together encourages movements without pauses and without thinking. I can feel my heart pound and feel a rush of adrenaline during each loud and unexpected Bang!

I hear another Bang! as the music becomes loud and frenzied. Shechter calls out, “Now you just go with it go go go go go go go!”

In this third section, intense rock music begins, complicated and percussive over a driving mid-tempo rhythm, like a heartbeat. The style is similar to the jazz/metal fusion sound of hard rock bands like Faith No More. It is energetic and unpredictable.\(^{22}\) I let go, moving frenetically, covering every part of the room. I think about nothing except the pleasurable sensations of moving with the music.

Shechter has now stopped narrating and guiding with his voice. He has spent the early part of the podcast training his audient, and now he sets the audient free. At this point, I do not need his guidance. I feel completely confident to create an improvisational dance piece that will...

\(^{22}\) Shechter usually writes his own music, which he customizes for the emotions and movements he desires from his dancers and audiences.
connect the music, the space, and my body. This section feels free from thought and from
structure, and yet the movements are informed by Shechter’s early and careful guidance.

After this section, the music abruptly ends, and I hear Shechter take a breath. He says in a
calm voice, “Now that was fun. Just let yourself settle down a little bit… Something happened
here, but we won’t tell anyone, OK?… Nobody saw us, that’s fine.” His words are soothing,
reminding me, as I return to a normal sense of self-consciousness, that this performance had no
outside audience. I was free to move without fear of judgment from anyone, including myself.
There was no ideal artistic or aesthetic standard that I had to meet other than surrendering to
Shechter’s guidance. My performance was only about what I felt. I was my only audience, and
my performance was for me.

In the fourth section, Shechter allows me to sit down and feel the heaviness of my body.
Shechter instructs me to feel, in contrast to the weightless plastic bag of the first section, warm
water dripping down my body as I melt into the ground. Once again, he reminds me that
“nobody can see us,” that I (and the Shechter in my head) am alone and unobserved. He says I
am inside my body and then says that I am outside of my body. He repeats this refrain, pulling
my attention inward and outward. I feel my body from the inside from the perspective of a
dancer. I then imagine that I see my body as if I am on the ceiling above my bed, watching a
performance. Shechter seems conscious of this aspect of the performance—that his audience can
move from one perspective to another internally within the mind. The piece ends with this
refrain, as the music swells and then becomes silent.
Acting, Doing, and Performing *Everyday Moments*

Shechter builds a non-narrative dramatic arc in *Everyday Moments* that is performed by the audients. While audients do not take on a fictional role, they do take on thoughts, emotions, and feelings that Shechter suggests and that lead to particular types of movement. They dance and play a character (even if that character is a version of themselves) that Shechter forms and they enact. Questions arise as to how much Shechter is controlling the movement and character with his instructions, or how much the movements that the audients create feed their emotions and character. Additionally, one consistently moves from listener, performer, to spectator and back again. Alice Rayner has analyzed dramatic action by categorizing it into three verbs: *to act, to do,* and *to perform.* Rayner is concerned with dramatic, text-based performances in the theatre, which she notes are “textual, material, and public.” I believe that extending her analytical framework to *Everyday Moments* can highlight the theatricality of the work and the complexity of the actions of the listener in a theatrical context.

Rayner says that the verb *to act* implies intention. It has a beginning, middle, and end and can thus be ascribed a narrative. The act is also a social behavior that implies that the action is carrying meaning for an onlooker. The act does not exist in a vacuum but instead is generally associated with a “what, why, who, how with whom or against whom.” Audients in Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* begin the piece acting. In the first section of the piece, Shechter instructs his

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24 Ibid., 13.
25 Ibid.
audient what to think about and what not to think about. Sitting in the dark, thinking, the audient engages in a cerebral activity, attempting to figure out the work and her or his role in it.

In contrast to *to act*, the verb *to do* is an action that is severed from intention and refers only to the “material or gestural conditions.”27 Doing is motion without intention and can be ascribed to any object—animate or inanimate. According to Rayner, “the body has a mind of its own and speaks its own kind of language.”28 Shechter’s music and instructions urge the body to respond rather than to think. The improvisatory movements the audient makes seem to her or him as if they are generated spontaneously.

Shechter needs his audients—especially those who are not trained dancers—to suspend any preconceived ideas about their own ineptness as dancers, any awkwardness at being asked to perform. Shechter is the choreographer of this piece, and in order to do his work he must have the audients surrender to his process, which requires them to surrender to impulse. As Rayner explains, doing, “requires a divorce between intentions, desires, and symbolic codes and a reconfiguration according to other systems. . . . Acting teachers know how difficult it is for students to unlearn their concepts and to concentrate solely on motions, and any number of exercises focus on suspending consciousness or putting consciousness into the physical.”29 Shechter’s text is just such an exercise. I agree with Rayner that “discoveries about emotion, attitude, even reasons often occur as result of doing, not before doing.”30 Audients in *Everyday Moments* discover emotions and thoughts about the piece as a result of enacting the work.

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27 Rayner, *To Act, to Do, to Perform*, 21.
28 Ibid., 22.
29 Ibid., 25.
30 Ibid.
For Rayner, *to perform* is distinct from *to act* and *to do* because it implies an audience. By surrendering to the impulse of doing rather than thinking about their actions, the audients can allow the mind to drift and to imaginatively view their own body’s performance. This performance, according to Rayner, is layered with the habits of genre. The behavior and gestures of a performer take on significance in the imaginary viewing from a field of cultural codes.

The audients interpret their movements both from the perspective of the doer—how the movements feel—and from the perspective of a performance viewer—as he or she imaginatively “watches” the performance. What audients “see” in their minds will not be what an observer might see. There can be no other observer to this performance because what this moving body actually looks like is of no concern. Rather, the audient imagines a performance based on her or his understandings of what this type of theatrical dance *should* look like. There is certainly not a clean break between acting, doing, and performing, but it is in the pushing toward a separation between these three verbs that discoveries can be made about the self, about movement, about intention, and about emotion.

According to Rayner, *to perform* refers not only to the ways that actions are “conceived and done” but also to how they are “perceived in public.” One of the ways that Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* is unique and highly theatrical is in his development of a public mode of listening within private spaces.

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31 Ibid., 34.
32 Ibid., 27.
Summoning Theatre

What is it that summons theatre and makes the audient conscious of it inside the private space in which he or she listens to *Everyday Moments*? Christopher B. Balme argues that in the age of the internet, a “place of performance need not be a concrete place, but rather is a hub that allows for public interaction.” However, the publicness of theatre is contingent. While theatre can take place in a large auditorium or in a bedroom, the event’s status as public or private is not determined by the size of the space or number of attendees but rather by analyzing “constantly changing sets of discursive, social and institutional factors” relating to theatre performance. Balme explains that “culturally dominant forms of theatre have effectively ‘privatized’ to the extent that conventional distinctions between private and public have been reversed.” Balme refers specifically to the modernist turn toward private, intimate, dark, and aesthetic theatre experiences. Theatre can thus carry the paradoxical experience of being both public in private and private in public.

In *Theatre Audiences*, Susan Bennett analyzes the public nature of theatre. She argues that television “lacks the sense of public event that attaches to theatre and cinema. It denies the audience the sense of contact with the performers that is integral to any theatrical performance and, moreover, it denies the spectator-to-spectator communication . . . within the larger

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34 Ibid., 27.
35 Ibid., 23.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 26–27.
framework of audience as community.”

Although Bennett does not mention radio in this discussion, it would seem that she would categorize radio and television into a contrasting category from theatre and cinema when it comes to their status as public event. I would argue, however, that the essence of public event that attaches to theatre and cinema can be transposed to other formats. Fuel has designated their podcast as theatre, and Shechter has categorized his episode of *Everyday Moments* as a dance piece. By framing their work in this manner, they have attached theatricality and publicness to the works. Thus, the private act of listening to the podcast also becomes public.

Dance pieces and theatre productions are usually public performances, and as such people are accustomed to experiencing them in public. Shechter prefers his audients to listen in a private space, alone in the dark. The private act of listening, however, is blurred with the public act of performance. In addition to its life as a free, downloadable podcast, the work has had a life in the theatre, being performed in black box theatres and in curtained-off areas on more traditional stages. For example, from September 28 through October 2, 2015, four years after the podcast premiered, Lakeside Theatre at the University of Essex hosted Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* inside a small, black box theatre constructed especially for *Everyday Moments* and located outside the Lakeside Theatre. The location of this performance emphasizes the

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39 Most recently Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* was featured as part of Festival of the Dark at South Street Arts Centre in Reading on January 26–28, 2017. Additional performances took place as part of #Hofest, a London-based festival that featured Shechter’s work. On September 22–24, 2015, live audiences could visit the Pina Bausch Room in Sadler’s Wells, a London dance venue, to enact Shechter’s *Everyday Moments*. Then again on October 6–8, the work was hosted by Pop Brixton, a London project that provides affordable spaces to artists, startups, and
alternative theatricality of Shechter’s piece; the performance is affiliated with Lakeside Theatre and yet is in its own makeshift building outside of the theatre. Individuals entered the black box alone, performed the piece in total darkness, and then exited, allowing the next audience member to proceed. For the Lakeside Theatre event, audients would be cued that Everyday Moments was meant to be a work of theatre. The setting near a traditional theatre, the black box space, and the darkness of the “stage” encouraged a certain type of theatrical engagement—one in which an audient surrendered to the stage fiction during the time that the lights were out and then left it behind when he or she left the space. Audients who listen to the podcast at home do not have the benefit of the dedicated theatre space to signal the theatre event; however, there are ways that Shechter has built theatrical signifiers into Everyday Moments, no matter in which location it takes place.

The darkness of the space in Everyday Moments has multiple functions, one of which is a signal for theatricality. Darkness signals the beginning of three boundaries in theatre: between the real space of the stage and the fictional reality of the play; between the experience of the audience and the experience of the real world outside of theatre; and between the roles of the performers and the roles of the audience. Everyday Moments uses an interval of darkness to signal the first two of these boundaries. By submerging themselves in darkness, the audients leave the real world and enter the theatre space until they reemerge into the light (which may merely involve flicking on the light switch). However, rather than separating the roles of performer and audience, the darkness signifies an extended blackout that creates a liminal space

entrepreneurs. Previously, the work had been presented at Tom Thumb Theatre in Cliftonville, Kent, on August 16, 2014.
for the role of the listener to merge with the role of the performer and thus become the new role of the audient.

In addition to the darkness of the space that the audient chooses for listening, the physical qualities of the room become important as a theatrical set for the performance. Rayner asserts that “one of the distinguishing characteristics of theatre as opposed, say, to books or film is its use of real and tangible objects.” One of the objects of the theatre is the set in which the performance takes place. Whether in the black box or the privacy of the bedroom, the theatricality of the event is reinforced by the attention placed on the physical space of listening. The dark, private space that the audient chooses for listening becomes an artistically rendered space of performance.

There are ways in which the more private the setting, the more theatrical the performance may be. When Shechter’s audient chooses somewhere intimate and personal to participate, a more engaged, embodied, and boundless participation is made possible. I argue that the podcast form itself creates a theatrical experience because the lack of theatrical conventions specifically for podcasts produces a situation in which audiences have little knowledge of what is expected of them. Rather than calling on a set of expectations for theatrical conventions, audiences bring their expectations for podcast conventions. Podcasts have developed their own set of conventions since their inception. As I have specified above, listeners have developed listening practices both at home through desktop computers and on the move through mobile listening devices. Most individuals listen alone, though they enjoy discussing popular podcasts with others. Unlike radio, which often serves as “aural wallpaper” that plays in the background, podcasts typically engage

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40 Rayner, *Ghosts: Death’s Double and the Phenomena of Theatre*, 73.
listeners’ full attention. Listeners also find podcasts that are most suited to their interests to hear on demand, when and where it is convenient for them. Thus, audiences of Everyday Moments most likely come prepared to listen intently and privately.

Intimacy

Shechter employs strategies that create an intimate experience for listeners. The intimacy helps to hybridize the work, transforming the podcast into theatre. He fosters two distinct, intimate relationships: intimacy between narrator and listener and intimacy between body and self. To create an intimate environment, Shechter emphasizes the private qualities of the performance. Toward the end of the performance, he says to the listener, “Something happened here, but we won’t tell anyone OK, we don’t have to tell anyone. Nobody saw us, that’s fine.” The performance’s private space that Shechter specifies—the dark room, the lateness of the hour, and the solitude—helps to create an environment that is conducive to an intimate experience. In isolation, listeners can have the sense that they and the narrator are having a private, one-on-one moment. Shechter carefully orchestrates the feeling of togetherness, then solitude, and then back again, by establishing a rapport, then replacing his voice with music, and then returning to the private listening space he has created. The darkness and solitude also facilitate the loss of inhibitions that is required for most listeners to turn attention inward to their own bodies and to respond with movements without fear of public judgment.

42 Shechter, “Everyday Moments 5.”
Shechter also uses the recorded voice in the ear to enhance intimacy. The audio quality of microphoned sound is essentially the same, whether it is live or recorded. The content and style of delivery can signal liveness and intimacy. In Schafer’s analysis of sound, he notes, “Hearing is a way of touching at a distance.” This is an accurate way of describing how the vibrations of sound reverberate in the ear canal; the listener can both hear and feel the voice of Shechter though he is far away in space and time. Shechter speaks quietly in a deep, reverberant voice. The voice is amplified enough to be easy to hear and to resonate within the skull of the listener. In this way, Shechter is indeed touching his listener from distance. He touches the inside space of the head, in an act that is both physically and metaphorically intimate.

The intimacy of the microphoned voice, both live and recorded, has been explored by radio, television, and film scholars. Allison McCracken discusses how the radio crooner of the 1930s transformed publicly broadcast vocal performance into sexualized, intimate experiences for listeners. In her book on sound in pornography, Linda Williams explains that when voices are microphoned, they have a tendency to sound as if they are coming from very close. She cites Alan Williams’s work on movie musicals to explain that microphones close to the body provide the effect of an “extra sonic presence of the body” and “spacelessness.” Michel Chion names the spaceless voice of cinema the “I-voice.” Chion claims that the use of close miking and

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43 Schafer, The Soundscape, 11.
the absence of reverb remove the voice from space and allow the spectator to identify with the speaker. Unlike most pornography, musicals, and films, however, Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* is designed for headphone listening. While there is also a spaceless quality to Shechter’s voice, it is a different spacelessness than the external spacelessness of L. Williams’s and A. Williams’s examples: *Everyday Moments* conveys a spacelessness that is inside the body. Another way to think about Shechter’s effect is with Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter’s idea of *proxemic distances*. Listeners evaluate relationships between themselves and sound producers by detecting the proxemic distances of sounds. Blesser and Salter claim that headphones allow for entrance into a sphere of intimacy, crossing the barrier between outside and inside. The intimacy of recorded sound played through headphones is one way to make *Everyday Moments* into an immersive theatre experience.

**Virtual Sites of Performance**

Different recording techniques can create different styles of aural architecture for listeners. Sometimes sounds heard through headphones overlap with the sounds of the space, creating an augmented reality. Other times, headphones block out all ambient sounds and create a new spatial architecture through binaural sound recording. With Shechter’s *Everyday Moments*, the voice of Shechter and the music seem to come from within the listener’s mind. R. Murray Schafer has theorized about this phenomenon of headphone listening, explaining that when listening to headphones a listener is no longer, “surrounded by a sphere of moving elements”;

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rather, the listener “is the sphere . . . is the universe.” When the internal space of the listener becomes the site of the performance, a virtual theatrical space is created in which Shechter choreographs his dance.

Theatre has been viewed by some scholars as fundamentally virtual. In her essay on theatricality, Josette Féral articulates the specificity of theatre, bringing “the nature of theatre into focus” and differentiating it from other forms and genres. Féral argues that theatricality is a process that is enacted by the gaze of the audience, thus creating a virtual space of illusion where a fiction can emerge. Féral’s theory can apply to Shechter’s work as well, though the gaze is an internal and imagined one. Shechter, Fuel, and the Guardian together have created the conditions that wait for the catalyst—the audient—who causes the performance to unfold and be witnessed within the virtual reality of the imagination.

As an aural theatrical work, Everyday Moments shares some qualities with radio drama, which is often described as if it creates virtual realities. The place of performance in radio drama has been conceived of as a virtual space in the mind. Though Martin Esslin does not use the word virtual in his essay “The Mind as a Stage,” he is essentially arguing that radio drama creates a virtual reality within the listener’s imagination. He describes the location of the theatrical event as a stage on which the play is performed in “the listener’s own mind.” Esslin perceives the audience member of radio drama as a viewer of a drama in which he or she,

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48 Schafer, The Soundscape, 119.
49 Féral, “Theatricality,” 94.
50 Ibid., 97.
“provides the visual component.” Shechter explains that his podcast is meant to be experienced as, a “dance show . . . but from the inside of your body.”

When discussing audio walks, theatre scholars have addressed ways that we can understand the place of performance as occurring within the body of the listener. Alison Oddey argues that in the audio walks Bassline and Linked by Graeme Miller, “the place of performance resides within the spectators’ senses and memories.” Misha Myers has also discussed audio walks in terms of an “interior bodily space” that becomes enmeshed with the landscape of the walk. While often the physical space is important in an audio walk, the acts of walking and listening transform the space into a virtual blending of body and space. The physical location of an audio walk and of Shechter’s Everyday Moments functions in different ways in relation to the works. In an audio walk, attention is drawn to the site, often so that the audience can understand the site in new ways. In Shechter’s podcast, the purpose of the private, dark space is to provide a location in which listeners can tune in to themselves without focusing on their external environment. The location is meant to disappear as the site of the performance transfers to the body of the listener.

The Posthuman Audience

Shechter’s Everyday Moments requires listeners to fluidly change their roles many times from listeners to audience members, perceivers, and performers. They must be able to shift their

52 Ibid.
53 Shechter quoted in Fuel, “Hofesh Shechter’s Inspiration."
54 Alison Oddey, Re-Framing the Theatrical: Interdisciplinary Landscapes for Performance (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 192.
55 Myers, “Vocal Landscaping,” 76.
understanding of what is being viewed, heard, or experienced, and—more importantly—move between performer and audience member. Sometimes they are imaginatively inside their bodies as performers, and sometimes they are imaginatively outside their bodies as observers. What is ototheatrical is that the listener performs both roles.

Theories of posthumanism, which have been defined in multiple ways and used in different contexts since the early 1990s, can help explain how twenty-first century listeners are especially equipped to fluidly change perspectives and manifest themselves through different identities.\textsuperscript{56} The posthuman is not an individual but rather a hybrid unit of multiple perspectives. According to posthumanist theorists, our increasingly technological culture changes the way that we perceive of our identities and the ways that we interact with the world. N. Katherine Hayles famously explored the posthuman in 1999 in her book \textit{How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics}. According to Hayles, “the posthuman subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction.”\textsuperscript{57} By examining the human as posthuman, we consider the ways that technology has expanded the boundaries of our


\textsuperscript{57} N. Katherine Hayles, \textit{How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.
understandings of our bodies and our identities. This expansion is necessary when attempting to analyze Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* as a work of ototheatre.

One question to consider in an analysis of Shechter’s piece is: with what or whom does the audience interact? To be more specific, is it a human because it is a human artist that created the work and because the voice stands in metonymically for the human? Or is it the machine, the recording or the object that plays the recording? Does the machine make use of the human input to interact with the human audience? Hayles asserts,

> posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process. . . . [T]he posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines. In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals.58

This understanding of humanness as ambiguous, its boundaries porous, allows for experimentation with immersing the self in virtual realities without fear of loss of the human within the electronic reality.59 This perspective renders Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* as a complex system in which the listener takes on multiple perspectives—audience (of Shechter), performer, and spectator (of imagined self). The podcast as accessed through a smartphone is particularly suited to the fluidity of perspectives. More than other sound media, the podcast becomes seamlessly integrated into the user’s mind and body.

Sound technologies have long been understood as uncanny prostheses of the body, both in terms of listening and in the way that one can leave a part of oneself behind in the form of a

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 290.
recording. Early mobile sound works, whether sound art, audio tours, or mix tapes listened to on a Walkman, were object-based activities. The prosthetic extension of the body was a Walkman or a Discman. The sound existed within an object, mechanically or digitally etched onto a magnetic tape or compact disc. Each tape or disc contained one album performed by a musical group, a handful of songs curated by a listener, an audio tour, or one (or part of one) audio book. When someone wanted to hear an album, mix-tape, tour, or audio book, he or she took by hand the object that contained the sound, placed it into a device that make the sound audible, and turned on the device. The period of time that I might call the iPod parenthesis—from the 2001 release of the iPod to the 2007 release of the iPhone—marked a transition period in which sound works began to be associated less frequently with objects and physical reproduction and more often with the flow of sound from the incomprehensible digital network to the individual listener.

In today’s typical use of podcasts through smartphones, the technology is more invisible and seamless than ever before. This aspect is partially due to the ease by which the podcast arrives on the smartphone. The user can access it with a few taps on the screen, either visiting a website or opening a podcast-streaming app. It is even simpler if the user has previously subscribed to the individual podcast’s feed, since the podcast will have already arrived, waiting to be played. The invisibility of the technology also has to do with the way that smartphones are now used. Because they perform so many functions, connect the user to others through many communication platforms, and allow the user to access the internet, smartphones have become a

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frequently necessary extension of the human being. Even the smartphone becomes less an object outside of the body and more an integrated extension of the brain.

Shechter’s *Everyday Moments* is enhanced by the way the information in the podcast flows from the network to the user. If the podcast were recorded on a tape or CD, the object-ness and containment of the work would be emphasized. The work would exist *inside* the tape or CD. In contrast, podcasts and other streaming content have a presentness, especially when used by a smartphone, even though they have been prerecorded. This presentness and embodiment of the work gives listeners agency to perform the work in the theatricalized moment of listening. The invisibility of the technology also reduces the transactional nature of an exchange between audience and artistic producer. A tape or CD would have to be procured from someone somewhere, whether or not it cost money. Podcasts are generally free, and when they are not, the payment for them is less visible and tangible—one may be able to simply type in a PayPal password, or that password may already be saved within the phone. *Everyday Moments* was and is free, but more importantly, no transaction takes place. One simply accesses the podcast through very straightforward steps, as Ira Glass’s friend Mary demonstrated. *Everyday Moments* relies on audiences who know how to access podcasts and who go about many of their daily activities tethered by headphones to their mobile devices. Neither Shechter nor the other creators of *Everyday Moments* episodes recommended that audiences use small listening devices or wireless headphones. I can attest from my own experience that neither my six-inch smartphone nor the wired-in-ear-monitors hindered the freedom of my movements or my immersion in the experience. This easy access and easy usage, combined with the solitary and private listening experience, encourages an ownership over the artistic performance. Shechter’s *Everyday*
Moments relies on the invisibility of the medium and its integration with the body to make possible the shifts in perspective and the embodiment of the content.

Conclusion

The importance of Everyday Moments is in the way that Shechter frames the experience for his dance theatre. This is more than someone dancing alone privately in a room. Shechter’s Everyday Moments is a scripted, guided improvisatory piece enacted by the body of the listener, with that same listener serving as imaginary spectator.

Although Fuel has functioned as theatre producer for three podcast series designed by a variety of artists, Hofesh Shechter’s Everyday Moments is the only one that promises possibilities for future podcast theatre that are unlike the theatre and radio drama that came before. Shechter manipulates the way that people imagine themselves. He guides them on a journey of objectifying and experiencing, moving in and out of experiences as performer and spectator. Shechter uses the particularities of the podcast form itself to engage audiences’ emerging understandings of what podcasts are and what people can do with them as makers and listeners. In 2011 this work was innovative and possibly interesting to a small group of podcast or theatre enthusiasts. But now, in the golden age of podcasting, audiences are ready for immersive podcast theatre on a wider scale. The podcast as it can be written, recorded, accessed, and experienced is now a more cohesive practice. As such, the podcast as medium becomes invisible, a means to experience content. The ease with which audiences access and listen to podcasts makes the format immensely promising for experimentation with mobile, immersive,
intimate theatre. Audiences are ready for the techniques that create theatre that allows them to be “together alone” rather than “alone together.”

In the next chapter, I move outside of the bedroom and into the city. I discuss another familiar practice that holds ototheatrical potential: the audio tour. Chapter three focuses on outdoor ototheatrical works that guide audiénts to understand and interact with urban spaces. Moving outdoors introduces geographical considerations, as audiénts navigate new places or understand familiar places in new ways. Sound augments reality and helps audiénts create internal and personal maps.
Chapter Three—From the Audio Tour to the Panaurama: Mapping Urban Space with Sound

We’d like to sing you a piece of history
About people like you, and people like me
To take you way back to when this green got named.
He was a cook, see, at Trinity he
Leased this fine file dog green
Where bowlers pitch and spin
As we all pass by and watch or join a game.
The cook named Edward, he, went down in history
For Parker was his name and legacy
And the land on which we stand was handed to the common man
A lot like you and me…
Parker’s Piece.¹

On July 7, 2014, I walked with my headphones in my ears through the crowded streets of Cambridge, United Kingdom, toward a park called Parker’s Piece. Nearing the park, I heard an upbeat song begin to play through my headphones. A choir of voices sang to me the history of the park. On this day the Tour de France, the annual three-week 3500-kilometer bicycle race, would pass through the city. Residents, along with thousands of visitors, flooded the streets on the warm, sunny day to find a spot to view the race. Though the cyclists would be in and out of the city in minutes, the weekend residents of Cambridge would be there all day. I followed a map on my phone toward nine places that I knew would each provide me with another educational song about the history of Cambridge. I was using a smartphone application called Cycle of Songs developed for the Tour de France, intended for the many visitors that were sure to flood the city. The city was filled with cycling fans and buntings made of knitted jerseys and other visual

evidence of the Tour de France, but amidst all this, in a city redolent with history, were the residents of Cambridge, practically indistinguishable from the crowds of tourists. Each song revealed a localized, sometimes highly significant and sometimes seemingly insignificant, history of Cambridge sites. The songs played automatically, triggered through geolocation, making the act of walking (or cycling) the action that revealed the history of Cambridge.

*Cycle of Songs* was commissioned by Cambridge City Council and funded by Arts Council England. It was devised by Historyworks (a production company that makes many types of media products, primarily for educational institutions) and Pilot Theatre (a York-based theatre company), who worked with “composers, local musicians, choirs, poets, historians, schools and volunteers” to mark Stage 3 of the Tour de France that would pass through Cambridge on July 7, 2014.²

*Cycle of Songs* is a hybrid work that exists at a convergence of various media forms. The smartphone plays a key role in the accessibility of the piece as well as in the geolocative technology that makes for its seamless and automatic unfolding. The app contains a map that users can follow to experience the curated narrative designed for *Cycle of Songs*, or they can freely roam the city, waiting for a serendipitous song to begin to play. The app is part history lesson, part treasure hunt, and part processional theatre piece. As is apparent through its creation by a theatre company and an educational software developer, the work is one that is meant to both teach an audience and be performed by the same audience.

Cycle of Songs digitally augments the city of Cambridge, providing audients the means to interact personally with histories of Cambridge. As each audient moves through the town, he or she hears the history, myths, and legends of Cambridge performed by residents. Cycle of Songs is representative of a genre of works that has its roots in site-specific art, immersive theatre, and the audio tour. While recorded audio tours have been used as pedagogical tools to provide consistent information about a location for on-site visitors, theatre artists are evolving the genre to create new theatrical experiences for participants. These works are site-specific, drawing on rich histories of place for their narratives. The works are also immersive and participatory because of the flexibility of the mobile audio technology.

When artists manipulate the genre of the audio tour, they often subvert the tourist gaze. For John Urry, who coined the term tourist gaze, the tourist is a traveler for pleasure who has learned a systematized way of consuming with his or her gaze that which is out of the ordinary. Urry says that tourists, “linger over such a gaze which is then normally objectified or captured through photographs, postcards, films, models and so on. These enable the gaze to be endlessly reproduced and recaptured.” Rather than direct the gaze outward, the audio tour immerses the body within a space both real and imagined, actual and virtual. The audient is aware of the body being drawn into the physical space and narrative place, and he or she becomes a player in the enactment that the audio tour prompts. Attention to the surrounding space and the people moving through the space is heightened, though always through a negotiation between what is seen, heard, and imagined. The works that I discuss in this chapter use various forms of recording.

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4 Ibid., 3.
styles and technologies in the creation of the audio tracks that guide the audience: high and low fidelity, binaural and monaural recording, and other techniques that change the relationship between the audience and the technology, between the audience and the place. The audio tracks change the way that audiences react to and interpret historically rich sites, allowing audiences to immerse themselves in roles in relation to the site.

The embodied, immersive qualities that make up the experience of ototheatrical audio tours provide a way to map city spaces for both creators and audients. The audio maps orient audients to place in ways that work in conjunction with as well as in opposition to visual maps. Additionally, audients map city spaces with their personal performances of the tours.

The Audio Tour

The first-known audio tour, a series of small lectures about paintings in the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 1952), was created by Willem Sandberg through the use of radio broadcast technology.5 According to museum specialist James M. Bradburne, Sandberg was one of the first museum directors to “recognize the importance of the visitor’s as well as the museum’s voice, and to argue that they should exist in dialogue, not only a ‘top-down’ lecture.”6 Although the technology was limited, the possibilities for providing individualized, detailed experiences for someone wishing to be oriented to historically rich material were becoming clear. Acoustiguide, founded in 1957, became the largest producer of audio guides, creating them

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for museums, libraries, and popular tourist locations. In one of its first projects, audiences listened to Eleanor Roosevelt through a portable reel-to-reel tape player as she gave a recorded tour of the Roosevelt residence in Hyde Park, New York. According to Acoustiguide lore, a visitor claimed that the tour was, “like hearing a whispered confidence.” In 1959 Acoustiguide created an audio tour voiced by the actor Vincent Price, and since then, actors such as Orson Wells, Meryl Streep, and Steve Martin have voiced successful audio tours, creating a link between audio tours and the performing arts.

The Sony Walkman in 1979 freed listeners from the boundaries of time and space. They were no longer dependent on radio transmissions that could travel only short distances from receivers or on cumbersome tape players that were awkward to carry. Prerecorded cassette tapes could be played anywhere in the world, at any time, and the Walkman was an affordable product that could fit in a pocket. Audio tours provided a different experience from travel guidebooks or museum pamphlets by layering the textual information seamlessly over the sensorial experiences of wandering through famous locations. Loïc Tallon, who led the development of the main mobile app for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2013, perceives a trend in the twenty-first century toward individualized, personal interpretations of museums and historical sites, as well as a move toward interactivity. He argues that handheld technologies, being a combination of “mobile, digital, and personal,” allow museums to expand their audience to those less accustomed to or inclined toward the traditional museum guides and lectures.

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9 Ibid., xvii.
The city audio tour has also taken different forms since its development. In the early 1980s, when audio tours played on cassette tapes, the style was lecture-based, emulating live guided tours. The recorded audio tour, however, held more possibilities for bringing many voices to tell stories, including those with a personal point of view. For example, the 1987 *Alcatraz Cellhouse Tour*—developed by Chris Hardman of Antenna Theatre, author of “Walkmanology”—featured stories told directly by people who had been incarcerated or had worked in Alcatraz. The different styles of audio tours affect the ways in which audiences are positioned in relation to the site.

A Trip to Amsterdam

Lecture-style tours create a distancing effect between the listener and what is described. The headphones create a buffer surrounding listeners, othering the objects, people, and sites around them. Rick Steves, American guidebook author and TV host about European travel, narrates audio tours of this style. On a trip to Amsterdam in 2013, I participated in Rick Steves’s audio tour of the Red Light District, an area designated for drug use and sex work. Steves uses the audio tour as a barrier between the tourist and the site, insulating the tourist against fear and discomfort. In an animated voice, Steves asserts, “We’ll see history, sleaze, and cheese!” The

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11 Ibid.
words “history, sleaze, and cheese” obscure the everyday reality of the area, putting a focus on the distant past as well as on the spectacle.

Steves spends much of the tour explaining to listeners the behaviors that will keep them safe, as well as assuring them of the safety and appropriateness of the tour. He states multiple times that everything they will see in the Red Light District is “all perfectly legal.” The opening track of the tour is filled with warnings, urging listeners to beware of cyclists, trams, pickpockets, “rowdy drunks, drug-pushing lowlifes, and con artists.” He warns listeners of possible sights that might offend them, such as “in-your-face images of graphic sex, exploited immigrant women, whips and chains, passed-out drug addicts, the pungent smell of pot smoke and urine, or just the shameless commercialization of it all.” He explains the safest time of day to go on the walk and points out the police station. His tone allows for a distance from the discomfort, awkwardness, or fear that a tourist may otherwise feel in the Red Light District. Steves encourages listeners to follow the rules of the Red Light District, both actual and assumed, and to do everything in the order that he lays out in the tour.

Steves encourages using his app’s visual components, which include a map, the text of the audio tour, a guide with the different “chapters” or tracks, and controls that allow the listener to pause, rewind, or speed listen so that Steves “talks like a chipmunk.” He also encourages concomitant use of his guidebook so that listeners can have as much information about the site as possible. All the visual material provided by Steves through the app and the guidebook further removes readers from becoming immersed in the site and the experience of the present reality. Looking at and reading the visual material allows an escape and a distraction from discomfort.
Steves gives the tour with a female cohost named Lyssa, who serves as an additional buffer, allowing female listeners to have a chaperone so that they are not “alone” with Steves on the tour. Steves’s corny banter with Lyssa gives the sense for listeners that they are part of a group—there is safety in numbers. In his description of a sex shop, Steves says, “Downstairs, Lyssa, you’ll find irresistible deals on whips and masks.” Lyssa comes back with the punchline, “I DO love a sale!” The humor validates the listener’s choice of the tour as wholesome and fun.

The tour provides two personae with whom listeners can identify. Steves presents one tourist attitude: he cracks corny jokes about the sex and drugs of the Red Light District and is eager to see the curiosities of the area. Lyssa presents another: she is more reluctant to talk about sex and drugs, and she only goes to the seedier areas after being dragged there by Steves. Both of these personae offer tourists permission to explore the Red Light District under the guise of an outsider perspective of tourist and ease their discomfort by providing virtual traveling companions with whom they may share a sense of awkwardness.

The segment of the tour with the most capacity for awkwardness or discomfort is the extremely narrow alleyway called Dollebegijnensteeg. Female sex workers wearing only bras and underwear stand in the doorways and in windows all along the alley, within arm’s reach. They solicit customers and, according to Steves, “look disdainfully at sightseers.” This is the portion of the tour during which it is most difficult to feel like an invisible tourist among the crowd. I felt alone and conspicuous walking down that alley, and Steves seems aware of this sensation in the many ways that he attempts to mollify the listener. Just before I enter the alleyway, Steves reminds me to watch for pickpockets, put my camera away, and “keep [my] pants on.” Lyssa stands in for many listeners in this moment of Steves directing us down the
alley when she asks, “Do I have a choice?” Steves says, “No.” This quick interaction allows the listener to submit to the will of the virtual tour guide rather than having to make the uncomfortable decision to enter the alley. It would, after all, be easier to briefly peer down the alley and then keep walking along the main street. Steves frames the short walk on either end in a way that makes it pass quickly. As I enter the alley, Steves tells me exactly what to do: “walk the length of the block, then turn right at the intersection up ahead, which leads directly back to the church.” He presents the walk through the alleyway as a bracing journey through the dark with a metaphorical moral light at the end in the form of the old church. He even urges the listener to, “take a deep breath . . . and plunge ahead.” With this phrasing and his framing around the journey down the alley, Steves acknowledges the immersiveness of the experience of the Dollebegijnensteeg and does his best to counter the immersion. He does not encourage lingering, using the senses, or connecting with people in the alley. He wants me to slip through the alley unscathed (and suspects that I want this as well), having merely passed my eyes briefly over the sites. It seems that he wants me to be able to say, “I was there,” to mark this off my bucket list or have an entertaining anecdote to tell to friends.

Steves closes his tour with the line, “Congratulations. You’ve survived. Now go back to your hotel and take a shower.” Steves does not take me on the tour of the Red Light District to change me. He wants me to return to the comfort of my tourist home-away-from-home and feel clean and untouched by the “sleaze” he has shown me. It was meant to be good, wholesome fun, with just a touch of titillation. Though Steves’s tour resembles the other ototheatrical audio tours that I discuss in this chapter, this work pushes audients into an isolating auditory bubble that other ototheatrical works resist. By augmenting reality with sound, ototheatre immerses audients
in hybrid environments, allowing them to create closer connections to aspects of the place and its inhabitants. My next day in Amsterdam, I participated in another guided audio walk that produced a more ototheatrical experience than did Steves’s.

Soundtrack City is an artistic initiative from the Netherlands that also makes location-specific audio guides that layer different places and times. The members of Soundtrack City, theatre artist and scholar Renate Zentschnig and artist and curator Michiel Huijsman, are adamant that they do not make audio tours but rather soundtracks for different places. In this, they push back against the passive audience implied by the accepted definition of an audio tour, “a tour of a museum, gallery, or other place of interest, in which a visitor is guided to and informed about exhibits, displays, etc., by recorded audio commentaries, typically by means of an audio guide.” In this definition, the audience of the audio tour is portrayed as a follower of directions and a receiver of information, while the creator of the audio tour is depicted as a generator of factual data. In contrast, the term sound track—which is defined as, “the sound constituent of a film, recorded on the edge of the film stock as either an optical or a magnetic band; also, such a record independent of the film”—connotes the creativity of the composer and the artistic layering of sound and image. This layering is what Soundtrack City accomplishes in their work.

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Although Soundtrack City resists the definition of audio tour, their work *Ticket to Istanbul* begins by pretending to be a typical one. After borrowing an iPod preloaded with the audio track from a local gallery, I traveled to an unassuming monument near a bus stop in a residential area in Amsterdam Noord. The work begins with the voice of the narrator:

This audio tour will take you all the way from Amsterdam to Istanbul. You are standing next to the Atatürk bus stop, the starting point of our tour. This street is also called Atatürk. A street in Amsterdam North that’s named after Kemal Mustafa Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic? How on earth did that happen? Maybe the monument behind the bus stop can tell us more. Go over to it now. A stone platform, a while concrete wall with a plaque. “Peace at home, peace in the world. K. Atatürk,” it reads in Dutch and Turkish. This monument stands for an important moment in Turkish Dutch history. Here in 1966, the first Turkish guest workers were welcomed into the Netherlands.  

The narrator, voiced by Oya Capelle, leads me through the area, explaining how Turkish guest workers lived there in the 1950s and 1960s, building ships in the NDSM dockyards.  

As she continues the tour, her narrative is augmented with sounds meant to be from the past, which begin to transport the audient to a hybrid site of past and present.

*(over sounds of bells and seagulls)* Eight men shared each hut with two dormitories, a toilet, and a living room. The barracks were surrounded with meadows and sports fields. You could see far into the distance. The current housing estate was yet to be built. Cross . . . by the zebra crossing, then turn to the right and walk along to the next corner. The men from the Atatürk Barracks didn’t have far to go to their work. They worked at the dockyards of the NDSM.

At this point, a former NDSM welder, speaking in Turkish, takes over the narration for a while, speaking through a translator for the English and Dutch versions of the work.

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16 NDSM stands for Nederlands Dok en Scheepsgebouw Maatschappij, which translates to the Dutch Dock and Shipbuilding Company.
We departed from Ankara by train. We went through different countries: Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Germany. In Amsterdam we were met at the central station by a translator and one of the NDSM bosses. We came to the shipyard and the bus where we had an introductory talk in the canteen. Then they divided us up into the groups who would share a hut. After a cup of tea, we had a tour around the different parts around the factory. Then they sent us off to our new homes so we could all start working the next morning.

The narrator then explains what the extant buildings were used for before the dockyards were transformed into an artist space. The work then begins to transform from audio tour to soundtrack, first with the immersive sounds of shipbuilding, seagulls, and Turkish-speaking voices. When the narrator now speaks, she works to further augment the reality. Rather than describing what is there or what used to be there, she describes another place to which she wants me to imaginatively travel.

With a bit of imagination, you can envisage ships being built here. But can you picture being in a completely different city, in Istanbul? Just try it. (sounds of car horns and birds) Imagine, you are in Istanbul in the Kadıköy neighborhood in the ancient part of the city. You could compare Kadıköy with Amsterdam Noord. It is on the other side of the water, across the Bosphorus, just like Amsterdam North is across the River IJ. . . . We are close to the ferry station here. Have a look around. . . . Old men sit on the benches in the sun. . . . A group of girls walk toward the ferry laughing as they go. A cleaning truck rides around sweeping circles over the square. . . . Hey, look! There is the boat coming from Kadıköy. . . . Take the ferry to central station.

On my trip across the IJ (the body of water that separates Amsterdam from Amsterdam Noord), the narrator asks me to imagine that I am now crossing the Bosphorus River in Istanbul. She describes what one would see all around, while I also hear the recorded sounds of the ferry in Istanbul. The rest of the soundtrack features the sounds and voices of Istanbul, while I move through Amsterdam. The layering of two different places, one physical and one virtual, highlights a history of Amsterdam that is mostly imperceptible in other tourist activities. For a tourist already disoriented by an old and unfamiliar city, the walk is further disorienting, working
in contrast with the typical audio tour. Soundtrack City highlights the interconnected cultures of Amsterdam and Istanbul, whose residents—of both Dutch and Turkish descent—move back and forth across the rivers and across the continent.

Soundtrack City demonstrates the way that sound works have the capability to layer an embodied, sensorial experience of different times and locations over experiences in the actual world. *Ticket to Istanbul* orients by disorienting: by introducing conflicting sensory information about the space and time of the journey, it makes the audience aware of hidden histories of the site that impact its culture and economy. In the next section, I examine a work of ototheatre that similarly creates new ways to understand city spaces. However, *As If It Were the Last Time* differs in that is not site-specific; rather, it is specific to a type of place.

*As If It Were the Last Time* by Duncan Speakman

Duncan Speakman is a fluid artist: composer, filmmaker, and sound designer. He is the creator of a type of sound-based work called a *subtlemob* that falls somewhere between the forms of theatre, cinema, performance art, and sound art. A subtlemob, like a flash mob, uses social media to direct a group of people to a certain place at a certain time. But unlike a flash mob, the subtlemob asks audiences to “try to remain invisible.”\(^{17}\) Rather than act as the focus of the spectacle, the audiences turn their gazes on their surroundings, making “films without cameras.”\(^{18}\) By asking audiences to use their eyes like cameras, Speakman places audiences in the role of co-artists, performing interactions with the city and framing the world around them.

\(^{17}\) Circumstance, e-mail message to author, July 1, 2013.
Subtlemobs create new, parallel virtual spaces alongside city spaces in which audients can reconsider the everyday and connect with other city dwellers. The subtlemob takes advantage of an audience’s common understandings of theatre, film, and popular technologies to create an intermedial experience that forces the audience to negotiate between virtual and real, past and present, and fictional and factual. In the following section, I describe my experience as part of a subtlemob.

As If It Were the Last Time, Brooklyn, NYC

On July 6, 2013, my companion and I travelled to the neighborhood of Williamsburg in Brooklyn, New York City. We had flown to the city with the express purpose of attending As If It Were the Last Time. The event occurred as part of the Game Play Festival at The Brick Theater in Brooklyn, which attempts to curate a selection of “works that lie at the intersection of video gaming and performance.”

After purchasing my ticket online on June 6, 2013, I received the following e-mail from Circumstance (the artistic collective that Duncan Speakman worked with from 2010 to 2016). The email, dated July 1, was titled, “a subtlemob New York 6th July”:

Hi,

Thanks for signing up to take part in the subtlemob ‘as if it were the last time’ on 6th July at 7pm in a secret location in Brooklyn, New York.

48hrs before the event we will send you a link to an MP3 file, a map of the location and some instructions.

Remember you need to come with a partner and you will both need your own devices for listening to the MP3 file.

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try to remain invisible\textsuperscript{20}

On July 4, I received the following e-mail, titled “subtlemob files and instructions”:

Hi,

You’ve signed up to take part in the ‘as if it were the last time’ subtlemob on Saturday 6th July at 7pm. The instructions and files are now online at:

http://wearecircumstance.com/t4hr2s.html

Remember you need to come with a partner and you both need your own MP3 players and headphones

try to remain invisible

/ circumstance /\textsuperscript{21}

I visited the Circumstance website to retrieve the directions. The instructions informed me that I was to download the MP3 titled “LOST” because my birthday falls between January and June.\textsuperscript{22} If my birthday had fallen between July and December, I would have downloaded “FOUND.” I was told to have my partner download the same MP3 file as I had. The website instructed me to bring my partner, along with our MP3-playing devices and headphones, to an area in Brooklyn on Bedford Avenue between Fifth Street and Eighth Street, where we, along with any other audients, were to press play at exactly 7:00 PM. The final instruction echoed the previous emails:

“Try to remain invisible.”\textsuperscript{23}

Bedford Avenue between Sixth and Eighth Streets is lined with bars, small boutiques, ice cream parlors, art vendors, and other retail locations that signal a customer base with expendable

\textsuperscript{20}Circumstance, e-mail message to author, July 1, 2013.
\textsuperscript{21}Circumstance, e-mail message to author, July 4, 2013.
\textsuperscript{22}Circumstance, “As If It Were the Last Time (Instructions and Sound Files),” accessed July 4, 2014, http://wearecircumstance.com/t4hr2s.html.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
income. The borough of Williamsburg was once a low-rent, industrial haven for artists and counterculture; however, since the 1990s, rents have skyrocketed and the neighborhood has gentrified. There would be no chance for audients on Bedford Avenue to be isolated at seven o’clock on a Saturday evening. The street was bustling with people, strolling, shopping, and eating ice cream. The bars, shops, and restaurants were full of people who might be watching the activities of the street out the windows. The warm weather of the summer evening also encouraged pedestrians to sit on the benches and cafe tables located along the street. The scene was one in which every Bedford visitor watched and was watched by others. This was enhanced by the highly affected mode of dress, in the style of the “hipster,” worn by many of the pedestrians. While attending other performances at the Brick Theater, I noticed that many—though certainly not all—of the audience members appeared to be young hipsters. If the audients of As If It Were the Last Time were meant to be invisible, and if the audients were expected by Circumstance and the Brick Theater to look like the inhabitants of Williamsburg on Saturday evening, they made the right choice.

While wandering Bedford Avenue, both before and after I pressed play, I looked for other audients. I saw a couple, around my age, walk by listening to headphones, but I could not know if they were participating or merely listening to music. I saw a mother, father, and child walking together, listening to headphones and looking around intently. I thought they must be audients, partly because of how they were the only family that looked like them on street, and partly because of how unlikely it would be that a family on an outing together would isolate themselves from each other with headphones.
The text of *As If It Were the Last Time* features the voices of Jess Marlowe and Jess Hoffman: one gives the audient instructions and the other narrates. Additional voices change from city to city. Duncan Speakman was the third voice on the recording for Williamsburg. His interludes seemed to intrude on the high-quality recording, as if we were listening to him through a handheld radio transceiver.

At precisely 7:00 PM when my partner and I (as well as everyone else participating) pressed *play*, a voice said,

> Hi, thanks for coming to *As If It Were the Last Time* . . . My name is Jess and I’m going to be guiding you through this experience. Some of the time you’ll just be watching what is going on around you as if you were in the cinema, but sometimes I’m going to ask you to do certain things so you’ll become actors in this film. Don’t worry, there isn’t going to be anything dangerous or embarrassing. In fact, you’re almost just going to be playing yourselves. So when you hear my voice, you’ll know there is an instruction coming. Please make sure you try to stay in the area marked in the map. We wouldn’t want you to get lost.\(^24\)

Regardless of whether this explanation is necessary, it highlights the hybrid nature of the medium. This explanation reveals an anxiety about the behaviors of an audience that does not know enough about the conventions of a genre to know how to behave or how to feel about this role. Sometimes Speakman wants his audience to watch, as if they are audience members, and sometimes he wants the audients to engage in actions that allow them to “become actors.” The voice of Jess continued:

> So let’s start very simply. Stay where you are and look down at your feet. Look carefully at the ground beneath you. Right now you’re here and you’re not alone. Keep looking at the ground. You can’t see them all right now, but around you are friends and strangers. Now, raise your head very slowly. And take in everything around you. This vision, this street, the people in this place, to your left and to your right. Stay where you are for now. In this moment. Savor it as if it were the last time.

\(^{24}\) Circumstance, *As If It Were the Last Time (Brooklyn Version)* (July 6, 2013).
I was tempted to make eye contact with others whom I thought might be participating so that we could find a bond in our shared roles as audience and performers. I watched others, looking to see who was performing their roles. I noticed that some, like myself, were taking their performances very seriously, fully committing to the instructions of the piece, while others were more casual. This was most apparent during the final moments of the piece when the audience is instructed to slow dance with their partner. In this moment, the audience are the most visible to each other and to others in the area. I could see others laughing and half-heartedly dancing, or performing exaggerated dance moves.

The non-audience seemed not to pay any attention to the audience. The actions we performed were, for the most part, “subtle.” For example, the narrator instructs:

With your partner, you should find a window that you think looks interesting, maybe a shop or a restaurant. . . . Now go up to the window and stand right next to your partner in front of it. . . . Can you see your own reflection right now? Look at yourself for a moment and just think about your day. Now one of you should grab your partner’s arm as if you are trying to get their attention, or as if you need their help or as if you want them to just know that you are there. Look at each other for a moment.

Later, the other group will be given the same instructions, told to look at their reflections while the first group is told to look for someone who is looking at their reflection. Passersby will not find these behaviors out of the ordinary and will be unlikely to notice the performance. But other audience members listening to As If It Were the Last Time will notice others fulfilling the actions of the script.

In his discussion of the Walkman, Jean Paul Thibaud refers to the visiophonic knot, a concept that designates the “convergence point between the audible and visible.”²⁵ Although

²⁵ Thibaud, “The Sonic Composition and the City,” 337.
Thibaud is referring primarily to accidental knots created by the meeting of the sound from the Walkman and the sights in the city, this concept can be deployed purposely. Audients who are used to listening to media through headphones in public spaces will have some familiarity with the visiophonic knot. Thus, when the narrator in As If It Were the Last Time says that someone nearby is looking at her reflection in the mirror and one sees that this is happening in the actual world, the excitement of finding the visiophonic knot is there, even if the audient knows that this moment was constructed.

Thibaud describes another knot that he calls the interphonic knot, which is the “point of convergence between two sonic spaces of a different nature— that of the walking listener and that of the street.” Thibaud explains that when actual sounds merge with recorded sounds, “the . . . user is situated between two simultaneous sonic worlds.” I used in-ear headphones with noise-blocking, earplug-like inserts. My partner, in contrast, wore regular ear buds that sat just inside the ear, not blocking any of the sounds around him. Having the surrounding sounds significantly muffled, I was immersed in the music and narrative. The experience felt like watching a movie, as if I were watching what was around me and not really a part of it. My partner described a different experience. He reported that sometimes environmental sounds, such as car horns, sirens, and loud conversations, overwhelmed the sound coming through the earphones. For him, the effect was additive—the sound work provided a new layer of experience to his visit to the space—whereas for me, the work replaced the experience I would have had in the space with a very different one.

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
The History of the Subtlemob

Speakman has a diverse background that contributes to the type of work he undertakes. He began as a musician and studied sound engineering in college. He developed an interest in documentary cinema and worked in the television industry creating interactive documentaries. His work eventually shifted to public spaces, where he began making short films of everyday life. Speakman describes the moment when the major shift occurred in his work that led him to making subtlemobs: “there was a bit of an epiphany moment where I suddenly found myself walking around listening to my sound pieces, and seeing the films I had been making happening around me, the real world framed by the soundtrack.”

The subtlemob blends Speakman’s interests and skills. He explains that his main influences lie in film and music. Speakman is not the only artist experimenting with the idea of the pervasive documentary. Documentarians are expanding beyond traditional filmmaking techniques and experimenting with virtual reality, live action, gaming, locative media (such as GPS technology), and more, in hopes of finding new ways to immerse viewers in a “real” experience that can change the way they view the world. Speakman uses narration and sound tracks that are meant to mimic those that a spectator might hear while watching a movie. In this way, Speakman creates cognitive confusion that interferes with his audients’ usual interactions with public space.

As If It Were the Last Time was designed in 2009 to be performed in London, Bristol, and Liverpool, and it was subsequently enacted in other cities around the word. Circumstance’s website explains that As If It Were the Last Time is,

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28 Duncan Speakman, “Subtlemob Creator Duncan Speakman.”
29 Ibid. Speakman cites Swedish filmmaker Roy Andersson as influential, as well as musicians Tayor Deupree, Fennesz, Godspeed You Black Emperor, Tool, and Maria Callas.
a subtlemob about celebrating the moment, about home, belonging and loss. This piece is a snapshot of the world around you, a chance to savour the moment, and make new connections with the people and the place surrounding you. This is no requiem, this a celebratory slow dance, a chance to savour the world you live in, and to see it with fresh eyes.30

Many of Speakman’s works can be called situational31—more specific to a type of site than one specific place. Claire Doherty explains that synthesis of “place, locality, time, context and space” is more relevant to twenty-first century art than is “a fixed, physical notion of site.”32 Circumstance chooses sites that are connected by the types of social structures and behaviors that occur there. Subtlemobs often take place in shopping districts and malls—not what one might think of as places that connote “home, belonging, and loss.” These sites, however, are predictably crowded with people who are often spending leisure time, walking aimlessly, or browsing stores. These are sites that are best suited for the activity of people watching that the subtlemob employs.

This reappropriation of capitalist space brings to mind the dérive, a type of urban walking created by the Situationists. Guy Debord’s definition of dérive is: “A mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.”33 While subtlemobs are not dérives, they do share a key quality—a desire to experience urban spaces in new ways through affective walking. A significant difference between the dérive and the subtlemob is that while the dérive is improvisational, the subtlemob is

32 Ibid., 13.
restricted—though not quite choreographed. Audiences have a text and a recommended limitation to the space in which they wander, but where they go, what they do, how they act, and where they look is entirely up to them. The subtlemob, then, acts as a tool for the user to try on the role of the dériviste. Additionally, though Speakman has not addressed this in his interviews, his subtlemobs always take place in spaces of commerce—sites that are a blend of public and private space. While these sites and the activities that take place within them are not critiqued directly, the events themselves are subversive in that they involve the production and consumption of space without making a purchase.

*As If It Were the Last Time* was designed to be experienced in pairs. Both sets of audio tracks play music and narration and give audients instructions such as, “try to make eye contact with everyone you pass . . . place your hand on your partner’s shoulder in such a way that they will know you will be there for them if they need you.” According to Speakman, while one group was instructed to perform a simple scene, the other group heard the scene described as if it were a film scene. One audient, Rik Lander, posted online about his experiences with an earlier version of *As If It Were the Last Time*:

> The effect is extraordinarily powerful as the soundtrack takes you out of your body, whilst you are very much aware of being in a public space amongst people who may not be experiencing the same as you. Who is a player? Who is a bystander? What is a player or a bystander? As you stand in the early evening shopping street amongst office workers hurrying home, the narration encourages you into a charged emotional state.

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34 Circumstance, *As If It Were the Last Time (Brooklyn Version)*.
35 Speakman, “Subtlemob Creator Duncan Speakman.”
For Lander, the power of the piece was in its ability to make him question his role in this public space and to see the space and others around him in a new way. In *As If It Were the Last Time*, especially, each audient becomes the object of the narrative and thus of observation by her or his partner. Speakman also invites audients to view *themselves* as part of the cityscape when they are instructed to look at their reflections in windows or to examine their hands placed on the shoulders of their partners.

Speakman has claimed that the subtlemob is, “made by the audience. They own it entirely.”\(^{37}\) He gives his audience a template with which to create their own experience, including possible political meaning, without designating the meaning for them. While Speakman (sometimes in conjunction with other artists) designs and produces the recordings—which he calls “a static piece”\(^{38}\)—the question of authorship in a work that relies on participation from an audience is more complicated. Speakman says, “I don’t make anything. There is nothing left at the end.”\(^{39}\) Speakman describes his role in a way that is similar to a composer creating a score or a playwright writing a script. He sees his recordings as jumping-off points for the real artistic work—the subtlemob itself. For Speakman, then, the artistic product is the performance of the subtlemob in which audients listen to the recording, follow the directions, look at their surroundings, and interact with people in a way that creates the experience they both consume and produce. Speakman’s sound recordings serve as a script that is performed by the audience.

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid.
The city also plays an active role in the performance rather than serving as merely a backdrop. While Speakman can predict what might happen in the space, he cannot control every element. The weather, the people, and the events can all introduce elements to the narrative and the mood. Speakman is interested in this ephemeral everyday life of city spaces. He claims that an important goal of the subtlemob is to draw the audients’ focus to the world around them—particularly to what urban dwellers often filter out of their perceptions. Prior to his work on subtlemobs, Speakman made short films that captured moments of everyday life. Subtlemobs are a logical extension of those films. One of the main goals of subtlemobs is to make “films without cameras,” which Speakman calls “cinema of everyday life.” In order for his subtlemobs, which do not use cameras, to be understood filmically, Speakman relies on his audients’ previous experiences with cinema; he uses narration and sound tracks that are meant to mimic those that a spectator might hear while watching a movie. Speakman creates cognitive confusion in a way that is meant to interfere with audients’ usual interactions with public space. I felt a sense of detachment as if watching the city while in the confines of a movie theater, but I also felt, paradoxically, a sense of engagement, as if I were making a movie from my point of view. Speakman claims that audients can immerse themselves in a mediated everyday, creating their own filmic experience. The immersive element of the work exists in the way that the soundscape dominates due to the headphones that audients wear and in the way that audients move through the visual space of the work. Although there is undoubtedly a physical immersion, there may not be an entirely intellectual immersion. Just as a film, stage, or computer screen can mediate

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40 Speakman, “As If It Were the Last Time.”
41 Speakman, “Duncan Speakman: On Subtlemobs.”
between a fictional or aesthetic world and the actual world, the sound technology mediates between the virtual and actual world. I contend that the sound recording, delivered through the headphones, becomes an architecture that designates the aesthetic space of the subtlemob. Once a city’s spaces and its inhabitants have been framed inside the subtlemob’s architecture, the city and its inhabitants can take on roles as artist and artistic product.

Subtlemobs are simultaneously public and yet exclusive in their character. Anyone can sign up to participate in a subtlemob. The MP3 can be downloaded for free, no entrance fee is required to enter the semi-public/private spaces of the location. But once a subtlemob begins, a passing spectator cannot join in; this spectator has not gone through the entrance ritual of signing up, downloading the MP3, and starting the track at the correct time and place. These simultaneously penetrable and impenetrable spaces delineate an otherwise ambiguous work of art.

Although Speakman has never mentioned why, his subtlemobs are all set in shopping areas—either malls or shop-heavy streets. As sites of consumption, shopping districts serve as ideal spaces for subtlemobs to inhabit. Subtlemobs both obey and disobey the expected practices of shopping districts. Audients in subtlemobs spend time looking closely at their surroundings, and shopping districts are designed for unabashed looking: it is the looking that feeds the desire to purchase. But the sound recording disrupts the type of looking that shopping districts construct. The attention of subtlemob audients is redirected to other people, to themselves in their reflections in shop windows, and to a conscious rethinking of the use of space.

Speakman composes works of music and text that are designed specifically for his location, with the goal of distancing audients from the typical ways that they might get lost in the
uses of a space like a shopping center, redirecting their attention and creating closer connections to the space and its inhabitants. The idea that personal sound technology has the potential to connect a person with his or her surroundings contrasts with the scholarship of Michael Bull, who analyzes ways that personal listening devices create isolating bubbles around urban dwellers. Other scholars, though, have explored how these same technologies can be used in a way that resists the isolation of city dwellers by redirecting their attention to their surroundings. Geographer Toby Butler has acknowledged Bull’s bubble, but has pointed out that soundwalks have the ability to break that isolating bubble by slowing the pace of walkers and directing their attention to their immediate surroundings. Thibaud posits that listening to personal sound devices creates a complex relationship between the listener and the city, in which the listener is always aware of the parallel worlds of the city and the soundscape. Speakman acknowledges Bull’s argument that the iPod isolates, but he claims that the subtlemob “hacks” the experience of listening as isolated and distancing, creating instead a connecting experience. He does this through the site specificity of his music and text, through the “mob” of people listening to the two recordings, and through a narrative that draws audients through a space, directing their attention to the world around them.

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42 Ibid.
43 Bull, “Sound Moves.”
45 Thibaud, “The Sonic Composition and the City”
46 Michael Bull, “‘To Each Their Own Bubble’: Mobile Spaces of Sound in the City,” in Mediaspace: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age, ed. Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy (New York: Routledge, 2004).
Speakman has acknowledged that he named his works *subtlemobs* because of the link, both logical and problematic, to flash mobs.\(^47\) The term *flash mob* was originally defined in the *OED* as, “a public gathering of complete strangers, organized via internet or mobile phone, who perform a pointless act and then disperse again.”\(^48\) This definition describes the flash mob as it was conceived by Bill Wasik in Manhattan in 2003, but creators of flash mobs in recent years might argue with the characterization of the acts as “pointless”—and in fact, the most recent definition in the *OED* has replaced “pointless act” with “prearranged action.”\(^49\) Speakman conceives of the actions of his subtlemobs as incredibly pointed and significant. He noticed that, like flash mobs, his work used technology to bring strangers together so that they could perform the same actions at the same time in a public space. Like flash mobs, the subtlemobs blur the boundary between performer and spectator.

Despite the similarities, however, subtlemobs were intended by Speakman to serve as a reaction to flash mobs, promoting a different form of engagement with public space and public dwellers. The key distinction that Speakman makes between flash mobs and subtlemobs is in the way that audients are meant to be perceived by non-audients. Flash mobs aim for visibility—the performances are meant to draw attention to the audients, and they are often recorded in order to draw a larger audience through videos posted on YouTube. In subtlemobs, however, Speakman intends for his audients to aim for “invisibility,” by which he means that audients are supposed to

\(^{47}\) Speakman, “Duncan Speakman: On Subtlemobs.”  
blend into the crowd and observe the world around them without drawing attention to themselves. While flash mob participants are supposed to disrupt the everyday lives of non-participants, subtlemob participants disrupt their own reality.

Speakman claims that to experience a subtlemob, you “had to be there.” He notes that while flash mobs can continue to perform for an audience through YouTube videos, subtlemobs cannot make sense in the same way. He insists that a YouTube video of a subtlemob would look like nothing more than a bunch of people wandering around (and indeed, many videos of subtlemobs on YouTube do just look like people wandering around). Also, Speakman does not leave the MP3s on his website after the subtlemob ends, presumably because the recordings would be unable to perform their intended function without the organized group performance. I presume this because he has left MP3s on his websites for other, smaller-scale projects including *What We Have Done*, a site-specific work designed for two people to experience in the SoHo area of London.

Issues of access, agency, and control become important in understanding Speakman’s work because of his claims that the audience owns the work and because of the location in public space. At whom is this work aimed? Speakman does not identify the ideal spectator, but the work hints at the type of audience that he aims to attract. For example, when examining the mechanism for access to the subtlemob, it is clear that Speakman aims at an audient who is a user of social-networking internet sites. Like flash mobs, subtlemobs invite users through social

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50 Speakman, “Duncan Speakman: On Subtlemobs.”
51 There are good YouTube videos of subtlemobs, but these are more than the simple documentary footage that characterizes most flash mob videos. In addition to the performance, these videos also feature segments of music and narration to which the participants listen, as well as post-subtlemob interviews with participants.
media, including a website and cell phones. Despite its claims to ties to everyday life, the work is really only about a particular kind of everyday life—one that is technologically mediated.

There are multiple ways that subtlemobs are targeted to certain audiences, cutting off other potential audiences from accessing the inside world of the subtlemob. First, an audience must have access to a computer and an email account to download the MP3, and he or she must possess a smartphone or MP3 player and headphones to perform in the subtlemob. There are also other barriers, both social and cultural, that may prevent someone from participating. Who would or would not feel comfortable gathering with a large group of people in a public place and performing concerted and sometimes strange actions (however subtle)? It is useful here to examine public perceptions of the flash mob because it is a more common activity that gathers large groups together.

In 2013, I performed a Google Images search for “flash mob” and was served a sea of smiling, primarily white bodies. However, when I searched “flash mob theft” or “flash mob violence,” the images featured running, grimacing, primarily dark-skinned bodies. The term flash mob has been used to describe the harmless, impromptu events that are now enacted by even the Girl Scouts, but it has also been used to describe certain types of group crime organized with technology. A youthful white body, then, is likely to feel more comfortable and socially acceptable participating in group performances like flash mobs or subtlemobs. A culturally aware or media savvy person with dark skin might feel wary of participating in an act that may be misunderstood as criminal by strangers or law enforcement officials. My partner and I were both keenly aware of the way that our bodies and clothing allowed us to fit into the area and remain as invisible as Speakman desired us to be.
Flash mobbers and dérivistes all find ways to interact in and with public space in order to disrupt everyday life, build community, live creatively, break down barriers between art and politics, and critique social structures. Speakman draws on these models along with theatrical, artistic, and technological antecedents to create his subtlemobs. The personal sound technology that Speakman employs creates an architecture that designates an artistic space. In this way Speakman creates a parallel virtual city space. Audients navigate between the virtual city and the actual city to create a very personal, internal map of the designated performance area that allows for being within a space and being outside of a space. Audients are walkers and watchers, documentarians of city life and voyeurs of it. The maps they create are specific to the location—in my case a small portion of the neighborhood of Williamsburg in Brooklyn—but audients are also mapping new ways to move through and experience cities.

Though As If It Were the Last Time has only been accessed by a limited group of people, other artists could appropriate the subtlemob model to provide a wider audience new ways of understanding everyday life and to draw attention to urban issues such as poverty, access, and corporate control in public spaces. Speakman is clear about being creator—rather than owner—of the subtlemob. He encourages others to take up and adapt his strategies in creating subtlemobs of their own. His website states, “‘Subtlemob’ was never a company or an organisation (despite what some people think), subtlemobs were an idea, an experiment in creating experiences. We always wanted it to be an open idea, something that anyone can make with a little time and effort.” 52 Speakman and his collaborators engage in a long process of writing, composing, recording, and producing their subtlemobs, making it seem difficult for anyone to undertake with

52 Speakman, “Duncan Speakman: On Subtlemobs.”
only “a little time and effort.” However, it is possible to make a subtlemob with relatively little effort. Anyone with a recording device could record a sound track, which despite its low-tech simplicity could still create a narrative structure and an augmented reality. With the use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other social media websites, one could conceivably gather a group of people to participate. The concept of the subtlemob could thus move beyond the works that Speakman designs, and other artists could use Speakman’s strategies to access virtual worlds in order to direct audients to often-invisible realities in the actual world.

The immersion into an augmented reality that audiences experience in *As If It Were the Last Time* is made possible by a recorded soundtrack, a mobile audio device, and headphones. While this particular method of sound art provides new ways to see and understand public space by pedestrians, it is not the only way. In the next section, I will discuss a sound work that performs dramatic reorientations of spatial understandings with sound devices that mimic the public telephone. This work rejects immersion, instead asking audiences to listen to and reflect on new perspectives from those who have a very different mode of navigating and understanding the city.

*Sights* by Trickster⁶

Cristina Galbiati and Ilija Luginbühl, of the Swiss theatre company Trickster⁶, developed an urban journey in which audients take a long walk through a city, stopping at special telephone booths where they listen to narratives that provide alternate perspectives of space.⁵³ *Sights* was

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⁵³ Galbiati and Luginbühl explain that the superscript P is meant to ambiguously stand for “performance” or “project,” emphasizing the way that their theatre company blends artistic forms. Cristina Galbiati and Ilija Luginbühl, interview by author, May 4, 2015.
developed around the question: what does sight mean for people who are blind? I conducted a series of on-site interviews with Trickster in Bern, the location of this version of Sights. Galbiati and Luginbühl, in collaboration with Riccardo Fazi and Claudia Sorace, developed Sights in Bellinzona, Switzerland, later moving it to other cities. Sights consists of nine stations, each a simple telephone booth that Trickster has set up around a city. Here, audients listen to the personal stories of urban citizens who are blind. The artists explain that this focus on perceptions of those who are blind is meant to highlight the ways that seeing is a learned behavior based heavily in imagination and memory. The focus is not on a handicap but on different modes of perception: the work focuses on how the subjects construct and experience the cities in which they live.

When I asked if the work is site specific, the artists explained that it is “language specific.” For its first iteration, in Bellinzona, Galbiati and Luginbühl talked with people who could not see, asking about what sight meant to them. The artists recorded the responses of the participants, edited the text, and then asked the participants to re-record their edited responses for the final work. The resulting audio work consists of nine sites, each featuring one of the interviewees. They speak in their own words, with their own voice, and in their own language—Italian—about their understandings and experiences of sight.

Trickster takes Sights to other cities and countries without changing the text if the language spoken by the inhabitants of the site is the same. For example, if they took the work to Italy, they would use the Italian text developed for the city of Bellinzona. If they took the work to France, however, they would interview new participants to record a new text in French. Like

54 Ibid.
Speakman’s *As If It Were the Last Time*, the work is more situational than site specific. The work is for fairly urban areas, but it is not *about* any one place. Rather, it focuses on experiences in and perceptions of certain kinds of space. What is important to Trickster⁹ is the authentically real communication of the performers. They must speak their own stories in their own language in order to make a real and intimate connection with the audience.

I experienced *Sights* in Bern, Switzerland, as part of the Auawirleben theatre festival in May 2015. For the Bern iteration of the piece, Galbiati and Luginbühl found a new group of German-speaking, blind residents of Switzerland. Galbiati explained to me that it was important that the stories be told by those to whom the stories belonged and that the participants be able to speak in the language with which they were most comfortable. Laughing, Galbiati noted her own unrealistic ideals of how she imagined the process working. She thought that she would find many urban blind people with long, detailed stories to tell about their understanding of the concept of sight and their experiences with sight in the city. In reality, she found that it was difficult to find blind people in the city. Most seemed to live outside of the city, where they found it easier to navigate. Additionally, the questions that Galbiati and Luginbühl asked did not always elicit the detailed responses desired.⁵⁵

*Sights*

I began my journey at a temporary telephone booth made with a simple wood frame in front of the police station in Bern. It was a perfect day, sunny and seventy-two degrees Fahrenheit, with a breeze. I had been given an envelope filled with nine tokens and a map of the city marked with the route I was to take. The phone-like apparatus had two handsets. I picked up one, put it to my

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⁵⁵ Cristina Galbiati and Ilija Luginbühl, presentation at University of Bern, May 7, 2015.
ear, and inserted one of my tokens. A sign in the booth informed me that I would be hearing from Angelika. I heard a sound like someone clunkily picking up a telephone receiver from a cradle. She began to speak. She said, in German, “I do not live in darkness. I don’t see, but that has nothing to do with life in the darkness.” I closed my eyes so that I could listen more carefully; though I understand quite a bit of German, I am not a fluent speaker of the language. Angelika explained that she sees pictures in her head, but that the pictures are memories frozen in time from before she lost her sight thirty years ago. After Angelika “hung up,” I followed the map to the next location. As I walked, I thought about the impermanence of what I saw around me and the scale of that impermanence. Though the buildings around me had been there for hundreds of years relatively unchanged, the face of the city, the shop fronts, must change often, as would the residents, tourists, fashions, and technology.

The Tourist

I used the map to find the second booth location. Although it was not far away, the winding, medieval streets of Bern were disorienting, making the journey feel like a treasure hunt as I attended closely to the map and to the world around me. I found the next booth in a dark, narrow street and listened to the next speaker. Joseph explained that he has never seen a city, because he lost his sight before he had travelled beyond the farm he lived on until he was ten years old, though he imagines what a city looks like in his head. He explained that even his

56 “Ich lebe nicht in der Finsternis. Ich sehe nichts, aber das hat nichts mit Leben in der Finsternis zu tun.” Trickster®, Sights (Bern Version) (Bern, Switzerland: Aauwirleben, 2015). Trickster® emailed me a copy of the text of Sights so that I could fill in any gaps in understanding. I have quoted all text from that document, and I have translated it into English.
memories of the farm and countryside may not be memories of things he has actually seen, but perhaps things that were described to him.\textsuperscript{57} I wondered how the way I previously imagined Switzerland would blend with my personal experiences to form my memories of Bern. Like Joseph, I see a city that is filtered by my imagination and the particular direction of my attention. I have, by necessity, traveled to the city with the expectations and preconceived notions of a tourist. The Bern that I am creating as I travel the city is an amalgamation of those notions and my perception of the city itself.

The experience of the tourist in Bern, as in most tourist experiences, is one of consumption and documentation. The expectation is that one will travel to certain points, see the same sights from the same angle, and photograph the site like a postcard or—more recently—like a selfie. The tourist reenacts the performance of many tourists before her. This focus on repetition and the consumption of the picturesque obscures the underlying experience of the city.

The differences in types of experiences and documentation when it comes to the picturesque and the moment-to-moment, on-the-street experiences are not necessarily apparent to the tourist. It is the experiences and non-experiences of the blind speakers that make these differences perceivable. Georg says, “If something does not produce a sound, it’s not there.”\textsuperscript{58} Georg’s assertion leaves one wondering how the picturesque fits into a blind person’s understanding of Bern. This seemingly crucial part of understanding this city—its picturesque vistas—becomes nonexistent by its lack of sound. The sounds of the city, the smells, the action

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} “Wenn etwas kein Geräusch produziert, ist es nicht da.” Ibid.
up close, blocks what is distant. Thus, the experience of the city that the blind people communicate is one of immediacy, change, and contingency.

**The Telephone**

I struggled to find the next booth. I followed the map but looked around, confused. A woman came up to me and asked if I needed help. I told her that I was looking for a telephone booth and pointed to the map. She immediately knew what I was looking for and directed me to an alley up ahead. I inserted my token and began to listen to Alexander. Immediately the nearby church bells began to toll loudly, making it difficult to hear. A herd of school children came crushing through the alley. I held my hand up to my other ear to try to block out the noise. Then, I noticed that there was an image on the booth—a graphic of a head with a receiver up to each ear. I realized what the other receiver was for and began to use both. Holding two receivers felt strange because I am so used to using a telephone with only one. The artists later explained to me that this stereo use of the phone had not been their original intention; rather, they had noticed some of their audience using them in this way, and so they decided to indicate this use in the instructions at each booth. The duel handsets affected the way I experienced the work. The practical advantages of having a handset up to each ear were the added volume and the ability to block out some of the surrounding street noise—talking pedestrians and tolling church bells come to mind. Additionally, the stereo sound effect added a level of immersiveness that would otherwise be missing.

The other audio walks in this chapter use earphones that both serve to block out outside noise and, often, provide a high-fidelity soundtrack, whether binaural or monaural, that

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manipulates the aural architecture the audience experiences. The telephone conveys another set of meanings and experiences. The sound of a telephone is grainier, more distorted, and usually heard through one ear at a time. James Lastra uses the terms *phonographic* and *telephonic* to describe different approaches to recording sound in film. He explains that phonographic sound aims for the highest fidelity—to record and transmit all of the sounds in the environment in order to present a faithful representation of the sound in that space.\(^{60}\) This mode of sound is that which is used by the other audio works in this chapter. This mode layers one time and place over another, creating an immersive experience of another soundscape. Telephonic sound, in contrast, aims for legibility of spoken language rather than fidelity. Telephonic sound, Lastra explains, “sacrifices acoustic specificity in favor of rendering speech clearly under widely varying conditions.”\(^{61}\) Fidelity is not important; the believability of “being there” is not important. What is important is the communication of spoken word.

This function of sound represents a vast difference between *Sights* and the other works that I have discussed, which use binaural recording, set up visiophonic knots, and prescribe the use of headphones in order to immerse the audient in a hybrid, semi-fictional space. *Sights* intentionally keeps audients from immersion with the use of nonmobile phones. Between each segment of the work, audients take new insights with them to see the world differently, in what is a very different way of augmenting space.

The telephone has been used as a tool to transmit performances to audiences in different capacities. The *théâtrophone* at the turn of the twentieth century was a means for audiences to


\(^{61}\) Ibid.
listen in on live performances of operas from a distance. More recently Gob Squad, Rimini Protokoll, and Blast Theory have used telephones to connect audiences to performers across spaces in real time. [murmur], while not primarily a theatre work, has been studied by theatre scholars as a public work that engages performances of residents and visitors to a site. This oral history project began as a series of recordings made by locals in Toronto. Signs around the city direct passersby to call a number on their cell phones and enter the code posted on the sign. Each code allows audients to hear a story about the site in which they are currently located. While [murmur] shares similarities with Sights, it is different in some key ways. The speakers in Sights are not speaking about the locations that the audients visit; rather, the artists have paired each story with each site. And the telephones that the audients use are not cell phones but an older

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62 Room Service (2003). “In the conference room of the hotel the audience watch four performers on four huge TV monitors set side by side. Each performer is in a separate hotel room, unable to see and hear the audience or each other. . . . Their only contact to the outside world is a phone line that puts them directly in contact with the audience. As the night progresses they call their voyeurs . . . in a plea to remain with them and help them make it through the night.” Gob Squad, “Room Service: Help Me Make It through the Night,” accessed January 5, 2017, http://www.gobsquad.com/projects/room-service-help-me-make-it-through-the-night.

63 Call Cutta in a Box (2008). “Imagine you are buying a ticket at the box office for an individual show on a specific day, but are not led to the auditorium of the theatre. Instead, you get the key for a room and a sketch of how to get there. . . . You open the door and you find a phone ringing. You pick up the phone. . . . The voice belongs to a call centre agent from Calcutta, India.” Rimini Protokoll, “Call Cutta in a Box: An Intercontinental Phone Play,” accessed January 5, 2017, http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_2766.html.

64 Ulrike and Eamon Compliant (2009). “Commissioned by the De La Warr Pavilion for the Venice Biennale. . . . Assume the role of Ulrike or Eamon and make a walk through the city while receiving phone calls. The project is based on real world events and is an explicit engagement with political questions. What are our obligations to act on our political beliefs? And what are the consequences of taking those actions?” Blast Theory, “Ulrike and Eamon Compliant: Adopt the Role of a Terrorist as You Walk through the City En Route to an Interrogation in a Hidden Room,” accessed January 5, 2017, http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/ulrike-and-eamon-compliant/.

style of analogue telephone booth, one that conjures different memories and associations in the user.

The telephone, although used in different contexts, carries with it the connotation of intimacy tied to a person’s memories of talking to loved ones who are uncomfortably far away. Since the late nineteenth century, telephone advertisements have focused on the ability of the telephone to bring loved ones close.66 Sights makes use of these understandings of the telephone, using the audience’s associations to its advantage. Each call begins and ends with a sound effect of the phone being taken out of or being put back into its cradle. This creates the image of the person on the other end of the line talking into a handset. Rather than feeling as if I were listening to a recording, I got the sense that I was having a live and personal exchange with another person, separated by space, but not by familiarity. The lack of fidelity in the sound was not a detriment to the production. In fact, I would argue that an attempt to create an immersive virtual reality would be inappropriate in this context. The blind speakers must be separate from the audient—not merged with the role of the audient. These experiences that they share are deeply personal and unique to each of them. They share their experiences with us, the audience, but we are not meant to inhabit their bodies or try on these related experiences. The telephone allows interviewees to share their experiences with the audience in an intimate way.

**Perception and urban space**

The third booth is located in a narrow alley. Through the headset, I hear Alexander:

66 Claude S. Fischer notes that “AT&T advertisements claimed that telephones nurtured a ‘close-knit, personalized society’ and ‘simultaneously provided a means of overcoming distance.’” *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 223.
[I] feel passages, that is I feel an opening between buildings. I can feel it from the smell, the temperature, the wind. . . . An unlimited space feels different: there are fewer odors, it is cooler. When I’m between two walls, I feel like the walls sweat: old, stale odors remain there, everything will come out very strongly. If the space then expands, the smells change completely, the sky is open, odors are differently distributed.67

Because I keep closing my eyes to try to pay close attention to the German language that Alexander speaks, I find myself wondering if I too can sense the narrow space I am in through the smell or the reverberation of sound. Alexander notes that sight is not just a physical ability but also a learned skill. Newborns, he notes, can see, but they do not have the ability to decrypt what they see, and thus they are virtually blind.68 All of the blind participants deny that they live in a black, dark, or imageless world. Alexander explains that blackness signifies emptiness and that he has far too much sensory data to process in any situation for it to be like blackness. In the winter, odors are weaker, but sounds are stronger. He feels the warmth of recently parked cars. Things are there, and he must find a way to read them.

After each interaction and experience of place, the audient has another perceptual tool to try out on the next portion of her or his journey. While my other senses may not be as honed as those of the blind performers, I still found myself working in new ways to perceive the shape of the space around me. How much did this new act of perception change the way I moved through the space? Was I slower? Did I spend less time gawking like a tourist and more time listening, smelling, touching?


68 Ibid.
The performers of *Sights* provide different understandings of time and place. The stories seem to lend themselves to different elements: memory, experience, legibility. I found the fourth telephone booth in a playground behind the cathedral. Watching the children play, I listened to Georg describe the experience he had as an adult of returning to a playground he used to play in as a child. He describes the disorientation that he felt when trying to move through this very familiar place. Because his body had changed, he was now “not able to read the site.”\(^{69}\)

Research into the way that those who are visually impaired interact with space indicates a more egocentric means of coding a space rather than using external frames of reference. Neither way of coding space is more sophisticated than the other, but each has its advantages.\(^{70}\) Georg indicates that an adult who uses external frames of reference would, when returning to a familiar site from childhood, have the ability to navigate that site. However, though Georg experienced distress at his inability to “read” the site, this distress came from the extremely intimate relationship he had with this playground as a child.

Georg perceives things around him through his sense of hearing. He says that a space is made up of its sound reflections, and therefore abstract visual concepts like perspective views or the horizon mean nothing to him. Various lookout points across the city feature wide, cinematic vistas of the medieval architecture, river, and Alps that are difficult to capture photographically. But there are also the small, low to the ground, hidden places of Bern that are so different in the ways that they look, sound, smell, and feel. The specificities of the everyday experiences in Bern change as time passes and as the body moves. These experiences of place contrast with those of

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\(^{69}\) “Ich . . . war nicht in der Lage den Ort zu lesen.” Ibid.

the wide, spanning vistas that remain largely unchanged year after year. Both of these experiences become muddled when one is visiting a place. Listening to Georg differentiate between the two experiences allows the audient to apply that distinction on subsequent walks in the journey.

**Maps vs. Itineraries, Freedom vs. Direction**

Galbiati and Luginbühl say they were inspired by treasure hunts and their accompanying maps. They provided a map for *Sights* for audients to use to find the next location. In Bern, the map was quite detailed, created to scale and with street names and key landmarks. In Bellinzona, they explained, they used a much more abstract map and enjoyed the idea of audients searching, trying to find out how the real place coincided with the map. However, due to some audience distress and confusion, they made the Bern maps more conventional.

De Certeau differentiates between an itinerary as “a discursive set of operations” and a map as “a plane projection totalizing observations.” The other works I discuss in this chapter rely more on the itinerary than the map. The map provided in *As If It Were the Last Time* is meant to be glanced at only once or twice to ensure that the audient has not left the designated playing space. The recording guides the audient on a journey that unfolds over a set amount of time. Though audients are free to move where they like within the boundaries, their movements are inspired by the suggestions and directions of the recording, which guides them on a journey that unfolds within a specific span of time. *Sights*, however, is not restricted by time. Each recorded portion exists at a numbered point on a map, suggesting an efficient route to take,

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though audiences are free to visit the booths out of order and on their own schedules. The artists claim that the experience is left intentionally open-ended. There is no unfolding narrative that would be disrupted by taking a different path. There is no reason that audients could not stop for lunch in the middle of the journey. The effect of this open-endedness is to grant agency to audients that goes beyond the usual freedoms of a theatre audience.

Galbiati and Luginbühl do not have an ideal spectator in mind. They like the idea of both the tourist and the local resident experiencing *Sights* in different ways. Trickster's says that in their past work they have tried to find ways for the audience to find the freedom to create their own dramaturgy by interacting with a space. In their installation works like *B* (based on *Snow White*) and *HG* (based on *Hansel and Gretel*), audients are able to refer to what they know about the source texts and then construct their own narrative based on exploration of the theatrical spaces and their associations with the poetic monologues that they hear through their earphones. *Sights* continues this idea, providing fewer restrictions and theatrical devices. Unlike the other works that I discuss in this chapter or Trickster’s *B* and *HG*, *Sights* does not immerse users in a continuous experience with headphones. Between each of the telephone booth segments, the audience spends time on the journey to the next booth, seemingly outside of the work, except for their interaction with the map. Galbiati and Luginbühl explained to me that they want their audience to have this freedom between the segments of the narrative. During this time, the audience can freely associate the city with what they have just listened to, perhaps thinking about the different ways that cities can be experienced through their various senses. Audients traversing Bern between booths can choose for themselves whether to move quickly and

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73 Galbiati and Luginbühl, interview by author, May 4, 2015.
deliberately to the next site, or to take their time, wander off course, or perhaps stop for coffee. Galbiati and Luginbühl explain that in a conventional theatre space, the audience is hindered by conventions of the space and the event, but the city is much more flexible in terms of timing, access, and acceptable behaviors. Not only the location in the city but also the format of *Sights* leads to flexibility for the audience. Audients of *As If It Were the Last Time* were expected to play the track continuously without pausing. Although each audient had the ability to stop, skip ahead, or go back when they chose, the event would have been destroyed since it relied on audients to follow directions at exact times. Other works that I discussed above, such as *Cycle of Songs* and *Ticket to Istanbul*, did not require this uninterrupted continuity, though it was desired and expected. This type of uninterrupted sound work unfolds in the way that Gertrude Stein describes the stage play, as syncopated or out of step with the audience’s emotions relating to the play.74 The flexibility that Galbiati and Luginbühl build into the format of their work requires audiences to step away from the work and process it on the next leg of their journey before they listen to the following piece. There is an additive effect to the work; each time another contributor tells her or his story, the audient has a new way to process the space of Bern.

Bern is a city full of picturesque lookout points featuring medieval architecture, the snowy Alps, and the winding Aare River. While on a visit to Bern, it is easy enough to move from one beautiful spot to another, collecting image memories along the way. *Sights* does not take away from this experience but adds to it, giving visitors the tools to access other aspects of the city through their senses. *Sights* lastingly impacts visitors’ memories of the city. The twisting medieval streets make it difficult to travel from one tourist site to another, but the stories told at

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74 Stein, “Lectures in America,” 244.
each of Trickster’s telephone booths draw attention back to the journey, to the present, and to what can be heard, touched, smelled, and felt along the way.

Sights organizes Bern based on its affective and abstract connections to experiences of the blind contributors rather than focusing on popularity, historical significance, or picturesqueness. The contributors tell stories about how they map space and provide audients insights into how they might try to map space in new ways through their senses and memories. In the next section of this chapter, I continue to explore ways for visitors to understand urban spaces with mapping techniques that use sound and personal experience of place. I also focus on how technologies, both established and emergent, provide a basis for comprehension of complex places and spaces.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people began to create networked cities both under- and aboveground. The London Underground opened in 1863 and spurred new ways to understand the body’s path through the city. Travelers could venture underground, sit for a few darkened minutes, and emerge aboveground in a distant location. Above the ground, telegraph and telephone wires connected distant places, allowing ideas, voices, and imaginations to travel quickly and distantly. The miles of wires aboveground and at the bottom of the ocean created physical spaces of travel through which people could only move virtually. Radio towers transmitted signals, creating an invisible network across the world, further changing people’s concepts of space and time. Now, in the early twenty-first century, our understanding of our bodies in space has been further changed by GPS navigation and satellite maps. Temporary

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75 Brandon LaBelle says that radio—the soundwaves, antennae, and radio towers—contours the sky with an “elaborate electro-communications network.” Acoustic Territories, 207–08.
maps, custom generated for each user, can be pulled up on smart devices. Walkers can surrender completely to the navigation application, ending up in distant locations without ever paying attention to how they got there.

Sound Panaurama

*Cycle of Songs* included a map of Cambridge inside the smartphone app. *As If It Were the Last Time* emailed audients a link to a map to show the boundaries of the area in which they should stay. *Sights* provided a detailed paper map of Bern, after a failed experiment using a more abstract map in Bellinzona. These maps regulate audients and keep them safe or at least provide a sense of security. The maps orient the audient to the physical layout of a place and ensure that audients are able to locate key spots for listening, looking, and walking. Despite the uniform and universal maps given to all audients, each audient is creating a personal map of space during her or his walk. The map is a tool for the performance of the audients as they render their own versions of space and spatial relationships. Each performance of an audient traces unique paths through place that are both physical and virtual. In an experiment designed to push the audio walk to its most virtual ends, I designed what I call a “Panaurama,” an immersive personal sound map of London. In this section, I examine how the elements of maps, panoramic images, and recorded sounds of London reveal different aspects of the city, and how these elements can be synthesized to create a new kind of embodied, temporally located, virtual experience of London.

Mapping London

After spending time in a new place, I often compare the experience to the one I imagined before I arrived. Despite the research that I conduct into the place—by looking at photographs,
examining maps, and reading descriptions—I am always surprised by how much erroneous information my imagination provided and how little information it inferred from the documents I perused. In preparation for my first trip to London, I sifted through many virtual representations of the spaces I might traverse. I zoomed in and out of Great Britain on Google Maps to discern the length of a train trip to London from Cambridge, to find appropriate lodging, and to try to plan daily excursions. Google Maps provided detailed satellite imagery—a bird’s eye view—as well as countless, single-framed street views. I attempted to gain knowledge of particular places by clicking, dragging, and dropping the street-view icon—a little, yellow, human figure—onto the map. Though I had more images of the city than I could possibly view in total, I had very little sense of day-to-day life, culture, rhythms of the city, or the people who lived there—the elements that constitute the lived spaces of London. I still felt as if I were traveling “blind.”

Despite perusing maps, I felt disoriented and unable to make decisions about where to stay, where to visit, how to get anywhere, or how long it would take to travel to and fro. I could not develop a sense of the city through the map. The numbers told me the miles and kilometers between one site and another, but they did not give me a feel for what the journey would be like between those sites. As I clicked through the static, framed street view images, I could not really get a sense of what it would feel like to walk through different neighborhoods. In other words, I had plenty of information but no way to feel what that information meant for my body in time and space. I wanted to find my own way to map the city, one that would allow me to comprehend my own journey and that would perhaps allow others to gain an embodied, overall sense of my personal journey through London. After experiencing and analyzing the audio works in this chapter, I suspected that sound recording might be the best way to approach this task.
London is a city that is accessible to the world’s population through centuries of media representations. Novels, poems, films, paintings, and television shows provide us with material to make imaginative journeys to and through the city. The geographic layout has been recorded in maps, pictorial itineraries, panoramic images, and journalistic street photographs. These visual forms allow ways to view large spans of London quickly, by visually panning across the space of a single large image or many small images. In developing a method for creating an embodied and personalized map of London, I studied the many ways that London has been mapped and represented. I wanted to know how travelers have used maps and other city representations to navigate, experience, and remember city spaces.

**Representing the City**

London has a vast corpus of extant representations of the city that have been and can still be used as tools for understanding the city. Visitors—both those traveling physically to the space and those traveling imaginatively—can access these maps, itineraries, panoramic photographs, and other tools for a variety purposes. A visitor may need help navigating the city to physically get from one place to another, which would necessitate one kind of map. Or perhaps a visitor might need to understand one variable of the city, such as density of clothing shops or violent crime, which would necessitate a different kind of map. There are many famous visual depictions of London that attempt to make different aspects of the city legible and to provide a mode of positioning oneself in relation to the city.

Throughout London’s history, representations of the city have gone in and out of fashion depending on people’s needs, society’s technological capabilities, and “the visual culture’s mode
of relating the observer to the object.”\textsuperscript{76} In the second chapter of \textit{City/Stage/Globe: Performance and Space in Shakespeare’s London}, D. J. Hopkins analyzes medieval to early modern images of London by describing the relationship between performance and views of the city. He uses the term \textit{map images} after J. B. Harley, who denotes a map image as a “representation of selected spatial information, which when placed onto a storage medium becomes a map.”\textsuperscript{77} Hopkins articulates a representational system that he calls \textit{pedestrian performance}, which he defines as a “practice that relates the individual to public space via the experience of performance and the representation of that experience.”\textsuperscript{78} According to Hopkins, medieval map images were encoded with pedestrian performance, representing personal experiences of place. These same images, while conveying an author’s relationship to London, may resist historically “accurate” imagery. He discusses the differences between cartographic and chorographic map images. The former required skills such as “surveying and mathematical conversions and projections derived in part from Ptolemy’s \textit{Geography}.”\textsuperscript{79} The latter, chorography, included city portraits that required individual observation and personal experience of a local region.\textsuperscript{80}

In the early modern era, representations of London’s spaces expanded from itineraries and city portraits to include the bird’s-eye view. In future maps that followed this logic, the personal performance of the individual mapmaker was removed. Brian Baker explains,

\begin{quote}
London has, particularly over the last 150 years, been the site of repeated attempts to comprehend the physical, social and economic fabric of city life through exercises in
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{77} J. B. Harley, quoted in Hopkins, \textit{City/Stage/Globe}, 71.
\textsuperscript{78} Hopkins, \textit{City/Stage/Globe}, 68.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 69–70.
cataloguing and mapping. These mapping exercises render the city legible, and articulate its spaces in textual form.  

One of the most famous maps of London is Charles Booth’s “Life and Labour of the People of London,” begun in 1886 and commonly referred to as “Booth’s Poverty Map.” Booth used information from the 1881 census as well as house-by-house interviews to create a map of London that indicated economic class across the city. As Baker points out, Booth’s map fixes the space of the city and places the reader “in a powerful spectatorial position.” Booth’s “poverty map” produces a kind of legibility; it indicates patterns of the distribution of wealth across the city. It does not, however, give a reader the sense of what day-to-day life is like on each individual street, or the specific cultural practices of individual neighborhoods. It may generate fear over parts of the city deemed dangerous because of their poverty, but it does not give accurate imagery on cultural life. In researching neighborhoods in London to find suitable lodging, I frequently shifted perspectives on the safety of neighborhoods in response to top results of search engines. The neighborhood that I ultimately chose due to its affordability, Tottenham, was almost removed from my list of possibilities because of the frequency of the word riot in the information circulating on the internet. Thus, it is not only the totalizing view of the map that can grossly simplify an entire culturally diverse area and population, but also the collection of data that is the internet tour.

82 Ibid., 3.
83 Tottenham is a suburban area of north London in the Borough of Haringey. It is one of the most diverse places in the world, with over two hundred first languages spoken.
Oversimplification is not necessarily the mark of a bad map. The London Underground map, designed in 1931 by Harry Beck, compressed the city into a recognizable, comprehensible, and digestible simplified shape with only the train stops labeled. Beck’s map is not geographically accurate in its representation of space, because a more geographically accurate map would be less useful. This map was more of a diagram that attempted to allow transit riders to understand the underground train system. The purpose of the map is to understand which train stop follows which, and at which stops one can transfer to a different train. The map would be of little use to someone attempting to navigate London aboveground. Booth’s and Beck’s maps are two examples of very different types of maps that both attempt to create a universal legibility and to present historically factual, non-personal city imagery.

The most useful and trustworthy map for travelers is that which most closely matches the way that the culture places the traveling subject in relation to map images. In the twenty-first century, more and more maps are based on the user’s moving body in space. Smartphone applications provide maps that use GPS signals to place users within a digital image and then to give users step-by-step directions to get to where they are going. Online maps combine disembodied, bird’s-eye views with embodied, personal subject positions. Google Maps and other online satellite maps allow us to zoom in from above on nearly any location in the world, with dizzying and disembodied results, zooming to the tops of the Great Pyramids or the Willis Tower. Google Street View allows the user to inhabit the eye of a moving Google Street View car or the “Trekker,” a wearable 40-pound backpack camera that takes 360-degree panoramic views.

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84 I draw this idea from Nuti who says that “the most trustworthy and significant image [of a town] will undoubtedly be the one that matches most perfectly with the visual culture’s mode of relating the observer to the object.” Quoted in Hopkins, 67.
images. More than offering framed images of buildings on the ground, Street View allows the user to turn 360 degrees to attempt to get a sense of the space, and then it allows the viewer to travel in either direction down the street. Despite the implication of three-dimensional space, however, Street View is no more than a series of static images strung together. This fact is what causes strange occurrences such as the same person or vehicle appearing in multiple images. There is also a disconnection between the moment that one is viewing the map as a whole and the moment that the street view image appears. In 2006 Google developed three-dimensional imagery for tall buildings in major cities, and in 2012 Apple released Flyover for Apple Maps, which allowed users to view a three-dimensional aerial view of major cities from 45-degree angles, from a vantage point of their choice. Flyovers are created not from one static image but from an amalgamation of many images. This three-dimensional space not only allows users to trace imaginary paths through virtual space as they would in a map but also allows them to embody a virtual self that travels through the space, viewing skyscrapers, trees, and other vertical objects from different angles. Viewing a city from a 45-degree aerial angle invites users to physically move through the space—even if they are doing it virtually—which is a different experience than the bird’s-eye view from above. Google Street View and Apple Flyover provide more embodied perspectives, but they still distort the perception of time—one click can move the viewer a mile away on the map.

In addition to the advanced digital imagery created by the large tech companies, there is a wealth of panoramic photo compilations from high vantage points created by photography and travel enthusiasts. AirPano, according to their website, “is a not for profit project created by a team of Russian photo enthusiasts focused on taking high-resolution aerial panoramic
photographs.” Their website features photographs from some of the most famous and stunning places in the world. They state, “When viewed on a large screen the panorama technology creates a complete illusion of a personal presence on the spot.” Interestingly, those spots are often places that people are not likely to be, for example, hovering ten feet above Tiananmen Square; AirPano often uses drones to access the best angle to view the scenic prospects. The AirPano website states that the only downside to the photographs is that nothing can be touched.85 The other senses including sound are not mentioned, although the panoramic images for each location feature a musical selection. Panoramic imagery has been a tool for virtual travel arguably since Trajan’s Column. The term panorama was coined in 1791 by a friend of Robert Barker, a portraitist who earned fame for painting large, circular, immersive scenes.86 Alison Griffiths discusses the panorama as a mode of immersive, embodied spectatorship and even a virtual reality that sends “shivers down your spine.”87 Griffiths notes, “Unlike the frame, which functions as a window onto an illusionistically rendered space, the panorama attempted to create the sensation of the spectator’s physical relocation into the center of such a space.”88 The technologically rendered panorama that users navigate with the click of the mouse is not entirely different from those that they can walk past. Each creates virtual realities that simulate journeys to distant locations and, sometimes, historic events.

88 Ibid.
The Flyovers, Street Views, and panoramas all disrupt universalizing map images that attempt to create objective, stable interpretations of space. Each of these three examples requires movements through space, either physically or virtually, to make embodied sense of a place. I began this section discussing medieval and early modern map images that, according to Hopkins, represent personal experience of place rather than geographical accuracy.\textsuperscript{89} Digital mapping technologies have allowed for a return to more personal and performative mapping practices. Travelers today value immersiveness over objective legibility. Rather than read a map to plan an itinerary, we may let our digital navigation device tell us where to go from moment to moment. The \textit{map image} that Hopkins references no longer represents the embodied and immersive perspectives of today’s mapping and navigation technologies. Making use of Flyovers, Street Views, and panoramas means moving through multiple images and perspectives, constructing meaning within the mental journey. There is a simulated three-dimensionality that makes these embodied perspectives functional, useful, and legible.

Despite the attempts to make mapping technologies hyper-accurate with photographs and three-dimensional illustration, in some ways the technology has drawn attention to the inaccuracy of the maps. When someone sees a street-level view on Google Maps of a building that was demolished the day before, or when someone sees her or his car parked in an image of a driveway where he or she no longer lives, the contingency of the map is emphasized, its specificity to a certain time and personal context. The focus of the map becomes the way that the user of the map fits into the world represented. Hopkins states that to understand the transition from medieval to early modern map imagery is, “to consider the emergence of \textit{looking}, of

\textsuperscript{89} Hopkins, \textit{City/Stage/Globe}.
voyeurism, as the principal strategy for constructing (physically as well as conceptually) urban space,” as opposed to the practices of walking.\textsuperscript{90} We are now in a transitional moment, one in which we are moving from looking and voyeurism to immersion and virtual embodiment. Individual performance has returned to a place of importance in mapping. Chorographic mapping practices of today provide virtual, immersive ways to travel to distant locations. The way that these map images are recorded has expanded to the digital means that I have described above. Additionally, I argue that some of the most compelling “maps” can be made without images at all. Artists, archivists, and mappers can use sound to make immersive chorographic maps of urban space.

\textbf{Sound and Embodiment}

The British Museum and the online archive \textit{The London Sound Survey}, among other sites, house recordings of London sounds. Ian Rawes, the founder of \textit{The London Sound Survey}, perceives the difficulties in understanding a place through visual images alone. Rawes explains that his recordings, unlike photographs, provide a greater sense of being in London, a more accurate sense of the city. “Listening to a recording of the sounds of a place or event gets the imagination working and recreates some of the sense of being there,” explains Rawes.\textsuperscript{91} \textit{The London Sound Survey} features sounds that Rawes and others recorded around the city of London. In addition, recordings from radio programs from the 1920s to today are included to give a sense of sounds of various eras. To provide sonic information of London in the time before recording

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 78.
technologies, one section of the website features descriptions of sounds pulled from such historical sources as novels, poems, diaries, and newspapers.\(^{92}\)

Although there is a black-and-white, text-only version of the site “for blind users”\(^{93}\) that uses no visual components other than the text necessary to direct the audient to the sound files and explain them, the main website contains a variety of intricate maps that organize the sounds in meaningful ways. Complex urban spaces are unable to be understood in the abstract or as generalizable wholes. The website features a map of London divided into 112 squares. Each square, when clicked on, takes the viewer/listener to a more detailed map of the section, similar to using the grid in an \textit{A to Z} map of London. Small boxes embedded in the maps can be clicked on by users to listen to sounds recorded in the corresponding locations in London. Users can navigate the sounds by accessing present-day and historical maps. Rawes uses maps as an organizational tool for the sounds, making the sounds “legible” by an association with their location in space and time.

Sound-based maps such as those used in \textit{The London Sound Survey} are designed for interactive, virtual pedestrianism. I argue that the inclusion of sound in the interactive maps allows for a level of embodiment that brings the virtual pedestrian into temporal interaction with the spaces of London. This approach to map use functions as a return of medieval itineraries which, rather than depicting a location, functioned as a script for “travel performances.”\(^{94}\) Hopkins notes that medieval itineraries could be used for actual trips and also as an aide-


\(^{94}\) Hopkins, \textit{City/Stage/Globe}, 76.
mémoire for those who could only travel imaginatively, functioning as a precursor to the virtual, online travel made possible through The London Sound Survey and Rawes’s other online sound projects.

In addition to The London Sound Survey, Rawes has contributed sounds to a panoramic image of London on the Guardian website.95 The image is an interactive panorama taken from the Shard, an eighty-seven-story building in London completed in 2012. Visitors to the Shard can travel to the seventy-second floor, where they can see a 360-degree view of the city, a view that is recreated virtually on the website. The building is the tallest in Western Europe and the only site in London where one can view the entire city at once. Looking out at the view, either online or from the top of the Shard, calls to mind the World Trade Center section of de Certeau’s essay “Walking in the City,” as the eyes scan over the perceived legibility of the bird’s-eye view representation of London. The “panorama-city”96 that de Certeau describes, however, contrasts with the experience of the aural panorama embedded within the visual one on the Guardian website. While the visual panorama is a sweeping view from above, the embedded sounds come from recordings made on the ground in the city. The sounds embedded in the panorama do, however, give a sense of density to the sites viewed from afar.

The online panorama features embedded links with information about nearby locations, as well as links to Rawes’s sounds recorded in various sites around London (both in and out of sight in the panorama). Online visitors can pan across the image, circling back to a starting point.

96 Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 93.
The viewer has the option to zoom in on different locations; this option does not allow the user to see anything that is not already there in the wider panoramic shot, but merely makes the image larger. This way of looking is not entirely different than the way a visitor to the Shard in London might look through the digital “tell:scopes.” The panoramic still image mimics in many ways the experience one would have of an actual panoramic view, in person, at a location. The image is not still in the actual visit to the Shard, but it functions rather like a still image. The experience of a panorama is not one of the moving image, even in real life. The sounds that Rawes contributes to the virtual panorama provide a depth to the experience of the viewer that paradoxically is not present to the physical visitors of the viewing deck.

There are technical and artistic difficulties in trying to represent spaces with sound in a distant panorama. Sound recordings are specific to one location and to what can be heard by the human ear from a short distance away. None of the sounds in the Guardian’s panorama could have been heard from the top of the Shard. The Guardian website has developed one way for a listener to pan through sound. When the user is viewing the full panorama, she hears a whooshing that sounds the way wind might sound from the top of a building high above the city. The sounds embedded in the panoramic image are prerecorded at selected locations, including those not visible in the panorama—inside the zoo or the House of Commons, for example. The user can create the sense of a “sound panorama” by zooming into the visual panorama and panning through the image. The site explains that “the more you zoom in, the nearer you get to the sound source.”97 A pan at full zoom plays sounds from the nearest location on the map that has an embedded sound recording. One sound fades into another as the user pans through the

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97 Panetta et al., “The View from the Shard.”
image. For example, when a user zooms in fully to St. Paul’s Cathedral, he or she hears the peal of bells recorded on a Thursday at lunchtime in 2010. Panning to the right causes the sound of the bells to fade out while the default recording fades in—the sounds of city streets, sirens, other church bells, and pedestrians. Panning further, close to Smithfield Market, causes the sound to fade into the sounds of a rowdy crowd at a meat auction on Christmas Eve, 2012. Panning right, fading in and out of the default recording, the listener hears the singer Ms. Dynamite performing at the Barbican Center on March 3, 2012.98

This sound panorama functions very differently than the visual panorama. The visual panorama covers no more than the span of a few minutes, the length of time it would take the photographer to circle around the viewing deck taking the images that would later form the composite image. Unlike the photograph, the sound recordings cover a span of years. In the example that I gave in the previous paragraph, the listener moves from 2010 to December 2012 and then back to March 3, 2012. However, it could be argued that the sounds are representative of sounds heard regularly at these locations, just as the visual image, taken on one day, is able to stand in for nearly identical images that could be taken on any day.

A more significant difference between the visual and aural panoramas is the amount of effort and curation necessary to make a comprehensible work. The creation of the sound panorama is much more complicated than the creation of the visual panorama. The visual panorama is made up of a composite of still images that the photographer stitches together with software. The viewer can then explore the image without any additional help or guidance. The sound panorama cannot be designed or constructed in this same way. So that the listener can pan

98 Ibid.
through the sounds in the *Guardian*’s panorama, recordings had to be made at many individual locations rather than from a fixed point like the seventy-second floor of the Shard. Individual sound recordings had to be chosen to represent different areas of London. One must virtually travel nearly half a mile away from St. Paul’s Cathedral within the panorama to hear another sound specific to a location. Panning through the sounds on the *Guardian* site creates a sense of the action of the city. Crowds laugh, Members of Parliament shout, squirrel monkeys scream, and commuters echo underground. The aural panorama, then, curates a very particular experience for users, one that represents a very particular London.

Navigating through the sounds in *The London Sound Survey* or those embedded in the *Guardian* panorama is a type of imaginative journeying. These digital spaces can become *practiced places*, in the words of de Certeau, as users imaginatively enact a digital pedestrianism.  

**Moving Through the City**

Walking is a way that people perform their relationship to the city. Walking in the city, with or without an artistic work to frame the journey, is a way for people to create their own spaces and knowledge. The chorographer uses pedestrian performance to create personal portraits of urban space. Additionally, the flâneur, the dériviste, and the traceur are three figures who represent certain ways to interact with, perform in, and map the city. Charles Baudelaire’s flâneur is a detached, wandering spectator of urban life.  

Michael Savage, Gaynor Bagnall, and Brian Longhurst say that the flâneur moves around fleetingly due to “the fragmentation of

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modern life,” but that the flâneur can, “redeem it through his ability to aesthetically link
otherwise disparate phenomena.\footnote{Michael Savage, Gaynor Bagnall, and Brian Longhurst, \textit{Globalization and Belonging} (London: SAGE, 2005), 117.} These varying descriptions of the flâneur describe a subject
who follows paths created in urban spaces and who has the agency to disrupt the prescribed
meaning of those paths. Looked at in this way, the flâneur is not wandering aimlessly but is
assembling “raw materials”\footnote{Ibid., 118.} for the production of culture and identity. As a historical figure,
the modern flâneur can only be male, according to Janet Wolff. Women would not have had the
freedom or invisibility to wander the city streets alone in Baudelaire’s Paris.\footnote{Janet Wolff, “The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity,” \textit{Theory, Culture, and Society} 2, no. 3 (1985).} Though the urban experience is still different for men and women, the twenty-first century flâneur in the Western
metropolis can arguably be female, depending on the neighborhood and time of day.

The dériviste is another type of walker, defined by the Situationists. Both the flâneur and
the dériviste are visual creatures, closely watching the city as they walk. The flâneur, however is
a voyeur who takes on the role of an outsider looking in. In a dérive, “one or more persons
during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other
usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the
and exiting where the city calls them to, and moving with flows and into vortices. The dérive is
an alternative mapping of space that attempts to provide multiple and personal understandings of
space. Doreen B. Massey explains that the Situationists attempted, “to disrupt the sense of
coherence and of totality” of maps, objects that purport to “tame confusion and complexity” and envision the world as one understandable whole.105 Just as the flâneur is historically a term that has been appropriated to new contexts, locations, and people, the Situationists’ dérive has served as an inspiration for artists, geographers, and walkers.106

Tim Etchells, an artist from the group Forced Entertainment, claims that cities are ideal spaces for performance because they have layers of commerce, leisure, and politics that overlap and collide in a tight space that is populated by many people. According to Etchells, this kind of space is loaded with multiple meanings. A work of art can have the power to frame these spaces and attempt to filter the information in various ways.107 In urban works, as Mike Pearson points out, the site is full of “unruly elements” that invade the work, unlike the synechdocal ways of the stage.108 These “noisy” elements (I mean this visually and aurally) must be filtered in some way by the viewer/listener. Through choice, prior knowledge, and emotional states, audiences construct meaning from information—both from the art and from the site.

One way that artists create art in the city is by making use of that which is not in use. In Art in the City, Nicolas Whybrow describes the work of traceurs as those who makes use of (in the words of de Certeau) “spaces that cannot be seen.”109 Traceurs are participants of parkour, an activity in which runners move “rapidly and freely over or around the obstacles presented by an

106 Phil Smith, know for his experimental walking, has written an article analyzing the practices of a multitude of artists and geographers in the twenty-first century who have taken up aspects of the dérive. See “The Contemporary Dérive: A Partial Review of Issues Concerning the Contemporary Practice of Psychogeography,” Cultural Geographies 17, no. 1 (2010): 103–22.
107 Tim Etchells, foreword to Theatre & the City, by Jen Harvie (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
(esp. urban) environment by running, jumping, climbing, etc.” When we see urban spaces, we recognize the spaces in which we can walk as well as those in which we are supposed to walk. The traceurs make use of the spaces that we do not see as walkable space. In this way, they claim the space as pedestrian space. The name traceur implies that these “free runners” are etching the space, writing a new form of pedestrian engagement. Like dérivistes, traceurs subvert the logic of the city and its organizing structures. Also like the dériviste and the flâneur, the traceur is typically male, though representatives of parkour communities have boasted of efforts to be inclusive to women.

Metaphors of walking have been used to describe imaginative journeys that people take through places, narratives, and memories. Bourriaud developed the term semionaut to describe a figure who makes mental paths through culture—creating paths between signs. He describes the locations where this mental mapping takes place as communication zones, which have been identified in cafes, pubs, and art galleries. Additionally, the figure of the flâneur has been appropriated to describe the ways that people navigate virtual spaces, particularly online. The term cyberflâneur has been in use since the 1990s to define the action of exploring virtual creations of physical spaces as well as to describe the act of navigating the web itself.

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113 Ibid., 16.
I am interested in multiple kinds of journeys: physical, mental, and a hybrid of the two. The panorama is a combination of the two. As visitors to the giant panorama of the nineteenth century both walked past and visually scanned the image of the panorama, they took a physical and a mental journey into an imagined space. Sound can provide an even more pronounced hybrid journey that blurs the boundaries between the walker and the listener. There are ways to use sound to create a type of panoramic experience of space and time, one that is broad and expansive, like a visual panorama, but that offers a specificity of locality and a density of placeness that only sound can provide. I call this project a panaurama.

**Making a Panaurama**

Like the many maps of London that I pored over in my planning, sound panoramas, it seemed, could represent for users particular aspects of London. How could I communicate to others the experience of visiting London for the first time? In my time in the city, I produced many hours of my own field recordings with the aim of developing a sound panorama. Although I normally create recordings monaurally, using the microphone and recording application on my smartphone, I decided that I wanted to record with binaural microphones so that my listeners would have a more immersive experience of my journey. For the project, I purchased a digital sound recorder that is about the size of a cell phone and a pair of binaural microphones that I wore inside my ears like a pair of earphones. This way, listeners would be able to come as close as possible to hearing what I heard on my journey through London. By manipulating the

recordings later, stitching them into a legible sound work, I hoped that listeners could understand my affective experiences of the spaces.

Binaural recording is a way to place a listening body virtually within an aural architecture from another time and physical space. *Aural architecture* “refers to the properties of a space that can be experienced by listening.” Blesser and Salter explain that listeners are able to perceive aural architecture through audio spatial awareness, which is “the internal experience of an external environment.” My listeners would have the ability to sense the physical spaces I travelled through by perceiving the aural architecture recorded through binaural microphones. Although listeners would have some ability to do this with monaural recording techniques, and even more so with stereo recording, the binaural recording technique, I hoped, would allow listeners to virtually inhabit my body by listening in the precise way that I had listened. The nooks and crannies of the pinnae (external part of the ears) filter the sound and change the content for microphones placed inside the ears, providing a clear directionality. Tina Rigby Hanssen writes about binaural recording effects in sound art:

Binaural recording works either to preserve the original sound field of a particular space and atmosphere, or to reintroduce the sound from one place into another place whereby all of the reflections of a particular setting are recorded and recreated from their original positions. In short, it moves the listener into the scene of an original performance, in contrast to other space-related recording techniques—like Dolby surround sound, for example—that move the acoustic event to the listener. 

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115 Blesser and Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?*, 5.
116 Ibid., 131.
Because of the differences in the external ears of every person, no one can make the same binaural recording. Thus, a listener has the sense of travelling through time to inhabit another’s body. It is hard to describe the disconcertingly “real” nature of binaural recordings and the sense of physical dislocation that even unedited samples create in the listener. One can hear quite distinctly the location of a bus as it passes from the left to the right, or the approximate height of a panting dog approaching from behind.

From the beginning of the project I realized that the binaural recordings of my journey through London, no matter how I edited the content, would produce an intimate and highly personal sound map for listeners. While with a panoramic image, the eyes scan over still (or virtually still) space, my panaurama created the sense of movement through active spaces. Wearing the microphones gave me a strong sense of making the recordings with my body, recording not only what was external to me, but also what was internal—the sensory information entering my body. Sharing the recordings is quite intimate; I am letting someone take on the experience of my body in space.

With my panaurama, I attempted to convey the dislocation that I felt travelling throughout the city on the incredibly fast and efficient London Underground subway system. Over the week I spent in London, my days were spent going underground in one place and emerging a short time later in a very different spot—one that was far away from the origin point in both spatial distance and cultural particularities. Although I initially assumed that physically travelling through London would “feel” more coherent than looking at maps, in truth, the embodied experience of moving through actual space was almost as disorienting.
I attempted to create the sensation of a body strolling through the city. I strung different recordings together, most that I made while walking through London, though some came from my rides on the London Underground. In linking recordings to create the panaurama, I faded out of the previous recording and into the next, attempting to create a sense that the listener is walking away from one place and appearing in an entirely different location. I matched the end of each recording with a similar sound in the next. For example, the listener takes a virtual walk through a Tottenham market listening to the sounds of steel drums. Then as the sounds of the market fade, the listener comes upon the sounds of steel drums being played at Millennium Bridge across the Thames. The movement from the sounds of one set of steel drums to another creates an almost imperceptible transition, disorienting the listener in space. In the transitional moment, the listener does not have a clear distinction between the two sites. This effect was intended to simulate the disorientation that I felt when constantly popping under and overground, changing locations faster than I was able to get a sense of them. In another transition, I fade out from the sounds of excited patrons watching the 2014 World Cup final match between Argentina and Germany in a tourist bar near King’s Cross Station and into the sounds of the locals watching the same game in Tottenham (a physical distance of nearly six miles and an even greater cultural distance). Paradoxically, with my sound panorama, I make “legible” to others the illegibility of these transitions.

The panaurama does not provide a chronologically accurate soundscape through London, one that unfolds in real time. Nevertheless, I contend that the sound map based on my personal journey is chorographically accurate; it conveys a what it feels like to move through the city. My panaurama is a portrait of London that is meant to convey my experience of London-ness. The
construction of the panaurama can be considered a “mapping performance.” The steps of creating the performance include: recording sounds on various journeys through the city over a period of days; reflecting on the journey and how I remembered it unfolding; and assembling and editing segments of the recorded sounds until they conveyed a representation of those memories. The panaurama is not a work that can be scanned all at once from an outside, voyeur perspective; rather, it must be inhabited and allowed to unfold over time. Like a medieval itinerary, the panaurama is linear. It guides virtual travelers on a journey that focuses on what is important to the urban portraitist. And just as users of medieval itineraries would have been able to utilize the work based on an understanding of how space was represented in the era, the listener to this work accesses the mapping information it conveys by utilizing skills practiced through interactions with the visual mapping technologies I have discussed above, including Street Views, Flyovers, and panoramas.

Looking at visual maps of London left me feeling alienated, isolated, and disconnected from the city. I believed, like Ian Rawes, that sound might have the potential to convey a stronger sense of place than do the many visual images available of the city. I created my panaurama to map my own journey and affective experience of London. Specifically, I hope that the panorama conveys how the fast-paced, underground travelling affected my experiences of the sensorial stimuli from place to place. The audio components of the Guardian’s “View from the Shard” constructed a sense of what it was like to be in the places the recordings were made, but as a sound panorama, the recordings did not convey a sense of space overall, except for a general bustle. I designed my panaurama to provide a way for listeners to pan across my embodied

[118] Hopkins, City/Stage/Globe, 70.
memory of my journey. Like many visual panoramas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the action of the journey is not rendered in real time. Like these panoramas, my panaurama strategically guides a listener through a curated experience of London. Like medieval city portraits, my panaurama provides a personal, chorographically rendered map of my journey. My panaurama is a time capsule of a set of moments in time, both moments that can be pinpointed exactly (such as the moment Germany wins the World Cup), and moments that could have taken place within a period of years (such as sounds of voices on Millennium Bridge).

The listener to the panaurama can become an ototheatrical audient and conduct her or his own mapping performance. While my mapping performance is of London itself, the audients will remap the chorographic experience of the virtual space of the panaurama. These ototheatrical journeys, unlike those of my previous case studies, are purely virtual and imaginative. Users will have to decide for themselves if they close their eyes while listening, sit in the dark, take a walk through London or somewhere else, pan through images or maps of London, or do any other activity that attempts to activate or suppress the senses.

Conclusion

As new and accessible portable technologies are developed, so are new ways of mapping and interacting with space. I have argued that recorded sound is a key technology in creating embodied experiences of space and in creating affective maps of places. Using a paper map is a way of augmenting reality as the mind projects what is represented in the map onto a place. Panoramas, too, are a type of virtual reality that invite audiences to move through a fictional or recreated space. Sound can create a more immersive experience, as with As If It Were the Last
Time, or it can create intimate moments between audiences and performers, as with Sights. Because it allows deeper immersion into the work, sound can turn tours, maps, and panoramas into theatre as the audient enacts a narrative or a journey.

My panaurama is an experiment that seeks to explore the ways that sound can help travelers map, record, and communicate affective experiences of place. The panaurama can be used to create a virtual audio tour with the capacity to bring a highly specific personal map to a listener. With further development, it could be made more interactive, with more elements of choice for the user. What stops users from listening to an audio tour while exploring a virtual space rather than listening only while bodily in the site? One key factor is the limitation of the tools. While Google Street View was revolutionary in giving users access to views of nearly every urban street in the world, allowing them to virtually take a walk through any city they desire, it only maps official city streets that can be accessed by cars.\footnote{This is because Google primarily uses cars with 360-degree GPS-enabled cameras to capture street views. In 2012, Google introduced the Trekker, the same Street View camera attached to a backpack. The first images produced by Trekker were taken on a journey through trails at the Grand Canyon. Since then, Google has created other Treks of sites inaccessible by car.} This leaves many alleys, pathways, footbridges, and other areas unmapped and inaccessible to the user. This is limiting in a number of ways. For example, Circumstance developed an audio app for the Museum of London’s 2014–15 Sherlock Holmes exhibit. The app guided audiences in pairs, similar to As If It Were the Last Time, through the area around the Museum of London. When I discovered the app while in Chicago, I thought it would be possible to use Google Street View to virtually take the tour. It turned out to be nearly impossible, however, due to unphotographed landmarks and inaccessible plazas and paths. The joys of wandering are limited when the potential for
wandering off the path is curtailed. It breaks down the ability to perform the work, the ability that I argue is so important to ototheatre. There were fewer possibilities to manipulate or transgress, actions that create the individuality of the performance. Additionally, because I was engaged in the effort of matching image to sound, I could not perform the freer, imaginative work that an audience could engage in with the panaurama.

It seems that Google has recognized the possibilities for virtual explorations using their tools as well as the current limitations of Google Maps and Street View for these purposes. Night Walk is an experimental work created by artist Christophe Perruchi (adapted from “Le Souffleur”) and the sixteenth of a series of audio walks called Promenades Sonores that were made by thirty different authors, “including artists, local shopkeepers, and documentary makers.”

The work was funded and built by Google and combines multiple genres and medias including the audio tour, the video game, and the online map. Night Walk is a virtual audio tour in which users click through an interface built on Google Maps. The user stumbles on “unexpected encounters” created by the artist; Perruchi constructs what is essentially a video game of an audio tour. Night Walk takes advantage of Google Street View technology, allowing users to click through the streets of Marseille with views all around, including the sky, the ground, and a 360-degree rotation. The website suggests that “Your headphones will give you the best experience.”120 Perruchi tells the user to look around freely, saying he will “take care of your ears.” The soundscape is binaural and dense with city sounds, providing an element that Street View lacks. The format is similar to a standard audio tour. Perrucchi guides the listener with

such instructions as, “on your right if you look up slightly, one of Mrs. P’s General De Gaulle.” When the user follows the directions, a ticker in the upper left-hand corner of the screen advances one number, showing that the user has now achieved one out of thirty-four “hotspots seen.” The gamification of the walk is a method of adding interactivity to the work, resulting in the sense that the user is in control of the experience and is participating in the virtual world. Additionally, though users cannot walk off the designated path, there are other virtual paths they can choose to explore giving a sense of freedom and personal mapping. Embedded in the interface are images, videos, informational texts, and other elements that users can access.

*Night Walk* suggests a future in which mapping, gaming, traveling, and artistic projects become more and more overlapped. These activities all take place in both the digital and the actual worlds, and the difference between the two becomes less and less important. This chapter has focused on a variety of mobile sound works that are linked by a theatrical engagement with a mobile audient who makes personal maps of space. I began the chapter with *Cycle of Songs* and ended with my panaurama. These two works differ greatly in the ways that they are made, distributed, and engaged by users. In *Cycle of Songs*, the audient triggers the songs by moving her or his body to different places in Cambridge. The history of the sites, told through the songs, is a community effort that audients enact and interpret in their own time and way. My panaurama, in contrast, needs no physical movement on the part of the audient; her or his journey is purely imaginary. The history of the space I provide is my own, drawn from my personal memories of one trip to an unfamiliar city. Each of these two “maps,” however, offers highly localized perspectives, and each offers audients physical or imaginative freedom to map
their own version of space. All ototheatre provides new and virtual spaces through which audients journey.

Thus far I have discussed works that I have categorized as ototheatre, though some also fit comfortably into existing categories such as the audio tour (Cycle of Songs and Ticket to Istanbul), installation (Sights), or podcast (Everyday Moments). Some have been given by the creators categorical labels, including audio walk (Forest Walk) and subtelmob (As If It Were the Last Time). In the next chapter, I analyze a work that shares traits with many media forms and practices but that cannot be easily categorized. Zombies, Run! is an exercise tool, an audio drama, a game, a social media platform, and, I argue, an immersive theatrical experience. I demonstrate that the immersive audio narrative combined with the fan production in online forums creates a complex network of theatrical performance that serves as an example of ototheatre.
Chapter Four—Exercising the Imagination: The Theatre of Zombies, Run!

The sounds of groaning zombies that I hear in an otherwise deserted wasteland do not fit with the busy Chicago street on which I run, so I turn down a side street that is often devoid of pedestrians. A voice that I hear through my earphones tells me that he will refer to me as Runner 5, because the old Runner 5 has recently been killed. As I run through the deserted street, another voice periodically tells me that I have found useful supplies—sports bras, batteries, bottled water, bandages. Although I know that I am not finding these actual objects, I begin to look around for anything that might be useful. I think, “Are there bandages hidden under the pile of newspapers? Should I check under the stoop for a stray pack of batteries? Anything could be stuffed inside these mail boxes.” Occasionally, a voice urgently warns me of approaching zombies. Alerted, I see an older man limping toward me, and a sullen teenager standing on the corner. “They could be zombies,” I think, and I run toward the other side of the street. I am not used to running, and it leaves me out of breath and panting. I am out of shape and asthmatic, and I have left my inhaler at home. I lean against a brick wall, afraid, though I am unsure whether I fear an asthma attack or killer zombies. The fears blend together. I want nothing more than to return home, to the comforts of real life. The voice in my ear, however, asks an important favor of me: she wants me to fetch much needed medical supplies from an abandoned hospital. Just around the corner in my real-life neighborhood sits a tall building that takes up an entire city block. This mysterious structure is the hospital where Hillary Clinton was born, a building abandoned for nearly two decades. I cannot resist the connection between the recorded script of the zombie drama and my real life, and so I jog (slowly) toward the abandoned hospital. After a voice tells me that I have completed my mission, he encourages me to run home, quickly, so that
I am not attacked by zombies. Instead, I trudge slowly. Though my desire to physically participate in the game is overridden by my exhaustion, my engagement with the narrative is not. As I near my home, I smell something awful, a stench that might be coming from a gutter, the sewers, or the nearby McDonald’s dumpsters. I probably smell something like it every day as I walk down this same street, but this time, as I associate the odor with the rotting stench of zombie flesh, I come very close to vomiting. I open the door to my apartment, remove my headphones, and return to real life.

In 2010, Adrian Hon, head of gaming company Six to Start, approached novelist Naomi Alderman about creating a new kind of game—one that combined storytelling, gaming, and fitness. The two took a popular trope in early twenty-first-century entertainment—zombies—and created Zombies, Run!, a fitness app compatible with smartphones. Hon and Alderman’s goal, they say, was to provide people with motivation to run by scaring them with chasing zombies, piquing their interest with an unfolding serial narrative, and making them heroes in a post-apocalyptic world whose survival counts on fast-running zombie-evaders.¹

Knowing my interest in mobile sound works, a colleague recommended the new smartphone app, which I understood as an audio track of groaning zombies that would motivate one to increase the pace of running while out getting exercise. When I downloaded Zombies, Run! onto my phone, I sought an emotionally engaging theatrical experience. Not being a runner, I had little knowledge about fitness apps. As a theatre and performance scholar, I structured my

experience in terms of performance, audience, narrative, and scenography. From the beginning, I questioned my role in this activity. I could understand from prior experiences playing games that I was a player, and from listening to audio narratives and recorded music I understood that I was a listener of a previously recorded live performance. These roles—player of games and listener of recorded content—involves different types of performance. In games, players must accept a scenario, follow rules, and enact a series of tasks set before them. When listening to an audio narrative or music, one interprets the content in relation to one’s own prior histories with the medium and content. **Zombies, Run!**, however, is a unique work that I feel is much more than a combination of game and audio narrative. In the experience of enacting **Zombies, Run!**, I find elements that resemble multiple modes of art and entertainment, such as cinema, television, novels, games, audio drama, and theatre. I argue that this type of multimodal work, like the other case studies in this dissertation, requires audiences to negotiate among the multiple ways of understanding different media forms. Audiences’ prior knowledge of and history with different forms inform the way they perceive the work and experience it. What sets **Zombies, Run!** apart from my other case studies is the way that it resists categorization into one form. While I have grouped my previous case studies within the category of ototheatre, they could all easily be named other things: soundwalks, audio tours, podcasts, and so on. To label **Zombies, Run!** as a fitness app, game, or radio drama, however, would misrepresent the content, structure, purpose, and the experience of listening. In this chapter, I argue that **Zombies, Run!** is a flexible medium—one that does not yet fit within a fixed category and is thus open to multiple interpretations by users.
As in the previous chapters, I investigate *Zombies, Run!*, using my own experiences enacting the work. However, in this final chapter I have also surveyed other audients, over one hundred fans of the app. *Zombies, Run!* differs from my other case studies significantly in that it is an ongoing serial work with an active base of fans who frequently post in online communities. My experience as an audient was impacted greatly by the work of fans; their fanfiction, fan art, plot speculations, and reactions to each mission helped shape the narrative world in which I ran. By surveying others, I discerned different entry points into the app for those of different interests, backgrounds, and perspectives. My analysis of online fan activity revealed the ways that audients performed for other fans and the way that they also served as audience members for others’ performances.

How it Works

Let me guide you through an abbreviated version of the first episode of *Zombies, Run!*

You first download the app, which is free and contains missions and side quests, to your smartphone. Upon opening the app for the first time, you are presented with an aerial view of Abel Township, the community on which much of the narrative centers. After selecting “Mission 1: Jolly Alpha Five Niner,” you are presented with the option of choosing a music playlist from your device to play during breaks in the narrative. You begin to run. Upon starting Mission 1,

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2 The original twenty-three episodes cost $7.99 in 2012. This is more expensive than typical apps, a price that the creators hoped would convey quality. Six to Start, “Why $7.99 Beats $0.99,” April 3, 2012, accessed April 5, 2013, http://www.sixtostart.com/onetoread/2012/why-7-99-beats-0-99/. In 2014, the price was lowered to $3.99, and the app contained over one hundred missions and side quests. The app now contains two hundred missions and is free to download with in-app purchases to acquire some of the content.
you hear a helicopter through the earphones and a female voice that has the tinny quality of a voice heard through a headset. It is the pilot:

    So, you’ll see the township as we loop round. Nothing but a few fences to keep the zoms out. Tiny little island of humanity. . . . So, I expect you’re not allowed to say what you’re being dropped into the township for, huh? . . . Nah, I thought not. I know how it works. They don’t even tell you till you get there.³

Within the first minute of your run, you are presented with some important information about the narrative world and your role in it. Sound effects, such as the helicopter noise and the radio voice, establish the architecture of the narrative space in a similar fashion to standard audio dramas. You also understand within the first minutes that the female voice is addressing you, setting up immediately that you are playing a character in the world of Zombies, Run! The developers employ what they call “the classic ‘protagonist can’t speak’ moment,”⁴ giving you a reason not to answer the pilot’s questions—you are on a secret mission that may be so secret that even you do not know what it is.

    There is a hiss from a communication device. The pilot says:

    Abel Township, Abel Township. This is Jolly Alpha Five Niner from Mullins Military Base bringing in med supplies, some backpacks, some shelters, and the temporary loan of one of our people . . . requesting permission to land.

You hear the hissing again, and a male voice answers:

    VOICE: Yeah, got that. I mean uh roger that, you’re clear to… um… yeah, you can come on in.
    PILOT: Roger Abel Township. Heading down now. (To the runner) I can see clear as day we haven’t got half the supplies we usually bring. Yeah, I know. You don’t know anything. Project Greenshoot? Need to know basis? A briefing to follow at Abel.

Sorry, I couldn’t help hearing when you boarded. And then you’ll find out what your mission really is.

You have now received a narrative hook that gives you a reason to continue: what is Project Greenshoot and why are you in a helicopter flying toward Abel Township?

You hear gunfire.

PILOT: ...the hell? They’re shooting. That’s not coming from the township. Who the hell has a rocket launcher in this sector? (Sound of explosion.) We’re hit. I’ve lost the tail rotor. Mayday, Mayday, Mayday! Jolly Five Niner is going down three miles east of the township, two souls on board. Aircraft is gray with black lettering and trim. We’re going in hard! Brace, brace, brace!

VOICE: Ohh, they’re going down fast. Holy moly. Can any of you hear us? Open your chutes. Jump, jump! (Sounds of wind in chute. Sound of a loud crash some distance away.) Hey, hey. This is Abel Township calling. Over. They’re not answering. Their comms equipment could have been fried. (Sounds of wind whipping a parachute and then something crashing through branches.)

So far, while you have been running, your character has ridden in a helicopter, parachuted out from the crashing helicopter, and landed forcefully in a tree. The game developers explain that they “wanted to drop you into the middle of the action, to set up a lot of questions and drama, to give you a reason to be running for your life the first time you went out.”

Although your character in the game’s missions is primarily engaged in running, he or she occasionally engages in other activities, often in locations and situations that involve a leap of the imagination.

Although the game is marketed as a tool that makes you “run for your life from the zombie hordes!” the game’s motivational techniques are more complex than that. Within the narrative, the protagonist that you play must run to save the lives of other characters, to discover supplies,

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5 Ibid.
to find out secrets, and to do much more. By embodying the emotional as well as the physical state of the character, you may find yourself taking your role in the narrative world quite seriously.

The first segment of Mission 1 ends with the male voice saying:

Listen. If you’re alive, if there’s anyone alive, this is Sam Yao from Abel Township. I’m just a, huh, I’m just a radio operator, man. I’m not supposed to handle this stuff. You’ve come down in a nest of hostiles. They’ve heard the noise. They’re coming. There are thirty, no forty, no… oh crap. Uh, your only safe path is towards the tower. You should be able to see that from where you are. If there’s anyone alive there, just run! (sounds of moaning zombies) Run!

Up to this point the game has immersed you within a virtual world, disconnected from your actual location and actions. This is the first time in the game that you have the opportunity to connect the actual and virtual worlds. Here, Sam gives two commands that serve an orienting function to the game. First, he draws your attention to a physical location in the virtual space, allowing you to find an analog in actual space. Sam then directs you to, “Run!” This is the inciting incident of the entire Zombies, Run! series. In a game about running, you have your first narratively motivated reason to run, thus joining your physical action (you have probably been physically running since you pressed play) with that of your character.

The game also uses reward elements: in every mission, the user gains items that she can use to build her own online Abel Township. Lead Developer at Six to Start, Alex Macmillan, explains that Head Writer, Naomi Alderman, “gave the script a sense of place using generic features that you might see on your own skyline.” She hoped that this would allow connections between objects and locations in the game and in the real world. For example, when Sam mentions a tower, Alderman hopes that there is a building nearby you will turn toward. “At the very least, [Six to Start] hopes this prevents the mention of landmarks from jarring with your real-world experience.” Six to Start and Alderman, The Runner’s Guide, 55.
In the subsequent segments, you begin to get to know two of the main characters in the game: Sam Yao, who is framed as a kind, funny, awkward person who feels like he is out of his element; and Dr. Maxine Meyers, who immediately demands that you prove your worth by retrieving valuable medical supplies from a zombie-infested, abandoned hospital. Sam and Dr. Meyers exchange dialogue throughout the first mission that is alternately urgent, funny, and poignant. This relationship is further developed throughout the series, becoming one that inspires discussion fanfiction and artwork in online forums and blogs.

It is Sam who reveals to you the information that your name will be “Runner 5,” the prior Runner 5 having died in the hospital toward which you are now running. Although you are new to the game, your place in the narrative world has been established by the dead character’s role you are now needed to fill. Sam tells you about the old Runner 5:

She was so fast. Really funny. And clever. Me and her we sort of… (sighs) She was amazing. But, hey, you could be our new Runner 5! If you make it back alive.

Sam’s revelation that he and the old Runner 5 were involved romantically introduces the first personal tragedy of many in the game. It also sets up the possibility of a close relationship between you and Sam, now that you carry the loaded name, “Runner 5.”

The game developers carefully constructed the role of Runner 5 to be flexible, ready to be filled with any body. The gender, sexuality, race, and physical ability are never referred to. This allows you to cast Runner 5 with your own body—with either your own identity or with an imaginary character you design for the role. Runner 5 is often referred to as reliable and trustworthy and is assigned some of the most dangerous missions in the story, but Alderman left out any reference to the character’s speed or fitness level. Later in Mission 1, Sam mentions that because most zombies do not run very quickly, anyone who “has two legs and can go above a
slow shamble” can perform effectively as a runner. This clarification opens up the immersive roleplaying of Runner 5 to users of the app who are new to running or who are otherwise limited physically.

In the final segment of Mission 1, you are urged to run as fast as possible—a vicious and unusually fast zombie is right behind you, “moaning and growling with rage.” Sam has recognized the zombie as the previous Runner 5, and Dr. Myers comforts Sam as the soldiers of Abel Township shoot her through the head. As you safely enter the gates of Abel, you hear the voices of the residents who are surrounding you, peppering you with questions:

VOICE 1: Do you want some water?
VOICE 2: What were you doing in that helicopter anyway?
VOICE 3: Did you bring any food? Any canned food? Dried food?

The mission ends as an unknown voice whispers to someone, “You think that’s who they’ve assigned? For Project Greenshoot?” This ending should provide you with many questions about what will happen in the following missions. You begin setting up narrative expectations about those missions, based on your knowledge of serial narratives.

Flexible media

_Zombies, Run!_ is not easy to categorize, and this ambiguity affects the interpretive codes that users bring to make sense of the experience. _Zombies, Run!_ is marketed as a game and as a fitness app. However, these two categories alone cannot encompass the interpretive experience of the audience. While performing the role of Runner 5, I found myself accessing prior knowledge of multiple media and artistic forms in order to make sense of _Zombies, Run!_ The

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9 Ibid., 66.
game contains structures that are similar to other forms. For example, the serial narrative has elements in common with television dramas, the rich audio soundscape calls to mind radio plays, and the musical sequences are not unlike movie montage. Rich Altman explains that new technologies are initially created to “conform to the codes established by already existing technologies.”\textsuperscript{10} He says that each new media form begins its life with a “crisis of identity” in which the naming of it is difficult.\textsuperscript{11} Instead, it serves as an extension of different existing forms. J. David Bolter and Richard A. Grusin argue that new media forms remediate older forms.\textsuperscript{12} By refashioning familiar media forms, creators of newer forms allow audiences to rely on previous interpretations to make sense of what is new.

I can argue similarity among \textit{Zombies, Run!} and various other forms, and yet I must also acknowledge that other individuals will not necessarily recognize or understand these structures the way that I do. They may, due to their own knowledge and experience, be able to find similarities between \textit{Zombies, Run!} and other media and modes of which I am unaware. I recognize that the interpretive strategy that I primarily applied to \textit{Zombies, Run!}, theatre, results from my education and interests. This interpretive specificity became clear to me when I analyzed the surveys I conducted of over one hundred users. I found a variety of interpretations that differed greatly from mine.

Users categorize the app differently based on their own interests, uses, and ways of reading the different generic elements. This flexibility in the understanding of the work allows for cross connections with other media, which alter the experience for individual users. It is this

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  \item[11] Ibid., 19.
\end{itemize}
ambiguity of definition that draws me to define the notion of a flexible medium. Novels, films, paintings, and pop songs are usually easy to identify and categorize as media forms, and they are interpreted by each reader, audience member, or viewer using a set of interpretive codes learned over a lifetime. In contrast, a flexible medium is a form that has no existing interpretive framework; rather, it requires users to recognize elements within it that are similar to other media forms. Thus, users must synthesize multiple interpretive frameworks to make sense of an experience with the flexible media work. Each audience member will define the work differently, and her or his experience will differ greatly. I have derived the term flexible media in part from the idea of hypermedia—a term that originally comes from computing, meaning “a mixture of media.” In the essay “Theatre as the Art of the Performer and the Stage of Intermediality,” Chiel Kattenbelt describes theatre as a hypermedium—one that not only represents but also stages other mediums. In a staged work, a spectator recognizes the layering of different media forms: dramatic text, acting, and design elements that include the modification of bodies and space through costumes, sets, lights, sound, and perhaps video projections. The spectator also incorporates into his or her understanding the entire sensorium of the experience and the other guests in attendance, as well as the size, shape, and location of the theatre.

As a hypermedium, theatre becomes, “a platform for other media to perform on. Media therefore become visible as media, as means of communication, each with their own materialities, medialities and conventions of perception.” I want to expand upon the idea of a

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14 Kattenbelt, “Theatre as the Art of the Performer and the Stage of Intermediality,” 32.
15 Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink and Sigrid Merx, “Presence and Perception: Analysing Materialities, Medialities and Conventions of Perception,” in Mapping Intermediality and Performance, edited
hypermedium to include works that need not necessarily include the medium itself (if, for example, we define the medium of film, by the material film itself). Rather, I argue that the experiential codes of interpretation that are embedded within the medium are a useful way to view performance as a flexible medium. For example, *Zombies, Run!* contains no moving images, and yet I argue that it prompts users to draw on understandings of film viewing in order to interpret the experience.

Like a theatrical work, *Zombies, Run!* incorporates other mediums and requires the audience to synthesize information from dramatic text, vocal performance, space, sight, and chance encounters. However, unlike theatre, which has thousands of years of historical conventions with which to shape our understanding of it, *Zombies, Run!* has no such clear history. Thus, the game is flexible in that audiences have more latitude in interpreting what it is, where it comes from, and what existing modes it incorporates.

Audio drama, developed in conjunction with radio broadcasting, is only a century old, and is thus a fairly recent example of a flexible media form. Audio drama is also one of the most identifiable predecessors to *Zombies, Run!* In the following section, I analyze this antecedent to *Zombies, Run!* in order to demonstrate how artists and audiences use prior knowledge of artistic and entertainment forms in developing new, medium-specific genres. I also demonstrate how radio and audio drama helped to form the ways that we listen today.

by Sarah Bay-Cheng, Chiel Kattenbelt, and Andy Lavender, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 225.
Radio

Tim Crook says that it is “generally agreed” that the first drama written specifically for the radio was Richard Hughes’s *A Comedy of Danger*, transmitted by the BBC on January 15, 1924.\(^{16}\) Hughes, a novelist rather than a playwright, took advantage of the unique aspects of the radio medium and set out to write a drama that would serve as a contrast to popular theatre of the time.\(^{17}\) In *A Comedy of Danger*, Hughes used the medium to structure the way that the audience understood their role as audience for the narrative. Remote listeners differ practically from local audiences—actors are unaware of who is listening, if indeed anyone is, when performing for remote audiences. Hughes foregrounded this difference by framing the audience as eavesdroppers to the characters’ conversations.

The audience for *A Comedy of Danger* was advised to listen in the dark in order to simulate blindness. Radio producer Ian Rodger writes that lighted rooms allowed visual distractions that detracted from the “scene being fed into their ears.”\(^{18}\) As David Goodman notes, visual representations of radio listeners reinforce the idea that people sat around radios, carefully listening to broadcasts, “engaging the radio with their eyes as well as their ears as they gaze respectfully, lovingly, delightedly at it.”\(^{19}\) But by the 1930s, as Goodman explains, most radio listening was “distracted listening.” Many people listened to radio while doing other things, like housework, bathing, knitting, talking, playing cards, and doing farm work.\(^{20}\) Producers of *A

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\(^{18}\) Ibid., 15.


\(^{20}\) Ibid., 21.
Comedy of Danger were reasonable in assuming that uncontrollable visual stimuli could change the way audiences understood the narrative.

Radio has become a portable and customizable medium that has shaped an understanding of aural entertainment for new media forms in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The necessary conditions for communicating orally over long distances without the benefit of visual complement shaped descriptive, engaging, and intimate modes of communicating through audio drama, the crooner, and sports broadcasting. Radio listening has changed over time; the addition of the internet as a way to download and stream audio content, as well as the MP3 player and smartphone as a means to make this content mobile, has provided more customizable ways to listen.

The podcast has led to a resurgence of interest in audio dramas. Podcasts resemble early radio experimentation in that they are produced and shared by individuals who have no ties to broadcast networks and are not subject to regulation by the Federal Communications Commission. Many podcasts also resemble serialized radio programs of the past in that new episodes are released on scheduled dates and times. They differ, however, in that listeners can stream them at will or download and play them later, one at a time or one after another. In their early years, radio and television relied on single broadcasts to mass audiences who listened or watched at the same time; audiences of today, in contrast, have the ability to watch or listen to programs on demand, which changes the way that audiences function as a collective.

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In his famous manifesto “The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication,” Bertolt Brecht lamented the use of radio as a one-way communication device. The technology was capable of being used for two-way communication as Brecht suggested (and as it is used today among truckers and police dispatchers), however, rather than serving as a networked communication device between and among the masses, radio was primarily a medium that distributed content from radio stations to users. In this way, as Brecht noted, radio became “a substitute for theatre, opera, lectures,” or another means of transmitting content to home audiences. Radio became a method of disseminating the spoken word, much of it narrative-based. Radio listening was not so much a replacement for theatre, opera, and lectures, but it served as a method for experiencing these things privately, within the domestic sphere rather than out in public. In contrast, as listening became portable (when the transistor radio was sold in the 1950s and the boombox in the 1980s), and then as it became more individualized (with popularization of the Walkman in the 1980s and the iPod in the early 2000s), it became something that brought the private sphere into public life.

Broadcasting companies still control the radio waves, but now individuals can podcast their own content on the internet. While podcasting is closer to Brecht’s ideal for networked communication, the realm of internet forums is the way that listeners have found a greater ability to network. Online communities allow users to gather in cyberspace and discuss ideas about a shared interest. I contend that it is through the networked way that listeners listen to and

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22 Bertolt Brecht and John Willett, *Brecht on Theatre : The Development of an Aesthetic*, 2nd ed. (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), 51.
24 See Bull, *Sound Moves*. 
contribute to today’s audio dramas that Brecht’s vision of the networked communication of radio comes into play. In the following section, I will discuss how that Zombies, Run! allows users to engage with the work on an emotional level, inviting networked fan participation.

Emotional Engagement

Running

Running games of all sorts have become popular over the past few years. In his blog, Hon mentions Seek 'n Spell, Pac-Manhattan, Journey to the End of the Night, and Pokewalker.25 Running plays a different role in each of these games. For example, Seek 'n Spell, a smartphone app, assigns letters in different locations on a map that reflects the surrounding environment. An individual runs to each location, where the GPS-enabled software allows her or him to collect the letters virtually. The player then uses the letters to spell words for points, competing with other players.26 Seek 'n Spell motivates the user to run longer distances by requiring the player to travel to many physical locations to play the game. Pac-Manhattan is a live-action version of the video game Pac-Man that uses cellular connections, Wi-Fi, and custom software. Pac-Man and the ghosts, played by a group of runners, are tracked from a central location and their progress broadcast over the internet for viewers from around the world.27 Though both games involve active group gameplay, Pac-Manhattan also serves as a performance for outside observers. Hon believes Zombies, Run! is unique among gamified running apps and running-based games in that

his game is “about running,” rather than merely using running as part of the mechanism for gameplay. This concern for the act of running contributed to the elements of the game, its components, and its story, all of which emphasize the importance of the performance of the user, more so than in other games that involve running. In Zombies, Run!, running becomes the means to enact the story, as Runner 5 is encouraged to evade zombies, collect needed supplies, and save other characters.

Hon intended Zombies, Run! to be used by those whose primary interest in the application is running and whose secondary interest is gaming or narrative consumption. Now that the app has been released, has acquired over one million users, and is being used by a variety of audients, it has become clear that those who use Zombies, Run! do so for different reasons. Some view it as primarily a fitness app—a tool that helps motivate them to run and that keeps track of their progress. Other users are primarily interested in the story, treating the work like a radio play. What is consistent throughout a variety of user experiences is the importance of physical movement and the body and mind’s reaction to this movement, which shape the user’s understanding of the story.

The act of running puts audients in charged states that differ based on the abilities of each runner. Experienced runners may feel the freedom of flying through space, confidence in their ability to outrun zombies, and the pleasure of endorphins attaching to brain receptors. This elation offers a different emotional context for the actions and identity of Runner 5 than the

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28 Hon. “The Route to Zombies, Run!”
29 Not all Zombies, Run! users run; some report skating, brisk walking, bike riding, and other activities such as using stationary machines in the gym. Users discuss their experiences on various online forums, including Tumblr, Facebook, and Reddit.
feelings of exhaustion, discomfort, pain, or even nausea that are likely to accompany less experienced runners. In the following sections, I demonstrate a reciprocal relationship among the different elements of the game: running, narrative, location, and music all work together to create emotional engagement for the user.

Music

The creators of Zombies, Run! express an understanding of the impact that listening to music can have on the experience of running and on the emotional engagement with the story, saying “Music is one of the best ways to motivate yourself while exercising, so that’s why we made it a central part of the game.” Research indicates that listening to music while exercising changes the way that the brain perceives feelings of fatigue and makes the experience of extreme exertion more pleasurable. Tia DeNora describes music as a technology that has the ability to extend what bodies can accomplish independently. In her study on music used in aerobics

30 Lisa Gauvin and W. Jack Rejeski use their Exercise-Induced Feeling Inventory (EFI) to conclude that increases in sympathetic activity that come with physical activity, “can produce feelings of being refreshed or alive.” Due to reduced electromyographic activity and increased alpha power in the electroencephalograph during exercise, they propose that exercise leads to enjoyment. Finally, they explain that exercise causes fatigue due to “thermal discomfort, the depletion of metabolic resources, respiratory distress, and sensations originating from the joints.” “The Exercise-Induced Feeling Inventory: Development and Initial Validation,” Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology 15, no. 4 (1993): 405. Panteleimon Ekkekakis and Steven J. Petruzzello question the generalizability of the data from the EFI. They argue that it would not give accurate data for what those who are physically limited would experience during exercise. They also question the comprehensiveness of merely measuring positive feelings. “Analysis of the Affect Measurement Conundrum in Exercise Psychology: II. A Conceptual and Methodological Critique of the Exercise-Induced Feeling Inventory,” Psychology of Sport and Exercise 2, no. 1 (2001): 5–6.


33 DeNora, Music in Everyday Life, 103.
classes, she demonstrates the ways that musical tempo, “provides a model for bodily action.”

Six to Start initially planned to compose an original track for the first musical break in the game—the first time the player runs from zombies. In the end, the game’s designers decided to let users choose their own musical playlists. This element of the game provides a way for users to customize the experience, choosing the music that enhances the type of emotional engagement they are seeking. Although the creators expressed a preference for “heavy rock drums and high octane distorted guitar,” they acknowledge that the “weird juxtaposition” of songs in a random playlist with the story and location can lead to unique engagements with the game. In his work on sound in cinema, Michel Chion explains that music that “participates in cultural codes for things like sadness, happiness, and movement,” can heighten the emotions of the narrative. He calls this type of music empathetic. However, he argues that anempathetic music, which is conspicuously different from the emotional tone of a scene, can also emphasize that scene’s tone by conveying a sense of “cosmic indifference.”

The musical interludes that the developers placed in Zombies, Run! are structured into the narrative as moments when Runner 5 is too busy running and those speaking are too busy with another activity. The pauses are not meant to be breaks in the narrative in the same way that commercials are generally breaks in television shows. The music chosen by the user functions as a non-diegetic soundtrack. The tempo, lyrics, and tone, as well as the associations users have with the songs, shape their emotional state of mind as they run. Consequently, this changes the emotional state of each Runner 5 as her or she enacts the narrative. This is significant because

34 Ibid., 100.
36 Chion, Audio-Vision, 8.
when the narrative continues after each musical break, the runner’s understanding of Runner 5 and the shape of the narrative arc is shaped by the music she has been listening to.

*Zombies, Run!* users’ familiarity with the soundtracks used in films and (possibly) video games impacts their understanding of the music in the game. Rob Munday discusses the many uses of music in video games. One quality that Munday argues music adds to video games is “mythic immersion.” He explains that as players control their avatars within the game, the music provides an “epic feeling” that creates a more immersive experience.37 This idea is echoed in comments from the game’s creators. Alderman explains that while writing the narrative, she listened to the same music that she often listened to at the gym “to get [herself] into that mindset.”38 In *The Runner’s Guide*, Six to Start shares their original wish to place an epic song in the first narrative break. Though they are open to non-epic music, they do offer suggestions as to which music might work best. *The Runner’s Guide* features lists of songs provided by each of the game’s creators that they prefer to play while running with *Zombies, Run!* Each creator lists a variety of different songs that indicate a desire for very different running experiences, suggesting that different runners require different soundtracks to achieve mythic immersion. By conveying this to users, the creators emphasize the choices that each player can make when creating the role of Runner 5 and impacting the tone of the narrative.

**Emotional Investment**

Runners are likely to become invested—physically and emotionally—in the narrative world with help from the music and the act of running. *Zombies, Run!* becomes an immersive audio drama in which each runner inhabits the role of the protagonist Runner 5. The runners have a complicated relationship to the game while running: they are conditioned as audience members of films, television, and video games. Thus, they can apply the music as a filmic soundtrack, anticipate peaks and valleys in the action of a serial narrative, and play the avatar of the protagonist as they would in a video game. Consumers of *Zombies, Run!* accustomed to the safe and isolated world of screened media and digital avatars must engage their own bodies within the actual spaces of the world, a way that bridges reality and fantasy. The physical performance of the role enhances the emotional impact of the episodes.

Users of *Zombies, Run!* who participate in online communities centered on the game frequently discuss their favorite missions, sharing their reactions to some of the more emotional missions on internet forums and blogs. For example, in Mission 9: “A Voice in the Dark,” the most popular and discussed mission among fans, Sam Yao is speaking over the radio at night. He has lost track of Runner 5 and doubts that he or she is still alive. Sam sadly speaks of his past, of his parents whom he was forced to kill when they contracted the ZN1 virus and turned into zombies, and of his sister whose fate is unknown. He slowly and quietly says, “If you are still alive Runner 5, run home.”

When fans of *Zombies, Run!* discuss Mission 9 on internet forums and blogs, they do not mention how many miles they ran or how many personal records they beat during the mission. They do, however, talk about how much they wanted to give Sam a hug, how they fell in love

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39 Six to Start and Alderman, *Zombies, Run!: Season 1.*
with Sam, and how they cried so much that passersby stopped to see if they were all right. Some say that they ran simply because they wanted to get back home to Sam so he would stop worrying. When I searched the Tumblr blogging site for posts tagged with “Mission 9,” I found many strong reactions by runners. One player, whose Tumblr name is Eto, says, “THEY TOLD ME THIS GAME WAS CALLED ZOMBIES, RUN! NOT WALK DOWN THE SIDEWALK AND CRY OVER SAM YAO. GOD I AM SO UPSET SSAM [sic] I AM ALIVE PLEASE DON’T GIVE UP HOPE SAM.”40 Another, Jonna, says, “Okey [sic], I have only one reason NOT to buy the Zombie, Run app… It’s freaking DANGEROUS to run while sobbing like a maniac!”41 The emotions that some users experience when they perform Runner 5 come out expressively online in comments like those above as well as in the creative works they produce and share.

The Survey

Gathering Data

My analysis of Zombies, Run! relies heavily on my own embodied experiences. In order to broaden my understanding of other ways of using and experiencing the app, I surveyed more than one hundred users. In recruiting possible survey respondents, I did not seek to find typical users in order to generalize about an average experience of Zombies, Run! Rather, I sought out

40 Eto, “They Told Me This Game Was Called Zombies Run!...” February 26, 2013, accessed May 1, 2013, http://etosaurus.tumblr.com/post/44093991891/they-told-me-this-game-was-called-zombies-run.
those who are invested in the game, particularly those who play avidly, run frequently, and participate openly in forums, blogs, and other web communities. I posted a link to the survey on Tumblr and Facebook, hoping to elicit responses from fans of the work.

The definition of *fan* varies among scholars. Claudia Rebaza points out the complexity of the definition; it has an older meaning—an enthusiast or devotee—but media studies often examines fans in terms of their activities and of the communities they form. Rebaza asks, “Are media fans actually fans of an activity such as watching television or reading a book? Or are they fans of a particular text?” Rebaza suggests that the latter is the case, noting the centrality of the “continual negotiations regarding what is considered ‘canon.’”

However, though fans use single texts as the topic and jumping-off point for discussions and fan production, many fans move through different fandoms over time and are involved in many fandoms at the same time. John Tulloch and Henry Jenkins use the terms *followers* and *fans*, placing them on a spectrum in which people can fall based on levels of devotion and involvement.

When deciding how to recruit volunteers to survey, I suspected that Tumblr and Facebook would provide me with the type of *Zombies, Run!* users that wished to be connected to

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a community of other users. Tumblr is a blogging site that is often used by communities of fans to communicate with each other. They discuss the plot, express emotions, leak spoilers, and post fan creations such as fan fiction, fan art, videos, photo sets, gifs, and more. Tumblr users “follow” each other by subscribing to others’ blog feeds. Through these typically friendly and supportive interactions, users create communities based on shared interest in activities and mutual devotion to the source text, thus expanding the world of the original text and creating deeper engagement for fans. I was interested in the users of Zombies, Run! who participate in the Tumblr community because of the imaginative and immersive ways that these fans perform and extend the text. These activities, I hypothesized, could expand the possibilities for becoming an audient for Zombies, Run!

Tumblr has a non-centralized format that provides a more synthetic experience. Although Zombies, Run! has an official Tumblr page, users do not need to visit it in order to share information with each other. By following a blend of official and fan feeds, users synthetically create their own “dashboard” where posts from multiple sources appear. Users are free to “follow” and “unfollow” blogs at will, customizing their dashboard content. Additionally, Tumblr users can conduct a search for specific tags to find specialized content. In order to allow users to find the link to my survey, I tagged my post with words and phrases such as, “Zombies Run,” “Runner 5,” “Sam Yao,” “ZRS1,” and “Zombies Run fanfic.”

Facebook, though somewhat similar to Tumblr in its structure of centralized pages that users can “like” in order to follow them on their feeds, is not used in the same way by fans. Tumblr users tend to be either anonymous or stylized versions of themselves. They create made-up monikers that change frequently and use pictures of favorite characters from movies, TV,
comic books, and games as their avatars, in contrast with Facebook users, who tend to display their real names and photographs of themselves. By posting a link on the official Zombies, Run! Facebook page, I surmised that I would communicate with fans who were not active in fan communities. I decided that this would provide me a mix of different types of fans who engage frequently and differently with the game.

My analysis of fan responses is not intended to represent the experience of the average user. Rather, I seek to explicate many singular uses that can demonstrate the way Zombies, Run! depends on individual users to apply their own sets of interpretive frameworks to their experiences. Zombies, Run! contains elements from different media and modes of knowledge transmission. Users make sense of the experience through an understanding of these different elements. By elements, I mean all aspects of the work, such as the way the app is downloaded to a smartphone, the way that users access the work through headphones, the style of the voice acting, and any other aspect that users could experience or interpret. By associating elements of Zombies, Run! to other types of work, users are able to navigate the complex relationships to other media and genres that allow them to categorize and understand their experiences. However, an ability to understand the work in various ways based on preexisting knowledge and experience of media, genres, symbols, and repertoires, does not necessitate an active, imaginative engagement with an object.

There are some users of Zombies, Run! who choose to experience the game through an active engagement with both the work itself and other users. I am studying primarily users of Zombies, Run! who frequent message boards and blogs dedicated to the game. They produce fan fiction, art, videos, photos, and other creative products, which they then share with others and
jointly consume. These activities change the way they relate to the game and change the ways that others relate to the game as they flesh out the story world.

**Interpreting Data**

All 112 respondents who filled out the survey liked the game and played frequently, and all but one person identified as a “fan.” To the question, “How often do you use the Zombies, Run! app?” respondents’ answers ranged from “a few times a month” to “every day.” About 80 percent of those surveyed claimed to use the game between one and five times a week, and no one answered, “rarely.”

There were strong similarities among users in how often they used the app and in their descriptions of what they did and did not like about the app. As I had predicted, the data suggested a rough division between fans that actively participated in fan communities and those that did not. These differences were apparent in how users described their experience of the game, how they perceived the game, how their surroundings affected their usage, and how they responded emotionally. When asked about how they would primarily categorize the app, almost all users preferred to use a combination of various media and genre types. A few expressed a need for multiple terms because “there’s nothing else quite like it.” When forced to choose only one term to define the primary function, users showed preferences for the narrative aspects of the app as a serial narrative or game, with 54 percent choosing the label “story” and 26 percent choosing “game.” Only 13 percent of respondents chose “tool.”

No matter how the respondents categorized the app, the way they experienced Zombies, Run! differed primarily in whether they experienced the app through a fully embodied

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44 I did not ask users when they had started using Zombies, Run!, though the app had been out for eighteen months for iOS devices and fourteen months for Android devices at the time of the survey.
perspective (immersed within the physical world) or experienced the narrative within a virtual world that they pictured in their minds.

Phenomenologist Don Ihde, author of *Listening and Voice*, describes an exercise that he conducts with his students to illustrate the polyphony of “inner experience.” In response to Ihde’s prompt to imagine themselves doing something that they had not experienced before, one of his students chooses to imagine himself jumping from an airplane. The student describes how he “‘feels’ the rush of air on his face; he ‘sees’ the ground rushing up to meet him; he ‘hears’ the airplane receding in the distance.” While this student imagines this scenario “‘in’ and ‘from’ his own body,” another student describes the same scenario from outside his own body. In his imagination, he sees himself jump from the plane and watches from the distance as he falls to the ground. One experience is embodied and the other is objectified. Audients of *Zombies, Run!* described their experiences of the game along a spectrum of embodiment and objectification. I found it useful to categorize runners into two groups: *Performers* and *Imaginers*: Performers embody the role of Runner 5, and Imaginers observe the character of Runner 5.

I fall into the Performer category. For Performers, the physical immersion of their bodies in the story is important to their emotional engagement with the narrative and thus to their enjoyment. When I listened to *Zombies, Run!* while running, I took on the role of Runner 5. When I listened elsewhere—while sitting in a chair in my office, for example—I still felt like a

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46 Ibid.
Performer, imaginatively embodying the role of Runner 5. However, when I ran while listening, I felt the boundaries blur between real life and fiction. When Sam Yao asked Runner 5 to complete a task, I imagined him speaking to me and felt the urgency of the request, usually running faster. When Runner 5 was in danger, I worried about my own safety. The respondents in the Performer group expressed a desire to enact the role of Runner 5. Some of the fans that I surveyed explained that Runner 5 feels like a stronger, faster, braver version of themselves, perhaps what they might be like in a post-apocalyptic world, transformed by circumstance.

I simply love being a character in the story. Usually when I read I like to imagine myself as the main character. In this, I AM the main character, and it’s awesome. (Natasha, 23, Melbourne)

I’m an actress and a cosplayer, so I love that I have this role to play while running, it gives me a different POV or “environment.” I like wearing a Z,R shirt to go with it so I could really get into character. (Marisol)

I’m the actor in a play all around me. (Skyler)

My survey indicated, however, that not all users experience the app in the same way. Five percent of respondents claimed that they do not take on the role of Runner 5 when they run and thus feel more like spectators, and 47 percent claimed to feel like they function as performers and as audience members who drift in and out of embodied immersion.

It’s much more like being immersed in a novel or video game as a participant than it is like putting on a performance for others. (Patricia, 41, Canada)

I don’t identify with the character… Runner 5 has no personality besides competence. Runner 5 is simply a camera eye. (Charlie)

Neither Patricia nor Charlie takes on the role of Runner 5. Patricia implied that Runner 5 is another character like any other that she listens to (or about) in the narrative, and
Charlie indicated that Runner 5 is merely a narrative device through which to hear the story.

Despite the different forms of engagement users take on, and despite the different categories they attempt to apply to the game, these users still fit into a range of performer and audience behaviors. Those with interests and backgrounds in theatre and performance sometimes admitted that their previous experiences with the game were framed by their knowledge of theatre.

So I used to act and I was really big on getting the opportunity to play a role in an adventure, science fiction, or fantasy movie and that is a really rare opportunity to get. Not only do you get to do that with Runner 5, but you get to create your own idea of who you are. (Kendall)

It’s like watching good performance art, but as I said before, you get to be a part of it. You get a rush from being the centre of attention (in the app story) and having to perform. It’s similar to playing an instrument or acting in that way. (Echo, 25, British Columbia)

For Kendall, enacting Runner 5’s adventure and acting in a movie are the same type of activity. In this perspective, acting is determined by the actions of the actor rather than the experiences of an audience watching the performance. Echo also feels like the subject of someone’s gaze, though it is not clear whose. She noted that she feels like spectator and compared playing Zombies, Run! to “watching.”

Alexa, a twenty-five-year old customer care representative from Ohio, explored her ideas about audience agency among different media and genres in her response to my query about the similarity of Zombies, Run! to other activities she enjoys.

Funnily enough, my Z,R! experience is very different from most of the activities I enjoy . . . it comes closest to video games or novels—stories that I consume and worlds that I explore. Whereas theatre and acting and role-playing are active activities, worlds and
ideas you create for yourself and seek to inhabit in a sense, video games and novels are much more passive. You take what is given into yourself, and if you let it, it can change you. . . . in similarities, it’s a world that I can step into and explore and consume and learn about. It transports me to an alternate life from my own, into a world where the protagonists have clearly defined goals and know what they’re aiming for. It’s an escape. But it’s different in that it asks me to become an active participant, to put myself into the game. (Alexa, 25, Ohio)

Alexa’s response reveals the way that Zombies, Run! is difficult to categorize. She initially places Zombies, Run! into a category with video games and novels, which she identifies with consumption, exploration, and passivity. These traits contrast with those of “theatre and acting,” which she identifies with creation, immersion, and action. But later in her response, she comes to describe herself as an “active participant” in Zombies, Run!, admitting to the ways that she can create within and inhabit the game. Alexa’s comment reveals the complexities with which one can view one’s role and actions in the game.

Many participants commented that they felt as if they do not perform when then play Zombies, Run!, because no one is watching them, and because they are detached from their surroundings, immersed in the fictional world. However, I argue that the effects of the players on their surroundings and vice versa are stronger than may be apparent. People around them view them and read their affect. Similar arguments have been made by sound scholars Jean-Paul Thibaud and Brandon LaBelle. Thibaud contends that bodies that listen to headphones move to the music and contribute “a new tonality the city street.” Brandon Labelle cites Thibaud in his

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48 Sally Harrison-Pepper, in her work on Central Park street performance, claims that one cannot separate the street art from the urban environment because the city is constantly influencing perception and reception. Sally Harrison-Pepper, *Drawing a Circle in the Square: Street Performing in New York’s Washington Square Park* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990).

49 Thibaud, “The Sonic Composition and the City,” 329.
argument that the gait of a pedestrian, “marks out in an expressive manner the meeting point of private listening and public space.”\textsuperscript{50} The content of \textit{Zombies, Run!} changes the mood of the audient, which changes the behavior of the audient, which thus changes the tonality of the space through the audient’s resulting actions. For example, if terrifying sounds scare an audient, he or she may look frightened and glance around quickly. Others may pick up on this energy of fear and apprehension, mimicking it and passing it on.

Despite the possibility that their performances of Runner 5 affect those around them, most users still feel like they are being unobserved. Christine, Cameron, Shannon, and Lily explained that it is the lack of an observing audience that they find appealing.

I think I enjoy it because it’s very different from being ‘on’ for an audience, which I do constantly as a teacher or performer. This app does, however, combine the type of storyline I’m interested in with an activity I usually don’t enjoy, thus making running much more fun...or at least doable. (Christine, 33, Seattle)

I think I enjoy this more because in other performance activities, there is always an audience. When there’s an audience, I always have that reminder that I’m performing for (and being judged) by others. When I’m running to \textit{Zombies, Run!} nobody else knows what I’m experiencing. It’s much more personal. I always enjoy my other performances, but with this game, it turns into my own little world that no one else can disrupt or judge. (Cameron)

It’s very internal. I’m not one for performing (even though I have a theatre background, it’s more technical than onstage). My Runner 5 is my own character in my head, it doesn’t need to be shared. (Shannon)

I love acting and role-play, but I’m terribly self-conscious about it, which limits what I do and how I do it. Z.R! is a private role-playing experience; I never have to think about how others are judging my play. (Lily)

It seems that pressure of being “on,” as Christine mentioned, has less to do with performing a role and more to do with having to meet the expectations of others. Each of

\textsuperscript{50} LaBelle, \textit{Acoustic Territories}, 98.
these four runners is open about enacting the role of Runner 5, though in a way that is not identifiable to outside audiences. Rather, it is for an audience of one—they themselves. Whether runners find the activity to be passive or active, there is disagreement and confusion about who, if anyone, is an audience in the playing of *Zombies, Run!* Though they do not explicitly define themselves as audiences for their own performances, they are, in effect, serving as their own audiences for their performances.

Some users define themselves as audience members—not for their performances of Runner 5 but for the recorded narrative in *Zombies, Run!* Indeed, users of *Zombies, Run!* are audiences of the recorded audio drama written by Naomi Alderman and performed by professional voice actors.

I quite often have thought of myself as the audience, since I’m the one listening to narratives and waiting to see how the story unfolds, as opposed to thinking of myself as the performer. (Brandon, 31, North Carolina)

Brandon models his experience of *Zombies, Run!* after that of listening to audio books and radio dramas, placing his actions during listening—running—as inconsequential to the definition of audience. The second-person address then does not necessitate that the audient identify as the character being addressed. Audients can choose to play Runner 5, act as an eavesdropper to the conversation, or take on the role of outside audience member to an audio drama.

Audients’ locations in space and their actions within it impact their interpretations of the narrative and their performances. The audient in *Zombies, Run!* is aware of his or her body’s movement through two spaces—one actual and one virtual—both created through a blend of sound, sight, architecture, and imagination. The actual
space that the *Zombies, Run!* audient’s body inhabits will vary; it could be city, suburb, or countryside, in locations anywhere in the world. The physical qualities of the space will involve what is visible, what is audible (unless the audient is wearing noise-cancelling headphones), and what is tangible within a terrain. Survey respondents reported running in the city, in the suburbs, in rural areas, in the woods, in the respondent’s neighborhood, on bike paths and hiking trails, and on treadmills at home or at the gym.

Layered over the actual space of the site of running is the virtual space that the mind and body inhabit. This space is constructed through the descriptions provided by the dialog of the characters in the recordings, as well as through sound effects such as the groans of zombies, the sound of gunfire and motorbikes, and the distant voices of people calling for Runner 5’s help. The descriptions of the fictional space and the virtually created *aural architecture* that reveals height, depth, size of space, and openness of space combine to provide an augmented reality for the user to run through. This space is produced through sound, yet also experienced through the other senses. Depending on the sounds heard in the environment and recordings heard through headphones, people on the sidewalks can seem like fellow runners, insurgents, or even zombies. And, depending on the sounds, an unidentified and unpleasant smell on a run can seem to come from toxic waste dumps or rotting corpses. The correlation between what is heard and what is seen has been discussed in film scholarship. Chion says, “We never see the same thing when we also hear.”^52 Chion’s experiments with “forced marriage,” in which he played different musical

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51 For more on aural architecture, see chapter one of this dissertation; and Blesser and Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?*, 2.
tracks over the same segment of film, allowed him to observe “points of synchronization and
moving or comical juxtapositions,” which allowed him to “begin to see the image in all its
potential signification and expression.”

Although audients can only replay the recordings and
not the exact images they see or how they feel when they run, the juxtaposition of these three
things, combined with an element of randomness, can create very different understandings of
story, movement, and place.

Most audients stated that their physical surroundings had an impact on their experience of
Zombies, Run!, though the individual reactions differed vastly. Overall, Performers tended to rely
on the setting of their runs to enhance their performances. I asked the question, “How much of an
effect does the location of your run have on your experience of the game/narrative? Please
explain.” Some users responded with “A lot,” “Lots!” and “A great effect.” Sixty percent of
respondents affirmed that their surroundings affected their emotional condition or level of
immersion in the game. An augmented reality is especially successful as a cohesive world when
the actual space and the virtual space blend harmoniously. The worlds cleave together in
moments of convergence between what is heard and seen, forming a visiophonic knot.

Thibaud, in discussing the Walkman, claims that people are highly attuned to the connections between
seeing and hearing, and thus when listening to a Walkman they notice and find pleasure in the
connections between what they hear through their headphones and what they see in the world.
Many Zombies, Run! users find pleasure in looking for and listening for visiophonic knots while
playing.

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53 Ibid., 188–9.
54 Thibaud, “The Sonic Composition of the City,” 337.
Heidi and Michelle find the game more immersive and “real” when they find moments of convergence between the actual and the virtual world. Other users explained that they enjoy running in locations that “enhance” the story.

Going for a run in a place that visually could support the idea of being in a post-apocalyptic world is really thrilling. Parks, especially forested ones, rivers, and empty streets at night add so much to the imagination. I can really pretend I’m a Runner without the distraction of other people to ruin the mystique. (D. J., 21, Texas)

If I’m in the forest, I actually creep myself out. (Katharine, 31, British Columbia)

Running outdoors, in the woods, alone, and at night are all ways that users claim to get in a charged emotional state. The setting of the run becomes a way to become further immersed in the world and to more easily take on the role of Runner 5.

Some Performers explained that they care little for the physical qualities of the surrounding environment except as they relate to time of day and weather.

The game has seriously influenced the time of day I normally run. I actually look forward to running at dusk and nightfall to add to the creepy element of the game. (Jason, 22, student from a suburb of Philadelphia)

Much more intense in the dark. (Charlotte, 21, North Carolina)

The survey respondents that expressed preference for time of day and weather referred to “mood” and “ambiance” as elements they seek that intensify their visceral reactions to Zombies, Run! and that help immerse them more in the world of the narrative.
I found that the Imaginers tended to find pleasure in creating mental images of the narrative that do not (at least from the perspective of the users) coincide with their surroundings. These users seek out the safest, most neutral environments that are free from sights, sounds, or other stimuli that will distract them from their close listening to the recorded missions. Some expressed a desire to stay away from busy streets and intersections because of the distraction of having to be mindful of safety.

I do prefer to run in the gym, because I don’t have to pay attention to things like traffic, and that lets me get more fully immersed in the narrative. I can’t be as involved with the game when running ‘in the real world’ because I have to concentrate on my surroundings. (Alison, 31, Sydney)

I do elliptical with my eyes closed so I can imagine the scenes. (Melinda, 37, New York City)

In imagining the world of the game, and in being immersed in that world, runners need very different scenarios. For some runners, being surrounded with a scenario that supported the story, such as a secluded area, a darker time of the day, or similar architectural structures as those described, allows them to feel more like they are participating in the narrative. But, for others, their own performance of the narrative is less important than the way that they can experience the story as a spectator or audience member. For this mode of experience, these users valued a less distracting environment.

In my own experience running with Zombies, Run! and acting as a Performer, I valued the setting and mood-altering lighting conditions. From my perspective as a theatre scholar who is interested in blurred boundaries between performers and spectators, it seemed that the only way to really enjoy the game was to perform Runner 5 within a world that one could imagine to
be the post-apocalyptic British countryside. After my first run I did not consider that this type of theatrical experience would be something that other fans of the game would try to avoid.

Imaginers differ from Performers in that they find pleasure in Zombies, Run! by treating the consumption and production of meaning the way they might an audio book or a radio drama; they rely on the words and the voices to let themselves imagine the rest of the sensory information in the narrative.

I’m happy to let the story take me away to another place. (Kate, 30, Australia)

My brain supplies the rest of the adventure. (Mariel, 23, Manila)

In Kate’s experience, she wants to disassociate her location from the story world, preferring to let the story distract her from the task of running. Mariel pays little attention to her surroundings because the recordings provide most of the necessary detail she requires to enjoy the story.

Some users see a connection to theatre in the way that the narrative scripts the behavior of the runner.

*Zombies, Run!* has a set story, like a script, and I have my own part I get to act out as if I were in a play. And because the character we play is intentionally left as kind of a blank, it gives us a lot to work with. (D. J., 21, Texas)

It’s great because it’s putting you in a situation where the plot is already set, but the character you play is up to you. I guess it’s a bit like improv with acting. (Helena)

Both D. J. and Helena find freedom within the structured narrative to create the character of Runner 5. Although some respondents including D. J. refered to Runner 5 as a “blank,” the character is ascribed a few qualities and traits by the creators. Other characters refer to Runner 5 as dependable, capable, and quiet, among other things. But, by having no dialogue within the narrative, the character does, as D. J. and Helena
suggest, allow for quite a bit of interpretation, more so than most characters in play scripts.

However, some users do not see the freedom that D. J. and Helena find in *Zombies, Run!*

Runner 5 isn’t a performance at all. There are no choices involved. Runner 5 is simply a first-person point of view narrative. (Charlie)

From Charlie’s perspective, the internal choices that runners can make about the character of Runner 5 and the way that runners enact the role do not constitute real, situation-altering choices. Charlie, it seems, requires users to be able to change aspects of the plot in order to be considered performers. The scripted nature of *Zombies, Run!* conveys different things to D. J. and Helena than it does to Charlie. D. J. describes the “script” as an actor would—as a starting point for the choices made in developing a character. However, Charlie sees the scriptedness of the narrative as one-directional; audiences receive the content rather than produce it.

Above, Alexa claimed that users in *Zombies, Run!* are more passive than active and that they consume more than they produce. Alexa said, “On the flip side, if you decide to, you can play a more active role as well, through participating in a fan community!” Alexa mentioned the fan community in her response, stating that it provides a way for users to engage more actively with *Zombies, Run!* Many of the respondents to my survey said that they enjoyed writing or reading fanfiction as well as creating or consuming many other forms of fan products, such as drawings, miniature figures of characters, photographs, videos, and fan-produced recorded missions. Through creating, sharing, and viewing or listening to fan products, fans create a network of performers and audiences that augment the audient opportunities already present. Fan
art as well as online discussion, gives runners a way to perform their own Runner 5 to an audience who did not witness the run itself.

Performing through Fan Production

When audience members attend a staged performance, they engage with the staged work in different modes and over different periods of time. One mode takes place during the time of the performance, when the actors act and the spectators spectate, but spectators engage with the event before and after as well. Before the performance, a spectator may read a dramaturg’s note in the program. After the performance, the spectator may read a review on the internet or discuss the production with a friend. The creation of meaning takes place over multiple time segments, places, and modes. *Zombies, Run!* offers a similar structure for experiencing the work. Audients are offered a free document called *The Runner’s Guide*, available for download from zombiesrungame.com, that provides the back story for the spread of the ZNI virus, an introduction to different characters, the bios of the game designers, and more. This optional material can foster a more informed engagement with the work, similar to what a dramaturg’s note can do for an audience member. During the performance of the work—the run—the audient takes on the role of Runner 5, performing the role and imaginatively observing the performance. And after participating in the work, the audient can engage with fan sites and produce fan art or fiction. All of these modes of engagement are part of the experience of creating individualized performances for each audient while also creating the group experience that is so like the common experience of theatre. The serial nature of *Zombies, Run!* generates a system for cycling through those performance modes, continuing the engagement.
Zombies, Run! players are audiences for the voice performers in the audio drama as well as audiences for their own performances of Runner 5; however, many seem to long for another, outside audience for their performances. Internet communities allow for these extensions of their performances as Runner 5 by providing venues for other fans to serve as an audience to their work.

Zombies, Run! has an active fan community that produces and circulates fan texts in a manner that mimics online fandoms of television shows, book and film series, and comic books. Many fan communities revolve around an episodic work—generally, the more serial in nature, the deeper the engagement of the fan. Paul Booth in his book Digital Fandom claims that the more serialized a text becomes, the more complex the narrative becomes. The more complex the narrative becomes, the more invested fans become in figuring the story out, in filling in the blanks, and in emotionally investing in the lives of the characters. Written by a novelist, Zombies, Run! is carefully crafted with larger plot arcs and smaller character arcs. In online forums, fans respond to each episode, filling in the gaps in the form of discussions, reactions, fanfiction, videos, drawings, photographs, radio plays (both scripts and recordings), and more. The fan community is held together by the continuous production of the official work, which fans use as a starting point for their narrative extensions. Unlike many fandoms that center on TV shows, movie series, comics, or games, the Zombies, Run! fandom is made up of people who are inherently cast in the work and who physically perform the actions of the main character. Fan

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55 Booth, Digital Fandom, 88.
56 Six to Start hired a television writer to contribute to the second season.
engagement, then, works as responses to and extensions of fans’ own performances, as well as being driven by an interest in experiencing the performances of others.

Forums, such as “Bunker of Feels” on Tumblr, allow fans to share their performances of *Zombies, Run!* through comments and discussion, as well as through creative production sparked by their emotional engagement with the games. For example, after running Mission 9, one Tumblr user posted her nearly eight-hundred-word response to the mission, a response that she describes as the “monologue” that was developing in her head while she was running. It is her response to Sam’s monologue, comparing their experiences, thanking him for talking to her, promising to remember him if he dies, and admitting to her fear and sadness during the run.

> It’s funny, me, with no contact to you . . . and yet I learned so much more about you than I probably ever would have in conversation.
> As I kept going forward, a slow jog, the adrenaline having long worn off and the pain of a day of running setting in, your voice rang in my ear, keeping me going.
> I was running and laughing and you were talking about the craziest things. . . .
> Then you started talking about your sister, and that Last Christmas. I couldn’t stop the tears that began to run down my face. . . .
> You asked me who will be around to remember me.
> Well, You should know that I will always be here to remember you.57

In addition to first-person accounts like the one above, users post copious amounts of fanfiction that fill in gaps in the narrative and explores relationships between different characters—building on the canon or creating alternate universes.58 Fans also create visual depictions of the world through drawings or photographs taken of themselves or others in costume.

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58 Within fan culture, *canon* refers to details from the original source text. *Alternate universe* refers to the practice of placing characters from the source text within new locations, times, or narrative situations.
Cosplay, an activity descended from anime fandom, is often practiced in fan communities, primarily in those that center on comic books and their movie adaptations or on science fiction and fantasy novels and films. *Cosplay*, a term that merges *costume* and *play*, involves dressing up in (usually) handmade costumes of favorite characters, attending fan conventions and gatherings, and taking photographs to share with other fans. The enjoyment that cosplayers receive comes partly from being the subject of an audience’s gaze. Cosplayers become the persona of the character through an embodiment of the outward physical qualities, in part because of the transformative power of the costume.59 *Zombies, Run!* fans practice various levels of cosplay. Some wear official *Zombies, Run!* T-shirts purchased from Six to Start, which produce series of men’s and women’s shirts that are offered in limited quantities. By purchasing one of the shirts and wearing it in public, users identify themselves as fans (possibly connecting to other fans they meet while wearing their shirts), and use it as a costume for Runner 5. Other users follow the more typical cosplay model and make their own costumes for Runner 5 and, sometimes, other characters in the narrative. As part of performing the role of the character being cosplayed, fans often photograph themselves performing a series of activities related to their source material. Tumblr and the website Deviant Art are two sites where fans frequently post images of themselves cosplaying. These websites host many images of different fans in self-made Runner 5 outfits. Runner 5 is usually costumed in exercise pants/shorts or military-style

59 “Cosplayers report many reasons for their interests in this creative activity, such as the pleasure of dressing up and pretending to be someone else, the obsessive desire to experience the ‘soul’ or gestalt of a beloved fictive, the craving for praise and recognition, the satisfaction of creative expression, or the fulfilled sense of belonging to a community of persons with similar interests.” David M. Higgins, “Science Fiction, 1960–2005: Novels and Short Fiction,” in *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, ed. Robin Anne Reid (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2009), 76.
cargo pants with a T-shirt or tank top. The shirts often feature “Runner 5” or “Abel Township” and sometimes are decorated with “blood” spatters, “dirt,” or rips and tears to suggest many previous difficult “missions.” These are simpler than many cosplayer costumes from other fandoms that often are expensive and highly detailed, but the resulting transformation and performance are similar.

In my view, the circulated fan creations turn *Zombies, Run!* into a transmedial work. Media studies scholar Henry Jenkins coined the term *transmedia storytelling* in 2003. He explains that through the process of transmedia storytelling, “integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.” For example, if I read a comic book about the early romance of Hamlet and Ophelia, play a video game that features the adventures of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, watch a live production of *Hamlet*, and follow Fortinbras’s Twitter feed for a week to read about the various events following his coronation, I have just experienced transmedia storytelling. Fan creations that extend a story and are dispersed across multiple platforms can transform a work into a transmedial work. *Zombies, Run!* was not created as a transmedial experience. The app is self-contained, needing nothing more than a smart phone or portable media player to convey the story. Yet, fans have made *Zombies, Run!* transmedial: anyone who accesses the information from fan communities will then interpret *Zombies, Run!* through those multiple layers of additions to the narrative world. The canon text—in this case, the app itself—is forever altered by the fan extensions for engaged fans.

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The fans of *Zombies, Run!* who produce and circulate fan texts are an odd blend of official and unofficial authors of the *Zombies, Run!* text. Fanfiction, fan vids, and fan art from other fandoms often begin with a disclaimer such as, “I am in no way associated with the creators of [name of television show, movie, comic book, etc.]. I do not own the characters and have not written this story in order to make any money.” In my study of *Zombies, Run!* fan texts, however, I have seen very few of these disclaimers. This could be because creators of *Zombies, Run!* have praised fan products from the beginning, posting links to work on the official blog. Six to Start held an official fan art contest in 2013, soliciting posters, fanfiction, scripts, art works, and recorded missions, with awards of cash prizes and the promise to include some of the works in the official *Zombies, Run!* canon. One popular writer of fanfiction named Andrea, who the writers discovered on Tumblr and referred to as “Fandrea,” was even hired and was paid to write official missions for season two. Without the support of Six to Start, the unofficial fandom would still contribute to the transmedial story world, but the acknowledgement of fan talent and inclusion into the official online presence blurs the boundaries even more between the canonical text and its fan extensions, making a complex co-created narrative that invites playful participation and performance.

In his book *Textual Poachers*, Henry Jenkins claims that after participating with a fandom, consuming and producing fan extensions, one’s future encounters with the original work will be built on this new fan-created foundation, shaping understandings and interpretations of the canonical work. There is then a circular, remediating process in which the original work serves as a basis for interpretation, which then prompts new works that serve as a basis for
interpretation of the original work, and then back around again. When fans of Zombies, Run! participate in fan communities, consuming and producing new extensions to the text and recording their performances for others, they create even more complex ways of performing and being an audience for the work.

Conclusion

I just love how this game has kind of struck out into its own category. There’s nothing else quite like it, and it is SO. GOOD. (Bailey, 29, suburban Minnesota)

Zombies, Run! is marketed as a gamified fitness app. I argue, however, that it is a much more complex product that crosses multiple media and genre boundaries. It works as an open, transmedial narrative that allows its audients to understand and create the story through performance.

The survey questions that I wrote for Zombies, Run! probed users for insight into the ways that they see themselves as performers and audiences for the game. I encouraged users to define and categorize the app and to compare it to other artistic and entertainment activities they enjoy. The results revealed the ways that the users of Zombies, Run! differ in their interests and in their understandings of different artistic genres and media forms. While I interpreted the work as clearly theatrical, not all users felt the same way.

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The two groups into which I coded users, Performers and Imaginers, delineate between different ways of understanding what Zombies, Run! is and how the content can be consumed and generated by audients. Audients access this unique, intermedial work through their prior understandings of multiple media, including games, novels, radio, television, cinema, and theatre. Due to the flexibility of Zombies, Run!, users can identify structural qualities that are similar to other forms of art or entertainment that they enjoy and with which they are familiar.

While Zombies, Run! is ototheatrical in the way that audients play—performing the role of Runner 5 or taking the position of an audience member—audients have generated new ways to extend the performance and audience opportunities. Zombies, Run! fans have extended the narrative of the game through fan fiction, fan art, fan vids, cosplay and more. These creations, circulated through the internet, turn Zombies, Run! into a transmedial, participatory narrative world that is built on and adds to performance. By attempting to record their performances through writing, drawing, or photography, and by then sharing those performances through sites like Tumblr, Fanfiction.net, and deviantart.com, audients expand the audience for their performance from the original audience of one. Further, by consuming fan production on these sites, they expand the performances they can experience.

Due to the way that Zombies, Run! resists categorization and encourages creative fan extensions, it prompts questions about the roles of performers and spectators/audience members in the age of new media. In the last decade of the twentieth century, popular culture framed virtual reality as the next innovation in entertainment and even as a mask for daily living. But the twenty-first century has provided technologies that augment reality rather than virtually covering it up. I believe that Zombies, Run! is an important antecedent for the ways that reality
augmentation can be used in future works. The game takes advantage of users’ understanding of common narrative structures among multiple media forms, as well as their understandings of various modes of performing, playing, and acting as an audience. By augmenting runners’ locations and performances, *Zombies, Run!* blurs the lines between reality and fiction, consumption and production, and performer and audience.

*Zombies, Run!* users interest me as potential theatregoers. How can theatre access this and other fan bases that are primarily focused on games, comic books, television, and other serial and participatory works? Is it by creating serialized content for the stage? Is it by creating communities built around common source texts? Is it by augmenting reality? Or, is it by basing theatrical events on interactivity and individualization?

The numerous and individualized ways that *Zombies, Run!* can be experienced and understood makes it an ideal model for other works. Users with very different interests can enjoy the app by participating in slightly different physical ways and vastly different interpretive and imaginative ways. The work allows users—simultaneously performers and audience members—to customize their experiences based on their own desires, through the use of individual technology and narrative extensions available through online participation. In a twenty-first century artistic landscape augmented through individualized and networked technologies, theatre artists can make use of flexible media forms in order to connect to new audiences who demand new narrative structures and ways to participate in them.
Chapter Five—Conclusion: A Future for Ototheatre

Theatre is the first human invention and also the invention which paves the way for all other inventions and discoveries.

—Augusto Boal

In this dissertation, I have argued for a way of listening and performing that is based on the knowledge, desires, and experiences of the contemporary audient. While my work here will one day be a history of today’s ototheatre and the work of today’s audients, it may also predict some ways that ototheatre will continue to thrive and change in the future. The smartphone, which has played an important role in many of my case studies, may or may not survive the years to come. The internet is abuzz with predictions from technology insiders who assert that augmented reality devices will soon replace smartphones, “hijack[ing] your senses . . . with your sight and your hearing intermediated by technology.”¹ The smartphone may be replaced by new technology, but ototheatre is dependent on the mode of consumption—personalized, mobile, and immersive—and will continue to evolve in response to this new technology, just as other media forms have adapted.

The future of ototheatre may involve other technologies that augment reality through headsets, eyeglasses, or even neural implants.² Technological advances in augmented reality

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² Companies are currently developing augmented reality headsets. Microsoft markets its HoloLens as a holographic tool for surgeons, engineers, and architects. In contrast, the Mira Prism is marketed as a tool for gaming. Neural implants are currently used to control tremors in Parkinson’s patients and to replace missing audio and visual receptors, among other uses. Far-future applications envisioned by entrepreneurs like Elon Musk include the ability to “upload...
signal changing understandings of the relationship between people’s bodies and technology and of the ways that people expect and are comfortable with their world being augmented. These technologies will augment reality through a variety of means affecting multiple senses. Even as augmented reality expands, however, ototheatre will continue to rely on sound as its primary mode of activating audients. As I have argued, sound creates an interior, virtual architecture in which the inner voice of the audient and the recorded voice, as well as the environmental sounds and the recorded sounds, blend and merge. Sound can create a more immersive space, augmenting the world all around rather than just what is in front of the audient’s eyes. The use of recorded sound in ototheatre can create a feeling of intimacy between the speaker and the audient. As with works such as Hofesh Shechter’s Everyday Moments and the audio walks by Janet Cardiff, the artists speak quietly but are heard loudly, as if they are very close—so close, in fact that they may even be confused with the audient’s inner voice. Finally, one of the key aspects of sound technology is the way that it seamlessly integrates with an audient’s actions and experiences of the world. It augments reality without disrupting it. Although it can certainly distract from the everyday world, it can also focus an audient’s attention upon it. Whatever direction augmented reality technology takes in its development, the oto- in ototheatre will remain foundational.

Ototheatre thrives in the digital age, though not because the technology that is used for it must be sophisticated or digital. Rather, it is audients’ experiences with those technologies as

networked, individualized, interactive, and mobile that impact their listening and performing. Today’s ototheatre audients have experiences with both digital and analog technology. When they are audients of a work, they access their memories of using similar technologies and having related experiences. Audients engage in a process of remediation as they synthesize experiences of artistic and digital forms. Audiences choose (consciously or unconsciously) which interpretive codes to employ to access the work. While artists could use an original Walkman to make ototheatre today, the experience would be different than it would have been in 1979 because the audient remediates the Walkman.

Immersive and interactive theatre has become more popular in the twenty-first century. Punchdrunk’s Sleep No More, the immersive dance-theatre adaptation of Macbeth, continues to sell out in New York City in 2017, though it was intended to close after six weeks in 2011. Haunted houses such as Blackout, which describes itself as “an immersive theatre experience,” and “escape rooms,” particularly those designed as works of theatre, such as The Last Defender at Chicago’s House Theatre, engage audience members’ bodies and emotions. Complex recording techniques combined with speaker placement or earphones create more immersive environments that make it difficult to place boundaries on the inside and outside of the performance. Artists can use immersive sound technology to play with the audience’s engagement with the imagined sounds and voices already in their minds. I argue, however, that

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ototheatre remains a distinct category from immersive theatre. While immersive theatre brings audiences into an established immersive theatrical environment, ototheatre enters an audient’s imagination and perception. Ototheatre asks audients to do a different kind of work than immersive theatre asks of its audience. Audients activate the performance space and the performance work. Each augmented reality lies dormant until the audient presses play and enacts the work by walking, watching, running, or dancing. Audients are different than an audience. An ototheatrical performance is not meant to be watched and interpreted; it is meant to be an alternate reality that is activated with the body.

What are the stakes of calling this work ototheatre? Or in other words, does ototheatre exist without naming it? Yes and no. Many of the works that I have discussed have already been categorized as theatre, or at least described as theatrical, either by their creators or by others. Other works that I have dubbed ototheatre are performed by people who who see nothing theatre-like about their activities. However, by naming these works as “ototheatre,” designating a category and placing them all together within it, I have articulated the ways that these works respond to our culture and our way of understanding ourselves in relation to the arts, to technologies, and to other people. I contribute to an important conversation about connections among theatre, sound, mobility, and technology in the twenty-first century to further understanding of the connections among these concepts and constructions as well as to promote ototheatrical experiments by artists to engage twenty-first century audiences. Identifying a practice with a name and establishing a corpus of relevant works encourages artists to consciously respond to similar works as well as rethink the function and aesthetic of ototheatre.
Naming ototheatre and making it an object of study reveals the potential that it has to play a larger role in the world and to expand the population of people connected to and affected by theatre. Christopher B. Balme notes that the political and social efficacy of theatre has diminished as it has split into a highly commercial form and an inaccessible high art form.\footnote{Balme, \textit{The Theatrical Public Sphere}, 7.} Theatre has become difficult to afford and difficult to access, limiting its audience and its relevance. I contend that digital sound technologies create opportunities to revive theatre as a public art form. These technologies are accessible; most people can gain access to a smartphone or, at the very least, an MP3 player. Additionally, it is potentially far less expensive for artists to produce a recording than it is to fund performers, a theatre space, sets, costumes, and so forth. Finally, ototheatre is relevant; the hardware, software, and mobile listening experience is similar to accessing music, podcasts, audio tours, and smartphone games. Theatre does not have to fade into obscurity or stay within the hidden black boxes of the elite; it can also take on new forms, engage audiences in new ways, continue to build on previous practices, and merge existing forms.

Ototheatre extends the experience of theatre by playing with ideas of liveness and presence. The duration of the theatrical event can extend beyond the time of listening, as in the case of \textit{Zombies, Run!}. Fans of the work re-perform their roles for online audiences through photo sets, drawings, fan fiction, and many other creative works. While this form of participation is not common among ototheatrical works in general, it does point to the ways that ototheatre allows for flexibility in the construction of the theatrical event and in the ways that audiences perform and serve as an audience for others’ performances as well as their own.
Ototheatre’s activation of the audience member as a performer can carry over into a desire to perform for others and to communicate with other audients, resisting the isolating bubbles that Bull ascribes to mobile listening devices. Ototheatre is a different kind of listening than the typical urban earbud listening. In what ways can ototheatre creators activate a participatory kind of listening that extends beyond the parenthesis of putting on and taking off the headphones (or of listening to the recording)? What kind of durational effect can these works have on audients’ perception of places, spaces, and themselves?

There is still more ototheatre can do to comment on culture, society, and politics. Race, class, and gender—of the audients and of others around them—are all extremely important and influential to the audients’ experience. As I noted in chapter three, the streets have a history of who is free to roam them. This history affects how people feel and are treated within public spaces. Ototheatre works, whether intentionally or not, create individualized experiences due to this history. But artists can go a step further by using the form to help people reclaim the streets.

Recording techniques create *aural architectures* that overlay physical architectures, blurring boundaries between what is heard in the world, what is heard in the recording, and what is imagined in the mind. Places, whether they be the private, enclosed, bedroom of the audient, or the public, outdoor space of a city, can be altered by sound. Other places as well as times can be introduced into the experience, creating complex ways of interpreting spaces. Artists can use recorded sound to augment spaces as well as to layer different times and attitudes, allowing audients to reflect on spaces and their place within them. Each audient is a theatrical unit that permeates the world, either singly as in *Ticket to Istanbul* or in groups as in *As If It Were the Last Time*. By encouraging forms of interaction, artists can make a lasting impact on how people feel
in a space, how they are perceived, and how they perceive others. Shifted perspective can reveal the invisible in everyday spaces or position audients as performers of the roles of another.

With this dissertation, I hope to inspire the creation of new ototheatrical works. Ototheatre still has many subjects that it can explore and questions that researchers can use it to ask. I have conducted my own experiments with ototheatre, creating works that are intended to push the limits of what ototheatre can accomplish. The sound panaurama I discuss in chapter three served as an academic experiment. As the ototheatrical artist and audient, I used binaural recording to document a hybrid work that blended my physical journey with an emotional one. There is still work for me to do alone or collaboratively to explore how such a project could be useful to other audients and to discover the best way for them to perform it.

I believe that ototheatre can be used as a vehicle for social commentary and change by playing with the perceptions and emotional experiences of an audient moving through a space. What are the implications of “walking in someone else’s shoes” or “looking at the world through another’s eyes?” There is more work to be done investigating this important question. I have discussed how ototheatre changes how audients understand the world around them, but there is still much to consider about the ethics of this activity. A colleague and I are currently developing, as a research project, a work that explores the effects of street harassment on someone’s experiences of public space—how does this affect an audient’s feelings of safety and comfort? How does this make an audient feel about her or his level of personal space? How does this change the way things look and sound? However, by simulating a form of street harassment, augmenting the world into a hostile place for audients, we cannot pretend that the experience we simulate is comparable to the one that many people experience daily. Thus, we must consider
theatre’s power to make the abstract real, actual, and tangible. Ototheatrical works activate spaces in ways that bring things to life in front of the audient. But it is vital that these pieces also retain a distancing function, making clear that this is art, not real life. We can learn fragments about the experience of others, but we cannot truly embody the memories and socialization of others, nor is it clear that we should want to. A man performing our piece should feel something of the invisible experience of a woman, but without feeling like he has experienced it as a woman. We are attempting to discover how to illuminate and recreate something of the experience of being harassed without replicating the violence of the experience. Future works will have to deal with these and similar questions regarding race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and other elements of identity and daily experience.

In this chapter’s epigraph, Augusto Boal notes that theatre “paves the way for all [human] inventions and discoveries.”\(^6\) Theatre in this view is an experimental mode, not just reflecting the world that is, but anticipating a world that could be. Ototheatre directly participates in this experimentation and invention. Ototheatre asks an audient not just to observe but to perform. It asks an audient to interact with space, technology, and presence in new ways. I have come away from my work on this dissertation inspired to create new interventions that reveal otherwise inaccessible parts of my experiences (of the city, of certain spaces) to others. My deepest hope is that my research contributes to the continued development of this important and vibrant area of theatre.

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Appendix A: List of Productions

For this dissertation, I participated as an audient in the following works:

2012
*Zombies, Run!*
By Six to Start and Naomi Alderman
(Released February 27, 2012)

2013
*As If It Were the Last Time*
By Duncan Speakman July 6, 2013
Gameplay Festival at Brick Theatre, Brooklyn, NY
Produced by Circumstance
(Premiered November 12, 2009, London)

*Red Light District Walk*
By Rick Steves and Gene Openshaw
July 22, 2013
Amsterdam
(Released March 6, 2013)

*Ticket to Istanbul (Over het IJ)*
By Justin Bennett and Renate Zentschnig
July 23, 2013
Amsterdam
Produced by Soundtrack City
(Released 2012)

2014
*Cycle of Songs*
July 7, 2014
Devised by Pilot Theatre and Historyworks
Commissioned by Cambridge City Council
(Released May 2014)

2015
*Sights*
By Trickster®: Cristina Galbiati and Ilija Luginbühl
May 6, 2015
Auawirleben Theaterfestival, Bern, Switzerland
(Premiered 2014, Bellinzona, Switzerland)
2016
*Everyday Moments*
By Hofesh Shechter
February 15, 2016
Produced by Fuel
(Released May 20, 2011)
Appendix B: Zombies, Run! Survey

August 12, 2013–November 22, 2013

Q1 Do you wish to take this survey? I am Lauren R. Beck, a Ph.D. candidate in the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Theatre and Drama at Northwestern University in the United States. I am conducting a research study to determine how much your experience of participating in a sound-based artwork is similar to being an audience member, spectator, or performer in other art works. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to fill out a survey that asks questions about your experience. Your participation in this study does not involve any risk to you beyond that of everyday life. You are not likely to have any direct benefit from being in this research study. Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for your participation. Participation in this survey will be completely anonymous. You will have the option of providing an email address, but this information will be stored in a separate document from your answers, in a password-protected computer, accessible only by me. This survey is being hosted by Survey Monkey and involves a secure connection. Terms of Service, addressing confidentiality, may be viewed at http://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You can skip questions in the survey and you can withdraw at any time by just exiting the survey. If you have any questions about this study you may contact: [Redacted]

Q2 Why did you choose to purchase Zombies, Run!?

Q3 How often do you use the Zombies, Run! app?
   - Every day
   - Once or twice a week
   - A few times a month
   - Rarely
   - Other (please specify)

Q4 What do you like MOST about the app?

Q5 What do you like LEAST about the app?

Q6 Where do you typically participate in Zombies, Run!? (Choose all that apply.)
   - The gym
   - In my neighborhood
   - In the city
   - In the suburbs
   - In a rural area
   - Other (please specify)
Q7 How much of an effect does the location of your run have on your experience of the game/narrative? Please explain.

Q8 How do you feel about the other people around you when you are playing *Zombies, Run!*?

Q9 Do you ever listen to *Zombies, Run!* while sitting still?

Q10 Which types of artistic genres and mediums do you enjoy most (as a spectator, listener, reader, or player?) Choose all that apply.
   - Theatre
   - Musicals
   - Movies
   - Television
   - Video games
   - Role playing games
   - Board/card games
   - Novels/Non-fiction
   - Comic books/Graphic novels
   - Other (please specify)

Q11 Do you enjoy participating in any of the following activities? (Choose all that apply.)
   - Singing for an audience
   - Playing musical instruments for an audience
   - Acting on stage
   - Live Action Role Play
   - Making YouTube videos starring yourself
   - Making YouTube videos starring others
   - Posting fan fiction online

Q12 How is *Zombies, Run!* similar to the activities that you typically enjoy? How is it different?

Q13 How much do you feel that you ARE Runner 5 when you participate?
   - I feel like a spectator. Like I’m listening/watching Runner 5.
   - I feel like a combination of spectator and performer. I identify with Runner 5.
   - I feel like a performer. I AM Runner 5.
   - Other (please specify)

Q14 How much do you think your experience of the work is similar to or different from the experience of others who play the game? Please explain.

Q15 Do you consider yourself a fan of *Zombies, Run!*?

Q16 In what ways do you participate in the *Zombies, Run!* fan community? Please choose all that apply.
I read Z,R! fan fiction.
I write Z,R! fan fiction.
I look at Z,R! art.
I create Z,R! art.
I dress up in costumes and/or take photographs of myself or others as Z,R! characters.
I make or star in Z,R! videos.
I do NOT participate in the Z,R! fan community.
I read blogs and forums about Z,R!
I post on blogs and forums about Z,R!
I meet with other fans of Z,R! in person.
Other (please specify)

Q17 In what other fandoms (if any) do you participate or follow? Please explain your level of participation.

Q18 How would you categorize Zombies, Run!? Choose those that apply.
   - Exergame
   - Alternate Reality Game
   - Augmented Reality Game
   - Computer Game
   - Radio Play
   - Theatrical Performance
   - Live Cinematic Experience
   - Social Networking Tool
   - Transmedial Story
   - Other (please specify)

Q19 In your opinion, based on the way YOU use Zombies, Run!, which term BEST represents the app?
   - Game
   - Tool
   - Performance opportunity
   - Story
   - Inspiration for creative work

Q20 The more information I have about your participation with Zombies, Run!, the better. Is there anything else you would like to share about: 1. The game 2. Fandom 3. Participation 4. Performance 5. Audience 6. Or anything else?

Q21 What is your age?

Q22 What is your gender? (Please identify yourself with whatever words you are most comfortable.)
Q23 How would you describe your race and/or ethnic identity?

Q24 Where do you currently live? (Be only as specific as you are comfortable.)

Q25 What is your occupation?

Q26 I may have follow-up questions. If you wouldn’t mind me contacting you, please put your email address below. This is completely optional.

Follow-up Survey


Q1 Most people mention that the story in Z,R! makes them run faster and run more often, but do you find that the action of running itself contributes to your immersion in the story? How does running affect your mood or affect your involvement in the narrative?

Q2 What types of emotions do you feel while you run that are affected by your physical condition? How does your experience with the story change if you are out of shape or having an off day, as opposed to being in great shape and experiencing a “runner’s high?” Does this change the way you interpret the story?

Q3 Do the EMOTIONS that are inspired by Z,R! help you run, or make it harder? Both sometimes? Can you explain?

Q4 Many respondents to the first survey were fans of Radio Mode. Are you? Can you tell me why or why not? Do you feel that your experience running in in Radio Mode is different than running a mission? Please explain.

Q5 In the survey I conducted, people often said that they don’t generally listen to Z,R! when not running, often saying, “It’s cheating!” But, does anything else keep you from listening without running, besides guilt? Does the story make more sense when you are running? Are you more connected to the narrative and the characters?

Q6 One person said (and others implied) that it would be “pointless” to listen to Z,R! when sitting still. Can you explain why you agree or disagree with this statement? What might be meant by “pointless?” That there is a missed opportunity to exercise? That the experience doesn’t make sense/is not fun without the running? Something else?

Q7 One respondent says, “Zombies, Run! gives running a purpose.” Do you agree? What might that purpose be?
Q8 This question is for anyone who enjoys acting, larping, cosplay, or role playing (online is fine): Do you find similarities in the way that you enjoy performing the role of Runner 5 and your other performance activities? Can you explain the connection?

Q9 This question is for anyone who DOES NOT enjoy acting, larping, cosplay, or role playing: Why do you think that you enjoy Z,R! and not other role-playing activities? What is different about Z,R! that makes it enjoyable for you?

Q10 Is there something about the characterization of Runner 5 that makes you identify with the character? And conversely, is there something about Runner 5 that distances you from the character?

Q11 What are your favorite types of music to listen to while listening to ZR! ? Why?

Q12 Does the music change the tone of the story for you? Do you feel like it changes the genre (e.g. Adventure, horror, psychological thriller, comedy, etc.)? Please explain.

Q13 Does the music you listen to during Z,R! make the experience more like another genre or medium? Do you feel more like you are in a film, TV show, video game, etc.?

Q14 Do you ever leave the pauses empty (not play music)? Do you enjoy this? Can you explain why?

Q15 Do you listen to audio dramas such as radio plays or podcast narratives like “Welcome to Night Vale”? Can you tell me which ones and why you enjoy them?

Q16 If you answered YES to the last question, which answer fits you best?
   I listened to audio drama before I listened to Z,R! (I started Z,R! BECAUSE I knew I liked audio drama)
   I listened to audio drama before I listened to Z,R! (But I started Z,R! for other reasons)
   I listened to Z,R! before I listened to audio dramas. (I started listening to audio dramas BECAUSE I knew I liked Z,R!)
   I listened to Z,R! before I listened to audio dramas. (But my reasons for listening to audio dramas are unrelated to Z,R!)

Q17 Pretend that you are an actor. You are playing Runner 5. The audio track of Z,R! is your script for your performance (you don’t have many lines, mostly actions).
   Yes, I have thought about Z,R! in this way.
   I haven’t thought about it this way, but this makes sense.
   I get what you are saying, but it doesn’t work that way for me.
   This makes no sense.