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AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF INTIMACY IN RADIO  
STUDIES, COMBINING MAINSTREAM AND NON-MAINSTREAM  
THEORIES AND PRACTICES

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the University of Sunderland  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedicated to my mom and dad  
with all my love and thanks for their devotion and continuous support  
and to

Dr. Martin Shingler and Professor Andrew Crisell

with sincere gratitude and thanks for their guidance and support over the years.

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An Examination of the Concept of Intimacy in Radio Studies, Incorporating  
Mainstream and Non-mainstream Theories and Practices

**Abstract**

My thesis is a meta-theory that looks at the evolution, current status and possible futures of Radio Studies. It provides a new synthesis of material which has until now appeared to be antithetical. This material is defined as mainstream radio theory and non-mainstream or avant-grade radio theory. Some shortcomings are pointed out and interrogated in what has in the past been perceived as an under-theorized field. Ultimately, elements from both strands of radio theory are used in order to gain a better understanding of the concept of intimacy with the aim to add to the still growing field of Radio Studies. Intimacy, through extensive review of radio theory literature, is revealed as a core yet vague concept. Drawing on my production background and on methods used in the avant-garde strand of radio theory, this thesis includes a practical component: the creation of a radio programme on the relationship between the radio voice and intimacy. The combination of theory and practice in this project aims to demonstrate the ways in which theory can inform radio practice and vice versa and to reveal some creative interpretations of theory as well as theoretical reflections that result from working with sound. The contribution of this thesis aims to be a more systematic understanding of intimacy through a new approach to academic literature on radio. This approach employs mainstream and non-mainstream theories in order to offer some new insights on the ways in which radio has until now been theorized and to reveal some unexpected similarities between these two ideologically opposite traditions.

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## Introduction

My thesis is a meta-theory that looks at the evolution, current status and possible futures of Radio Studies, largely through the detailed examination of a key concept: Intimacy. It brings together and puts into dialogue theories of radio that have previously appeared to be antithetical: in other words, (what I refer to as) mainstream radio theory and non-mainstream (or avant-garde) radio theory. Throughout the following chapters, I shall be using these terms (mostly ‘mainstream’ and ‘non-mainstream’ radio theory and, on occasion, ‘avant-garde’ radio theory) in order to distinguish between two broad types of radio studies literature. I use the term ‘mainstream’ radio theory to designate the ideas and arguments set out in textbooks and other scholarly articles and monographs that seek to explain the historical development and the workings and meanings of radio broadcasting (contemporary and historical) across a variety of popular platforms, formats and genres. I use the terms ‘non-mainstream’ and ‘avant-garde’ radio theory, on the other hand, to designate a more abstract approach to theorizing radio art (and radio *as* art) that has been largely produced by radio practitioners reflecting critically upon their own experimental and avant-garde productions, many of which challenge the conventions of mainstream and commercial radio broadcasting.<sup>1</sup> Situated within the margins of mainstream broadcasting, these theorist-practitioners often position themselves (as

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<sup>1</sup> I have decided to use these interchangeably for linguistic reasons. The term ‘non-mainstream’ is very useful in setting this strand of theory *against* the mainstream and has, crucially, been used by Allen S. Weiss in order to describe his own work (1995: 2), as explained more fully in chapter one. However, it has proven useful at certain times to make a sharper distinction between the two terms ‘mainstream’ and ‘non-mainstream’ in order to avoid any confusion that might result from their visual similarity on the page. Using the terms ‘mainstream’ and ‘avant-garde’ thus avoids any potential confusion. The term ‘experimental’ will also be used at times in order to specifically describe the broadcasting *practice* of the radio avant-garde. While, I recognize that the use of a third term could be confusing, it is a term that these writers use often themselves in the texts discussed here and thus cannot be avoided.

well as being positioned by others) as a counter-cultural minority, one moreover that refuses to be bound by either the conventions of radio techniques and formats or the conventions of academic writing. Consequently, this body of theory is often quite challenging, impenetrable, allusive and (darkly) poetic, which means that it is subject to various interpretations, misunderstandings and contradictions, as I will discuss in more detail in chapters one and two of this thesis. These non-mainstream theories are typically more alternative in both content and language, which is often designed to challenge any sense of complacency in thinking by disturbing the ontological and epistemological regimes that operate elsewhere in such disciplines as Radio Studies, Media Studies and Cultural Studies. Nevertheless, as I shall argue, these artist-writers and critical thinkers have many valuable insights to contribute to Radio Studies as a whole and one of my aims is to absorb their ideas and arguments more fully into my exploration of radio Intimacy, while simultaneously borrowing from them some of their methodologies.

In order to provide a coherent focus for my project, which otherwise ranges across a broad span of theory (from student textbooks and 'how to' guides through to highly speculative and abstract commentaries by avant-garde theorist-practitioners), I have chosen to concentrate on the specific topic of intimacy and how this has evolved (and is evolving) within Radio Studies as a key concept (i.e., Intimacy). The decision to focus on a specific concept should enable me to employ elements from both strands of radio theory (i.e., mainstream and non-mainstream) in order to: (a) test out how satisfactorily these apparently oppositional theories can be integrated, and (b) to gain

a better understanding of the concept of Intimacy,<sup>2</sup> which is one that is still evolving as part of the on-going development of the academic field of Radio Studies. An extensive review of radio theory literature in chapter two will reveal that while Intimacy has emerged within Radio Studies as a core concept it has remained rather vague in its formulation. My initial objective will be to clarify the meanings of Intimacy within the various branches of Radio Studies in order to determine a more concrete understanding of the term and then to reflect further upon its wider use-value as a concept for understanding radio as both a medium and a cultural practice.

In order to achieve my primary objective of clarifying the meanings of Intimacy within Radio Studies I will, in the first instance, analyse in detail the writings of a wide range of theorists and theorist-practitioners in order to: (a) determine commonality (or otherwise) among the various articulations of Intimacy within and across Radio Studies, and (b) consider how further elaborations of the concept might evolve in order to usefully expand our understanding of Intimacy and how it operates across various radio genres and in different contexts of listening. Thereafter, I aim to put my reading and research into practice by making an experimental radio feature on the subject of the radio voice and its relationship to intimacy, which will involve conducting interviews with a range of theorists, theorist-practitioners and practitioners of radio based in the UK with a view to ascertaining a diversity of views, opinions, insights and experiences born out of either working in the medium or writing, researching and teaching it. This will enable me to compare these views with those of the broad range of theorists analysed and discussed in the first three chapters of the

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this thesis I shall be using Intimacy with a capital 'I' in order to refer specifically to intimacy as a concept (i.e., as it has been theorised). In other instances, I will simply be using intimacy with a small 'i' as a descriptive or more general term (e.g., when describing a particularly intimate affect).

thesis. This will also enable me to draw on my own production background, as well as to adopt a methodology used by avant-garde radio theorists. The combination of theory and practice in this project aims to demonstrate the ways in which theory can inform radio practice and vice versa, revealing some creative interpretations of theory as well as theoretical reflections that result from working with sound. One of the intended contributions of this project is to demonstrate that, as a research tool, theory and practice can be used in combination to: (a) refine conceptual thinking, and (b) transform intellectual work into absorbing, illuminating and entertaining media products, and thereby disseminate new ideas more widely beyond the academic community, as well as in different formats.

As will be discussed in the first chapter, Radio Studies has a long tradition of practitioners developing theory via the writing and publication of books and scholarly articles after years of working practically in the industry. A good example of this can be found in John Biewen and Alexa Dilworth's edited collection *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* (2010), where practitioners theoretically reflect upon their own work.<sup>3</sup> To date, however, only a few individuals have transferred their theoretical work into audio production: most notably, David Hendy in his 30-part series of 15 minute documentaries *Noise: A Human History* for BBC Radio 4 in 2013, which was an extension of his book *Noise: A Human History of Sound and Listening* (2013). With the increasing democratization of media production as a result of new technologies and media convergence, it is certainly becoming increasingly possible

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<sup>3</sup> Crucially, this book comes with an online companion through which the reader-listener can hear samples of work by the contributing authors. The method of incorporating sound into academic work on radio (and sound in general) can be very fruitful, especially today when the Internet allows easy ways of disseminating audio and making it available to the general public.

for academics, scholars and students to mediatize their research in this way. Moreover, Radio Studies is particularly well placed to pioneer developments in this area due to its long-standing links between theory and practice as well as the relative low economic costs of audio-only production.

## **1. Research Questions**

My project is focused on a number of inter-related questions, which can be summarised as follows:

- (1) What distinction can be made between the mainstream and non-mainstream strands of radio theory and what is the prevailing relationship between these distinct ends of the Radio Studies spectrum?
- (2) What does Intimacy currently mean within radio theory and to what extent has the concept been addressed differently in mainstream and non-mainstream academic radio literature?
- (3) How can the current theories of Intimacy be advanced or refined? For instance, what do we really mean when we say that radio is *the* intimate medium?
- (4) How can the concept of Intimacy be broken down into its constituent parts in order to more comprehensively understand the diverse ways in which it operates for broadcasters and audiences, both across the medium as a whole and within distinct genres, formats and types of programme?
- (5) Finally, how can knowledge be gained from feeding theory and practice back into each other, thus contributing to new ways of considering and

understanding the medium of radio and, most particularly, the concept of radio as an intimate medium?

## **2. Methodology**

As a practitioner and an academic scholar, I have chosen to use a methodology that not only exploits my own set of skills and interests but also seems highly relevant to the subject matter and to current developments within the fields of academic research, particularly those that seek to combine traditional academic skills of research, analysis and writing with the use of modern media technologies (e.g., the video essay). By making a programme to accompany the written chapters of my thesis, I am not simply attempting to demonstrate high-level audio production skills and an understanding of experimental radio feature-making but rather to follow the example set by influential author-practitioners such as Sean Street, Tim Crook (both from the mainstream) and Gregory Whitehead (from the non-mainstream). Following a method common in the non-mainstream, I shall reflect theoretically upon the creation of the practical part of this thesis and, at the same time, I shall allow ideas to develop through my practical engagement with interviewing and editing for the programme, so that these can be further analysed in the written part of the thesis. My own practice is experimental and comes very close to avant-garde radio practice. Although I have produced work for commercial radio in the past, my natural sympathies and interests lie predominantly in the area of avant-garde radio practice. As a non-commercial project, funded in part by a bursary from the Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Sunderland, this PhD provides me with an opportunity to create an audio work that is theoretically informed and intellectually stimulating. At the same time, it will enable me to experiment further with

unconventional techniques of treating, editing and mixing sounds and voices in aesthetically innovative ways that might otherwise have limited commercial viability.

In addition to my interest in and experiences of radio production, I have a long-standing fascination with the theories developed by non-mainstream and avant-garde radio artists. Moreover, for some considerable time I have held the belief that these can prove instrumental in helping to develop new and more comprehensive understandings of radio. However, I have also been rather critical of this strand of radio theory since I have often found it to be ambiguous and difficult to penetrate, making it hard to access for most theorists and practitioners (particularly students), thus minimizing its influence in broader discussions of radio. As I believe that this branch of Radio Studies has considerable merit and use-value for many different types of scholar, I shall attempt to explain some of the main ways in which intimacy is conceptualised here. As part of this, I will discuss non-mainstream studies of radio in conjunction with mainstream ones (which are, in general, easier to comprehend) in order to attempt to answer my research questions. Thus, while as a practitioner I would situate myself more closely to the non-mainstream, as a theorist I would probably position myself closer to the mainstream on the grounds that I believe I have a fuller understanding of this branch of Radio Studies, finding the concepts associated with it generally easier to grasp. However, as a theorist-practitioner, I believe I occupy a position between the two extremes of the mainstream and non-mainstream, and am thus in a good position to be able to undertake the work of comparing and integrating these in my research into radio Intimacy. Many of the themes that I am interested in have originated from my engagement with non-mainstream ideas.

Consequently, my research into radio Intimacy will be informed by work from both ends of the theoretical spectrum, as well as those that occupy a middle ground.

### **3. The Focus and Structure of the Thesis**

As my research into the two distinct ends of the radio theory spectrum has developed, Intimacy became the main focus when it emerged as something that is not only central to both mainstream and non-mainstream theory but also, in both cases, as something that is neither fully understood nor adequately defined. For this reason, my intention is to provide a more systematic understanding of the concept of Intimacy and to propose some new and potentially useful theoretical distinctions and definitions of it. In order to achieve this, the thesis will be organised into three written chapters, a radio programme and a further written chapter.

The first chapter will establish my field of reference through a review of radio literature, seeking to understand the current state of radio theory and examining some common perceptions about its recent standing within the wider context of Media and Cultural Studies. It will also seek to better understand the perceived limitations of radio theory today and to provide an account of the relationship between the two ideologically distant strands of it (i.e., mainstream and non-mainstream). In order to achieve this, it will provide a critical review of some of the key texts that have proven to be the most influential within both the mainstream and non-mainstream sectors of Radio Studies.

The second chapter will further explore mainstream and non-mainstream radio literature, focusing specifically on those accounts most relevant to understanding the



concept of Intimacy. I will be looking here at how this has emerged as a concept within and across Radio Studies. At the same time, it will consider how theories of Intimacy might be further developed and refined. This chapter will attempt to make a number of key distinctions that might prove useful in achieving a clearer understanding of what is meant when radio is described (as it so often has been) as an intimate medium.

The third chapter will take the findings of chapter two and expand upon these in order to more clearly define some of the distinctions that emerge from a more systematic conceptualisation of intimacy. This will involve a consideration of how these may be further explored through both mainstream and non-mainstream theorisations. It is here that the concept of Intimacy will be deconstructed and expanded through a consideration of how it functions and can be read across the medium of radio and in specific genres and formats in terms of a variety of *intimacies*. As part of this, I shall propose a distinction between what I refer to as *technological* intimacy (i.e., that which is associated with the medium as a whole) and to *personal* or *performative* intimacy (i.e., that which is associated with particular genres and formats or results from the actions of individual broadcasters and presenters). The intention here is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the various components, operations (or practices) and affects of intimacy.

The programme, which follows on from chapter three, narrows the focus even further to the specific relationship between the radio voice and intimacy. This will explore the paradoxical ability of the radio voice to both soothe and unsettle listeners. It will also make an original contribution to the thesis and to the field in general by taking

the methodology of theoretically reflecting upon one's own production a step further by having the theory influence the production as well. By interviewing mainstream theorists and broadcasters and asking them questions that derive from issues most commonly associated with non-mainstream radio theory, the programme aims to blur the lines between the two distinct ends of the radio theory spectrum, once again in order to establish (or expand) a middle ground.

Following the programme, chapter four will reflect upon the process of producing the programme in addition to a discussion of the issues raised by my contributors. In so doing, I hope to be able to establish connections here with my previous chapters, in particular chapter three. From this, I hope to gain further insights onto radiophonic intimacy and the radio relationship between the medium and broadcaster, as well between the medium and listener.

Finally, in my Conclusion, I shall attempt to provide some definitive answers to the research questions set out above. By this point, I hope to have attained a more systematic understanding of radio's intimacies, while demonstrating the use-value of a research methodology that not only integrates mainstream and non-mainstream theories but also theory and practice.

## **Radio Theory: A Divergence and Some Limitations**

### **1. Divergence and Limitations: Mainstream and Non-Mainstream Theory**

Broadly speaking, much radio theory is preoccupied with radio as we encounter it in everyday life, and maintains a consciousness of individual genres and broadcasting practices. In universities this kind of theory dominates the curriculum, not least because part of the role of Media Studies is seen as preparing students for professional life.<sup>4</sup> However, there has also been a tradition of what may be seen as avant-garde theory, with less influence on the academic teaching of radio, its approach to the medium being abstract, not preoccupied with individual genres, and essentially focused on conceptualizing radio as an art-form. We may therefore categorize these theoretical traditions as ‘mainstream,’ on the one hand, and ‘non-mainstream,’ on the other. As we shall see in the next paragraphs, there is a tendency within the avant-garde strand of radio theory to define itself by what it is not, hence my choice of a double definition here as ‘avant-garde’ as well as ‘non-mainstream’. These terms will be used interchangeably.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis and Booth note that, “Compared to film and television, radio is hardly noticed in academic literature and as a practice is mostly taught in a vocational context as a preparation for journalism. As a result radio practice and policy lacks a language for critical reflection and analysis” (1989: xii-xiii). While the field of Radio Studies has moved on and more diverse work has been produced since 1989, the argument remains partly true today. The teaching of radio within academia is most often geared towards the industry.

<sup>5</sup> The term ‘experimental’ will also be used at times to define the practice of these radio artists/theorists, namely their radio programmes and artworks. While I recognise that using three terms to define this strand of radio activity is not ideal, my decision is due to the fact that this term is being used in these non-mainstream texts in order to define the practice that the texts are reflecting upon. In this sense, I cannot avoid the term as it appears in quotes that I shall be using and also in the title of one of my core texts, *Experimental Sound and Radio* (2001) by Allen S. Weiss.

These categories are not absolute and allow for some variation within them. However, it is useful to gain an understanding of the divergence between the two, as well as some internal limitations within them.

### **1.1 Divergence**

The divergence between mainstream and non-mainstream radio theory may be generally characterized by a number of points (some of which are mentioned briefly above). The level of influence in academic teaching of radio that the mainstream has is profoundly larger. Namely, the texts and authors considered here as mainstream are the ones that occupy a fairly central position in the curricula of Radio Studies courses in Western universities. A few of the most popular texts that are used to teach radio production to university students in the UK (and elsewhere) are: Crisell's *Understanding Radio* (1986 / 1994), Fleming & Wilby's *The Radio Handbook* (2002 / 2010), McLeish's *Radio Production* (1978 / 2005), and Starkey's *Radio in Context* (2004 / 2013). In terms of content and writing style, mainstream radio theory mostly analyses mainstream radio practice, audiences and histories, offering genre definitions and an understanding of their codes and conventions (e.g., news and current affairs, music, sports and phone-ins). These texts aim to help future and current radio producers understand the main principles of the medium, giving them guidelines on professional practice and a general theoretical frame of reference. In the non-mainstream, we observe a self-professed disconnection from what avant-garde theorists consider as 'mainstream' in terms of both theory and practice. This work does not aim to 'teach' how to make radio but rather it makes a case for what radio's 'true' essence is. The theoretical disconnection is evident through the content as well as the literary style of the texts. Namely, as we shall see in greater detail later on in

this chapter, the disconnection from mainstream ideas of radio is articulated through arguments whose expression is often linguistically peculiar. While there is no direct criticism coming from the mainstream towards avant-garde radio theory, there is a general lack of reference to this work by theorists who operate within the academically influential mainstream and this suggests a lack of interest in it on their part. Equally, there is minimal reference to mainstream texts within the avant-garde other than a very firmly expressed opposition to what the mainstream represents and the ideas it carries. Consequently, a comparison of non-mainstream and mainstream ideas is largely unprecedented and although it may seem an impossible task, it does reveal some unexpected commonalities. While the avant-garde's definition of their work in terms of what it isn't (namely, mainstream) should not be what defines the opposite side of theory as 'mainstream', the influence the latter has in both academia and the radio industry does reveal it to be 'primary'. For the purposes of clarity I will be using the term 'mainstream.' However, it is helpful to retain an understanding of it as *primary*, which defines it not merely as being against avant-garde theory but more broadly influential.

Non-mainstream, avant-garde radio theory is mainly occupied with experimental production and radio art. Although this work is often difficult to categorize, some such programmes may be described as 'soundscapes' or 'experimental features.' Avant-garde radio theory also adopts ontological approaches to the medium as a whole and the theorists associated with this branch of Radio Studies often analyse it in aesthetic and existential terms, frequently using an idiosyncratic vocabulary. Martin Shingler, may be broadly considered as a mainstream radio theorist (even though he has produced work that reaches further into the middle of the spectrum of

Radio Studies), provides a definition of the non-mainstream tradition in his article 'Some recurring features in European Avant-Garde Radio' (2000):

The term *avant-garde radio* is used here to designate radio productions that reject traditional and conventional sound broadcasting practices, works that are essentially iconoclastic and set out to challenge, disturb, shock, and unsettle their audience. The term implies an advance guard (or "vanguard") of practitioners intent on devising new techniques and styles that others may adopt in time, a group of exponents ahead of their time. However, theorists of the avant-garde have cautioned against giving too much weight to this notion (2000: 198).

With his last remark, Shingler seems to recognize a difference of opinion between how non-avant-garde theory defines these practices as operating outside of certain accepted frameworks and how theorists of the avant-garde actually view their own field. As we shall see in this chapter, the tension in this relationship manifests itself as something of a paradox. Namely, the non-mainstream is often trapped between a resistance to any mainstream approach and a definition of itself as what it is not. At the same time, it reveals a belief that the avant-garde's concept of what radio is (and should be) doing represents, in fact, what *all* radio is (and should be) doing. In this sense, one may argue, the avant-garde radio theorists do not see themselves as diverging from a 'norm' (which is represented by the mainstream) but, more controversially, propose themselves as the norm.

Some of the core theorists in non-mainstream radio theory are Allen S. Weiss, Gregory Whitehead, Douglas Khan and Dan Lander. I shall be using Weiss's monograph *Phantasmic Radio* (1995) and his edited collection *Experimental Sound and Radio* (2001), along with Augaitis and Lander's *Radio Rethink* (1994) and a number of essays by Whitehead in several publications and journals, as representative of non-mainstream radio theory. In his book *Phantasmic Radio* (1995), Allen S.

Weiss explains that one of its concerns is to sketch “some possibilities of non-mainstream concepts of radio” (1995: 2). In using this word, he affirms the placement of his work and, consequently, the work of the authors and artists that his work converses with as being firmly outside of mainstream radio theory. Much of this work is written by radio artists, who interchangeably act as both practitioners and theorists, often reflecting theoretically upon their own radio practice/work. Non-mainstream theory is characterized by its polemical stance towards mainstream theory and production, often expressed by a theoretical, conceptual and linguistic detachment from mainstream radio and its theory. Informed mostly by arts practice, the writing is often rather abstract and open to varying interpretations.

Although there are numerous avant-garde texts on radio, these remain at the margins of traditional radio theory and, in a wider context, at the margins of general media theory. In a complex dynamic, two things are happening. Firstly, there is some criticism of mainstream theory and practice expressed by non-mainstream theorists. This criticism largely refers to: (a) the exclusion of artistic practices and theorisations of them within the mainstream; and (b) what the radio avant-garde perceives as a false mainstream theoretical perception of what radio *is* and what it *is for*. Furthermore, there is criticism of the mainstream radio industries, their aims, aesthetics and practices. Secondly, the radio avant-gardists aim to dissociate themselves from and exist outside of the mainstream. They do not seem interested in making a theoretical intervention that would make communication with the mainstream possible. Their unconventional modes of writing mirror the opposition to mainstream practice and its theory, which are seen as controlled and dictated by commercial rules and aspirations. Furthermore, their idiosyncratic writing betrays their lack of interest in conversing in

a more accessible language that may appeal to a wider audience. Non-mainstream texts are available and accessible in academic libraries, yet a radio student will probably not come across them unless she has a particular interest in experimental production and the sonic arts.

Looking at mainstream and non-mainstream theory in opposition to each other reveals some critical differences. Firstly, mainstream theory is (amongst other things) concerned with the genres conventionally consumed by a general listenership, and it often focuses on the differences between factual and non-factual programming. Non-mainstream theory, on the other hand, is concerned with radio as a medium, often without distinguishing between genres but rather focusing on radio art or radio *as* art. In so doing, it distances radio from its function as a medium of information and entertainment (or what is typically understood as popular entertainment). Secondly, mainstream theory offers an approach to radio “in the real world”; namely, it is concerned with its functions, histories, its signification systems and unique properties and its relationship to other mass communication systems. In contrast, non-mainstream theory takes a more abstract view of radio, based largely on aesthetic analysis, although, it should be noted, histories of radio art and experimental production are part of the non-mainstream analysis. Thirdly, mainstream theory looks at what radio *does*, while the non-mainstream, quite antithetically, is more concerned with what radio *ought to be*, often by placing itself in direct opposition to what mainstream radio does as well as in opposition to the mainstream theoretical understanding of what radio as a medium ordinarily does. However, despite the refusal of the non-mainstream to converse with mainstream theory and mainstream theory’s general failure to engage directly with the non-mainstream, I will suggest



that the themes explored at both ends of the spectrum can both be used in order to better understand key concepts in radio theory.

## **1.2 Anomalies**

No matter how extensive the differences between mainstream and non-mainstream radio theory are, both ends independently recognize a general anomaly in the study of the medium. The limitations within each of these theoretical traditions are rooted in different issues. These differences call for an approach in which the scholar must talk not just of one but two anomalies. The first lies in the peculiar marginalization of radio and its study *within the broader field of media theory*. The second lies within what the non-mainstream theorists would see as the marginalization of aesthetic analysis and the study of radio art practices and theories within mainstream radio theory, ultimately resulting in the absence of such non-mainstream theorizations of radio in the broader field of Media Studies. Radio avant-gardist Allen S. Weiss aptly describes both of these anomalies by writing that, “If the history of mainstream radio is a suppressed field, the history of experimental radio is utterly repressed” (1995: 3). He claims here that there is a general ‘repression’ when it comes to the question of radio in academia but he stresses the greater repression of his own particular field. The term ‘repression’ is one that belongs to the avant-garde vocabulary but it would not be used within the mainstream to describe the field’s perceived under-theorization. This is an adopted position and it is hard to pin-point where such a repression may be originating from. Thus, it may be understood to represent the avant-garde’s fighting spirit. Furthermore, its use suggests an attempt by these theorists to radicalize themselves.

Non-mainstream radio theory and practice remain rather obscure in relation to the rest of radio theory and production and the term ‘repression’ used by Weiss represents a polemical tension that sees mainstream radio production and its theory as not only antithetical to but also as deliberately repressive of radio art and its philosophy. While this might be true to an extent, it could be argued that the radio avant-garde has also willingly distanced itself from a conversation with the mainstream. As mentioned earlier, this is evident from their arguments as well as the idiosyncratic language they use, which make these arguments difficult to interpret. However, there is a developing interest in the sonic arts, which might help non-mainstream theory to find its place within the broader field of Media Studies. The contribution this thesis makes is to reveal points of contact between the two opposite ends of radio theory.<sup>6</sup> Although such theoretical approaches are sparse, this thesis is not the sole example. Most notably, Martin Shingler in ‘Some recurring features in European Avant-Garde Radio’ (2000) records a general resistance to (and a culture of) ignoring experimental radio production by media historians (2000: 96- 197). He also reveals the limitations of the existing literature originating from the avant-garde, noting a lack of historical and conceptual coherence within these texts that would otherwise provide a clear picture of the international radio avant-garde. Shingler notes that, “What is also absent from these books, with the exception of Allen Weiss's *Phantasmic Radio*, is an examination of the parallels and continuities of radio art” (2000: 197). As a scholar whose work on radio is widely taught in academic courses in Britain and who employs a conventional academic writing style and conceptual approach, Shingler

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<sup>6</sup> These meeting points between mainstream and non-mainstream theory result in overlap rather than convergence. The apparently strong theoretical antitheses between the two may make this overlap very interesting. While this thesis uses both theories in order to achieve new theoretical insights, the philosophical and political differences between the two strands are nevertheless fully recognized and appreciated.

attempts here to re-negotiate the limitations within avant-garde theory and to shed some light on avant-garde radiophonic cultures from the position of someone who would not be defined as operating within the avant-garde. His approach is not one that occurs often but it is very important in assisting the field of Radio Studies as a whole to achieve further coherence. This thesis aims to follow Shingler's example in investigating these divergent critical theories in order to find out what they might be able to tell us about the concept of Intimacy.

The limitations of the field of Radio Studies today then might be viewed as having three distinct yet interacting problems:

(a) The first and most obvious problem in the discipline is, as described above, the almost total absence of dialogue between the theorisations of mainstream and of artistic practice, resulting in a history of the discipline that is incoherent and characterised by two parallel histories that are not satisfactorily connected in current literature. The divergence between the mainstream and the avant-garde is, of course, natural to an extent, as avant-garde trends usually take on the task of exploring the unconventional ideas and processes that mainstream currents shy away from. However, it is also common for the latter to ultimately reveal ideas and practices that inform, affect and transform mainstream processes to a lesser or greater extent. To date, this does not seem to be occurring enough in radio theory and, thus, this discussion is looking at possibilities of allowing such transformations to take place.

(b) An internal concern in the mainstream strand of theory is that the field itself is under-theorised, along with a further concern that this results in radio's marginalisation in relation to the rest of Media Studies. It may be argued that this

general sense of under-theorisation was even more prominent in the past than it is today and that it actually derives less from a lack of volume of work but more from the content and the approach of the themes explored in what is a fairly large amount of scholarly books on radio. Although there are a great number of books dedicated to the medium of radio, along with two specialised journals, a great deal of mainstream radio theory is preoccupied with teaching scholars how to *use* the medium in order to respond to the ‘industry’ and its commercial needs and expectations. Some of the common themes explored in books used to teach radio in British universities are on how to *make* programmes, how to record sound and how to edit it; how to read and talk for different genres such as news or DJ shows; how to deal with advertising and management.<sup>7</sup> It must be noted, however, that the literature used to teach radio also considers meanings of radio, audience attitudes and preferences and histories of radio.<sup>8</sup> Yet, generally, the literature often seems to be preoccupied with a ‘how to’ objective as well as a general understanding of the dominant conventions and formats, to some extent reducing the ‘studies’ status of the field to handbook status. American radio scholar Christopher H. Sterling in his 2009 essay ‘The Rise of Radio Studies: Scholarly Books Over Four Decades’ offers a thorough guide of books, mostly American, on radio published in the past forty years. However, as he states in the introduction of his essay, he has eliminated from his discussion almost all “textbooks, how-to (production/performance) titles” (2009: 229). He notes that his focus is on “*serious* or scholarly titles devoted to some aspect of American radio, with a bias toward those issues by university presses” (2009: 229) [Italics mine]. This argument

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<sup>7</sup> An example of such a book is *Radio Production* by Robert McLeish, first published in 1978 as *The Technique of Radio Production* and currently on its fifth edition (2005).

<sup>8</sup> For example *On Air: Methods and Meanings of Radio* (1998) by Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa.

reveals a dichotomy between “serious” books and textbooks, as perceived by Sterling, within the mainstream. The implication seems to be that the large amount of textbooks offers less to the field than books on histories, genres and meanings. Although only partly sharing this notion, I shall be looking mostly at texts that provide more conceptual analysis. Some reference to textbooks will be made, as these can be very useful in revealing popular attitudes towards radio and radio production as well as how technology is used by broadcasters in order to communicate meanings to their audience. The non-mainstream theorists are not only concerned with under-theorization with radio in general but also, more specifically, with the poor or inadequate historicisation of avant-garde radio, even making claims that this history has been repressed (Weiss, 1995: 3).

(c) The concern about radio and its study being overlooked within Media and Cultural Studies results in what can be described as an external anomaly. Namely, that while Radio Studies should be enjoying an equal position to studies of the visual media (television and film), it seems to be given less attention. This thesis argues that a step in the direction of a resolution to this problem is to first deal with the internal limitations within Radio Studies.

The lack of communication between the two traditions of radio theory (as well as the internal limitations in both) is part of the sense of ‘disarray’ that is discovered when approaching the discipline. The perception, common within both the mainstream and non-mainstream, of radio and its theory as being in perpetual crisis and overshadowed by a preoccupation with the visual media, also results in the impression of Radio Studies as a rather isolated and eccentric discipline. However, as will be revealed, this

crisis might be only partly true. Without denying the anomalies, we can perceive the discipline as enjoying a growth in status since the 1980s. This upward trend is at times masked because of internal theoretical limitations and due to continuous concern about the aural and its standing within a wider visual culture. However, attention to this trend may allow for a new, more positive, understanding of the discipline and for new ways to engage with it and negotiate its position within Media and Cultural Studies.

In the next sections of this chapter, a historical look at how Radio Studies developed and what its status is today will help to explain its intricacies, starting with the internal issues in mainstream theory. A less clear and less linear account of the non-mainstream will reveal a set of internal limitations. Consequently, the marginalization of Radio Studies within the broader field of media theory will be looked at with a sense of how this may be overcome. Furthermore, material from both mainstream and non-mainstream radio theory will be used in the next chapters, partly addressing the issue of the divergence between them while, at the same time, I shall be using this material in order to analyse the concept of Intimacy.

## **2. How Radio Studies Developed**

The development of Radio Studies has been afflicted by a constant concern with the under-theorisation and a more general lack of scholarly attention to the medium. Interestingly, and perhaps paradoxically, this concern is what has motivated radio theorists to move the field further at nodal points of its development. In the mainstream the general claim that the field is under-theorised is followed by the assumption that the field is still in the shadow of studies of visual media. This is often

expressed in relation to the argument that radio itself is overlooked and its value remains unrecognised compared to that of the visual media. However, the study of radio has experienced an increase, which contradicts the reservation and apprehension that have been following the medium since the arrival of television in the 1930s. This discussion is not another account of how radio is an overlooked medium. Rather, it looks at the limitations of a discipline that has now been solidly established and is still on the rise. Now is an appropriate time to look into ways of enriching it.

If books on radio often seem to recycle the same themes, journal articles typically offer new ideas of a wide range, including analyses of radio programmes and of radio as an industry, issues of the voice, gender and teaching radio and texts that offer deeper theoretical analyses of ideas and concepts relevant to the media in general and not just to radio.<sup>9</sup> In the words of American radio scholar C. H. Sterling, “A major boost for radio research came in the 1990s with development of a radio studies or culture movement, which included the creation of an annual *Journal of Radio Studies* in 1991,” and which “was joined by *The Radio Journal* from Britain in 2003” (2009: 230).

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<sup>9</sup> For instance: In the first issue of the *American Journal of Radio Studies* we find ‘The Evoked Rhetorical Vision of *Lake Wobegon*: A Textual Analysis of “A Prairie Home Companion”’ by C.U. Larson (Vol. 1. Issue 1-2, 1992) a heavily theoretical textual analysis of a programme based on E. G. Bormann's fantasy theme methodology and Tony Schwartz's resonance theory. An interesting example of an article on radio appearing in a journal which is not dedicated to the medium is ‘The voice from the Void: Wireless, Modernity and the Distant Dead’ (1998) by Jeffrey Sconce. It was published in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies* and explores the reactions of early audiences to radio who viewed it as “a medium of the dead and telepathy” (1998: 211). While the subject matter seems to be close to ideas explored in the non-mainstream Sconce does not engage with that strand of theory. A good example from the British *Radio Journal – International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, is Richard Berry’s ‘Radio with Pictures: Radio Visualization in BBC National Radio’ (2013, 11:2, pp. 169-184). This is an article on the present evolutionary state of radio.

## **2.1 Mainstream**

In my review and close analysis of the literature I have come across some clusters of activity that seem to be happening either within a particular chronological period or within certain groups of theorists. As a methodological practice, I have chosen to base the structure of my arguments around these clusters. In terms of chronology, I have decided to divide the mainstream material into three distinct periods. As will become apparent in the rest of this chapter and in the next chapter, this distinction was informed by an observation of how certain key concepts have been established within the discipline. While I recognise that this periodisation is arbitrary and not watertight, it is based on the particular subject matter of this thesis and how the topics included here seem to have evolved, and is used for purposes of clarity and practicality. Historical observation is always a product of hindsight and subjectivity of viewpoint. Therefore, I am not arguing that these periods are either objective or that they were defined this way at the time. For example, while at this point Radio Studies seems to be in another critical stage of its development, it might only be clear later what exactly made this period crucial or whether in fact it was indeed as crucial as it now seems.

For the purposes of this thesis then we may divide academic writing on radio into three chronological periods: The pre-Radio Studies era, from the beginnings of radio up to the end of the 1990s; the Radio Studies era, between the end of the 1990s and up to 2008, in which the field was gradually developed and, by the end of this period, firmly established in academia; and, finally, the era after 2008, when having become an established disciplinary field, Radio Studies now explored new directions in order



to further enhance the status and influence of radio and its study within Media and Cultural Studies.<sup>10</sup> These chronologies mostly reflect the British and American contexts, as this thesis is concerned with texts written in the English language. However, it is important to note that edited collections, journal articles and conference papers are evidence of a global dialogue. In Britain especially, the radio scholar is exposed to research from very diverse contexts and countries. In this sense, although focusing on Anglophone literature, it needs to be noted that Radio Studies is indeed a field that is expanding globally and events such as the bi-annual Radio Conference allow for creative interaction and, most importantly, validate the field as a very strong forum for new, original and peer reviewed work.

In 1936, in the pre-Radio Studies era, Rudolf Arnheim identified radio's aesthetic qualities and capabilities, defining radio through its differences from other media. Even at this early stage, Arnheim was expressing a degree of concern about the future of radio versus visual media. In *Radio* (re-printed in 1986), he expressed concern about "how long wireless will exist" (1986: 16). Pointing out the robustness of sound's artistic potential, as it was evident in the then newly developed sound-film, he wrote that, "this new form of expression need not entirely disappear" (1986: 16).<sup>11</sup>

Arnheim's book was a product of its time, when television was still new and still to be

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<sup>10</sup> An example of an alternative chronology which might have been useful in another instance would be as follows: 1936-1986 as a pre-history of academic Radio Studies; 1986-2004, starting with the publication of Crisell's seminal *Understanding Radio* and ending with a relative establishment of the discipline marked with a number of academic conferences on the subject of radio in the early 2000s; and finally, 2004 onwards, where Radio Studies seems to be established and moves on to an era of convergence with other media thanks to the development of digital technology and the Internet.

<sup>11</sup> The reprinting of Arnheim's book in the same year that Crisell's seminal *Understanding Radio* was first printed is suggestive of a renewed interest in the discipline.

academically explored and contextualised. Yet even here radio is described as ‘blind broadcasting’, its importance being understood through this lack of vision and the creative, imaginative potential that it opens up because its messages are “above all directed towards thought and feeling” (1986: 278).

In the less well-known book *Broadcasting: Sound and Television*, published in 1958, radio and television critic Mary Crozier made a point about radio’s advantages over the relatively new medium of television. She remarked that while most British households at the time owned “what is known as a ‘radio’ set – that is for sound reception; more and more each year acquire a television set” (1958: 26). Nevertheless, she wrote that,

The radio set (still most important for music) is a general utility; it is often movable, it brings the time and the news, it is less cumbersome than the television cabinet, and it can still be heard while manual jobs are done (1958: 26).

Crozier here recognizes what we still consider to be radio’s strengths, setting them against what television cannot offer. In other words, radio is cheap to buy, it is portable, it is a medium that *marks* time and it can be a secondary activity. Radio’s uniqueness is put forward via a comparison with television.

The first modern textbook on radio was not published until Andrew Crisell’s *Understanding Radio* in 1986, signalling the beginning of the teaching of radio as a stand-alone subject in British universities. Crisell continued the tradition of focusing on radio’s uniqueness, while providing a semiologically-informed approach to the language of radio. In other words, semiology was applied to radio texts for the first time. Crisell, echoing Arnheim, defined radio as a ‘blind medium’, providing the reader with a focused radio-centric analysis on how it communicates its messages.

This constituted a very important first step toward establishing radio's importance within Media Studies at a time when Radio Studies was still non-existent and radio's individual potential needed to be pointed out in order to secure its fair inclusion in academia. Crisell's book was followed by *The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial and Community Radio* (1989), written by Peter M. Lewis and Jerry Booth, offering an alternative history of radio broadcasting. By offering a global context to their analysis, the authors suggested that community radio was the way forward for the medium. Not surprisingly, the first words on the back cover of the book unreservedly state that radio is neglected in critical and academic studies and that its "subordination to television policy debate" make it invisible (1989). Interestingly, the authors state that they wish to re-examine radio's position, myths and forms "at a moment of crisis for traditional broadcasting" (1989). These two statements are an addition to a collection of statements, starting with Arnheim (as mentioned earlier) and continuing until now, that present radio as a medium in constant crisis. There are elements of this crisis related to a true academic neglect that followed radio for the first half of its existence as a broadcasting medium. Moreover, there are elements to do with radio's secondary nature (that is, that it required less of the audience's attention), which make it seem like a medium in crisis without it necessarily being so. The first element, the crisis in Radio Studies, seems to have followed a perceived crisis of the medium in an increasingly visual culture. However, while the perceived rise of the visual is apparent, the medium has proved its resilience and Radio Studies has been steadily growing. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, there is a need now to look into how the discipline can grow in a fresh direction instead of recycling the same ideas.

The field of Radio Studies today is represented by two journals, the American *Journal of Radio and Audio Studies* and the British *Radio Journal*, which provide forums for important work of considerable diversity. The first issue of the *Journal of Radio and Audio Studies*, formerly known as *Journal of Radio Studies*, was published in 1992, eleven years before the first issue of the *Radio Journal*, which was published in 2003. This might suggest that the US was quicker to acknowledge the importance of the discipline but in the years between 1992 and 2003 it was in the UK that a considerable amount of new research was published in the *Journal of Radio Studies*. A series of academic gatherings, conferences and book publications in the UK (and the establishment of the Radio Studies Network in 1998) also played a crucial part in the rise of Radio Studies.

Shingler and Wieringa's *On Air: Methods and Meanings of Radio* (1998) was published at a time when the field of Radio Studies was beginning to take shape, coinciding with the year that the Radio Studies Network was set up in the UK. In the introduction of the book, the authors note that despite its "powerful cultural influence in the modern world" radio is very often taken for granted (1998: ix). They add that,

In the ever-changing world of mass-information and entertainment, radio has remained one of the most vital and popular forms. This being the case, why is it so taken for granted? Why, for instance did its centenary pass almost unnoticed, while cinema's one-hundredth birthday was celebrated with three years of film festivals and publications in the mid-1990s? (1998: ix).

The authors give three explanations for "us quite literally failing to recognize the value of radio": Firstly, they list radio's ubiquity, explaining that because "it gets everywhere", from vast oceans and mountain peaks to our own bedroom, in the end "there is nothing special about listening to the radio". Secondly, they note that it costs "virtually nothing to consume". Thirdly, Shingler and Wieringa list radio's invisibility

as a reason for its underestimation. They write that “listeners consume radio blind. Consequently our attention (like our eyes) is often focused on something other than radio itself...” (1998: ix-x).

The authors here talk about radio’s importance being overlooked by society as a whole. In addition, they make a point about a lack of academic work on radio, noting that while there was an increasing interest in radio’s history, institutional framework and modes of production, there still remained a “need for an informed and in-depth examination of the medium itself, its inherent properties, its codes and conventions, its textual practices and modes of reception” (1998: xii). They further write that, “This type of study (which might constitute a field of ‘radio studies’ akin to film studies) is long overdue” (1998: xii). They also claim that, “Radio has not been given anything like the academic or critical attention devoted to film or television, and to date a ‘critical theory’ of radio is lacking” (1998: xii).

In their introduction, Shingler and Wieringa describe their book as a contribution “towards the establishment of a more wide-ranging theoretical, analytical and ‘academic’ approach to radio” (1998: xii-xiii). They thus confirm that 1998 was a year that had not yet seen the formation of a uniform Radio Studies discipline but the need for it was apparent. The first steps for its creation were being made with Shingler and Wieringa’s book and with the formation of the Radio Studies Network in 1998, which was followed by the creation of an email forum that would serve as the ground for debates and ideas on the topic of radio and its study.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For a historical account of how the Radio Studies Network was formed, its aims and purposes, see Peter M. Lewis’ article ‘British Radio Studies’ (2000), *Journal of Radio Studies*, vol. 7 no. 1, pp. 153-160.

A year later, in her book *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination...from Amos 'n' Andy and Edward R. Murrow to Wolfman Jack and Howard Stern* (1999), American media scholar Susan Douglas also lamented the lack of attention to radio. She wrote that although it is “arguably the most important electronic invention of the century” (1999: 9), radio “as an invention, and a cultural force, is regarded as mattering very little now in the grand scheme of things, especially in the face of cable TV, blockbuster movies, and the Internet” (1999: 9). Douglas goes on to describe radio as “low-tech, unglamorous, and taken for granted” (1999: 9). She observed that at this time there were “only a handful of books about radio after World War II” and that “the press and most cultural observers ignore radio...” (1999: 9). Douglas, like Shingler and Wieringa, ascribes the fact that radio is taken for granted to its blindness, alluding to its evanescence by stating that,

Radio is also hard for our culture to remember properly. We enshrine and relive our history through images - TV documentaries, movies, museum exhibits, and magazines - or through books (1999: 9).

In 2000, anthropologist Jo Tacchi published her article ‘The Need for Radio Theory in the Digital Age,’ which “makes an argument for connecting old and new technologies in our efforts to create a coherent field that we might call ‘radio studies’” (2000: 289). Tacchi here calls for the same need that Shingler and Wieringa noted two years before, while her words also suggest that she had not yet considered Radio Studies to be a coherent field. Acknowledging “a lack of academic work to date on radio - the ‘secondary medium’”, which “has left us with a void in media and cultural studies” (2000: 289), she claims that radio “has become naturalized - so much so that it is difficult to establish its significance” (2000: 290). Explaining this naturalisation, she cites many of the same factors that Shingler and Wieringa had previously noted;

(a) radio's status as a secondary activity (b) radio's ubiquity (c) radio's low cost of production<sup>13</sup> (d) radio's status as "the oldest of the time-based media in the home" (2000: 290). Claiming that Radio Studies or radio theory needs to achieve some further coherence while at the same time remaining multi- or post-disciplinary, Tacchi points out that her work on radio as an anthropologist had revealed that "radio sound has the ability to engage with people's emotions" (2000: 291). In 2000, Tacchi was already hinting at a non-radiocentric radio theory that may allow it to converge with broader media theory. At this point, the latter had not yet happened because the Radio Studies era was at the beginning of its course (as we can now observe) and the discipline was not yet fully established. Thus, there was still a need for radiocentric work in order to stress radio's importance but also to define it through its differences from other media.

Talking about radio's power and pervasive quality, David Hendy added his voice to those of Tacchi and Shingler and Wieringa when noting that radio is largely ignored "in society as a whole" (2000: 3). He ascribed this to the same reasons mentioned previously by the three authors. Here he described radio's ubiquity, writing that, "Despite - or perhaps *because of* - this pervasive quality, radio is for those of us in the developed world a taken-for-granted part of our lives" (2000: 2). He also observed radio's secondary character in that "it is simply there in the background almost all the time" (2000: 3). While noting that, "It is relatively prosperous", he pointed out that "in the media pond it is still an economic minnow" (2000: 3). The economic element here is considered from the point of view of the generation of capital, completing the

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<sup>13</sup> Shingler and Wieringa mention that radio is cheap for the audience to consume but their argument and Tacchi's complete a general notion of a medium that does not cost a lot either to produce or consume.

image of radio as a cheap medium to make and consume, as previously noted by Shingler and Wieringa and Tacchi. Furthermore, Hendy stated that there is a wide and rapidly moving diversity in radio, due to its ability to quickly adapt to social change and new technologies. He ascribed this (referencing the work of Susan Douglas) to the fact that “‘corporate control is never complete’ in such a do-it-yourself technology” and adds that radio has reinvented itself frequently (2000: 6). He claimed that radio’s fast adaptability makes the field of study of radio larger, more diverse and more changeable than that of television. For this reason, and differentiating himself from Shingler and Wieringa and Tacchi to some extent, he stated that he “will not offer a theory of radio” (2000: 6). However, he did recognize that radio “needs to be reconnected with the mainstream of media and communication studies”. Rejecting what he calls a ‘Grand Theory’ of radio, he certainly saw the study of radio as being able to provide insights into the whole of media studies (2000: 6). He wrote that, “It is a medium through which we can explore issues of policy, technology, identity, ideology and culture, just as fruitfully as by studying other media - television, cinema or the press” (2000: 5). The need for radio theorists to integrate their research into Media and Cultural Studies is apparent in this statement. Hendy was arguing that radio scholars could benefit from the changes of technology and new cultural practices of radio since they are forced to rethink and reconceptualise the medium. In this sense, Hendy was ahead of his time in 2000, as the general tone of that era was more concerned with *radio* in the older and narrower sense and its study as overlooked.



Back in 2000, at the beginning of the Radio Studies era, scholars on both sides of the Atlantic had been acknowledging a renewed academic interest in radio. In the UK, in the introduction of his textbook *Studying Radio* (2000), Stephen Barnard had claimed that radio “has been a neglected field within Media Studies over the years, but there is a growing literature” (2000: 3). Likewise, in the USA, in the introduction of the edited collection *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* (2002), the editors Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio had pointed out that in the work conducted in the previous decade there remained difficulties in studying radio. They had even pointed to the same elements that Shingler and Wieringa, Tacchi and Hendy had pointed to from a British perspective, writing that,

...over the last ten years interdisciplinary scholarship on the cultural history of radio has blossomed. Still, attention to radio’s more recent decades remains sparse. As always, radio remains a difficult medium to study: invisible, evanescent, pushed to the margins of mainstream media, rarely talked about and easily overlooked (2002: xv).

They had ascribed this difficulty to engage with it academically to a reliance of radio “on non-narrative forms such as music and talk” which, they noted, “continue to position it outside the boundaries of most scholarly research, in a place where only the most innovative of researchers dare to tread” (2002: xv). This may have been a valid argument back in 2002. However, in more recent years there has been an increasing interest within Cultural Studies in non-narrative forms despite their previously assumed low cultural status. The rise of the iPod, for instance, has created a renewed interest in such forms.<sup>14</sup> Podcasts and functions such as the BBC iPlayer have also reinforced a sense of non-linearity, forcing scholars to look at the traditionally time-based medium of radio outside the boundaries of linearity and the continuous

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<sup>14</sup> The work of Michael Bull remains at the forefront of such studies, following on from his work on the Sony Walkman (e.g., *Sounding Out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life* [2000] and *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and the Urban Experience* [2007]).

narrative of a radiophonic day. This kind of research has also signaled and been characterised by a shift from text to context, from texts to audiences.

Michele Hilmes, in her essay 'Rethinking Radio' (which opens the *Radio Reader*, 2002) collection, made a very strong case regarding the neglect of radio in American academia from "the 1950's through the 80's", placing the limitations in its study within a historical context (2002: 2). Pointing out the persistence and ubiquity of the medium (2002: 1), she wrote that,

...this invisible penetration of our lives has gone remarkably unstudied. Scorned as "merely" a popular culture phenomenon in its most prominent decades, radio had barely begun to attract serious aesthetic and political attention when television eclipsed it (2002: 2).

Hilmes identified that this had been a factor ever since the arrival of television – as previously noted by Arnheim in 1936.<sup>15</sup> Hilmes, then, pointed out that there had been a constant expectation that radio was going to fade away and decline under the power of television. Consequently, this expectation made scholars consider the study of radio redundant. Hilmes noted that television scholars "pretended that television had sprung into the world fully formed in the 1950s, and simply dismissed the decades of aural innovation that preceded it" (2002: 2). This statement is a true reflection of the fact that after the war and until the beginning of the 1980s there was an academic void when it came to studying radio.

Concluding that, "only in the last ten years has this massive act of public "forgetting" begun to shift..." (2002: 2), Hilmes noted a renewed interest in the medium in the 1990s but, at the time of writing this essay in 2002, she still recognised a lack of work on issues such as radio aesthetics, radio in everyday life and political discussion about

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<sup>15</sup> "...this new form of expression need not entirely disappear" (1936/1986: 16).

media and power.<sup>16</sup> One may argue that such work did exist during the period that Hilmes describes. This work would be the non-mainstream essays and edited collections published between the mid 1980s and during the 1990s. What Hilmes seems to perceive as a lack of work on radio aesthetics is specifically in a mainstream context. This is a very telling example of the divergence between mainstream and avant-garde radio theories. It may be argued that throughout Media Studies there is a dichotomy between mainstream and avant-garde theorisations as well as practices. Yet, Film Studies, for example, seems to have managed to have a commonly shared academic lexicon through which mainstream films as well as avant-garde productions may be taught to a student. In Radio Studies, this common basis most often seems lost.

Back in the UK, an increase in academic activity can be observed taking place between 2002 and the end of the Radio Studies era in 2008. A series of conferences took place during this period, the British *Radio Journal* was published (in 2003) and more academic books on the subject of radio were printed: most notably, Guy Starkey's *Radio in Context* and Andrew Crisell's edited collection *More than a Music Box*, both in 2004. Four years later, Kate Lacey offered a review of the Radio Studies era (establishing 1998 as the start of the discipline in the UK) in her paper 'Ten Years of Radio Studies: The Very Idea' (2008). Lacey's essay marks the definitive arrival of Radio Studies as a field of academic study. Henceforth, scholars begin to look into the future of Radio Studies, as well as its potential for future development. Tracing radio theory's history, Lacey marks the beginning of "what we mean by the term 'radio' now" in the establishment of the Radio Studies Network in 1998 (2008: 25).

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<sup>16</sup> Hilmes notes that there has not been any such work on aesthetics since Rudolf Arnheim's *Radio* in 1936.

Furthermore, she recognized that,

ten years ago, when the nascent Radio Studies Network gathered for the first time [...] the diagnosis was that radio is a neglected medium, invisible, the Cinderella of communication studies and a wall-flower at the media studies ball (2008: 21).

She suggested two reasons for this neglect: Firstly, she noted that one reason may be the fact that radio's golden age<sup>17</sup> "pre-dates the rise of media and cultural studies as a discipline, in the UK at least, and so the foundational studies tended to focus on television as the dominant broadcast form" (2008: 22). Secondly, she noted that, "too much contemporary scholarship of the media is *fascinated* (in the sense of being enchanted or bewitched) with the present and with the future – and characterised by a certain *amnesia* about previous media forms (perhaps accounting for the sidelining of radio studies in the first place)" (2008: 22).<sup>18</sup>

Lacey, as a cultural historian, calls for a thorough examination of radio's history *within* media and cultural histories and not in isolation and expresses a concern about how radio theory has dealt with the medium's history until now. She poses the question of whether, "...in our eagerness to let radio have its day in the academic sun, we fall into the trap of emphasizing radio's distinctiveness over its similarities and connections with other cultural forms" (2008: 22).

Lacey has argued that Radio Studies today needs to move on from looking at how radio is different from other media and start looking instead at it as part of a field in which convergence is happening fast. In the pre-Radio Studies era (and at the time when Radio Studies was becoming established in academia) there was clearly a need

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<sup>17</sup> A notion that she, however, considers debatable.

<sup>18</sup> This point echoes Hilmes' point about television scholars 'forgetting' that television did not just emerge fully formed but was based on an aural past (2002: 2).

to separate radio from other media in order to argue for its importance, especially since it was overlooked due to its ubiquity, secondary character and the increasing prominence of the visual. Having readdressed this neglect since 1998, however, scholars now need to look at how Radio Studies can become influential within a wider Media and Cultural Studies field. Lacey, in this crucial and timely intervention, put forward the question of reconnecting it to the wider field. She wrote that, “This question of ‘reconnecting’ becomes, then, inevitably, a question about the ‘edges’ of radio (and by association, radio studies)” (2008: 23). At the same time, she did not overlook the relative lack of diversity in the work on radio compared to other media. Indeed, she wrote that:

There is still a long way to go, as we all know, before we have the wide-ranging body of detailed work that has been built up in the study of the press, film, television and even, already, the ‘new’ media, but it is at least no longer necessary to begin every contribution we make with an apologetic justification for daring to suggest radio as an object of study (2008: 21).

A year after Lacey’s intervention, in 2009, Hugh Chignell published his *Key Concepts in Radio Studies*, officially marking (for the first time in a book) the arrival of Radio Studies in academia with a book published by *Sage*, a major academic publisher. American radio scholar C.H. Sterling noted that the book was “a solid indicator that an academic field was thriving both here and abroad” (2009: 229). In his book, Chignell wrote that his was “the first book to have the words ‘radio studies’ in its title” (2009:1), effectively affirming Lacey’s argument about a discipline that need no longer make excuses for its existence. He noted that, “It used to be the case that books about radio would begin with a rather apologetic justification for writing about the ‘neglected’ medium” (2009: 1) and argued that indeed radio was ignored and that “The media was in fact shorthand for the ‘visual media’” (2009: 2). However, as

Chignell asserted in his introduction, “The situation today is rather different. There will be no justification here for a book about radio because none is needed”.

*Key Concepts in Radio Studies* provides its information in fifty short chapters that make up a reference guide to radio theory. Chignell’s book recognizes a need for ‘ideas’ and ‘production’ to be discussed together. The author, thus, notes that he chose his concepts from two sources: Firstly from “the business of producing radio itself” from which he derived concepts with “a professional currency”, such as ‘the phone-in’, ‘news’ and so on, and secondly “from writing about radio from within the academic field of media studies, including radio studies” (2009: 2).

Chignell’s book made a timely and important intervention in providing a Radio Studies book that is aimed at students (as well as scholars and practitioners) and also provides *ideas* about radio and its study rather than just advice on how to *make* radio. Chignell does not go into great detail in terms of analysing his key concepts but he does offer a discussion that goes further than might be initially assumed. The entries in his book do identify well-established keywords related to radio, such as “phone-ins”, “propaganda” and “formats” but, most crucially, they go well beyond these. In his book, Chignell makes an intervention that is more profound than immediately apparent, as he also identifies concepts and ideas that, although present, had not previously been singled out and given the status of a ‘concept’. For instance, he identifies ‘co-presence’ and although he refers to work by Hendy and Scannell in the relevant entry, it is a concept that had not previously been given substance.

The concepts identified provide starting points for a further analysis of radio sound and its meanings in a direction that allows for a blurring of the boundaries between radio and other media and also places radio within the realm of Sound Studies. As he argues in his introduction to *Key Concepts in Radio Studies*, he uses the term ‘radio’ openly, meaning “not just broadcast analogue radio but digital radio, Internet radio and podcasts” and he does so unapologetically (2009: 2). Affirming his point on the importance of radio and its study having today become fully established, he adds that the medium “has asserted itself to such a degree that excuses are unnecessary”. He continues by making a point that is perhaps the most current and rather popular in Radio Studies today, which sees radio and its study as part of an ‘audio’ culture. He writes characteristically that,

Some readers might think that I am stretching the term radio to include audio and indeed the new technologies of Internet and podcasting. I think this is splitting hairs. No medium can be defined by the technology of its delivery: a podcast remains radio because of the way it is produced (2009: 2).

While this is a notion that may, indeed, be debated, (especially in relation to the concept of Intimacy where the technology, as we shall see, plays an integral part), it represents an important shift in the study of radio as a medium that may only be defined through its separating attributes from all other kinds of media and all other kinds of audio.

In 2013, we observed a few remarkable examples of work that affirmed Chignell’s claim for an opening up of the term radio towards the concept of audio. David Hendy’s *Noise: A Human History of Sound and Listening* (2013) offered a broad selection of themes from the pre-historic cave, to the sound of modern cities and orators. Radio is also a part of the discussion in a chapter entitled ‘Radio Everywhere’! While this is not a book about radio, Hendy includes it as part of this

history that borrows from several disciplines and, crucially, is directed to a wide audience, academic and non-academic. The book also coincided with a BBC Radio 4 series created by Hendy on the subject of noise. The choice of making a *radio* programme along with the book places the medium in sharp focus with relation to the subject of sound today and represents a clear choice of radio as an appropriate medium for the discussion of noise as a subject of study.

Also in 2013, Kate Lacey's *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age* addressed the issue of listening to media texts and the political extensions of this act. She notes here that most theoretical analysis of listening focuses on the act of listening-*in* simply as consumption of media messages in sound (2013: 8). She also adds that, "even when listening is taken to be a sense of *formation*, the appreciation of sound tends to be examined at the level of intimate, individual experience" (2013: 8). Her book seeks to challenge what she calls a "restricted understanding of the listening public by identifying listening as a category that bridges *both* the realm of sensory embodied experience *and* the political realm of debate and deliberation" (2013: 8). Radio here is part of an analysis that is not restricted to radio theory and draws from a variety of disciplines.

Again in 2013, Hilmes and Loviglio published a follow up to their 2002 *Radio Reader*. The new collection was entitled *Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era: Audio in the Digital Age*. The title was a first indication of a theoretical progression from mere 'radio' to 'audio' that is a wider concept that can include the multiple new forms that radio is taking in the new digital era. The title immediately echoes the calls that Hendy (2000) and Lacey (2008) in the mainstream made for



fluidity and flexibility in the definitions of radio. The book's aim is stated as "exploring the evolution of radio as a concept and as a practice" (2013: 2). The latter reveals a new attitude towards the discipline while the editors recognise an opening up of Radio Studies towards Sound Studies, as well as the rest of Media Studies, and offer this collection as an introduction to "what's new in radio studies" and to "new directions in radio soundwork in the US and across the globe" (2013: 3). This new collection highlights the global element while their 2002 *Radio Reader* was much more focused and based on a US context. This is a reflection on the changes that the Internet had brought to radio listening. As the editors note, while radio remains "a medium of local specificity and intimacy", it is "increasingly defining its audience not through geography but through cultural affinity" (2013: 3). This collection followed two other collections on radio in the digital era, *Digital Radio in Europe: Technologies, Industries and Cultures* (O'Neill et al [eds.], 2010) and *Radio Content in The Digital Age* (Gazi, Starkey & Jedrzejewski [eds.] 2011). The two preceding collections are both international in terms of their contributors and thus offer a wide geographical perspective on the issues covered. They are, however, geared towards what we may call the radio 'industry' and thus mostly touch on issues of technologies, policy, formats and models. Loviglio and Hilmes' collection shares with these preceding collections some analysis of the issues of convergence but theirs is a theory book. Moreover, it is conscious of its position within Radio Studies and the significance of the current framework. The use of the term 'new age' does essentially and rather boldly signify a time in which Radio Studies is not simply established but is moving swiftly on to new futures.

## 2.2 Non-mainstream

In contrast to the development of mainstream radio theory, an overview of the development of the non-mainstream strand of radio theory will not offer the scholar an easily defined and traceable linearity. This is because a great deal of this work was first published in obscure magazines or online, and often some of this material becomes re-worked and consequently published in books. While the latter might be a common practice in academia, in the case of the non-mainstream there is at times a difficulty in tracing the time at which a piece of writing was first published. Although this is sometimes indicated, at other times the references are not clear. Stating this fact is not a criticism of this strand of theory, as obscurity and non-linearity are often part of its dialectic and its politics. However, it means that the scholar needs to approach the articulations of this theory differently. While the volume of this work is considerably smaller than the work in the mainstream, there is still a considerable amount of books and articles that allow for it to be treated as a coherent strand in radio theory.

Another reason that there is greater difficulty in approaching this material is that complete histories of it are sparse.<sup>19</sup> It needs to be noted here that the treatment of this material will be different from the previous section, not because the history and course of development of this strand of theory are less important but because throughout its development there is a constant overwhelming argument which remains unchanged and which is crucial to this work. This prevalent argument,

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<sup>19</sup> References to a history (and lack thereof) of the field appear in the work of avant-garde radio theorists. For instance Lander in Augaitis & Lander (eds.) (1994: 11) quoted later on in this segment. Also, relevant here is a quote mentioned earlier: “If the history of mainstream radio is a suppressed field, the history of experimental radio is utterly repressed” (Weiss, 1995: 3).

deriving from an overview of non-mainstream theory, is for a need to reconceptualise radio and open up the field to further questions of philosophy and aesthetics. The way of achieving this, as proposed by the avant-garde theorists, is a *disarticulation* of perceived notions of what radio is and a *disarticulation* of the ways of literally expressing these notions.

In this context, disarticulation may mean a number of things: (a) the complete dismantling of established structures of radiophony and programme making within the radio industry as they come into contradiction with what the radio avant-gardists are proposing the medium's role should be; (b) a literal and metaphorical disarticulation of language as it is heard *on the radio*. The radio avant-garde proposes that there is a need for more 'noise' in radio sound and the radio voice. For example, Weiss's fascination with the work of Antonin Artaud comes from the fact that his work *failed* to make it onto the airwaves as it broke all the rules of what was and is perceived as 'proper' and acceptable in radiophony. The scatological references in Artaud's radio artwork *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1948) is one example of why it was deemed inappropriate for broadcast.<sup>20</sup> Artaud's own mental as well as physical illnesses translated into his work as a breaking down of the mind as well of the body. In some cases words appeared literally severed in a peculiar glossolalia used by Artaud, for instance, "cri" meaning "scream" or "cry" (Weiss, 1995: 16 & 19). Weiss in his monograph *Phantasmic Radio* defines what is perceived as proper and situates his work in direct opposition to such propriety. He writes that

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<sup>20</sup> "This notorious work was commissioned by the director of dramatic and literary broadcasts for French radio as part of the *Voix des poètes* series on Radiofusion français to be broadcast at the beginning of February, 1948. However, the day before the broadcast, the work was banned by the director of French radio on the grounds of obscenity, blasphemy, and anti-Americanism" (Shingler, 2000: 205).

one of the considerations of the book is to give “an idea of the broad potential of radio beyond the various stultifying “laws” that guide mainstream radio: the law of maximal inoffensiveness, the law of maximal indifference, the law of maximal financial return” (1995: 2); (c) disarticulation within radio theory: in the non-mainstream the use of alternative terminology is often used as an attempt for complete disengagement and redefining of meanings and ontologies of radio. As we shall see in the next chapter, this form of disarticulation may not always result in complete detachment but (and although this might be contested by theorists such as Weiss) it may sometimes be seen as a *re-articulation* of concepts that in their core remain the same.

At the current point in the course of the Radio Studies discipline, the non-mainstream’s ontological considerations of the medium may be of great use and importance for two reasons: First, it may contribute towards unifying the discipline by partially reducing the divergence between mainstream and non-mainstream. Second, it may help in overcoming a recurrent limitation (cited by mainstream theorists): the relative lack of conceptual as well as aesthetic analysis due to an overpowering concentration on the practicalities of radio production and audience studies and on genre-oriented analyses. Overcoming these limiting factors may also help Radio Studies converse more productively with the rest of Media Studies. Thus, this segment, instead of being occupied with how the non-mainstream strand of radio theory has developed, will consider how the argument for ‘disarticulation’ developed. In 1995, Allen S. Weiss, in his book *Phantasmic Radio*, called for “...transmission, circuits, disarticulation, metamorphosis, mutation - and *not* communication, closure, articulation, representation, simulacra” (Weiss, 1995: 1-2). This indicates very clearly

that there is in the non-mainstream, as there is in the mainstream, a concern with under-theorisation in terms of histories of radio art and, at the same time, there is a concern with the exclusion of radio and sonic histories and cultures from a broader art theory context, which is seen to favour the visual over the aural. Dan Lander, in *Radio Rethink: Art, Sound and Transmission*, echoes Weiss's concerns when he cites the prominence of visual media and arts as a reason for the neglect of radio art. Here he acknowledges that while there is a significant body of radio art-work, there is also a distinct lack of a solid theoretical framework to back it up, stating that:

[In radio art], when compared to other arts, namely the visual, there is a marked absence of historical radio artworks and theoretical readings. There are many factors which contribute to this absence including the prominence of the visual over the aural... ( in Augaitis & Lander, (eds.), 1994: 11).

In the same year, Gregory Whitehead, another leading non-mainstream theorist, addressed the issue of radio art and the virtual exclusion of experimental radio practice and avant-garde theory from histories of the medium. He observed a dual failure of the mainstream to address radio art and its theory but also noted the non-mainstream's refusal to converse with the mainstream. In *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant-Garde* (1994), he wrote that,

For most of the wireless age, artists have found themselves vacated (or have vacated themselves) from radiophonic space; thus, the history of radio art is, in this most literal sense, largely a history of nobodies. Periodic visitations have remained isolated occasions; in the context of radio's more entrenched commercial and military identities, such fleeting interference decays quickly. The nobodies of radio art have been diminished even further by the numbing absence of critical discourse. Such silence can only feed upon itself, eventually making even the thought of radio as a cultural space seem remote, farfetched, improbable (1994: 253).

In Whitehead's account, the problem of inclusion starts from production and reflects on theory. In his interpretation of events, radio's poetic potential has been overwhelmingly overtaken by the medium's technical ability to entertain and

disseminate information quickly. It should be remembered that Lander and Whitehead were writing before the era of academic Radio Studies, at a time when the theory of radio in general was still trying to find its way into academia. Their concerns, although polemical towards the mainstream, do also mirror the mainstream's concern with under-theorisation, as well as a fear of obscurity and invisibility.

Later, Allen S. Weiss, in the introduction to his edited collection *Experimental Sound and Radio* (2001) made an all-too-rare attempt to reach out to the mainstream when he noted that the divergence between the two distinct strands of radio theory has occurred due to reluctance on both sides. He made this remark during the Radio Studies era, when the discipline was on its way to becoming established in academia and was becoming more and more conscious of itself. Weiss' introduction to the book mirrors what we observed in the mainstream around the same time. In contrast to Lander and Whitehead seven years earlier, Weiss' collection represents a point at which scholars were still concerned about under-theorisation but, with radio theory developing and becoming more extensive, this concern was slowly shifting towards issues of connection to a wider and bigger picture. In 2000, Hendy and Tacchi were calling for mainstream radio theory to connect to wider media theory by becoming less radio-centric (Tacchi) and less radio-specific (Hendy). Weiss in 2001 echoed this need for re-connection but this time it was a re-connection to the wider radiophonic theory that he was advocating. He does mention what is perceived (within his strand of theory) as mainstream radio theory's deliberate repression (through exclusion) of the non-mainstream (i.e., an approach that favours radio as an industry as opposed to an art-form). However, Weiss seems to momentarily overcome this dividing factor

and, rising to the occasion of the now ascending academic field of Radio Studies, he recognizes that the building of new bridges could assist this ascent:

This volume was conceived to play a certain role in the current dialog about radio. Considerations of mainstream radio have been for the most part excluded from aesthetic and cultural discourse, and the history of experimental radiophony has until recently been utterly repressed. At this moment that academic and museological recognition is belatedly occurring, we offer the present project as an attempt to complicate such matters (2001: 6).

In 2001, as Radio Studies was on its way to becoming established within academia, Weiss's statement appeared to embrace this development. His choice of the phrase 'to complicate such matters' indicates something of his political stance. What this seems to complicate is the belated academic recognition of radio and its theory but it does so presumably not to obstruct it but rather to enrich it by putting non-mainstream theories into the equation and by seeing non-mainstream theories engage more positively with the mainstream.<sup>21</sup>

Allen S. Weiss went further in the same year by expressing a view generally shared in the non-mainstream, which sees mainstream radio as having missed the true significance of the medium. In this sense, he was not merely asking for mainstream attention but for something much more radical. He was, in other words, proposing a shift of attitudes towards radio and, most crucially, a shift in the vocabulary and conceptual framework in the study of radio at a time when the discipline of Radio Studies was finally coming to its own and being recognized in academia. He writes

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<sup>21</sup> A few years later, in a rare occurrence from the other side of the spectrum, radio scholar and broadcaster Virginia M. Madsen, wrote about the genre of the experimental radio feature in the article "Radio and the documentary imagination: thirty years of experiment, innovation, and revelation" in the *Radio Journal*. Here she indirectly affirmed Weiss's remark on the repression of non-mainstream radiophonic history by using the term marginalisation which is in keeping with the vocabulary used in the mainstream. She wrote that, "throughout radio's relatively short history, developments of an aesthetic nature [...] have been marginalized" (2005: 190).

that we must, “rethink the radio in terms of a potentially disarticulatory – and no longer articulatory – site of the symbolic, not representing the body but rather transforming it or annihilating it” (2001: 4).

While this quote opens up some issues around embodiment and disembodiment, Weiss appears to be suggesting that radio is a site of symbolism rather than of merely realistic representation. Further to this, he appears to view radio as a site in which human presence acquires a different texture, one that allows for non-regular manifestations of the voice and of the body that this voice evokes. His conceptual pairing of disarticulation and the annihilation of the body evokes the disembodiment of the radio voice but is also reminiscent of Artaud’s work, which was a literal as well as a metaphorical subversion of several distinct things: namely, the body *in* the voice; the language of the voice; and the articulation of the ideas that the voice utters. Weiss’s work in *Phantasmic Radio* reveals a correlation between the disarticulatory character of Artaud’s radiophonic work and the mental and physical illnesses that resulted in his death, the ultimate disembodiment, soon after he created *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*. ‘Disembodiment’ has been prominent and of interest throughout radio’s history in the mainstream as much as in the non-mainstream. Weiss’s proposition about transformation offers a rich and fertile ground for ideas and new understandings of how human presence works on radio and on the effect and affect this presence may have on the audience. In Weiss’s concept of what radio *does* to the body we may read hints of a philosophy that sees radio as connecting to the audience through aesthetic interpretations and transformations of the world rather than pure realism. Here lies one of the main objections that avant-garde radio theorists have to mainstream production and the way it affects theoretical understandings of



what radio is and should be doing. In other words, they strongly dispute mainstream radio's implicit prescription of what a voice should and should not be doing on the air. Weiss explains that his concern is related to 'cleanliness':

[S]eldom is such aesthetic openness manifested or even encouraged in modern media; ironically mainstream radio uses all of its efforts to deny this poetic source of creativity by restricting radio to old musical and theatrical conventions by remaining a clean medium (2001: 5).

Gregory Whitehead also criticises mainstream radio, which he, like Allen S. Weiss, has dubbed "clean" (1984: 3). The use of the word 'clean' is a critique of mainstream radio's perceived obsession with the 'well-spoken' and 'clear voice'. However, apart from the literal meaning of their opposition, the scholar may also discern another meaning to this cleanliness, one that is related not only to the sound of a voice but to what the voice is saying. The avant-garde theorists here advocate a radio which does not rely so heavily on articulation. Disarticulation can be seen to typify radio art. Jo Milutis (a writer, media artist and academic who associates himself with the radio avant-garde) certainly supports this idea, recognizing "a split between this instrumental, controlled use of language and the avant-garde conflict with the project of clear transmission" (2006: 80).<sup>22</sup> In a chapter dedicated to radio in his book *Ether*, Milutis proposes a general sense of imperfectness and heterogeneity that comes with

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<sup>22</sup> His idea of a 'split' is a recognition of what this thesis is describing as a divergence between the mainstream and non-mainstream and the ways that radio is conceptualised within them. Interestingly, however, although his work appears in Weiss's *Experimental Sound and Radio* (2001) and is very strongly associated to the radio avant-garde and its theory, Milutis, in his monograph *Ether* (2006) includes Susan Douglas in his references as well as philosopher, cultural and communication theorist John Durham Peters, whose work on radio seems to share more with the mainstream than with the avant-garde. While the overwhelming references in the book are from the non-mainstream, the inclusion of Douglas and Peters seems like one step toward some communication between these distant schools of thought. The recognition of their differences, however, is never stated.

avant-garde radio and which sharply contradicts an implied homogeneity in mainstream production. He writes that:

The ethereal avant-garde - for whom the radio became both a metaphor of modern consciousness and a tool for radiophonic artwork - welcomed the possibility of noise, misprision, and appropriation that would always be in conflict with the standardization of the radio waves (2006: 80).

However, one must not restrict the avant-garde argument to a call for more radio art on the radio. What the radio avant-gardists are proposing is much more radical. They argue for radio *as* an art, radio *as* art and not just merely radio art.<sup>23</sup> In the words of Milutis, radio “can be art in and of itself” (2006: 98-99). Whilst this is stated very clearly by Milutis, it is a sentiment that many among the non-mainstream radio theorists would appear to share. This, moreover, is a viewpoint that distinguishes them from most (if not all) mainstream radio theorists. In that sense, it would appear to be a crucial point on which these two broad categories of radio scholar strongly diverge and where little convergence seems possible.

### **2.3 An Overview of Non-Mainstream Radio Theory**

While in the mainstream a significant amount of work has been carried out in both the British, European and American context, avant-garde theory seems to be mostly originating in the USA, with some contributions from Canada and Germany. One possible explanation for this is that the overwhelmingly commercial character of American radio has provoked stronger reactions from the avant-garde than, for instance, radio in the UK, where a public service broadcaster (the BBC, which has been more inclined to experiment with innovative forms of radio) is at the centre of the country’s broadcasting system. In the case of Germany, there is a long radio art

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<sup>23</sup> This thesis does not argue for such a sharp shift. Rather, it argues for a shifting and flexible theoretical articulation that will include such ideas and may, as a result, influence radiophonic practice.

tradition that, according to Mark E. Cory (in Khan & Whitehead [eds.], 1994), is rooted in early experimentation with radio in the innovative work of theorists and practitioners such as Walter Benjamin, Kurt Schwitters and Bertolt Brecht.

*Radio Rethink* (1994) is a characteristic example of the work and ideas originating in Canada. The book is a project of the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta and most of its contributors have worked within that context. The main concerns of this work and the methodologies used here are very different from the mainstream. Often these authors are also radio artists and it is a common practice for their theory to derive from analysis of their own artworks (Cristof Migone's writing is a good example of this method). Moreover, their theory is rather self-referential. While it may be placed within a context of other such artworks, it is not looked at in relation to wider radiophonic contexts or to their audience. This method often involves documentation in text and transcripts of their radiophonic work. While they are not studying audiences or programme genres as is common in the mainstream, their analysis does to an extent address their concern regarding a lack of historical accounts of radio art. By documenting and thus preserving their work, these authors/artists, however fragmentary, are creating a history of the evolution of non-mainstream radiophony and the ideas that derive from it. The reference to these artworks is not a mere analysis of production techniques. Rather, it functions as a vehicle or a starting point for ontological, aesthetic and philosophical reflections on the subjects of radio sound, the voice, the human body and sound in general. Philosophical ponderings on the nature of radio and its sound form the primary points of the discussion, and radio art programmes serve as case studies or examples that demonstrate the ideas described. In Weiss' *Phantasmic Radio* (1995), for instance, Antonin Artaud's work and its

failure to be broadcast, is used as an example of what Weiss perceives as strict aesthetic and conceptual limitations that the radio industry places on content and artistic expression.

Without overlooking the fact that both the mainstream and the non-mainstream theorists share responsibility for the lack of communication between them, the self-referential character of avant-garde radio theory and its general opposition to the mainstream have not allowed the field to open up and gain a more prominent position within Radio Studies.

### **3. Conclusion: What/Where is Radio Theory Today**

This chapter has outlined the two different strands of theory in the field of Radio Studies and some of the more salient limitations within these separate strands, but it has also presented the discipline in a positive light of steady ascent, questioning a general perception of radio as a medium in perpetual crisis. Since 2008, a number of books have been published, conferences continue to grow both in numbers of delegates and international participation, and journals continue to feature diverse articles on the subject of radiophony. The discipline is moving towards new directions, some of which were identified by theorists in the years leading up to its establishment. A non-radiocentric direction for the study of radio means that it may be observed for what it can offer to the study of the media in general as opposed to being studied merely through the unique traits that differentiate it from the others. A direction needs to be explored other than that prescribed by the textbooks. More conceptual analysis is needed, while radio's histories need to be observed as part of the bigger picture of media histories.

From the literature review it is clear that, for the most part, radio has been identified according to some of the main characteristics that set it apart from television and visual media. These may be summed up as ‘invisibility’, ‘evanescence’, ‘secondariness’ and ‘blindness’. Interestingly, all of these share a general concept of the *absence* of something. Even more interestingly, these are often presented in the literature as factors responsible for the perceived underdevelopment of Radio Studies. Absence has then, until recently, been a key feature of studies of radio. It might be argued, however, that the future of Radio Studies, relies on *presence*. Furthermore, it might also be said that this can be a terrain upon which concepts related to all media can grow. Radio is a way of talking about the diverse, exciting, complicated and ever-changing contemporary media landscape. The study of radio has during its course been considered redundant, overlooked and limited. These characterisations have also been applied to the medium itself. It is an advantage for radio and its theory today that while it was seen as a Cinderella discipline for a Cinderella medium (Lacey 2008: 21), they both resisted time, technological change and academic doubt to arrive today not only intact but open to change. Radio theory has been quietly rising, in terms of volume and diversity of work, as well as in terms of becoming steadily more relevant within a wider context of audio and Sound Studies, even perhaps to the surprise of radio theorists themselves. In an unconventional course, Radio Studies has managed to develop and become established while at the same time remaining pregnant with potential.

An overview of mainstream and non-mainstream accounts reveals that what radio theory needs more than anything is a re-connection with its various constituencies as well as a bigger picture. There are two distinct ways in which this can be expressed.

Firstly, in the mainstream it emerges as a need for reconnection with wider Media and Cultural Studies. Secondly, in the non-mainstream it is expressed as a need for radio theory that re-connects with the aesthetic roots of the medium enabling it to influence the bigger picture of radio theory that is otherwise dominated by the mainstream. Both of these may be achieved through a shift in the conceptual approach to radio from an analysis that merely approaches it as a media industry to an analysis of it as a cultural phenomenon. This sense of the bigger picture is another, and more unified way of understanding the different calls for radio theory to open up, including Tacchi's call for "multi or post-disciplinary" radio theory (2000: 291), Hendy's call for a study of radio through its ability to change instead of a 'Grand-theory of radio' (2000: 6), Lacey's call for interdisciplinarity (2008: 26) and re-connection to the broader field of media theory through an opening of the term 'radio' (2008: 22) and Weiss's call for a 'complication of matters' by opening the lines of communication between mainstream and experimental theorizations of radio (2001: 6). In all of these ways, Radio Studies might be opened up to other disciplines. First, of course, Radio Studies needs to resolve some of its internal limitations and divisions. One very good starting point for 'complicating matters' is the concept of Intimacy. This is not only relevant to the study of a range of media (including film and television) but also, as we shall see, it is crucial to all understandings of radio, mainstream and non-mainstream. Over the remaining chapters of this thesis, I will identify and develop the concept of Intimacy by first setting out how 'intimacy' has been articulated and developed within Radio Studies in both the more 'traditional' strand of mainstream radio theory and the much more radical avant-garde of radio theory.

## Chapter 2

### **Theories of Intimacy: From Mainstream to Non-Mainstream**

One of the qualities most commonly ascribed to radio and the radio voice is ‘intimacy.’ In the literature to date it has been indiscriminately applied both to the medium as a whole and to individual programme genres, and the aim of this thesis is to make the distinction explicit and to define the concept more clearly. The word ‘intimacy,’ although used very often, is used variously, ambiguously and without precise definition. I would suggest that ‘intimacy’ has not been sufficiently understood in relation to radio and, for that reason, I wish to offer a more thorough explanation of the term and of concepts associated with it.

Intimacy is often referred to in radio theory as a key attribute of the medium. However, with very few exceptions, there are neither chapters nor sections of books (or whole books for that matter) dedicated to it: it is usually referred to *en passant*. In exploring the concept, this chapter will collect, analyse and compare the existing accounts of it from both mainstream and non-mainstream radio theory.

In my research, I have found one major exception where a specific (albeit very short) section is dedicated to Intimacy, and this is Hugh Chignell’s *Key Concepts in Radio Studies*. Here Intimacy is presented as a key concept and has two pages dedicated to it. In the introduction to the book, Chignell categorizes it as a concept deriving from “writing about radio from within the academic field of media studies including radio studies” as opposed to terms deriving from the radio industry (2009: 2). He adds that “the idea that radio is an ‘intimate’ medium is a recurrent theme in radio studies”

(2009: 2). Acknowledging the centrality of Intimacy in radio theory, Chignell defines it as “the unusually close and personal link commonly referred to as intimacy” (2009: 87). The word ‘unusually’ here signals that the link between radio and its audience is closer than normally expected. It is also unusual because intimacy as understood in radio communication is dramatically different from intimacy as a non-mediated concept: it lacks fundamental qualities traditionally associated with intimacy: (a) The two parties in the radio relationship are separated, not close or together; (b) they are invisible to each other, while traditional notions of intimacy might imply that visibility helps to build a companionship and knowledge of each other; (c) they are usually unknown to each other. Although some familiarity is indeed built over time in the radio relationship, this is a wholly mediated intimacy and is limited to the fact that often the listener will imagine the broadcaster to be quite different from what she or he actually is. Anna Raeburn, in her interview for the audio part of this thesis, tells a story about a taxi driver who recognised her from her voice and was shocked at how different she looked from the way he had imagined her. Raeburn ended the anecdote, exclaiming: “People make you up”! Paradoxically, while this seems to be an antithetical notion to intimacy – intimacy normally arises from knowledge rather than ignorance and fabrication – the act of imagination in radio also seems to be bound up with this intimacy. Why and how then can radio be intimate and even be described as the most intimate of media? Indeed, radio’s intimacy lies within the radiophonic paradox due to a number of reasons:

(a) Radio penetrates the listener’s private spaces and envelopes her due to the ubiquity of sound and the frequent portability of the receiver. In this way, for the most part, listening is an individual, solitary experience. The listener has then the sense of being



the only person who is being addressed. (In chapter four I will provide an example of this in a short case study on sleeping with radio).

(b) Portability and the secondary uses resulting from radio's blindness allow it to accompany the listener throughout the day, making it part of her everyday routine. The repetitive, habitual nature of radio listening may result in the listener feeling as if she has come to know the broadcaster well. While this familiarity over time may result even with voices that are not intending to be intimate the modes of address and uses of language and sound by the broadcaster may enhance this sense of familiarity that some might claim is, to an extent, an illusion.

(c) Due to the absence of vision, as described above, the broadcaster is 'realised' in an individual, idiosyncratic way, unique to each listener. The listener makes up the broadcaster the way she or he wishes them to be.

(d) Radio is 'live'. It is either pre-recorded but broadcast live or entirely live. This is true of traditional, linear, broadcast radio but perhaps not applicable to newer formats such as the podcast. In linear radio, then, liveness might enhance the sense of intimacy through a sense of *being* at the same time.

(e) It may also be argued that the sense of intimacy may be enhanced by the listener's awareness that a number of *unknown others* - a concept that we shall understand as 'co-presence' later in this chapter - or even *significant others*, as we can see in Jo Tacchi's research in 'Nostalgia and Radio Sound' (in Bull and Back, 2003), are listening at the same time. Tacchi's participants describe listening to the radio in order

to connect to absent significant others that they knew were listening to the same programme at the same time. The latter is closer to a sense of individualism or privacy with which intimacy seems to be bound up.

The notion of the 'unusual' then (that derives from the above points) is the main characteristic of many, if not all, debates about Intimacy yet this notion of the 'unusual' (or 'curious' as described by Anna Raeburn and 'hard to pin down' as described by Anne Karpf in their interviews for this thesis) is seldom analysed in detail. The unusual character of radiophonic Intimacy is understood to be derived, paradoxically, from a non-reciprocal relationship in which the broadcaster usually sends and the listener usually receives, and the paradox of a mass medium that achieves the illusion of privacy. These paradoxes have perhaps made it difficult to access the concept in radio theory.

Shaun Moores makes the case that Intimacy is a concept that has received little academic attention in general and specifically in relation to the media:

When friendship and intimacy do receive the serious consideration they deserve (see also Allan 1979, Jamieson 1998), little is said about the role played by media in friendship relations, and even less about the sort of intimacy at a distance with media figures...(2005: 77).

In order to redress this imbalance and give the intimacy of radio more serious consideration, this chapter will offer a new summary and appraisal of the existing literature on Intimacy in Radio Studies and explore what intimacy on the radio means in more detail. Aided by radio theory it will seek to clearly define and conceptualise the idea, moving from the generic to the specific. Moores' claim, made in 2005, is

still valid today and makes the importance of understanding intimacy on the radio even greater.

Before moving on to this analysis, it is worth illustrating the confusion that surrounds Intimacy by citing the example of a very recent collection of essays that may be categorized as part of the mainstream tradition. This example demonstrates that although the conceptual weight of Intimacy is now recognized in *Radio Studies*, there is still some confusion about where it actually stems from and how it really works. In Loviglio and Hilmes' collection *Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era*, published in 2013, the word 'intimacy' is included in the index, yet for a collection that claims to be providing a sense of radio in the present-day there is a surprising lack of engagement with the concept (2013: 5). The only reference to it appears as part of the essay 'Voices Made for Print: Crip Voices on the Radio' by Bill Kirkpatrick. As is often the case, intimacy only comes up as part of another discussion and is not the main concern of this essay (as the author recognizes), yet the author attempts to engage with it in four paragraphs of his essay.<sup>24</sup> Kirkpatrick's account presents some interesting points. Firstly, he seems to be alluding to a difference between intimacy as a characteristic of all radio and a cultivation of this intimacy by announcers and DJs (2013: 116). Additionally, he points to radio technology, writing that "Multiple features of radio and various byproducts of the affordances of the technology help underwrite these feelings of intimacy" and listing "the ability of radio waves to cross boundaries in order to enter the privacy of the home" (2013: 116). He further describes "the amplification technology that allows

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<sup>24</sup>"While it is beyond the scope of this essay to join a broader philosophical or psychological discussion of what might be meant by intimacy, the concept clearly has to do with inter-subjective relations..." (2013: 117).

more conversational speaking styles” and “the pervasiveness of sound itself as an omnipresent and inescapable form of sensory input” (ibid.). Pointing to presentation styles, he notes that “radio’s intimacy was also a deliberate creation” and (quoting Van Cour) that “radio practitioners have actively sought to cultivate” a sense of spontaneity and sincerity and the illusion of intimate conversation (ibid.). While he seems to be close to spotting a distinction that, among other things, ascribes some importance to radio technology itself, in the next page he seems to contradict himself. Mentioning the work of Scannell, he makes a point about intimacy not being a feature only of radio but of other media too (2013: 117). While this claim carries considerable truth, the justification that Kirkpatrick gives seems to contradict his earlier point, missing the essence of why radio has indeed come to be considered *the* intimate medium. He suggests that Scannell’s assessment of other media also being intimate means that,

radio’s privileged reputation as the intimate medium is not inherent in the technology itself or the phenomenology of sound but rather has been actively produced and asserted for so long and with such success that we have subsumed them into our listening practices: expectations of intimacy are integral to how we encounter and relate to radio (2013: 117).

This assessment is profoundly problematic for a number of reasons: Firstly, as Kirkpatrick himself recognized within the same paragraph, there is a technological element to why radio affords such intimacy. Secondly, he seems to assume that intimacy was carefully orchestrated from the beginnings of radio, although the literature and radio histories suggest that early radio producers and managers had, more likely, found through working for the medium that there is an inherent intimacy that might indeed be exploited or, in some cases, actively *not* exploited (see the article ‘What Do You Expect of this Friend’: Canadian Radio and the Intimacy of Broadcasting’[2009] by Len Kuffert, reviewed later on in this chapter). Thirdly, the

assumption that radio intimacy is so actively orchestrated by broadcasters and that the audience is merely responding passively to such a construction is also problematic. Kirkpatrick bases his assumption on what he calls “the commonsense understanding of speaking as “active” and listening as “passive”” and adds that “the intimacy that results from the speaker-listener bond is not necessarily a relationship between equals” and that “radio’s intimacy is rooted in multiple overlapping asymmetrical relationships that tendentially privilege and empower the speaker” (2013: 117). While, as we shall see later on in this chapter, there is a spurious element to intimacy and some reason to be apprehensive in certain cases, media audience passivity, especially in relation to radio, is a debatable notion not only because radio thrives by allowing the listener to subjectively and *actively* complete its messages in her imagination but also because radio has thrived against all odds in a visually dominated media landscape. The latter suggests that despite the fact that visual culture seems to be, at first glance, all encompassing, the audience is actively choosing to use and be connected to radio in meaningful ways that may not be dismissed as merely passive reactions.

Elsewhere, Kirkpatrick asserts that, “In writings on radio and intimacy it is clear that the authors usually have in mind the bond that the listener feels with the speaker on the radio, a connection that produces the illusion of an unmediated, one-on-one experience” (2013: 117). The review of the literature in this chapter suggests that, in fact, intimacy is most often discussed in relation to the medium as a whole and the intimate relationship of the listener on a programme/presenter level is one that occurs slightly less frequently.

While Kirkpatrick's essay is just one example and not necessarily representative of all contemporary thought on radiophonic intimacy, it is, however, included in a collection which aims to represent Radio Studies as it stood in 2013, and the fact that it contains the only discussion of Intimacy in the whole collection is rather telling. It may be argued that it is an example of the confusion around Intimacy as a concept and of the difficulty theorists have, while recognizing its centrality, in assessing why and how the notion of intimacy is so important in the discussion of radio. This and the next chapter aim to unpack some of the issues surrounding radiophonic intimacy and establish some theoretical underpinnings that will help further establish Intimacy as a core concept in the study of radio. The task now is, by reviewing radio literature, to see what we mean when we say that *radio* is 'intimate' and also what we mean when we say that certain *radio programmes* are intimate.

While identifying the ways in which intimacy has been discussed to date, I shall mostly concentrate on the core texts and authors that are used in teaching radio in British universities. For this purpose, I have selected five main texts from the mainstream literature, which chronologically mark the evolution of Radio Studies between 1986 and 2009.<sup>25</sup> In these, I will include the only example of a book on radio with the word "intimate" in its title, as well as some reference to academic papers that give some consideration to intimacy in a more profound way.

In the non-mainstream radio literature it is generally more difficult to identify instances where intimacy is explicitly discussed but it is nonetheless referred to in more circumspect ways. As this body of literature tends to be rather abstract in

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<sup>25</sup> I will also be referencing some further work by the anthropologist Jo Tacchi because, as indicated in the first chapter, her work on radio comes very close to a notion of intimacy without, however, explicitly interrogating it.

general my task here will be to deconstruct the terms used to explore intimacy. The most prominent authors from the non-mainstream are Allen S. Weiss and Gregory Whitehead (i.e., in terms of the volume of their work) and thus I shall mostly be focusing on their work with the addition of some other texts (mostly essays).

As mentioned earlier, intimacy is used to describe both aspects of radio as a medium in general and also in relation to specific radio genres; most notably, phone-ins. Although the word may be used interchangeably and variously, the first point to be made is that intimacy usually appears under specific headings (in mainstream radio literature). What strikes the researcher, after a close look and comparative analysis of mainstream and non-mainstream texts, is that there is a considerable continuity across the spectrum. In the mainstream, this continuity is chronological as well as conceptual. In the non-mainstream, it may be harder to follow such a linear path but, as we shall see, there are some surprising similarities here with the mainstream, which perhaps came unwillingly and unknowingly, possibly even suggesting an underlining coherence across the radio theory spectrum.

## **1. Mainstream Texts**

The choice to start with Andrew Crisell's book *Understanding Radio* is due to its importance as the first radio textbook in the English language and the first to be widely used in academia. Here, Crisell discusses intimacy in two different chapters. The first reference, appearing at the very beginning, is included in 'Characteristics of Radio' where he relates the concept to the medium as a whole. Explaining what he calls the "fictional tendency of radio," he talks about radio as a medium that

communicates by stimulating the listener's imagination (1994: 10). Crisell describes the act of imagining as an individual act, writing that,

...there is the paradox that while radio is a long-distance mode of communication it is also an inward, *intimate* medium, and so integral does the imagination seem to be to the way in which we decode virtually all its messages, whether factual or fictional, that when we speak of its 'appeal to the imagination' we mean in effect its basic ability to communicate (1994: 11).

Crisell here connects intimacy to two of the most important characteristics of the medium as a whole: (1) the paradox of privacy despite spatial distance and the public mode of its communication; and (2) the appeal to the imagination due to the medium's blindness. This, as will be seen, opened up fertile ground for other radio theorists to explore.

The second instance in which Crisell refers to intimacy is in his section on 'Talk and Music Radio', where he reconciles and explains the paradox by saying that the public manner in which all radio reaches its audiences can be masked by means of radio talk. In his analysis, intimate modes of address override the public nature of broadcasting. As he writes,

The listenership is reached as a mass, but through a second-person mode of address which is informal, intimate, ostensibly directed at a single individual. This intimacy is, of course, established in large part by the manner of delivery, the tone and pitch of the presenter's voice; but as Montgomery observes (1986: 429) it can also be created explicitly through such 'response-demanding' utterances as 'How are you today?'- a question which could not obtain separately discoverable answers from a massive audience (1994: 68).

Finally, Crisell points out in his chapter on 'Audiences', while specifically talking about 'The Listener', that, "radio gives the isolated listener a feeling of community



not simply with the broadcasters but with the *other* isolated listeners” (1994: 212).<sup>26</sup>

In due course, this observation would be developed in *Radio Studies* into the concept of co-presence (see Chignell, 2009: 74-78).

Crisell’s comments on intimacy have proven highly influential, with many succeeding radio theorists subsequently building on these ideas. For instance, in their 1998 book *On Air: Methods and Meanings of Radio*, Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa place their discussion of intimacy under the chapter ‘Listening and Talking Back’. In a rare instance in *Radio Studies*, they even included ‘intimacy’ in the index of their book, giving the concept some added weight. Beginning their chapter on ‘Listening and Talking back’ with the statement that “radio is, for many of its audience, a life-long friend and constant companion”, the authors reference Paul Donovan, adding that one of the medium’s most important functions is “that of being a companion or friend”. They also add that, “No other medium has been able to match radio on this score and it is not for nothing that radio has long been called the ‘friend in the corner’” (1998: 110). They specifically describe radio’s friendly functions as, “providing not just company in periods of solitude but also an organising structure and timetable” (1998: 110). Apart from explicitly re-stating and recognizing radio’s most frequent characteristic, they make an initial connection here with the temporal element.<sup>27</sup> Situating radio as, “virtually a member of the family, part of the fabric of our private lives”, their mention of privacy immediately leads us on to intimacy (1998: 110). They finish their short introduction to the chapter by stating that radio is “much more

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<sup>26</sup> Later in this chapter, I will be looking at this relationship more closely, also referencing the work of Paddy Scannell and David Hendy. We shall see that Hugh Chignell also makes a point about a feeling of ‘co-presence’ with the presenter and the other listeners, this being intricately connected to the notion of intimacy.

<sup>27</sup> David Hendy, Paddy Scannell and others also consider this important in the creation of feelings of intimacy.

than a technological device for receiving the transmitted signals of a local or national broadcasting station”, adding that, “it is the most personal and intimate ‘mass medium’: an unrivalled companion and one of the most interesting, reliable and useful friends” (1998: 110). In this last sentence, they evoke the paradox observed by Crisell in *Understanding Radio*. In their introduction, Shingler and Wieringa refer to intimacy (and the related ideas of radio as a friend, companion and part of the family) as a characteristic of radio as a whole, without distinguishing between those genres that are more or less intimate than others.

The first subheading of Shingler and Wieringa’s chapter is entitled ‘A one-sided conversation’, which further evokes Crisell’s paradox: i.e., a very private and personal relationship with a mass, public medium. They begin by making clear that the relationship with radio as a whole is exceptionally personal, quoting from the conclusions of the Broadcasting Standards Council’s annual review of 1994, which states that “‘the audience enjoys a more personal and individual relationship with radio than with television’ (Hardgrave [ed.] 1994: 27)” (1998: 111). Having talked about radio as a medium of intimacy (and having evoked the paradox of this private/public relationship), Shingler and Wieringa initially reconcile this paradox just as Crisell does, by referring to modes of communication that override or, rather, exploit this public medium in order to speak as if it was addressing the individual. Talking about radio output in general, they write about the illusion of talking back to the radio when in reality no one can hear the listener (1998: 111).

In general, radio broadcasters go out of their way to provide their listeners with a sense that they are part of a radio discussion, that their own personal cares, needs and attitudes are being cared for, that their presence is felt: in short giving listeners a sense of power and participation (1998: 112).

While referring to the medium as a whole, the authors situate the creation of personal relationships with the listener in what could be called the performative realm, in which the radio broadcaster needs to go some lengths to initiate intimacy.

Before identifying the ways in which broadcasters can create the illusion of a private *conversation*, Shingler and Wieringa mention the genre of the phone-in as “the exception to one-way communication” (1998: 113). Referencing broadcaster and phone-in host Brian Hayes, they identify the phone-in as “the most personal form of radio” (1998: 113). Here they briefly home in from the general way that radio as a medium mimics the privacy and closeness of an inter-personal relationship, to the specific (i.e., the phone-in), as an example of a heightened intimacy, provoking a more intense closeness due to its two-way mode of communication. All too soon, however, they bring the conversation back to the general by removing the element of a two-way communication as a crucial factor in the creation of the special radio relationship. Here they write,

Only a small minority of the listeners who regularly tune in to certain radio phone-in programmes will actually avail themselves of this opportunity (and only a few of those who try will actually get through and on to the airwaves”. [...] Therefore, the appeal of these programmes for the majority of the phone-in audience comes from listening to others participate in radio talk (on behalf of, or as representatives of, the listening community as a whole) (1998: 114).<sup>28</sup>

Whether the ‘talking back’ to the radio actually happens in the form of calling and talking on the air or is just a consensual illusion of communication manifested by talking back to the radio device in solitude, the phone-in programme is seen by the authors as enhancing a ‘conversation’ that takes place in radio as a whole. Thus, they

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<sup>28</sup> This reference to a ‘community’ of listeners is relevant to the discussion of intimacy and/as ‘co-presence’ as it appears in Shingler and Wieringa’s work as well as in David Hendy’s and Paddy Scannell’s work. Co-presence is also a core concept in Hugh Chignell’s contextualization of intimacy.

argue that, “The ubiquity of the phone-in on today’s radio lends a certain credence to the reciprocity of the medium more generally” (1998: 114). In this way, it might be said that the phone-in contains a performance of intimacy based on the enhancement of the listeners’ impulse to talk back to their radio. Shingler and Wieringa make the point that the phone-in merely plays up a quality of all radio, placing the medium’s general intimacy in a primary position. Thus, they write that,

...many types of radio programme produce a sense of reciprocity even without actually allowing listeners to engage in live broadcast debate [...] Interview programmes, panel games, news and current affairs, music programmes and many more create a semblance of reciprocity [...] Radio listeners are repeatedly asked to telephone in or write in...(1998: 114).

However, they also quote an avid radio listener, Tim Logan, who stated that talking back happens spontaneously as a “somewhat strange phenomenon [...] but, in other ways, a quite natural and inevitable reaction to this particular medium” (1998: 114). Here, Shingler and Wieringa begin to discuss the ‘unusual’ nature of the radio relationship (which Chignell later uses in his lexicon of radio theory concepts) as a defining one for what might be understood as Intimacy. The word ‘strange’ in the above quote is used not antithetically but complementarily to the words ‘natural’ and ‘inevitable’. It is important here to re-state that the authors are talking about intimacy as a characteristic of all radio. Their next paragraph continues their task of removing the focus from the specific genre of the phone-in, firmly placing it onto the medium as a whole. Thus,

If the phone-in is indicative of the natural desire of the listener to talk back then talking back to the unheeding radio perhaps indicates the **unusual** intimacy between radio and its audience. Even before the rise of the phone-in programme, radio had acquired a reputation as an intimate medium; the phone-in has consolidated rather than created this. Intimacy has long been regarded as one of the defining characteristics of the medium and is exploited

by broadcasters across a broad range of programme output (1998: 114-115).  
[Emphasis mine]

Shingler and Wieringa also identify a duality in the creation of intimacy. Leading up to that duality, they use the examples of two genres: radio dramas (as staged inside the listener's minds) and music on the radio (as evocative of "personal associations for listeners, in the form of romantic memories") (1998: 115). They describe these as, "two instances where radio can be seen to establish intimate and participatory relations with its audience without it actually telephoning, writing, texting or e-mailing in" (1998: 115). The paradox of a non-reciprocal communication, one that creates the illusion of reciprocity, is explained here as deriving from the active imagining that follows every radio broadcast and from the personal associations that this imagining allows for. Like Crisell, they connect intimacy to the key characteristic of radio, its blindness. They also explain that the paradox of privacy derives from the medium's blindness (and the consequent imagining which follows it). The duality, that Shingler and Wieringa note, is intriguing because it establishes a distinction between a general and an 'exploited' (and specific) intimacy. To quote Shingler and Wieringa once more,

...the twin concerns of intimacy and reciprocity lie at the heart of successful radio broadcasting. Exploiting the medium's natural ability to establish intimate relations with its audience has undoubtedly been one of the most important lessons learned by radio broadcasters since it became a mass medium and certainly since radio lost its family audience to television and found its main audience in a multitude of solitary listeners (1998: 115).

Using examples of modes of address and microphone uses as they appear in Robert McLeish's *Radio Handbook*, the authors explain some of the ways in which radio's inherent intimacy can be further exploited. Radio's inherent intimate qualities are in this instance taken for granted. In other words, they are not questioned. Shingler and Wieringa use a further example, of daytime DJ programmes, to re-state that radio is

an intimate medium, recognizing here that in this type of programme a particular intensity resides: “This intimacy, so typical of radio as a whole, is at its most intense in these daytime music programmes aimed largely at women (and, more specifically, at housewives) (1998: 127). The authors here make a significant distinction, one of intensity. Although they do not elaborate on this point, they do distinguish between a general intimacy and a more intense one that arises in specific forms or types of programmes. To me, this seems like a very crucial distinction.

The above distinction, along with Shingler and Wieringa’s discussion of the illusion of a ‘conversation’ between the radio voice and the listener are significant elements in the development of an understanding of intimacy. The debate on the intimate relationship between the medium and its audience would be taken further and into new directions by David Hendy in 2000, who elaborated on the importance of the temporal element in the creation of this relationship.

David Hendy’s discussion of intimacy (and its related concepts) appears in two different chapters of his book *Radio in the Global Age* (2000), in ‘Audiences’ (under the subheadings ‘The act of listening’ and ‘The radio audience’) and in ‘Meanings’ (under the subheadings ‘Radio texts: talk and music’ [in ‘Talk’], ‘Radio and modernity: time, place and communicative capacity’ and ‘Time’). In the first instance, under ‘Audiences’, Hendy talks about ‘The act of listening’, returning to the paradox of listening to a mass medium as an individual, while often having the illusion of belonging to a community of listeners and presenters, one that is “rarely fixed in time or space” and that has “to be imagined into being” (2000: 121). Here he writes,

The act of listening to the radio is, then, quite **paradoxical**. It prompts us to explore our innermost thoughts and memories, but it also takes us out of

ourselves. It stimulates idiosyncratic mental images, but also panders to our desire for the familiar song and the shared experience. In the end, then, the act of listening to the radio is defined by this paradox (2000: 121). [Emphasis mine]

By referring to the work of Susan Douglas, Hendy argues that the intimate experience of all radio listening results from three factors: (a) the stimulation of the imagination as forging “a strong *emotional* attachment” (2000: 119); (b) a neuroscience connection of the auditory system of the brain to “the part of the brain from which we derive emotions and memory” (2000:119); and (c) “the *sociable* dimension”, which means that hearing other people “fosters human relationships even more than seeing them” (2000: 120).<sup>29</sup> He adds that sound possesses an enveloping power, which he describes as “pouring into us” (2000: 120). He too, then, connects intimacy to radio’s other core characteristics, blindness and imagination, which derive from the very nature of the medium as a whole.<sup>30</sup> Here, Hendy understands the act of listening to radio as being an intimate one because of the intimate functions of radio broadcasting in its totality, without distinguishing between different genres.

According to this account, the way the human brain receives radio’s communications is not accidental but rather, the two (human brain and radio technology) mirror each other. It can be argued that this mirroring creates an intimate space that radio occupies, one that is ever-changing and evanescent, as well as democratic, private and individual because of its personal character. As Hendy puts it, radio is “more personal, more intimate, more innately prone, at a cognitive level, to individual

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<sup>29</sup> Susan Douglas, Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan, is the author of *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination, from Amos ‘n’ Andy and Edward R. Murrow to Wolfman Jack and Howard Stern* (1999). Hendy bases much of his account of radio audiences on this book.

<sup>30</sup> In his discussion on imagination, he quotes and references Shingler and Wieringa’s *On Air* (on page 118) and Andrew Crisell’s *Understanding Radio* (on page 119).

interpretation than the process of watching television or reading the newspaper” (2000: 121). He adds that it is also “simultaneously, an act which is *replicated* countless times among members of the wider audience (ibid.). For him, “the sense of this wider phenomenon *is part of the individual experience*”. He qualifies this by stating that, “This, at least, is what listening to radio offers *in theory*. It marks radio’s potential” (ibid.).

Hendy’s reference to intimacy here is related to all radio, since it involves the stimulation of the imagination. Interestingly, before he goes on to explore the relationship between listener and broadcaster he mentions what he calls “a rather peculiar paradox” (2000: 129). He writes that,

On the one hand, the concept of radio as friend, company and background noise [...] tends to imply that the precise nature of programme *content* is unimportant in radio - the medium is somehow fulfilling its function simply by being *on* (2000: 129).

He adds that,

On the other hand, the sort of ‘relationship’ often forged between a listener and a particular show suggests that, despite our distracted and taken-for-granted approach to listening, the *content* of radio may well be extremely important to us (2000: 130).

Hendy relates this paradox to a distinction between “a rather indiscriminating tap-listening, and a rather more engaged attention to actual content” (2000: 131). The radio being on and the listener casually listening to it, helps create an ‘intimate atmosphere’, a general feeling of closeness, privacy (and perhaps safety), *a sense of (friendly) presence*, which is a matter of space and how radio relates to it, creating it, shaping it, interacting with it. On the other hand, more engaged attention to certain kinds of programming may also result in enhanced intimacy, this time directed more specifically to a voice or a presenter; in other words, to the presence of *someone in*



*particular*. This is what Hendy draws our attention to when talking about content. Although Hendy does not explicitly define it in such terms, he nevertheless draws attention to a crucial distinction between a general intimate relation to radio and a more specific attachment to particular kinds of content.

Developing his argument in his chapter on audiences, Hendy introduces the element of time, noting that all radio output, “is interwoven with ritualized routines, such as reading the paper, preparing for work, eating meals, having a bath, going to bed” (2000: 132). He also observes that radio “marks time so intimately, in fact, that cause and effect are difficult to establish” (2000: 132). Referencing Scannell here, Hendy argues that scheduling is a matter of “broadcasters adjusting output ‘to be grossly appropriate to what people are doing and when’, but it is also true that our sense of time in our domestic lives ‘is always already in part determined by the ways in which media contribute to the shaping of our days’” (2000: 132). This clearly indicates a ‘relationship’ of some sort between the listener and the medium that bears similarities to how someone’s everyday life may be partly defined by how she chooses to spend her time but also by how her social life influences her own schedule. Interestingly, the examples of tasks that Hendy uses as routines into which radio is interwoven include both traditionally solitary activities and those traditionally seen as shared with others. In this sense there may be a change in the modes of radiophonic intimacy, from (a) a general sense of presence that does not interrupt one’s sense of privacy (for example, when having a bath), to (b) a particular enhanced sense of being with someone (an illusion that the listener knowingly takes part in); for example, when eating a meal. In marking time intimately, as Hendy suggests, radio offers an intimate presence. Hendy does not explicitly note this but we may infer that the latter may be subject to

variations of intensity. In addition, this presence may also be of varied textures or modes.<sup>31</sup> These are related to a complicated synergy between radio production and modes of reception. As Hendy notes, it is difficult to tell which comes first in some instances.

Later on, in his section specifically dedicated to “time, place and the ‘communicative capacity’”, Hendy clearly marks the importance of the temporal element in relation to intimacy, stating that, “Time, then, and the familiarity engendered over time, is one of the foundations upon which radio’s intimacy is built” (Hendy, 2000: 184). Here he draws strong connections between intimacy and the sense of all radio guiding or following the listener through her day.

Hendy also mentions intimacy in another section of his book *Radio in the Global Age*, under the subheading of ‘Radio Texts: Talk and Music’, under the general chapter of ‘Meanings’. Here, he moves from the intimacy of radio as a whole to ways in which this intimacy can be enhanced more specifically. In explaining the content of stylebooks commonly used in radio newsrooms, he talks about the use of “active rather than passive” sentences and “present tense rather than past tense (e.g. ‘The Prime Minister says...’ not ‘said the Prime Minister’)” (2000: 156). He then connects these modes of speech to intimacy by noting that, “the more natural and spontaneous the speaker sounds, the more intimate will be the broadcaster’s relationship with the audience” (2000: 156). It is of particular significance here that Hendy uses an example from news programming. Although traditionally, ‘friendly’ modes of address have been associated with music shows and phone-in programmes, given that those

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<sup>31</sup> This variation of intensity recalls Shingler and Wieringa’s remarks about a general intimacy and a more specific one that is intensified.

are the programmes most profoundly aiming to enhance the medium's inherent intimate qualities.<sup>32</sup> Hendy recognizes some element (even if minimal) of performed intimacy in news programming. While this correlates to Crisell's admission that even the newsreader needs to establish some sort of relationship to the listener (if only by identifying herself and bidding the latter "Good evening"), Hendy's association with intimacy and radio news still comes as a surprise.<sup>33</sup>

This unorthodox example suggests that the use of language in news programming can be a valid instance of performed intimacy even though it is one that is less explicit than those associated with, for example, DJ shows. It demonstrates, furthermore, that radio's intimacy extends across many different types of programming, including those genres commonly associated with authority, objectivity and a de-personalized mode of address.

On the other hand, Stephen Barnard's work, published in the same year, focused on performative notions of intimacy associated specifically with phone-in programmes, expressing his scepticism and highlighting some of the contradictions arising between such well thought-out (although unscripted) performances and the genre's claim to intimacy. In the introduction of *Studying Radio* (2000), Barnard provides a rare instance of a connection between a mainstream text (in this case a textbook for university students) and a non-mainstream text, since it begins with a quote from Gregory Whitehead's essay *Out of the Dark* (in Kahn and Whitehead, 1994: 256-

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<sup>32</sup> Crisell in *Understanding Radio* mentions that one of the newsreader's skills should be that of "minimizing her voice's function as an index of her personality" (1994: 58). Barnard, likewise, states that, "the effect is to place a deliberate sense of distance between the (relatively anonymous) newsreader and the text itself..." (2000: 148).

<sup>33</sup> See Crisell in *Understanding Radio*, 1994: 190

257). The quote is a series of defining contradictions that Whitehead sees in radio, which he calls a “composite of opposites”. Intimacy appears as one of these.

Whitehead writes,

...speaking to everyone, abstractly and no one in particular, ubiquitous, but fading without a trace; forever crossing boundaries but with uncertain destination; capable of the most intimate communion and the most sudden destruction. Radio is a medium voiced by multiple personalities, perfect for pillow talk, useful as an anti-depressant, but also deployable as a guiding beam for missile systems (Whitehead in Barnard, 2000:1).

This statement, quoted in full by Barnard, very successfully sets out radio’s main paradoxical characteristics. A mass, yet private, medium; the evanescent nature of sound, everywhere but nowhere; the ability of radio to defeat spatial boundaries and the release of its sound into space; the intimate relationship between the listener and its messages, which comes, however, with no strings attached due to the one-sided nature of its communications. Radio’s comforting ability to sooth and bring joy, and to be democratic, as well as dangerous and destructive when used for military purposes. There seems to be a very close correlation between Whitehead’s list and radio’s main characteristics as detailed in mainstream literature. Despite the polemical opposition of the radio philosophers towards mainstream production and mainstream theory, the similarities here cannot be overlooked. Although the radio avant-garde tends to use a vocabulary far removed from the one used by mainstream theory, the core ideas would appear to be largely the same. Furthermore, this vocabulary has not prevented all mainstream theorists from engaging with such work (e.g., Barnard). Although Barnard does not reference non-mainstream texts any further in *Studying Radio*, his decision to open his book with this quote may be understood to have some relation to his scepticism about the authenticity of intimacy in mainstream forms of radio; most especially, the phone-in.

In the main body of his book, Barnard discusses intimacy under two different headings. Firstly, his discussion comes under the general title of ‘Talk Radio’ (in the chapter on ‘Forms’) and, more specifically, under the subheading ‘A friend in need’, where he discusses phone-in programmes. The second instance of his discussion of intimacy is in the chapter on ‘Practices’ and, specifically, under ‘Language and Voice’.

Barnard (in contradiction to Crisell, Shingler and Wieringa and Hendy) starts his discussion of intimacy with a specific genre of programming and only then moves on to the general intimacy of the medium. His starting point is the phone-in. Here he writes that,

Away from the limelight of the shock jocks, one of the main characteristics of phone-in culture is the way it plays on an **assumed intimacy**, in both the subject matter it touches upon and the manner in which it is explored (2000: 163-164). [Emphasis mine]

The performance elements of radiophonic intimacy are described here in much the same way as we have seen before in Shingler and Wieringa, as a play on an intimacy that is for Barnard ‘assumed’ to be there already. Later on, Barnard makes another claim about intimacy in phone-in programming, describing it as being “spurious” and suggesting that it derives from both a forced informality and a false equality between caller and called (2000: 181). He sees the conversation between caller and presenter as uneven, favouring the latter; stating that, “...the conversation is weighted in favour of the presenter, who can cut off a caller at the touch of a button” (2000:181). Like Shingler and Wieringa, he sees the phone-in conversation as an illusion of intimacy but his account is more negative, providing a more suspicious take on performed intimacy. While Shingler and Wieringa simply state that the phone-in is not necessarily more intimate than other programmes, playing up a natural intimacy and a

general desire for conversation on the part of the audience, Barnard presents the phone-in as being more deceptive, questioning the veracity of its intimacy. “In phone-ins”, he writes, “an intimacy - or at least familiarity - with the individual listeners is assumed through the simple device of referring to callers by their first names” (2000: 164). In both cases, however, the authors question the importance of phone-ins in the context of discussing intimacy. The implication seems to be that although the genre seems (at first glance) a perfect candidate for understanding radiophonic intimacy, it is not necessarily so.

Barnard does, however, recognize a general role of radio as a friend, achieved through temporality, seeing the radio presenter as playing a part in building this close relationship. Thus, he writes that,

...the ideological strength of much radio programming is based on its ingratiation into the rhythms and routines of personal life. Radio's *raison d'être* is as a companion and friend, ever ready with information and kindly advice, and part of the presenter's responsibility is to build the semblance of an intimate relationship with the audience and thereby help to bond the station to the listener (2000: 164).

In this quote we see a subtle distinction between a general characterisation of all radio as intimate (because it can always be there for the listener) and the specific role of the presenter to build up this intimacy. The difference with what we have seen in the accounts of Crisell, Shingler and Wieringa and Hendy, is that Barnard takes a more critical view of the characterisation of radio as intimate. However, like all of them, he connects the concept to the paradox of a mass medium being intimate, stating that,

...mundane talk sounds informal and spontaneous and therefore directly imitative of private talk, but it is still talk that is given a public platform. The paradox of radio talk is that it evokes intimacy yet operates on a massively public scale (2000: 174).

Barnard uses Ian Hutchby's distinctions between institutional and mundane modes of speaking and explains that mundane talk "approximates [far more] to conversations of everyday discourse: it takes the form of conversation, the exchange of information or gossip, the giving of confidences" (2000: 174). Barnard also notes that there is an element of artificiality involved in mundane talk and, again, presents a more sceptical position in the question of intimacy. This seems to happen because (unlike Shingler and Wieringa and Hendy) he prioritizes the role of the presenter in the creation of intimacy as opposed to intimacy being inherent in all radio, mostly ascribing intimacy to forms of mundane talk; namely, the kind of talk that is commonly assumed to be intimate. In doing this, he puts less weight on the intimacy that the other authors have recognised as part of all radio. However, in his section on 'Language and the voice', he talks about intimacy as a result of studio ambience. He seems to view this as a natural result of the noiseless quality of the radio studio, which helps listeners to focus on what is being said (2000: 181-182).<sup>34</sup> In the light of his comments on the use of talk in order to create intimacy, there is then a recognition here that intimacy results from a synergy between the general nature of radio sound and the specific ways in which broadcasters can manipulate it.

While Barnard's work may be seen to challenge mainstream notions of intimacy, most notably those articulated by Crisell and Shingler and Wieringa, it remains very firmly within the mainstream. His scepticism, moreover, advances and makes more explicit the concerns of mainstream scholars regarding the paradox of radio intimacy. The scepticism towards intimacy is not a new occurrence and historical accounts of early radio reveal a concern amongst broadcasters regarding the exploitation of this

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<sup>34</sup> See my further discussion on space and intimacy later on in this chapter.

‘intimacy’. While these accounts do not offer a theoretical analysis of the concept, they do point towards the idea of intimacy being an exploitable element of radio, an element that may appear in different degrees of intensity. Barnard’s reservations on radio’s ‘spurious’ intimacy are reservations towards the performed intimacy in certain programme genres and point in particular to an artificial element in radio – the sense of ‘artifice’ evidently based on the fact that because radio is of necessity different from conventional intimacy, it has to be in some sense performed or simulated.

Jason Loviglio’s book *Radio’s Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass Mediated Democracy* (2005) is *not* a core text for the teaching of radio to university students (in Britain, at least). It looks at a very specific period in the United States and, thus, compared to the rest of the books reviewed here, its purpose is not to offer a general understanding of the medium. Rather it is directed to a readership with a specific interest in the 1930s and 1940s, in the American context and the issues of power, hegemony, inclusion, exclusion, national, local and other social tensions created when the boundaries between public and private were blurred. This text is included in this chapter because it is a sole example of a book on radio with ‘intimacy’ in its title. Despite this, the concept of intimacy is used rather loosely and ultimately it is not defined. The word ‘intimate’ is used to signify the element of privacy in the tension between private and public that is observed in radio. This tension is reminiscent of the radio paradox (as described in the core textbooks reviewed in this chapter), however, Loviglio observes this tension strictly within a social-political context. Loviglio displays a similar suspicion to radio’s intimacy as Barnard did with his use of the word ‘spurious’ (2000). Moreover, he has a very specific reservation with regard to how early network radio in the USA tried to be



intimate with the public. Instead of the word 'spurious', he uses the words “deceptively informal and “intimate””, in order to characterize the commercially sponsored broadcasts by Eleanor Roosevelt (the wife of President Roosevelt) (2005: xxvii). His use of inverted commas indicates his reservations towards the specific programme and its methods of approaching its (perceived as) female audience. In another reference to the concept, the author refers to radio’s mode of address as “peculiarly intimate and national”, although he leaves this peculiarity unexplained, affirming a common occurrence in Radio Studies in which authors seem to have a difficulty in defining it (2005: xxv).

Len Kuffert, in his article “‘What Do You Expect of this Friend’: Canadian Radio and the Intimacy of Broadcasting’ (2009), observes roughly the same chronological era as Loviglio but in the Canadian context. Here, he is also concerned with a negative element of intimacy. This article discusses the concerns and precautions taken by station controllers and broadcasters of the pre-television era regarding the potentially dangerous power and effect that radio programmes were perceived to have on what was thought to be a ‘gullible’ audience (2009: 303). Kuffert’s opening lines immediately describe intimacy through the paradox of radio (public yet private) (2009: 303). Referencing Graham McInnes, Kuffert makes the claim that the illusion of intimacy may be better exploited through storytelling formats rather than talk formats so that the sincerity of the speaker need not be questioned (2009: 307). He defines “radio’s intimacy” as “the double illusion of presence and exclusive conversation”, while he makes a slightly obscure mention to “‘uses of intimacy’ by those making, listening to and commenting upon radio” (2009: 313). While these are very useful remarks, there are some underlying distinctions here that beg further

analysis and understanding (some of which will be explored in the next chapter of this thesis).

Published in the same year as Kuffert's article, Hugh Chignell's book *Key Concepts in Radio Studies* (2009) synthesized much of the existing mainstream radio theory rather than attempt to supplement this work with original theories. Here he included Intimacy as a key concept and, thus, recognized its importance. However, he did more than that. In addition to his scholarly synthesis he offered an original and very useful insight regarding the symbiotic relationship of the concepts of 'co-presence', 'liveness' and 'intimacy'.

Chignell first mentions intimacy under the sub-section on 'DJs and Presenters' (in the chapter 'Genres and Production'). Like Barnard, he starts by relating the concept to a specific genre:

Most of the literature on DJs, such as it is, tends to focus on their performative use of talk [...]. So, for example, much has been said about the way the DJ uses direct speech ('you', 'we', 'I') to create an intimacy with the listener and also to conjure a simulated sense of 'co-presence', the sense that the listener has of being with the presenter and also with other members of the audience (Montgomery, 1986: 428) (2009: 18).

The concept of co-presence is discussed next in a separate sub-section in his book (in the chapter 'Audiences and Reception') but, as he mentions, it has a strong relation to intimacy (as well as the concept of liveness) (2009: 74). Chignell traces the origins of the idea of co-presence to Paddy Scannell (while mentioning that Scannell is influenced by philosopher and phenomenologist Martin Heidegger) (2009: 74). He also explains that David Hendy, "brings together ideas of time, intimacy and 'sociability' (or co-presence) (2000:75). In explaining Hendy's notions of sociability, intimacy and temporality, Chignell moves away from the element of performativity

and draws closer to the idea of an intimacy applicable to radio in general: “This time-based sociable experience is also characterised by intimacy, that uniquely close relationship between some, if not all, radio and its listeners” (2009:75). Chignell, in his segment on co-presence, stresses the importance of the temporal element in Hendy’s account of radiophonic intimacy and explains the idea further:

So when we turn on the radio in the morning and gradually wake up to the voice of a favourite DJ or presenter, we share an intimacy at a very precise moment in time with thousands or millions of others and so experience the sociable ‘co-presence’ of ‘being in the world’ (to borrow Heidegger’s own expression) along with other listeners (2009: 75).<sup>35</sup>

Chignell, after establishing the idea of co-presence as one that can relate to “most, if not all, radio”, goes back to specific programmes, using a genre that is most traditionally seen as ‘intimate’. The following statement provides a very good demonstration of how mainstream radio theorists move from the general, (i.e., base level) intimacy of all radio to an enhanced intimacy as it takes places in different programmes.

Co-presence is not an accidental by-product of radio, it is a defining characteristic and vital ingredient in the success of the **medium** and therefore one which is often actively **fostered**. This is particularly true of music radio. Traditionally, DJs have built not only on ‘intimacy at a distance’ but also a sense of shared identity and experience in their audience (2009: 76). [Emphasis mine]

Chignell, then, starts by acknowledging the importance of co-presence and intimacy in relation to ‘the medium’ (hence, to all radio) but proceeds to explain how this can be further ‘fostered’. More specifically, his account corresponds to Shingler and Wieringa’s, who use the word ‘intensity’ in place of Chignell’s ‘fostering’. Chignell

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<sup>35</sup> The idea of co-presence as intimacy is one that is implied but not really spelled out in Jo Tacchi’s work and specifically in her article ‘Radio and Affective Rhythm in the Everyday’ (2009). The difference here is that some of her subjects seem to use radio as a way to feel co-present with certain loved ones who they cannot be with physically.

restates this in his segment on Intimacy: “The radio DJ has probably exploited radio’s potential for intimacy more than anyone else” (2009: 86).

The triad of intimacy, co-presence and liveness are central to Chignell’s understanding of the radio relationship and its unusually strong bonds. In his entry on ‘Liveness’ (in the chapter ‘Audiences and Reception’), for instance, he stresses the importance of Hendy’s idea of *temporal* rhythms, asserting that most contemporary radio is live and the portions of it which are not live are created so that they can be heard ‘as live’ or, at least, convey the impression of ‘liveness’ (2009:88). While there is not a consensus amongst theorists about this (and it may be argued that one may feel intimate to a text [sonic, written or visual] that has been produced in the past), Chignell concludes that intimacy is bound to this element of liveness. His use of the phrase ‘rhetoric of liveness’ supports this idea of *actual* liveness *not* being the prerequisite for this sense of intimacy but just a suggestion of liveness.

Radio is often described as an **intimate** medium and one that fosters a simulated **co-presence** with its listeners. A friend that is also somehow in the same place as the listener. Liveness is a critically important part of this effect. The rhetoric of liveness (spontaneity, lack of script) contributes both to radio’s intimacy but also to co-presence. These three qualities are at the core of what radio is (2009: 90).

While in his two and a half page segment on Intimacy (in the chapter ‘Audience and Reception’) Chignell notes that there are “various factors that contribute to the sense of intimacy”, he nevertheless, chooses to focus on just four: (a) Listening as an individual act; (b) The listener working with her imagination and thus inhabiting “an inner world”; (c) “that radio address is often direct”; and (d) “that the radio persona adopted by presenters and DJs is often that of an ordinary and friendly person” (2009:85).

Interestingly, the first two of these, as we have seen above, are present in all radio without the need for any sort of amplification. They derive from the part of the listener, happening to be on the side of the receiver. In other words, they are a matter of reception. As we shall see later in the next chapter of this thesis, these are relevant to space and modes of reception. The third and fourth factors, meanwhile, are subject to specific modes of address and performance, originating from the side of the broadcaster; that is, they happen on the side of the studio, and are, therefore, a matter of broadcasting. Chignell does not make this distinction but his choice of these four factors nevertheless sheds light on the distinction identified earlier in relation to radio literature.

The inclusion of an entry on intimacy in Chignell's book signals the arrival of Intimacy with a capital 'I'; that is, as a key concept in Radio Studies. Furthermore, although Chignell's main aim in this book is not to offer new and original work, his account of co-presence and its relation to intimacy (and liveness) is illuminating and does contribute a new element to the analysis of Intimacy.

### **1.1 Overview of Mainstream Radio Theories of Intimacy**

This examination and comparison of mainstream radio theory texts suggests that Intimacy has played an important role in radio theory. It is possible to draw from this several concluding observations. Firstly, there is a general consistency in the way intimacy appears in these core texts and the chapters under which these discussions take place. The general themes under which intimacy appears are 'Talk' and 'Audiences', which establishes the discussion within two interconnected realms; the broadcaster's and the listener's. In terms of the broadcaster, the analysis typically

focuses on two main themes: uses of speech (including modes of address) and uses of sound technology (such as microphones). The analysis of intimacy under the general theme of the audience tends to focus on the act of imagining facilitated by radio's blindness and the sense of co-presence/community, focusing (in some cases) on the element of time. Furthermore, in these theoretical discussions of intimacy, the programmes most often used as examples are phone-in programmes and DJ-based music shows. Secondly, the main ideas related to intimacy appear to evolve. As the literature develops chronologically, the authors develop and build upon each other's ideas. Thus, while Crisell establishes the idea of the paradox of a mass medium being private and intimate, Shingler and Wieringa, Hendy and (less explicitly) Barnard all use this as a starting point in their discussions of intimacy. All authors, apart from Barnard (who takes a more critical view of intimacy), relate this paradox to radio's blindness and the imaginative element associated with radio broadcasting. Shingler and Wieringa develop the idea of the paradox by calling intimacy on the radio 'unusual' and, more specifically, by attaching the element of an illusion of reciprocity to it. Hendy, on the other hand, adds another layer to this illusion of a close relationship by relating it strongly to the element of time, focusing his attention on the connections between presenters and audience, as well as listeners and other listeners. Barnard, meanwhile, takes a more sceptical view of this illusion, using the example of the phone-in (drawing on Shingler and Wieringa) and considering the spurious elements of a highly performed intimacy.

The discussions of intimacy in all these texts appear to mostly relate it to the medium as a whole, although it is often unclear, when examples are given, whether it does actually apply to all programmes (and to what extent) or to just certain kinds of

programme, such as phone-ins and music shows. It is also unclear how intimacy is created, how it manifests itself in these different instances. While the development of intimacy as a concept within Radio Studies, (i.e., Intimacy with a capital 'I'), may have arisen unintentionally, it does represent a traceable path. Initially, Andrew Crisell placed intimacy at the heart of his characterization of the medium in *Understanding Radio*, even though the term does not appear in the index of his book. Crucially, Crisell relates the discussion of intimacy to the paradox of radio and, in so doing, establishes the foundation for later discussions. Subsequently, Shingler and Wieringa did place the word 'intimacy' in their index of terms, thus recognizing that the issue is not just incidental to other discussions but rather that it operates as a stand-alone concept. Nevertheless, they do not proceed to analyse it as such. Avoiding some of the tensions that may arise from a word that is so emotionally charged, they use the epithet 'unusual' to describe intimacy, while focusing their analysis on 'reciprocity', which they closely relate to intimacy. Meanwhile, although Hendy begins his discussion of intimacy with the paradox of radio working on the level of the private and the personal (at the same time creating an illusion of a community), he introduces the element of time as a key issue. Though the concept of Intimacy itself remains generalized in his account (and is not put in the index of his book), Hendy does relate it to many of his themes. It is, however, Barnard who is the first to openly question intimacy, challenging the sincerity of radio presenters. His engagement with intimacy is noticeably more critical than that of his predecessors and, as such, he adopts an approach that interrogates it more closely. Finally, having engaged with all the above texts, Chignell presents Intimacy in his book of key concepts as a stand-alone entity. While he does not define it, his inclusion of it here prompts further and more elaborated enquiries into the concept.

## 2. Non-Mainstream Texts

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard,<sup>36</sup> wrote a very short essay on radio in 1951 called ‘Reverie and Radio,’ which sets the question of intimacy very firmly within a context that is relevant to today’s non-mainstream radio theory.<sup>37</sup> He writes:

Talk calmly, over the radio, at a time when the individual cannot be seen and can himself see no one. For this lack of a face to go with the voice is no impediment; rather it is an asset, because it is precisely this which opens up the axis of intimacy, the inward perspective (in Platenga, Strauss and Mandl, 1993: 220).

Bachelard approaches the issues of blindness (‘this lack of face’) and imagination (‘the inward perspective’) as crucial assets of radio broadcasting, his writing deriving from the traditions of poetry and philosophy. His approach, however, is not at all alienating in the context of the mainstream texts that I reviewed previously. Intimacy here is connected to the issues of blindness and imagination just as it is in the works of Crisell, Shingler and Wieringa, Hendy and Barnard. He conceptualises radio space as an archetype of the home, thus revealing the idea of radiophonic space as an intimate, private one. For instance, he notes that,

the theme [of the home] is thoroughly rooted in the psychism of every individual. To develop it is to show that there is no more picturesque, that the picturesque is precisely fantasy, entertainment, that it must arouse some response in the mind of the individual. We can ask him to dream of a home, an interior. [...] It is a question of showing the listener little by little the essence of **inward** reverie. This is why the theme of the home - the seat of privacy and inwardness - lends itself so perfectly to the purpose (in Platenga, Strauss & Mandl, 1993: 219-220.<sup>38</sup> [Emphasis mine])

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<sup>36</sup> Bachelard was an epistemologist whose interests lay in poetics, the imagination and the philosophy of science.

<sup>37</sup> The Oxford Dictionary defines the word reverie as “a state of being pleasantly lost in one’s thoughts; a daydream” deriving from “Old French *reverie* ‘rejoicing, revelry’, from *rever* ‘be delirious’”.

<sup>38</sup> Crisell also uses the word inward in his discussion of intimacy, writing, “...while radio is a long-distance mode of communication it is also an inward, *intimate* medium...” (1994:11).



This stance connects a philosophical approach to radiophonic Intimacy with the notions of privacy discussed at the mainstream end of the theoretical spectrum. Bachelard argues for a day-dream inductive radio - which he terms 'psychic radio' - that should ideally be listened to in solitude (in Platenga, Strauss & Mandl, 1993: 221-22). Today, radio listening is still seen as mostly a solitary activity. In this realm, the listener intimately connects to more obscure parts of herself but also to a space that presents some degree of detachment from the 'real' world.

In Bachelard's essay, the idea of the illusion is indeed present and occupies some common ground with the mainstream theoretical debates on radio. Crucially, however, his idea of intimacy is not spurious because it strictly calls upon the personal, private fantasy of the listener and it aims to provide a sense of security for the listener in the form that she imagines it. Moreover, the radio does not gain anything back from her, as might be claimed in regard to commercial radio. In this way, Bachelard's idea of intimacy does not include the suspicion that Barnard expresses for mainstream radio. If we were to compare Bachelard's ideas to those of Shingler and Wieringa, we might find that the illusion of reciprocity presented in *On Air* (1998) conveys a different sort of illusion to the one Bachelard describes because the latter is not concerned with the question of reciprocity as much as the broader question of the home.

Gregory Whitehead, who brought Bachelard's work back to light in his essay 'Let us Lay on Splendid Nights' (2009), seems rather taken by the idea of what the philosopher calls a '*psychic engineer*' who can help "develop subjects for radio aimed

at the unconscious, which can then find the principle of reverie on every wavelength” (in Platenga, Strauss & Mandl, 1993: 219). Whitehead notes that,

Even though much of the rest of the essay becomes lost in somewhat misty ideas of archetypes and the unconscious, I love Bachelard’s conception of a psychic engineer because it implies a creative practice for radio that is as subtle and complex as the medium herself (2009: 2).

Whitehead sees in Bachelard’s proposition radio *as* art in the way that the radio avant-garde envisions it. However, the illusion of the home is not an idea that Whitehead connects to and, indeed, the idea of the home archetype may be closer to the mainstream idea of intimacy, where radio is seen to evoke a safe, usually non-challenging relationship between medium/broadcaster and listener. The idea of radio working at the level of the unconscious is actually challenged by Whitehead, who presents a philosophical conception of radio that often entails disturbing elements to do with embodiment and the suffering body, as seen in the work of Antonin Artaud. However, in ‘Who’s There’ Whitehead writes, “To my ears, radio language comes close to the language of memory and dreams” (1989: 11). In his 1989 essay, Whitehead seems to share Bachelard’s connection between radio and the state of dreaming or day-dreaming. In another instance, published twenty years later, he also recognizes the intimacy he felt as a child when falling asleep to the radio at night (2009: 6).<sup>39</sup>

Whitehead, in his own work challenges perceived notions of mainstream radio by citing propaganda and business uses as the beginning of the medium’s demise, which he sees as too ‘clean’.<sup>40</sup> In ‘Speleology’ (1984) he states that,

The ancient and original magic of radio, the tremendous release of excitement incited by voices floating through the air was quickly, even brutally,

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<sup>39</sup> See my discussion on sleeping with radio in chapter four.

<sup>40</sup> Allen S. Weiss also calls it a ‘clean medium’ (2001: 5).

compressed into good, clean function - ah, so here are the latest reports from the war front and the stock exchange; and here is the symphony I never wanted to listen to; and here is the chatter to dull me, sell me, put me to sleep; and here is the Fuhrer's last speech (1984: 3).

Here, Whitehead subverts all the perceived notions of what we have understood as intimacy on the radio. He puts propaganda in the place of trust, assuming that the news is a form that does not retain any kind of intimacy, while rejecting music programming (using the word 'symphony', with its implication of upper class culture) and transforming the idea of sleeping to radio from an intimate affair to one of (dangerous?) oblivion, although he celebrates it elsewhere (1984: 3 and 2009: 6).

The elements of time and liveness are the next to be questioned, when he writes that,

Once attached to the clock, radio came to crystallize the acceleration of time that was to characterize the whole of twentieth century. [...] Speed: here was the essence of good warfare, good business, good politics and - suddenly - good radio. [...] The magical power of the Word carried through the air, the deep powers of oracles and talking winds, were compacted in Reality Radio as the supremely modern power of anything can go faster, farther... (1984: 3)<sup>41</sup>

Here Whitehead rejects the idea of radio as an intimate affair, where the listener co-performs with the broadcaster and the other listeners, with the illusion of being in the same place at the same time, or sharing an experience at the same time. Instead, the temporal element becomes one of relentless speed. The element of a spurious intimacy that Barnard raised, is even more profoundly expressed by Whitehead, who does not generally seem to accept that intimacy can be part of modern mainstream radio, which he sees as a spurious event altogether. Nevertheless, he begins by claiming a 'magic' that is not too different from what has been claimed by many mainstream theorists as an 'unusual' intimacy deriving from the way in which radio communicates messages to its audience. Whitehead speaks of 'the Word' being

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<sup>41</sup> Whitehead here means mainstream uses of radio. His use of the word 'reality' is in contrast to imagination, fantasy or, as Allen S. Weiss might say, 'phantasy'.

carried through the air, while mainstream theorists place the voice at the centre of radio as a communication medium, connecting it to intimacy through the ideas of human presence and co-presence. It is a curious contradiction how this element of meaningful communication is claimed by both ends of the theory to support two seemingly opposite arguments. But the paradox that allows both for an ‘unusual intimacy’ and the ‘magical power of the word’ is a common link; it is the paradox of a public medium talking intimately to the individual.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the ‘desired’ radio voice in non-mainstream theory is a ghostly one, one which haunts with its presence, as opposed to mainstream theory where we have a voice which lives, comes alive in the same space at the same time as that of the listener. In this interrogation of intimacy, and in the light of Whitehead’s remarks, liveness can be seen as a ‘killer’ of intimacy. Liveness, in Whitehead’s account above, appears as a somewhat spurious concept, as is mainstream radio talk. He seems to associate the meaning of ‘live’ to an oppressive idea of the ‘clock’ as a signifier of commerce in its most negative sense. Later, however, he writes that,

Radio is intensely present tense, yet speaks from outside of time. And while the press of its muzzle against the ear may be intensely intimate, we only know the bodies of our interpolators through the body of their voices (1989: 11).

Whitehead recognizes here a kind of liveness as an existence in the present. He also recognizes the intimacy of the listening experience as well as the paradox or illusion of this intimacy. Moreover, this animalistic description of the radio in Whitehead’s essay seems to be connected to the elements of the schizophonic and the ‘schizochronic’, which he explains as “the separation of the acoustic event from the time and place of its occurrence, and the separation of the utterance from the physical immediacy of the one who utters” (1989: 11). This is another instance where we

encounter the recurring theme in the non-mainstream of radio as an embodied practice that can, at the same time, be intimate and painful. The ‘muzzle’ of the radio here severs the voice from its owner, its place of origin and its time of origin.<sup>42</sup> This split (‘schizma’) also represents the paradox of radio as presented in the work of mainstream theorists (including, Crisell, Shingler and Wieringa, Hendy and Barnard), not to mention Weiss (as we shall see later on). Intimate yet split from the body, the radio voice in Whitehead’s work appears to be dream-like and frightening at the same time, as he considers radio to be permitting “the coupling of all those who have never been properly introduced: the live and the dead...” (1989: 10). The paradox takes the form of a dead yet *live* broadcast (a prominent idea in the non-mainstream).

In ‘Who’s There’, Whitehead also writes that,

Distinct from any other entrance to the human body, the ear is a hole we cannot close, permitting a level of intimacy among perfect strangers which in other media would be literally unheard of (1989: 12).

Here he talks about a ‘physical’ kind of intimacy, once more suggesting an element of unsettlement, proposing a diminished level of choice in the matter of listening. He explains his position by returning to radio’s paradox: “Here, then, is how I figure radiophonic space: *a public channel produced by an absent other entering into a private ear*” (1989: 12). The context of his work suggests that he considers this as part of the medium’s appeal. In this sense, we may not confuse his remarks with Barnard’s suspicion of intimacy on the radio (as being spurious). Rather, what Whitehead presents here is a fascination with the paradoxical character of radio and the intimacy that derives from it. This is the same fascination that we have encountered in most (if not all) the authors and books reviewed in this chapter so far.

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<sup>42</sup> Schizophonia means ‘split voice’ and the term *schizochronic* literally means ‘split time’ (from the Greek *schizo*, meaning ‘split’, *phoni* meaning ‘voice’ and *chronos* meaning ‘time’).

The gulf could not be greater between what Whitehead understands as the true essence of radio and what mainstream theorists consider it to be. Yet the start and end points are the same; the achievement of magic through ‘exploiting’ radio technology, which allows words to float into/onto the air. The intimacy of this experience is explicitly expressed and admitted by theorists across the spectrum.

In the essay ‘Language is the Flower of the Mouth’ (1992), radio artist Cristof Migone negotiated the idea of communication between broadcaster and listener suggesting ‘a contortion’ of the established means of radio broadcasting. Here he connects the idea of intimacy to the elements of space and time. He writes that, “The spatiality and temporality of the radiophonic field inscribes an intimacy of experience” (1992). Although the character of the article is subversive and critical of mainstream perceptions of radiophony, this description is very much in line with what we have seen in the mainstream and, most prominently, in David Hendy’s *Radio in the Global Age* (2000), where the author stresses the importance of the element of temporality in the generation of intimacy.<sup>43</sup> The element of space is also described by Hendy, specifically as a ‘sense of place’ which may be literal or metaphorical (2000:185). Although Migone’s and Hendy’s conceptualizations of time and space may not be identical, the correspondence remains important to both in their discussions of intimacy. Migone, as in most discussions in the mainstream and non-mainstream, does not use intimacy as a main concept in his essay. Rather, intimacy emerges as a subtext from the rest of his discussion; for instance, when he describes one of his artworks as a space where “strangers to radio and each other became

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<sup>43</sup> “Time, then, and the familiarity engendered over time, is one of the foundations upon which radio’s intimacy is built” (2000: 184).

intimate within a frequency” (1992). This alludes to what is described in the mainstream as a sense of community or co-presence. Referencing Henry See (whom Migone does not otherwise identify apart from noting that he interviewed him for one of his projects), he observes that,

‘I look at this technology as a way to externalize the internal maps of the world that we all have’. Yet, the intimacy of the voice betrays a body out there, warm to the touch. ‘We are beginning to see what kind of relationship people are drawing between things and what kind of domains people have in their heads. Maybe that way we’ll be able to understand each other a little better’. This sort of alienated intimacy is not reserved for the radiophone, as contemporary technologies are all intimately tied to the constant redefinition of personal space (1992).

Migone describes intimacy here as evoking an embodied, tactile effect but, most importantly, by calling it ‘alienated’, he points to the paradox that Crisell outlined years before, of a medium which feels intensely intimate despite the obvious spatial distance between broadcaster and listener as well as between individual listeners.<sup>44</sup>

While the word ‘alienated’ carries negative connotations, the rest of Migone’s statement talks positively about radio as a meeting point for strangers, as a space that carries the potential for the creation of a new “vocabulary of a **relationship**” (1992).

[Emphasis mine]

The essays examined here are not part of a specific group or school of thought. Rather they have been grouped here because they appeared before the books that I consider below. However, the authors are connected in the sense that they have all engaged with each other’s ideas in edited collections and reference each other in their own work. The particular themes and terminology that resurface in all their work are as follows: imagined space, embodiment, illusion, time/place, life-death and the paradox

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<sup>44</sup> This recalls specifically, Crisell’s statement that, “the paradox that while radio is a long-distance mode of communication it is also an inward, *intimate* medium” (Crisell, *Understanding Radio*, 1986/1994:11).

of radio. These themes, although approached from different angles, recall the discussions of intimacy in mainstream theory. Intimacy is, indeed, present in the discussion in these essays and, interestingly, the three authors focus on different elements of the subject. While Bachelard focuses on the imagined and the illusion of the home, Whitehead's work places greater weight on themes of embodiment. Meanwhile, Migone is interested primarily in the triadic relationship of time-space-communication and the relationship between radio and listener that these can create. He seems to allude to an idea of a blurring of boundaries between broadcaster and listener when he talks about a "constant redefinition of personal space (1992)"; a notion that I shall explore further in the next chapter. Interestingly, the paradoxical nature of radio appears in the essays of both Whitehead and Migone. It may not be explicitly named as 'a paradox', yet the paradox is evident when discussing radio and its relationship to the listener through its contradictions. It is interesting that this remains a core issue in the discussion of Migone and Whitehead, suggesting that intimacy is a concept important to theorists at both ends of the radio theory spectrum.

In 1994, Daina Augaitis (a contemporary art curator) and Dan Lander (an artist and editor), edited the collection *Radio Rethink: Art, Sound, Transmission* in order to "convey the breadth of the field of radio art and related artistic practices emerging in the 1990s" (1994: 8). The book emerged from a series of artworks commissioned by the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada; the contributors (including Whitehead and Migone) being primarily artists but also academics, writers and broadcasters. The result was a polemical book, set firmly against mainstream radio production and theorisation. The book contains a few rather obscure texts that are rooted in a tradition of art practice rather than media theory. However, we can discern



some discussions of intimacy and the general themes relating to it. Interestingly, in the introduction to the book, Augaitis and Mary Ann Moser use the same statement by Whitehead quoted by Stephen Barnard in the introduction of *Studying Radio* (2000).<sup>45</sup> It also appears in Whitehead's submission to the collection, re-used here in a different article entitled 'Holes in the Head' (first published in 1991 in the *Performing Arts Journal*).<sup>46</sup>

Dan Lander, occupied with Antonin Artaud's dystopian view of a body without organs and the general question of disembodiment/embodiment, claims that, "The illusion of intimacy that transmission portends, through a conscious corporeal assertion, does in fact allow for diverse references to bodily signification" (in Augaitis and Langer, 1994: 22).<sup>47</sup> This quote, although intriguing, illustrates the impenetrability of a lot of non-mainstream radio theory. Although we can recognize the general themes of illusion, intimacy and embodiment, it is difficult to comprehend what Lander means. Continuing by referencing Migone's 'Language is the Flower of the Mouth', his discussion of disembodiment/embodiment is placed here on the basis of an absence that, according to Lander, Migone attributed to "a temporal and spatial disjunction accompanying a radiophonic (lack of) presence" (Lander, 1994: 22). This

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<sup>45</sup> That is, "speaking to everyone, abstractly and no one in particular, ubiquitous, but fading without a trace; forever crossing boundaries but with uncertain destination; capable of the most intimate communion and the most sudden destruction. Radio is a medium voiced by multiple personalities, perfect for pillow talk, useful as an anti-depressant, but also deployable as a guiding beam for missile systems" (Whitehead in Barnard, 2000:1).

<sup>46</sup> Barnard took the quote from 'Who's There', first published in 1989 in *Art & Text*, and re-published in 1994 in *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant-Garde*.

<sup>47</sup> Artaud's 1947 radio artwork, *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* is an important landmark for all the radio avant-garde writers that I have studied. Created towards the end of Artaud's life while he was seriously ill, the notion of the body is a rather unsettling, painful one. Allen S. Weiss offers the most detailed history and analysis of the work in *Phantasmic Radio* (1995).

disjunction is what Whitehead described earlier as a separation/split of the radio voice from its owner, place and time of origin (1989: 11). Although Lander's 'conscious corporeal assertion' and 'bodily signification' are mystifying notions and uncertain descriptions, what is clear is what he refers to as the schizophonic element of radio and, consequently, the paradoxical intimacy that derives from this split in body-voice, place-voice, time-voice; a split, of course, that allows radio sound to be both public and intimate.

Accusing most mainstream radio of sterility due to the use of voices that are stripped "of any corporeal references", he discusses an illusion of intimacy similar to the one in the analysis of mainstream literature. Yet, in his account, he questions whether this can actually apply to the mainstream (Lander in Augaitis and Lander, 1994: 22). Quoting the work of R. Murray Shafer, Lander further questions established mainstream ideas associated with western broadcasting, by revealing his suspicion of radio time and its function as a clock: "Radio today is the pulse of a society organized for maximum production and consumption" (in Augaitis and Lander, 1994: 25).

The idea of conversation, proffered by Shingler and Wieringa in 1998 as an illusion of reciprocity, is equally present in Lander's 1994 essay, which cites the work of playwright Bertolt Brecht "who, in 1926, wrote a paper entitled "The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication". Here, Brecht suggested that "radio is one-sided when it should be two" (quoted in Augaitis and Lander, 1994: 17). Broadcaster Hank Bull returns to Brecht's idea of reciprocity later in the book when he recounts working on a set of performances for the *Radio Rethink* project where he tried to make radio truly

two-way by inviting constant participation of the audience either by the telephone or in the studio. He notes,

Here for one brief moment, the Brechtian dream, of a truly interactive radio comes to life. This is not the coin-in-a-slot freedom to choose this or that pop, this or that politician, this or that channel, but the real, experiential involvement in a conversation (Bull in Augaitis and Lander, 1994: 61).

Bull's implication here of a spuriousness in relation to the phone-in and the general illusion of a two-way conversation in mainstream forms of radio, resembles Barnard's discussion made a few years later in 2000. At the same time, Bull seems to think that radio art is a field in which this spuriousness can be overridden or rectified by allowing 'real' conversation to take place. Radio artist Cristof Migone presents a more universal idea about radio's conversational abilities by reflecting on an artwork he created where he used the metaphor of the confessional in place of the radio phone-in. Here he writes that the,

airwaves are the ideal playground for two strangers to have an intimate conversation. You can perform a *pas de deux*, you can step on each other's toes in the imaginary confines of the radio confessional. The conversation does not have to go anywhere, like a dance, it can twirl and twine (Migone in Augaitis and Lander, 1994: 119).

What Migone seems to allude to here is the paradox of the intimate (yet no-strings-attached) relationship between broadcaster and listener: that is, the paradox of being close yet far apart, which allows for the conversation to happen without further expectations.<sup>48</sup>

Echoing Migone's notion of radio as a confessional, Rober Racine (a writer, broadcaster and artist) writes in his work on the sound of handwriting that,

radio is first and foremost the incarnation of a privileged listening experience, a sort of confidant. Sound writing and radio may be seen to converge in that both draw upon each other's intimacy for the expression of a mild polyphony (Racine in Augaitis and Lander, 1994: 142).

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<sup>48</sup> These remarks are in line with his essay that we looked at earlier where he talked of an 'alienated intimacy' suggesting again an element of separation.

Racine's comparison of 'sound writing' and radio conjures up the impression of the 'small' size of radio sound: that is, its potential quietness, depending on modes of listening (similar to the quiet sound of handwriting) and the privacy that this can evoke combined with the idea of eavesdropping on it.<sup>49</sup> The interesting use of the phrase 'mild polyphony' also evokes the sound of a number of murmuring, whispering voices. Although murmurs can be disturbing in some contexts, his use of the word 'mild' seems to imply, apart from low in volume, also a non-threatening sound.

Despite its apparent opposition to the mainstream thinking (as signalled by its title), *Radio Rethink* contains some discussions that share common ground with mainstream theory, adding to the work on intimacy and contributing to a wider understanding of the concept. Meanwhile, Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead's anthology *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio, and the Avant-Garde* (1994) represented a concerted attempt to document the field of radio art that was largely uncharted. It was written in a style difficult to penetrate with tools of conventional media theory. The text, like in *Radio Rethink*, appears sometimes in single spacing, sometimes in double, sometimes in bold lettering and often in the form of poetry. Both books, in form and appearance, evoke their non-conventionality, non-conformity and opposition to the mainstream. In this sense, intimacy and its neighbouring concepts are often there but they are hidden behind unconventional articulation. However, compared to *Radio Rethink*, this book contains work mostly by academics, with only a few artists. Khan and Whitehead included in this collection two of the most influential texts in this strand of theory,

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<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, phone-in pioneer Anna Raeburn in her interview with me for the audio part of this thesis, talked about employing the notion of eavesdropping in her programmes.

Antonin Artaud's *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947) and F.T. Marinetti and Pino Mansata's futuristic radiophonic manifesto *La Radia* (1933). In doing so, they firmly place the book against mainstream theorizations of radio. The few references to intimacy re-affirm this opposition in terms of their linguistic detachment from mainstream theory, although conceptually similarities can be found.

Radio makes an appearance just over half-way through the book, following histories of recording and of sound in modern art. The first radio essay is the previously mentioned 'Out of the Dark: Notes on the Nobodies of Radio Art' by Whitehead, in which can be found a description of the several paradoxes of radio quoted by both Stephen Barnard and Augaitis and Lander. Here, Gregory Whitehead recognizes the tension/paradox between public broadcast and private effect/affect. He writes that the radio signal is "intimate but untouchable, sensually charged but technically remote, reaching deep inside but from way out there" (Whitehead in Khan and Whitehead, 1994: 254). What Whitehead seems to consider here, I would argue, is not that far off from what the mainstream theorists describe as intimacy. In this essay, however, Whitehead conveys hostility towards the mainstream, akin to *Radio Rethink*. He ends his article by affirming that radio art does aim towards a kind of 'embodied' intimacy, which he argues has been currently lost because of mainstream radio and other aggressive uses of radio technology.

If the idea of radiophony as the autonomous, electrified play of bodies unknown to each other (the unabashed aspiration of radio art) sounds at times like it has been irretrievably lost, it is most likely because the air has already become too thick with the buzz of commerce war, too overrun by radar beams, burning harpoons, wagging fingers, body brands, and traffic reports to think of anything else (Whitehead in Khan and Whitehead, 1994: 262).

Another “polemical and passionate” study of radio is Allen S. Weiss’s *Phantasmic Radio* (1995) in which the writer describes radio’s “transmission, circuits, disarticulation, metamorphosis, mutation - and *not* communication, closure, articulation, representation, simulacra” (1995: 1-2). Yet in all of this, Weiss does not talk of intimacy. He does, however, describe the relationship between the radiophonic artist and the listener as one fostered by means of the artist’s work. He describes this kind of work as:

...project, transcript, recording, cutting, cleaning, overlaying, mixing recording. Here, where one may ‘feel the shadow of the person who worked on the piece leaning over us’ (1995:7).

While, Weiss sees the ‘presence’ of the radio artist in the radio artefact as a whole, he also highlights the role of the voice in this relationship when he continues,

There exists a point, unlocalizable and mysterious, where listener and radio are indistinguishable. We therefore seek that realm where the voice reaches beyond its body, beyond the shadow of its corporeal origins, to become a radically original sonic object (1995: 7).

His extreme notion of the listener becoming one with the broadcast voice is, it could be argued, an intimate notion. In contradiction to the mainstream’s illusion of intimacy, described as a mental process of evoked closeness, Weiss talks of a rather embodied intimacy, one in which radio and listener become one; where the broadcast voice physically enters the ears of the listener. Furthermore, his use of the words ‘unlocalizable’ and ‘mysterious’ betray the same uncertainty of the nature of radiophonic intimacy that Shingler and Wieringa’s ‘unusual’ epithet evokes.<sup>50</sup> His references to embodiment confirm that it is a concept which is often related to

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<sup>50</sup> Jo Tacchi in her essay ‘Nostalgia and Radio Sound’ also recognizes a difficulty in conceptualizing this relationship (in Bull and Back, 2003: 281). Referencing her earlier work, she notes that “Radio sound can be seen to mediate between individuals in the home and the wider world (Tacchi 1998)”. She adds that, “On a sensory level, radio sound is particularly open to sensory creativity- a quality that itself makes the experience, activity, and meaning of listening to the radio difficult to describe in words”.

intimacy in the non-mainstream. Weiss's idea of embodiment adds to Lander's mention of the corporeal and to Whitehead's contradictory (if not slightly disturbing) notions of intense intimacy deriving from the open eardrum, completing an image of intimacy as deriving from the relationship between the alive body of the listener, and the possibly dead body in the radio sound, which can, however, be penetrating.

As part of the non-mainstream, Weiss, like Whitehead and Lander previously, stresses in *Phantasmic Radio* the polemical character of his work (i.e. his opposition to mainstream radio and its theorization) concentrating his discussion on radio art, while using theory that is directly opposed to mainstream notions of radio. However, in the preface of the book, he too starts with the same paradox that is found repeatedly in mainstream texts. He states that,

the paradox of radio: a universally public transmission is heard in the most private circumstances; the thematic specificity of each individual broadcast, its imaginary scenario, is heard within an infinitely diverse set of non-specific situations, different for each listener; the radio's putative shared solidarity of auditors in fact achieves their atomization as well as a reification of the imagination (1995: 6).

The similarity of this assertion to the one that Crisell made in *Understanding Radio* is striking and well worth comparing:

...there is the paradox that while radio is a long-distance mode of communication it is also an inward, *intimate* medium, and so integral does the imagination seem to be to the way in which we decode virtually all its messages, whether factual or fictional, that when we speak of its 'appeal to the imagination we mean in effect its basic ability to communicate (Crisell, 1994: 11).

The similarity is so intriguing given that Crisell's book epitomises what might be thought of as mainstream radio theory, whereas Weiss's book is a seminal book from the non-mainstream end of the spectrum. And yet, clearly both are in essence

describing the same thing. Weiss's work (along with that of Whitehead, Lander et. al.) makes every effort to dissociate itself from the mainstream both in terms of production and theory, by studying, telling and creating a separate history of radio art and (most importantly in this context) by choosing to speak with a different language, a kind of radiophonic glossolalia particular and unique to the non-mainstream theorists. Nevertheless, the language used in the above quotes corresponds closely. Thus, Weiss brings us back to the point from which we began: the paradox of radio that is crucial to its intimacy. Given that there is such perfect communication between what seems to be two books from the opposite ends of the theoretical spectrum, it might well be found that these two studies share more than their authors might willingly admit.

Despite his earlier work, Weiss's edited collection *Experimental Sound and Radio* (2001) has relatively little to contribute to debates on radio's intimacy and, yet, several of its essays do raise pertinent and related issues. In the book's introductory essay (which came 6 years after the polemical *Phantasmic Radio*), Weiss appears less dogmatic, particularly when he states that, "As the inevitable canonization of the field transpires, we wish to keep its margins fluid" (2001: 6).<sup>51</sup> Here, the author also reiterates word for word the aforementioned quote on the paradox of radio, affirming its centrality (2001: 5). Compared to *Wireless Imagination*, this collection consists mostly of contributions by artists, with only a few academics, in this way, being closer to *Radio Rethink*. However, Augaitis and Lander's collection has a greater sense of playfulness and lightness compared to Weiss's collection. *Experimental Sound and Radio* is certainly the most impenetrable of the three collections (more so

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<sup>51</sup> The title of the essay is 'Radio Icons, Short Circuits, Deep Schisms' and it was first published in *The Drama Review* no. 151 (1996).



even than Weiss's monograph *Phantasmic Radio*) with the connections between the various contributions being difficult to fathom. The element of intimacy is equally difficult to identify. A reader is likely to remain unsure as to whether the concept is absent or just very well concealed.

There is, however, definitely one instance in the book where a brief relation to the mainstream helps the reader gain a sense of context. Mary Louise Hill (a Performance Studies scholar) contributes an essay to the book in which she makes a rare connection with mainstream theory by referencing the work of Andrew Crisell in *Understanding Radio*. Her essay, 'Developing a Blind Understanding: A Feminist Revision of Radio Semiotics' notes that radio signifiers attempt "to mask an absence, but they do not replace that absence with a thing and thereby produce an illusion of presence" (in Weiss, 2001: 109). Here she takes the idea of blindness and relates it to another paradox. The illusion in radio is for Hill one that is described as the sense of a presence that, curiously, derives from an absence: namely, that of image/vision; an absence which can be compared to the absence of a body in the radio voice, discussed earlier in Whitehead and Weiss. The idea of being and not being there at the same time connects to ideas of phantasms, ghosts and haunting so prominent in the work of Whitehead and Weiss. Although Hill is not talking about intimacy, she deals here with the issue of 'presence,' which is closely related to intimacy as the latter derives from the radio voice denoting that the listener is not alone.

Weiss, in his own essay 'Erotic Nostalgia and the Inscription of Desire',<sup>52</sup> a title which can be seen to invoke intimacy due to its thematic concern with erotic desire, only mentions the concept towards the end, concluding that,

the rare confluence of antithetical oneiric spaces, where the intimacy of the closed (albeit public) chamber and the acousmatic presence of the distant, disembodied recorded voice combine... (in Weiss, 2001: 18).<sup>53</sup>

We see here the same paradox as discussed in *Phantasmic Radio*. The element of the erotic is present in two more essays in the book: 'Aural Sex: The Female Orgasm in Popular Sound', by J. Corbett and Terri Kapsalis, and 'Mendicant Erotics [Sydney]: a performance for radio,' by Ellen Zweig. In the first essay, considering the sound of female orgasm in popular music, radio only comes into the discussion as a space where such music is broadcast. On the other hand, 'Mendicant Erotics' is about a piece of radio art and of how two characters experience the city of Sydney while exploring it. Weiss, in his introduction, describes the piece as "a narrative of aleatory relations between erotic encounter and geographic location, suggesting an allegory for constituting a libidinal radio space" (2001: 4). These two essays recognize a sort of bodily intimacy that can be conveyed in radio. This kind of intimacy is very far removed from what we have so far considered as intimacy on the radio in mainstream theory. Moreover, the element of embodiment is taken here to another level of intensity with a sexualised element of bodily participation that we have not seen in the mainstream.

Gregory Whitehead, in his contribution to the book, an essay entitled 'Radio Play Is No Place: A Conversation between Jerome Noetinger and Gregory Whitehead',

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<sup>52</sup> First published in *Essays in Sound* no. 2 (1995)

<sup>53</sup> 'Oneiric' derives from the Greek word *oneiro*, which means 'dream'. *Oneiric*, thus, means 'dreamy'.

continues the theme of the paradoxes in the relationship between medium and listener that he so aptly described a few years earlier. He once more calls forth a number of antitheses which are present in radio:

the idea of the confounding and encircling public with private, immediate with distant, noise and silence, voice with technology, [...] a spiral of communications transforming itself into an improvised community...(in Weiss, 2001: 92).

In general, this book focuses on the element of the radio voice and issues of disembodiment/embodiment, as well as the issues of utopia/dystopia as determined by different kinds of radio (2001: 2). In this sense, although this collection does not have a lot to offer to the discussion of Intimacy as a concept in radio theory, it does deal with a lot of its peripheral issues: Namely, the voice as the first condition for intimacy on the radio, and the creation of utopian or dystopian *spaces/places*, which are some of the imaginative terrains in which radiophonic intimacy is fulfilled. Furthermore, as the latest published collection of its kind, the inclusion of *Experimental Sound and Radio* in this review serves the purpose of marking chronologically where the non-mainstream discussions of radio lay in 2001, revealing a difference with the mainstream: that is, while a path of evolution (even if unconscious on the part of the authors) can be traced in discussions of intimacy in mainstream radio theory, the same cannot be identified so readily for the non-mainstream. Intimacy here is rather elusive and, although the radio avant-gardists are in touch with each other's work and share common references, the development of this concept is fragmented and does not appear to follow a continuous path. This can be seen, in particular in the theoretical work of Joe Milutis, a writer, media artist, and assistant professor of art at the University of South Carolina. While Milutis belongs to the same tradition as Weiss, Whitehead and Migone, he differs from the other avant-garde theorists in that he offers more of an analysis of avant-garde theory itself 'from within'. While his essay

'Radiophonic Ontologies and the Avantgarde' was included in Weiss's 2001 collection *Experimental Sound and Radio*, he offers a very different version of the paradox of radio, relating it to the radiophonic voice and its paradoxical relationship to 'liveness', one of the medium's most treasured features. His perception of the broadcast voice is that it is dead once it has been uttered (in Weiss, 2001: 57). He writes that, "Reproduced mechanically or mimetically, life is actually death, a paradox that is most obvious in the "live" aesthetics of broadcast media" (ibid.).

This paradoxical element of life and death is not uncommon in the writing of non-mainstream radio theorists, who typically propose a different kind of radiophonic relationship to the one offered up in the mainstream. For Milutis, radio's ability to connect seems to allude not to a relationship that is based on the 'live' element of radio communication but to the uncanny, spiritual dimension that a radio voice evokes and allows. In his contribution to Weiss's collection, he also makes a very interesting connection between the virtual absence of a complete history of radio art (especially compared to other media histories), which we examined in the previous chapter, and the intimacy of the medium (which is the main subject of this and the next chapter).

Referring to radio's intimate imagined spaces he writes that,

...the body of radio art work is dispersed and undisciplined, posing difficulties for the historicizing of radio art within sound history; radio is supposedly perceived only in the interior space of the mind, an intimate space incommensurable to historiography. The attempt to organize radiophonic noise on a wide scale [...] has always met its challenge in this intensely personal space (akin to the presocial or maternal where radio is received" (in Weiss, 2001: 60).

In this statement, Milutis seems to divert from Weiss's comments about a perceived 'repression' of radio histories (1995: 3), recognizing that the non-mainstream of radio production and theory have followed a route that is not as linear or homogenous as

that of mainstream production and theory, which makes it difficult to historicize. The word ‘undisciplined’ seems to be another way of elaborating the avant-garde’s natural differentiation from the mainstream, previously described in terms of ‘disarticulation’. Crucially to this chapter, though, Milutis in this statement also poses intimacy as a reason for the difficulty of historicizing radio in general. He does offer a (political) distinction between mainstream and non-mainstream in order to explain the mainstream’s better achievement in producing histories, posing a distinction between the two which may be summarized as unification versus heterogeneity; writing that,

...large, state financed broadcasting has traditionally used radio to construct a national voice, radio art is incommensurable to this project of unification and whole-someness. It has thrived in pirate radio, community radio, anti-gallery installations, tape culture, avantgarde film and performance – illuminating the solitude of production and consumption of an unprofitable art which does not attempt to conquer space and time (in Weiss, 2001: 60).

Although the political and aesthetic differences between the mainstream and non-mainstream (that Milutis perceives) are legitimate and convincing, his argument about a difficulty in historicizing such an intimate medium, does seem to apply to all radio. The question of a difficulty in analysing radio within the strict boundaries of radio theory due to its profound emotional affect arises here and points to anthropological work such as Tacchi’s (in Bull and Back [2003] and Tacchi [2009]), as well as to connections of radio theory with psychoanalysis, such as those proposed in Volume 11, Number 1 of the *Radio Journal* (2013), which is devoted in its entirety to exploring psychoanalytic approaches to radio.

## **2.1 Overview of Non-Mainstream Theories of Intimacy**

To summarize, although these non-mainstream texts often assume a polemical stance against the mainstream, common themes are apparent between the two ends of the theoretical spectrum. Intimacy tends not to be spoken of in explicit terms in these

philosophical texts. However, the relationship between the medium and the listener is described as an intense one, and in no uncertain terms, crucially often blurring the boundaries between listener and medium/radio voice. The general themes that this intense relationship is associated with are closely linked with the claims that mainstream theorists make about intimacy: namely, the paradox of a mass yet private medium, blindness, imagination, the illusion of an intimate space and communication and the ‘mysterious’ texture of the radio relationship. However, one crucial difference is the discussion of *disembodiment/embodiment*, which is not always directly related to intimacy in mainstream theory but rather is confined to discussions of the voice. Discussions of the body in non-mainstream theory contain the often disturbing, unsettling issues of the body in a state of *decay* or the body in pain, which we do not encounter in the mainstream.<sup>54</sup> Intimacy in these discussions acquires the character of a raw bodily signification, which presents a stark contrast to mainstream theorisations of the concept, where the tendency is to perceive the terrain of intimacy as noumenal.<sup>55</sup>

The non-mainstream radio theorists generally relate intimacy to the medium as a whole. Genre is not applicable in their discussion as they mostly come from a position where radio art is seen as the only ‘true’ form of broadcasting. Radio art may be seen as a general category, but because of its fluidity of expression, non-conformist character and the various forms it may take, it does not seem appropriate to restrict it under the label of genre. However, the notion of the conversation is one of interest to the radio philosophers just as it is in the mainstream. Radio artist Cristof Migone and

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<sup>54</sup> These discussions are often centred around Antonin Artaud’s 1948 radio artwork *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*.

<sup>55</sup> Disembodiment in the non-mainstream may be presented as a signification of the riddance of pain which often means the passing from life into death.

broadcaster Hank Bull, in particular, make some claims that radio art can achieve an authentic two-way communication between presenter and listener as opposed to a 'false' sense of communication in mainstream programming, thereby recalling Barnard's suspicion of a spurious intimacy in phone-in programmes. The general notion of the phone-in is explored in the artworks and resulting theory of both Bull and Migone and, thus, they too (like mainstream theorists) tend to relate intimacy to the radio genre that most explicitly aims for a 'conversation'.

While there is less sense of an observable path for the development of the concept of intimacy in non-mainstream radio theory, there is nonetheless an observable communication between theorists and also a common set of references that they all tend to refer back to.<sup>56</sup> In this sense, when intimacy does arise, it does so as part of conversations that stem from common references and a certain set of preoccupations (some might say obsessions).

The value of these non-mainstream collections (along with Weiss's monograph) lies largely in their assembly of an otherwise rather idiosyncratic and fragmented body of work. This makes it easy for the reader to access texts that would otherwise be difficult to locate as many were first published in obscure magazines and articles.<sup>57</sup> If, at one point, the material might have seemed slightly disparate, these books demonstrate and elaborate on the communication that does exist between these authors and their work. The radio artists/non-mainstream theorists reference each

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<sup>56</sup> Such as Artaud, Marinetti, Novarina and Brecht

<sup>57</sup> The personal web pages of Gregory Whitehead (<http://gregorywhitehead.net/>, accessed 19 July 2014), Allen S. Weiss (<https://files.nyu.edu/asw3/public/home.html>, accessed 19 July 2014) and Cristof Migone (<http://www.christofmigone.com>, accessed 19 July 2014) have been excellent sources for material as they all provide extensive, chronological lists and links to their own essays.

other repeatedly, contribute repeatedly to these books and alternate as editors and authors, writing sometimes as theorists and sometimes as radio artists reflecting on their own work. In this sense, although the nature of their work is difficult to penetrate, we can see that this is a tightly knit group of people who are in direct communication with each other. While this is positive, showing that there is, in fact, such a thing as an observable non-mainstream end in the radio theory spectrum, it also betrays a sense of intentional isolation from mainstream radio theory.

### **3. Conclusion: The Mainstream and Non-Mainstream Paradox**

As my analysis demonstrates, the two theoretical ends of the radio theory spectrum share more than might be expected. Non-mainstream theorists have chosen to use a vocabulary that is hard to decipher, confusing their readers at times but, despite their polemical approach, the essence of radio that they strive to evoke in their texts bears many similarities to mainstream radio theory. The key concept attached to radio across the theoretical spectrum is that of the *paradox*. This paradox is defined by radio's *unusual* intimacy, which contradicts radio's public distribution and its historical significance as the first mass medium that has defied time and space in order to communicate to listeners across vast distances instantly. Intimacy with a capital 'I' is, it could be argued, a concept that needs to be defined and analysed as well as placed at the centre of discussions of the medium. Mainstream and avant-garde radio theorists, rather paradoxically (perhaps unknowingly), meet on the terrain of the radio paradox. This chapter has demonstrated that they often discuss the same issues, albeit in two different languages.



‘Intimacy’ is a word that, as mentioned earlier, carries an emotional weight and can be rather resistant to academic enquiry. For this reason perhaps, theorists in the mainstream have shown a reluctance to analyse it directly or to give it a capital ‘I’. Instead, most scholars have chosen to generalise and deal with it in discussions that avoid its perceived emotional intricacies. On the other hand, the non-mainstream theorists, due to an intense desire to dissociate from the mainstream, have constructed another language in which intimacy (like other key concepts) is barely mentioned by name. Such texts are difficult for scholars to analyse and interpret because of their idiosyncratic character. Yet, when grappled with and interrogated, they do evoke various elements of intimacy. In both cases (mainstream and non-mainstream), there has been a lack of rigorous analysis and exploration of the issue of intimacy. However, such interrogations can offer a starting point from which the relationship between radio and its audience can be better and more systematically understood.

Allen S. Weiss has suggested that, “There is no single entity that constitutes ‘radio’; rather there exists a multitude of radios” (2001: 2). David Hendy, arguing for a greater diversity and plurality in radio formats, outlets and genres, suggests that “these strikingly different phenomena cannot easily be grouped under the one heading ‘radio’ and *explained* in the same way” (2000: 6). However, this multitude of radios seems to be threaded together by a paradox. Namely, despite theoretical, conceptual and ‘political’ differences within the spectrum of radio theory, the field actually seems to agree on the notion of *a radio* which is defined by a paradox of Intimacy.

In this chapter I have focused on the shared element of the paradox within mainstream and avant-garde theories. In the next chapter, I shall be offering an analysis of the

term of Intimacy through the differences in the approach of these two theoretical strands.

## Chapter 3

### Understanding Intimacy

This thesis takes a closer and more systematic look at the characteristic of Intimacy, which many earlier critics have claimed for radio without analysing in detail. It seeks to discover the ways in which Intimacy conforms to, and differs from, the more conventional understandings of intimacy. As part of this, I shall develop here a distinction between the intimacy that informs the medium as a whole and, over and above this, the specific forms of intimacy that presenters seek to cultivate within certain programme genres. It is evident that when mainstream scholars have made claims about radio's intimacy, they have sometimes discussed the former and sometimes the latter but they have rarely (if ever) made a clear distinction between the two. This chapter then explores this distinction more closely and considers what relevance it might have to non-mainstream theory, where there is a tendency to discuss 'radio' as a single and somewhat abstract entity rather than as an agglomeration of different genres.

#### **1. Technological and Performative Intimacy**

The distinction between talking about intimacy in relation to all radio and intimacy that relates to specific programmes is significant. I will term the former *technological*, since it is an inherent part of radio's character, and the latter *performative*, since it is generated by the behaviour of particular broadcasters to further the purposes of certain genres. *Technological intimacy* refers to an intimacy immanent in the medium as a whole, one that stems from the medium's mode of transmission, its blindness, its secondary character and its modes of listening. This is an intimacy in the relationship

between the medium and the listener, regardless of type of programme. It results from some inherent characteristics of all radio irrespective of the character of individual radio programmes: (a) For the most part it communicates to the individual, since people tend not to listen to the radio in groups. (b) It bears the capacity to accompany the listener wherever she goes or whatever she does, due to the medium's portability and the absence of visuality. In this sense, it can superimpose itself on more private experiences and situations. (c) It is ambient and, thus, not sharply framed, like, for example, television, and this results in 'encompassing' experiences that have been described as womb-like (Anne Karpf, 2013). (d) The absence of pre-set visual stimuli means that the listener is invited to complete the radio messages (and complete them idiosyncratically) in her head. This personalized experience may also result in feelings of intimacy.

The non-mainstream theorists in their oblique references to the concept tend to relate intimacy to the medium as a whole. This is perhaps for two reasons; (a) because they are mostly interested in the broad form of radio art and so they do not pay attention to the range of its genres, and (b) because their discussions of radio are often a mainstream radio polemic, focusing on the ways in which all radio broadcasting could be different. In other words, they look at how radio broadcasting could be artistically exploited and interpreted. They, thus, completely distance themselves from the established notions of radiophony that do contain very clearly defined genres, as well as different ways of talking, editing and performing within those genres. Talking about the radio as a whole (and consequently of an intimacy related to all radio) is part of the radio avant-garde's polemical rejection of mainstream radio, and (consequently) mainstream radio theory, and of all the established ways of theorising

about the medium. It is also part of their methodology that, as we shall see, places them as observers of radio in a different position from that which the mainstream critics occupy.

*Performative (or personal) intimacy*, on the other hand, relates to certain kinds of programmes, where the listener feels intimately connected to a broadcaster, even feeling as though they know her or him personally. Intimacy here is understood to stem from the broadcaster and the ways she uses her voice, broadcast technology and broadcast sound in general. This will help us identify *degrees* of intimacy relative to genre and modes of address (or intimacies). Performative intimacy has a role in *enhancing* technological intimacy. Although examples from certain genres are used more often in the literature, I will be arguing that this enhancement may take place in any kind of programme. Depending on the nature of programme, there may be different levels to this enhancement and it may be the result of different processes and mechanisms. Performative intimate address might be recognised through a number of points: (a) In the choice of subject matter in programmes such as phone-ins in which ‘agony aunts’ will often tackle the very sensitive, personal problems of the listeners. While this example falls towards the extreme of the Intimacy spectrum in terms of thematic content with news programmes at the other end, we cannot talk about hard and fast distinctions. A consumer and life-style programme, for example, may be almost as factual as the news but the presentation is often rather more personal. (b) The informality of address, then, is another enhancement technique along with frequent use of first and second person pronouns. (c) Regional accents may also function in this way in certain cases. (d) The posing of direct questions to the listener. While this occurs extensively in DJ-based music shows, it rarely happens in news

programmes, where intimacy is not part of the intention of the programme (nor an obvious part of the performative role of the news reader). More commonly, intimacy results in news bulletins from the relationship that is built over time as listeners receive their news on a daily basis from the same newscaster over many years. Yet even here we cannot exclude performative elements that derive from the presence of the personality in the voice or the simple address of ‘goodnight’ or ‘good morning’ of the news reader to the audience. It is impossible to completely remove personality from the voice and, consequently, there is an aspect of performative intimacy involved even here. No matter how ‘clean’ a radio voice sounds (as criticised in the non-mainstream), there are still traces of the person behind it. The grain of the voice (as described by Roland Barthes) is then a characteristic of all radio and not exclusive to certain genres. Nevertheless, performative enhancement is not within the conscious goals of broadcasters working within *all* types of programme.

In books and lectures about radio production, students are taught how to ‘do’ objectivity and intimacy. For example, Martin Shingler in his article ‘Fasten Your Seatbelts and Prick up Your Ears: The Dramatic Human Voice in Film’ (2006), refers to a keynote speech by John Gray, a university professor and former chief assistant at BBC Radio Scotland, in which “He demonstrated how crucial the microphone could be in a relationship between speaker and their audience, minor adjustments to proximity and angle producing major effects in terms of intimacy” (2006: 9). In an interview conducted in 2012 for my doctoral project, Anna Raeburn talked about how she used radio technology in order to *enhance* intimacy in her phone-in programme, an intimacy that was very much her express aim:

One of the wonderful things that I discovered when I went to *Talk Radio* was how much the equipment had improved and I discovered that I could speak very

quietly. I also discovered [...] the value of silence. I discovered that a moment of total dead air was very effective (Anna Raeburn, 2012).

Raeburn recognises here some of radio's technical characteristics that we may define as intimate and explains how she used them as part of her performance. This is indicative of the ways in which technological aspects and performative aspects may be combined in radiophony in order to produce enhanced modes of intimacy. The base-level technological intimacy of radio is typically enhanced here through performance but, perhaps less typically, this technology is also used to enhance the performance itself. For example, the enveloping quality of sound that ultimately accentuates the impact of a silence and also the spatial element in which the relatively small size of the radio studio in combination with microphone technology allows a voice to sound *close*. Anna Raeburn's description is intriguing. Her manipulation of her output both by technological means (i.e., microphones) and organic means (i.e., timing her pauses) implies that she possesses an intimate knowledge of how her body interacts with the technology and, consequently, of how this interaction may affect the listener. The performative element here is seen to interact with the technological element in a process that aims to intimately communicate with the listener. It is also one, of course, that communicates intimacy above and beyond any other message being conveyed. (It must be noted here that while I am defining performative intimacy as an enhancement of the technological intimacy of all radio, the relationship of the two is not always as hard and fast and, as evident from Raeburn's example, the two might interact in complex ways.)

The intimate interaction of the broadcaster with radio technology is an element that we may benefit from exploring in more detail and which reveals how technology and performance may be combined to generate intimacy. If intimacy is produced in the

studio as a result of the relationship between broadcaster and technology, we may pinpoint a moment of its genesis. The mediation of intimacy, then, is something that can be learned, performed and achieved by embodied practices.<sup>58</sup> The appropriation of radio technology for the generation of intimacy can bring radio into the topical discussion of technologies as body extensions. The intimate uses of technology on the radio may be defined as the relationship of the broadcaster with microphones, consoles (mixing desks) and the space of the radio studio, in order to instigate notions of intimacy and prepare the ground for feelings of intimacy on the part of the listener. Bearing in mind that media intimacies are mostly considered one-sided and non-reciprocal, I accept that they contain a large degree of illusion and performance, which may separate them from conventional social intimacy. This performed intimacy is only one of the ways that radio can be intimate. This, among other things, should be seen as a crucial indicator of the fact that the production of intimacy is not a one-way process. Rather, it is a result of a relationship and can only be fulfilled upon reception, heavily relying upon the listener. Feelings of close familiarity between audience and radio broadcaster are based on uses of the voice and sound technology in order to create a message that has the *potential* to be received as an intimate one. It is at the point of reception where this intimacy will or will not be fulfilled.

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<sup>58</sup> As long ago as 1956, Horton and Wohl referred to uses of technology that create intimacy in television. In their article 'Mass Communication and Para-social Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance', they stated that, "In addition to the management of relationships between the persona and performers, and between him and his audience, the technical devices of the media themselves are exploited to create illusions of intimacy. For example [Dave Garroway explains in this connection], we developed the 'subjective-camera' idea, which was simply making the camera be the eyes of the audience" (1956: 218). We can easily see how in radio the microphone could similarly be understood to constitute the ears of the audience.



The mainstream theorists of the core texts reviewed in the previous chapters set the question of Intimacy under two broad separate headings: (a) Audiences/Listening and (b) Talk (which I shall be calling producing/performing intimacy). In other words, they indicate the two ends of a relationship, between listener and broadcaster. In mainstream theorisations, radio seems to happen once it is listened to. In other words, Radio becomes intimate *because* it is listened to. Meanwhile, in the non-mainstream strand of theory, where intimacy is discussed in much more elusive terms, the reader is left with a general feeling that these artists/writers place less attention on the audience than on their own relationship to their radiophonic artworks and the medium itself. There seems to be an implication here that they perceive themselves not only as producers but also as listeners. The various, heterogeneous ways in which these radio avant-garde practitioners work with their material and the freedom of expression that comes with not following traditional radiophonic codes and conventions results in their own alternative positioning within the radio relationship. This relationship places the radio artist/writer in a non-fixed position, one that allows for movement between the roles of speaker and listener but also presents an intimate connection between the artist and the idea of radio as a whole. The work of avant-garde writers seems to be steeped in a sense of intimacy that, in contradiction to mainstream production, is darkly shaded, evoking a relationship to death and the dead, to loss and the lost, to pain and the release from it. The intimate relationship of these artists/authors with their own work is evident in the fact that one of their main methods of writing is theoretical reflection on their own radio art as well as on work of other radio artists; most notably, Antonin Artaud.

As intimacy is evoked so differently by mainstream and avant-garde radio theorists, it may be worth going back to some fundamental definitions of the term. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word ‘intimacy’ has more generally been used in the following ways to describe: (a) close familiarity or friendship; (b) a cosy and private or relaxed atmosphere; (c) *euphemistic* of sexual intercourse; (d) an intimate remark; (e) [*in singular*] closeness of observation or knowledge of a subject (Oxford English Dictionary). These meanings of the word ‘intimacy’ clearly establish a general closeness with *another* human being and may be similar to (or synonymous with) notions of togetherness, affinity, rapport, attachment, familiarity, friendliness, amity, affection and warmth. All these evoke some degree of the personal. In these definitions there is also an element of space, represented as cosiness and a sense of privacy. Intimacy also describes closeness of a sexual nature (the most intimate of human relations and physical proximity). Intimacy may refer to language, to modes of speech and communication, and how words may imply intimacy between people. Finally, intimacy may generally refer to one’s closeness to a subject of study (i.e., depth of understanding).

Of these definitions, some are directly applicable and some only loosely or indirectly applicable to the radio relationship. Crucially, we find that the temporal element is not directly indicated, although it seems to be implied within the concepts of closeness, attachment and familiarity, all relating to human contact and communication *over time*. As we shall see below, an observation of intimacy through and in radio suggests that the temporal element is indeed important. While the element of space (as well as the performative/personal element) is part of the complex set of parameters that result

in radiophonic Intimacy, especial attention will be given below to the element of time as it seems to be a defining characteristic of radiophonic Intimacy.

The elements of time and space (that operate in synergy and cannot be completely separated from each other) are in tune with the two broad categories in which the discussion of radio intimacy has taken place in the academic literature to date: technological and personal intimacy. Crucially, these definitions also confirm *time* and *space* as key elements within the question of Intimacy in general and, thus, provide an early indication of why radio (specifically, a time-based medium that is characterised by its ability to *leak* into the listener's environment and be carried along while performing everyday tasks), presents an intensely intimate quality.

The cocoon-like space of the radio studio is an appropriate place for a discussion of radio intimacy to start. This space affords the ability to isolate the radio voice and put the spotlight on the radio presenter. The radio studio, traditionally a small space that affects sound texture, serves at the same time as a metaphor for an intimate/private space as opposed to an 'open'/public one and establishes the medium as one of 'fewness'. This spatial 'intimacy' may have played a part in the construction of radio as intimate in the minds of the audience as well as the broadcaster herself, not least due to the sound quality that small spaces afford.

Intimacy is another characteristic of radio conversation. Some of this sense of privacy is technologically enhanced: the environment of the radio studio obliterates all noise except that picked up by the microphones, forcing an aural focus on what is being said. [...] Some of the most compelling radio broadcasting occurs when the intimacy of the studio setting enhances the confessional nature of the conversation... (Barnard, 2000: 181-182).

In the above statement, Stephen Barnard claims that the technology of radio enhances intimate modes of speech. This indicates that there is some kind of enhancement in

radiophonic Intimacy, that intimacy may indeed be enhanced but the notion of enhancement also implies that the medium is already, at some level, intimate. There are some technological elements that have been there from the beginning of radio and that seem to precede any intentional performative enhancement. These include: ambience, absence of pre-set visual stimuli and a sense of ‘co-presence’ between presenter and audience. To these we may add the fact that radio sound is often received from devices that *sound* intimate. For example, listening *in* headphones (a practice that goes back to the beginnings of radio technology) or in-car listening means that the space of reception is small. What we may take from this discussion is that it might be useful to observe the technological element of intimacy as generated from two different (and interacting) technologies, the technology of production/ broadcasting and the technology of reception/ listening. While the first may, in fact, contain a *performed* element, in the sense that it is manipulated by the broadcaster, the technology of radio reception seems to occur in a combination of the real and the imagined.

In terms of real space, Shaun Moores (commenting on Michael Bull’s work on in-car listening) explains how a radio broadcast interacts with the physical space that it enters. Here, he uses the verb ‘intermingle’ in a very apt description that evokes the synergy between acoustic but also multi-sensual stimuli that occurs in radio listening (2012: 37). The lack of frame in radio, which places us within its messages rather than opposite it, has a direct effect on the radio message and its reception in ways that I am suggesting are intimate. The radio message, because it is not contained within the receiver, has a great capacity for affecting the listener’s environment, interacting with

it and becoming a true part of it. Headphone listening means that the sound leaks into our heads, which one may argue makes for a space with no specified boundaries.

This intermingling and blurring of boundaries allows for imagined spaces to be more freely generated. Crisell has refined the notion of radio's appeal to the listener's imagination, stating that: "...the distinctiveness of radio is not that it involves the imagination while the other media do not, but that it involves it to a different *extent*" (Crisell, 1994: 9). Chignell has also noted that radio intimacy, "owes a lot to radio's invisibility, which results in it being experienced entirely inside the listener's head rather than objectified on the screen" (2009: 87). The radio avant-gardist Gregory Whitehead makes a similar point in his essay 'Speleology', where he states that, "Writing radio performs a *suggestion* that can only be completed in the heads of individual auditors, a completion that takes place in the privacy of their own grotto" (1984: 3). The metaphor of a cave is an interesting one, since it evokes an explicitly private space, one that is characterized by darkness. This is an apt metaphor for radio's blindness and its appeal to the imagination.

One might argue that these are characteristics of all audio technologies. So, is there something that makes radio more intimate than, for example, listening to a CD? I argue that this technological and inherent potential for intermingling, blurring of boundaries and enveloping of the listener that mediated sound carries, may be enhanced with radio sound. Crucially, this is a matter of *time* and of the performative, personal element of the radio voice *in time*. Firstly, on the level of the medium as a whole, the element of time and liveness is of importance here. While the voice of a singer coming out of a recording may strike the listener in intimate ways, there is a knowledge that this is not 'live' sound. I am not suggesting that listening to recorded

music may be less intimate but I am suggesting that it is intimate in a different way. Even if the output is pre-recorded or, indeed, recorded music, the act of broadcasting this material is always live. Furthermore, many radio programmes are recorded ‘as live,’ playing upon the liveness that seems to be inherently carried within the idea of radio. Secondly, the close relationship that may develop between broadcaster and listener may result from the idea that she is talking to a single listener, privately and *now*. In other words, in radio the listener seems to be more inclined to suspend belief in order to accept that what she is listening to is live and, even further, it is live and just for her to listen to. Furthermore, the radio voice and radio programmes create a relationship *through* and *over* time with the listener through scheduling and everyday uses of the medium.<sup>59</sup> Clearly, in many instances, radio adds an extra level of intimacy to the most intimate of songs broadcast throughout the day and on a daily basis in music-based programmes.

The notion of radio as ‘a friend’ of the listener is a popular way of referring to it. This friendship may refer to general feelings of being at ease while listening to the radio or certain stations, or to feelings of friendly intimacy towards certain broadcasters, that listeners feel speak to them as individuals, as their friends. The most prominent feature in the latter is the paradox that the broadcaster may be perceived to be speaking personally to one listener while the audience is aware of the public address of the medium in its entirety. The programmes with which intimacy is mostly associated in the literature are music programmes (where the DJ assumes a friendly

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<sup>59</sup> Namely, because, in the act of transmission, radio is always live, and also because the consumption of radio is a routinised, regular experience, we are readier to suspend our knowledge that some of the material is pre-recorded: and this is what makes it an even more intimate experience than listening to CDs.

persona) and phone-in programmes (where the communication becomes two-way, if only in a very controlled manner). The use of intimate remarks or, to be more precise, of intimate modes of address is a technique commonly used by presenters in these genres that allow for mundane talk (as opposed to institutional talk) in order to enhance feelings of intimacy (see Hutchby in Scannell [1991, 119] and Barnard [2000, 173-174]). The intimacy associated with music programmes and phone-ins, therefore, is dependent on both personal and technological intimacy. In the case of the former, the broadcaster has to build on radio's intimacy through *organic* means (such as voice, use of words and modes of address) and through appropriating radio technology as a tool for the generation or the enhancement of her intimate address.

My specific pre-occupation with Intimacy in this chapter leads me to the conclusion that intimacy of any kind requires a blurring of boundaries. For intimacy to be allowed to happen a *meeting* is required. In the case of radiophony this meeting is the result of a series of such 'blurring' incidents that happen even before one has the time to consider them but the *meeting* happens largely in a neutral ground following a series of solitary actions: (a) The voice comes out of the broadcaster's mouth, blurring the boundaries of body and the space the body inhabits. (b) It hits the microphone and at once enters the radiophonic ether, blurring thus the line between studio space and space(s) of reception, with the ether being a place of blurriness, an in-between, a boundary that is in reality not a boundary but a fluid transitional space. (c) The listener switches her radio on. When the broadcast hits the listener's ears her space and the partly manufactured (by broadcast technology and the broadcaster's personality), partly imagined space of the broadcast will also merge to a smaller or larger degree, thus blurring the boundaries between real and imagined. (d) The voice

itself is received as a largely unknown and unseen disembodied entity that, at the same time, carries the intimacy of a friend (due to all the conditions described above). The radio voice blurs, in a way, the boundaries of what is intimate and what is not. If to be intimate with someone means to know them, or to even be with them, then the radio voice is neither of those two things for the listener (or for the broadcaster for that matter). The listeners are not with the presenter and they, most probably, do not know her personally, and very often the listener does not know what the owner of the broadcast voice looks like. It is indeed a 'paradoxical' intimacy and, on paper, it seems to contradict some of the conventional understandings of intimacy in non-mediated situations but, nevertheless, it seems to come so naturally. In blurring her boundaries, the listener allows the radio voice to become someone close to her, even if only for a moment.

While this blurring of boundaries is largely safe, as radio sets come with an off button, some accounts of the radio avant-garde present us with a dark yet compelling view of the radio relationship as one that may contain an element of trespassing, violation and, to some extent, dysfunctionality. Having looked at performative intimacy and some of its manifestations, I shall now pursue the discussion further by looking at how the avant-garde relates to these notions through a specific interest in theorising intense and emotionally charged broadcasts, ones that at times even propel us into suggestions of the sexual.

Interestingly, in 2000, Martin Shingler provided an illuminating comment on the relationship between avant-garde radio practice and the concept of radiophonic Intimacy. Analysing the avant-garde practice of glossolalia, Shingler compared the



1995 radio artwork *Alone at Last* (produced by Kate Rowland and written and performed by Nigel Charnock) with Antonin Artaud's radio work.<sup>60</sup> According to Shingler, *Alone at Last* "reveals distinct similarities to Artaud's radio work in its blurring of madness and sanity but also in its use of glossolalia and scatological language" (2000: 205). As Shingler describes, in *Alone at Last* "a man speaks directly to his radio listener" in a contradictory outpouring of love and emotion and verbal attacks towards the audience (2000: 205-206). Shingler's use of the term 'intimacy' to discuss Chanock's work offers a rare insight into the concept and, crucially, one that attributes this quality to the avant-garde:

*Alone at Last* has exploited one of the medium's defining features, its intimacy—that is, the intensely private and apparently reciprocal relationship it has with its listeners (see Shingler & Wieringa, 1998). What most listeners find reassuring and appealing about radio has been turned here into something disturbing. The one-to-one effect of radio discourse, which conceals its very status as a mass medium, is brandished threateningly before its audience, revealing how the solitude of so much radio listening can leave the listener in a position of vulnerability. In this radio piece, the speaker exposes that vulnerability with his insistent attempts to reveal all to his listener, to achieve the ultimate intimacy. In the end he is too intimate, too close for comfort. With all the contempt born of familiarity, he violates the intimate relationship that commonly exists between radio and its audience (2000: 206).

Shingler's account gets to the core of what we may see as a quintessential difference between making radio and making radio art: the level of the personal involvement on the part of the broadcaster in the intimate relationship with the listener. We might also describe such instances as *anti-intimacies*. In calling them this, there is no implication that they are not intimacies but my use of the prefix 'anti' is chosen to directly link the concept of Intimacy in the avant-garde to their general theoretical opposition to the mainstream. Anti-mainstream, anti-articulation, anti-commercial and anti-

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<sup>60</sup> Shingler writes that Artaud's radio work of 1948 drew heavily on the method of glossolalia and defines the latter as "emulating the speech of infants, poets, psychics, and the insane. The resulting language was almost nonsense but not quite. More precisely, it emulated (and appeared to be) and outpouring unregulated by rational consciousness" (2000: 205).

intimate, the avant-garde wants to connect to its listener but *on its own terms*. At the same time, however, they appear to alienate the listener in an ultimate act of resistance by getting (paradoxically) *too close*. Here they may alienate but still remain within the guise of intimacy by becoming so intimate that they end up violating the listener's space. In other words, they trespass the boundaries of radiophonic intimacy, as they have (customarily) been set by the mainstream. In so doing, they become anti-intimate as much as anti-mainstream. While it may no longer be helpful to distinguish between levels of performative enhancement of intimacy within different genres as we did in our discussions of the mainstream, we might claim that these anti-intimacies seem to be a result of the ultimate 'performance', the performance that is of a voice no longer sanitized, no longer 'clean.' On the contrary, this is a voice that is raw with emotion, as opposed to emotion conditioned to meet the purposes of a specific genre or programme type. *Alone at last* is perhaps an example of *meta-radio*, a radio broadcast that is about radio itself. It certainly contains performed intimacy but not of the conventional type associated with mainstream DJ and phone-in shows. Its purpose is to draw attention to the invasiveness and intimacy of the medium itself by inflecting intimacy in an unpleasant or sinister way. It simultaneously draws attention to the spuriousness sometimes attached to its performative elements that come with certain genres.

If we may use an analogy here it seems that the voice in the non-mainstream is trying to rid itself of its *ethereal* qualities and replace them with *corporeal* ones. This idea remains true to the subversive character of the avant-garde and attempts a utopian goal: that is, to let the body come through the speaker of the radio apparatus. This, although not explicitly stated, seems to still be aiming at intimacy. Weiss (2001: 5)

and Whitehead's (1984: 3) criticism of mainstream radio as a 'clean medium' appears to be a criticism of the conventional disembodiment of the radio voice and, equally, of the failure to be sufficiently intimate. As we saw in the previous chapter, Weiss talks in his book *Phantasmic Radio* about the paradox of radio, noting that it achieves "a reification of the imagination" (1995: 6). 'Reification' contains within it an element of materiality and the researcher has to wonder whether Weiss's conception of radio intimacy is one that exceeds more conventional degrees of intimacy; for while he recognises the radiophonic paradox of a mass medium talking to a listener privately from a distance, he seems to understand the imagined part of the radio message as one of some substance beyond the noumenal (i.e., the realm of thought). The non-mainstream does not deny the imagined part of radio but it does seem to invite the listener to imagine *in a different way*. By keeping radio 'clean' of corporeal sounds (e.g., voices in pain and angry voices), the mainstream may appear to non-mainstream radio theorists to impose false limits on intimacy. The avant-garde (along with Shingler's analysis of *Alone at Last*) exposes therefore that there is a limit to intimacy as it is understood in the mainstream, that once this mark is overstepped, it becomes a form of anti-intimacy. In contrast, few (if any) mainstream radio theorists acknowledge that radio intimacy is one that is bound by certain limits, that it operates within a zone of decorum or acceptability, beyond which intimacy becomes unsettling, unwanted, unpleasurable and even alienating.

Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and his radio work *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947) is another example of overstepping the mark of intimacy. Artaud's use of glossolalia does not intend to please the listener. He is merely using his own radio voice and the radio itself as a medium of catharsis. Allen S. Weiss in *Phantasmic*

*Radio* explains Artaud's glossolalia as such a process: "Artaud proposes the religious, magical, use of glossolalia as catharsis, as a mode of exorcism, to rid himself of God's influence and judgment" (1995: 20-21). Taking us back to the notion of blurred boundaries, avant-garde radio theory suggests that the boundaries of 'safe' intimacy should be removed, thus embracing radio's blurriness in full. In so doing, they offer a new kind of blurring in which there is no longer a clear line between where the speaker ends and the listener begins. This is not only because they 'violate' whoever else is listening (a violation evident in the use of words such as 'hole' [Whitehead, 1989: 12] and 'headhole'[Migone, 1996], both referring to the ear) but, crucially, because their primary interest is not the audience but themselves as listeners of their own voice. It is this specific blurriness that ultimately allows such overfamiliarity and for the avant-garde to become so overly intimate, open with its emotions, graphic and uncensored. In these instances, the speaker talks to the audience as if talking to herself/himself. So, in another radical departure from perceived notions of intimacy as being something that essentially exists between two people, the non-mainstream goes beyond it to a relationship with what seems to be the same person, revealing a level of narcissism that may alienate many (if not most) listeners but, at the same time, fascinate them with its extreme (and sometimes autoerotic) excessive notion of intimacy. This excess results in a rawness that allows the listener to get 'under the skin' of the radio voice. Avant-garde radio theorist and producer Jo Milutis offers a clear admission of this when he states that, "The radio artist is producer and consumer, audience and performer of his own electroacoustical soundings" (in Weiss, 2001: 63). Interestingly, Anne Karpf in her recent article 'The sound of home?: Some thoughts on how the radio voice anchors, contains and sometimes pierces' also suggests a form of blurriness of the sense of self between broadcaster and listener

(2013: 59-73).<sup>61</sup> Karpf's discussion uses the listener as a starting point, as opposed to non-mainstream discussions where this blurring is examined with a focus on the broadcaster. She writes: "I want to suggest that the radio voice works on us so powerfully and viscerally that its non-verbal melodies are regarded by listeners as something belonging not purely to the speaker but equally in some sense to the listener themselves" (2013: 62). Her reference here to the non-verbal is reminiscent of the non-mainstream's use and celebration of glossolalia.

## **2. Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter reveals, I believe, that my distinction between technological and performative intimacy remains useful in providing further insights into the intimate ways in which radio functions. This distinction is not always hard and fast given that the technological and the performative aspects of radio Intimacy interact in more than one way. Nevertheless, this does confirm the value of distinguishing between a range of *intimacies* with different characteristics rather than simply designating them all as 'intimacy'. Radiophonic Intimacy is certainly an unorthodox form of intimacy that only conforms in part to the qualities and conditions conventionally associated with the term. Moreover, the unorthodox nature of radio intimacy operates equally at the levels of technology and performance: that is, it is born out of distance and blindness, on the one hand, (i.e., *technological*) and performed by broadcasters/presenters/actors, on the other (i.e., *performative*). Unorthodox intimacies, furthermore, can be found both in avant-garde radio works (e.g., *Alone at Last* and *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*) and in the mainstream (e.g., when over time listeners form close attachments to particular

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<sup>61</sup> Please refer to my next chapter for a brief reflection on the relationship of Karpf's article to the audio part of this thesis.

newsreaders or continuity announcers). One particularly interesting aspect to emerge from this is the recognition that not only can intimacy be discovered in all forms of radio programmes due to technological aspects, constituting a base level intimacy across the medium, but that performative aspects cannot rob radio of this essential intimacy. Indeed, it would appear that intimacy can only be enhanced (rather than diminished) by performative factors, so that at some level (i.e., *technological*) intimacy remains a constituent feature of all radio.

What is particularly noteworthy is that the element of blurriness emerges as crucial to understanding radio intimacies even though it may be differently understood and exploited in the mainstream and the non-mainstream. In the mainstream, the blurriness is understood through a certain level of imposed boundaries: technologically, the imagined and the real may be blurred by allowing the listener to contribute towards the completion of the radio message, something that happens through another form of blurring, merging actual reception space and radiophonic space. Yet, as mainstream theorists of radio are audience-centric, these accounts recognise that there is a conscious effort to provide the listener with varying degrees of intimacy above and beyond radio's base-line technological intimacy. So, for instance, the news will appear to have little (or seemingly no) enhancement, while a phone-in show will have more. In the non-mainstream, the disinterest in genre along with a more broadcaster-centric approach has led to a situation in which a much greater degree of blurriness is embraced and celebrated, advocating one that often proves disturbing, eradicating a 'safe' distance between broadcaster and listener. For non-mainstream theorists, radio is a single entity rather than a multitude of genres and listeners. It is through the non-mainstream's abundance of boundaries, however, that

radio scholars can generally gain some new insights into mainstream radio, for the avant-garde indicates that radio intimacy in the mainstream operates within certain boundaries, beyond which it is undermined.

The radio voice in the mainstream performs according to specified amounts of enhancement relative to specified genres and specified target audiences. It seldom (if ever) goes further from a point where there is a safe distance and a safe distinction between listener and broadcaster. The avant-garde, on the other hand, challenges this, forcing us to think beyond this line by trespassing into the dark side of a range of radiophonic intimacies. In so doing, it conceives of intimacy beyond these established or accepted boundaries. The other important feature to note about radio's intimacies is that the voice occupies a primary role here. As mainstream theorists have frequently observed, the radio voice operates differently across a range of genres in order to generate different levels of intimacy deemed appropriate for the genre (i.e., phone-ins or news bulletins) and it has also been recognised as a central feature of many avant-garde productions.

Despite the very different ways in which Intimacy is understood in the mainstream and the non-mainstream, the radio voice provides a common denominator from which all radiophonic intimacies stem. This will be pursued further in the radio feature that accompanies this thesis, as well as in the next chapter, which provides a commentary on (and response to) the practical component of this project. The reader is now invited to listen to the programme before reading the next chapter.

## INTIMATE CIRCUITS

### *A life journey of the radio voice*

A 27 minute experimental radio feature, with contributions from (in order of appearance):

**Anne Karpf**, broadcaster, critic and author of *The Human Voice* (2006)

**Annette Rizzo**, voice-artist, broadcaster and lecturer in radio production

**Tim Crook**, Head of Radio at Goldsmiths College, broadcaster and author of *The Sound Handbook* (2012)

**Anna Raeburn**, broadcaster and author

**Sean Street**, broadcaster, academic, poet and author of *The Poetry of Radio: The Colour of Sound* (2012)

Produced and edited by Evangelia Karathanasopoulou, July 2014



Picture by Justin Battin



## Chapter 4

### **Intimate Circuits**

This final chapter will reflect on the programme and its meaning for this thesis. I will explain the main steps of the production process and the ideas and concepts that derived from it. I shall also provide some reflections on how the programme was made and designed to fit the written thesis and what its aims and intentions were. Subsequently, I will use a short case study on the idea of sleeping with or *in* radio that derived from the production process. This will offer some further insight into the concept of Intimacy. The role of the programme within the thesis, as well as the role of this chapter, is to use the methodology that avant-garde radio theorists often employ in reflecting upon their own work. In this chapter evidence of how I employed this methodology will be seen, as well as how I took this one step further by exploring the issues that I was writing about through the interviewing and editing processes and then feeding the emerging ideas back into my writing.

#### **1. The Programme**

'Intimate Circuits' is a 27minute feature that explores the radio voice and the intimate relation that broadcasters and audiences have with it. The story of the radio voice is told in the form of a metaphorical life journey or circle of life that aims to highlight radio's affective powers as well as the uncanny notions of its ubiquity and immateriality. The programme's timeline develops like the life of a baby: we start inside the womb and this is followed by birth, life, death and then the implication that the life cycle starts again. The story is told through interviews supported by archive footage, sound effects and a song. I created the sound effects by manipulating the

voices in the programme and I have also used the radio interference that I recorded. As the programme is not narrated, I have used sound creatively as a story-telling vehicle and as a carrier of meaning. The format of the piece is typical of those programmes regularly heard on BBC Radio 3 in the *Between the Ears* slot and my target audience is intended to be similar to that of this BBC network: that is, university-educated adults (in the 35-75 age range). Like many experimental features, it dispenses with a presenter (more typical of BBC Radio 4 documentaries) in order to lend greater emphasis to the story-telling potential and significance of sounds, music, acoustics and vocal tones. This is also, I hope, the kind of radio feature that avant-garde radio theorists such as Gregory Whitehead would find engaging and thought-provoking. Over all, the intention behind this work is to provoke the listener's imagination and provide a means for them to reflect on many of the themes and arguments that have been raised in the chapters of the thesis. Rather than produce an aural thesis or debate on one or several of the key themes of the thesis, this feature remains more impressionistic throughout, enabling ideas to surface and resurface, deepen and meld as the speakers and sounds evoke a range of ideas in succession and sometimes even simultaneously. The tone of the piece is designed to be conducive to such reflection and to the creation of an intimacy that draws a listener in closely, forcing them to attend carefully to what is being said and to the various sounds that make up a rich, cohesive and yet ever-changing texture. My intention has been to relax the listener and yet simultaneously activate their minds and imaginations in order to keep them stimulated and engaged throughout.

One of the more specific purposes of this feature is to offer further insights on radiophonic Intimacy through its main originator, the radio voice. The title 'Intimate

Circuits' represents the cyclical narrative of this feature that tells the story of a life cycle. It also contains both the affective element through the word 'intimacy', which is directly connected to the (intimate) *technology* of radio, represented by the word 'circuits'. The cyclical nature of the circuit is a connective notion between radio transmitters and the idea of the cyclical, everlasting nature of the transmitted voice. My use of the plural is to indicate the variation and plurality in radiophonic intimacies as this has been established in the written part of this thesis.

## **2. The Contributors**

I conducted five interviews with a range of eminent theorists and practitioners of British radio. The first one was with theorist, academic, poet and broadcaster Sean Street, followed by interviews with author, academic and broadcaster Anne Karpf, Tim Crook, Head of Radio at Goldsmiths College and author and broadcaster, Annette Rizzo, a voice artist working in both Britain and the USA who has also worked as a lecturer in radio production and, finally, Anna Raeburn, broadcaster and pioneer of the phone-in genre.

Sean Street's work (both theoretical and broadcast), although not part of the non-mainstream tradition, offers important reflections and connections between radio broadcasting and poetry. Street's work often offers poetic reflection in otherwise pragmatic, historical discussions of the medium, and this was a combination that I wanted to bring into the programme. Tim Crook is now primarily a theorist with a very strong background in practice. He has written books on radio drama and media law and ethics and, most recently, *The Sound Handbook* (2012). In the latter he includes considerations of aesthetics, philosophy, metaphysics and ontology in

relation to sound (themes not dissimilar to some of the issues that Street discusses in his work). Crook brings these elements together in a book that is written in the format of a multidisciplinary textbook for the teaching of sound to university students. The themes that he explores in this book are very close to the notions that I wanted to explore in my programme and the fact that this was published at the time that I was creating the programme also made a discussion with him quite topical and current.

Anne Karpf has, amongst other relevant work, included considerations of radio in her book *The Human Voice: The Story of a Remarkable Talent* (2006). In this book, Karpf includes a discussion of the maternal voice and its intimacy. Her academic interests made her a very suitable contributor for this project. After my interview with her in 2012 and relatively near the completion of this project, Karpf published her 'The sound of home?: Some thoughts on how the radio voice anchors, contains and sometimes pierces' (2013: 59-73). This article, which is largely about the radio voice, contains many ideas that overlap directly with those contained in my radio feature and quite a number of the things she discussed with me in our interview reappear in her article. In this contribution one can, in hindsight, observe the ideas contained in her later article being formulated and developed. For example, in her interview there are seeds of her discussion of the womb and radio as mother, which she subsequently developed in her essay (2013: 63-65). In both her essay and interview with me she relates her own experience of taking part in BBC Radio 4's *Start the Week*. Again, in both my programme and her article, she refers to the Wizard of Oz, "whose formidable booming voice is eventually revealed as belonging to an unimpressive, unwizardly human frame" (2013: 65). I consider it a success of this project (and a privilege) that Karpf shared these ideas with me prior to publication. I have only made

a few references to Karpf's article in my chapters, as the programme provides a unique and appropriate space for her ideas to be aired and contextualised within a more general debate established by my other interviewees.

Annette Rizzo was chosen for the programme due to her wide experience of working with her voice and particularly because of the varied and commercial nature of her work that would allow me to ask questions around the idea of the separation from one's own voice. Namely, she could reflect on the fact that she regularly hears her own voice used and manipulated by other producers. Furthermore, because she makes a living from her voice and is trained to use it and to adapt her performance for different briefs, she was able to offer insights on her performance and relationship to her own voice. Anna Raeburn, another practitioner, has similarly carved out a career by using her voice and, like Rizzo, she has primarily worked in commercial radio. She was chosen for the programme as a pioneer of the phone-in programme, which in mainstream literature is often presented as one of the most intimate genres. She was the last addition to the programme, offering a closer look at the element of intimacy and her voice served as a metaphor for this intimacy. I chose to record her through a telephone line, reversing her usual role and placing her at the other end of the telephone line responding to someone else (i.e., myself) in the studio.

### **3. The Other Voices in the Programme**

There was a number of other voices that were used in the programme: Richard Burton, from the BBC's *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas (1954/1963), the announcer of Arch Oboler's horror radio series *The Devil and Mr.O* (1972), Mark Chapman introducing Charlotte Green and Green herself reading the football results

on BBC 5 Live (2013), the BBC Radio 4 Shipping Forecast announcer (2014) and, finally, the voice of singer Alkinoos Ioannidis performing a traditional lullaby from Cyprus (2006).

The two radio plays used here are examples of performative intimacy, each one being distinctly different and resulting in different kinds of intimacy. I used the introduction of Arch Oboler's 'Alley Cat' from the series *The Devil and Mr. O* that aired in the 1970s. This was a repackaging and syndication of Oboler's *Light's Out*, the original series from the 1930s-1940s, which was an early American radio example of the horror genre. I used this in order to illustrate the uncanny element of radio as well as its imaginative power. The sneering and threatening voice of the announcer may be seen as a sonic reference to anti-intimacy as described in the previous chapter of this thesis in my interrogation of intimacy in non-mainstream radio theory. It is an unsettling yet gripping experience. The sinister tone of this voice comes in direct contrast to Richard Burton's warm, inviting voice as the first narrator in Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* (1954) as it was broadcast on the BBC in 1963. The common element in both is that they are recorded close to the microphone, both sounding as though they were speaking to one person only, close to the listener's ear. They are both intimate yet in strikingly different ways. They both take us into a story, into a world, that we are going to imagine. However, while the world of *The Devil and Mr. O* is a scary, uninviting one, the world of *Under Milk Wood* is an inviting place of poetic wonder. The announcer in Oboler's work urges the listener to turn her radio off, *not to listen*. In stark contrast, the listener of Dylan Thomas' radio play is invited to "come closer", *to "listen"*. The intimacy of *Under Milk Wood* comes from both the voice of the narrator but also the words in the play. The work was dubbed 'a

poetic play for voices' and is a text that can be read as a meta-text about radio (similar to *Alone at Last*, as described in the previous chapter). Thomas enables the radio listener to see a whole town through sound: "You can hear the dew falling, and the hushed town breathing" (1954/1972: 2). He talks about hearing what cannot be heard or seen and makes his reader/listener feel like she is the *only* one who can hear these sounds: "And you alone can hear the invisible starfall" (1972: 2), "From where you are, you can hear their dreams" (1972: 3). This reinforces the idea that radio speaks to the individual as if she was the sole listener.

While words can soothe, they can also disturb, particularly when employed along with sound effects to conjure up the thrills and chills associated with horror stories, as Anna Raeburn describes in the programme. Words and the radio voice that utters them, prompt the imagination to take the listener into her own subjective and most fearful thoughts. The announcer in 'Alley Cat' is playing with this notion, informing the listener of the fear these 'imaginative' horror stories can bring. He is acknowledging radio's power and is using the idea of the radiophonic to enhance the sense of (pleasurable) unsettlement that the horror story aims to produce. Interestingly, both plays begin with the idea of darkness, even blindness. While they are both set at night, the idea of darkness is used antithetically in the two plays. The announcer in 'Alley Cat' begins by saying, "It is later than you think", and continues: "Turn out your lights...Now". Darkness here is directly linked to the "supernatural and the supernormal," as the announcer says. Interestingly, the supernatural and the uncanny are elements that were flagged up by my interviewees as one of the primary notions connected to radio. However, in an interesting twist, Tim Crook discusses the more reassuring aspects of darkness on the radio when he notes radio's "comforting,

story-telling potential,” even comparing it to a ‘parent’ that tells the listener a bed-time story, allowing her to “embrace darkness with security, comfort, rather than the mythical association of darkness as being something threatening and lonely”. This is the role that darkness seems to have in *Under Milk Wood*, which begins with these words: “To begin at the beginning: It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black, the cobblestreets silent...” (1972: 1). Here, there is no threat in sight, as the small silent town is sleeping in the dark. While the night and the absence of vision in ‘Alley Cat’ are used in order to enhance the fear factor, in *Under Milk Wood* it is a setting reminiscent of the quiet intimacy of sleep. We see, then, that radio can be equally celebrated for both its ability to unsettle and provide comfort, both of which can be understood and analysed through a rhetoric of intimacy in radio theory.

While the above radio plays illustrate the performative elements of intimacy, the examples of Charlotte Green and the Shipping Forecast illustrate the power of radio’s (often unexpected) technological intimacy, one that is comparable to what Sean Street called in my programme ‘the cold poetry of information’ (in Karathanasopoulou, 2014). Street’s phrase implies that all broadcast sound, including the most functional of announcements, has the potential to be transformed into something more evocative and emotional by the broadcast voice. Crucially, he refers to an affect that touches not only the listener but also the broadcaster herself (echoing many non-mainstream accounts of the radio relationship). In this instance, Street uses the Shipping Forecast as an example of this. His input here is interesting for me since it offers a different articulation of technological intimacy. For Street, the emotive quality of information (even the most prosaic) becomes particularly prominent as it is vocalised. In other



words, the voice automatically adds extra levels of emotionality (possibly even metaphor), introducing a poetic dimension to the information being read out, not least because the reader is herself affected by the underlying poetry of what she is reading. Street's observation sheds light on the paradoxical relationship between information and *poetry* rather than information and *intimacy*, as explored earlier in this thesis. However, in this context, intimacy and poetry may be considered to have something fundamental in common that is peculiarly relevant to better understanding the nature of the radiophonic paradox: that of emotional affect being generated through seemingly non-intimate and/or non-poetic broadcasts. In this way, Street (a poet himself) is able to reconcile two seemingly opposite things, information and poetry, just as I have sought in chapter 3 to reconcile information (e.g., news or continuity announcements) and intimacy through the notion of *technological* intimacy. In the programme, I sought to illustrate this sonically by mixing parts of the audio extracts of Charlotte Green reading the football results and an anonymous announcer reading the Shipping Forecast, along with lines from *Under Milk Wood* and extracts from Sean Street's interview.

In addition to the various speaking voices in the programme, there is also a singing voice, performing a Greek-Cypriot lullaby. My choice of song was based on a number of things: (a) As a lullaby, it serves as a metaphor for the beginning of life and a continuous relationship to the mother. An idea of radio as a mother (offering comfort, closeness and familiarity) runs through the programme, making this choice of music highly relevant. (b) It was also chosen as a response to the fact that many of my interviewees talked about the intimacy of radio by using the example of listening to it in bed as a child. (c) The singer, Alkinoos Ioannidis, is a very popular recording artist

in Greece who happens to be a personal friend of mine, one that I have known from a very young age and, thus, his voice has personal significance for me, evoking intimacy and closeness. (d) The song is performed acapella, which foregrounds the voice. (e) The fact that the element of the maternal is rather prominent in the programme was something that I considered when choosing to use a male voice. I decided that the notion of the mother was used as an open term in the programme (for example, by Tim Crook who talks more generally about parents and loved ones) and that I should not remain bound to literal interpretations of it. Ioannidis' voice is ambiguously gendered, sounding both male and female, and therefore it is left open to interpretation on the part of each listener.

#### **4. The Production Process**

In the programme I have used sound and the voice largely as metaphors. These metaphors were most often not pre-planned. In most cases, they happened during the editing process through an intimate engagement with the gathered interview material. At the time that I was choosing most of the interviewees and recording their interviews, the concept of the radio voice had a more central position in the written part of the thesis. However, as the process of writing and producing evolved, the subject of intimacy became the major focus of the project. Fortunately, despite this shift in emphasis, it became clear to me that the radio voice remained of central concern to an exploration of radio Intimacy. This meant that the audio material that I had gathered on the voice could be used to introduce new ideas to the project as a whole, supplementing rather than replicating the written chapters. Consequently, I decided that the radio feature could function more effectively by providing additional material and ideas on the specific topic of the intimacy of the radio voice. With this in

mind, I removed written sections on the radio voice from the thesis and selected those parts of my recorded interviews that concentrated specifically on the intimacy of the radio voice for my feature to ensure that the programme provides a significant contribution to the project as a whole.

When I began editing there was a concern that the material still might not be entirely suitable for the new focus of the written thesis. However, I soon realised that my questions to my interviewees, subtly yet decidedly, had pointed them in the direction of intimacy even before I had consciously decided that this was going to become the focal point of my written discussion. As a consequence, the metaphors created through the editing point directly to the issues that derive from writing about intimacy. The programme, as initially planned, is structured as a metaphorical journey of birth, life, death and re-birth. As a circle of life, it starts in the intimate confines of the mother's womb, as the equivalent of the radio studio. It then travels through life, on the air, ending up in outer space (symbolic of death), only to be picked up again to begin a new circle of life. The intimacy of this process emerges in the programme from the comments of my interviewees in rather revealing ways. A direct connection between the radio voice and the themes of motherhood and childhood emerges from all my interviewees and, while some of my questions pointed to the direction of radio as mother, the contributors (unprompted) used the example of listening to radio in bed as a child in order to demonstrate the medium's affective power. For this reason, the metaphor of the child sleeping and being told stories or sung to by a loved one remains constant throughout the programme. The opening moments of the programme were designed to place the listener in the most intimate of situations, in the mother's womb. This is initially described by one of my interviewees, Anne Karpf. Another of

my interviewees, Annette Rizzo, subsequently describes her studio (from which she is speaking) with words that evoke a womb-like environment, thus expanding upon the metaphor and emphasizing the link between these two confined spaces.

One of the main criteria for choosing my contributors was that they were involved in both radio theory and practice and could, thus, offer not only theoretical observations on radio and the radio voice but also insights on how they perceive their own radiophonic voice. This was a methodological reflection on the non-mainstream tradition in which authors often produce their theoretical work through close analysis and reflections (often poetic) of their own radio work or the work of other radio avant-garde artists. The theoretical occupation of most of my contributors with radio was very important because I saw the programme as an integral part of this thesis that is a meta-theory. In this sense, the mainstream element of the written thesis was reflected in the programme in that these contributors might generally be considered closer to the British mainstream theoretical tradition. However, these contributors have clearly offered insights that chime closely with non-mainstream theory. In my discussions with my contributors and in my treatment of the material I often employed the technique of implication instead of direct articulation. I also used disarticulation, a technique of cutting up words and phrases in order to use them as sound effects that, nevertheless, most often served a meaningful purpose.

Each of my interviews was recorded via different means. This was partly serendipitous, although I was conscious that by recording Anna Raeburn over a telephone line (while I was in a radio studio) I was effectively putting her into the position of one of her listeners (i.e., the callers to her phone-in programmes). I hoped

that this would enable her to reflect on the nature of her relationship with her audience from this unusual (for her) vantage point. The variety of recordings used in the programme has served it in two distinct ways. Firstly, it offered sonic variety and richness. Secondly, some of these choices are, in fact, a direct reflection on the varied and changing broadcasting landscape that allows different means of conveying the radio voice and, as a consequence, a variation of ways in which the broadcast voice can be technologically disseminated as intimate modes of communication. Tim Crook's interview was conducted via a Skype call (while I was in a studio), which he comments upon when in the programme he says "we are both zero-ones zero-ones"; the interview with Annette Rizzo was recorded through ISDN; Sean Street came to the studio in Sunderland and we recorded the interview during his visit for an academic talk; Anne Karpf's interview was recorded with a portable audio recorder in a room at the Tate Modern gallery in London during a break from an academic symposium at which she was a speaker. The interviews that I conducted remotely with those contributors that I had not met before, Annette Rizzo and Anna Raeburn, whom I had only seen in pictures, were for me as a producer an exercise in radio's blindness. Annette Rizzo was talking to me from a studio and had, as a professional, set her own voice settings in her console, which meant that I got the voice that she chose for me to hear. Thus empowered, she was put at her ease and more inclined to respond to some very personal questioning from me. The questions I asked her often resulted in her sharing personal anecdotes about her relationship to her own voice. She talked, for instance, about how she has a 'normal' voice with which she speaks to her family and a 'professional' voice. My discussion with Anna Raeburn also proved to be very personal and, indeed, lasted a lot longer than anticipated. By the end of it I felt like I had known her longer than the 90 minutes of our conversation. Listening to

her voice through my headphones made me very sensitive to the tone of her voice and also to the change of ambience as she moved through her house and garden. If anything, the grainy quality of the telephone line added to the intimacy because it made it sound more like a personal conversation with a close acquaintance than an interview with someone I have never met.

In addition to these voices with their various acoustic treatments and distinctive aural qualities, the feature is rich in sound effects. All the effects used in the programme were created by manipulating parts of my contributors' voices, along with some sections of Alkinoos' singing voice. I did this in order to foreground the importance of the broadcast voice, its ability to be meaningful but also to function as pure sound. By using 'close-ups' of these voices I attempted to come 'closer' to these voices and to what they had to say as well as hear their sonic, non-verbal qualities. The interference used was recorded (by me) with a small transistor radio. Recording this was a rather mystifying experience as the muffled, broken voices often seemed to say all the right things for my programme. Interestingly, one of these voices said the word 'bedtime' as I was recording interference to overlay it under accounts of sleeping with the radio on. The only sound effect that was downloaded was the Morse code letter 's' (three dots), that I also replicated at a different point in the programme using a fragment of Annette Rizzo's voice. The three dots are reminiscent of the fascinating initial ontological ambiguity between information and evocation to do with radio's subsequent development. Sean Street tackles the subject in the programme after I put the question to him referencing the work of Chris Brookes (American radio documentary producer and author) who in his essay 'Are We on the Air?' suggests that back in 1901 Guglielmo Marconi did not actually *receive* his first transatlantic

radio transmission but that he might merely have *imagined* that he heard it: “A man giving radio his full attention. Does it give him the information? No. It engages his imagination so powerfully that he imagines the information” (in Biewen & Dilworth, 2010: 17).<sup>62</sup> The focus that Brookes places on imagination is crucial when it comes to radiophonic intimacy. “He heard it, or at least he said he did. The signal was the Morse code letter *s* [...] just pure binary information over the radio: three dots. [...] [It] seems to me this might explain why radio has been too often mistaken as a medium for information instead of evocation” (Brookes in Biewen & Dilworth, 2010: 15).

It was with this in mind that I used Charlotte Green’s voice reading football results along with parts of a BBC Shipping Forecast, as discussed earlier. It appears that Sean Street’s notion of the ‘cold poetry of information,’ closely echoed by Tim Crook’s comment on sound and how it appears in the digital age, somewhat reconcile Brookes’ dichotomy. Namely, information does not cancel out evocation, not least because the technology of radio is inherently intimate but also because the radio voice cannot be completely eradicated of some (however minimal) element of the personal. I first used raw extracts from the two broadcasts and later manipulated some of these, cutting them into pieces and interweaving them with other voices in order to illuminate the subjectivity with which one may receive these broadcasts. At the same time, I was keen to stress the paradox associated with the ability of broadcast information to have an emotional affect upon both listener and broadcaster.

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<sup>62</sup> The essay is part of the edited collection *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* (2010) in which broadcasters from the experimental tradition reflect on their practice.

I had decided that I did not want to use my own voice and to only be present in the programme through my editing and choices of audio material. However, what would have otherwise been outtakes in the context of this metaphorical journey of the voice became quite crucial and meaningful. For example, towards the beginning of the programme I am heard talking as if expecting a voice to ‘come into the world’ and asking the technician (Grant Lowery) how this is going to happen. A voice suddenly appears out of nowhere. It is born in Annette Rizzo’s studio and first heard inside my studio. The expectation and the wonder of ‘how’ it will come into being, made me think of the wonder of new life coming into the world. I find it intriguing that this ontological pondering came as a consequence of me asking a technological/technical question to the studio technician that was helping me set up. These are examples of a process that was not only intimate for me as a producer but also crucial to my thinking about intimacy in radio broadcasting and which resulted as much from my interaction with my contributors as it did from my interaction with the technology: studios, microphones, editing software, etc.

## **5. Sleeping with Radio**

In the process of making the radio feature, I have had occasion to reflect in more detail on one of the most fundamentally intimate practices associated with radio, that of taking a radio set to bed and listening to it while falling asleep. This was brought up (unprompted by me) and discussed in several ways by my contributors but it has also featured recurrently in the Radio Studies literature, both mainstream and non-mainstream. Susan Douglas, for instance, writes that,

One primal experience those born before *and* after the Second World War share is lying in bed, sometimes with the covers just barely over our heads, listening intently to the box next to us. Maybe it was the darkness, the solitude, or being



in bed but the intimacy of this experience remains vivid; listeners had a deeply private, personal bond with radio (1999: 5).

More recently, Anne Karpf has described the experience of listening to the radio in bed as a “return to the womb”. Interviewed for my programme, she stated that: “If you’ve ever had the experience of listening to the radio in the dark, lying in bed, it is an extraordinarily powerful experience. You do feel some sort of return to the womb” (in Karathanasopoulou, 2014). The notion of the return to the womb is a very powerful one here and it is very telling of the perceived levels of intimacy that radio can produce.

Annette Rizzo also brought up the practice of listening to radio in bed during my interview with her, describing an element of secrecy that can be part of radio listening, one that reinforces the element of radio as a solitary experience:

Lights out, time to go to sleep...and, you know, there might be something you really wanted to listen to, and even I remember that, listening to the radio with the lights off in my bedroom, you know, under the bed clothes so nobody can hear...That you are really supposed to be asleep, you are still wide awake (in Karathanasopoulou, 2014).

In Rizzo’s example, the sound of the radio is there in secret, only to be heard, *privately*, by the child. The secretive nature of listening to radio in bed is also captured in the following quotation from Gregory Whitehead:

As a child, I sacrificed part of my eyesight to the habit of reading late into the night, flashlight in hand, hiding beneath a tent pitched from a bedspread. I knew all along that sooner or later I would be discovered, my light confiscated, my tent collapsed. But no matter: I had an AM radio tucked beneath my pillow, held in reserve. Of course, there was nothing “on”; there didn’t have to be. I was listening to the other radio, the radio that is always there, the radio that intersects with fantasy, dream worlds and the unconscious, the radio made from every kind of overhearing, the radio of narrative mobility, of language on the move. I was listening to the radio *in my head* - turning the AM dial was simply *pulling the trigger* (1984: 3).

In fact, Gregory Whitehead has written repeatedly about this. In a later work, he recaptures his intimate relationship to radio, placing the start of it not only in his childhood but, more specifically, in the form of listening in bed. For instance, in 2009, he wrote that, "...I first fell in love with radio during late solitary nights as a twelve year old boy, with a cheap transistor under my pillow, and the great Allison Steele, the Night Bird, on the air" (2009: 6). Whereas in his early example (quoted above) he seems to describe *technological* intimacy (i.e., the idea of radio coming to him from a distance, manifested through interference and sparking his imagination), in his later work he talks about a personal intimacy in which he was attached to a specific voice. It was with this instance in mind I tried in my programme to evoke sonically both modes of Intimacy. On the one hand, there are instances where I used the interviewees' voices raw and without any effects, speaking close to the microphone (such as Sean Street's voice, which is soft and very conducive to creating the sense of closeness). On the other hand, I used interference in order to evoke a sense of technological intimacy, the sense of sounds arriving from a distant location, sounds that can be received by listeners in their most private situations.

One of the most vivid evocations of listening to radio in bed was written by poet and novelist Lavinia Greenlaw in her book *The Importance of Music to Girls* (2007). Here she wrote about the sense of privacy that radio technology offered her in the form of a transistor radio, part of which was, indeed, a result of transistor technology:

Before I had a record player in my room, I had a transistor radio. My parents issued one to each of us like a form of rations. They were the size of a billy can, with a leather case and loop handle. Before this, I had thought of radio as news and orchestras, background to eating cereal or brushing teeth, to my father reading the paper and my mother sewing. Now I carried around Radio 1 pressed to my ear as if listening to *Top of the Pops* in a seashell. Music became a private occupation, not least because the sound was so small. I could not have shared that radio with anyone even if I'd wanted to (2007: 68).

As we see in the examples of Greenlaw and Whitehead, technology has allowed radio broadcasting to become a sort of intimate whisper that one could listen to in private. The size of the device has meant that the size of the sound could be equally small and, thus, hidden. Of course, a hidden voice, a voice without a body, penetrating one's ears, may at times be as powerful in creating a sense of discomfort and fear as an intimate whisper may create feelings of security and calm. Anne Karpf, Tim Crook and Sean Street describe in their interviews for my programme that radio was uncanny to early audiences in particular (but also to contemporary audiences) because of its technology, particularly its ability to bring disembodied voices through the air to an audience that was often not expecting it. However, the technological element of the uncanny may, as observed in other radiophonic intimacies, be enhanced, manipulated through performance in order to result in a heightened sense of fear and unsettlement. As we observed earlier in the thesis, theorists in the non-mainstream strand of radio theory often allude to this kind of penetration by using language that evokes an element of violation. Whitehead, for instance, writes about radio: "...And while the press of its muzzle against the ear may be intensely intimate, we only know the bodies of our interpolators through the body of their voices" (1989: 11). The private whisper described above reaches now an uncomfortable level of closeness yet still, curiously, from a distance. Depending on *what* the voice is saying, on what and how it is *performing*, the inherently intimate technology of radio may become too close for comfort, something captured in the following reminiscence by broadcaster Anna Raeburn:

The first ghost story I ever heard, well horror story really, was on the radio, I remember it to this day; it was called *The Monkey's Paw*; and it terrified me. And it terrified me because I couldn't see anything, it was all happening inside my head. That is the most curious form of intimacy (in Karathanasopoulou, 2014).

What intrigued me about this was the way it echoed the sentiments of the non-mainstream radio theorists even though it was made by a mainstream practitioner. This clear statement of the uncanny helped me to better understand the non-mainstream notions of fear, pain, intrusion and their curious relationship to intimacy. In making my radio feature, I was struck not only by the fact that the issue of listening to radio in bed (particularly as children) was raised unprompted by several of my interviewees but also that some of their comments corresponded closely to the theories and writings of avant-garde radio practitioners. There is indeed a paradox here since my contributors do not belong to the non-mainstream end of the theoretical spectrum. Yet this paradox was, in fact, central to my aims and methodology, my original starting point being to challenge the boundaries of the mainstream and the non-mainstream and to use both in my interrogation of Intimacy.

As mentioned above, when asked about radio's special affective power, three of my five contributors (Karpf, Rizzo and Crook) talked without further prompting about the intimate experience of sleeping with the radio on as a child. Prompted by their response, I adopted the element of childhood and the specific notion of sleeping with the radio as the main metaphor for my programme, although this is intended to remain part of a multitude of 'intimacies' in order to correspond with the chapters of my thesis. The descriptions of the interviewees range from the technological (e.g., Marconi's Morse code, the poetry of information, the studio as a womb-like containing space), to the performative (e.g., Raeburn's description of people 'making her up'), all the way through to anti-intimacy (i.e., most notably, the uncanny described by Street, Karpf, Crook and, finally, Raeburn, all of whom link intimacy in some way or other to fear or anxiety). Although all of my interviewees are

mainstream theorists/practitioners, my questions to them were intended to set them thinking about issues largely associated with non-mainstream radio theory. For instance, I asked them to consider the radio relationship as one that exists as much between the broadcaster and the medium as much as between broadcaster and audience. So when I posed the question to Annette Rizzo of whether she ever feels separated from her own voice, she mentioned instances in which unexpectedly hearing her own voice on the radio has produced a curious experience of dissociation. She also described the idea of being separated from her own voice as a sense of “creating the voice that you are sending out there,” even likening it to producing a physical object (like “a potter throwing a pot”), parting with it and sending it off on its way (in Karathanasopoulou, 2014). This is precisely the kind of discussion that features prominently in non-mainstream theories of radio. In prompting my interviewees to think along such lines, it is clear to me that there are many potentially productive correspondences between what has hitherto been conceived as diametrically opposed bodies of knowledge. Furthermore this has justified my original intention of bringing these distinct ends of the radio theory spectrum closer together into a more productive synergy.

It is clear to me that non-mainstream radio theory can be brought more significantly into wider discussions of radio. In so doing, this may signal a slight shift in the balance between audience and broadcaster, shedding more light on the broadcaster’s role as both creator and consumer of radio. This produces a role in which theorists are not only encouraged to reflect upon practice (mainstream and avant-garde) but practitioners are encouraged to contribute towards new theories of radio, the insights of theorists and practitioners combined in dialogue along with those of practitioner-

theorists (e.g., like Sean Street, Tim Crook and Gregory Whitehead). This calls to mind the blurring of boundaries inherent in radio (as discussed in chapter 3), suggesting that the blurring of critical boundaries is perhaps better suited to radio theory than any other discipline.

## Conclusion

The approach to the conceptualization of radio intimacy adopted for this project has been threefold. Firstly, I have attempted to understand the subject not as a single unified concept (i.e., Intimacy) but as a multitude of inter-related factors (i.e., ‘intimacies’). Secondly, I have examined the concept through the lens of both mainstream and non-mainstream theories in order to gain a better purchase on the subject. Thirdly, I have integrated theory and practice in order to create a circuit of knowledge in which theoretical concepts are put into practice via an experimental radio feature, while the insights gained from the contribution of interviews conducted for the feature (as well as the orchestration of the speech content alongside music and sounds) inform the thought processes and writing involved in the development of the chapters of the thesis.

This project has attempted to incorporate mainstream and non-mainstream radio theories in order to arrive at a more comprehensive and systematic definition of radio’s intimacies. The obvious danger involved in such an attempt comes from the necessity of resolving (or, alternatively, bypassing or ignoring) the existence of clear ideological differences between the two, differences that may well make the achievement of integration impossible. However, the decision to bring together the two distinct ends of the radio theory spectrum has, I would argue, proven fruitful, enabling me to arrive at some new insights on the subject of radio’s intimacies, which remain close to the core of many theoretical understandings of radio. The account of radio intimacies that I have produced by comparing and fusing mainstream and non-mainstream theories may, I hope, in the future extend to further considerations of the topic and also to other aspects of the medium (i.e., other key concepts).

Comparison of mainstream and non-mainstream theories has highlighted for me the difference between an approach that was largely audience-centric (the former) and another that was broadcaster-centric (the latter). This prompted me to ask the contributors interviewed for my radio feature to reflect upon their relationship to radio in terms of their own experiences as listeners as well as their experiences of working with the medium as broadcasters. The discussions in this thesis have to a large extent confirmed the ideological and conceptual differences between the mainstream and the non-mainstream theorists but they have also revealed some striking similarities, producing a common ground between the two, which I for one feel comfortable occupying as a radio theorist-practitioner. Most notably, it has emerged in the earlier chapters of the thesis that the notion of the radiophonic paradox is central to an understanding of radio at both ends of the radio theory spectrum. Furthermore, the concept of Intimacy has been defined as one that is also characterized by its own set of paradoxes; so, for example, it has been associated with provoking feelings of discomfort as well as contentment, alienating listeners as well as putting them at ease. Through such paradoxes, it is possible to see that ‘Intimacy’ may be broken down into different types of *intimacies*.

Throughout the thesis and the radio feature produced as part of this project, it has been observed that a number of elements are constituent features of radio intimacies. These can be usefully separated out into two broad categories, namely *technological* and *personal/performative*. On the one hand, *technological intimacy* results from the portability of reception devices that affect modes of intimacy and result from messages originating from one distant location that are subsequently received in some



very private spaces. While individual instances of listening to radio in such private conditions may only occur over relatively short stretches of time, for most people listening to radio accumulates over many years, building familiarity, repetition and anticipation into the relationship between radio and its audience. Thus, the combination of private listening spaces with a long-standing and regularized habit of listening to radio ensures that all programmes broadcast on this medium possess a fundamental or base level of intimacy. On the other hand, *personal/performative intimacy* results when the listener intimately connects with certain voices that seem to speak ‘privately’ to her. These work to intensify or enhance the base level of radio’s intimacy in order to create various degrees of intimacy, with different genres being associated with different levels of intimacy (e.g., phone-ins having a higher degree in general than current affairs programmes).

However, as it has also been observed in earlier chapters, the technological and personal/performative intimacies of radio emerge as part of a series of unconventionalities and paradoxes. Radio’s intimacy approximates to but is clearly distinct from the notion of intimacy per se (i.e., intimate human relationships). This is due to several factors, most notably: radio broadcasters are physically distant rather than close to their audience; listeners are often solitary rather than together with each other to form a singular audience; radio programmes involve some degree of artifice and illusion rather than candour; and radio broadcasts can use intimacy to illicit fear and alienation as much as security and comfort (e.g., the anti-intimacy of avant-garde radio works described in chapter three). These factors suggest that radio’s intimacies are as paradoxical as the relationship that exists between radio and its audience. Yet despite these paradoxical factors, intimacy remains at the heart of the radio

broadcasting experience for many listeners (as it does for many broadcasters). As such, it is also a vitally important concept within Radio Studies, one that warrants greater attention, analysis and conceptualization.

I hope that my written and audio work for this project have contributed some new knowledge to the field, while developing a discussion that will lead to further new knowledge in the future. I am satisfied that I have provided some answers for all the questions that I set out to tackle at the beginning of this project. The concentrated account of Radio Studies set out in chapter one has provided a context for understanding the factions and divisions of this academic field, highlighting the differences and the similarities between the various constituencies of this community, while establishing how the discipline itself was formed and developed over time in Britain and the USA. In the process of mapping this field, I have offered an account which describes a spectrum of theories that extend from a radical avant-garde at one end, to a group of theorists at the other end whose work is largely designed to illuminate the mainstream uses and conventions of radio (across a variety of genres and formats) for students and trainee broadcasters. I have also suggested that there is, however, a middle ground here that already exists (for example, Shingler [2000]) but has the potential to be further expanded through increasing integration of diverse theoretical positions and it is here, of course, that my own project is situated.

By offering a historical analysis of the development of the concept of Intimacy in Radio Studies in chapter two (and by systematically reviewing a selection of core texts from both the mainstream and the non-mainstream), I derived some useful distinctions that had not been previously identified. Namely, I discovered that the

term 'intimacy' has until now been used interchangeably to mean both an intimacy attributed to all radio and to an intimacy specific to particular kinds of programme. This recognition enabled me, in chapter three, to offer one solution to avoiding the ambiguity of previous definitions of radiophonic intimacy by providing some clear distinctions (i.e., *technological* and *personal/performative*) and, ultimately, arriving at the notion that a multitude of unconventional intimacies can be identified, such as intimacy relative to newscasters (deriving from mainstream theorizations) and anti-intimacy (deriving from non-mainstream ideas). Subsequently, my programme gave specific attention to the radio voice as the main originator of intimacy. It did so by inviting mainstream theorists and practitioners to consider radio and its affective powers, posing to them questions that mostly originated from my engagement with the non-mainstream strand of radio theory. When critically reflecting upon the making and findings of this experimental radio feature in chapter four, I was able to identify some further points of contact between mainstream and non-mainstream radio theory, particularly in terms of methodology. Moreover, I was also able to pursue a new line of inquiry into another aspect of radio's intimate relationship with its audience, that of listening to radio as a child in bed and falling asleep to it, something which was prompted by several of my interviewees who raised this subject without any prompting from me. This clearly demonstrates one of the benefits of undertaking practical work as part of a research project, particularly when, in the process of making a documentary, the researcher-producer is able to use the process of recording interviews with contributors to gather research material that can determine the direction of the theoretical work.

Ultimately, this project has arrived at a new way of conceptualizing radio's intimacies by researching the topic from the vantage point of a middle ground between the two diverse ends of the radio theory spectrum, while simultaneously integrating theory and practice. Determining this position has not been easy or obvious and trying to locate myself within the theory/practice, mainstream/non-mainstream has often proven frustrating and confusing. It has forced me to merge and blur some of the distinctions that have been established within Radio Studies, whilst at the same time I have been required to impose new distinctions of my own; for instance, distinguishing between *technological* and *personal/performative* intimacies. However, it is clear that while this distinction may be said to exist, there are also complex interactions between these two categories that see them merge or blur to some extent, especially when we are presented with individual case studies, such as newscasting (i.e., where what is initially considered to be the preserve of *technological* intimacy is revealed upon reflection to contain small but significant aspects of *personal/performative* intimacy). It is possible that the categories that I am proposing will be challenged by further research into the subject of intimacy (either by myself or other scholars). Nevertheless, I remain convinced that these are, at the present time, valid and productive categories for radio scholars to adopt in pursuit of radio's intimacies. Should they prove provisional and be superseded by alternative forms of conceptualization, they will, I hope, have been instrumental in opening up future explorations of what lies at the heart of radio broadcasting and of what has been central to the radio experience since its birth as a broadcasting medium to the present day.

While radio's future formats and modes of reception remain uncertain amidst predictions of increasing levels of media convergence, it seems relatively safe to assume that Radio Studies will forge closer links with other Media and Cultural Studies disciplines and that, as it does so, Intimacy is one concept that offers a fertile ground for drawing in theories and methods from other related disciplines in order to enhance and expand the academic field that has been born out of our deep attachment to and abiding fascination with what to date has been called 'the radio.'

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