

*The Specificity of Christian Theosony:
Towards a Theology of Listening*

Nóirín Ní Riain

B.Mus. (Cork), M.Mus., H.Dip. in Ed., Dip.Phil. NUI, Dip. CMSM

Doctor of Philosophy

Mary Immaculate College
University of Limerick –
Ollscoil Luimnigh

Supervisor: Doctor Eamonn Conway

Submitted to the University of Limerick

August 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been initiated without the insight, help and support of my supervisor, Dr. Eamonn Conway. Its fruition to this particular stage has been due to the extremely generous input and textual editing of three people: Mark Patrick Hederman, OSB, John O Donohue, and Cyprian Love OSB. Gregory Collins OSB was a sensitive, prayerful companion throughout the journey. To Father Abbot Christopher Dillon and the Benedictine community of Glenstal Abbey, I am grateful beyond words, for the living and library space to complete the writing. Two people here deserve mention: Librarians Fr. Vincent Ryan and Br. Colmán Ó Clabaigh were, at all times, welcoming, accommodating and tolerant.

My mother, to whom this work is dedicated, taught me more about listening to God than I can ever tell. She was called back to God two weeks before the dissertation was submitted. Her common sense intuitively taught me that God does not discriminate; hearing the divine voice is an experience that includes everyone.

For miscellaneous reasons, I am so grateful to Senan Furlong OSB, Pattie Punch, UL, Phyllis Conroy and the interlibrary staff of MIC, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Eoin Ó Súilleabháin, Mícheál P.Ó Súilleabháin, Noel Ryan, Ciarán Forbes OSB, Carmel Sheridan, Simon Sleeman OSB, Fintan Lyons OSB, Michael Drumm, (Mater Dei), Sr. Marcellina O' Sulllivan, Sr. Anne O Leary, Barry McMillan, Oonagh O' Brien, Thomas Brodie, Margaret Daly, Peter and Margaret Ferguson, Declan Casey and Conor Flynn.

The final acknowledgement rests with the triune God: The All-powerful Father created the human being to pray constantly and this work, particularly in its inevitable darkneses and doubts, was always a prayer. Jesus Christ taught humanity to listen and pray in human words which this is made up of. The Holy Spirit guided and enlightened in so many mysterious ways that one could never forget that 'He who planted the ear, does he not hear?' (Ps. 94:9)

Benedicamus Domino. Deo gratias.

ABSTRACT

The burden of this thesis is to show that of all the existential preventent sites where nature prepares for the event of revelation, the human ear is the most sensitive and theologically attuned. The foundation stone of this work is that the encounter with the incarnate Word of God through the Holy Spirit takes place *primarily*, although not excepting other media, through the human sense of hearing, listening and its associate silence. The second hypothesis proposed here is that such acts of listening to the Spirit of God are undervalued, unexplored and unappreciated in Western Christianity. That sound preceded sight is a fact of the Christian narrative yet the Christian tradition has made little effort to develop a methodology to explore such an aural concept of God's self-disclosure.

Without overestimating the intention of this thesis, it would be fair to say that the present writer has identified a lacuna in theology. It is her modest intention to propose and sketch one possible methodology in order to begin to address this absence. At the outset, I wish to underline three elements of our proposed methodology: Firstly, defining an aural ontology requires the coining of a new word: theosony. Secondly, four branches of learning are harnessed to sketch the groundwork towards a theory of auditory Christianity: theology, philosophy, biology and linguistics. Thirdly, a taxonomy of divine/human encounter through the medium of sound will be set out.

God provides both the faculty of hearing and the content of what is heard as preventent grace. Such aural grace is ubiquitous and indiscriminate, it precedes all human experience in and of the world. 'Theo' in theosony evokes this graced Christian experience. Theosony itself is treated at three levels: Cosmic Theosony relates to all sounds which are non-human, mundane and pre-conceptual; Kerygmatic Theosony deals with sounds that communicate, carry a message or a meaning; Silent Theosony treats of the intimate salvatory presence of God that is silent, aphonic and solitary. As in human silence, the realm of God's silence is a positive ground or horizon of sound; theosonic silence is, in this sense, the horizon of God.

Many insights from contemporary philosophy have been used to develop this aural ontology. For the most part, this work could be described as a phenomenology of hearing as the basis for human interconnectedness including our relationship with God. It describes the human ear as the heart of human being: the membrane which allows access to all that is beyond ourselves and, therefore, one of the most privileged inlets to God.

THE SPECIFICITY OF CHRISTIAN THEOSONY

Towards a Theology of Listening

Contents

Acknowledgements

PART ONE: THEOSONY AND THEOLOGY

Introduction

◆ <i>Two intentions and two premises</i>	1
◆ <i>The sense of hearing in selected theological sources</i>	6
◆ <i>The limitations of human language</i>	8
◆ <i>Some reasons for the neglect of the sense of hearing</i>	11
◆ <i>Interfaith dialogue</i>	15
◆ <i>Synopsis of the thesis</i>	20
◆ <i>Motivating influences and contribution</i>	23
◆ <i>Summary</i>	26

Chapter One: 'Theosony' and Parameters

<i>Introduction to the phenomenon of 'theosony'</i>	31
<i>1.1 Defining the word 'theosony'</i>	33
<i>1.2 Theological framework and interdisciplinary nature</i>	35
<i>1.3 Christian parameters</i>	38
<i>1.3.1 Theosony as grace</i>	43
<i>1.4 The critical, the obedient, the clairaudient ear</i>	50
<i>1.5 Summary</i>	55

Chapter Two: Theosony and the Sense of Hearing

<i>Introduction</i>	58
<i>2.1 Hearing – 'a physiological phenomenon'</i>	64
<i>2.2 Listening – 'a psychological act'</i>	70
Brain/Mind considerations	72
Theological implications	75
Listening according to Roland Barthes	77
<i>2.3 Neurotheology</i>	80
<i>2.4 'The grain of the voice'</i>	83
<i>2.5 'Vox fortis in aure interiore' - Paul of Tarsus (d.c. 67), Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and Patrick of Ireland (d.c. 461)</i>	87
Five considerations: conversion, rhetoric, narrative, conversation, and wisdom	93
<i>2.6 Summary</i>	98

PART TWO: THEOSONY AND SCRIPTURE

Chapter Three: The Reader and the Voices of the Pages

Introduction

3.1 Literary criticism	103
3.2 The oral/aural nature of Scripture	109
3.3 Four overtones on the oral and aural nature of Scripture	113
3.3.1 Contingency and continuity	116
3.3.2 'Off by heart'	123
3.3.3 'Who made the [ears] but I? / Truth, Lord...'	126
3.3.4 Folklore, poetry, story-telling and literacy	129
3.3.5 To write is to hear – To read is to hear	134
3.4 A summary of the 'voice of the pages'	140

Chapter Four: Theosonic Scriptural Events

<i>Introduction</i>	146
♦ Six arguments for preferring the Gospel of John	147
4.1 Hebrew 'däbär', Greek 'logos', Prologue 'Logos'	154
4.2 Hearing the Risen Christ Jn. 20:11-18; [Lk. 24: 13-32]	161
4.2.1 Mary Magdalen's christophany – the recognition drama	164
4.2.2 Naming and names	167
4.2.2.1 The Names of Jesus and Mary	172
4.2.2.2 The Name of all Names and No Name	173
4.2.3 Good Shepherding	176
4.3 'The wind/spirit/breath ...the sound/voice of it' (Jn.3: 8)	177
4.4 Summary	183

PART THREE: THEOSONY, SILENCE AND RELIGIOUS
EXPERIENCE

Chapter Five: Theosony and Silence

<i>Introduction</i>	185
<i>5.1 Towards a phenomenology of silence</i>	190
<i>5.2 The Base of the Triangle – Silence and Divine Discourse</i>	199
5.2.1 Silence in ‘the great Trilogy of ...virtues’	205
<i>5.3 Silence – the book ends of Scripture</i>	209
<i>5.4 Summary</i>	214

Chapter Six: Theosony and religious experience

<i>Introduction</i>	219
<i>6.1 Religious experience, fundamental theology and theosony</i>	220
<i>6.2 Three theories of religious experience: Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto, William James</i>	230
<i>6.3 A taxonomy of theosonic religious experience in Scripture</i>	237
6.3.1 Cosmic Theosony	238
6.3.2 Kerygmatic Theosony	242
6.3.3 Silent Theosony	248
<i>6.4 Summary</i>	

Chapter Seven: Towards a conclusion

Introduction	255
7.1 Socratic midwifery and the daimonion: Jesus, the Holy Spirit.	
St. Paul	258
7.2 Ten aspects of theosonic alertness	265
7.3 A theosonic ‘Approach-Road’ to God	274
7.3.1 Theosony – the metaphor	275
7.4 Summary	280
BIBLIOGRAPHY	282

Introduction

*At times the sound of a vocable, or
the force of a letter, reveals and then defines
the real thought attached to a word ...All
important words, all the words marked for
grandeur...are keys to the universe, to the
dual universe of the Cosmos and the depths
of the human spirit.¹*

¹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, (1964), p.198.

From Abraham to the incarnate Son of God, the connection between humanity and God was through the ear. God taught and continues to teach the universe to listen. Any listening, therefore, is, in itself, the voice of God in the transcendental ear of the listener. It is a dialogue between partners and friends.

Two intentions and two premises

The first intention is to argue that God's self-disclosure can occur through a certain kind of *listening*. Such listening is an aural understanding that involves hearing, obedience and silence. The English term 'obedience' is derived from the Latin '*ob-audire*'; the Hebrew and Greek words meaning 'to obey' are also connected with the verb 'to hear'.² The first intention, therefore, is to present a taxonomy, i.e. a classification, of the human listening experience which can be taken up into a Christian sensibility.

The second is to argue for the *recovery* of the aural/oral experience which itself was an integral component of the earliest Christian tradition and transmission. Bonding both aims is the fact that divine auditory perception has been neglected in Western theology; how and why this is the case is the *leit-motif* of the work. In this thesis,³ 'aural' refers to what is heard and relates to the sense of hearing; 'oral' is what is spoken, uttered and also heard; 'verbal' specifically relates to the inherent meaning or feeling communicated through words. 'Oral' and 'verbal' do not carry the same meaning.

² See Alois Stuger 'Obedience' in '*Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology*, ed. Johannes B. Bauer, London/Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1967, (1970), Vol.2, p.616. This fact is restated more fully in Chapter One to follow.

³ See Chapter Three for further elaboration of the terms 'oral' and 'aural'.

The study begins from two premises: *firstly*, that the *aural* was and still remains crucial⁴ in the full realisation of God's grace in humanity. For the Christian, Christ voices the ultimate word of God's self-communication; he, through the human spoken word, is the supreme human spokesperson for divine revelation.⁵ Yet, as Karl Rahner points out, 'Christianity...needs practice in learning to *hear* such words.'⁶ The Gospel according to John has been a particular yardstick in this research. The evangelist brings the reader to the recurring awareness that, as Paul also believes, 'faith comes from what is heard (Rom. 10:17).⁷ But for John this is 'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in the name' (Jn. 3: 18).

The *second* premise is that this aural/oral aspect of religious experience, which embraces silence, is neglected in the practice and theology of contemporary Western Christianity.⁸ This neglect is apparent not only in religion. Throughout Western culture it is an all-pervasive trait to bypass the ear in favour of the eye. In every discipline throughout Western history the ear has taken second place. 'Ever since the age of Newton and Descartes we have existed in a culture that put excessive emphasis on the eye.'⁹

⁴ This does not exclude those who lack or are deprived of the sense of hearing either totally or partially. The fundamental hypothesis in no way excludes the deaf person from the metaphorical, religious, aural, graced experience proposed here.

⁵ The full story of God's oral and aural self-revelation in the history of humanity is not always *positive*: often it conveys dark images of evil and sin. Many people turn deaf ears to God persistently refusing to give ear or attend; 'their ears are closed, they cannot listen (Jer. 6:10). Not paying attention to the words of the incarnate Word of God, closing one's ears to the voice and message of Jesus is the ultimate sin of disobedience; because, as God's voice made flesh clearly states, 'blessed are your...ears, for they hear' (Matt. 13: 16). From the Old Testament, Isaac in his old age refused to trust his ear; in the New Testament, Zechariah is condemned to dumbness because he too distrusts what he is hearing.

This dissertation is biased in favour of the *value* and consequences of the actual heard sound of God, which is to be listened to in non-human, cosmic form, in linguistic concepts and in silence.

⁶ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1966, p. 359. Italics mine.

⁷ All Scripture references, apart from citations, are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version of The Holy Bible, containing The Old and New Testaments with The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, London, HarperCollins Religious Publishers, 1998.

⁸ See Section 5.1 of Chapter Five concerning silence. Of fifteen primary sources consulted, only seven contained any reference to silence.

⁹ Joachim E. Berendt, *The Third Ear: On Listening to the World*, 1985, Dorset: Element Books Ltd., 1988, p.32.

Such neglect of the aural must affect the spiritual climate also. According to Søren Kierkegaard, the ear 'is the most spiritually determined of the senses.'¹⁰ Favouring the visual and the visible in all areas of life, has, in the words of Joachim Ernest Berendt, generally 'despiritualised our existence'.¹¹ Hearing, he concurs with Kierkegaard, 'is none the less the most spiritual of all our senses.'¹² Through learning and practising hearing, not only is one's quality of life enhanced but God's self-revelation is more readily and obediently received.

Western theology has investigated the nature of God primarily from a visual perspective, largely ignoring the transcendent possibilities of the sense of hearing. The ways in which such possibilities have been experienced in some eastern traditions will be discussed later here. The religion of the Hebrews valorised the ear in revelation. Hellenist and Greek culture favoured the eye over the ear. According to the Marburg theologian W. Mundle, '[I]n biblical revelation hearing has a much greater significance than in the Greek and Hellenist worlds.'¹³ The Greek noun for an eye, *ophthalmus*, occurs over a hundred times in the New Testament; the aural equivalent, *akoe*, is used only thirty six times.¹⁴

For its future survival, Christianity *must* address the function of the auditory sense, indeed all sensory functions, in revelation and religious experience. Western Christian theology can do this by showing both how the aural conveys the revelation of God to the human subject, and how the aural holds open the space wherein the world can

¹⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Vol. 1, Trans. David F. Swenson/Lilian Marvin Swenson, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944, (1959), p. 66.

¹¹ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.23.

¹² Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.24.

¹³ W. Mundle, 'Hear, Obey' in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 173. The abundance of phrases such as, 'thus says the Lord' and 'the word of the Lord came', in the Old Testament is a testimony of this point.

awaken to the graced presence of God. This requires a new kind of listening to the word of Scripture. The original meaning of the Hebrew ‘dābār’ and the Greek ‘logos’ embodied an understanding (‘theosony’ in the context of this thesis) and a reciprocated effectiveness (the effect of the sounding of a word on both the speaker and the listener). The divine Logos, in its sounding and in its hearing, *releases* an understanding of oneself, of the universe and of God. Before a discussion on the neglect of attention to the auditory sense in theological scholarship, a word about the current heightened awareness to the significance of hearing and listening in contemporary thought is called for.

As early as 1985, Berendt highlighted an interdisciplinary obsession with hearing, although he excludes the discipline of theology. ‘Hearing and listening are suddenly “in”’,¹⁵ he wrote. This interdisciplinary interest in the sense of hearing makes it exciting to research the *theological* implications. The term ‘theosony’ carries a multiplicity of meanings. All relate to the listening functions of the ear in the particular event of intimate prayer, Scripture and Divine Revelation. It is not a clear-cut system of theology, nor is its uniqueness as yet obvious.

At least three¹⁶ branches of learning — theology, philosophy and biology — prompt questions with which this theological work on the theory of auditory Christian belief begins. The first words rest in the area of *theology* itself. The premise here is theological, not biological. However, secondly this thesis must consider the *biological* reality of the sense of hearing, exploring the two interconnected areas of aural physiology

¹⁴ See K. Dann, ‘See’ in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament*, Vol. 3, 516.

¹⁵ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.6. In philosophy, see Fiumara and Love. In medicine see *British Medical Journal*, March/April, 2002, the first ever edition of the Journal to be devoted to hearing. In musicology, see bibliography of Zuckerkandl, Begbie, Love.

¹⁶ It may appear that there is a lacuna here in the omission of musicology as a disciplinary partner. However, as I argue in chapter eight, because much of the debate between musicology and theology is

and psychological listening, and asking what happens when a God-made earthly sound travels the birth canal from the ear lobe, through the inner ear and to the brain.

Thirdly, a definition of the truth of the divine/human conversation looks to *philosophy*. Phonetics is the science of speech, sounds and their production. Combined with semiology, the science of signs by which people communicate with one another, phonetics embraces the subjective amalgam where language and body interact. Indeed, the French literary critic and semiologist, Roland Barthes, holds that ‘if contact with the music and phoneticism of one’s own language is lost, the relationship between language and the body is destroyed.’¹⁷ On the other hand, literary historian Robin Flower holds that it is in the very act of *sounding* language that the music of the word is heard: ‘[I]f the spoken Irish of today is...the liveliest, the most concise, and the most literary in its turns of all vernaculars of Europe, this is due in no small part to the passionate preoccupation of the poets...restlessly seeking the last perfection of phrase and idiom.’¹⁸

The sense of hearing in selected theological sources

It is important to chart a brief outline of the neglect of the aural in Western theology. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*¹⁹, for example, has no entry under ‘hearing’, ‘listening’ or ‘the ear’, yet it includes articles on the ‘human body’, the ‘head’, the ‘heart’, the ‘eyes’, the ‘hair’, the ‘hands’, the ‘knees’, the ‘feet’ and the ‘phallus’. There is an entry on ‘silence’

initiated by the musicologist, the thrust of the debate is more often on what musicology has to offer to theology particularly through the phenomena of music timing and more importantly, improvisation.

¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale, London: Jonathan Cape, 1985, p. 185. This quotation, extended, is cited again in Chapter Seven to augment a point concerning darkness and aural creativity.

¹⁸ Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1947), 1979, p. 106.

¹⁹ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987. It must be admitted that although this tome is somewhat dated, it is nevertheless yet regarded as a classic in its field which is both theological and anthropological.

by Elizabeth McCumsey and, in the course of this short article, she refers to the paucity of scholarship on silence.²⁰

The recently published, second edition of the Roman Catholic equivalent, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* has entries on ‘sensation’,²¹ ‘sense knowledge’,²² ‘senses’,²³ and ‘sensibles’.²⁴ These are exact reprints of the 1967 edition of the Encyclopaedia. All four bibliographies to these articles remain unchanged in the 2003 editing except for one new text, which is added to the ‘sense knowledge’ bibliography.²⁵ There are three further points here: The 1967 edition’s entry on ‘sensation’ incorporates an article on ‘physico-chemical factors in sensation’ by R. A. Wunderlich. The auditory is considered only on the physical characteristics of the ear and its functions and, as is also the case with the other sensations biologically described here, makes no reference whatsoever to the theological implications of hearing. This article is omitted from the 2003 publication. Secondly, there is an entry for ‘sound’ in the 1967 encyclopedia which is again scantily scientific, ignoring the theological context and its bibliographies recommend only scientific, acoustic titles. There is no entry under ‘sound’ in the most recent second edition. Finally, there is an entry under ‘deaf’ in the first edition that deals only with the education and social rehabilitation of deaf people; there is no biblical or theological discussion. The 2003 edition has eliminated this article altogether.²⁶

²⁰ See Elizabeth McCumsey, ‘Silence’ in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 13, pp. 321-324. The reference to the lack of books on silence is in the Bibliography, p. 324. References to this article appear in Chapter Five here on Silence.

²¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second edition, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003, Vol. 12, pp.906-909. Author: J.F. Donceel.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 909-911. Author: M.M. Bach.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 911-914. Author: A.M. Perreault.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 914-916. Author: M.M. Bach.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 911. This added text replaces ‘Syntopicon 2: 706-709 in the 1967 edition.

²⁶ A black-and-white cartoon entitled ‘Humorous illustration of ‘The Five Senses’ appears on the ‘senses’ article page of the 2003 edition. (Vol. 12, p. 911) In ways, this highlights the frivolous way in which the senses are regarded in this most recent *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

The six-volume theological encyclopaedia, published simultaneously in six languages, *Sacramentum Mundi*, has no entry on hearing, listening or the ear. *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*,²⁷ which includes an excellent article on silence, makes no specific reference to hearing, listening or the ear. *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2,²⁸ does provide an article entitled, 'Hear, Obey' by W. Mundle, referred to above. The equivalent visual entry is relevant because it makes an argument for the primacy of the eye and the ear in the reception of God's revelation.²⁹ This three-volume dictionary includes a short entry on deafness and dumbness, which in classical Greek and New Testament usage are embraced by the one word, *kophos*. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*³⁰ has two brief entries under 'ear' and 'voice' by William Domeris. In short, of the twenty-three major reference sources consulted, only three find the auditory sense worth mentioning regarding God's self-revelation. One of these references is out of date.

Consultation of concordances to the Old and New Testaments for references to the sense of hearing makes interesting reading. One such index³¹ has four full pages citing biblical references to hearing and two pages on voice. In contrast, there is about one page of citations on seeing. Specific references to the eye and ear are similar in

²⁷ *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, eds. René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994.

²⁸ See W. Mundle, 'Hear, Obey' in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, pp.172-180.

²⁹ See K. Dann, 'See, Vision, Eye' in *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 511-518.

³⁰ William R. Domeris, 'Ear' in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 361. Also 'voice' p. 1360.

³¹ *Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments, Revised Edition*, Guildford/London: Lutterworth Press, (1930), 1982. 'Hear' citations, pp.286-290; 'voice' pp. 724-725; 'see' part of 576, 577, 578.

number. Berendt finds hearing referred to no less than ninety-one times in the first five books of the Old Testament.³²

This dissertation argues that the Christian tradition has failed to penetrate the depths of mystery in a listening relationship with the triune God. One of the reasons for this is arguably that many theologians have been provided with a professional vocabulary, which is as intricate as it is scientific. As Paul Newham, suggests: ‘The more scientifically orientated one is, the less one’s voice uses the affective undulation of music.’³³ Theology may have suffered from an equivalent desiccation. René Fisichella criticises theologians’ neglect of silence for similar reasons.³⁴

The limitations of human language

The paradox has been universally recognised: all human linguistic expression of the Divine falls short and trails off at a certain point in our understanding. Karl Rahner holds that ‘the word “God” places in question the whole world of language in which reality is present for us... This reality might be present speaking clearly or obscurely, softly or loud. But it is there at least as a question.’³⁵ Verbal descriptions of God belong to human thought forms. The word ‘God’, as well as the Word of God, has sounded out in humankind’s historical existence. The very sound of the word ‘God’ is majestic. It must be acknowledged; it must be faced up to; it must be *obediently*³⁶ received. Karl Rahner thinks this point significant enough to highlight in italics: ‘Rather we *hear and receive the*

³² Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.24.

³³ Paul Newham, *The Singing Cure: An Introduction to Voice Movement Therapy*, Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc., 1993. p.221.

³⁴ René Fisichella, ‘Silence’ in *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p.1001.

³⁵ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith, : An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1978 (2000), p. 50.

³⁶ This word ‘obedience’ is an important term in this work. Although it appears throughout the dissertation, its full impact is elucidated in Chapter Seven.

word 'God'...the phonetic sound of the word 'God' is always dependent on us...it creates us because it makes us men.'³⁷

Language is the tantalising, frustrating medium whereby humanity articulates an understanding. It is our only way of giving God a *hearing*. But as Seán Freyne rightly states, God 'can never be exhausted or fully represented in the words of humans.'³⁸ Paul Ricoeur, on the other hand, hints at the importance of the aural dimension of language: '[I]t is always in language that religious experience is articulated, that one *hears* it in a cognitive, practical or emotional sense.'³⁹ It is through language that one hears, but what one hears is *more* than language itself can impart. The phrase 'reading between the lines' means to understand or to discover an implicit meaning in addition to the explicit one. We hear more than we see written down. The word 'God' is never silent even to the profoundly deaf. In aural experience the hidden, mysterious, loving God is intimated between the words. Divine listening is precisely 'hearing between the words'. George Steiner, describing this same phenomenon in articulating the power of music, puts it like this: 'When we try to speak of music, to speak music, language has us, resentfully, by the throat.'⁴⁰ In the midst of human linguistic limitation and weakness, God holds us 'by the throat'. One must remain in the presence of a language where, as Fiumara puts it, the 'only thing that counts is to learn to "dwell" in the *saying* of language.'⁴¹

³⁷ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 50.

³⁸ Sean Freyne, *Texts, Contexts and Cultures*, Dublin: Veritas, 2002, p.95.

³⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, p. 218. Italics mine.

⁴⁰ George Steiner, *Real Presences*, London: Faber and Faber, 1989, p.197.

⁴¹ Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language: A philosophy of Listening*, translated by C.Lambert, London/New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1990, p. 159. Italics mine.

Karl Rahner concludes that if humanity cannot hear the name God as the ultimate in all speaking, then 'we would be hearing it as a word about something obvious and comprehensible in everyday life, as a word alongside other words. Then we would have heard something which has nothing in common with the true word 'God' but its *phonetic sound*.'⁴² There is something hidden in the sound that must be *listened out for* to be experienced. Although it is the underlying theme here that *all* created sounds are the work, the divine kindness of God, it is crucial to make a distinction between hearing and listening: hearing is the mundane biological fact, while listening pertains to the psychological with its highest expression in prayer. So in the context of a theology of sound and listening, hearing refers to mundane aural experiences pertinent to the earth and the universe, while listening refers to heaven and the realm of God. Mundane hearing and mundane sounds speak of the terrestrial as opposed to the celestial world. It is the former, older usage of the word 'mundane' which is relevant. In contemporary linguistics, this word tends to cite what is banal, uninspired, quotidian and lacklustre. Neither does the word 'mundane' deny or dilute the Christian theological foundational belief in all creation, including its innate silence, being the perennial, active grace of the triune God.

God's self-revelation in phonic Word is proof of the power and possibility of the ordinary words we use. The word is both understanding and doing as the Hebrew 'däbär' and the Greek 'logos' imply. Scheffczyk puts it this way: 'Thus even if man can only think of God mediately and can only speak of him in a fragmentary way, this possibility exists and is even obligatory through the primal word of God uttered in revelation. By this utterance, God himself has entered human language, and has permanently

⁴² Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 51. Italics mine.

empowered it to express him.’⁴³ The force and passion of the Word is accurately suggested in and through the melody, the rhythm and harmony of the word.

Some reasons for the neglect of the sense of hearing

Theology’s failure to understand the ‘most spiritual’⁴⁴ of all senses is a major lacuna, leading to Western theology’s failure to understand the power and the virtuosity of the aural.

Such failure has important implications. The reliance upon language as a trustworthy and self-contained vehicle leads to the adoption of a particular *language style*. Much theological scholarship, and indeed much preaching, revolves around stilted, technical, Greco-Roman vocabulary, far removed from everyday prayer and conversational language. Donald Cozzins summarises the listening experience well: ‘They [priests] may preach the Gospel, but the assembly senses that they have yet to live it.’⁴⁵ This is not to acknowledge and respect theological language as a particular ‘language system’ in itself. The failure to recognise the transmission of mystery in the space between the words has resulted in a fetishistic obsession with precision and perfection in the words themselves. Whether from the pulpit or between doctrinal book covers, God’s grace has sometimes been smothered in verbose abstractions and dogmatic tracts. The intimations, the whispering breath of the Spirit, have been eliminated. The fundamental elements of the music, the melody, the rhythm and the harmony of the triune God have been lost. Much theological speculation has been dominated by highly technical, formal language, closely allied to seminary training and a particular sacerdotal

⁴³ Leo Scheffczyk, ‘God’ in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 2, p. 386.

⁴⁴ Ernst Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p. 24.

culture. This genre of linguistic expression emanates from a left-brain, rational source and largely ignores the personal, emotional, experiential, listening, religious experience. Such speech, it could be argued, is primarily a stylistic, literary genre, to be read and not heard. One-sided as this stance might seem, it is important to state that the language system of most Western theology does not intend to be either musical or poetic and is most definitely intended to be read rather than spoken or heard. The traditional language game of Western Christian theology is a stiffly formal mode of the eye and not of the ear.⁴⁶ Words should be heard and listened to; spoken and responded to. This is particularly true in the case of the words in Scripture.⁴⁷

Hearing, and silence⁴⁸ have been devalued by patriarchy in theology and in other disciplines. What is being argued here is the need for *liberation* of sense perception from stereotypical categorisation. Humanity needs to hear, humanity needs to see and it is only through both and indeed all sensory perception, that one achieves one's full potential. In the words of Anthony Storr, sensory expression 'eschews the personal, the particular, the emotional, the subjective.'⁴⁹ Andrew L. Love agrees that '[t]he conceptual tradition of Western ontology...because of its cognitive emphasis on clear and objective rationality and "fetishization of detachment" harbours a bias in favour of *masculine* models of knowing'.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Donald B. Cozzens, *The Challenging Face of the Priesthood*, Collegeville/Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000, p. 16.

⁴⁶ It is acknowledged and respected here that this is a generalisation and that there are many exceptions, for example, among the early Christian writers such as Polycarp and the Fathers of the Church.

⁴⁷ This oral and aural aspect is presented and developed in Chapter Three.

⁴⁸ See Chapter Five for a review of silence in theological sources.

⁴⁹ Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind*, New York: The Free Press, 1992, p.38. Incidentally, the emotions are closely connected to the sense of hearing, as is elucidated in Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁵⁰ Andrew L. Love, *Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks: Heidegger, Language and Sources of Christian Hope*, PhD thesis submitted to the University of Hull, 2000, p.148. Italics mine. The quote within this quotation is taken from Susan Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture*, Albany: New York State University Press, 1987, p.7.

The omission of auditory religious experience in the primarily male preserve of Western theology has certain resonances. This is a highly divisive area of research but the case must be considered before being dismissed. It is the claims of Joachim-Ernest Berendt that are briefly presented here. He suggests that an eye/male, ear/female tendency pervades Western culture generally and that the fortunes of hearing and listening are in tandem with the rise and fall of patriarchy. He holds that the 'eye is the most expansionist and aggressive, the harshest and most piercing, the most *masculine*, egocentric, and hungry for power.'⁵¹ For Berendt, earliest history was matri-centred. Women were linguistically and vocally superior to men. Berendt maintains that women make better hearers. Their keener responsiveness to ambient sounds was because women 'were more concerned with processing the information heard and converting it into directives.'⁵² To be obeyed, that is listened to keenly, women listened harder, more carefully and precisely, and searched meticulously for the words and the timbre to reflect and convey the fruits of their listening. To the poet, the ear of flesh of every creature in communing with the 'Uncreated' is feminine: 'One song they sang, and it was audible, /Most audible, then when the fleshly ear, /O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain, /Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.'⁵³ This claim could be trenchantly contested; the eye, for example, has the marvellous capacity to unearth and uncover treasures of gentleness and receptivity in its work of creation and perception. Beauty is in the eye *and* the ear of the beholder/listener. However, the argument that this work holds is that the auditory religious experience, for whatever and regardless of reason, is a cardinal one in

⁵¹ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.4. Italics mine.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.150.

⁵³ William Wordsworth, 'The Prelude, Book Second, 415-418', in *William Wordsworth, The Prelude: A Parallel Text*, ed. J.C. Maxwell, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971, p.95/97.

Christianity and has not matured in scholarship or practice. The ear permits human thought about God to sing. In the listening 'ear of the heart', the real thought of God's Word is heard.

Highlighting this omission of the aural sense and its feminine implications in Western theology is not to paint a helpless predicament. It must be acknowledged that theology is now embracing the feminine linguistic expression and voice. Indeed, it could well be argued that feminist hermeneutics, the theory, art and practice of interpretation from a woman's perspective, is contributing to changing the course of theological reflection.⁵⁴ This dissertation does not attempt a critique of gender interpretations and practices but it does argue for the reinstatement of one human, sensory medium to its rightful place in theological speculation.

In short, then, this thesis is not arguing for any exclusive gender bias around the essentially aural revelation of the triune God. Male or female concepts of God, and of hearing, simply reinforce oppression, if not idolatry. God is present for everyone who has ears to hear.

While it is true that some theologians and commentators have acknowledged the importance of listening to and hearing the voice of God, it is argued here, that they have failed to explore this dimension to the full. Most articulation of an *aural* religious experience, scriptural, liturgical or personal, has been lip service. Religious experience, both oral and aural, have for the most part given way to the visual. Like Thomas, we believe because we have seen. This thesis supports the greater blessedness of those who have not seen. It asks questions such as what each person's particular experience of

⁵⁴ See the works of Sandra M. Schneiders, Mary Grey, Marina Warner, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza etc.

hearing the divinity says to that individual; what kind of God is heard in prayer; and what, precisely, is 'the good will'⁵⁵ of the hearer and how can it be nurtured?

There is a reluctance in theology to enter into the vulnerable arena that is experiential and subjective. René Fisichella links the neglect of silence by theologians with a preoccupation with science. Theologians yearn to become scientists and so risk distraction from the work at hand.⁵⁶ One wonders whether the scientific theologian regards silence, and indeed all aspects of listening, as trivial when compared with the sense data of empirical science. Concurring with Fisichella's observation on the impingement of scientific methodology on theologians, Winston L. King finds that the attempt to define religion 'is a natural consequence of the Western speculative, intellectualistic, and scientific disposition.'⁵⁷ He further attributes this to 'the Judeo-Christian climate or, more accurately, the theistic inheritance from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.'⁵⁸

Although it is a contestable claim, perhaps doing theology to date has been more concerned with map-making a route to God than with actually experiencing the contours of that road. Maps are important and helpful in charting directions through the territory. Yet they hardly communicate the lived experience of the terrain; the sensual knowledge which accrues from touching, smelling, tasting, seeing and hearing the reality. This is the reverse of the poetics of experience suggested in *The Dry Salvages* by T.S. Eliot as having the experience but falling short of the meaning.⁵⁹ In short, a diagram of features, although an important initial guide, is experientially unrepresentative of the reality.

⁵⁵ Karl Rahner, *Foundations*, p.26.

⁵⁶ See article on 'silence' by René Fisichella in *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 1001.

⁵⁷ Winston L. King, 'Religion' in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 12, ed. Mircea Eliade, p. 282.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

Reading is in the realm of the cartographer; hearing is the soft, sound-soil of feeling and sensitivity.

Interfaith dialogue

All religions unite in their acknowledgement of the primacy of word and sound vibrations in their varying conceptions of an Absolute Other, according to Hazrat Inayat Khan.⁶⁰

Religions are primarily transmitted orally and aurally. Hindu sacred scriptures, Persian literature, the Qur'an, and the Scriptures of Judaeo-Christianity agree on many levels about sound, the word, the ear, what is spoken and silence. The early biographies of Muhammad, from whose prophecies Islam developed, relate how the angel Gabriel revealed to him, over a period of twenty-two years between 610 and 632 CE, that he was the Messenger of God. The Qur'an came first as sound. Indeed, the word itself is said to be derived from the Arabic verb *quara'a* which means either 'to read' or 'to recite'.⁶¹

On receiving the message, it was clear that Muhammad had to recite and be heard in the name of the Lord.⁶² Hearing and listening in Muslim tradition is responding to heaven and expanding the soul. Khan describes a personal experience of hearing from out of his own spiritual tradition, Sufiism: 'By hearing I do not mean listening, I mean responding: responding to heaven...responding to every influence that helps to unfold the soul.'⁶³

⁵⁹ 'We had the experience but missed the meaning'. *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969, p.184.

⁶⁰ Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, Vol. 2, Geneva: The International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, 1960 (1991) 'On this point all the different religions unite'. (p.54).

⁶¹ See Charles J. Adams, 'Qur'an' in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 12, p. 159. However *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* only refers to 'reading'. See 'Qur'an' in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, p.566.

⁶² See W. Montgomery Watt, 'Muhammad' in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 10, pp. 137-146. Watt makes the point here, however, that it is 'fairly certain that normally Muhammad neither had a vision nor heard voices, but simply 'found the words in his heart.' p.144.

⁶³ Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, Vol. 2, p. 267. Sufiism gives particular primacy to the word as the 'key to mystery of the whole life'. (p.266) That word is from, and of, God.

Before introducing some sonic factors of the *Indian*⁶⁴ tradition, one can summarise that East meets West in the simple phrase: ‘The origin of the whole creation is sound.’⁶⁵

Indian spirituality is the innovator and the summation of attunement to the sound of the Divine. Some commentators claim that Hinduism is spiritually superior. To quote just one, David Tame claims, when it comes to comparing Indian and Western spirituality, that ‘[w]eighed on the scales of devotion, India is the First World nation, and our own might be said to be the land that is backward.’⁶⁶

The mystical concept of the Sanskrit ‘nada’ is basically that the life principle or creative breath of humanity comes from vibrations which can only be *heard* from within. This creative sound is God whose word precedes light. Although outside the scope of this particular study, one has only to refer briefly to an aural spiritual tradition based on the sound of the most sacred of Sanskrit syllables — *om*.⁶⁷ This contraction of a three-letter word — a/u/m — is revered in Hindu tradition for its intrinsic power as sound - oral, aural and silent. It is the supreme sacred sound of God — the sound that opens the gateway to God. To chant on *om* is to become the source and the centre of the universe, which is where the silent one resides. God is the source of all mundane,⁶⁸ terrestrial sound. Musician and composer, Joseph Gelineau makes the same Christian and Hindi connection through sound. ‘The religious significance of the sacrifice of sound is

⁶⁴ Two points are important to explain why this tradition is favoured: for over twenty years, I have been researching/singing/performing Indian music and have learned of and spoken about these brief observations personally with Indian singers there. Secondly, there is a strong musical, stylistic, relationship between the spiritual songs of India and the spiritual songs of Ireland particularly women’s songs from both cultures.

⁶⁵ Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, p.17.

⁶⁶ David Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, Northamptonshire, England: The Aquarian Press, 1984, (1988), p. 184.

⁶⁷ For an excellent overview of music and religion in India, see Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol.10, pp.185-191. It also contains a very comprehensive and informed bibliography and discography.

⁶⁸ ‘Mundane’ from the Latin ‘*mundus*’ meaning ‘earth’.

global...from the syllable “om” which contains within it all the acoustic powers, to the vocal expression of a Kyrie or an Alleluia.’⁶⁹

In the ancient Indian Vedas, which are much earlier scriptures than the Old Testament, there are two Sanskrit words for sound. One, ‘*ahata*’, refers to sounds which can be heard and perceived by everyone through the ear. The second Sanskrit word, ‘*anahata*’, however, cannot be heard indiscriminately but can only, according to Tame, be ‘*experienced*’⁷⁰ by the one who contemplates more deeply on the Divine. The concept of ‘*anahata*’ is akin to the kind of listening out of a Christian perspective that this work promotes; it is an actual ‘*experience*’ which a certain kind of listening to God in prayer permits. Moreover, the word ‘*anahata*’ carries a second meaning; it refers to the most important spiritual centre of the body called the *heart chakra*. It is the *heart chakra* that is most closely aligned with the Divine. The *anahata chakra* is the human realm where the Word of God resounds. The way to God is through a heart-felt experience of word and sound.

In the Hindi tradition, ‘om’ is the human sound that images the Voice of God — a human reflection of that voice. In Indian tradition, as Tame puts it, ‘through the use of his vocal cords...man is thought to be a co-creator with God.’⁷¹ Every religion, every language, has its words of great spiritual and sonic wealth. Sanskrit has the three-lettered word ‘*aum*’, just as Christianity has the three-character words of ‘*God*’ in English, or *Dia* in Irish. These are words of immense sonic grandeur, powerful beyond language in the sounding and in the hearing.

⁶⁹ Joseph Gelineau, ‘The Path of Music’ in *Music and the Experience of God*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1989. p. 137.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.171.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.174.

Indian spirituality is keenly aware of an aural relationship with God. This is bound up with its music tradition — ‘an inspiration that transcends description except as felt experience.’⁷² The *voice*, before any instrument, is the way towards such transcendence. As Menon states, it ‘is as a voice that Indian music is heard and not as a sound’.⁷³ The emotional nature and expression of the voice comes before the sound; the *swara*, which in Sanskrit means ‘the self shining forth’, is ‘always a human utterance, the truest sounding of oneself beyond the actual notes themselves’. Music that is instrumental talks of notes; but it is the *swara*, the work of the voice, which provides free-range, wholesome nourishment for the soul. Thus the two main musical traditions of India, Carnatic and Hindustani share a vast vocabulary, at once cosmic and transcendent. In one context, a thing, rather than a word, has a very specific meaning; wearing a spiritual cloak, the same word is theosonic. For example, *shruti* in purely musical terms means the microtonal intervals between two notes and the Indian scale has twenty-two such intervals or *shrutis*. On the other hand, for the perfect vocal execution of the *shruti*, it cannot, according to Ustad Fariduddin Dagar, ‘exist on paper, however accurately calibrated, for its emotional content is beyond calculation’.⁷⁴

There are many points of comparison between the Judaeo-Christian tradition and Hinduism. Both religious traditions agree on the concept of sound and silence, although Christian theology has been tacit on the matter. As David Tame puts it, ‘one can hardly

⁷² Menon in ‘Introduction’ to *The Penguin Dictionary of Indian Classical Music*, New Delhi, India: Penguin Books, 1995, p. viii.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.vii-xvii.

⁷⁴ This quote from one of the two eminent Dagar brothers from Bombay is cited from Menon, p. x. I had the privilege of having a three-hour personal workshop with one of the brothers in 1984 where he spoke at length on the whole spiritual nature of singing and the power of sound to communicate with God. Then he also made this point.

avoid the conclusion that the OM and the Word of Christianity are one and the same.’⁷⁵

‘Om’ is the synonym of Hindu/Indian race; Jesus Christ, the logos of God, is the synonym of the Christian. Both auditory energies are concerned with the coming into being of Creation and each refers to a sonic Divine Energy, which creates and sustains this universe. Both sonic concepts encapsulate a Trinitarian unity. Although a later tradition, A.M. Esnoul writes that ‘*om* stands for the union of the three gods is the second person of the Hindu triad, Brahmā (the creative force, or /a/), Visnu (the sustaining force, or /u/) and Śiva (the dissolving force, or /m/).’⁷⁶

The two objectives of this work are inherently linked: The graced event of God’s self revelation is, although not totally or for everyone, aural and oral. Since this particular sensory experience has played so minor a part in Christian theology, it is the intention here to highlight this omission and to plead for a fair recovery of aural sensitivity. Such a reinstatement has creative implications for interfaith discourse, gender issues, liturgical trends, biblical studies, personal and silent prayer. More specifically, it would radically alter the methodology and substance of theological discourse.

In short, contemporary Western theology could profitably hear and practice wisdom from the East. The Hindu reveres the divine sound and silence of Brahma. ‘Om’ is the soundless sound. The Christian reveres the revelatory sound and silence of the incarnate Word of God. Jesus Christ is the soundless Word.

⁷⁵ David Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, 1984, Northamptonshire, England: The Aquarian Press, 1988, p. 171.

⁷⁶ A.M. Esnoul, ‘Om’ in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 11, p. 69.

Synopsis of the thesis

Chapter One explores the particular phenomenon of hearing. The event of listening for the sound of God is expressed in a new word: ‘theosony’. This neologism will be defined broadly, etymologically and linguistically. This word, ‘theosony’, brought into being here, has a twofold task in this thesis. It presents the current theological debate, scant as it is, on aural religious experience. The second point here concerns the eclectic scope of the research. The methodology of this work relies more on an initial presentation of diverse seedlings of possibility rather than on one reflection on a mature tree of life. Of its very nature, therefore, the analysis and evaluation of the word is elusive and shifting in its developing epistemology. ‘Theosony’ cannot be exhaustively defined in this study, as it is, by its nature, open-ended. This study opens up many possibilities for future research, interpretation and adaptation in theological discourse.

Chapter Two looks at the physiological and psychological implications of the aural sense. It gradually proceeds to embrace the theological event which listening ‘*in aurem interiorem*’⁷⁷ implies.

If the claims of these opening chapters of the thesis are true — that all listening is essentially God’s self-gift to humanity through which God comes to them and they to God — then it follows that the Word of God in Scripture and tradition, by word, writing and action, is the crucial medium to reveal and manifest this self-gift. The work of Part Two of this thesis, therefore, will be grounded in Scripture. Theosony does not end with

⁷⁷ Augustine repeatedly draws on this metaphor of God’s voice in his inner/interior ear - ‘*voce forti in aurem interiorem*’ — ‘with a strong voice into my interior ear’. See *The Confessions of Augustine*, eds. Gibb and Montgomery, Cambridge: University Press, 1908, p.373. In this chapter of Book 12, chapter 11, Augustine addresses God three times with these exact words.

listening; it is concerned with a particular way of reading and understanding sacred texts as an ongoing auditory event whose central characters are God and human beings. It is the sonic *process* involved in the transmission of the content to the subject that is under microscopic surveillance here.

Chapter Three focuses on the Bible from three different, yet related, positions: a brief overview of biblical criticism; the oral and aural dimension in Scripture's genesis before it eventually became the fixed, permanent word; finally, the critical conversion, which can take place in the conversation between Scripture and the listener/reader. Mark Patrick Hederman defines the reading experience: 'The important books in life are not the ones which we read: they are the ones which read us.'⁷⁸

Chapter Four examines certain biblical moments where revelation is born of sound. It refers to three very different, yet aurally important, aspects of the Fourth Gospel: the concept of logos; Mary Magdalen's aural theophany⁷⁹ (Jn. 20:11-17); and the definition by Jesus, the living Word, of how to listen to the triune God (Jn. 3:8). The effect of such moments on the hearer/reader is the essential interest. So many scholars have glossed over the aural/oral experience as is apparent from a selected consultation of commentaries and sources.

Chapter Five turns to the reality of silence. This essential medium of thought is in the realm of hearing and listening to language. All speech and sounds are born of silence. There is a pre-speech, pre-sonic state from which heard speech and sound emerge. Silence is the womb of listening and hearing; silence is also the midwife assisting at the

⁷⁸ Mark Patrick Hederman, *Tarot: Talisman or Taboo?* Dublin: Currach Press, 2003, cover note.

⁷⁹ 'Theophany' is simply, according to Benedictine Byzantine theologian, Gregory Collins, a 'manifestation of God'. See *The Glenstal Book of Icons: Praying with the Glenstal Icons*, Dublin: Columba Press, 2003, p. 61 and 62.

birth of sound. I address how Scripture — the Word of God — can be understood as the ‘Silence’ of God.

Influenced by the classic definitions of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto and William James, Chapter Six makes a case for theosony as a category of religious experience. A three-fold categorisation of aural/oral, theosonic biblical moments is suggested: *cosmic* theosony includes sounds of God in and through the earth — concrete, definable sounds. In terms of speech, cosmic theosony is a pre-language, non-conceptual stage; *kerygmatic* theosony carries a direct message to the listener, who is listening *to* God. In terms of theological speech, kerygmatic theosony is the praying dialect, heard and listened for; *silent* theosony is the ear which hears the hidden mysterious Sound and Silence, Voice and Word of God by patient, obedient listening *for* God. In linguistic expression, it is a post-language phase when words, speech and language are abandoned in the presence of God’s self-disclosure.

Finally, Chapter Seven will argue for the restoration of theosony — God’s self-revelation through the human ear — as one, although not the only, manner of conversing with God, by outlining an oral and aural ‘approach-road’⁸⁰ to God. In effect, conversing with this God of Sound, the *Vox Fortis in aurem interiorem* of Augustine, is sensational on two levels: firstly, it springs from the physical senses, *albeit* one sense, the aural sense; secondly, it produces in and through the hearing a startling impression.

[Motivating influences and contribution

⁸⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar names seven general approach-roads to God with appropriate NT citations: childlikeness, simplicity, peace, prayer, joy, thanksgiving and insight. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The*

Five factors influenced the work of this dissertation. Firstly, I want to contribute to theological reflection on Christian revelation, religious experience, silence, feminist theology and biblical studies by probing the neglected oral/aural nature of God's revelation of the eternal plan to unite all in Christ. Secondly, having searched in vain for an articulation of my own personal aural/oral experience and conversational need of God in theology, I decided to embark on my own *epistemology*⁸¹ of the specifically aural religious experience. I feel that present conventional theology has fallen short of thoroughly addressing this fundamental activity of hearing. Thirdly, I have been persuaded, both through research and personal experience, that Christianity, a religion of the Word, is originally a religion of mouth-to-ear. The argument that occurs again and again here is that **because Christianity is so deeply rooted in the aural, this very listening and response is powerful, moving and critically important in God's self-disclosure to humanity.** Fourthly, my Master's thesis was in musicology; the subject matter being the structure and analysis of traditional religious song in Irish.⁸² In the contextualisation of this tradition, I was primarily struck by the integral auditory nature inherent not only in the song tradition of Ireland but also in the spirituality of the people. Therefore what was a peripheral theme in that work led me to believe in the truth of a universal theological argument wider than solely musicological. Finally, I believe that keener awareness and obedience to a certain kind of listening is crucial in the current Western crisis in Christian belief and understanding; a crisis which, as already suggested, has much to do with the

Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Vol.VII, trans. Brian McNeil, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989, p. 267.

⁸¹ 'Understanding' is a key concept in this thesis. 'Listen therefore...and understand' (W. of S. 6:1). To understand according to the dictionary is 'to learn or hear'. Another definition of understanding is to 'be expert with or at by practice'. Therefore, any sensitive, intimate, responsive relationship with God is in the realm of listening and hearing; it is also a relationship wherein 'practise makes perfect'.

lack of the presence of a feminine approach in doing theology. This work intends to flesh out, through one human sense, the wider, more personal picture of prayer, which Mark Patrick Hederman sees as ‘being attuned to the tempo, the texture and the idiom of God’s way of relating to us.’⁸³ The listening adventure with God is characterised by a close and warm relationship, which is deeply personal and even secret.

In alternative auditory terms, Andrew L. Love describes the parallel philosophical notion ‘that the deepest kind of understanding comes from placing oneself within the full being of an object and allowing it to speak.’⁸⁴ In theological terminology, Karl Rahner, defined theology thus: ‘In its origin, it [theology] is always the self-illuminating hearing of the revelation of God himself, which proceeds from God’s free decree...the totality of divine speech...thus already heard, and grasped in an original unity of *auditus* and *intellectus*, can and should in turn be made by man the object of his enquiring, systematising thought.’⁸⁵ The motivating force behind this dissertation is not to ostracise more verbalised theology but, like Rahner, the motivation is towards contextualising much contemporary theology afresh. Within the framework of theology, the sense of hearing must be established again to its former position.

It would be naïve and erroneous to claim that no plausible, authentic auditory speculation from Western Christian theologians appears occasionally in their scholarship.

⁸² Nóirín Ní Riain, *The Nature and Classification of Traditional Religious Song in Irish*, MA thesis submitted to University College, Cork, 1980.

⁸³ Mark Patrick Hederman, ‘Personal Prayer’ in *The Furrow*, Vol. 52, No.3, March 2001, p. 131.

⁸⁴ Andrew L. Love, *Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks: Heidegger, Language and Sources of Christian Hope*, PhD thesis submitted to the University of Hull, 2000, p.147.

⁸⁵ Karl Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, trans. Ronald Walls, London: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1969, p. 8. Two points must be acknowledged here: firstly, that this is a translation and as such is very much susceptible to the language bias of the translator; secondly, the translation dates back to Rahner’s original text first published in 1941. Nonetheless, it is a strong example of the linguistic style of much theology with heavily exclusive language

However, it is largely true that such references remain unexplored. In other words, what is the *actual* experience of hearing the revelation of God?

The work of this dissertation arises out of an *exclusively sensory human source* and is not rooted in the theological thought of any particular person or school. In the case of most doctoral theses, the genesis and anchor of such research often revolves around one particular theory or set of theories, which provide a definite, concrete reference point to be revisited during the course of the work. There was no such reference point here. To label this thesis *eclectic*, therefore, that is selecting from various styles, ideas and methods, is appropriate. As a result, however, a point already made earlier, the broad canvas of the work leaves many details unfinished, to be reworked, revisited and completed satisfactorily.

This thesis does not aspire to prove anything conclusively. The work is not concerned with new facts but rather with new perspectives on an aural/oral communication with God. It aims to balance academic rigour with suggestive nuance. The reading will hopefully be, as it was for the writer, more of an *evocation*. The word itself has sonic implications, meaning from the Latin, ‘e-vocare’, ‘to call in’, ‘to entice’, ‘to call out’ and it is the stem of the Latin ‘vox’ which means ‘voice’.⁸⁶ The human race is called to be evocators of God. An evocator is one ‘who evokes, esp., one who calls up spirits’.⁸⁷ As we embark on this literary/aural/oral/ silent journey, metaphorical in nature, let the metaphor say it in shorthand: ‘The ear loves God’. Before summarising this chapter, there is one other point to be made. On a broader note, theology and the senses, generally, are in sunder. In Western theological scholarship, there is no fundamental

⁸⁶ See Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, pp. 197 and 689.

⁸⁷ *The New American Dictionary*, p. 417.

theology of the senses. A retrieval of the importance of the theological implications of the sense of hearing will automatically pave the way towards a theology of *all* five senses.

Summary

The compelling motivation of this thesis is ultimately the search for a listening knowledge of God. Although the auditory is not an exclusive channel of God's grace, this dissertation argues that it is a central symbol and privileged means of encounter. The work examines the nature and significance of the word of God that is *listened for* by humanity. 'The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward' (Is. 50:4-9). How does sacred listening act upon the living soul? How can the soul interpret the act in response to the living word of God?

Berendt talks the same language in a non-theological context. 'The World is sound.'⁸⁸ To be in the world is to participate in the conversation⁸⁹ with that sound. To put it another way, an actual sound is unrealised until it engages with the auditory sense. To realise and to birth sound means, for most people who are blessed with hearing, to hear it. To listen is to take in and entertain sound. The power of meaning is in the actual sound. In every sound, but particularly the sacred sound, the first task is to hear the original murmuring. The ear never rests even in sleep; it is always receiving welcome and unwelcome sounds. There is so much sound in the world that it is reasonable to propose

⁸⁸ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.3.

⁸⁹ The notion of conversation is integral to the concept of prayer carried in this work. It will appear in a different context in Chapter Five where the conversation partners become reader and text. I am indebted to David Tracy's careful, eloquent writing, on this notion or metaphor of conversation. See *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the culture of Pluralism*, New York: Crossroad, 1981. His primary focus is on the conversational reader/classic relationship (see chs. 3 and 4 particularly). He also calls for authentic conversation between theologians and in interfaith dialogue (see pp.446-455). Therefore his primary focal point is on conversation at a *human* level; conversation is the analogy of communication between two human beings that tells me who you actually are, what is meaningful in your life and what ensues from such dialogue. (pp.454/455). This book led to the following theological issues. What *exactly* is

that the aural sense is paramount. The written silent word keeps physical things at a distance. What arrives through the ear, penetrates to the core. To enounce the essence of this core, to express verbally the penetrating experience of God's presence to humanity is the work of this dissertation.

Fiumara suggests that this urge to cloak *philosophical* experience in word is particularly crucial at this time and it is true in theological speculation also. 'Human beings are ever more trying to put into words whatever they believe is hidden or absent in their culture [and religion]. At the same time they are attempting, as never before, to give voice to that which is inexpressible...in their inner world.'⁹⁰

Present-day Christians are no longer content with what Fiumara calls in philosophy, a 'dumb resignation...when...unable to express themselves effectively they feel swindled and cheated out of something that is rightfully theirs.'⁹¹ 'Or is it just a matter of being unable to remember or recall just how precisely to listen. Humankind must trust that God will tell of new things now as fulfilment of the divine auditory promise heard by the prophets; 'and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them (Is. 42:9). The Jewish poet, Nelly Sachs, believed in this long-forgotten listening process. Inspired by this verse from Isaiah, which the prophet repeats twice more to consolidate the message of trust (Is. 48: 3,6), she penned this poem shortly before her death in 1970. Here is an extract⁹²:

How long have we forgotten how to listen!

the experience of being in conversation with God? Is it true that we can have an aural relationship with the God who gifted us with this graced sense? And how can we tune into God's wavelength?

⁹⁰ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.30.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.30/31.

⁹²The entire poem is translated by Ruth and Matthew Mead and published in *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women*, ed. Jane Hirshfield, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, (1994), 1995, pp.217/218.

He planted us once to listen...
Press, oh press...
The listening ear to the earth,
And you will hear, through your sleep
You will hear,
How in death
Life begins.

Divinely attuned sounds have a transcendence about them which cannot be planned or predicted. Iris Murdoch articulates this experience philosophically, although it also makes perfect sense theologically. Such a contemplation either of the Good or God is 'an attempt to look right away from self towards a distant transcendent perfection, a source of uncontaminated energy, a source of *new* and quite undreamt-of virtue.'⁹³ Such transcendent wholeness is an act of imagining new possibilities not just by looking right beyond one's own horizon but by an imagination which hears sounds above and below the threshold of the ear. Each divinely created and gifted ear has its own threshold of soundscape; a threshold attuned to cosmic, non-human sound, to the communicative sounds of human speech, language and human sounds and to an aural sensibility that reaches beyond both the human and non-human. This is where a theology of listening is sourced.

This thesis reflects on the graced human word that surely resounds in the hearing and listening of the graced Word of God. Instead of asking 'what is heard?' when God speaks to human beings, the important question is 'who is heard?' in the process. The

grace is not just in receiving but in access to the new relationship with God. Through the ear God addresses humankind. Through the human ear, the risen Christ surprisingly reveals himself to Thomas first through the voice, the sense of touch followed in sensual affirmation of faith. Without that divine/incarnate verbal invitation, Thomas would still be doubting. Karl Rahner provides an alternative synopsis of the subject matter, which serves well to introduce the work of the next chapter which is an epistemology of the term ‘theosony’:

‘In every word, the gracious incarnation of God’s own abiding Word and so of God himself can take place, and all true hearers of the word are really listening to the inmost depths of every word, to know if it becomes suddenly the word of eternal love by the very fact that it expresses man and his world. If one is to grow ever more profoundly Christian, one must never cease to practise listening for this incarnational possibility in the human word.’⁹⁴]

EVERYTHING ABOVE [AND] not used 5·09.09

Chapter One: ‘Theosony’ and Parameters

*‘[T]here are values and energies in the human person – and **per-sonare** means, precisely, a*

⁹³ Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of the Good*, London: Routledge, 1970, p. 101.

⁹⁴ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966, p.362.

“sounding” a “saying through” – which transcend death.’⁹⁵

‘So faith comes from hearing’ (Rom. 10:17).

The previous chapter introduced the all-inclusive theme of the thesis, which is to understand the connections between the human auditory sense and God’s self-communication. In the exploration and research involved around the vast theme, it gradually emerged that it was necessary to invent a new word which would subsume the full tenor or course of meaning which runs through the aural sense and God’s self-revelation. In short, the word ‘theosony’ refers to any number of factors that are implicated in an aural relationship with God: for instance, listening, hearing,⁹⁶ speaking, sonic language, memorization, reading aloud and silence. The ‘Theo’ in theosony reflects the fact that all graced experiences, (inclusive of the human listening experience) can be interpreted by a Christian sensibility. In other words, this is only the application to a classification of human listening of the traditional, theological principle of grace building on nature. Therefore, the initial work of this chapter will be to introduce and situate the new word – ‘theosony’. The concept of the word, structurally, etymologically and theologically, will be outlined in **1.1**. Section **1.2** introduces the area of Christian theology where theosony most comfortably fits. **1.3** discusses the Christian perspective.

⁹⁵ George Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.226.

²The distinction and degrees of both hearing and listening are defined in Chapter Two.

1.4 introduces the crisis, the critical point that accompanies God's auditory self-disclosure. 1.5 summarises.

Introduction to the phenomenon of 'Theosony'

Theosony describes the *phenomenon* of a listening theology. On the one hand, it attempts to define the fact, occurrences and circumstances in which theosonic moments emerge; on the other, it refers to the sacred aural event as it appears and is constructed by the human experience *per se* as distinguished from the *noumenon*, the objective listening itself.

The lacuna, already discussed in the previous chapter, in theological discourse around the inclusion of the auditory sense, results from the fact that all aspects of the aural, for example, listening, speaking, conversation, clairaudience and silence are underdeveloped and underexplored. For instance, the Christian is very aware that no one has ever seen God; the same theological emphasis is not as strong in the aural. Yet the fact is that from Christianity's earliest sources, God has been heard. Abraham, 'the common patriarch of the three 'Abrahamic religions'⁹⁷ was to be the first listener to the divine voice. Christ did not see God; but he clearly heard God's message of the kingdom. In short, the word of God will never be tacit or fossilised. In the words of von Balthasar, '[w]hat can escape being destroyed? Nothing – except, for a christian, the word of God as set down by him.'⁹⁸

Within the various aspects of the aural, there are different degrees or kinds to be firstly distinguished and then, to be adapted to the sound of God's self-communication.

⁹⁷ These are the Jewish, Muslim and Christian religions. See P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., 'Abraham' in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 8/9.

⁹⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation: Essays in Theology* Vol.1, p.166/167.

For example, there are four degrees of listening, reflected by four states of speech expression.

- ◆ There is a pre-conceptual listening which is antecedent to all cosmic sound and which is *grace*. God's act of self-giving is never detached from the human being, Jesus Christ, who heard, spoke and listened. Therefore, these human acts of hearing, speaking, and listening can never exist impersonally for the believing Christian. Divine grace, like the act of hearing, conversation, silence is not quantitative or qualitative but present and dynamic and always the symbol of God's self-disclosure.
- ◆ There is the *hearing* of the mundane, quotidian, cosmic ambient sounds. These are sounds, which are not distinctively human. In speech, this is a *pre-speech* stage of being.
- ◆ *Listening* is the interiorisation of the sound from the inner ear to the brain, understanding and interpreting the *message* of the sound. Listening becomes a conscious act where one is awoken to one's own existence and cognition and one's own communicative powers through human sounds that are vocal and communicational. In linguistic terms, this is the moment when conceptual speech is born; the second state when one is aware of the message of one's place in the world of sound, the separateness of outer and inner, intuitive sound listening. This is *speech* itself, the essence of which is to capture the speaking being's sensitivity.
- ◆ Finally, there is the listening of transformation, which is obediently, and diligently engrossing oneself in the act of hearing. This is a *silent* listening

hinted at by the popular saying of being ‘all ears’. Hearing differently is through closed eyes; the only communication is through being ‘all ears’. It is an epistemology of teaching oneself to *hear* oneself listen. In speech imagery, this is *post*-speech and purely aural. This is a listening in solitude that is post-linguistic.

When it comes to *sacred* listening and speech modes, this thesis⁹⁹ suggests *cosmic* theosony, *kerygmatic* theosony and *silent* theosony on the basis of a reading of Scriptural theosonic moments.¹⁰⁰ The prescriptive which gives directions or injunctions is a given and exists prior, above and beyond. Then, there are degrees of sound levels, pitch levels, timbre qualities, rhythmic components also. In short, this one word ‘theosony’ summons up *all* aspects of the aural, conceivable and inconceivable, in knowing and thinking about God.

1.1 Defining the word ‘theosony’

‘Theosony’ is a fusion of two words from Greek and ecclesiastical Latin.¹⁰¹ It is no more peculiar than the word ‘television’. The Greek word for God is abbreviated to ‘Theo...’,¹⁰²

⁹⁹ I am indebted to Andrew L. Love who, on reflection on the overall theme of this dissertation, made several helpful and creative observations and introduced me to many philosophical resonances and linguistic terminology.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter Six.

¹⁰¹ In the initial research around this word, the term ‘theophony’ from the Greek ‘Theo...’ and also the Greek word ‘phone’ was seriously explored. However, ‘phonetics’ is defined as pertaining to vocal sounds only and this thesis seeks to explore the widest possible range of sounds and not just those sounds which are vocal, spoken, conceptual speech. The contemporary composer John Tavener uses ‘theophony’ to describe one of his operatic works. ‘Theosony’, therefore, adequately refers to and attempts to define God’s self-disclosure as it manifests itself through all sonic media.

⁸ See ‘Theology’ in *The Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. It refers to θεο- as ‘a crude form of θεος. p. 635.

‘*Sonans*’ is the present participle of the Latin verb ‘sonare’ meaning ‘to sound’. The ‘present’ tense of verbs describes the action or event occurring at the time of speaking or when the speaker does not wish to make any specific reference to time. The present participle links with the time on hand, it does not refer to past or future but to what is contemporaneous. ‘Standing, they prayed’ links the participle to the time of the verb. Listening is being in existence at the time when the sound or word is spoken. The notion of being on the alert at the moment of speaking describes an omnipresent feature of our lives. This is the sense of hearing at its most precise. ‘I am all ears’ means so much more than ‘I am listening’ or ‘I hear you’. Something critically important is about to be heard and its meaning must not go unnoticed. A key sentence that expresses the soul of our being is about to be spoken. We must be constantly at hand, and in the particular moment, to really listen. The eye can revisit its object endlessly; it can look again and again; the ear generally gets one chance to hear. Therefore, the ear has to be much more industrious and active in this mortal coil. The act of conversation, human and divine, is a temporal act of the moment. It is always only now and aural. It is always the sum total of the silent, the visual, the physical and the aural. Yet it is the only real connection between the past and the present; with eyes closed, ears attuned, we say, ‘I’m just trying to think back...’

The word ‘theosony’ is a portmanteau word: one that combines and dovetails two other words. ‘Portmanteau’ has two meanings, one pragmatic and tangible, as a noun, the other, qualifying and adjectival.¹⁰³ Originally, a ‘portmanteau’ was a large travelling bag designed for riding on horseback. It was hinged at the back so as to open out into two

¹⁰³ See ‘portmanteau’ in *The New Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus*, p. 769 for these two different meanings of the word.

compartments. The second meaning, as a modifier, an adjective, it qualifies or limits a word in the same syntactical construction. For example, ‘Christ is the portmanteau figure of all the virtues’ implies a figure ‘embodying several uses or qualities’.¹⁰⁴

The concept of ‘theosony’ also operates as both noun and adjective: the ear, the sense of hearing, is the noun; insofar as theosony imputes a spiritual characteristic or component to the human aural sense, it is a modifier or adjective. Linguistically speaking, the large indefinite number of meanings around God’s self-disclosure which is aural can not be adequately conveyed through the use of one word only and is more, although never completely, comprehensively understood through the use of two. What cannot be conveyed meaningfully in one word drives us to say it in two,¹⁰⁵ yet under the same cloak or within the one word-bag. A portmanteau word is a ‘*cut and paste*’ strategy until a more accurate description is found. The ‘portmanteau word’- theosony – is a *sine qua non* in reinstating the aural in its rightful place in theological discourse. The word is absolutely necessary to articulating a universal, *auditory* religious experience of God’s self-communication. Finally theosony is divine *Esperanto* – a concise, allusive, one-for-all word for prayer as the most intimate human expression of the constant conversation between the triune God and humanity. *Esperanto* is an auxiliary language ‘intended as a simple second language for all mankind, so each of us may have it within his power to speak to, and to understand, any of his fellow men throughout the world.’¹⁰⁶ Theosony is the simple language of the praying ear, all about the power to speak to and to understand

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 769.

¹⁰⁵ This linguistic concept of one idea expressed by two words is closely akin, yet different from the linguistic figure of speech called hendiadys. From the three Greek words, *hen, dia, dyoin*, meaning *one by means of two*, hendiadys is where one complex idea is expressed by two words with a copulative conjunction. For example, ‘to pray with ears and love’ instead of ‘with loving ears’.

God. It is an aural language that speaks of sacred and transcendent *sounds* that are audible and therefore accessible to all human beings in their historical, concrete, existence. Theosony is temporal in every sense of the word; it is concerned with the present life of humanity in its relationship with the triune God, and it is a worldly expression of a timely, rhythmic ‘meek stirring of love’.¹⁰⁷

1.2 Theological framework and interdisciplinary nature

The discipline of fundamental theology is the home of theosony. Rahner defines fundamental theology as ‘the scientific substantiation of the fact of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.’¹⁰⁸ Quite simply, fundamental theology interprets religious belief as the quest for ultimate *meaning*, which is satisfied in divine revelation. It asks such questions as Karl Rahner posed; ‘[h]ow can man hear the word of God? What is the word of God that man hears? Where does man receive the word of God?’¹⁰⁹ In musicology, a fundamental note or tone refers to the root of a chord. Likewise, fundamental theology addresses the root of Christian apologetics; it dialogues with and challenges all contemporary ideologies and disciplines. Gerald O’Collins believes that ‘[e]ven more

¹⁰⁶ John Cresswell/John Hartley, *Teach Yourself Esperanto*, London: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1968, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ *The Cloud of Unknowing and other treatises*, ed. Justin McCann, London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1947, p.5.

¹⁰⁸ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.17.

¹⁰⁹ P.J. Cahill, ‘Fundamental Theology’ in *New Catholic Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 6, 2003 ed., p. 27. I include this citation because of its aural implications. Such male-centred vocabulary here is blatantly obvious and strange in the context of contemporary theological writings. Perhaps the author, consciously or unconsciously, presumes on the reader to take into account that the term ‘man’ originally included ‘woman’ as well.

than other sectors of theology, fundamental theology stands at the frontier in dialogue with a variety of other academic disciplines and modern movements.’¹¹⁰

This thesis embraces the basic tenets of fundamental theology in *four* separate, yet inter-related areas: It critically reflects on –

- ◆ divine self-revelation
- ◆ the religious experience of human *hearers* of the Word of that revelation
- ◆ biblical understanding and interpretation
- ◆ Interdisciplinary and faith dialogue.¹¹¹

The *revelation* of God is the basis of all Christian thinking. Christianity is a religion of revelation. ‘[F]undamental theology itself demonstrates the possibility of a revelation on the part of God.’¹¹² It is a revelation that is ever old, ever new, in constant obedient flow and operation.

Through the *ear*, although not exclusively, revelation from God can freely enter and be completed. One important way of being with God is through sound; the auditory is a direct invitation out of oneself towards the divine. Sensory perception of God’s self-communication is vital for humanity and no one sense exists or operates in isolation in the work of this divine communication. However this thesis intends to prove that the vital role which the functions of the ear, including silence, can play in theology can indeed enhance all other senses and add to their efficiency. Lafont summarises ‘[t]he primordial silence of God liberates speech and calls forth the response, first of all in God himself,

¹¹⁰ Gerald O’ Collins, ‘Fundamental theology’ in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, eds. A. Richardson/J. Bowden, p.224.

¹¹¹ The awareness of the sense of hearing in other disciplines was discussed in the previous Introductory Chapter.

¹¹² Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.18.

and then in every human being and every community on earth.’¹¹³ Hans Urs von Balthasar believes that it is in the very scope of human speech that the echoes of the divine word are heard: ‘Human speech...contains in itself the whole of nature and the whole moral life, the entire history of man; and here its scope extends to the eternal word of the father.’¹¹⁴ An aural revelation is God’s sound-revelation. The ear is already the self-gift and revelation of God. Like the whole of creation, the ear was named and created by God. Isaiah, ‘the “greatest listener” among the Bible’s great men’¹¹⁵, strains to hear the invitation to go to God; ‘Incline your ear, and come to me’ (Is. 55:3).

Fundamental theology scrutinises the *hearer, the responder* to the divine mystery. How must the human listener listen and respond to the intimate, inner sound of God’s own promise? How can a sound that is not made by humanity be heard by human beings of this historical world? Answers to these questions are to be found in the response of fundamental theologians whose task it is ‘to prove man’s basic reference to his history as the sole realm wherein he can come to his true nature.’¹¹⁶ Such a response begins with ‘the *good will*’ of the hearer.¹¹⁷ But the rejoin is much more than the happy accident of good will. This good will is the initiation of a longing for the unconditional love that the divine self-gift has already offered through the incarnate Word of Jesus Christ. Rahner regrets that this ‘metaphysical anthropology of man as the one who *listens* in his *history*

¹¹³ G. Lafont, ‘Language’ in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 597.

¹¹⁴ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation: Essays in theology I*, trans. Littledale/Dru, New York: Herder and Herder, 1964, p. 118.

¹¹⁵ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.24.

¹¹⁶ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.22.

¹¹⁷ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 26.

for a possible revelation from God' is 'usually so sadly neglected'.¹¹⁸ This work challenges such neglect and highlights its devastating effects.

To summarise therefore, the revelation of God is the primary concern of the fundamental theologian. In the words of Heinrich Fries, fundamental theology 'may be described as a transcendental theology, inasmuch as it considers the nature and event of revelation as such, prior to all special theology or branches of theology.'¹¹⁹

1.3 Christian parameters

Christianity, according to David Tracy, 'does not live by an idea, a principal or an axiom but by an event and a person – the event of Jesus Christ occurring now and grounded in none other than Jesus of Nazareth'.¹²⁰ For the Christian, the world is contingent, that is, pointing outside itself to God for existence. The Christian reverently bows before God in obedience and patience to discern God's creative will for humanity; in a divine word of beauty and love spoken by God, the world and all within it can remain in that love and become more perfectly alive and human. 'The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord' (Ps. 33:5b). In the words of von Balthasar: 'A human being means one to whom God has spoken in the word, one who is so made as to be able to hear and respond to that word.'¹²¹ Humanity is destined to find its perfection in the revelation and grace of the eternal word.

Christian doctrine of creation holds 'that we are unities of spirit and matter inhabiting a physical word with which we are intimately bound up...and that part of what

¹¹⁸ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p. 22. Italics added to 'listens'.

¹¹⁹ Heinrich Fries, 'Fundamental Theology' in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 2, p.368.

¹²⁰ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the culture of Pluralism*, New York: Crossroad, 1981p.427.

¹²¹ von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation*, p.25.

it means to be human is to interact thoroughly with this non-human reality.’¹²² This being in the material world is, it is argued here, most powerfully manifested through the graced sense of hearing. Thus a Christian theology of hearing is crucial in this aural revelation between God and humanity. This graced gift, including the miracle which is hearing, is the very sound of ‘the river of your delights...the fountain of life’ (Ps. 36:8b/9a).

Through the sense of the aural and oral which is simply the loving gift of the triune God, every being can develop as a free person. The self-development promised through being *heard* by God is the message of Christianity. As the contemporary Italian philosopher, Gemma Fiumara suggests: ‘it is possible that evolving humans tend to speak out at their best because they are listened to – and not vice versa.’¹²³ It is a salubrious thing to simply listen. Jesus spoke at his best because he was being heard. For two full days, ‘the Savior of the World’ (Jn.4: 42) spoke out to the Samaritans at Sychar. They listened intently and having heard for themselves, they believed and lived (Jn. 4: 39-42).

The oral and aural are two juxtaposed elements in the tradition, the process of handing on Christian belief. Tradition is a living process, which is operative in the living faith of all believers, pastoral and faithful people alike. Hermann J. Pottmeyer underlines the auditory factor in tradition: ‘Active tradition presupposes *listening* to the word of God and appropriating the previous religious tradition of the church, implying also a metanoia in thought and action.’¹²⁴

The revelation that is inaugurated by the Son and Word of God is a continuity between the old and new covenants. The primeval establishing connection with the world

¹²² Jeremy Begbie, ‘The Gospel, the arts and our culture’, in *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hugh Montefiore, London: Mowbray, 1992, p.70.

¹²³ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.187.

¹²⁴ Hermann J. Pottmeyer, ‘Tradition’ in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 1125. Italics mine.

is through the ear, from Abraham, through Jesus Christ to humanity. Through the grandeur of the Word becoming flesh, humanity can through him, obediently listening to that Word, respond to the will of God. The Word of God is the continuity in history between the two covenants. God spoke, God has spoken and God speaks. The Word of God is the alpha and the omega. Humanity is enlightened and placed at its origin of being when 'in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son' (Heb. 1:1). 'For he sent his Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all men...to tell them about the inner life of God' (D.V. 1:4).¹²⁵ For the Christian, this word-language must make the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth its primary work because 'he whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure' (Jn. 3:34).

Paul Ricoeur states emphatically that 'there is something specific in the Hebraic and Christian traditions that gives a kind of privilege to the word.'¹²⁶ Furthermore, there is something specific in both traditions that honours listening and this takes its origin in the Hebrew imperative word *šema*, and what it stands for. The voice of God was the primary organ of revelation for the Israelites; the ear of the people of Israel is privileged.

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone'¹²⁷ is referred to in Jewish tradition as the '*šema*'. This is a Hebrew word meaning 'hear' and although it refers to six verses (4-9), it takes its name from the first word 'hear'. The emphasis is clearly aural from the beginning. This is the central Jewish declaration of faith in one God and one God alone – a declaration that must be heard throughout the land. The *šema* is to be learned off and kept in the heart (Deut. 6:6); it is to be recited to children and

¹²⁵ 'Dei Verbum, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation', in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, OP, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975, p.751.

¹²⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, p.71.

talked about without ceasing, at home and away (Deut. 6:7). Peter Knobel emphasises the orality or proclamatory, rather than the prayerful, nature of the *šema*.¹²⁸ Proclaiming one's faith in the one true Lord is effective primarily as something vocal. 'The *recitation* of the *šema*,' Knobel writes, is considered an obligation prescribed by the Bible itself on the basis of the verse: 'and you shall speak of them...when you lie down and when you rise up' (Dt. 6.7).'¹²⁹ In summary, of the auditory essence in Deutoronomy, Derrit states: 'Deutoronomy...is not concerned with esoteric meanings, but combines the ideas of (i) functioning ears and (ii) a resolution to obey.'¹³⁰

Christianity holds and trusts that human creativity is meaningful because of the incarnation, the coming of God to humanity through Jesus Christ. Because of the presence of Jesus Christ, the Word of God now makes complete sense. The letter to the Hebrews sums up the role of the effective, dynamic, active word to be listened to. Harking back to the invitatory Psalm 95, the unknown author, quoting the Holy Spirit, first issues the same warning three times about the act of listening – an act which unites Old and New Testaments. 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts' (Heb. 3:7,8). To harden one's heart is not to listen; to shut out the voice of God is to sin. Secondly, the word of God is dangerous; it is 'living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides world from spirit' (Heb. 4:12). Thirdly, to live with

¹²⁷ Italics mine.

¹²⁸ Peter Knobel, 'Shema' in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, p. 630. On the other hand, Joseph Blenkinsopp in his commentary on this passage in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* is very clear that this is a 'great Jewish prayer.' See p. 107.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 630. Italics mine.

¹³⁰ Professor J. Duncan M. Derrett, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Mark 4:9 and parallels), *The Downside Review*, no.417, October 2001, p.261.

the voice of God resounding in ones ears is to ‘enter God’s rest...so that no one may fall through such *disobedience* as theirs’ (Heb. 4:10,11).¹³¹

In a Christian context, the fundamental question here is: How can one lucidly differentiate God hearing humanity, on the one hand, and humanity hearing God, on the other? Karl Rahner addresses this problem pragmatically, providing a basic direction that this thesis follows. In conversational prayer, God replies. In the actual experience of the praying person ‘what God primarily says to us is ourselves in our decreed freedom, in our decree-defying future, in the facticity (that can never be totally analyzed and never functionally rationalized) of our past and present.’¹³² Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, created beings participate in God’s self-communication through the divine word, which they too can participate in through God’s address in Christ. This God-talk is beyond interhuman conversation – it is a gifted experience of God’s salvific universal will and covenant of love.

The reception of the risen Lord was precisely and uniquely through the sense of hearing for the first witness, Mary of Magdala. Her specifically aural conversion is the subject of Chapter Four. Everything comes alive for her at the sound of her name. Although this work singles out the sense of hearing, the work of all the senses - the physical faculties by which humanity perceives the external world - are also faculties by which the resurrection of Jesus is received. As the seventeenth century priest, mystic and physician, Angelus Silesius puts it: ‘The senses dwell in spirit as one sense and one use; Who sees God savors Him, feels, smells and hears Him too.’¹³³

¹³¹ Italics mine.

¹³² Karl Rahner, *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality*, eds. Lehmann/Raffelt, London: SCM Press 1983, p. 80.

¹³³ Angelus Silesius: *The Cherubic Wanderer*, trans. Maria Shradly, New York: Paulist Press, 1986, p.125.

St. Paul constantly reminds the first Christians that they are ‘the body of Christ’ (1 Cor. 12:27), the ‘image of God’ (2 Cor. 4:4) and the ‘image of the heavenly man’ (1 Cor. 15:49; cf. Rom. 8:29). Putting on the body of Christ which is the task of every Christian means imaginatively attending to and fine-tuning all sensory faculties of which the auditory sense is one.

In summary, Jesus of Nazareth is that persevering, unmistakable Word of God – a word to be listened to, spoken of and spoken to within ear-shot of God, the source of that Word. ‘[I]t is this speech that God has chosen as his means of revelation,’ says von Balthasar.¹³⁴ WRONG FOOTNOTE

1.3.1 Theosony as grace

The Christian doctrine of grace is the story of the divine Logos that becomes alive in our world: living, breathing, moving, speaking and listening. ‘Listen, so that you may live’ (Is. 55:3). ‘This is my beloved son, listen to him’. The human sense which perceives sound is a freely given gift from God before ever it functions. The sensation created in the ear when certain vibrations are caused in the surrounding air is the graced gift of God. Here it is argued that God’s self-communication to the human person, which is the essence of the Christian interpretation of grace, is primarily and primevally perceived through the aural sense. Therefore, hearing is an important grace of God that prepares the inner ear for the Word of God. The sense of hearing is an act of God’s self-love, enabling humanity to listen and hear in such a way as to mould one’s moral and religious decisions. For Karl Rahner, such divine grace is ‘always the free action of divine love

40 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Hearers of the Word*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1969, p. 107.

41 Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, p.177.

which is only “ at the disposal” of man precisely in so far as he is at the disposal of this divine love’.¹³⁵

In other words, God created the human ear and its ingenious ear-work so that the voice of God could be heard and responded to; God brought into being the ear so that humanity could hear that divine calling or invocation. The human ear can hear the Word of God, but it can *never* speak or become it. Human speech connects humankind and God. The grace of sound and ‘sound listening’ always surround the human being. There is no escaping from grace or sound. In the end, human re-action, through listening, in response to God’s calling, is what ordains one’s union with God. Karl Rahner’s theology of grace and nature is important to the hypothesis of this work on two levels. Firstly his insistence on the constant, *a priori* nature of God’s grace. Secondly, his insight that nature can be distinguished from, but cannot be divided from, the supernatural, given that creation is already the work of grace. The all-pervasive nature of grace is the legacy that God bestowed on the world through Jesus Christ. God’s word exploded on the earth through the truth which was Christ and who became human already ‘full of grace’ (Jn. 1:14). The intimate experience of God, in this case, the listening experience, is, according to Rahner, ‘the experience which is given to every person prior...to religious activity and decisions, and indeed perhaps in a form and in a conceptuality which seemingly are not religious at all.’¹³⁶

God’s entire creation moves and exists in the fullness of the grace of sounds.

Therefore, there is no escaping or bypassing the stirrings of the ear. Every activity of the

¹³⁵ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, p.177.

¹³⁶ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p.132. The argument in musicology is one proposed by the contemporary composer, John Cage, which is that all sounds are music. Music is therefore, in the ear of the listener. This thesis has its critics. For example, David Elliott argues against the notion of listener-centred

ear is an expression of the glory of God in nature. Humanity, with its mystical ear, is made in the image of God. 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good' (Gen.1: 31). The multiplicity of aural functions is united in God's unified and triune beauty. The human ear has an important role in the divine plan that surpasses its human function and nature. The human ear is from God and is inclined towards God in special ways. Furthermore, the human word is the shadow, the whisper of the supreme Word, the Logos, who became human. The human word is already graced by its very existence. The gentle word invites gentle listening. The appropriate and proper word for the human being according to Rahner 'in its true and full reality, is already grace in the word, and the power of hearing such a word in its true sense is already grace of faith.'¹³⁷

'[O]ur actual nature is *never* "pure" nature. It is a nature installed in a supernatural order which man can never leave, even as a sinner and unbeliever.'¹³⁸ The theological concept of nature reflects on the divinization of the human being in and through the grace of Jesus Christ. Sharing in the graced glory of Christ is sharing in the mystery of the life of God itself. Christ as a human being listened to and heard the divine voice; in his image, humanity slowly, obediently and patiently follows suit.

In other words, in Trinitarian theology, nature is undivided and singular; there is the divine and human nature in Christ that is both fully human and also the Word of God. Hawkins makes the important distinction here between nature and person terminology. '[N]ature underlines the internal unity of a thing's qualities and powers, while *person* underlines a separateness from everything else. In this way we speak of three divine

definitions of music. See *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.92.

¹³⁷ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, p. 362.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.183.

Persons as three distinct possessors of the divine nature and of the Person of the Word as also possessing a human nature without separation from him.’¹³⁹ Christ is the spokesperson of the Divine Word of God. The sound of the voice of God is the very sound of the voice of Christ. John the Baptist was the spokesperson for Christ; John was the voice, Jesus was the Word. The universe hears the call of God because humanity is beyond nature and therefore has a responsibility to listen to the imaginative sound of that invocation. The aural sense is a grace in itself – God’s self-communication to the human being through Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, any theological reflection on the Christian nature and activity of this sense is concerned with the concepts of grace and person.

The acceptance to listen is in itself a gift of grace. Rahner puts it in a way that also implies silence. ‘Because man’s listening must reckon equally upon God’s silence, God’s self revelation remains in every respect incalculable and unmerited grace.’¹⁴⁰ In the courts of the ear, the realities of the ‘word of God’ become one in the truth of God’s self disclosure. Theosony refers to the grace of God who is no longer aloof but clearly revealed. Similarly, for Schneiders, ‘the referent of ‘word of God’ is divine revelation, God’s accepted self-gift to human beings.’¹⁴¹ Attending to such realities in writing, from a Christian perspective, is the travail of this opus.

David Tracy’s experience of grace is appropriate here on two counts. Firstly, as a basic definition of what grace means for the Christian¹⁴² and secondly, on the permanence and persistence of Christian grace. ‘For myself’, he writes, ‘ the overwhelming reality disclosed in the originating event of Jesus Christ is none other than

¹³⁹ Canon D. J. B. Hawkins, ‘On the Nature and Person in Speculative Theology, in *The Downside Review*, Vol. 80, no. 258, Jan. 1962, p.11.

¹⁴⁰ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.174.

grace itself. From the first glimmers of that graciousness in the uncanny limit-questions of our situation...in the event of Jesus Christ, grace prevails for the Christian as the central clue to the nature of all reality. This grace prevails in spite of all else.’¹⁴³

This treatise draws exclusively from the Christian experience of God’s revelation culminating in the incarnate Word of God. It is the aural manifestation of this possible revelation that is at the heart of the matter. Rahner defines the theological implications thus: ‘If revelation when heard is to remain truly *God’s* word, known as such...by falling into the created, finite *a priori* frame of reference, then God himself, must, in the *grace* of faith...become a constitutive principle of the hearing of revelation.’¹⁴⁴

Tracy’s outline of grace goes even further using Rahner’s definition as a stepping stone across the river of theosonic language. Since listening to the sound of God – God’s self gift of manifestation – is a choice which humanity can make in human, finite and historical terms, it still remains, however, a free act from God first and foremost. In other words, God spoke, listened and heard humanity. Leo Scheffczyk summarises the conversation: ‘Fundamentally, man stands under God’s call, and his primordial orientation is towards *hearing* God’s word.’¹⁴⁵ Humanity is endowed through the ear with the Trinitarian grace of God. The beginning of the divine life of grace, its growth, its possible ruin through the natural tendency to sin, can all be charted aurally.

The personal sound of God is not any particular sound of the universe; the sound of God is infused in *every* sound. The marvellous point here is that this easy, obvious

¹⁴¹ Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, p.34.

¹⁴² Chapter One defined grace according to certain aspects of Rahnerian theology.

¹⁴³ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 430. Here he is referring to the overwhelming realisation in his own existence of the original Jesus event being nothing less than grace itself.

¹⁴⁴ Karl Rahner, ‘Grace’ in *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol. 2, p.416.

¹⁴⁵ Leo Scheffczyk, ‘God’ in *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol.2, p.382.

listening to the divine in every sound carries within it the origin of the original sound. This is the first stage of being; a remembrance of that original murmuring, a memory of the voice of God which, motionless, is still full of sound. The voice of God echoes in every voice. The sound of the cosmos is a faint echo of a sonorous God. But there is always more than meets the human ear in this. Just as no two musical compositions are the same, just as no two performances of any music is the same, just as no two voices, human or in nature are the same, just as no two silences contain the same stillness, so too every sound, every hearing, every saying, every silence in the dialogue with God is unique. Theosony so defined is reciprocal; the ear is the reciprocal aid to God. Grace is the grain of the originary voice of God, the remembered timbre in the two-way dialogue between God and the Christian. Embroiled in the workings of the auditory sense is a reality about God that all the words in the universe fail to capture. The question of God is answered through a right reading or hearing of divine revelation. A certain kind of right theological hearing is being efficient to hear God's word in Scripture in the same way that one can hold a silent piece of musical manuscript and immediately *hear* the sound of the page. Rahner has the appropriate formulation: 'Because God himself thus produces the readiness to listen as condition of hearing his own word, theology is purely and simply founded upon itself. It is the word of the living God himself.'¹⁴⁶

In short, theosony, listening for and to the sound of God, is a graced event, always dependent on the intervention of God. It is about the notion of being favoured by God's gifts. As Love puts it, every man and woman 'must receive from God personally the supernatural capacity for subjective assent to the content of the Christian message.'¹⁴⁷ As

¹⁴⁶ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.174.

¹⁴⁷ Love, *Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks*, p.251.

theosony is a waiting for the graced sound of God, humanity waits for that voice of God that initiates the conversation between both. The triune God is realised through a listening religious experience: Jesus Christ is the Word; the Holy Spirit is the mouthpiece of this divine/human invitatory sound; God is juxtaposed in the silence between. It is God's Word in silence, through Christ in the Spirit, who turns human beings to attend obediently to God's creative purpose whose full goal is not yet fully revealed.

To sin is to remain stubborn and defiant, numbed and immunised to the sound of the Spirit. In the Old Testament, one of the three Hebrew words for sin is 'Hatta' which literally means 'missing the mark'. In theological terms, William May interprets 'Hatta' as a word which 'stresses sin as a wilful rejection of the known will of God.'¹⁴⁸

Regarding theosony, to sin is freely *not* to choose to give God a hearing – to block one's inner ear to the *Vox Fortis*. The *Miserere* Psalm of pardon and cleansing says it in the inspired words of God's Spirit. Once cleansed and pardoned, 'my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance...O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise (Ps. 51: 14,15).

All forms of listening should draw one closer to God. Every sound is sacred, it is true. But for whom is it sacred? Every sound is sacred for those who *choose* to hear the breath of God from within. The kernel of the matter and the one question which the term 'theosony' poses is this: how can even a faint echo of this divine breath of God, not created by humankind, be heard even once in a lifetime? There is a paradox here which has a human biological parallel. No human being can reproduce the sound of his or her actual voice; that is, the sound of the voice that is heard in the inner ear and through the

54 William E. May, 'Sin', *The New Dictionary of Theology*, p.955.

resonances of the body can never be replicated. Recorded vocal sounds are very different from the sounds which one can hear in one's own head, as listening to any recording of one's voice proves. Although we hear the sound of the voices of those around, including the animal voices of nature, we can never actually listen to them in total concordance with the speaker. Everyone has a secret sound that can never be accurately reproduced outside of the body. This personal, private sound is akin to the sound of God; the deeper inner voice of God is the primal sound and is heard when the body vibrates and dances to its rhythms. God is the subject of what I am hearing.

1.4 The critical, the obedient, the clairaudient ear

Two further considerations close this introductory chapter on theosony: the critical moment of crisis and shock which is the reality of hearing the sound of God; and reference to the verbal quartet, that is four words, which embrace such graced awareness, namely obedience, clairaudience, audience and attention.

Contemporary artists and philosophers have also identified similar crises. For Christianity is itself a religion of crisis. Golgotha was a crisis-point shrouded in criticism and ending in silence. The words 'crisis' and 'critic' share etymologies. They are both from the Greek word meaning 'to decide or to judge'. From the same source is 'criterion', meaning 'a test'. One must be one's own critic, (from the Greek word 'to judge'), when it comes to being in true relationship and conversation with God. This religious crisis revolves around such oppositions as narration and prophecy, as the philosopher, Iris Murdoch, once defined them. 'In narration, no one seems to be

speaking... the prophetic voice announces itself in the *consciousness* of being called and sent.’¹⁴⁹

Theological crisis too is about the shocking and the radical. Steiner talks of ‘[t]he shock of correspondence’¹⁵⁰ in the face of the personal experience with *any* work of art. Theosony is a shock of aural correspondence with God. Steiner probes the experience which ‘is very difficult to put into words...it can be muted and nearly indiscernibly gradual – [it] is one of being possessed by that which one comes to possess.’¹⁵¹ The sudden and sometimes violent voice of God one possesses and is blessed with enchants. *Avant-garde* is a term in musicology to describe ‘composers who make radical departures from musical tradition.’¹⁵² In their unstinting quest towards inner intimations of musical possibility, the *avant-garde* composer breaks the fetters of convention and expectancy. In one’s own desire for partnership with God, radical departures are often called for. New ‘tonalities’ emerge, unexpected and unplanned for ‘rests’ appear in the silences; all of these are instrumental in the *avant-garde* relationship between God and humanity. The praying ear, the strong voice which the bishop of Hippo, Augustine, heard in the interior ear, surprises and takes one’s breath away and one must be revolutionary and courageous to discern the organic, salutary sound. The listening experience is always charismatic in the Rahnerian sense: ‘essentially new and always surprising...the charismatic feature, when it is new, and one might say it is only charismatic if it is so, has something shocking about it.’¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge, 1970, p.225.

¹⁵⁰ Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.179.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁵² *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, Vol. 1, 1.122. ‘Avant-garde’

¹⁵³ Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church*, London: Burns & Oates, 1979, p.73.

Pierre Boulez ‘the education of the ear is fifty years behind the education of the eye.’¹⁵⁴ As if to qualify and explain, he adds that ‘we are still hostile to sounds that surprise us’.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes we fear what we might hear. This corollary makes sense in the context of contemporary music where present-day composers, including Boulez himself, compose in a surprising *avant-garde* idiom sometimes perceived antagonistically as shocking by the listener. Bolts of sound from the blue constantly astound and jolt the inner ear.

Fiumara confronts a similar crux within western philosophy. The inability to listen is ‘a crisis of a culture tormented by splitting mechanisms and...so lacking in methods of reconnecting that the most disquieting of questions – such as linking branches of knowledge – are forced into silence since they can not even be adequately articulated.’¹⁵⁶ Theology, too, is experiencing a crisis of a God-seeking culture tormented by a rupture, a breach of harmonious relations between theologians and readers, men and women, clergy and laity, institution and individual. The most controversial and tantalising question for theology is how to facilitate the work of the Holy Spirit as the instrument of Divine action in nature and the human heart. But curiosity is smothered by fear; in the life-giving salutary search for God, we are afraid to listen and hear.

The second consideration here is about the sound and meaning of four interrelated sonic word images; obedience, clairaudiency, audience and attention. The two words ‘obedient’ and ‘clairaudient’ are derived from the Latin ‘audire’, ‘to hear, listen to’.

¹⁵⁴ Cited without source by Don G. Campbell in a book he edited entitled *Music: Physician for Times to Come*, Illinois: Quest Books, 1991,p.11.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁵⁶ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.113.

Hebrew and Greek words for ‘to obey’ are also related to the words for ‘to hear’.¹⁵⁷ The English auditory word from the same source is ‘audience’ which means ‘the action of hearing, the state of hearing or being able to hear’.¹⁵⁸ All three words, therefore, - ‘obedient’, ‘clairaudient’ and ‘audience’ are about particular definitions or classifications of hearing and listening. ‘Obedient’ is the combining of the prefix ‘ob’ to ‘audience’. ‘Clairaudiency’ is, along with theosony, another portmanteau word, the wedding of the French ‘clair’ meaning ‘clear’ with ‘audience’.¹⁵⁹ This is the aural relative or equivalent of clairvoyance; the power of seeing beyond the natural range of vision. According to *The Oxford Dictionary*, ‘clairaudience’ was first coined in 1864 as a ‘faculty of mentally perceiving sounds beyond the range of hearing...’¹⁶⁰ In visual terms, ‘clairvoyance’, from the French, *clair* and *voyant*, meaning *clear seeing*, is defined as ‘having the power of seeing objects or actions beyond the natural range of vision’.¹⁶¹ To be clairvoyant means to have ‘keen intuitive understanding’.¹⁶² In aural terminology, therefore, theosony is a *clairaudient* faculty that tunes into the Sound of God.¹⁶³

To speak of theosony, the Sound of God is to speak of aural prayer. Iris Murdoch, echoing Simone Weil, defines prayer as ‘an *attention* to God which is a form of love.’¹⁶⁴ The word ‘attention’ is derived from ‘attend’ and one sense of the word ‘attend’ has to do with the auditory. In *The Britannica World Language Edition of the Oxford Dictionary*,

¹⁵⁷ This important point is referred to in the Introductory Chapter, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ See *The Britannica World Language Edition of the Oxford Dictionary*, p.122.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 318. Furthermore, ‘clairaudience’ is a macaronic portmanteau, that is, a blend of two different language-words.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

¹⁶¹ *The New American Dictionary*, p. 221.

¹⁶² *The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus*, p.175.

¹⁶³ *The Oxford Dictionary* includes an entry on ‘clairaudience’. It defines the word, first used in 1864, as a ‘faculty of mentally perceiving sounds beyond the range of hearing...’ p.318.

¹⁶⁴ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 55. Italics mine. As well as Murdoch, Søren Kierkegaard also uses the verb, as I have highlighted in a quotation-opening Chapter Two here: ‘the true man of prayer only

the first category of meanings for the verb 'attend' includes '[t]o turn one's ear to, to listen to.'¹⁶⁵ In fact, linking prayer to divine/human aural encounter and relationship is as old as Scripture and as new as contemporary philosophy. For instance, King David, cries out vocally for attention to God in his song for salvation from his persecutors: 'Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit' (Ps. 17:1).

In summary, four adjectives - critical, obedient, clairaudient, attentive – applied to hearing take on deeper meanings when employed to narrate the immediate relationship to the mystery of God's self communication. Attending obediently, lending an ear to the Sound beyond all sounds of God is grafting oneself to the triune God so as to become nourished by and united with this Divine. Through such a graft, we are reinvented and transformed. By means of obedient attention, we participate in the very history of the Originator of all Sound. Steiner poses the question: 'How does the graft on to our being *take*?... The honest answer is that we do not know. Both intuitively and theoretically, Western speculation on the psychology of aesthetic reception...has been drawn towards intimations of *re-cognition*...of *déjà-entendu*. We have met before.'¹⁶⁶ This is an important point theologically and in the contextualisation of an aural theology. Humanity was made for and by God and to God it will return. The human race is born of sound and lives by sound. Humanity evolved and sprang into life at the sound of God's call. God is constantly calling out to every human person. The primal sound out of the primal silence can be intimated. It is a sound that is as familiar as it is distant. It is an auditory originary

attends.' *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, translated and selected by Alexander Dru, New York/Evanston: Harper & Row, 1959, p.97.

¹⁶⁵ 'Attend' in *The Britannica World Language Edition*, p. 119.

¹⁶⁶ Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.180.

identity, which the act of listening hears. That forgotten sound is like the forgotten nursery rhymes of childhood. Through the word of Jesus, the Holy Spirit fleshes out the sound of God in our bones. ‘Our dry bones have been fleshed out as once the dry bones of the whole house of Israel were: ‘O dry bones, *hear*¹⁶⁷ the word of the Lord. Thus *says* the Lord God to these bones’ (Ex. 37:4,5). The incarnate Speaker awakens for mortality, the Divine Word, which, like the sense of hearing, never sleeps.

God calls and humanity turns its ear towards the Divine. Jonathan Sachs recently wrote about a ‘new act of listening’¹⁶⁸ to which he believes God is calling creation back. God in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit earths that invocation to the human ear. As that invocation makes the connection, response is inevitable. For Joseph Gelineau, that response is theosonic: ‘To the one whose voice has created or called us...the response must be to make the sacred offering of sound.’¹⁶⁹

1.5 Summary

This chapter introduced the concept of theosony, situating it in theological and interdisciplinary settings. A sound is the sensation produced by the organ of hearing when certain vibrations are caused in the silence of the surrounding air. In the words of T. S. Eliot, ‘[b]y the delicate, invisible web you wove —/ The inexplicable mystery of sound.’¹⁷⁰ The neologism ‘theosony’ is necessary and useful as a phenomenology of theological listening for two reasons. Firstly, it has begun, and will continue, to define the fact of the aural nature of Christianity. In doing so, the specificity of Christian theosony

¹⁶⁷ Italics mine.

¹⁶⁸ Jonathan Sachs, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilisations*, London/New York: Continuum, 2002, p.19.

¹⁶⁹ Gelineau, ‘The Path of Music’ pp. 136,137.

will paint the canvas of neglect around this aural sense. Secondly, theosony will attempt to be specific about some novel, different, fresh approaches towards a forgotten aural theology. In some senses, this is a new word about an old thing; the phenomenon of listening is ever old, ever new. What theosony does suggest is a lively, vibrant, innovative, perhaps unfamiliar and unusual way of experiencing the loving revelation of the triune God. Absurdly¹⁷¹, God is an inaudible reality transcending the range of human hearing. The court of last appeal is the inner ear – *in aurem interiorem* - of the praying one. God is the permanent inhabitant of every human ear. Every cosmic resident retains its sound and voice like a fossil that is still alive. A deeper understanding of God and participating in such theosonic listening unlocks the door of personal alienation and restlessness. Tracy puts it thus: ‘Every human understanding of God is at the same time an understanding of oneself – and *vice versa*.’¹⁷² This is reminiscent of the important Rahnerian quotation already cited above: When God chooses to speak to human beings and when they choose to listen, it is humanity becoming more fully human, living and free. ‘O that today you would listen to his voice! Do not harden your hearts’ (Ps. 95: 7,8).

Theosony becomes an aural question when personal ability to respond becomes in turn personal responsibility.¹⁷³ Cardinal John Henry Newman summarises such responsibility that befits the curious vocal Christian: ‘In religious enquiry each one of us

¹⁷⁰ T.S. Eliot, ‘To Walter de la Mare’, *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, London: Faber and Faber, 1969, p. 205.

¹⁷¹ From L. *surdus* which means ‘indistinct’, ‘voiceless’ or ‘deaf’. See chapter Two.

¹⁷² Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.429.

¹⁷³ This play on words is borrowed from John Cage, *Silence, :Lectures and Writings*, London: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd., 1987, p. 10.

can speak only for himself, and for himself he has a right to speak. His own experiences are enough for himself...'¹⁷⁴

Divine self-communication is when God communicates to the human ear in all infinite reality; the created listener shares, participates in the sound of God's Being and becomes fully alive. It is precisely because God is beyond sound that God is also behind and within every sound. Theosony – sounding God and the sound of God - is about striking the tuning fork and with 'good will', listening to the powerful note of wisdom which is God's abundant grace of the Holy Spirit.

...and what happens next

Is a music that you never would have known

To listen for...

You are like a rich man entering heaven

Through the ear of a raindrop.

*Listen now again.*¹⁷⁵

Chapter Two: Theosony and the Sense of Hearing

*'The immediate person thinks and imagines that when he prays, the important thing, the thing he must concentrate upon, is that **God should hear** what HE is praying*

¹⁷⁴ John Henry Newman, *A Grammar of Ascent*, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1870, (1955) p. 300. A development of this train of thought is heard through Dom Sebastian Moore's statement that 'Theology has to be autobiographical.' See *The Downside Review*, Vol.III, no. 383, April 1993, p. 82. For a similar call in philosophy, see Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Meaning of the Creative Act* (1916) London: Victor Gollancz, 1995, pp.52-53. 'Philosophic knowledge cannot have its source in books or schools...The only true philosopher is he who has an intuition of being, whose philosophy has its source in life. Genuine philosophy has immediate connection with being.'

*for. And yet in the true eternal sense it is just the reverse: the true relation in prayer is not when God hears what is prayed for, but when the **person praying** continues to pray until he is **the one who hears**, who hears what God wills. The immediate person, therefore, uses many words and, therefore, makes demands in his prayer; the true man of prayer only **attends**.*¹⁷⁶

Introduction

Having defined the parameters of the concept ‘theosony’, the primary task of this chapter is to acquaint the reader with the biology of the human ear. The introduction defends the reasons why such a, seemingly unconnected, study is necessary to the argument. The three main functions of the human ear are then presented. The introduction ends with a brief consideration of human deafness and dumbness.

Section 2.1. presents four scientific facts about the ear. **2.1.1** outlines the physiological phenomenon¹⁷⁷ of the human ear and its functions. Listening as a psychological act follows in section **2.2.** Biologists, scientists and audiologists

¹⁷⁵ Seamus Heaney, *The Spirit Level*, London: Faber & Faber, 1996, p.1.

¹⁷⁶ Kierkegaard, *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, p.97. The words in bold Italics represent the original in Italics. The concept of attention/attending to God was used by another philosopher, Iris Murdoch and is quoted already here in Chapter One, p.26. It must be noted too, however, that this Kierkegaard quote is a translation from the original language of the author.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Hearing is a physiological phenomenon; listening is a psychological act.’¹⁷⁷ Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. by Richard Howard, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, p.245. It would appear to be Barthes who made this distinction between the terms ‘listening’ and ‘hearing’ initially. It has later been adopted by others including Alfred Tomatis, Paul Maudelle etc.

reluctantly concur that at some point in the time and space continuum of sound's penetration of our being, the radar device ceases to determine the presence and location of the sound biologically.¹⁷⁸ As Peter Kivy suggests 'what we expect has a great deal to do with what we 'hear'.'¹⁷⁹ French semiologist Roland Barthes' theory of what happens when we hear brings this section to a close. Section 2.3 refers to the relatively new discipline of neurotheology, which straddles science, medicine and theology. Is religious experience, aural or otherwise, innately, genetically, inextricably linked to the biological and the psychological? Is God's perceived response to this dialogue purely, as Karl Rahner would ponder 'one's own psychical state or activity...thrown up from deeper psychic layers?'¹⁸⁰ Section 2.4 concentrates on the physiology and psychology of the voice. It closes with a brief survey on the meaning of voice in Scripture. Finally, 2.5 looks at the religious experience of St. Augustine. This dictum – *Vox Fortis in aurem, in vocem interiorem* - is a metaphor borrowed from his autobiography. God is a voice, strong, loud and crystal-clear in his inner ear.¹⁸¹ In summary, the main purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the human, biological ear and its functions with the intention of discovering its theological expediency.

There are six reasons why such an apparently irrelevant study is helpful to the overall argument here.

¹⁷⁸ I have consulted an ear specialist, Peter Ferguson, on the biology of the ear and a scientist on acoustics. I pursued this particular point with him several times during the consultation. Not only could they supply satisfactory answers but also they could not point out to me any literature on the subject.

¹⁷⁹ Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 7.

¹⁸⁰ Rahner, *The Practice of Faith*, p.77. See pp.76-82 for an excellent exegesis of the problem of prayer as dialogue.

¹⁸¹ Augustine repeatedly draws on this metaphor of God's voice in his inner/interior ear. '*Voce forti in aurem interiorem*' – 'with a strong voice into my interior ear'. See *The Confessions of Augustine*, eds., Gibb and Montgomery, p.373. Here in chapter 11, Book 12, Augustine uses this metaphor three times.

1. First, the ear is, scientifically, the most *sophisticated* and *sensitive* sense in interpreting and understanding the outer physical world. The human ear has a miraculous ability to receive information from the world without, and within the body itself, above and beyond any other physical sense. From an attention to the biological detail of the human ear, we can then attend to the religious dimension present in all human hearing.
2. Secondly, serious attention to this sense has been *neglected*. This is not only true in theological scholarship but in many other disciplines as well. Although some theologians have alluded to the aural religious experience, no one has adequately explored the experience or managed to describe it accurately.
3. The third reason for examining the aural sense, as a biological apparatus is to apprehend the *listening process* itself, which, according to audiologists and scientists alike, defies full verbal, understanding. Audiologist and scientist, J.R. Pierce, concedes: 'A great deal is known about the structure of the ear and about the neural pathways from the ear to the brain, but our sense of hearing is understood *only in part*.'¹⁸² This resonates theologically: like human understanding of the mystery of God, the aural process defies human knowledge.
4. The fourth reason for understanding the physical ear is that herein resides the seat of emotion. Religion is an emotional relationship with God. Religious emotion that is excited by the contemplation of God is called 'Theopathy'. Theopathy is also defined as 'sensitiveness or responsiveness to divine influence.'¹⁸³

¹⁸² John R. Pierce, *The Science of Musical Sounds*, New York: Scientific American Books Inc., 1983, p.96. Italics mine.

¹⁸³ *Britannica World Language edition of the Oxford Dictionary*, p.2167.

5. The ear generates and provides essential sensory *energy* essential to the brain. The brain is dependent upon three main sources of energy: food; air and ‘sensory energy.’¹⁸⁴ The *aural sense* provides most of this third source of energy to the brain.¹⁸⁵ The ear never sleeps. It is constantly providing and supplying energy. According the French physician, Dr. Alfred Tomatis, ‘the ear provides the nervous system with almost 90 per cent of its overall sensory energy’.¹⁸⁶
6. Finally, one’s sense of *balance* resides in the ear. Although not the primary focus of this thesis, we will do well to keep this aural function in focus.¹⁸⁷ Balance is essential to a state of rest which is equilibrium. Holding oneself in equilibrium is vital to the attainment of inner peace.

Theologically, God is in every aural experience, in every act of the ear whether in listening, speaking or in silence. On the experience of God’s self-communication in grace, Karl Rahner writes that: ‘What we are really dealing with is a transcendental experience which gives evidence of itself in human existence and is operative in that existence.’¹⁸⁸ An understanding of the biological facts about the sense of hearing is important, even vital, to the overall theological thrust of this dissertation which argues for a timely redress of balance in favour of the ear in obedience to divine invocation. Human hearing is the auditory expression of the divine; the human ear is symbol of God’s saving love.

The human ear has *three* functions: it experiences and correlates *sound*; it maintains physical *balance*; it can be a *transcendental* medium. Its mysterious physical

¹⁸⁴ Madaule, *When listening comes alive*, p.59.

¹⁸⁵ This has been proven by the research of French physician, Alfred Tomatis.

¹⁸⁶ Alfred Tomatis, *The Conscious Ear*, Barrytown/NY: Station Hill Press, 1991, p.186.

functions and effects have inspired awe throughout the ages. The musicologist, Victor Zuckerkandl, disavows the many attempts to describe these adequately: 'far from accounting for the efficiency of our organ of hearing, [they] make it appear all the more miraculous.'¹⁸⁹ Music educationist David Elliott marvels at how the listening process 'proceeds with an ease and an accuracy that are nothing less than *miraculous*.'¹⁹⁰ More than that, the ear is coextensive with our being: 'The entire surface of the skin serves as an extension of the ear.'¹⁹¹ And Berendt goes even further by suggesting that to hear is to be.¹⁹² This thesis argues that to hear is also to pray; theosony is a theology of being as listening.

Biological hearing in such a context raises the question of biological deafness and dumbness: Is the person deprived of hearing also deprived of religious experience? Of course not. No human being is deaf to the sound of God. Many people with perfect hearing and perfect pitch choose not to listen. St. Augustine describes the moment in his own conversion when such spiritual deafness was dispelled. '*[A]d haec tu dicis mihi, quoniam tu es deus meus et dicis voce forti in aure interiore servo tuo perrumpens meam surditatem*.'¹⁹³ 'You answered me, for you are my God and your voice can speak aloud in the voice of my spirit, piercing your servant's deafness.'¹⁹⁴ Restored sacred hearing is to

¹⁸⁷ The ear as the locus of balance is fundamental to the auditory theories of Tomatis; postural phenomena, when the body reaches outside of itself, is the essence of verticality and vestibular function.

¹⁸⁸ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 130.

¹⁸⁹ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician: Sound and Symbol*: Vol.2, trans. Norbert Guterman, Bollingen Series XLIV. 2, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973, p.85. Italics mine.

¹⁹⁰ David J. Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.81. Italics mine.

¹⁹¹ Therese Schroeder-Sheker, *Transitus: A Blessed Death in the Modern World*, Missoula, USA: St. Dunstan's Press, 2001, p.58.

¹⁹² Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.48.

¹⁹³ Saint Augustine, *The Confessions of Augustine*, eds. Gibb and Montgomery, Cambridge: University Press, 1908, Bk., XIII: XXIX, p. 442.

¹⁹⁴ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S Pine-Coffin, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961, p.341. This translation varies from all other translations of the Confessions available. The other translations all read:

live in a different reality, to understand the new language of sound. God remains the same; sounds remain the same. What is different is the calling, the evocation, the perception of the sound. Theosony refers to a revolution in experiencing God's self-communication and love.

The whole of humanity has the capacity to be in the image of the deaf,¹⁹⁵ inarticulate man from the land of the Decapolis who encountered the articulate, incarnate Word of God (Mark 7:31-37). By dint of belief in the divine power of Jesus to heal, his ears are opened and his voice is restored. Here, in the shortest and almost certainly the earliest Gospel or Good News of Jesus, the message is loud and clear in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus embodies the sound of God, which he whispers symbolically through his fingers into the ear and through his spittle on the tongue of all believers. 'Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphata," that is, "Be opened" (Mark 7:34). The actual sound of that healing is in the one tri-syllabic Aramaic word 'Ephphata'. This Greek transliteration is a passive imperative of the verb 'to open'. Emily Cheney writes about this word: 'Hellenistic miracles often contained unusual words which conveyed extraordinary power. If the Gospel of Mark was written primarily for people who understood Greek, then the Aramaic command may have sounded magical.'¹⁹⁶ The image is powerful and once heard cannot be forgotten. It suggests the phenomenon of modelling; the ear and spittle are modelled to praise the Lord in the summertime air. The divine/human saliva merges into the soil of deafness to create the nest of the auditory.

'You are my God, You told me with [a] strong voice in the ear of your servant's spirit, breaking through my deafness.' See Sheed, p.285; Pusey, p.343; Bourke, p.448. (both antiquated terminology); Ryan,¹⁹⁵ It is important to mention that the deaf have developed a very sophisticated sign language to communicate. However, the average hearing person has no understanding or knowledge of the richness, the intricacy and precision which communication through the silent world of sign language enables. This is what is hinted at in the overall taxonomy of listening suggested here; silent theosony is the world of silent sign language in God's self-communication.

The sound of it was definitely and clearly heard, but it was well hidden to the rest of the world. 'Ephphata' is the tonic-note of baptism.

God can be reached on every human level; it is *belief* that is the ultimate criterion. The mystery of God's revelatory promise and love is manifested beyond all human sensory horizons. God's self revelation is too important to be confined to human sensory impulses. The Voice of God is softer and louder than the softest and the loudest human voice. On the other hand, any human opening can be access to the divine. The relevant sensory medium argued for here is the sense of hearing.

2.1 Hearing – 'a physiological phenomenon'

*Five Prefatory Scientific/Acoustic Points*¹⁹⁷

- The speed of sound is slow compared with the speed of light. Hearing has to be patient and has to wait. The speed of light travels at up to 300, 000 kilometres per second. The speed of sound is 330 metres per second. It takes eight or nine minutes for the light of the sun to reach the earth. On the other hand, a *sound* emanating from the sun would not reach earth for some 5,400 days and its arrival would depend upon constant temperature in space, which is an impossibility. Sound travelling from the sun would be a physical impossibility since sound as opposed to light depends upon a medium for its transmission. Furthermore, there are three ways of comparing sight and sound frequencies: the frequency range of hearing is *ten* times greater than that of sight. The highest visible frequency is approximately ten times the lowest visual frequency. The highest *audible* frequency is *one thousand* times the lowest audible

¹⁹⁶ Emily Cheney, 'Ephphata' in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 416.

¹⁹⁷ I am indebted to Declan Casey for drawing my attention to some of the following.

frequency. Therefore, the ear is vastly more sensitive and sophisticated in terms of frequency rates. The ear has, it could be argued, a greater range of sensitivity.

- Secondly, in the light spectrum, that is the band of colours, there is a series of seven colours usually described as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. These are produced when white light, such as sunlight, is passed through a prism which decomposes into rays of different colour and wavelength. For instance, the rays of longest wavelength produce the colour red, the shortest produce violet. Although these seven colours can be perceived in varying degrees of colour between the primary colours themselves, they can only be looked at in one frequency, as it were. The point is more readily understood when compared with a sound analogy. For example, in Western Classical music, there are seven notes in the musical scale. However, these notes can be heard in higher and lower frequencies. Take, for instance, the note known as 'middle C' at the centre of the piano keyboard. This note can be heard at higher and lower frequencies depending on the amount of octaves on that particular keyboard. Colours cannot be seen in different frequencies. There is only one octave of colour perception.
- The third point is that the human body through sound vibrations that penetrate the very walls of the physical body can discern sounds beyond the audible. The body is in this sense, an extension of the ear. The first attachment and connection to the world is through the ear of the womb. The eye is *not* a comparable extension or as attuned to the reception of the world around. Neither can the eye behold the external world in darkness; on the other hand, the ear hears in both light and darkness. Endorsing this from another standpoint, Paul Newham states that 'people who are mugged or

attacked late at night are left only with the sound of the persecutor's voice.'¹⁹⁸

Darkness, on another note, is the symbol of creativity and imagination. One hears differently in the dark; to listen deeply and thoughtfully is enhanced when one closes one's eyes. Because, as Bachelard puts it, the ear 'knows then that the eyes are closed, it knows that it is responsible for the being who is thinking...Relaxation will come when the eyes are reopened.'¹⁹⁹ God speaks and is heard in the darkness, through the closed eyes of humanity.

- The fourth point is that because there is a direct line from the throat to the inner ear which, in turn, runs on to the mind/brain, bodily sounds do not have to leave the body to be heard. In other words, feedback takes place from the brain to the inner ear; a part of the sound returns from the brain to the cochlea. Every spoken sound is heard in the ear. The larynx cannot keep secrets from the ear. The voice and the ear are one; they are simply two sides of the one coin. Each individual voice only contains sounds that each individual ear can hear. The aural precedes the oral. The aural dictates the parameters of the oral. There is no personal orality without the aural. No other person can hear precisely these head sounds; once the sound of the human voice leaves the body to communicate to the world around, the sound changes. (It is as if God is the only one who can hear every human being in its own voice.)
- Advancements in the area of the aural lag behind the visual. In medicine, there have been considerable advances in relation to the doctoring of the eye. The cornea of the eye can be reshaped and adjusted by laser treatment to enhance sight. The failing ear has still to resort to the mechanical, digital hearing aids. The blind have access to the

¹⁹⁸ Newham, *The Singing Cure*, p. 213.

¹⁹⁹ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 181.

world through animals. The blind person can be guided by a guide dog. No such aid has been developed for the deaf person.

- In *capturing* sound and sight, the visual wins out: Photography can capture a close up with the aid of a zoom lens; in sound recording, the microphone is much more difficult to work with and must be close by to pick up the sound. Yet in the *transmitting* of sound and sight, the aural and oral telephone and radio preceded television.
- The two eyes have been carefully protected for decades by sunglasses that filter the damaging glare of the sun. However, the two ears are totally and constantly exposed to damaging decibels of noise, but noise pollution is a relatively new concern. In short, sunglasses are commonplace; earmuffs are rare.
- Here follows a brief, rather simplified, physiology of the body function of the ear.²⁰⁰
- The ear has three regions: the external, or outer, middle and inner regions. The purpose of the outer ear is to catch, collect, pick up or gather the sound vibrations travelling through the air and direct them into the external auditory *meatus* that is the ear canal. This outer ear, composed of cartilage covered with skin, visually resembles an embryo; inside, the resonating ear canal is funnel-shaped. Remaining with this visual analogy of the visible ear-lobe or *pinna* as embryonic, it is as if this outer ear is the midwife²⁰¹ – the *maieutria* – of the physical ear inviting the sound to travel into the birth canal towards listening. This visually embryonic, funnel-shaped external ear is the aural ‘magpie’ collecting what appeals to it sound-wise. The work of the *pinna*

²⁰⁰ For a comprehensive, technical description of the ear, hearing and balance, see Alexander P. Spence/Elliott B. Mason, *Human Anatomy and Physiology*, Menlo Park, California: The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company Inc., 1979, pp.414-424.

²⁰¹ The metaphor of ‘midwife’ is developed in Chapter Seven below.

is to protect the middle and inner ear sound-boost entering the ear canal and to localise the source of the sound.

Once captured, the sound vibrations are channelled along the ear canal, which is approximately 2.5 cm long (1 inch), inside the head. At the end of the ear canal is the eardrum or 'tympanic membrane'. This tympanic membrane, also called the tympanum, (which immediately conjures up, for the musically orientated, orchestral drum sounds) is a quarter of an inch in diameter, three hundredth of an inch thick, smaller than the head of a thumb tack. Skin covers all of the ear canal and the eardrum. The outer third is cartilage and the inner two thirds are bone. Hairs in the outer part of the ear canal produce secretions that, along with the shedding skin, form wax. This wax ensures that the eardrum does not dry out and it prevents small foreign bodies from entering. Sound now reaches the middle ear which is the realm of the eardrum.

The eardrum is a grey translucent membrane that sits at an angle in the ear canal. There are some fibres in the upper part of the eardrum and a greater number in the lower section, which are important in the passage of sound. Located directly behind the eardrum are the three small bones of the inner ear, the tiniest bones in the body: the *incus* the *malleus* and the *stapes* aptly named purely because they vaguely look like a hammer, an anvil and a stirrup. These tool-bones form a bone-chain to transmit sound to the cochlea of the inner ear. The handle of the *malleus* (hammer) rests on the eardrum and covers more than half of it; the foot-hold of the *stapes* (stirrup) rests against the wall of the middle ear chamber and the *incus* (anvil) 'holds hands' with both to form the acoustic bridge.

Because we are never silent and never out of earshot of bodily or physical sound, these bones are constantly awake and in motion. From before birth to death and even as we sleep these ear-bones are on constant alert. At birth, they are fully mature and from then on do not grow in size. In the process of ageing, as this bone-trio grows rigid, hearing deteriorates.

Advancing sound in the relay race of hearing reaches the eardrum and buckles. The *malleus* is displaced and moves its interconnected bone neighbours converting low pressure sound waves to high pressure small ranging sounds. Through the footstand of the *stapes*, sound enters the inner ear through the oval window. Two muscles – one the *tensor tympani*, the other the *stapedius* - attached to this tripartite bone group are on constant alert to sounds. Their work is to temper, to tone down loud noise – they must protect the delicate inner ear. If loud sounds enter the middle ear, then the action of both these muscles affects the chain of minute ossicles to weaken their efficiency in transmitting sounds. This mechanism does not operate immediately, therefore, damage to the ear can be caused by sudden, loud sounds, such as gunfire.

The inner ear is connected to the middle ear by a membrane that covers an opening which is known from its appearance as the oval window. This oval window separates the middle ear, full of air, from the inner ear which is full of fluid. Half the sound energy absorbed by the eardrum of the middle ear is actually transferred into the inner ear. In the inner ear, sound vibrations are converted into electric impulses. Furthermore, for this transmission from the middle to the inner ear to take place, the air in the middle ear should be at normal atmospheric pressure. The normal pressure is maintained by the eustachian tube. This auditory canal extends from the middle ear to the nasopharynx, a tube that connects with the mouth and nose. When the eustachian tube opens and closes, it fulfils this function of pressure equalisation.

The inner ear is part of an enclosed fluid system contained within the cochlea. It is a complex of interconnected fluid-filled canals called the osseous labyrinth, which contains three semicircular canals controlling balance. These are not involved in hearing. Receptors of balance are regulated and angular velocity measured. This canal is never redundant, constantly informing the body about space relationship, poise and equilibrium. Body movements are carefully monitored in the vestibular labyrinthine organ of the inner ear.

The cochlea is shaped like a snail shell, doing two and a half turns around a middle core of bone. It resembles an embryo and comprises three divisions: a cochlear, a vestibular, and a tympanic canal. Membranes separate them and on the membrane between the cochlear and the tympanic canals is the organ of Corti. '[T]he organ of Corti, the most important element in our hearing, is developed directly from the embryo's skin.'²⁰² Through receptor cells, this organ, 33 cm in length, plays its vital role in the hearing process.

When sound reaches the oval window, it makes it move inwards displacing the fluid called the perilymph fluid. From now on sound is bathed in fluid. The waves of disruption reach the organ of Corti and other membranes. Thus begins the charting of the map from the inner ear to the brain. At this point, the transition from hearing to listening takes place.

²⁰² Berendt, quoting without reference, S.S. Stevens, an ear physiologist, in *The Third Ear*, p.37. Incidentally, Berendt states that the cochlea is fully developed at birth, completing its growth at 135 days after impregnation. Ear specialists according to Peter Ferguson dispute this.

2.2 Listening – ‘a psychological act’

The psychologist’s focus, beyond the physiology of the ear, dwells in the inner realm of the ear-labyrinth. Victor Zuckerkandl speaks about the threshold existence between the outer and inner world of perception: ‘The outer world is the world of bodies...it is the world we meet in our sense perceptions. The inner world is the world of the mind...the world of thoughts, feelings, imaginings... an immaterial world.’²⁰³

All experience is received and interpreted in this mental labyrinth. As an aside, Fiumara likens all verbal knowledge to a traditional Greek *Knossos* labyrinth. This has one path only through which one enters, follows to the centre, and returns to the exit. The hair cells of the organ of Corti detect the motion of the fluid in the closed hydraulic system of the cochlea. Beneath these hair cells are nerve fibres or endings of the auditory nerve which send neural impulses when activated to the higher nerve centres of hearing which dwell in the brain. As many as 30,000 nerve fibres connect the inner ear to the brainstem, *three times* as many as the nerve connections between the eye and the brain.²⁰⁴

Once the hair cells are stimulated, potassium changes the hair cells to release chemical transmitters, which stimulate the nerve ends. An electrical impulse travels along auditory sensory neurons to the brainstem. Forge and Wright summarise ‘Hair cells are thus...converting a mechanical stimulus (movement) into an electrical signal.’²⁰⁵ Albert Blackwell adds that sounds are thus reaching the brain not just ‘by means of the outer ear but also directly from vibrations within our skull.’²⁰⁶ Fiumara comments on this sound

²⁰³ Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World*, Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press, 1969 (1973), p.55.

²⁰⁴ Berendt cites Alfred Tomatis without reference to the source in *The Third Ear*, p.16.

²⁰⁵ A. Forge/T. Wright, ‘The Molecular architecture of the Inner Ear’, in *British Medical Bulletin – New developments in hearing and balance*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 2002, p. 21.

²⁰⁶ Albert L. Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999, p. 215.

³² Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.1.

journey to the brain: ‘there can be no saying without hearing, no speaking which is not also an integral part of listening, no speech which is not somehow *received*.’²⁰⁷

Sounds are partially coded in the first part of the journey along the auditory canal. The temporal lobe of the brain must unscramble pitch, intensity, speech production and language understanding. Feedback from the brain to the cochlea presumably allows every sound to return to sender, to return to the ear of the hearer.

Even the most basic audiological research shows a lacuna between the physiological and psychological acts of the ear. At a certain biological point, the road becomes nebulous. Pierce agrees: ‘A great deal is known about the structure of the ear and about the neural pathways from the ear to the brain, but our sense of hearing is understood only in part.’²⁰⁸ Sound can be traced to the threshold of the brain but from there on enter the mysterious, the spiritual and the silent.

Brain/Mind considerations

Before proceeding beyond the body to the mind or brain, it is necessary to clarify what the terms ‘brain’ and ‘mind’ mean. Neuroscientists and linguists²⁰⁹ agree that the terms ‘mind’ and ‘brain’ are two different ways of looking at the same thing in human functioning. ‘[T]he mind and brain are intimately intertwined in human behavior and thought.’²¹⁰ The brain and the mind are co-dependent: two performers in the same human performance. ‘One might argue that there can be no brain without mind and no mind

²⁰⁸ John R. Pierce, *The Science of Musical Sound*, New York, Scientific American Books Inc., 1983, p.97.

²⁰⁹ Naom Chomsky in his most accessible statement on the understanding of basic human nature, *Language and Problems of Knowledge*, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988, uses the dual term ‘mind/brain’ consistently. See pp.15-17.

²¹⁰ Andrew Newberg/Eugene d’Aquili. *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999, p.22. There is a Zen koan which illustrates the power of the mind/brain in all thinking: Two monks are observing a temple flag blowing in the wind. One says to the other that it is

without brain,'²¹¹ Newberg and d'Aquili suggest. The brain/mind functions as a system within other systems. 'The mind is the name for the intangible realities that the brain produces. Therefore, thinking, logic, art, emotions, and intentions all fall into the realm of the mind.'²¹² Of the five human functionings mentioned here, one omission is spirituality.

How does the brain turn raw auditory impulses, i.e. energy, into meaningful verbal expressions? Enter the twin hemispheres. The cerebral hemispheres are the two halves of the upper front brain.²¹³ The right hemisphere excels in the intuitive, creative, receptive and insightful; the left brain processes the rational, the logical. Andrew Love holds 'that human speech functions are found in the left cerebral hemisphere, while musical information is processed mainly in the right.'²¹⁴ On the other hand, from an overview of the evidence of non-scientific research, Love draws the conclusion, at one stage of his research, that '[u]ltimately, therefore, language and music seem not to issue from separate brain 'compartments.'²¹⁵ At another, later stage of Love's thesis, he supports the widely held theory 'in favour of music's right-hemispheric association... This hemisphere now seems, in sum, to be responsible for: emotion, music, narrative, improvisation.'²¹⁶ Impulses from primary hearing centres of the ear reach the brain's main language centre: the left hemisphere. Processed through this left half of the cerebrum, the brain hears, for example, the sound 'soul', which sounds exactly the same as 'sole', 'sole' (fish) and 'Seoul'. It is at this mysterious stage that 'this auditory input is

the flag that is moving; the other says that it is the wind that moves. The Zen master, passing by, says it is not the flag that moves. It is neither the wind that moves. It is your mind that moves.

²¹¹ Ibid., p.50.

²¹² Ibid., p.47.

²¹³ For a comprehensive review of the varied hemispherical theories on music and language assimilation see Love, *Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks*, pp. 140-143.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 141.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 171.

converted into intelligible words and sentences and understood logically, in the context of grammar and syntax.²¹⁷ Left-hemisphere dominance for language dates back to 1885 when Pierre Broca published his famous pronouncement: '*Nous parlons avec l'hémisphere gauche.*'²¹⁸

A secondary language centred in the right hemisphere is then informed of the left-side activity by impulses travelling across the connecting hemispherical structures as well as directly from primary hearing centres. The ability to process these impulses through the right hemisphere is crucial in daily existence and activity, 'though we may be less aware and conscious of our use of these processes than of our interpretation of verbal communication.'²¹⁹ It is the right side which discerns emotional tones and verbal inflections, all the qualities according to Newberg and d'Aquili which 'give spoken language its subtle shades of meaning.'²²⁰ Discerning the grain of the voice is the concern of the right hemisphere. It is not what is being said particularly, but how it is heard and how the emotion of the speaker communicates with the listener.

Hemispheric traits, some research has shown, seem to be gender determined. Summarising this 'sexually determined' research, Bumbar notes that '[w]omen react intuitively and make judgements on the basis of feelings. They show a right hemisphere dominance. Men...analyze and make judgements on the basis of conclusions. They display a left hemisphere dominance.'²²¹

²¹⁷ d'Aquili/Newberg. *The Mystical Mind*, p.p.22.

²¹⁸ Christine Temple, *The Brain: An Introduction to the Psychology of the Human Brain and Behaviour*, London: Penguin, 1993, p.48.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

²²⁰ Andrew Newberg/Eugene d'Aquili, *Why God Won't Go Away*, New York, Ballantine Books, 2001, p.22.

²²¹ Paul E. Bumbar, 'Notes on Wholeness' in *Aesthetic Dimensions of Religious Education*, eds. Gloria Durka/Joan Marie Smith, New York: Paulist Press, 1979, p. 52.

To summarise, the human ear lives by three modes of existence: gathering in cosmic, non-human sounds; secondly, in attuning oneself to one's own voice and to human ambient voices, the ear is a news bulletin of personal and communicative force; finally, in its transformative capabilities, the human ear, in the solitary labyrinth of aural silence, can transcend the very world in which it lives. All of human existence, therefore, is touched by the auditory sense.

Theological implications

This dissertation argues for the presence and restoration of the sense of hearing as a prime mover in the revelation of God to humanity. What do we hear that is new is the question that theosony poses? The answer is everything and nothing; because theosony refers to the song of the triune God alone, it is not manipulable but manipulates. God controls and influences what is heard in the divine name cleverly and skillfully. In describing the religious effect of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's music, Karl Barth so well defines the precise experience which theosony embraces in all its *human*, limited capacity: 'Mozart...does not reveal in his music any doctrine and certainly not himself...Mozart does not wish to *say* anything: he just sings and sounds. Thus he does not force anything on the listener, does not demand that he make any decisions or take any positions...' ²²² Through the receptive, open ear, God does not whisper any particular dogma nor is there any trace of the grain of God's own voice; God does not announce anything that is distinctively human. The Godhead freely sounds in the hollow of the ears of anyone who chooses, unconditionally, to hear.

In hemispheric concepts, theosony, listening for God in the universe, argues for a right-hemisphere approach to God. The right cerebral hemisphere is the seat of emotion,

music, narrative and improvisation. Music and religion are closely and complexly related. In fact, Joachim Braun tells us, the Bible was ‘considered the main source for the study of music in ancient Israel.’²²³

Applying these theories of right/emotional, left/rational processes to Western Christian theology leads to the claim that it is left hemisphere routes which have become dominant to the point of being overwhelming. Ultimately, however, polarisation of right and left hemisphere function is unhelpful. In terms of theology, there is no part of the human body or psyche that is deaf to, or bereft of, God’s revelatory self-disclosure. It is important, indeed necessary, to compartmentalise; humanity likes to categorise. However, there is a danger of rigid dualism, which is ironic when discussing the ear part of whose function is to provide balance.

Alfred Tomatis discovered that ‘there was a marked difference between voice quality when controlled with the right versus the left ear, the right ensuring much better quality...the right ear is the ‘leading ear.’²²⁴ The right ear is connected with the left side of the brain, the left ear with the right-hand side. Sounds, heard through the right ear in the right-handed person, tend to be processed rationally by the left hemisphere, whereas sounds received to the right temporal lobe are understood and interpreted emotionally as environmental sounds. This is in synchronicity with right/left hand function and perception.

Hemispheric theories have symbolic implications for praying through the body. The sound of God is listened for and through an alignment of both ears where there is a democracy of hemispheres. A government of the hemispheres is in conversation with a

²²² Karl Barth, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Ltd., 1986, p. 38.

²²³ Joachim Braun, ‘Music’ in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 927.

government of the senses in the work of theosony, which is the business of God's self-presentment to humanity. It is the symbolic image of the 'third ear' which is the leading ear attuned to the Word of God. In making sense of divine Revelation, the circle is tripartite: firstly there are the impulses of the third ear which, in turn, orally and aurally energise the inner brain and mind where the love and salvation of God resides which finally returns to rest in human response and obedience. 'No matter how you look at it, there is no way out of the circle of the audible.'²²⁵

To re-iterate, humanity listens to God then starts at the beginning: listening is an inherently human activity; it affects our biological, emotional, cognitive and spiritual responses. How and what we listen to is, was and always will be crucial. 'At the magical stage [of early man's relation to the world] the crucial organ was the ear, the crucial sense the sense of hearing.'²²⁶ This primitive primacy of the aural still remains unchanged yet unchallenged; memories, after all, are profoundly elusive but they are full of sounds. The ear powerfully governs the emotions in relationship. Anthony Storr attributes this to a depth inherent in the functions of the ear. 'At an emotional level, there is something "deeper" about hearing than seeing; and something about hearing other people which fosters human relationships even more than seeing them.'²²⁷ The elusive profundity of listening nurtures and enhances the relationship, which is fulfilled in the ultimate truth of Christianity: God's self-disclosure.

²²⁴ Madaule, *When Listening Comes Alive*, p.35.

²²⁵ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician*, p.84. In drawing on musical analogy, one point is relevant. Music, even to the pure listener, is exclusive and selective. Hearing and listening is the realm of the large majority of humanity and is not exclusive. There is nothing in hearing and listening outside of the simple realisation of grace and the good of it all.

²²⁶ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician*, .p.73.

²²⁷ Storr, *Music and the Mind*, p. 26.

Listening according to Roland Barthes

There are three types of listening according to Barthes: The first is an orientated listening which is *alert* to certain *indices* or external sounds. The second is a deciphering where the index for external sound becomes sign. '[W]hat is listened for is no longer the *possible* (the prey, the threat, or the object of desire which occurs without warning), it is the *secret*: that which, concealed in reality, can reach human consciousness only through a code, which serves simultaneously to encipher and to decipher that reality.'²²⁸ The third is listening as a psychoanalyst or psychotherapist.

Chapter Six proposes a definition of theosonic types of listening experience which is closely parallel to Barthes: a *cosmic* theosony which is alertness to sounds present in the environs; *kerygmatic* theosony which deciphers in such sounds a deeper meaning, a message of God; *silent* theosony which reveals a mysterious presence of God in the act. Given that these three theosonic experiences are yet to be defined, a brief word of suggested connection is appropriate here: The first type of keen alert listening is God's gift to all creation, human and beast alike. For Barthes this hearing is 'essentially linked to evaluation of the spatio-temporal situation (to which humanity adds sight, animals smell).'²²⁹ Biologically speaking, Barthes outlines the function of the listening ear as follows: 'Morphologically... the ear...is motionless, fixed poised like that of an animal on the alert; like a funnel leading to the interior, it receives the greatest possible number of impressions and channels them toward a supervisory center of selection and decision;

²²⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, p.249. ²²⁸ It is interesting that Barthes italicizes 'secret' thus emphasizing this concept of secrecy which is a feature of the intimate as stated in Chapter One. See also a definition of 'intimate' in *The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus*, p.530 that highlights the secrecy of such a relationship. In theological parlance, such an implication of intimate secrecy is particularly appropriate as a metaphor for God's self-disclosure.

²²⁹ Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms*, p. 246.

the folds and detours of its shell seem eager to multiply the individual's contact with the world yet to reduce this very multiplicity by submitting it to a filtering trajectory; for it is essential — and this is the role of such initial listening — that what was confused and undifferentiated becomes distinct and pertinent.'²³⁰ It is against 'the domiciliary symphony'²³¹ of the familiar environment that hearing begins its selective process. Domiciliary listening is *cosmic*, earthed, and mundane.

Barthes explains that 'this second listening is religious: it *ligatures* the listening subject to the hidden world of the gods, who, as everyone knows, speak a language of which only a few enigmatic fragments reach men, though it is vital – cruelly enough – for them to understand this language'.²³² This second religious listening resonates with the kerygmatic theosonic experience: the wonder of ambient sounds is the pure proof of the work of the Holy Spirit, whose work has just begun in the space between cosmic and silent theosony and is manifest in kerygmatic theosony. Barthes' third act of listening is where unconscious messages from a client to a listening analyst transfer. The analogy here between psychoanalytical listening and theological listening has led to interesting debates. In both disciplines, this listening has been referred to as 'listening with the third ear'.²³³ Indeed this was the title of a book, published in 1949, on the listening role of the analyst to the spoken words of the analysand. In the words of Reik: 'The voice that speaks to him [the analyst], speaks low, but he who listens with a third ear hears also what is expressed noiselessly...It can hear voices from within the self that are otherwise

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 248.

²³¹ Ibid., p.247.

²³² Ibid., p.249.

²³³ See Theodor Reik, *Listening with the Third Ear*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Co., 1949 and 'Listening for God with the Third Ear' by Frederic A. Alling, in *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Winter 2000, pp. 305-317.

not audible.’²³⁴ The voice that the analyst listens for is the unconscious mental reality which is ‘not just a theoretical concept, but a vitally important part of our mental apparatus which communicates clearly.’²³⁵ Alling, and more indirectly, Barthes, rightly call for more dialogue between the theologian and the psychoanalyst.²³⁶ Silent theosony is a listening to God with the third ear, craning one’s ears to hear voices from within that are otherwise inaudible. But theosony does suggest a pre-listening, pre-conceptual state, which is religious and is an aural manifestation of God’s grace, love and saving voice for humanity.²³⁷

2.3 Neurotheology

Are there any links between the workings of the brain and God? This question has implications for theosony. One way or another, according to some neurosurgeons, humanity yearns for a relationship with God. Given and accepted, then, the argument is that the ear is a powerful medium for the bringing to fruition of that relationship. Attention to the biological workings of the ear is the holistic, organic way to relating to God.

Neurotheology and psychotheology are contemporary scientific disciplines that try to articulate a concrete, biological/psychological/ theological synthesis although not necessarily restricted to the aural sense. The parameters of the arguments of one particular school of neurotheological thought are outlined to support a physiological

²³⁴ Reik, *Listening with the Third Ear*, p. 146.

²³⁵ Alling, ‘Listening for God with the Third Ear’, p.316.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.317. This article is plausible in many ways. However, it debates, despite the title of the article, from a psychiatric premise primarily. He suggests three pathways by which messages to the analyst from the analysand can be heard. The theological discussion is undeveloped particularly as the analyst and analysand are communicating through concrete spoken words. The theological discussion has more to do with intuition, in other words, the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, I feel.

²³⁷ See Chapters Six and Seven.

component to religious experience. This harks back to the ear's natural ability to measure and differentiate the sounds heard, already stated above. To reiterate, information from an ear event is more reliable than from visual input. The eye's capacity to inform is *ten times more restricted* than the ear's. The proof of this hypothesis is presented scientifically by Berendt²³⁸ who claims that the 'ear thus registers ten octaves and the eye just one.'²³⁹ As stated above, the eye perceives seven primary colours; the ear can hear infinite nuances of sound according to the frequency received through the outer, middle and inner ear.

Neurotheology²⁴⁰ is a science that presents the physiological arguments for religion. It is a neuropsychological approach to religious phenomenology. The particular school of thought that is presented here is that of Andrew Newburg and Eugene d'Aquili.²⁴¹ The following examination of this school is for its own sake rather than being in parallel to the argument of this thesis. Their biology of belief is 'a hypothesis that suggests that spiritual experience, at its very root, is intimately interwoven with human biology. Biology, in some way, compels the spiritual urge.'²⁴² This is of course a fascinating commentary on the Roman Catholic idea of grace building on nature. It is in the elusive, intangible realm of the mind that such transcendental experiences are monitored. In Newburg's and d'Aquili's terminology, 'it is always the mind that moves, regardless of whether it is experiencing our usual baseline reality or whether it is

²³⁸ See Berendt, *The Third Ear*, pp.16/17.

²³⁹ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p. 17.

²⁴⁰ James Ashbrook coined Neurotheology in 1984 in an article he published in *Zygon* entitled 'Neurotheology: The Working Brain and the Work of Theology'.

²⁴¹ Newberg and d'Aquili used scanning techniques to map the brains of Tibetan Buddhist and Franciscan nuns. The scans photographed blood flow – indicating levels of neural activity – in each subject's brain at the moment of intense spiritual experience. They found that in a chunk of the brain's LEFT parietal lobe – the orientation association – (this is the area responsible for drawing the line between the physical self and the rest of existence) - requires a constant stream of neural information flowing in from the senses. When the blood flow was dramatically reduced – deafferentation – the brain was deprived of information needed to draw line between the self and the world, the subject would experience a sense of limitless awareness of merging into infinite space.

experiencing God.’²⁴³ There are areas of the brain associated with the five senses, which are set in motion by motor behaviours; in other words, the brain can permit God’s radical free self-communication. Christianity believes that God created and sustains humanity – God created the brain. But everyone must also be open to the notion that the brain quite naturally and efficiently could develop, in light of God’s plan of salvation, the mechanisms for religious experience.²⁴⁴

This is important and relevant to theosony; after all, the work of theosony is to prove that the ear, efficiently attuned to God in prayer, prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit, is a highly efficient midwife and operator. But as Newburg and d’Aquili rightly assert ‘tracing spiritual experience to neurological behavior does not disprove its realness. You would need auditory processing to hear His voice...and cognitive processing to make sense of His message.’²⁴⁵ They suggest that ‘as far as we can determine, all human experience enters human awareness via the function of the brain. It certainly seems reasonable to reach the conclusion that the brain is the structure that gives all of us our thoughts, feelings and experiences.’²⁴⁶

If there is a God, our experience of what we mean by God must pass, *via* the senses, through the mind/brain. Speaking in non-psychological, non-physiological terms, religion, Herbert Farmer believes that it is ‘a great reinforcement...a necessary function of human personality in its life task...a feeling of confidence and optimism, a stimulus to

²⁴² Newburg/d’Aquili, *Why God Won’t Go Away*, p.8.

²⁴³ Newburg/d’Aquili, *The Mystical Mind*, p.120.

²⁴⁴ In Feb. 2001, the Vice President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, the Vatican’s leading expert on bioethical and medical issues, Bishop Elio Sgreccia, responds: ‘You can’t say it’s the brain that causes prayer. That would be confusing the effect with the cause. As for the idea that the feeling of being in God’s presence might simply be the result of the brain’s activity indicates a mistaken, materialistic view of human actions.’

²⁴⁵ Newburg/d’Aquili, *Why God Won’t Go Away*, p.37.

²⁴⁶ Newburg/d’Aquili, *The Mystical Mind*, p.44.

the will to go forth confidently to conquer its world, a reinforcement of the hold upon the mind of moral ideals'.²⁴⁷ The theological argument rests, Farmer states, 'on the assertion that religion is beneficial in its effects, not temporarily and incidentally, but in a very profound, creative and indispensable way.'²⁴⁸ The discovery of spiritual truth 'provides believers with a powerful sense of control over the otherwise uncontrollable whims of fate...that goodness rules the world, and even that death can be ultimately conquered...If God is not real, neither is our most powerful source of hope and redemption...it is a matter of existential survival.'²⁴⁹

To summarise: the sign is the secret. In theosonic listening, God is the secret which, hidden in reality, can reach the deepest human consciousness. It is the unravelling of that secret code, enciphering and deciphering God that is crucial to this thesis. Barthes lines up the aural and visual codes on equal terms: 'Here...begins the human: I listen the way I read, i.e., according to certain codes.'²⁵⁰

2.4 'The grain of the voice'²⁵¹

*'This delicate little Aeolian harp that
nature has set at the entrance to our
breathing is really a sixth sense, which
followed and surpassed the others. It quivers*

²⁴⁷ Herbert H. Farmer, *Towards Belief in God*, London: Student Christian Movement Press Ltd., 1942, p.169.

⁷³ Ibid., p.175.

²⁴⁹ Newberg/d'Aquili, *Why God Won't Go Away*, p.164.

²⁵⁰ Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms*, p.245.

²⁵¹ Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice*, p. 184.

*at the merest movement of metaphor; it
permits human thought to sing.'*²⁵²

It has been argued above that the ear is profoundly sensitive and expressive in being and existence. The voice is likewise a virtuoso player in the orchestral work of the ear. This section will consider the human voice, the unique timbre, the grain of the voice, the eroticism of the voice, which is 'really a sixth sense'.²⁵³ The purpose is to prepare the way for Chapter Three which presupposes a spirituality of the anthropological ear. Vocal sounds are perceived by the ear of both the maker of the sounds and the listener, in other words, hearing and the voice are totally related in the self and one's encounter with the external world of things and people. The voice is all sounds, particularly articulate sound, uttered through the mouth of sentient beings. In human beings, these sounds naturally emitted in speech, shouting and singing are often characteristic of the utterer. The timbre of the voice is always dynamic and in flux. Classical Western singing technique has often tried to work against the natural voice.²⁵⁴ A voice therapist, Paul Newham suggests that in European Classical singing 'the aim...has always been to reduce or even eliminate the changes in timbre between one register and another.'²⁵⁵

Only the sounds, which the human brain can imagine, create and make sense of, can be physically birthed through the auricular system that is the voice. The brain

²⁵² Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 197.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

²⁵⁴ My own experience of classical singing is a proof of this. Two weeks before my final singing diploma examination in 1969, I felt, painfully, that this voice which I was singing through was not real or the timbre that was natural to my being. (There were four of us doing this examination and we all had an identical timbre and technique which directly reflected the ideals of our vocal teacher, Margaret Dillon. I consulted her about this, suggesting that the true grain of my voice was a symbiosis of Gregorian chant timbre, *sean-nós* style and of course, classical technique. She not only refused to dialogue but also forbade me to enter the examination and withdrew access to the appointed accompanist. However, having procured my own accompanist, I proceeded to take the diploma examination in my own voice and was awarded the highest marks of all four of us!

controls all sounds made by the human voice. The brain is the voice. It is also the human brain that controls the production and understanding of the organised sounds, which is language. 'The singer or player cannot help hearing what he sings or plays: the circle must be closed.'²⁵⁶

The organ of the voice is the larynx.²⁵⁷ It is a cavity at the upper end of the windpipe containing the vocal cords. It forms part of the air passage to the lungs. The two pairs of membranous folds in the larynx are called vocal cords. The upper pair, called false vocal cords, is redundant in the production of vocal sound; it is the lower pair, called the true vocal cords, which is activated to produce sound when air from the lungs passes through them. The edges of these true vocal cords are drawn tense as the breath from the lungs makes them vibrate, producing vocal sound. Sounds from the larynx then proceed to the organ on the floor of the mouth, the tongue. The ear has three functions,²⁵⁸ the voice has two: that of taste and, in God-created humanity, of speech.

In girls between ten and fourteen years old, the vocal cords increase from about fifteen millimetres to seventeen millimetres. This lowers the range of the voice. Vocal timbre changes for women also during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause. The larynx increases, which allows access to lower sounds. The vocal cords of a boy increase up to twenty-three millimetres His larynx not only increases but also drops in position

²⁵⁵ Newham, *The Singing Cure*, p. 125. Furthermore, he rightly concludes, this has led to the six strata specialization in classical singing of soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone and bass.

²⁵⁶ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician*, p.12.

²⁵⁷ The following point is an interesting aside although it does not merit inclusion in the main text. For a complete exposure of the point see Arthur Samuel Joseph, , *The Sound of the Soul: Discovering the Power of Your Voice*, Florida: Health Communications Inc., 1996, pp. 30-32. Joseph suggests here that there is a connection between the larynx and the cervix. A visual representation of the larynx immediately suggests the image of the cervix or vagina to the eye of the beholder. Furthermore, Joseph points out that the tissue from which the larynx and cervix are made is similar. '[I]f you were to examine a slide of a woman's cervix and a slide of her larynx at both 14 days and three days before the onset of menses, you would see the identical mucosal count, so closely are these organs interconnected.'p.32.

²⁵⁸ See p.74 here.

and the resonating cavities in the chest and pharynx enlarge. To summarise the biology of the voice therefore is to say that for the voice to live and speak, another *miraculous*²⁵⁹ coalition is evoked: the lungs create the breath which glides through the vocal cords in the larynx; sound lands on the tongue which moulds the sounds into verbal sculpture.

Roland Barthes, addressing the timbre, which he calls the ‘grain’, highlights the power of the voice in terms of desire, emotion and eroticism. Stirred and given sound by the life-giving breath, which never rests in life, the voice bursts forth out of the silence and arrests both the voiced and the listener. The timbre is always in flux; register changes in the voice are directly in the control of everyone and can be manipulated according to the chosen shape of the voice’s resonators in the chest, the larynx, the mouth, the nasal cavities and the skull. Just as a cathedral space or a concert hall has a fundamental timbre, so too, every voice possesses its own unique vocal resonators. This timbre is the grain of the voice. According to Barthes, ‘[t]he *grain* of the voice is not indescribable (nothing is indescribable), but I don’t think that it can be defined scientifically, because it implies a certain erotic relationship between the voice and the listener. One can therefore describe the grain of a voice, but only through metaphors.’²⁶⁰

When the voice ceases to affect in a profound way, it is imaged by Barthes to be white and cold without fulfilling its innate capacity for love and eroticism. Every human voice is connected to desire; every act of the voice is an act of the erotic. ‘There is no human voice which is not an object of desire...there is no neutral voice – and if sometimes that neutrality, that whiteness of the voice occurs, it terrifies us, as if we were

²⁵⁹ This is again harking back to the beginning of this chapter where both Zuckerkandl and Elliot use this word to describe the organ of hearing and the listening process. See p.62.

²⁶⁰ Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice*, p.184.

to discover a frozen world, one in which desire was dead. ²⁶¹ The word ‘erotic’ is understood in contemporary linguistics as pertaining to the arousal of sexual love or marked by strong sexual desire. ‘Erotic’ derives its meaning from the world of the gods. Eros is the Greek god of love. For the Romans, Eros was identified as Cupid. Love is the business of the god who is the harbinger of peace. The Encyclopedia of Mythology defines Eros as the one ‘who “brings harmony to chaos”, and permits life to develop...He was armed with a bow and arrows whose prick stirred the fires of passion in all hearts.’²⁶²

What does the concept of voice mean in Scripture? Cruden’s Concordance answers: ‘By this word is not only understood the voice of a man or beast, but all other sorts of sounds, noises, or cries. And even thunder is also called the voice of God.’²⁶³

In ancient culture, according to Thomas Allen Seel, the Greek word *phone* ‘could be made by animals, nature, humankind, and by the Godhead.’²⁶⁴ In other words, this one word for voice could mean a cosmic voice, a human voice or the voice of God. In the Book of Revelation, for instance, *phone* can represent ‘both vocally and non-vocally produced sound. It can be literally translated to mean ‘a sound’ or ‘a voice’...’²⁶⁵

2.5 ‘Vox Fortis in aure interiore’ – Paul of Tarsus (d.c. 67) Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and Patrick of Ireland (d.c. 461).

This chapter has concentrated, so far, on three areas: the biology, the physiology of the ear and the voice; some considerations about the overlap between science, biology and theology and some methods of listening. All findings, scientific and biological, although

²⁶¹ Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms*, pp.279, 280.

²⁶² *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, p. 132.

²⁶³ Cruden’s *Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*, p. 724.

²⁶⁴ Thomas Allen Seel, *A theology of music for worship derived from the Book of Revelation*, Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1995, p.95.

²⁶⁵ Seel, *A theology of music for worship*, p.93.

not exhaustive, favoured the sense of hearing as more all-embracing, consistent, reliable in receiving information; furthermore, this aural sense is underdeveloped and underused in human life experience. Much of the work to come in Part Two of this dissertation is situated in Sacred Scripture. The most appropriate preparatory transition to this second part is through the audio-centric theology of two remarkable saints of hearing; Paul and Augustine. St. Patrick's story in its resonances with both saints is relevant too.

For Paul, graces are all the favours of God and what these 'have in common is that they are the work of the Holy Spirit'.²⁶⁶ The listening experience is always a graced charism in the Rahnerian sense of the word: it is always new, surprising and shocking. Paul believes that 'these special charismata need not necessarily always concern extraordinary mystical things. The simplest help, the most commonplace service can be a charisma of the Spirit.'²⁶⁷ 'For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life' (Eph. 2:9).

There are two important points about the Pauline corpus. Firstly, these letters themselves are essentially oral/aural preaching and teaching. The saint of an aural, theosonic conversion wrote letters *faute de mieux* in the impossibility of being physically present to address the first Christians who came to listen.

Secondly, Paul's letters, unlike the four gospels, did not have a story line to captivate the listeners. Paul wrote down his own story of God. As James Dunn puts it, 'by their very nature, Paul's letters are highly personal communications, not dispassionate treatises.'²⁶⁸ To effect this communication, he relied on the power of the vocal sounds to arrest and carry meaning. To interest the listener, Paul drives home his theology by

²⁶⁶ Thierry Maertens OSB, *Bible Themes-A Source Book*, Belgium: Biblica, 1964, vol. I, p.413.

²⁶⁷ Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church*, p.47.

repeating words and ideas over and over again.²⁶⁹ These forms or techniques of repetition, Achtemeier calls ‘clues to organization so the listener would not simply be lost in the forest of verbiage’.²⁷⁰ As Dundes put it, Paul ‘recognized the importance, the power, of both the oral word and the written epistle in his efforts to proselytize prospective Christians.’²⁷¹ ‘So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter’ (2 Thess. 2:15).

Paul believed that the Gospel was pronounced in advance by the prophets in scripture (Rom. 1:1-2). Kelber maintains that the Gospel for Paul ‘is constitutionally and operationally defined in oral terms. Not by association with writing...’²⁷² The important point here is that Paul believed in a fundamental auditory power inherent in the Gospel. The message is through the upshot it has on its hearers, speakers, and readers. ‘The “word of life,” ...is less a message about life than the power of life transmitted by the word...By endowing the Gospel with power, the apostle has assigned to it the very quality which is consistent with its oral operation.’²⁷³

This very passage from the apostle Paul was to be the culmination of an aural experience of the Holy Spirit of another saintly aural conversion; that which *St. Patrick* underwent. Patrick describes an aural mystical encounter with the Spirit. One occasion,

²⁶⁸ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1998, p. 8.

²⁶⁹ For an excellent overview of the various forms of repetition employed in Pauline literature, see Paul A. Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’ in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, pp.22-25. Also see G. A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980, p. 35 and W.J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, p. 44.

²⁷⁰ Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’, p.22.

²⁷¹ Alan Dundes, *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore*, New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 1999, p. 16.

²⁷² Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition*, Mark, Paul, and Q, Philadelphia/Fortress Press, 1983, p.144.

on being drawn into himself, he not only observed a Spirit presence praying within him, but the Spirit clearly spoke. 'He *spoke*...saying that he was the Spirit. In this way, [aurally], I learned by experience...' ²⁷⁴ At that moment, the words of St. Paul to the Romans above flooded his memory. Once again, the supreme example of which is to come in Chapter Seven in the experience of Mary of Magdala, the eye fails to recognise; the ear hears the voice instantly, obeys and believes.

Paul is not content to rely on the written word. The medium he chooses very deliberately to convince the original listener and the contemporary reader/listener is the sense of hearing. Kelber has the final word. 'It is fair to say that in Pauline theology the ear triumphs over the eye.' ²⁷⁵

To summarise, therefore, Paul's theology is a theology of the ear. First, Paul's own conversion was, as were Augustine's and Patrick's after him, around a call – a call 'through [God's] grace (Gal. 1:15). God's call is God's power to heal, to give life and to call into existence by name all of creation. It is this personal, as opposed to dogmatic, experience that makes Pauline writings still so captivating. Paul clearly enunciates that it is the Holy Spirit who intervenes from above and below in this salvific process; from below he intervenes on our behalf to God, from above, he communicates our needs to God and in turn reveals the theosonic response from God. The Spirit 'helps us in our weakness...intercedes with sighs too deep for words (Rom.8.26), and God 'knows what is the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:27).

The thought of Augustine is introduced with the quotation already cited in the title of this section: *Vox Fortis in aure, in vocem interiorem*: 'For God does not speak with

²⁷³ Ibid., p.145.

²⁷⁴ Joseph Duffy, *Patrick in his own words*, Dublin: Veritas, 2000, p. 18. Italics mine.

man through the medium of matter, with vibrations of air causing His voice to be heard by the ears of the body...But He speaks by means of the truth itself, and to all who can hear with the mind rather than with the body.’²⁷⁶ Gibb and Montgomery are in agreement about the *Confessiones*: this spiritual autobiography is ‘in an unchallenged position, as a religious classic, as a classic of Theology and...of Psychology.’²⁷⁷ Augustinian scholar, Frederick Van Fleteren attests to its continuing popularity and importance: ‘It is a literary, theological, and philosophical masterpiece. The most studied of all Augustine’s works in the twentieth century, it continues to attract the attention of historians, theologians, philosophers, philologists, and psychologists’.²⁷⁸

Augustine’s autobiography – the *Confessiones* – is also a theology of the human, physical senses and specifically of the auditory sense. Augustine knew the business of the ear, physiologically, psychologically and theologically. The underlying message of the thirteen books is one of desire for right listening. Every human being impregnated with *desiderium*, ‘the constant theme of Augustine’s teaching’²⁷⁹, and deeply desires to fulfil this pure holy yearning. Incidentally, this yearning, longing, desiring is in tune with contemporary semiotics as presented in Roland Barthe’s notion of the ‘grain’ of the voice. Until the moment of Augustine’s conversion, he blocked his ears to the sound of God.

²⁷⁵ Kelber, *The Oral and Written*, p. 143.

²⁷⁶ Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk. XI, Ch. 2, trans. Walsh/Mohan, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1952, p.188, 189.

²⁷⁷ *The Confessions of Augustine*, eds. Gibb and Montgomery, p.xi.

103 Frederick Van Fleteren, ‘Confessiones’ in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999. P.227.

²⁷⁹ See John Burnaby, *Amor Dei – A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, (1938), The Canterbury Press: Norwich, 1991, p.97. As original discourse of Augustine, see *In Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos Tractatus* x.,4.6.

St. Augustine did not, unlike St. Paul or St. Patrick, prioritise one particular sense.²⁸⁰ For him, all the God-created senses were equal. Like the entire creation, the body with its five ‘bodily senses’ replies to Augustine’s vital questioning; ‘are you of this world?’ ‘No’, the ‘whole fabric of the world’ - the earth and all within it – answered ‘I am not He but He has made me’ (*Conf.* 10:9). For ‘the founder of the Western Spirit’,²⁸¹ the five physical senses are pathways to the Creator/God. ‘The outer man...is divided into five parts: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. But...it is hardly necessary to question these five senses...[f]or what one of them informs us also applies to the rest’ (*De trin.* 11:1).²⁸² But the information supplied by the bodily senses in the pursuit of the love of God is inadequate. True theological love is embraced in a ‘certain’ sense which is a ‘certain voice...where he utters words that time does not speed away’ (*Conf.* 10:6:8). It is all about the soul’s pilgrimage of longing and love of God, whether through ear or eye.

The Word of the Master is the true voice that teaches. ‘[I]n the eternal Truth...[t]here, O Lord, I hear your voice speaking to me, since he who teaches us speaks to us’ (*Conf.* 11:8:10). Learning to listen in truth and faith to that voice demands rigorous discipline and training: ‘Therefore, he gave them the words, as he said, which the Father gave him; but when they received those [words] spiritually, not outwardly in their ears, but inwardly in their hearts, they have received in truth because they have known in truth.’²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Although he favors the testimony of the eyes when he admits that ‘this sense of the body far excels the rest and comes closer to spiritual vision...’ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. S. McKenna, C.S.S.R., Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963. p.316. Book 11, chapter , p.316.

²⁸¹ Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000 - Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1993, p.119.

²⁸² Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. S. McKenna,, p.316.

²⁸³ *The Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine Tractates on the Gospel of John*, Vol. 90, trans. By John W. Rettig, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996, tr. 106.6, p.272.

Listening to the Word made flesh is bypassing the biological ear in favour of the heart. Six words define Augustine's aural theosony: heart, truth, faith, voice, listening and learning. 'Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice' (Jn. 18:37). In his commentary on this verse only three things matter; listening, obeying and believing. 'He listens, of course, with the inner ears, that is, he listens to²⁸⁴ my voice, and this would mean just the same as if he were to say, 'believe me'.²⁸⁵

The ear of the heart is tuned to the heart of heaven; it has a direct line to the joyful, soundful festivities of 'the house of God' Augustine promises, provided cosmic noise does not drown it out. '[A] certain sweet and melodious strain strikes on the ears of the heart, provided only the world do not drown the sounds' (*En. in Ps.* 42).²⁸⁶ We must pursue the sound field and walk therein even though the ultimate prognosis is bleak as we hear the sounds of the groaning of human frailty. However, if we walk 'for a brief while...within reach of that sound...we may catch something from that *house of God*' (*En. in Ps.* 42).²⁸⁷ Conversion is precisely through 'the sweetness of that inward spiritual sound to feel contempt for all outward things' (*En. in Ps.* 42).²⁸⁸

One cannot but conclude that Augustine was aware of the biology of the ear as well as its innate possibility for conversation with the divine. He was also sensitive to maternal bonding. In *De trinitate*, he makes a claim for the sense of sight of a mother, given that she gazes on anything with love and passion, '[W]hatever they gaze upon with great delight' (*De trin.* 11:2:5), will directly affect the fruit of her womb. Examples of this

²⁸⁴ There is a footnote at this point by the translator which runs 'i.e., obeys. In Latin 'listen to' has the same double meaning it has in English.' See translation by John W. Rettig, p.24.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Tr. 115.4, p.24.

²⁸⁶ *Exposition on the Book of Psalms by S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847, Vol 2, p. 189.

²⁸⁷ Rettig, p.189,190.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.190.

phenomenon, the bishop continues are commonplace but the most trustworthy tale of this visual power of will is found in Genesis (30:37-41). '[I]n order that the sheep and she-goats might give birth to speckled offspring, Jacob had rods of various colors placed before them in the watering-troughs, to look at as they drank, during the period when they had conceived' (*De trin.* 11:2:5). Since the visual sense is just a model of other senses for Augustine²⁸⁹, could we infer that an expectant mother who bathes herself in the sound of God in prayer would also surround her embryonic child with those same sounds? The aural message, the messenger and the receiver are united momentarily in that sound field. The sound that is heard is 'what is proper to the soul alone... the will'²⁹⁰(*De trin.* 11: 2:5).

Five considerations: conversion, rhetoric, narrative, conversation, and wisdom.

Augustine's own conversion in the midst of psychological turmoil was auditory. God called Augustine one day in late summer or early autumn of 386 in a Milanese garden in a voice, which he could only describe analogically. '[A] voice *like* that of a boy or a girl, I know not which.'²⁹¹ This incessant mantra – *tolle lege, tolle lege*,²⁹² take read, take read – '[h]e certainly regarded ...as the vehicle of God's message.'²⁹³ From the moment Augustine read *aloud*²⁹⁴ the true story of God's incarnate word, that story became the story of Augustine's true self. As the sound of the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ resonated through him, the ego is silenced and *metanoia* vibrates. 'Hitherto God had spoken to him by His Word, or by the words of others. Now, as Augustine believed, he

²⁸⁹ See quote above, fn. 86.

²⁹⁰ Although Augustine uses a visual analogy here, as we remarked earlier, he intended any observations on the visual to be applied to the other four senses.

²⁹¹ *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. John K. Ryan, New York, Doubleday, 1960, p.202 Italics mine.

²⁹² *The Confessions of Augustine*, eds. Gibb and Montgomery, viii, 29, p. 230.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.lvi, fn.

received a direct call.’²⁹⁵ Augustine’s conversion story, like St. Paul’s before him and his Irish counterpart, Patrick, is aural midwifery. As Karen Armstrong puts it: Augustine’s ‘final conversion was an affair of *Sturm und Drang*, a violent wrench from his past life and a painful rebirth, which has been characteristic of Western religious experience.’²⁹⁶

On this point of aural conversion, St. Patrick’s memory speaks. As with St. Paul already referred to, there are strong resonances between *St. Patrick*,²⁹⁷ and the North African Bishop of Hippo. Both lived at roughly the same period in history; both were founders of the early Christian Church. Both were spiritually transformed by the sound of God. Conversion was far less dramatic for the British missionary and bishop, who also wrote about it in his own words in Late or Vulgar Latin, also called ‘Confessio’. What is certain, however, is that his conversion and relationship with God were clearly aural. Messages from the divine Voice crowded his dreams. Once, in these dreams, when he was tempted by Satan, he shouted out frantically the name of God, *Helia*; the veils of deep depression lifted and he writes: ‘I believe I was sustained by Christ my Lord and that his Spirit was even then *calling out (clamabat)* on my behalf.’²⁹⁸ This is a powerful sonic statement and event; from the depths of his loud cry, the triune God, in turn resounded and saved. Joseph Duffy summarises Patrician aural and oral prayer thus – a mental prayer wherein practice makes perfect: ‘As the years passed, his prayer grew in intensity. He learned to listen carefully to the promptings of his mind and to see them as coming from God...’²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ See chapter three for evidence that all reading in antiquity was aloud and in company.

²⁹⁵ Gibb and Montgomery, p.lvi.

²⁹⁶ Armstrong, *A History of God*, p.119/120.

²⁹⁷ See Appendix Two in Duffy, *Patrick in his own words*, p.130. Here is a tri-lingual text, Latin, English and Irish, of a letter to the soldiers of Coroticus where Patrick declares himself to be a bishop.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

To return to St. Augustine, the second point to be made is that he was an orator *par excellence*. The art of rhetoric, which is learning to speak eloquently and to recognise the sound of one's own voice ringing in one's ear, he mastered at the age of eighteen. The spoken word was wisdom and its intention was to affect the thought and conduct of its hearers. It was not necessarily a question of what was being said but *how* it was vocalised and sounded. Describing the influence of the 'sweetness of discourse' of St. Ambrose, his baptist, Augustine admits that he 'was not anxious to learn what he said, but merely to *hear* how he said it.'³⁰⁰ So the *sound* of the spoken word takes precedence over the meaning of what is being said. The heart is opened wide by the honeyed sound. In that awakening, truth is revealed. '[A]nd when I opened up my heart to receive the eloquence with which he spoke, there likewise entered...the truths that he spoke.'³⁰¹

Thirdly, the Confessions are *stories*, told and retold. Augustine kept many a friend in thrall telling tales of his exploits in his insightful descriptions of characters and events. He felt obliged eventually to submit such tales to writing - either by himself or again through the ear of a scribe. But the stories, as in the case of Scripture,³⁰² came first. The oral/aural gave way to the silent visual. Augustine's autobiographical *Confessions*³⁰³ were in origin verbal before written, his admission of the truth of his life was heard long before it was read. As Gibb and Montgomery put it, 'Augustine wrote at the request of

³⁰⁰ Ryan, *Confessions*, p.130. Italics mine.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p.131.

³⁰² See Chapter Five here.

³⁰³ Dom Sebastian Moore cites the *Confessions* as the greatest theological autobiography ever in an important article where he states that 'theology...has to be autobiographical'. There is nothing overtly novel about this proposal, he comments and cites the fifth-century Augustinian confessions as a prime example or case in point. See *The Downside Review*, Vol.III, No. 383, April 1993, p.82.

friends who begged him to commit to writing those recollections of his former life to which he often referred in private conversation.’³⁰⁴

Fourthly, the *Confessiones* are in the form of a *conversation*. The reader, from the outset, is the ‘fly-on-the-wall’ in the conversation-space between Augustine and his God and Lord whose power and wisdom knows no boundaries or limitations, ‘*non est numerus*.’³⁰⁵ But yet, the reader is forcefully drawn into the monologue cheering Augustine on. Here he so eloquently and perfectly articulates, on humanity’s behalf, the sum total of all Christian theology, namely that ‘*fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec CHECK IS IT DONEC??? requiescat in te*’ ‘you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you’ (Conf. 1:1:1). The reader of this classic is left in no doubt that it is God who hears this longing prayer. ‘[I]t is true that the sense of God as the supreme listener is never absent.’³⁰⁶ Furthermore, the eavesdropper in Augustine’s speech to and with God comes away convinced that God is responding in the real ear of the mind. Were Augustine never to have alluded to the inner ear at all in the *Confessions*, there are signs everywhere that point to the aural: this is a conversation; human words, divinely inspired, in praise of God.

The fifth point revolves around two foundation stones of Augustinian theology. Wisdom is firstly, understanding of God, which is love of God, who is creator of the world and all that it encompasses. Humanity who walks in that world comes to hear God not through the physical senses but through empirical faith. However, the senses can be taught to discern this faith in truth and love; a discernment - by name the *Holy Spirit*. ‘When God the Holy

³⁰⁴ Gibb and Montgomery, p.ix.

³⁰⁵ *Confessions*, Bk.1:1.

Spirit...has been given to man...He inflames him with the love of God...For man does not have whence to love God, except from God' (*De trin.* 15:17:31). Making sense of all of this means acknowledging that each and every God-created sense is pure gift. The concluding book of, what theologian Rowan Williams calls 'one of Augustine's supreme theological achievements',³⁰⁷ *De Trinitate*, Book 15, is a clarification of the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling a Trinitarian relationship with God. Augustine's theology of the Holy Spirit is relevant to this work because its conclusions are closely connected to Trinitarian theology. The Holy Spirit is the *ostinato*³⁰⁸ of love in the Trinity. Secondly, wisdom is of the divine (*De trin.* 14.1.3). 'Ultimately, there is very little that wisdom is not. It embraces all the Christian values, intellectual, as well as moral, and it implies a state of perfection in which the soul is anchored in love, enjoying interior peace and habitual joy in God.'³⁰⁹

Augustinian thinking on listening, therefore, is to chart a path through the theosonic labyrinth, which leads to conversion. The Voice is to be listened to; whether it is the analogical voice of Augustine's personal conversion, or the voice of the incarnate Word of God. *In aurem interiolem* – the inner ear literally takes that voice to heart. It is, to quote Reik, 'to be very aware of what is said inside himself, "écoutes aux voix interieures"'.³¹⁰ The heart is the haven of truth and faith and therein God lies in waiting. The process is complete. 'These words of yours...the outer ear reported to the

³⁰⁶ Gibb and Montgomery, p.xv.

³⁰⁷ Rowan Williams, 'Trinitate, De', in *Augustine Through the Ages, An Encyclopedia*, p. 850.

³⁰⁸ Borrowed from musicology, the Italian term literally means persistent or obstinate, (See *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, p. 1370). It is a 'persistently repeated melodic or rhythmic figure' in any composition. See *Dictionary of Music*, eds. Isaacs/Martin, London: Hamlyn, 1982, p.278.

134 K. Conley, 'Wisdom' in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 785.

understanding mind, whose interior ear was placed close to your eternal Word' (*Conf.* 11:6:8). Up to the shock of conversion, God was waiting in the inner ear while Augustine hovered around the outer ear. Hearing the command of God to read and enunciate was the experience of hearing his own voice as the graced voice of the peace of God coming alive.

The relationship, the conversation is consummated. The *Vox Fortis* of God is the object, the message one awaits for; the hearing of it – *in aurem interiorem* – is the sense that makes sense out of it. The manner and degree of attention of mind and soul on that same grain of the voice is the power to convert, to become, to change radically, to turn towards. The convert of Milan tells us that '[n]ow is the time for turning unto God' (En. in Ps. 6).³¹¹ Augustine's powerful description of an aural theology, discerning that strong Voice of God, is a balance of natural knowledge of the physical sense of hearing and the metaphysical possibilities of that sense.

2.6 Summary

This chapter commenced by making six arguments in favour of presenting an in-depth physiology of the ear and of hearing. Understanding how the human ear, physically and miraculously, receives and entertains the sounds of the exterior world, the anthropology of the ear is important; the neglect of serious attention to this potential; the third point is about different kinds of listening; appreciating the mysterious transition that ensues when sound, at some indefinable moment, is carried to the realms of the brain and mind, helps us to understand how hearing becomes listening. Fourthly, the ear monitors the emotional

³¹⁰ *Listening With the Third Ear*, p.147.

³¹¹ *Exposition on the Book of Psalms by S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847, Vol. 1, p.38.

– love of God is emotional. Fifthly, the ear is crucial to the brain providing most of the vital energy essential, along with air and food, for its functioning. Obviously, the more attentive one is to the energy levels of the body, the more efficient will be the body that yearns to listen to the love of God. Finally the ear maintains physical – and consequently mental – equilibrium and balance. In short, the human ear is the powerhouse of both personal, physical well being, personal and emotional encounter with the Cosmos and most importantly of all, personal and emotional relationship with the triune God.

Physical deafness and dumbness do not exclude God's self-revelation. Theosony, the entire range of aural and oral perception of God's self-disclosure, is a metaphor that excludes nobody. In the words of Newman, *ad aurem interiorem* is 'a definite message from God to man distinctly conveyed by His chosen instruments.'³¹² The ear is one possible, largely unexplored, instrument of belief.

Linking the spiritual function of the ear as medium of God's self-disclosure with the biology of the ear borders on the contemporary discipline of neurotheology. One particular theory is briefly outlined more for its own sake than totally supporting the claims of this work.

Roland Barthes' 'grain' of the voice became the umbrella or the organising term for three themes which are paralleled in this work: three different acts of listening were labelled cosmic, kerygmatic and silent; some points about the singularity of the human voice were elaborated as was 'the voice' in biblical history. However, this thesis also argues for a prior, pre-listening listening that is charism or grace. Five points on an aural theology of St. Augustine brought this chapter and Part One of the dissertation to a close.

³¹² John Henry Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p.302.

In conclusion, there were two main points in this chapter: firstly, the human ear is the hearing, balancing and transformative *apparatus* that can possess different qualities such as pitch, loudness, duration, tone, colour and volume. Secondly, this human *apparatus* has one specific function, which is to symbolise the triune God in all its manifestations. This transformative function of the human ear, the theosonic auditory sense is quite distinct from anthropological listening and hearing; many people hear perfectly well yet they do not hear God breaking through the silence of their deafness. St. Augustine's prayer sums up, theosonically, the graced apparatus of prayer. '*[T]u es deus meus et dicis voce forti in aure interiore servo tuo perrumpens meam surditatem.*' 'With a mighty voice you speak to your servant in his interior ear, and break through my deafness.'³¹³

*Prayer is the little implement
Through which Men reach
Where Presence – is denied them.
They fling their speech
By means of it – in God's Ear –
If then He hear –
This sums the Apparatus
Comprised in Prayer -³¹⁴*

³¹³ Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. 13:XXIX.

³¹⁴ Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*, London/Boston: faber and faber, 1970, p.210.

Part Two: Theosony and Scripture

Chapter Three: The Reader and the Voices of the Pages

[I]ntegral transformative interpretation [of the biblical text] is an interaction between a self-aware reader open to the truth claims of the text and the text in its integrity, that is, an interaction that adequately takes into account the complex nature and multiple dimensions of the text and the reader.³¹⁵

Introduction

If the claims of the thesis to date are true, then, theosony suggests an exciting threshold of looking/hearing the Word of God in Scripture through an unnoticed, uncommon window of perception. Reading and hearing Scripture is very different from reading and hearing any other tome; it is to live in the revelation of God's self love *through* the reading/sounding/hearing. The act of reading and simultaneously listening is the very medium of divine Revelation. 'So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ' (Rom. 10:17). Here is St. Paul echoing the mighty promise of the Johannine Messiah (Jn.5: 24).

Clearly, as the biological appraisal of the ear demonstrates, the functions of the human ear extend beyond the skills and reliability of the other senses. Surely, since the ear offers such effective encounter mechanisms with the physical external world, such encounter efficiency can be applied to the relationship with God. Theosony is the missing, undiscovered category of revelatory theology and the contribution that an aural theology has to offer is considerable.

³¹⁵ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, p. 3.

Section **3.1** briefly outlines the method of literary criticism chosen here. **3.2**, discusses orality and aurality and the written Scriptures. Four implications for this oral/aural nature of Scripture occur in subsections: **3.3.1** shows Old and New Testament contingency and continuity through the very fact of orality; **3.3.2** the experience and techniques of memorisation, peculiar to oral culture are presented; **3.3.3** considers the folkloric, storytelling, poetic nature of Scripture; **3.3.4**. makes the crucial point that, in all reading and writing of Scripture, the word was simultaneously sounded and spoken aloud. The chapter concludes in section **3.4** by returning to the conversion revolution which a certain ‘new act of listening’ to the voices of the Scripture promises – such a response is a branch of literary criticism entitled ‘reader-response approach’. In summary, this chapter is an ingathering of source material.

3.1. Literary criticism

In the words of Vatican II’s ‘Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: ‘Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit’ (DV Ch.II: 9).³¹⁶ Reading Scripture, therefore, is a conversation between the speech of the Prime Author, the human scribe and the reader that takes place in the concrete here-and-now. Reading, listening and responding are all going on simultaneously. In modern biblical studies, this approach is known as synchronic exegesis.³¹⁷ The word ‘synchronic’ is an adjective made up of two Greek words; ‘*syn*’ meaning ‘together and ‘*chronos*’ meaning ‘time’. French philosopher and theorist of

³¹⁶ *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975, p.755.

³¹⁷ The diachronic approach needs to be distinguished from the synchronic. Diachronic exegesis favours the historical antecedents of the texts and has dominated critical scholarship being pre-occupied with historical sources, forms and even author’s intentions in writing. John F. A. Sawyer in *The Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* states that biblical interpretation is largely concerned with the synchronic semantics. (p.617)

symbolic forms, Paul Ricoeur claims that in figuring the sacred ‘synchronic reading is called for to complete the diachronic approach of the historical-critical method.’³¹⁸

Literary criticism turns from the author to the manuscript itself, embracing and implicating the reader/listener. Here is a hermeneutics that begins with words and ends up as meaningful literature; after all, according to theologian, Sandra Schneiders, ‘Scriptures are...literature.’³¹⁹ Scripture is both a classic and a work of art.

David Tracy defines a classic as a ‘disclosure of a reality we cannot but name truth...which surprises, provokes, challenges, shocks and eventually transforms us.’³²⁰ According to this description, Scripture is a religious classic. Therefore, it must be submitted to the criteria of the classic for understanding. ‘The religious classics of a living religious tradition will...disclose an event of manifestation by the whole of a limit-of, ground-to, horizon-to experience – in sum, an authoritative-because-classic expression of the whole that promises a wholeness to life.’³²¹ A work of art becomes a classic for the reader, Tracy believes, ‘if the reader is willing to allow that present horizon to be vexed, provoked, challenged by the claim to attention of the text itself.’³²² Every book of the Old and New Testament is a full musical score waiting to be heard in the reading; the tune is familiar; it is already off by heart. That is the God-given grace of Scripture and listening for the theme song of each book is the essence of the theory of theosony.

A dynamic conversation between text and reader is the process that takes place. Embarking on a dialogue with Scripture is to oscillate between the mysterious and the revealed. David Tracy describes this conversation with the real meaning of the text thus:

318 Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p.171.

319 Sandra M. Schneiders, “History and Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel,” in Marinus de Jonge, ed., *L’Evangile de Jean: Sources, Redaction, Theologie*, BETL 44, Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1977, p.371.

320 Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.108.

‘For conversation will demand that movement back and forth between discovery and concealment, respectful awe and critical freedom, suspicion and recovery that characterises the dialectic of authentically critical understanding.’³²³

A conversation, as we have stated again and again here, is all to do with listening. By entering into a dialogical relationship with the written word, the word communicates powerfully through an obedient listening. The reader is given a share, a part in the thoughts and the hopes of the Bible, and is in the very sharing, being prepared to impart that knowledge received. To quote Paul Ricoeur, ‘[a] text is first a link in a communicative chain.’³²⁴ To use the analogy of conversation as interpretation and understanding of any text, indeed any classic, be it event, image, symbol, person, is to ignite audible images and the auditory imagination.

As opposed to more traditional approaches to Biblical literary criticism, which, according to Schneiders: ‘refers to the exploration of such historical issues as author, time and place of composition, nature and provenance of sources, and socio-religious implications of literary forms,’³²⁵ one method conforms with the experiential approach to theology under scrutiny here. *Reader-response criticism* holds that the heart of the matter in reading Scripture is the actual human experience, not the abstract information, either didactic or historical. Understanding the Bible depends largely on the reader’s capacity to receive the depiction of human experience portrayed in the overall story about God. The real question is what can be seen in Sacred Scripture through the optic transference to the

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 105/106.

³²⁴ Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred* p.219.

³²⁵ Schneiders, ‘Hermeneutics’ in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 1158.

ear which is the essence of theosony; what can be seen through being heard which has not been heard before?

Reader-response criticism is, as is deconstructionism, an offshoot of literary criticism. Deconstructionism seeks to ‘understand the meaning conveyed by a text *to those who read it* rather than the meaning which the original author intended to convey.’³²⁶ Past concedes to the present – the future can only be determined through the reader’s ability to walk the verbal labyrinth, which is the text. The reader/hearer receives the text in the present, not in the past of the ancient writer. In contemporary post-modern, post-structuralist literary circles, Steiner tells us ‘it is the reader who produces the text...It is in the reader’s free experience and ontologically irresponsible response that worthwhile games can be played with meaning.’³²⁷ In other words, it is not what the actual texts precisely say or from what context and reference point they emanated. What is important in literary/linguistic criticism is *how* the text is actually heard and made meaningful to the present individual engaged with the text. According to Begbie, it is simply that texts no longer ‘point to authors or things or events.’³²⁸

Texts point to, and at, the reader; not the author. This is not to reduce the text to the subjectivity of the reader, or indeed the author, and all of his or her deafnesses and limitations. The majesty of a classic text is the mystery of its own achieved autonomy in the very event of its form. But the reader is brought in on the story. The text has the final say in divine revelation. In the words of Schneiders: ‘revelation...lies not in the deeds of the earthly Jesus in their historical facticity but in our encounter with him through the

326 Jeremy Begbie, “The Gospel, the arts and our culture,” in *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hugh Montefiore, London: Mowbray, 1992, p.67.

327 Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.126.

328 Begbie, “The Gospel, the arts and our culture,” p.67.

written account of those deeds.’³²⁹ This encounter is more than the reading, the listening and the silence; the Holy Spirit permits the answer to two-way, dialogical prayer which is the important and sobering principle of God’s love; ‘I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me’ (Mic. 7:7).

A methodology of theosonic biblical criticism is one of aural recognition of Scripture: Divine revelation eventuates in listening to the word as something previously heard in the mind as true; a true realisation of the spoken, sounded and listened for Word of God’s self-announcement. The reader must be ‘all ears’ and alert to the sonic communication that is ingrained in the voices of the pages. In the act of recognition, divine revelation is realised where the imaginative world of unheard divine sound federates the mundane world of human word of mouth, which has been inscribed the Book of Books. Beardslee, the pioneer of such literary criticism, has this to say on the reader/text conversation which is critical of previous theologians: ‘[T]he reader’s participation... as an intrinsic part of entry into the imaginative world of the work... is toward inclusiveness, toward the understanding or appreciation of a variety of visions, rather than toward exclusiveness, as is the tendency of so much theology.’³³⁰

To summarise on a listening-response criticism inherent in the concept of theosony is to build on the endorsements presented above and to suggest another listening model which concretises the aural in approaching Sacred Scripture. The real question is what can we hear in Scripture that we have not heard before? The secondary challenge is how to hear a *new arrangement* of an old familiar theme. The eye and the ear work closely here in tandem. The eye hands on the object to the ear in the relay race of God’s

329 Sandra M. Schneiders, “Born Anew”, *Theology Today*, 44, 1987/88, p.195.

self-revelation. It is the ear that brings the object to the winning post. These are potent actualities: a full score in music is the silent, visual reality of the sound. To the composer of the piece and to the skilled 'reader', every written dot, separate or combined, can be heard instantly in the silence of the inner ear. The ear takes over the sound bite; the meaning is carried and discovered through the sound.

The discipline which theosophy endeavours to purport is how to listen, to give attention in order to hear and understand the meaning of that delicate eternal reverberation. There is no silent reading. Even when we read silently, the words are reverberating unconsciously in the inner ear. Understanding is reached by the *sounds* which the words of Scripture make when sounded, *never* by the pattern which appears before our eyes on the silent page; written words are meaningless until, like the stemmed dots and mystifying rests that adorn the musical stave, they happen in sound. Yet we are dealing with the written word that has endured for two thousand years; the fact is that the optic can co-operate with the aural to further enhance the power, the understanding of the message. Effective reading depends on effective hearing. This also involves the idea of understanding. After the language confusion at Babel, humanity could no longer 'hear', that is, 'understand' one another. (Gen. 11:7).

3.2 The oral/aural nature of Scripture

Reciting and listening to Jewish Scripture are the foundation stones upon which Christianity was built. 'An oral tradition was both current and influential in the first century of Christianity's existence.'³³¹ 'Influential' is the important, relevant word here;

³³⁰ William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*, Philadelphia, PA:Fortress Press, 1970 p.13.

³³¹ Harry Y Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 32.

what influences is that which has ‘the power of producing effects by means of invisible or insensible means.’³³² In and through the orality, the power of the Christian message is effected in the most powerful manner. The key that unlatches the door into the written word is the secret theosonic key of orality and aurality. Put another way, there is a secret theosonic door into the world behind the text. It is the door that opens out from the eye, giving access through the halls of the ear to the inner sanctum of the praying heart. Here again is an anthropology which embraces body, mind and spirit. Silent reading is so familiar that this fact can be muted. The spoken word, not to mention the phenomenon of sound, has survived for at least twenty thousand years; only for the last four thousand years has writing been around. If the life-span of the humanity were measured in terms of an hour, writing arrived some twenty minutes ago; sounding, listening, hearing and silence, along with the God who created the world and all that is within it, were there at cosmic conception and birth. Written Scriptures surely were so slow evolving because the ear was extremely able and adept to convey God’s self-communication and love.

Oral and aural experience was nothing new in the history of biblical revelation. Hans Urs von Balthasar says: ‘Revelation never falls directly from heaven to make supra-mundane mysteries known to men. God speaks to man from within the world, taking man’s own experiences as a starting point, entering so intimately into his creature that the divine kenosis, to be fulfilled later in the incarnation, already has its beginning in the word of the old testament.’³³³ The task of this section is to explore the *reality* of the oral and aural implications of the linguistic term “word of God” as applied to Christian

³³² *The New American Dictionary*, p. 623.

³³³ Von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation*, p. 102.

scriptures.³³⁴ Firstly, it is necessary to reiterate the basic distinctions and similarities that the two words – *oral* and *aural* – embrace in this thesis.

Oral is what is uttered by the voice and spoken through the mouth, the sound produced by air passing over the vocal cords. The word is formed from the stem³³⁵ of the Latin word ‘*os/oris*’ meaning ‘mouth’. Add to this the suffix ‘*al*’ again from the Latin ‘*alis*’.³³⁶ ‘*Al*’ in this context and in the context of ‘*aur-al*’ means ‘“of or pertaining to,” “connected with,” “of the nature of,” “like,” “befitting,” etc.’³³⁷ The word ‘oral’ has theological implications, being etymologically connected to ‘*orare*’, not meaning ‘to mouth’ but ‘to pray’. The word ‘adore’ meaning to worship comes from the Latin ‘*adorare*’ literally ‘to pray to’. There is a vital distinction to be made here: Oral and verbal are not synonymous in this work. What is oral is uttered, spoken and *heard*; verbal ‘applies to the words, spoken or written, in which thought or feeling is conveyed: a *verbal picture*.’³³⁸

Reading aloud is dialogue between voice and ear. The voice *enhances* the aural experience. The written word comes alive to the world through the sound vibrations it creates in the external world. Storr makes the point that the very act of reading one’s own writings as if hearing them aloud actually enhances the final text. ‘[W]riters who “hear” their sentences as if read aloud tend to write better prose than those who merely see them.’³³⁹

³³⁴ This is further developed in Chapter Four on the oral/aural as it pertains to the Fourth Gospel.

³³⁵ Grammatically, a stem is usually, as in this case, more than a root. For example, ‘*ten*’ is the root of the Latin ‘*tendere*’ while ‘*tend*’ is the stem.

³³⁶ See Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 405.

³³⁷ *The New American Dictionary*, p. 28.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 851.

³³⁹ Storr, *Music and the Mind*, p. 41.

How many people had access to reading in antiquity? Harry Gamble proposes some statistics around literacy in the early church. '[T]he extent of literacy in the ancient church was limited. Only a small minority of Christians were able to read, surely no more than an average of 10-15 percent of the larger society and probably fewer.'³⁴⁰ The early Christians were almost totally dependent on the spoken word. What are the implications of this for the few writers of the time? The answer is obvious: 'Knowing this, ancient authors wrote their texts as much for the ear as for the eye.'³⁴¹ It was the ear that governed and perhaps still governs most understanding. 'Sound has a pervasive quality: it permeates one's whole physical existence.'³⁴²

Aural means that which is received by the organ of the ear. 'So faith comes from what is heard' (Rom. 10:17). Again, the word 'aural' is coined from the Latin '*auris*' meaning 'ear' and the same suffix '*al*', meaning 'of or connected with'. Therefore, the aural is ear-work to be heard and listened to. Words isolated or in the context of other words, are physical sounds emitted, sent forth from the vocal chords. Scriptures in early Christianity were almost exclusively auricular. The tongue of the preacher was the teacher. To listen was to learn. '[W]hat is heard must first be preached.'³⁴³ In the very act of listening to that tongue, energy and faith are restored. 'The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. (Is. 50:4). The listening experience of this Scripture servant is in theosonic realms.

The aural has to do with community and culture. Inherent in every culture is a familiar linguistic communication. 'A kind of natural rhetoric occurs in all societies and

³⁴⁰ Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, p.10.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁴² Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983, p. 146.

some kind of formal pattern is necessary for communication of any kind.’³⁴⁴ There is interplay between the teacher, the storyteller and the listener. That speaker/listener relationship and the formulation of a discourse on the actual *experience* of that relationship are at the heart of theosony. The major question implicated in the aural is how can the *sound* of Jewish Scripture be heard and imagined through the murmurs of translation, which is another resonance entirely. A Theosonic theory would address this problematic question by evoking the phenomenon of transposition in musical practice. Music transposition is when the notation or performance of music in its original pitch is altered to answer more agreeably the needs of a given situation or person. The same musical intervals assume a new sight and sound. Translation is transposition; the rendering of Scripture into the familiar language of the reader just reorders the code of the original message so that it can be deciphered and heard more easily. The transposition is made through the wisdom of the triune God who knows the perfect pitch for each one which will be an evocation from the pitch of the world to the pitch of the divine. All languages have sacred, mysterious words that are revealed through the phonetics. Soundless, such words are only half-heard.

To conclude, the aural relates to the sense of hearing. The aural is about what is perceptible to the ear. A listener attends to cosmic sound, to the voice of another, or to the voice of the page, before reading merges into listening. All keen listening is metamorphosing; theosony, which is the power to speak to and to hear God in the world, is to be completely changed in character and in form. From the act of choosing to listen in the first place, the change takes place through various kinds of listening until the ultimate

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 146.

³⁴⁴ Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’, p. 20.

change is achieved that is complete conversion and oneness in the triune God. The rapid transformation, the metamorphosis, from the chrysalis to the butterfly is aural. It is the *how* not the *what* that is the birthing process to what is really heard, understood and ultimately communicated. The artist Bridget Riley counsels the observer face-to-face: ‘[y]ou will have to learn to listen, because it is through a special sort of listening, a sort of “listening-in”, that one learns how to speak.’³⁴⁵

3.3. Four overtones on the oral and aural nature of Scripture

There are four important aspects to a tradition that is both oral and aural, which are relevant and need to be brought to the table of this phenomenology of theosony. Firstly, any consideration of Scripture must begin with the recognition of the *integral role* that the oral and aural Old Testament played in the fulfilment of the New Testament event. Christianity emanated from Judaism and was moulded, orally and aurally, by Jewish culture. St. Augustine summarises: ‘Christ teaches, his inspiration teaches. Where his inspiration and his anointing are not, words from outside make useless sounds.’³⁴⁶

Theosony suggests that the actual experience of the oral and aural component of God’s loving message of God’s self-dissemination to humanity is crucial in the overall religious experience.

Secondly, the concept of the tradition of committing Hebrew Scriptures to memory aurally, rather than through writing, is important. Hebrew Scriptures described by George Steiner as ‘archetypal foundational language-acts in our civilization,’³⁴⁷ were learned ‘*off by heart*’ and retained there by every Jew. When some truth is deposited in

³⁴⁵ Bridget Riley, *The Eye’s Mind: Collected Writings 1965-1999*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1999, p.211.

³⁴⁶ Rettig, *St. Augustine*, p. 172.

the inner ear, 'by heart', the remembrance of it is in the recognition of knowing it before. At the heart of a theory of theosony is the concept of recognition, realising and respecting the God of sound.

The third ramification has to do with the *folkloric, storytelling* nature of Scripture. Basically, the story of the Bible is a 'once upon a time, there was the word' story with a happy ending; God is saviour and redeemer of all humanity. The power of story-telling is in the telling, the sounding and the listening. Suspense is heightened; tension is resolved in the cadences, the momentary ends of the word sounds. Questions are asked and answered in the sonic forum. Theosonic methodology puts forward the central importance of the spoken story as religious act. Speaker and listener are related in the act, quite apart from the content and information imparted. The meaning and the power of sacred language surfaces from the actual sounding of the story by the living. This has pragmatic implications for liturgical practice, which will only be touched on here.

The final point is that, in ancient times, reading was a *trilogy* of contemporaneous reading, speaking and listening. The spoken in antiquity accompanied both reading and writing. A word read or written was a word spoken aloud. This tradition offers imaginative levels of religious experience; to write a passage of Scripture or a psalm while speaking it is birthing the sacred sound to the world in sight and sound. Before getting to the heart of these four matters, there are two observations to be made. Firstly, in contemporary Western theology, the first premise above, the interrelationship between the Old and the New Testament, is widely accepted. The remaining three, memorisation, the spoken narration of a chain of events which is story-telling, and the audio-centric nature of reading and writing, are largely ignored. Secondly, within the context of

Western theology, it appears that when the term 'oral' is used, either in first-hand or in borrowed quotations, it is intended, unless specifically implied, to include the 'aural' also. In fact, the term 'aural' does not figure at all, to the best of my knowledge. It is significant that the oral phenomenon dominates the aural particularly in Theology almost to the exclusion of the latter. The importance of the aural experience of God, the thrust of this study, is largely ignored in biblical scholarship in favour of orality. Jewish theological reflection does refer to 'the mouth-to-ear tradition' however.³⁴⁸

3.3.1 Contingency and continuity

The Hebrew and New Testaments are related in a definite and creative manner. One cannot be understood without reference to the other. They are both parts of the same historical conversation between God and creation that is the mystery of salvation. The common denominator is the truth of the word of God that hovers over the waters of Scriptural aqueducts. This entire tapestry of both Testaments is embroidered primarily with a sonic thread. In short, the inherent power of the Bible is lost in a context that excludes the heard, the spoken word. Scripture should be spoken aloud, heard, listened to in deference of and obedience to its auditory cultural transmission.

In the history of the Judaeo-Christian scriptures, as Domeris states, '[b]iblical revelation is essentially an oral experience. Accounts of theophany are full of *sound*.'³⁴⁹ The hearing sense is the prime figure of speech in the Bible. References to hearing, listening, the Word and silence are all employed as metaphors and similes, where they are used out of their ordinary or literal locutions or expressions. Leland Ryken summarises:

348 See Hayim Goren Perelmuter, 'Conversation Two: A Response to Clemens Thoma' in *Reinterpreting Revelation and Tradition: Jews and Christians in Conversation*, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2000, p.64.

349 William R. Domeris 'Voice' in *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. D.N. Freedman, Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000, p.1360. Italics mine.

‘It is hard to find a page of the Bible that does not contain figurative language.’³⁵⁰ The metaphorical ‘speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit’ (D.V. 9) thunders forth, illuminating not just what one can hear but what one ought to and should listen to. The act of listening is fundamental to God’s self-disclosure to the universe. The ‘new act of listening’, suggested in this dissertation, is partly as Sachs suggests through ‘going back to the sources of our faith and *hearing* in them something we missed before.’³⁵¹

The Old Testament relies on the *word* of a God who historically saves and directs “his people, Israel”. It is well documented in biblical scholarship that the Hebrew Scriptures were first heard and listened to long before they were read. Kelber sums it up: ‘The Hebrew Scriptures were a highly oral and aural reality in ancient Jewish and Christian communities...the visual experience of the text was secondary to its oral presentation.’³⁵² The Hebrew word ‘haga’ means to learn the oral precepts of the Torah while pronouncing them in a low, murmuring³⁵³ tone. It is the learning by the mouth through to the heart. It is the mouth that teaches and utters wisdom. *Os justi meditabitur sapientiam* (Ps. 36:30). The same word refers to the praying psalmist crying to God for help: ‘Give heed to my *groaning*’ (Ps. 5:1).³⁵⁴ Ancient vedantic scriptures, also, Tame states, ‘never were primarily intended to be read and quietly studied, but were sacred hymns which were intoned and sung.’³⁵⁵

The Jewish practice of vocalising sacred scriptures is in response to the command of the Lord in Deuteronomy. ‘Surely this commandment...is not too far away...the word

350 Leland Ryken, ‘Literature, The Bible as,’ in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p. 462.

351 Jonathan Sachs, *The Dignity of Difference*, p.19. Italics mine.

352 Kelber in *Teaching Oral Traditions*, p.330.

353 The word ‘murmur’ is the expression used in classical antiquity for both reading aloud and vocalised writing. See Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’, p.15 f.85.

is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart' (Deut.30: 11,14). The commandment of the Lord is a knowing in full heart and soul through the mouth, orally, into *the heart*, aurally. It is a manageable, understandable knowledge freely available to everyone who chooses to listen obediently. In the words of Joseph Blenkinsopp on this particular passage, '[t]he law is not esoteric knowledge requiring that a chosen intermediary like Enoch ascend to heaven in order to communicate it. It is *recited*...and God has now put the disposition to *obey* it in the heart.'³⁵⁶ In the act of prayer, Scripture was half-read and half-heard.

There is a danger here of oversimplification and subjectivism which must temper any discussion on interpreting scripture as God speaking directly to humanity. Karl Rahner poses the relevant question: 'how can the content of a human consciousness, which in consciousness has become a part of man's subjectivity and suffers from all its limitations, and is ultimately to be interpreted as the effect of this human causality, be heard and understood as the word of God?'³⁵⁷ The impetus *behind* the engagement is one of remembrance of God's everlasting and abiding salvation covenant. The impetus *towards* the engagement is the promise of all future conversations to come. Within the general phenomenology of sound, the criteria which distinguish the sound of the Word of God have to do with remembrance, memory, recognition and naming. Humanity overhears the unheard-of whisperings of divine hope through human consciousness, which is heightened and highlighted through memory and promise. The theosonic experience here, what impresses the hearer of the Word of God as extraordinary or

³⁵⁴ Italics mine.

³⁵⁵ Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 174.

³⁵⁶ Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Deuteronomy' in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 107. Italics added to highlight the oral recitation and aural '*ob audire*', obedient listening.

remarkable, is the distinction between heard, mundane sound and the literally unheard-of sound of God. The latter interacts with and actually generates the former.

In the New Testament, the message of salvation history and God's incarnate Word is a direct invitation to share in the life of the Trinity. Scripture resounds with the audible profusion of life which is the Father, with the reality of truth that is Jesus Christ, and the exuberance of love that is the Holy Spirit. Life, truth and love are the trilogy of voices of the book of Christ which Angelus Silesius recommends as the best-seller of life: 'Too many books cause stress; who reads one thoroughly/(I mean the book of Christ) gets well eternally.'³⁵⁸

Faith in Scripture is the *conversation* between the text and the living of what it is and what it says. The three-way conversation between Scripture, reader/listener and God reveals the glory of God abundantly in the Voice of Jesus Christ. The interpreter at work both below on the part of humanity and above from God, is the Holy Spirit.

The relationship between both testaments, von Balthasar writes, 'for the biblical personages, for Christ himself and for the fathers of the church was always considered the fundamental, inexhaustible proof of the truth of God's word.'³⁵⁹ The entire corpus of Scripture is what God is and does for humanity from the beginning until the end of the world.

The New Testament sings the same song of God through the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. In the words of Pawlikowski, 'the uniqueness of the Christ event arises from the

357 Rahner, *The Practice of Faith*, p.78.

358 Angelus Silesius: *The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 109.

359 von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation*, p. 98.

complete identity of the work of Jesus, as well as his words...with the work of God.’³⁶⁰

What Jesus heard from God is the message of Christianity; Jesus talked and walked in the recognition of the sounding message from his Father. The truth of this epoch-making fact is *au fond* of theosony. The incarnate Word of God is the main character of the Scriptural drama. It is ‘...the evolutionary character of all Sacred History, the conception of the Church as a growing body and this body being the total Christ.’³⁶¹ ‘The New Testament perfects the Old; but the Old began the New.’³⁶² The Old Testament shares in the work of the New. It is one and the same story of the revelation and the question of God that is inherited by humankind.

Christ is the fulfilment of the religion of his fathers. He adhered to the tenets of faith of the earliest biblical character known to him in Abraham, and through the leader of the Israelites in their Exodus, Moses. Jesus Christ is within, and of, the faith of Horeb, the mountain of God. The important point here in this familiar fact is that Jesus was keenly aware and conscious of the power of the spoken, living, sounding, heard word and this is the clear message of the evangelist Matthew. ‘But blessed are...your ears, for they hear. Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to...hear what you hear and did not hear it (Matt. 13:16, 17). The unknown Jewish writer of the Letter to the Hebrews is acutely aware of the inherited power inherent in the incarnate word of Christ. The Letter begins firmly rooted in an aural reference to the diversity of God’s speech to the ancestors and the prophets. ‘Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways...but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...he sustains all things

³⁶⁰ John T. Pawlikowski, ‘Conversation One: The Search for a New Paradigm for the Christian-Jewish Relationship: A Response to Michael Signer’ in *Reinterpreting Revelation and Tradition*, p.38.

³⁶¹ Jean Leclercq OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi, London:SPCK, 1974, p.101.

by his powerful word' (Heb. 1:1, 2, 3). Humanity is reminded of the primacy of the spoken Word.

Sound preceded sight in antiquity. Writing was the privilege of the few; the ability to read, likewise. Early writers, therefore, were keenly aware of this and knew that what they were writing down was meant to be heard, spoken and listened to. Achtemeier puts it; '[O]rganisation of written materials will depend on sound rather than sight for its effectiveness.'³⁶³ This is the most important piece of knowledge and the most pertinent point of this theory of theological listening. The written word is a poor reflection of the listened to word. Every word transmitted to manuscript was heard in the mind as 'events in sound'³⁶⁴ first and foremost. Every author of antiquity wrote first for the ear. Add to this the point, that every written word in ancient history was spoken simultaneously. The spoken word could exist on its own; the written word, never. All writing was an *anamnesis* (Gk. 'a recalling to mind'): The written word was a recalling of past words spoken and heard. Achtemeier holds that 'writing itself in the earliest Greek period served simply as a reminder of oral pronouncements...'³⁶⁵ In antiquity the oral and the aural continued and survived long after the word was written down. 'The oral medium was tenacious and literacy by itself slow in undermining the world of oral values.'³⁶⁶

Just as these scriptures have survived through many copyists, these copyists in turn reflect the enigmas and imaginations of oral tradition '[A]lthough the Gospels are written, the tradition behind them was orally proclaimed and the marks of orality are still

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p.101.

³⁶³ Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat', p. 19.

³⁶⁴ Kelber, *The Oral and the Written* p. 15.

³⁶⁵ Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat', p.9.

³⁶⁶ Kelber, *The Oral and the Written*, p.17.

strong in the written accounts,³⁶⁷ ‘...one goal of which was to reconstruct the oral state that immediately preceded the written Bible.’³⁶⁸

The Gospel, according to the letters of Paul, is a faith that is born of sound and hearing. To hear is to be saved through faith. God’s call, the sound of God, ‘gives life to the dead and *calls* into existence the things that do not exist’ (Rom. 4:17).³⁶⁹ Paul immediately ‘transports us into a particular sensory field, that of sound, speaking and hearing.’³⁷⁰ This ambassador of the Gospel to the gentiles, according to Kelber, ‘leaves no doubt that the gospel, when it came alive, was *spoken aloud* and, if it is to bring life again, must be *sounded* afresh.’³⁷¹ The Gospels are historical proofs of how people listened to and heard about the Messiah of God. ‘Death...is overcome by the very medium of life, the sounding of God’s call.’³⁷² In short, the people of the gospels were an aural/oral people; to hear the word of God was the essential, obedient religious experience. This first point is well acknowledged and researched in the field of Christian theology. By simply declaring it here and repeating the point, I intend to argue for a recovery of the particularly powerful, transformative, sensory field of *sound, speaking* and *hearing*. Kelber claims, and rightly so, that the writings of St. Paul enchant us through the very sound.

3.3.2 ‘Off by heart’

Speaking, thinking, committing to memory and acting upon the heart-work is a powerful quartet of human experience. It is a hierarchical process; speech or sound is first heard, once taken in through the ear it proceeds to the heart wherein it resides from then on,

³⁶⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, New York, Doubleday, 1997. P.28.

³⁶⁸ Alan Dundes, *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore*, New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 1999, p. 13.

³⁶⁹ Italics mine.

³⁷⁰ Kelber, *The Oral and the Written*, p.143.

constantly alert to be reconvoled and acted upon. The learning ‘off by heart’ of the sound of the sacred word was essential to being.³⁷³ It is a very mature practice in the age-old pursuit of wisdom and spiritual advancement. However, Philippe Borgeaud suggests that: ‘In the Christian tradition, the role of memorisation seems to be much less important...’

374

John Cassian, abbot of Marseilles and St. Benedict’s acknowledged mentor on monasticism, pragmatically refers to this naturally in his treatise on how to grow in virtue: ‘Each one does the task laid on him, such as memorising a psalm or some passage of scripture...’³⁷⁵ What does learning ‘by heart’, memorisation, signify in terms of techniques and effectiveness? The basic technique of retaining or storing an idea in the memory can become a reality through two sensory media: visual images facilitate recall through association of sight and sound and secondly, *audial* sound-patterns embody meaning and emotions too which make them unforgettable. In the overall epistemology of theosony, that is, the knowledge of God, which is to be acquired through the ear, memorisation is an important prayer method.

In terms of the theological memorisation, visual images of parables and narratives arise naturally and easily from the heard word. On the other hand, catch phrases, pithy prayers become automatic and constant through sound patterns. For example, the Greek exclamation, *Kyrie Eleison* or the Hebrew *Hallelujah* do not necessarily call up visual imagery. It is the hidden aural sensation which, Ted Hughes describes as ‘almost as a

³⁷¹ Ibid., p.144. Italics mine.

³⁷² Ibid., p. 144.

³⁷³ The article on ‘memorization’ by Philippe Borgeaud in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* places very little attention on the earliest Christian tradition and skips right up to the fourth century as the source of this practice.

³⁷⁴ Philippe Borgeaud, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 9, p. 369.

³⁷⁵ John Cassian, The Monastic Institutes, Chapter 15, in *The Monastic Institutes: On the Training of a Monk and The Eight Deadly Sins*, trans. Jerome Bertram, London: The Saint Austin Press, 1999, p.25. Although this treatise was addressed to monks, it has much to contribute in any spiritual quest for wisdom.

physical momentum of inevitability, a current of syntactical force purposefully directed like the flight of an arrow in the dark.’³⁷⁶ Theologian Jacques Guillet defines the voice of God in a way that implicates human memory and attention. ‘Hearing God speak in Scripture is both a human operation, involving intelligence and attention and a spiritual one, involving adhesion to God.’³⁷⁷ The human operation, the human work is committing this scriptural voice to memory. In short, it is to fuse the human and the divine work through memorisation.

Such power of remembered language is particularly religious and taps into the ancient monastic practice known as *lectio divina*. The Irish theologian, Una Agnew, describes this daily monastic activity: ‘Each day the monk took a passage of scripture, his “sacred page”, read it slowly [aloud], paying attention to each word and its various shades of meaning, and as the Holy Spirit illumined the page with insight, the monk was counselled to stay where he found nourishment, to ruminate, repeat it continuously until he had learned it by heart. Passages thus learned belonged to the memory of the heart and lead the monk to prayer.’³⁷⁸ Such monastic practices³⁷⁹ have much to share outside of the monastic structure.

In other words, the power of the spoken word committed to heart and memory in the work of the self-revelation of the triune God is not confined to the monk alone but is the privilege and grace of all humanity. One living proof of this prayer method in action was the Monaghan poet, Patrick Kavanagh. Agnew proposes that Kavanagh discovered

³⁷⁶ Ted Hughes, *By Heart: 101 Poems to Remember*, London: Faber & Faber, 1997, p.xv.

³⁷⁷ Jacques Guillet, *A God Who Speaks*, trans. Edmond Bonin, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979, p.68.

³⁷⁸ Una Agnew SSL, *The Mystical Imagination of Patrick Kavanagh: ‘a buttonhole in heaven?’*, Dublin: Columba Press, 1998, p.98.

³⁷⁹ However, in much contemporary monasticism this prayer form is hardly adhered to any longer.

the power of such a method of attuning himself to the Holy Spirit and maintained this as an exercise into later life.³⁸⁰

Jean Leclercq suggests the connection between memorisation and contemplation in his description of *meditari*, which is a verb meaning ‘to think over, contemplate, reflect: to practice, study.’³⁸¹ The term *meditari*, implies ‘...thinking of a thing with the intent to do it...to prepare oneself for it, to prefigure it in the mind, to desire it, in a way, to do it in advance, briefly, to practice it.’³⁸² The important thing is to pronounce the words in order to commit them to memory. ‘To speak, to think, to remember, are the three necessary phases of the same activity.’³⁸³ This thesis would wish to add ‘to listen’ to this list.

Learning by heart therefore, is the fullest expression of one’s whole body and being. Learning ‘by heart’ is the process by which ‘the mouth pronounced it...the memory... fixes it...the intelligence...understands its meaning and...the will...desires [it] to be put into practice.’³⁸⁴ Learning by heart is what the ear first hears, understands and then acts upon. Leclercq says it is all about practice: ‘To practice a thing by thinking on it, is to fix it in the memory, to learn it.’³⁸⁵

A distinction should be made here between learning by *heart* and learning by *rote*. The latter is to commit to memory in a mechanical way without any thought, understanding or empathy with the meaning.³⁸⁶ Memorising by rote, the poet Ted Hughes

380 Agnew, *The Mystical Imagination of Patrick Kavanagh*, p. 98.

381 See *Collins Latin Dictionary*, p. 132.

382 Leclercq OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, p.20.

383 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

384 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

385 *Ibid.*, p.20.

386 *The Britannica World Language Edition of the Oxford Dictionary* defines ‘by rote’ as ‘in a mechanical manner, by routine, esp. by the mere exercise of memory without proper understanding of, or reflection upon, the matter in question.’ (Vol. 2, pt.1, p.1755)

holds, is ‘for most people the least effective’³⁸⁷ remembering technique. Such emotionless, spiritless learning is anathema in a theological context where meaning and understanding are based on love and spirit-filled emotion for God. In stark contrast, Hughes goes as far to say that rote work ‘creates an aversion to learning.’³⁸⁸

3.3.3 ‘Who made the [ears] but I? /’Truth, Lord...’³⁸⁹

Two experiences of hearing for Simone Weil are exemplary of the power of the theosonic religious experience of memorisation. The first revelatory experience was in the act of *listening*. The second, in the act of *memorisation*, precisely through an aural and oral encounter with a religious poem, came to her as an experience the ‘virtue of prayer’.³⁹⁰ Weil was born in Paris into a secularised Jewish family. On a visit to the Benedictine monastery of Solesmes in 1938, she first wrote that on simply *listening* to the Gregorian chant that ‘each sound hurt me like a blow...in the unimaginable beauty of the chanting and the words... the Passion of Christ entered into my being for once and for all.’³⁹¹

The second she described as ‘a real contact, person to person, here below, between a human being and God.’³⁹² But the heart of the matter is that reciting a particular prayer-poem *by heart* engendered this intimate relationship. The genesis of this second moment of theosony was also during her sojourn at Solesmes. She met a young English Catholic man. ‘Chance – for I always prefer saying chance rather than Providence – made of him a messenger to me.’³⁹³ This young man introduced her to the

³⁸⁷ Hughes, *By Heart*, p.ix.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

³⁸⁹ George Herbert, quoted in *Gregorian Chant Classics*, Nóirín Ní Riain, Dublin: O Brien Press, 1997, p. 100. The original reads ‘Who made the eyes...’ This English poet, who died in 1633 was keenly aware of the auditory in religious experience. Listening to music elevated his soul and was his heaven on earth. p.100.

³⁹⁰ See Chapter Five here on silence, also an ear function, where it is interpreted as a virtue for its transformative powers.

³⁹¹ Simone Weil, *Waiting on God*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1951, p.20.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

metaphysical English poets of the twelfth century and she particularly warmed to a poem of George Herbert.

The recitation of this prayer ‘learnt...by heart’³⁹⁴ was the transformation of body and spirit prayer to God. It had to do with the actual experience of reciting the prayer, becoming the prayer in sound and story. She describes the theosonic religious experience thus: ‘I used to think I was merely reciting it as a beautiful poem, but without my knowing it the recitation had the virtue of a prayer. It was during one of these recitations that...Christ himself came down and took possession of me.’³⁹⁵ Expressing in similar terms this aural, verbal experience, Joseph Gelineau puts it: ‘The strange divine power of the voice derives from the fact that this message...enters into me by the sense of hearing and invades me completely without my awareness of its arrival and its source...it is pre-logical communication, preceding the words as articulated language.’³⁹⁶

Simone Weil’s experience of the presence of God does not end with an off-by-heart experience of George Herbert. The Greek words of ‘Our Father’ also moved her deeply ‘by the infinite sweetness of this Greek text.’³⁹⁷ The essence of this profound memorizational experience, one not reliant on the visual text but upon the effect of the actual verbal sounds on the body, is the exploration of this thesis. This deeply spiritual visionary who waited on God in obedient, listening patience describes an experience which goes far beneath the superficial, the external and the obvious: ‘The effect of this practice is extraordinary and surprises me every time, for, although I experience it each

³⁹⁴ Weil, *Waiting on God*, p.21.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁹⁶ Gelineau, ‘The Path of Music’, p. 136.

³⁹⁷ Weil, *Waiting on God*, p.25.

day, it exceeds my expectation at each repetition.’³⁹⁸ This is the fruit of practice that animated my soul.

Simone Weil rejected her secular Jewish identity and through repeated mystical experiences – two to do with memorisation already recalled – came close to Christianity. She never became a Christian and was never baptised. Presumably her visits to Solesmes were not indifferent to the sound of Gregorian chant of the Benedictine community there. Kingsley Widmer concludes that this poor tormented soul who choose to end her short, brilliant life at thirty-four was ‘if not a saint without God and church, a poignant witness to the possible social-religious transcendence of unmerited human suffering.’³⁹⁹

In the Judaism that Weil rejected, learning by heart is the way to God. Learning sacred texts by heart was not a new idea for her. ‘In ancient Judaism...scribes and rabbinic scriptural experts routinely committed the entire text of Scripture to memory.’⁴⁰⁰ Learning the Torah off by heart, committing it to memory, is the first stage of encounter; meaning, interpretation and understanding follow. The process is described by Kelber: ‘Time and again words were recited by teachers, repeated by students, individually and in chorus, in turn corrected by the teachers, until the students knew them by heart.’⁴⁰¹

The relevance of the theosonic depths of Simone Weil’s religious experience are twofold: In her openness to receive ambient, cosmic sound, in the certain kind of listening which she paid to the monastic chant around her, beauty resounded and was in the ear of the listener at that moment and continued to reside there from then on.

Secondly, an aural theosonic experience does not go away. There is a permanence which

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁹⁹ Kingsley Widmer in ‘Weil, Simone (Adolphine)’ in *Thinkers of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Devine/Held/Vinson/Walsh, London: Macmillan Publishers, 1983, p.609.

⁴⁰⁰ Jaffee in *Teaching Oral Traditions*, p.327.

one kind of listening promises. That constancy of Christ entering her being for once and for all, it is suggested, through the illustration of her story, is transcribed in her soul through a listening and a memorisation. To forget is a natural phenomenon; to remember everything is absurd. God's love and its presence in one's life is never forgotten.

3.3.4. Folklore, poetry, story-telling and literacy

Alan Dundes, advocator of the Bible as masterpiece of folklore, maintains that 'the Bible consists of orally transmitted tradition written down. Certainly there were collations, 'literary' emendations and editorial tampering, but the folkloristic component of the Bible remains in plain sight'.⁴⁰² He blames biblical scholars for not acknowledging this element in biblical criticism because these 'blind scholars have failed to recognize it.'⁴⁰³

Multiple versions of major biblical events 'attest to the folkloricity of the Bible.'⁴⁰⁴ The implications of interpretation as folklore 'may represent a new paradigm with which to appreciate and better understand the Bible.'⁴⁰⁵ But the crucial question remains: *why* is the oral more important than the written and what is the full implication of this pre-literal stage? It has first of all to do with the source material, which is the greatest story ever told beyond all human stories. Spoken aloud, memorised or simply read, the Bible is divine story telling: the story of God's healing salvation. A storyteller is not simply entertaining: a storyteller is converting his or her listeners through the sound of the story. Words comes first, the imaginative powers of the listener come next. In the space created by synergised imagination, the story is carried and convincing.

⁴⁰¹ Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, p.10.

⁴⁰² Dundes, *Holy Writ as Oral Lit*, p. 20.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

The Irish are a people of a strong ancient aural culture, and the Christian religion of the Irish is primarily a religion of the ear. The God of the Irish is aural and oral. There is a dearth of research on this topic.⁴⁰⁶ This must be taken into account in theological and research, which attempts to reappropriate Irish Christianity. Writing and literacy were late acquisitions of the Irish; the ear held court in the early days. Robin Flower in his influential study in 1947 goes as far as to suggest that: ‘there was...no written tradition in ancient Ireland.’⁴⁰⁷ The advent and growth of literacy in Ireland is almost exclusively linked to ecclesiastical scribes. It ‘centred in the monasteries and all the evidence goes to show that, whatever parts the poets played in the oral preservation of the tradition, its written record was the work of the church.’⁴⁰⁸ Literacy is linked to the advent of Christianity in Ireland: ‘no evidence has ever been produced to prove the existence of writing...in Ireland before the coming of Christianity.’⁴⁰⁹

The story-telling, folkloric aspect of traditional Irish spirituality is present in traditional religious song, the major source of Irish spirituality.⁴¹⁰ The Celtic scholar Eleanor Knott emphasises this aurality in poetry: ‘There is one essential fact about Irish poetry which must never be forgotten...it is...composed for the ear...we must accept the fact that aural enjoyment was...an integral part of every poem.’⁴¹¹ The same holds true of the traditional religious prayer-poem. These centre on the aural experience of the listener to a certain type of poetic metre: ‘[T]he “strict” or *dán díreach* metres...for more than

406 My MA thesis highlighted this point in regard to the theory that Ireland possesses little or no traditional religious music. See MA thesis, ‘The Nature and Classification of Traditional Religious Song in Irish’, p. 130. No form of hymnology existed in Ireland but two important oral and aural song prayer-forms are significant: the Irish traditional religious song tradition itself, mainly preserved and passed on by women and the little known aural tradition of Christmas carols from Co. Wexford. Again both of these phenomena are rich in research possibilities.

407 Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947, (1979), p. 6.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

410 See Nóirín Ní Riain MA thesis, *The ‘Nature and Classification of Traditional Religious Song in Irish’*, University College Cork, 1980, p. 131.

411 Eleanor Knott, *Irish Classical Poetry: Filíocht na Sgol*, Cork: Mercier Press, (1957), 1978, p.17/18.

nine centuries were to delight the ears and feed the imagination of Irish listeners.’⁴¹²

Knott merges the act of listening and the imaginative possibilities, which are alerted and enabled through such listening. To be a poet, religious or secular, in early and medieval Ireland, was to be an expert on the sound of every word of one’s poem; a poem lived through the sound of the speaking voice. Robin Flower witnessed one particular moment when time stood still through the sound of a voice. On the Aran Islands, presumably in the 1930s, he, quite by chance, stumbled on an island potato digger in a field. This island octogenarian, as Flower puts it, ‘fell to reciting Ossianic lays.’⁴¹³(These are ancient poems and prose in Irish relating stories of Fionn and his friends in his adventures in Ireland and around the world. This particular blend of *chanted* prose and poetry recalled a mythological visit to Greece, and the marvellous events that unfolded there.) The old man is possessed by the telling and the sound, the power of every vibration surrendered to the air around them.⁴¹⁴ ‘At times the voice would alter and quicken, the eyes would brighten, as with a speed which you would have thought beyond the compass of human breath he delivered those...passages...full of strange words and alliterating rhetorical phrases...I listened spellbound...a real and vivid experience.’⁴¹⁵

Adding a layer of sung sound to the text intensified Irish eighteenth and nineteenth century poetry. Tadhg Gaelach Ó Súilleabháin (1715-1795), following his conversion around 1775, was inspired to write a poem entitled ‘*Duain Chroí Íosa*’. He

412 Ibid., p. 11.

413 Flower, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 105.

414 Gerard Murphy has made the resemblance of the chanting of Irish Ossianic balladry and Gregorian plain chant. See *Ossianic Lore: Fianáocht agus Rómánsaíocht*, Cork: Mercier Press, (1955), 1971p. 59.

415 Flower, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 105.

requested this poem should be sung to the secular air of ‘*San Mhainistir Lá*’.⁴¹⁶ To this day, both religious poem and secular tune are still conjoined.

In the field of story-telling too, the late professor of Celtic Literature at University College, Dublin, Gerard Murphy, confirms: ‘Old and Middle Irish storytelling had an oral origin...we may be certain that all Irish tales and ballads...were intended primarily to be told or chanted rather than to be read.’⁴¹⁷ All Irish prayers, sounded and sung were oral and aural; all categories of earliest religious song⁴¹⁸ depended on and still depend on oral and aural transmission for survival. More importantly, the inherent religious experience is totally dependent on the sounding and the hearing. This aurality contrasts with the Greek optic. The German theologian, Karl Dann, puts this primacy of the eye in Greek religion in a wider context. ‘Greek religion, like that of antiquity in general, was a religion of seeing.’⁴¹⁹ Victor Zuckerkandl says of Grecian music: ‘To the Greeks, the art of sound and that of words were intimately related: there was no music without words, and poetry was not spoken, but sung and chanted.’⁴²⁰

Irish church-going people too, up to the advent and application of the second Vatican Council’s doctrines, were a people of the ear. On Sunday, everyone went to ‘*hear*’ Mass. One could ponder well on that ‘hearing’. This was a kind of hearing which was far removed from the rational understanding of the actual meaning of each word, which was in Latin. No simultaneous translation appeared on sheets; presuming the priest knew the meaning of the Latin words spoken, he alone placed meaning on his utterances

416 This was published in *The Pious Miscellany and other poems by Tadhg Gaelach or Timothy O’ Sullivan*, ed., John O Daly, Dublin, 1868, p. 60.

417 Murphy, *Ossianic Lore*, pp. 59/61.

418 According to my research, these three categories of authentic traditional religious song are the *Amhrán* type (for example the Tadhg Gaelach song referred to above), the *numerical carol* (a song-type employed by the Franciscans as a mnemonic aid when they came to Ireland in 1226) and the *religious ballad* (which is akin to Ossianic lore referred to also above). See MA thesis, pp.130-135.

419 Karl Dann, ‘See, Vision, Eye’ in *The New Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 513,

420 Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician* P.1.

other than the pure effect of sound. Such sounds fed the imagination and formed images beyond the senses of God's presence and proximity. Such is the Irish theosonic tradition. Although one could argue that much of this going to 'hear' Mass was passive on the part of the congregation, this work suggests the opposite: removing the aural in favour of the rational and literate was detrimental to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit.

3.3.5 To write is to hear – To read is to hear

Every writing event in antiquity was, at one and the same time, a word event. Presented another way, the word being transcribed was spoken aloud simultaneously. Whether this word was one's own or the creation of another, the work of transcribing was, at one and the same time, seen and heard. Transcription or dictation was a sound event. Be it the author, the amanuensis or secretary, words were written through the channel of hearing.

This wedding of sound and sight, writing and word is the healing moment for Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist. The moment he wrote 'His name is John' (Lk. 1:63), his gift of speech is reinstated. Luke, the evangelist, is anxious to outline the restoration of speech: not only is his mouth opened immediately, but also his tongue is loosened and he spoke the fulfilment of Gabriel's announcement (Lk. 1: 64,20). Through the very sound of this song, the echo of universal peace and salvation is heard. Walter Bruegemann aptly calls this the 'answering song of Zechariah: '[I]t is a song of new possibilities given late, but not too late, possibilities of salvation/forgiveness/mercy/light/peace...The song releases energy...The transformation is unmistakable. Tongues long dumb in hopelessness could sing again.'⁴²¹ Achtemeier connects the miracle to the writing event: 'Luke's Greek (1:63), demonstrates that it is

⁴²¹ Walter Bruegemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978, (1982), p. 99.

the act of *writing* that proved his speech had been restored!’⁴²² All writing had to be sounded and the powerful ritual inherent in this dual act restored sound and speech to this old man, now filled with the Holy Spirit, which in turn would allow him to speak prophetically (Lk. 1:67).⁴²³

Reading was accompanied by spontaneous oral and aural response. As Michael Coogan puts it: ‘in Hebrew as in other languages, the verb meaning ‘to read’ ...literally means ‘to say aloud.’⁴²⁴ There was no reading or writing done which was silent or solitary.

An oral theology focuses on listening not proposition, on the sound not the system. To verbalise the sacred texts is to hear what the eye sees. To turn one’s ear to the sound of the Word is to receive and usher in the life-giving force of that Word. This is the existential effect which theosony makes available. The Word of God becomes inscribed in the body and in the soul. The senses merge to become a total body prayer. This is the existential effect. Referring to the practice and tradition of St. Augustine, Gibb and Montgomery write: ‘Throughout the Greek period and far into the days of the Roman Empire – to the third and fourth century of our era – the custom survived of reading both in prose and verse not silently but aloud and in company.’⁴²⁵ To communicate, to win influence and relationship was to entice others through the grain of the voice. Kelber is convinced that in antiquity, ‘composing in a hearer-friendly manner and reading aloud were prerequisites for gaining a hearing.’⁴²⁶

422 Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’, p. 15.

423 In chapter seven here, I would suggest that an erroneous assumption is made by Robert J. Karris in his commentary on this event in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 682. Here, he asserts that this moment is all the more miraculous and astounding because of Zechariah’s deafness. The question remains whether Zechariah was struck speechless and silent but could hear nonetheless.

424 Michael D. Coogan, ‘Literacy in Ancient Israel’, in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p. 437.

425 See *The Confessions of Augustine*, ed. John Gibb and William Montgomery, p.141 f., 11.

426 Kelber in *Teaching Oral Traditions*, p.331.

In his *Confessiones*, St. Augustine laments being deprived of the aural and oral wisdom and company of the contemporary bishop, St. Ambrose.⁴²⁷ Augustine almost curses the ‘throng of busy men who cut me off from his ear and mouth, (*ab eius aure atque ore*)⁴²⁸ men to whose weaknesses he ministered.’⁴²⁹

The Benedictine, Jean Leclercq, eloquently describes such a reading aloud as listening to the ‘voices of the pages’. Our ancestors apprehended the meaning of the written word in such a manner: ‘they read...with the lips, pronouncing what they saw, and with the ears, listening to the words pronounced, hearing...the ‘voices of the pages’.⁴³⁰ ‘It is a real acoustical reading; *legere* means at the same time *audire*; one understands only what one hears...’⁴³¹ Gamble concurs: ‘in antiquity virtually all reading, public or private, was reading aloud: texts were routinely converted into the oral mode.’⁴³² *Legere, audire* and indeed *lectio* are genuinely integrated body and soul prayers calling for full corporeal and spiritual response. In the sounding, the echoing, the silent reality, the meaning is grasped and comprehended.

The author of the book *Revelation* makes an emphatic point about saying the words of the page out loud. The written revelation of the risen Christ to John Patmos is to be read out *aloud* and all who do read aloud are blessed. Blessed are those who hear the words as they themselves enunciate them or presumably through the sound of the voices

427 Although Augustine does not acknowledge it here, this ministry was apparently one of the many duties of a bishop of this period. See *St. Augustine Confessions*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke, Bk. VI, Ch.III, p. 193 f., 17.

428 This is translated ‘face to face’ in Sheed p. 82 and Baldick/Johnes/Radice p.114.

429 *St. Augustine Confessions*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke, Bk. VI, Ch.III, p. 193.

430 Leclercq OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, p.19.

431 *Ibid.*, p.19.

432 Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, p.30.

of others (Rev. 1:3). The reader can hear the same call to *'tolle, lege'*. It is an *audientia divina* – a hearing, a listening and a silence⁴³³ with God in the courtroom of the heart.

In *reciting* Scripture, there are at least five factors which theosony suggests might coax conversion. There is the sacred word itself, which is to be read as God's action in the here and now of the present addressing the reader through the score. There is the overall context. Then there is the pronouncing or resounding of that syntax. Finally, there is the presence of God inherent in that oral/aural (through the mouth and/or ear) event.

The term 'oral' has negative connotations in Western civilisation that may have spilled over into Western theological expression. Western education is literacy based; nobody is taught how to listen. Western classical music is always read before sounded. The concentration is on one's ability to read, that is, the mental powers acquired to read. This ability to read holds the ability to hear in disdain. Andrew Love articulates this as follows: 'Written from within, and into, the horizon of Western literateness, the word 'literate' possesses a primary resonance of approbation, while 'oral' possesses a primary resonance of denigration.'⁴³⁴

There is the well-known anecdote told in traditional music circles in Ireland. Two traditional musicians are in conversation and one asks the other: "Do you read music or are you gifted"? There is truth in this pithy aphorism when considered in a theological light; having a natural ability or aptitude for a relationship with God, which is what being gifted means, requires no other ability than the one of listening and hearing. Love

433 See 'audientia' entry in *Smith's Latin-English Dictionary*, London: Wm. Clowes and Sons, 1874, p.111 where it is translated as the three above but also 'gains a hearing'; 'to give a hearing'; 'the faculty of hearing'; 'the ears'.

434 Love, 'Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks', p.92.

tentatively suggests about notated polyphony of the late Middle Ages that its validation was ‘by the look of the page, rather than solely the *effect* of the sound.’⁴³⁵

In theological discussion, likewise, the thrust has been to regard words as a record of events rather than as ‘events in sound’⁴³⁶ themselves. Indeed, as Love points out generally, in the ‘present-day West, orality is perceived as the marginalised ‘other’ of literacy.’⁴³⁷ Kelber believes that theologians generally think in terms of the written. ‘Literacy is so deeply implanted in every twentieth-century biblical scholar that it is difficult to avoid thinking of it as the normal means of communication and the sole measure of language.’⁴³⁸ For Alan Dundes, ‘oral tradition is deemed untrustworthy and must be confirmed by written documents (‘Get it in writing’), and this is also true in the case of the New Testament.’⁴³⁹ ‘Thinking about NT writings as both produced and used orally,’ writes Achtemeier, ‘is something scholars are not accustomed to doing.’⁴⁴⁰ Although theologians have acknowledged the oral background of Scripture, it is the actual *power* of the oral performance of these words, which has been undervalued if not passed over. What is labelled the ‘auditory field’⁴⁴¹, is the nearest that theologians have come to defining the essential theosonic experience, and even this term is undeveloped and ill defined.

What is heard is open to the process of change – what is committed to paper can resist change and dynamism. A classic in literature or visual art can embrace conversions

435 *Ibid.*, p.103. Italics mine.

436 Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, p. 15. For example, see Rudolf Bultmann *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, New York: Harper & Row, 1963. and Birger Gerhardsson *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, ASNU 22., Copenhagen:Ejnar Munksgaard, 1961 as representatives of this school of thought.

437 Love, ‘Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks’, p.91.

438 Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, p.32.

439 Dundes, *Holy Writ as Oral Lit* p.17/18.

440 Achtemeier, ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’, p.25.

441 Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* p.150.

of change, which are held deep within the form itself. Knowledge imparted through the ear, on the other hand, easily adapts and reflects itself to embody the time, the culture, and the religion of the hearer, ancient or contemporary. Catherine Bell defines the negative forces which literacy can engender: ‘In comparison to oral societies...change in literate societies is much more apt to be deliberate, debated, ridden with factions, explosive, and concerned with fundamentals. In other words, in literate societies change can be very untidy.’⁴⁴²

Memorisation, is a lost art in contemporary society. Steiner regrets the danger to heart knowledge: ‘There is no doubt that patterns of articulate speech, reading habits...are under pressure...we know less *by heart*.’⁴⁴³

Recognition of the crucial role which the ear, not the eye, played in all reading in late antiquity carries wider-ranging implications.⁴⁴⁴ Participation in this auditory field is the purpose of this work. This thesis defends ‘the epistemological principle of orality’ which is that to know something means actually ‘to participate in it.’⁴⁴⁵ In this sense, theosony is heuristic; in serving to further investigation on the theology of listening, it is a methodology which encourages the praying one to find out, given the various oral and literacy traditions, what is meaningful and potent in one’s own spiritual development. The ear is a heuristic instrument in God’s saving plan for humanity. In the act of finding out the sound of God, patience is the key that releases the dual prayer world from the

442 Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 204.

443 George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 467.

444 Although outside the scope of this research, Achtemeier points out its implications vis-à-vis textual inconsistencies which could be traced to the orality of the document and also in the inaccuracy which can occur in references to other texts. Authors were not meticulous in reference checking or precision, he states. ‘Omne Verbum Sonat’, pp.26/27.

445 Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, p.150.

cosmic praying one to the depths of the divine spirit. *Festina lente*⁴⁴⁶ – make haste slowly – is the sacred auricular threshold to a new way of being with God. Humanity is born to listen; the first task in the growth towards maturity is to hear the original murmuring.

3.4 A summary of ‘the voice of the pages’⁴⁴⁷

According to Schneiders, ‘the primary meaning of the text does not lie behind it in history but in it as text... This is why the reader returns again and again to it, entering more deeply in successive encounters with it into the mystery of conversion...’⁴⁴⁸ Every reading is dynamic, yet evanescent, which means that the deepest transformation is barely perceptible. Every single reading is, in the phrase of George Steiner, ‘perpetual re-invention.’⁴⁴⁹ This act of devising something new, in literary terms, is the exercise of imaginative or creative powers on the text; responding to the sacred texts of Scripture allows one’s imagination and creativity to respond to the voice of the God who cries out (Is.40: 3) and who says to cry out (Is. 40:6).

There is a process involved here, which Steiner describes as humane literacy. ‘In that great discourse with the living dead which we call reading, our role is not a passive one... reading is a mode of action. We engage the presence, the voice of the book. We allow it entry, though not unguarded, into our inmost.’⁴⁵⁰ The reader *is* the word.

Theosony is concerned with a heuristic approach to the actual *experience of reading*. It is an experience of reviving and restoring the order of the sound of things.

⁴⁴⁶ This dictum is attributed to the Emperor Augustus who transformed the Roman republic to an empire ruled practically by one man. It is appropriate to a theory of theosony because patient, obedient listening may have huge revelatory, overtones in conversion and religious experience.

⁴⁴⁷ George Steiner uses the similar phrase to this Leclerq phrase; ‘the voice of the book’. See *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978-1996*, London/Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996, p.[x].

⁴⁴⁸ Schneiders, ‘Born Anew’, p.194.

⁴⁴⁹ Steiner, *Real Presences* p.126.

⁴⁵⁰ George Steiner, *Language and Silence*, p.28.

Pitting a particular literary passage against the backdrop of one's own truth experience of human life is only the measure of one's own experience within that life and is thus limited and finite. On the other hand, bowing before the possibility of the fulfilment or completion of the words in our own life invites, welcomes, indeed expects, the exalted company of the Holy Spirit in its relational role between God the Father and God the Son. It is the reader's response to the response of God through Scripture. God is the authority⁴⁵¹ behind the author. The author, the message, the reader share in the authority's [God's] message [the incarnate Word] in the possible conversion of the reader [through the Holy Spirit]. Biblical studies to date have been 'more pragmatic (reader-centered)'⁴⁵² rather than reader-responsive.⁴⁵³ '[I]t is ultimately the *readers* of a text who must determine what it means.' Mark Patrick Hederman puts it: 'We do not read the book; the book reads us.'⁴⁵⁴

Biblical reader-response criticism goes three steps further. For Sandra Schneiders, '[t]o engage the meaning of the text at this level is to court conversion.'⁴⁵⁵ It has to do with a balance of power. Referring to the prologue of the Gospel of St. John, Thomas L. Brodie writes: '[w]hen the prologue is read aloud...it has unity and power.'⁴⁵⁶ 'We have lost this unity, we whose religion should be the most incarnate of any. We must

⁴⁵¹ The etymology of the word 'author' implicates 'authority'. See Skeat, p.43.

⁴⁵² Mark, Allen, Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism? A New Approach to the Bible*, London:SPCK, 1990. P. 16.

⁴⁵³ Powell makes the point that in biblical studies, structuralism and narrative criticism are regarded as parallel, independent methodologies to reader-response. (p.16) He lists three reader-response theories of literary criticism – Reader over the text, Reader with the text and Reader in the text - which embrace deconstructionism, phenomenological criticism, structuralism and narrative criticism. This thesis proposes to add a fourth category that is Reader is the text.

⁴⁵⁴ Mark Patrick Hederman, *Tarot: Talisman or Taboo? Reading the World as Symbol*, Currah Press, Dublin, 2003.

⁴⁵⁵ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, p.17.

⁴⁵⁶ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.136.

rediscover it.’⁴⁵⁷ Of all religions, Christianity knows the sound of the word; knowing the sound is through the flip side of language which is listening.

The New Testament shares with all other creative literature its original impact, which according to Beardslee, is a ‘deformation’ of language, a stretching of language to a new metaphorical meaning which shocked the hearer into a new insight’.⁴⁵⁸ ‘Every work of art is a dynamic structure whose purpose is to create its viewer/reader/hearer.’⁴⁵⁹ This Schneiders calls ‘Aesthetic Surrender’.⁴⁶⁰ The reader must surrender, give way to the message, must obey the call inherent in the message. For Steiner, the word, read or spoken, is there to awaken to the resonance of ‘its entire previous history... To read fully is to restore all that one can of the immediacies of value and intent in which speech actually occurs.’⁴⁶¹ How one scrutinises words and sentences is the measure of how one hears and listens to them.

The temporal and the spatial merge through the eye and the ear. Times past are alive in the present space for the reader. The future lies in the power of the listening to convert the reader. The reader *is* in the text. ‘We must imagine ourselves in it and moving with it.’⁴⁶²

Reader-response criticism is a shared experience that resides not in a past historical age and social culture. The reader sounds the depths of the fertile space between the written word and the eye. This sounding listens for the voice behind and within the words. It listens for the wider event from out of which the language, the vocabulary on the page, was conceived. ‘Indeed the words of God, expressed in the

⁴⁵⁷ Simone Weil, *Intimations of Christianity, among the Ancient Greeks*, trans. Elisabeth Chase Geissbuhler, London: Routledge Keegan and Paul, 1957, p.137.

⁴⁵⁸ Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*, p.11.

⁴⁵⁹ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text* p.172-173.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.172.

words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men' (DV 3).⁴⁶³ Reader responsive listening 'means that from the vast, entangled legacy of the past, criticism will bring to light and sustain that which *speaks* to the present with particular directness or exaction... that which enters into dialogue with the living'.⁴⁶⁴

Because Scripture is no textbook or manual, its court of last appeal is in the realm of imagining. Through the powerful storehouse of memory, God is suggested and known above and beyond what is actually present in sight and sound. Imagining oneself through oral discourse with God in prayer finally yields to the ultimate silent theosony. It is no illusion or false mental image or conception. The coda of all codas is entered most frequently through the protective veil of silence. If, in the depths and layers of that silence, all is mute and overwhelming, if that silence is dumb and impenetrable, then theosony fills the void and dispels the doubt. The experience of the mystic is a huge treasure trove of theosony here.⁴⁶⁵

'Writing, in its turn, is restored to living speech by means of the various acts of discourse that reactualize the text.'⁴⁶⁶ Ricoeur clarifies: '[r]eading and preaching are such actualizations of writing into speech.'⁴⁶⁷ In this sense, a hermeneutics of Scripture is an event, a performance, where the reader is actively participating in the silent drama of the text rather than being a passive interpreter of inherited doctrines. The experience

⁴⁶¹ Steiner, *After Babel*, p. 24.

⁴⁶² Morton T. Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*, London: SPCK, 1976, p.210.

⁴⁶³ *Vatican Council II*, ed. Austin Flannery, p. 758.

⁴⁶⁴ George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966*, London: Faber and Faber, 1967, p. 26. Italics mine.

⁴⁶⁵ Chapter Five which concentrates on the concept of silence will refer only in passing to mystical silence; the silence of the mystic is transcendental and ineffable, this thesis is towards concretising and articulating the auditory religious experience.

⁴⁶⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p.219.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.219.

embraced in *listening* is the crucial actualization. The scriptural word event is a movement from the page to the inner ear of the reader. It must be an interaction which is living, active and transformative which invites and allows the Holy Spirit to mix and match the written word, the sound of the word, and the resonance which amplifies that sound in the human body. It is the written word become incarnate in memory, and later 'by heart'.

Meaning in religious discourse, therefore, is born in the space between hearing and listening. The difference between these two modes of aural attention is simply that hearing is biological, listening is psychological and spiritual. The drift of the theosonic message is in living to hear the silent sound of the Triune God. This space is an aural ladder between heaven and earth; the graded stages forming the ascent and descent represent the varying stages of the aural. Hearing spirals up to listening; silence is the two sidepieces between which the hearing and listening takes place. In this structural metaphor of theosony, the ladder of success to God rises to eminence in Jesus Christ, through the work of the Spirit. Finally, in the reading relationship, theosony is best understood in the opposition between text and reader, between sight and sound. Here ends the reading.

Through this progress of thought, the present chapter should link up with the objectives of the next chapter, the second chapter of Part Two, and eventually with the overall hypothesis of the dissertation. These objectives are towards a clearer articulation of the aural dimension, that 'cloud of forgetting', where God is truly heard. Such is the true legacy of Scripture. The ear that is of God is *of* the earth: The Rilkean '*Ein Ohr der Erde*', is 'an ear of the earth...which talks alone to herself, and when sometimes a

pitcher's slipped under the flow, she thinks you interrupt.'⁴⁶⁸ The ear is God's wonder-worker without tools. Meister Eckhart makes a visual observation about the celestial and the terrestrial eye that works equally well for the ear: 'The ear by which I listen to God is the same ear by which God listens to me.'

4.2.3 Good Shepherding

Good shepherding begins and ends with the power of obedience that the grain of the shepherd's voice casts upon his flock. Chapter 10 in the Fourth Gospel gives three 'good shepherd parables' spoken by Jesus. Raymond Brown writes that Mary Magdalen's conversion 'is accomplished when Jesus calls her by name-an illustration of the theme enunciated by the Good Shepherd in 10:3-4: He calls his own by name, and they know his voice. Mary is sent to proclaim...'⁴⁶⁹

The symbol of shepherding is one of the most persistent in Scripture.⁴⁷⁰ This metaphor is immediately implicated with the oral and aural; it is the sound of the familiar voice that brings the hearers to safety. Everything is in the sound of that voice and in trusting that sound, 'he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his *name's* sake (Ps.23). As von Balthasar summarises, 'God is the Shepherd of Israel: in this image authority and life are perfectly identical at their source.'⁴⁷¹ The shepherd must keep before him the power in his voice to convey to the sheep a sense of direction. He must

⁴⁶⁸ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. By C.F. MacIntyre, Berkeley: University of California, 1960, pp. 84, 85.

⁴⁶⁹ Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p.359. Brown makes this connection firstly in *The Gospel According to John*, p. 1009, published in 1966.

⁴⁷⁰ Sheep and goats are the important domestic animals in the realm of the Bible. So too are lambs, which are young sheep less than one year old.⁴⁷⁰ The world of the Old and New Testaments abounds with numerous references to these roaming animals, valuable for their flesh and fleece. Particularly in the Old Testament, sheep-related references are largely literal and provide endearing insights into the life of the sheep herder and the animals' gregariousness, that is, how the sheep live together in flocks. For example, The Suffering Servant of the Lord in Isaiah is like a sheep who is prone to wandering and who is submissive and defenceless (Is. 53:6, 7).

⁴⁷¹ von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic*, p.142.

‘gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep’ (Is. 40: 11). To name God ‘the true Shepherd’, to name humanity ‘the lost sheep’ is the perfect theological symbol of the Old Testament. ‘Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel’ (Ps. 80:1) is the psalmist’s heartfelt plea for God’s saving grace in the midst of devastation. You who are the Supreme Shepherd must now listen to the sound of your flock bleating in disarray. Here is a plea for compassion. Jesus is God’s answer to the chaotic flock. According to Karl Rahner, Jesus using the allegory of good shepherding ‘only derives its true meaning from these preceding words: “I am”’.⁴⁷² Because Jesus is there and real to every human being, identifiable in the comforting sound of his voice, there is no possibility of being lost. The voice is not just any sound; it is the sound of salvation and perfect existence. It is a grace unimaginable but concrete in its sound if only humanity learns to discern the grain of the divine voice. The truth of ‘I am’, which must echo ‘I am who am’ is the message of Christian faith, a faith dependent on and originating in hearing and the hearing comes from Christ (Rom. 10: 17).

4.3 ‘The wind/spirit/breath... the sound/voice of it’ (Jn. 3:8)

The Greek word ‘pneuma’ means ‘spirit’, ‘wind’ and ‘breath’.⁴⁷³ In the Hebrew scriptures, duality of meaning existed also. ‘Spirit’ conventionally, according to C.H. Dodd is ‘applied primarily to the wind... and to the breath of living beings...’⁴⁷⁴ The divine or Holy Spirit of God was the breath of God’s creative and redeeming involvement with the universe. Israel’s experience of this Spirit is *spoken* first and foremost by the

⁴⁷² Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 7, p. 174.

⁴⁷³ See Bruce Vawter in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 430. This also applies to the Aramaic language Vawter states.

⁴⁷⁴ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p.213.

prophets. Listen to the prophetic word - life and power reigns. 'Once one has...heard, one is no longer the same.'⁴⁷⁵ In Greek, 'phone' stands for both 'sound' and 'voice'.⁴⁷⁶

Wind, the air in motion across the surface of the world, is a miraculous phenomenon that much of humanity regards as unsurprising. Weather vanes, also called weather cocks, are the flat pieces of metal that move steadily to and fro in tandem with the direction of the wind, are still seen fixed on many a church spire. Their message goes largely unnoticed now. Symbolically, the cock indicates the direction that the wind is coming from and going towards for humanity who is on the ground looking up. The cock is also an audiocentric symbol. Breath and breathing are equally mysterious and miraculous in their life-giving and sustaining work.

Breath is essential to the sound or sounds uttered through the mouths of living creatures. In short, breath is the life giving force of humanity; the wind is the pulse beat of nature. The sound of the breeze is the living voice of nature. Walter Eichrodt articulates this richness of both wind and breath in the lives of our scriptural forefathers. 'No wonder, then, that in the blowing of the wind and in the rhythm of human respiration, ancient Man detected a divine mystery, and saw in this element in Nature, at once so near to him and yet so incomprehensible, a symbol of the mysterious nearness and activity of the divine.'⁴⁷⁷ It is a different auditory wisdom that tuning into nature promises and the poet recognises wistfully the sin of not listening more: 'I know that I

⁴⁷⁵ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, p.17.

⁴⁷⁶ See Lightfoot, p. 117; Schnackenburg, p. 373; Francis J. Moloney, p. 99 for just three of the many commentaries which state this duality of interpretation.

⁴⁷⁷ Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, p.46.

have heard spoken/A different wisdom as/The tree was shaken/Above the parlour
grass...I should have listened longer.’⁴⁷⁸

It is interesting to observe how Johannine commentators ignore the *auditory* phenomenon of the breathing wind that has a clear sound and voice (Jn.3: 8). Of the *twenty-one* commentaries consulted,⁴⁷⁹ only *two* refer to the reality of the sound. These commentators are Rudolf Schnackenburg and Francis J. Moloney. Schnackenburg refers to Nicodemus as a ‘hearer’ of Jesus, firstly; second, he writes that the ‘central idea is that wind is also a mystery as to its origin and goal, but it still remains a reality, perceptible by means of its sound (‘voice’), recognizable through its effects.’⁴⁸⁰ Moloney makes a passing reference to the sound and voice, not in the context of hearing, but more relevant to the double meaning of wind and Spirit: The ‘sound’ of the wind may also refer to the ‘voice’ of the Spirit.’⁴⁸¹

In short, the interpretation of this short parable, a sonic image from nature, suddenly assumes a spiritual meaning; the raging wind represents the work of God

⁴⁷⁸ Patrick Kavanagh, ‘Different Wisdom’ 1-6, *Patrick Kavanagh: The Complete Poems*, p. 65.

⁴⁷⁹ In alphabetical order, see Bibliography for publication details, the others are: John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*; Thomas Brodie, *The Gospel of John*; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 2* (Incidentally, in Chapter IV here entitled ‘Faith: Faith as the Hearing of the Word.’ pp. 70-74. The first three pages here highlight the Gospel of John as an aural revelation; to hear is to believe is the Christian message. However, on p.72, Bultmann goes on to parallel seeing and believing, leaving the aural belief behind, as it were.) Raymond F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament*; C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*; Floyd V. Filson, *Saint John* (he makes a brief reference to the mysterious and impossible to see wind which ‘can be heard but not seen.’ P.45); Neal M. Flanagan, *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*; Donald Guthrie, *New Bible Commentary*; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*; R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John’s Gospel*; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*; John Marsh, *Saint John*; Joseph MacRory: *The Gospel of St. John*; John McIntyre, *Saint John*; James McPolin, *John*; Pheme Perkins, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*; Dom Ralph Russell, *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*; D. Moody Smith, *Harper’s Bible Commentary*; William Temple, *Readings in St. John’s Gospel*; Bruce Vawter, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*; John Wijngaards, *The Gospel of John & His Letters*.

⁴⁸⁰ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. 1, p. 373.

⁴⁸¹ Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, p. 99.

through the Holy Spirit. This is a wind, a simile Raymond Brown opts to call it,⁴⁸² to be heard and trusted by all who choose to hear. Incidentally, the commentary on this verse by Raymond E. Brown uses visual images throughout, which are disturbingly incongruous.⁴⁸³ What is constant and enduring is that each ear is ‘activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses’ (1 Cor. 12:11). The Spirit chooses the ear into which to breathe the message of God and it is a Breath which ‘blows where it chooses and you hear the sound of it’ (Jn.3: 8). Rudolf Schnackenburg defines this process, cited above, as both mysterious and real at one and the same time: The effects are in and through the listening.

This Nicodemus scene ‘is the first of the important Johannine dialogues’,⁴⁸⁴ or conversations. The message is that in order to be ‘reborn’ into and enter the Kingdom of God, one must *hear* the sound of the Spirit/Wind that blows the metanoia required for such an entry. This aural, free-spirited wind was what Jesus was hinting at in his night-time discourse with Nicodemus, when he compared the Spirit with the wind.

The pharisee, Nicodemus, visits Jesus in the *darkness* of the night. Rudolf Schnackenburg warns, and rightly so according to this thesis, against using this fact to imply his shady character. For whatever reason the author of the Fourth Gospel sees fit to indicate night-time activity. What is important here is the biological fact that even in the darkness, the vocal message or communication is orally and aurally unimpaired. The night-time is the time of hearing and listening.⁴⁸⁵ There is a symmetry between every

⁴⁸² Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p.141. PHEME PERKINS calls this verse a ‘short proverb’ which acknowledges the folkloric, aural feature of the verse. See *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 955.

⁴⁸³ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 141. ‘for although we can *see* the effects of the pneuma ...all about us, no one can actually *see* the pneuma (wind) that causes these effects. P.141. Italics mine.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.341.

⁴⁸⁵ As already stated earlier in this chapter, the correlation between darkness, hearing and the creative is developed in Chapter Seven.

darkness and every secret thought about God. The German Christian poet, Novalis, wrote a poetic cycle about the symmetry between the world, Sophia, and the resurrected Christ. In the depths of the night, the portress of heaven steps out of ‘ancient stories, bearing the key to the dwellings of the blessed, silent messenger of secrets infinite.’⁴⁸⁶

Macquarrie highlights the dynamic *albeit* invisible nature of the Spirit. ‘The breath is the invisible though none the less palpable characteristic that distinguishes a living man from a dead one; the breeze is the equally invisible force that stirs around man in the world and that manifests itself in many effects there.’⁴⁸⁷ Breathing can be heard although not seen. Breath has less unpredictability about it than has the wind. The ‘breath of life’ of the one truly alive is more keenly directed and accurate. Breathing, like the wind and indeed listening, is invisible. To live is to breathe. All humanity is ‘the breath of life’ (Gen. 6:17). John O’Donohue makes this point about Christian Trinitarian understanding: ‘In the Christian tradition, the understanding of the mystery of the Trinity...suggests that the Holy Spirit arises within the Trinity through the breathing of the Father and the Son.’⁴⁸⁸

The Spirit/breath/wind blows to be *heard* in the present, not in the past nor in the future (Jn 3:8). It is the Spirit that initiates, nurtures and sustains a theosonic conversation between Scripture and reader. It is not an automatic, a given, for the reader. In fact, the harder the task of interpretation, the more attentive and active is the Spirit. The power of the Spirit comes alive

⁴⁸⁶ Novalis, *Hymns to the Night: Spiritual Songs*, trans. George MacDonald, London, Temple Lodge Publishing, 1992, p. 11.

⁴⁸⁷ John Macquarrie, *Paths in Spirituality*, London: SCM Press, 1972, p.41. In an entire chapter in this book on the concept of the Spirit, he does not refer to the aural element although he quotes and comments on the Johannine logion, 3:8 on p.42.

through its graced sound ‘which is present and does transform all those willing to listen.’⁴⁸⁹ Here is an incarnation of the Spirit where spirit meets flesh in the flesh of the ear. It is Jesus telling humanity once again how to pray.

Moreover, it is the Spirit in *sound* and not in silent visual word that gives life. The Spirit of God is know-how and experience. ‘[O]ur competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; *for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*’ (2 Cor 2:5, 6, italics mine). Although its source and destination are unknown, what is clear is that it sounds and can be listened to. ‘One must believe in the wind without understanding its workings; he [Nicodemus] must do likewise with the spirit (the same Hebrew word – likewise in Greek – means ‘wind’ and ‘spirit’).’⁴⁹⁰ Belief in the spirit may lack understanding of its workings, but belief is guaranteed aurally. The source and destiny of the wind is vague and hidden. The reality, the fact, the presence of this spirit is its *sound*, which is immediately aural. ‘It is the Spirit, given to the one who believes, whose voice is heard in and through the believer whose origin and destiny, like that of Jesus, is hidden in God.’⁴⁹¹ The noisy wind is the supreme *symbol* of the Holy Spirit. In order to be ‘reborn’ into and enter the Kingdom of God, one must hear the sound of the Spirit/Wind that blows the rebirth and transformation of the metanoia required for such an entry. Once this Spirit is heard, it brands the listener with a name on a white stone, which is the secret pin-number, that

⁴⁸⁸ O’Donohue, *Anam Cara*, p. 69.

⁴⁸⁹ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.43.

⁴⁹⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary*, New York: The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1986, p.33.

⁴⁹¹ Schneiders, ‘Born Anew’, p.193.

releases true identity (Rev. 2:17).⁴⁹² The sonic wind and the naming stone suggest a theology of nature as sound. The Creator is the primal music that co-relates in every sound and in the name of every living thing. A stone is silent because God wants it to be so. Only God alone hears the *actual* timbre of every human voice. The God of Creation is a listening God. There is a secret sonic quality in every voice and there is another hidden name for every human being which God alone knows and it is auditory. God is sound for us: the real world is the one that has its beginning in the promising sound of God. Being in the centre of a *cromlech*, a circle of standing stones, is to know the sound of the silent stone voices. Stones, rocks and pebbles are as audible as they are responsive; the degrees of reception rely on the hearer and the be-holder. The miraculous unseen and unheard power of God in sacred stone is the measure of the dream of Jacob's ladder. When the dreamtime ladder leaves no trace, the stone pillow that witnessed the sound of the Lord endures. Jacob names this stone in the name of the Lord. Humanity and divinity are one in the stone and have been since. A sonic theology of nature, therefore, implies the freedom of the sacred to be heard and listened to in any form. Moreover, such a theosony of nature trusts in the *forte* of human nature to recognise the sacred, solemn aural expression. Nature's mode of extraordinary aural, sonic and silent expression are precious resources in an epistemology of theosony.

4.4 Summary

The symbolic Gospel of John is not, unlike the Synoptics, symbolic of the kingdom of God. It is a poetic, dramatic symbol of the Christian event, the living Christ himself and the events of his life, which were aural and oral. Faith relies on hearing Christ and his

⁴⁹² This verse has already appeared in the discussion on the garden Resurrection scene on p. above.

word, according to the Gospel of John. Three Johannine excerpts were presented through the course of this chapter, three symbolic references to humanity as the flock who listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10: 3, 16, 27). To conclude this chapter on theosony in the John Gospel, these two trilogies — of Fourth Gospel and Good Shepherd — are mirrored by three further audiocentric citations from the Fourth Gospel. One contains an educational message. ‘Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me’ (Jn. 6:45). Another contains a cautionary note. ‘The one who...does not receive my word has a judge’ (Jn. 12: 48). The third quotation of Jesus is his true promise of hope and salvation in the act of hearing: ‘Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming when the dead will *hear* the voice of the Son of God, and those who *hear* will live’ (Jn. 5:25).⁴⁹³

Christ, Mary of Magdala. Act one witnesses Mary, weeping outside the tomb. The angels *hear* her, converse with her and question the source of her grief. She is, we must presume, silent then, at least silent enough to hear them. Then on hearing, not on seeing them, she replies. ‘The angels make no [visual] impression on Mary. She is not seeing correctly.’⁴⁹⁴ Mary of Magdala is not seeing properly in her distraction. Her visual sense is numbed in tears. But she is hearing perfectly well to understand and respond to the interrogation of the two angelic figures.

Act Two is the scene of the mysterious gardener. The Risen Jesus enters centre-stage. She fails to recognise her Lord either by his appearance before her or by the sound of his voice as he asks the same question. Sight, and indeed sound at this stage, deceive her into ‘supposing him to be the gardener’ (Jn. 20:15) who has carried her Lord away.

⁴⁹³ Italics mine.

⁴⁹⁴ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, p.565.

The voice from the garden⁴⁹⁵ is the sound that thrills Mary and she runs to her companions to tell them whom she had encountered.

The climax to the story unfolds: Mary is named through the voiced sound of her name by the one whom ‘God...highly exalted...and gave him the name that is above every name’ (Phil. 2:9). The risen Saviour is not simply calling any name; he is keenly aware of the power of the spoken word that carries an intimacy within it between namer and named. This is a profound moment; echoed-intimacy unfolds and Mary knows again; she hears the identical sound she already knows. Walther Eichrodt writes ‘knowledge of the name is more than an external means of distinguishing one person from another; it is a relation with that person’s being.’⁴⁹⁶ Naming once again as it did in the God/Christ event evokes true conversion. ‘She turned and said...Rabbouni! (which means Teacher)’ (Jn. 20:16). Marrow interprets this title, which appears in three of the four Gospels, as ‘a cry of faith, not just a dramatic anagnorisis.’⁴⁹⁷ This was the aural turning point. From this moment of hearing, she has ‘life in his name’ (Jn. 20:31). Hearing and listening correctly is to have an abundance of health in soul and body. ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe’ (Jn. 20:29). Hearing is believing and believing is witnessing to that belief. Hers is the privilege to announce to the disciples ‘that he said these things to her’ (Jn. 20:18).

What is critical is, in Augustinian terminology, that ‘then having turned with her body, she supposed what was not, now having turned with her *ear*, she recognized what

⁴⁹⁵ R. H. Lightfoot in his commentary on St. John’s Gospel, finds the location of this scene remarkable. The entire Johannine Easter events, he points out, from Jesus giving himself up in ‘a place where there was a garden’ (Jn. 18:1) across the Kedron valley, take place in garden surrounds. Certainly John is very emphatic about the garden being the place of crucifixion and place of the new burial tomb (Jn. 19:41). Lightfoot explains that by ‘emphasising that the great deeds by which Christian redemption was effected took place in a garden, St. John suggests that the events which caused the original fall are here reversed, and once again the Garden of Eden is open to men.’ Finally, Lightfoot concludes that Mary Magdalen was not entirely off the mark in thinking that Jesus was the Gardener of the Garden. ‘In the obvious sense of the term, and as she used it, she was mistaken; but she also, like Caiaphas [11:49-52] and Pilate [19:5,14], spoke more truly than she knew.’ See R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John’s Gospel: A Commentary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1956), 1972, p.322.

⁴⁹⁶ Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, p.207.

⁴⁹⁷ Stanley B. Marrow, *The Gospel of John: A Reading*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995, p.359. An ‘anagnorisis’ is a Greek word meaning ‘recognition’ or ‘the *dénouement* in a drama’.

was.’⁴⁹⁸ ‘In the end, according to Schnackenburg, ‘the risen one assumes a form...appropriate for those to whom he wants to reveal himself.’⁴⁹⁹

Schillebeeckx adds his interpretation of the Magdalen intimate recognition: ‘[s]piritual contact with Jesus, ruptured by death, has been restored: they can once more address each other in intimate, personal terms, death notwithstanding.’⁵⁰⁰ David Tracy describes the moment of recognition as an encounter with art: ‘In our actual experience of the work of art, we move into the back-and-forth rhythms of the work: from its discovery and disclosure to a sensed recognition of the essential beyond the every-day; from its hiddenness to our sensed rootedness; from its disclosure and concealment of truth to our realized experience of a transformative truth, at once revealing and concealing.’⁵⁰¹

The other Gospel narrative which tells of Jesus appearing firstly to the beloved of Magdala, Mary, relates how she had been healed by Jesus of seven demons which plagued her earlier life (Mk. 16:9). Jesus knows the power of psychic energy that uttering a personal name carries. He knows instinctively and culturally that ‘the name denotes the essence of a thing: to name it is to know it, and, consequently, to have power over it.’⁵⁰² Mary is not being called by any combination of convenient sounds. God speaks to Mary, and in turn to every human being, with the one word that cuts to the quick. For Mary, it is the sound of her own name that brings her to the truth.

4.2.2 Naming and names

Just as it is helpful to draw attention to the cultural understanding of Hebrew and Greek ‘word’, so too an exploration of the rich meaning which *naming* implied in antiquity and Scripture will strengthen the argument that deplores its absence in contemporary society. There is a transformative power in the sound of one’s name which was revered and respected by the Hebrews and is evident in Scripture. Scripture tells us that it is God who named all of creation into being. Even after the fall, God still continued to name. ‘For primitive man the name is not merely a means of denoting a person, but is bound up in the closest possible way with that person’s very existence, so that it can become in fact a

⁴⁹⁸ St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John, The Fathers of the Church*, trans. By John W. Rettig, vol.92, Washington D.C.:The Catholic University of America Press, 1995, tr.121.2, p.58. Italics mine.

⁴⁹⁹ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, Vol. 3, p. 317.

⁵⁰⁰ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, (1974), London:William Collins & Co. Ltd, p.345.

⁵⁰¹ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.114.

kind of *alter ego*.⁵⁰³ Una Agnew goes so far as to suggest that one's name is undying, not liable to perish and celebrated through all time: 'To be named, biblically speaking, is a pledge of immortality. It is a supremely mystical and creative event, since naming can invoke the hidden power of the named.'⁵⁰⁴ Ancient Israel was keenly aware of this inherent mystery which words can carry, particularly one's name-word; Von Rad assures us that 'in everyday life...certain words were thought of as having power inherent in them, as for example, people's names.'⁵⁰⁵ There can be a sacred ritual in bestowing⁵⁰⁶ or calling a name, because to reiterate, in the words of Maertens, a name 'expresses the nature of the being that bears it.'⁵⁰⁷

Many traditions rely on maternal experience to dictate the name of the unborn. For instance,⁵⁰⁸ North American Inuit pregnant mothers in childbirth would speak out several names; at the easiest moment, presumably just as the child was born, the name called out was the name that remained. This was believed to be the baby's name-soul that was already endowed on the baby before leaving the womb and would continue to be the baby's guardian in the journey through life.⁵⁰⁹ In the Old Testament narratives, mothers are in the majority as name-givers.⁵¹⁰ (The midwife had an important role to play in the naming process also.⁵¹¹) The first birthing story is when Eve gives birth to and names her son. Seeing him first, she cries out in pride, relief and thanksgiving to the Lord. 'I have produced a man with the help of the Lord (Gen. 4:1). 'Cain, whose name means 'I have produced,' is Eve's first-born.'⁵¹¹ The name bestowed on this newly born child embraces in a *word*, the experience of conception, pregnancy and birth. The tapestry of mother-son bonding is embroidered in the single thread of the name Cain which is a pun or a play on words 'probably to be

⁵⁰² de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, p.43.

⁵⁰³ Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 207.

⁵⁰⁴ Agnew SSL, *The Mystical Imagination in Patrick Kavanagh*, p. 37.

⁵⁰⁵ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, ii, p.83.

⁵⁰⁶ For the women of the ancient east, in creating an intimate relationship with their babies, the first step of the life-journey of a thousand miles was the naming of her babe. (For an excellent, concise outline of the traditions and rituals of naming in biblical records, see the classic *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, by de Vaux OP, pp. 43-46.) See Frederick Mathewson Denny, 'Names and Naming' in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 10, p.306.

⁵⁰⁷ Thierry Maertens, OSB, *Bible Themes-A Source Book*, Vol.2, p. 405.

⁵⁰⁸ See Frederick Mathewson Denny, 'Names and Naming' in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 10, p. 306.

⁵⁰⁹ *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* states that out of some 46 accounts, 25 were mothers, 18 fathers, others women friends or midwives. p.946.

⁵¹⁰ See Chapter Eight here for an elaboration of the role of midwife in birth assistance and naming.

⁵¹¹ *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, p.45.

explained as kaniti is, ‘I have gotten a man-child.’⁵¹² Leah, daughter of Laban who deceitfully gave her in marriage to Jacob, named at the moment of birth her four sons with deep sighs which are wordplays for each name: first-born Rueben (That is See, a son)⁵¹³ has two etymologies – ‘Because the Lord has looked on my affliction (Gen. 29:32)’ and he ‘will love me’ (29:32). ‘Because the Lord has heard’ (29:33) is the wordplay of the name Simeon. The name of the third son, Levi, means ‘to be united’ and the fourth son is named Judah from Leah’s exclamation ‘I will praise’ (29:35). ‘The names of Leah’s children are given popular etymologies in each case corresponding to her utterances at birth.’⁵¹⁴ The conflicts and antagonism between Leah and Rachel are immortalised in these four names.

Jacob, the father of these birth-named sons, was also named at the moment of birth because of the extraordinary event of his delivery. ‘Jacob was so called because, while still in his mother’s womb, he grasped the heel, *‘aqeb*, of his twin (Gn. 25:26), whom he had displaced, *‘aqab*’ (Gn.38: 29).’⁵¹⁵ His name-giver is ambiguous, as are the name-givers of his twin brother. Those who attended this delivery named the first born ‘Esau’ which means hairy because his tiny body was ‘like a hairy mantle’ (Gen.25: 25). Jacob is the heel-grabber, which is the essence, the meaning of his name. Even from the womb, the struggle of the twins began. With the cunning help of his mother, Jacob dons gloves of kid skins and deceives Isaac into believing and trusting the sense of touch; had Isaac trusted his ear, the blessing of the first-born would not have gone awry. The sound of the name is ultimately more reliable than the name in itself. The name assumes a life of its own.

A personal name, therefore, in antiquity, was irretrievably linked to the meaning and being of the person. Christianity is a religion that thrives on the invocation of the name of Jesus. Jesus Christ is a theological title that Christians inherit. Being a Christian is a constant echo of the confession of belief eloquently spoken by Martha in the Fourth Gospel: ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world’ (Jn. 11:27).

⁵¹² *Dictionary of the Bible*, McKenzie, p.114.

⁵¹³ NRSV f.p.26.

⁵¹⁴ *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, p.27

To die without being named, that is, without being baptised, was to be condemned to limbo, the threshold existence on the borders of heaven and hell. Christians distinguish between family names and the Christian name given one at baptism. Christians are christened in Christ and receive a new name. Thierry Maertens is clear that in biblical culture the calling of another's name is a sign of intimacy: 'To name a being meant in a certain way to affirm one's capacity to know, to possess him.'⁵¹⁶ When God calls by name, redemption is at hand; the sounding of one's name is the summons: no name, no salvation. This is the promise of the listening prophet Isaiah: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine' (Is. 43:1).

Scripture records how names can change or be changed by others during the course of one's lifetime. Jesus said: "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter) (1:42)⁵¹⁷ God re-named Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17:5, 15). In Deutero-Isaiah, the Lord promises a new name to the New Jerusalem that will be uttered from the mouth of the Lord in acknowledgement of obedience and loyalty (Is. 62:2). The Spirit of God is to present the obedient one with a white stone on which is written the name, which is secret to everyone except God and the stone-holder (Rev. 2:17).

Eastern tradition talks with the same imagery about the effect of the name. The Sufi devotee Hazrat Inayat Khan writes: 'The effect of a man's name has a great deal to do with his life, and very often one sees that a man's name has an effect upon his fate and career.'⁵¹⁸ Tame writes that in Hinduism 'a name is not an arbitrary reference number, but an actual mathematical formula of ratio and vibration upon which the creation and sustainment of the...living being is based.'⁵¹⁹

God named everything into creation through sound. Naming and sounding the name are synonymous. The sound of the name is the meaning of the name. In ancient Israel, 'The Israelites...described God as creating everything by speaking (Gen. 1:1-

⁵¹⁵ de Veaux, *Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institution*, p.44.

⁵¹⁶ Thierry Maertens, OSB, *Bible Themes-A Source Book*, vol. I, p.21.

⁵¹⁷ The NRSV contains in a footnote of the etymology of this name: the Aramaic word (*kepha*) and Greek word (*petra*) meaning 'rock'.

⁵¹⁸ Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, Vol 2, p.254.

⁵¹⁹ Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 176.

2:3)...⁵²⁰ Moses, the liberator and lawgiver of the Israelites, listened obediently to the voice of Israel's deity from the burning bush calling out his name twice. Standing barefoot on the holy ground, the true name of God is revealed aurally to Moses. 'I am who am' (Ex. 3:14); my deeds, my acts are my name. According to Frederick Denny, 'Yahweh, as name and theological concept, affirms both God's eternal reality and his reliable presence with his covenant people, Israel.'⁵²¹ That divine name 'in the most eloquent, liberating and liberated song in Israel'⁵²² is the *leit-motif* of the Moses aria of the sea of freedom (Ex. 15: 1-19). Miriam, who is probably the true composer,⁵²³ also sings the praises of the Lord through the sound of the name (Ex. 15:21). The depth question that this work on theosony asks is: What is it in the sound of this name that energises and animates? Walter Brueggemann alludes to two energising traits which resounding the divine name meant to these two choir-leaders; directness and the primeval. 'There is something direct and primitive about the name in these most primal songs of faith and freedom.'⁵²⁴ In short, the Hebrews, who had the entire Jewish Scriptures off by heart, lived in the sound knowledge of the name and deeds of God. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel proclaimed the name of God.

4.2.2.1 The Names of Jesus and Mary

Both names are Greek. The name 'Jesus' represents the Hebrew and Aramaic *yesu'a* which is a late form of the Hebrew *yehosu'a*. It is a 'theophoric'⁵²⁵ name, embracing some divine name or title of God in its make-up. The category of theophoric names, according to Roland de Veaux, in ancient Israel was '[t]he most important category of names'⁵²⁶ To be given the name of Jesus is to be called 'Yahweh is salvation'. Angelus Silesius, the German mystic who had a conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1653 was

⁵²⁰ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, p. 37.

⁵²¹ Frederick Mathewson Denny, 'Names and Naming' in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, vol. 10, p. 301.

⁵²² Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p.25.

⁵²³ See this suggestion by Jo Ann Hackett in 'Miriam' in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. '[I]t has been speculated that the song was originally attributed to Miriam...The process by which the name of a dominant figure like Moses could become attached to a piece of poetry and supplant the name of a less common figure like Miriam is more easily understood than the converse.' p.520/521.

⁵²⁴ Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 25.

⁵²⁵ From the Greek, meaning 'God-possessed'. See Eerdmans *Dictionary of the Bible*, p.945.

⁵²⁶ de Veaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, p. 45.

convinced of the power of this Jesus name: ‘The name of Jesus is an oil poured out and spilt, It nourishes and shines, the soul’s own woe it stills.’⁵²⁷

The name Mary is also derived from the Greek names: ‘Maria’ or ‘Mariam’. Again it is a Hellenistic derivation of the Hebrew ‘Miryam’. The etymology of this name is uncertain but it has been suggested that it could be derived from the Egyptian ‘mrjt’ which means ‘beloved’.⁵²⁸ Barbara Thierring claims that Mary is a title not a name.⁵²⁹ The title refers to a role which women played in antiquity when ascetic orders like the Therapeutae ‘celebrated the Exodus as a drama of salvation, with two choirs, one by men led by a man representing Moses, the other of women led by a Miriam.’⁵³⁰ Mary of Magdala and Mary of Nazareth could well have been singers in their own lives untold of in the Gospels, using their voices to pray to God.

Jesus is true to his name; he is the saviour who carries the authority of God. The ancient East valued the mystery of names. Jesus lived by his saving name. His followers and disciples followed suit: the name of Jesus carried status. According to Kelber, ‘[I]n early Christian culture, speakers who spoke in Jesus’ name could function as carriers of his authority. The name itself was endowed with wonder-working power.’⁵³¹

4.2.2.2 The Name of all Names and No Name

It is interesting that in naming and calling out to God, Jesus Christ used the metaphor of the Father or Abba/Father [a ‘pet name’⁵³²] and urged every Christian to prayer to ‘Our Father’ (Matt. 6:9). Every Christian is privileged to nominate God ‘Father’. Denny uses a superlative to describe this Christian phenomenon: ‘*Father* has remained the most characteristic Christian appellation for God, used especially when the speaker draws near to him in prayer, worship and praise. All other names for God, whether inherited from the biblical tradition of the Jews or generated within the Christian movement, have been tempered by the intimate personal dimension that Jesus emphasised.’⁵³³ The name for

⁵²⁷ Angelus Silesius: *The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 87.

⁵²⁸ See *Dictionary of the Bible*, McKenzie, p.580.

⁵²⁹ See Barbara Thierring, *Jesus the Man*, London: Corgi Books, 1993, p. 120.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁵³¹ Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, p.20.

⁵³² According to *The New American Dictionary*, (p.906) to use ‘pet’ to qualify a word means ‘showing affection’; the *New Collins Dictionary* (p.740) describes a ‘pet name’ as ‘showing fondness’. Both meanings are precisely what Jesus intended in bestowing this name on his Father.

⁵³³ Frederick Mathewson Denny, ‘Names and Naming’ in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 301.

God in the Irish language is 'Dia'.⁵³⁴ Prayer as dialogue becomes *Dia-logue* – a nearest and dearest conversation between God's logos and the praying one who is known by and in the image of that divine word.

The goal of the true Christian is beyond oneself; the name of God is the essence, the destination of that journey beyond oneself. Karl Rahner reflects; 'it could be the case the *word* alone is capable of giving us access to what it means.'⁵³⁵ The Father is the space in between. Thomas L. Brodie puts it like this: "'God" tends to express the deity as distant; "Father," the deity as involved in human life.'⁵³⁶ The names of God and Father are the ultimate reconciliation between grace and nature. 'John's prologue... begins with a heavy use of 'God' (1:1-2:6,12-13), but the name tapers out and, after the word becomes flesh, is largely replaced by 'Father' (1:14). The prologue's final verse uses both names, in effect combining and contrasting them... Because God is unnameable and above all names; God is possessor of every name and no name. According to Rudolf Otto, '[n]ames have a power, a strange power of *hiding* God.'⁵³⁷ Angelus Silesius in his mystical verse has this to say: 'Indeed one can name God by all His highest names/And then again one can each one withdraw again.'⁵³⁸

Scripture recalls how the sound of the name of God dispels the darkness of the night.⁵³⁹ 'From out of the sound of his name, the morning darkness dims to lay bare his name. 'For lo, the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind, reveals his thoughts to mortals, makes the morning's darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth — the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name' (Amos 4:13).

The psalmist foretells the great Christ event: 'O Lord...how majestic is your name in all the earth!' (Ps. 8:1) Through Jesus Christ, the echo of God's name is sounded once and for all. 'The naming of God...is not simple... It is not a single tone, but

⁵³⁴ It has always fascinated me that, on the one hand, the Absolute Good in Irish is *Dia*. The Irish for the absolute evil or sin, on the other, encompassed in the notion of the devil is *DIAbhail*. Although outside the scope of this research, is it possible to surmise that every sacred word contains within it the *sound* of its opposite.

⁵³⁵ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 44.

⁵³⁶ Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical and theological Commentary*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 8.

⁵³⁷ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 221.

⁵³⁸ Angelus Silesius: *The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 115.

⁵³⁹ Night darkness heightens the aural experience. This point will be further explored in Chapter Seven.

polyphonic’,⁵⁴⁰ Ricoeur suggests, using sonic imagery. All Scriptural literary genres name God. God’s name is the common denominator of all Scripture.

The theosonic implications of naming in contemporary theology are about the sound, the sounding and the hearing of the name. It is in the actual act of speaking and listening to one’s name that a religious experience can occur; the sound is where the connection between the sound of the voice in the naming and the transformative power meet. A theosonic experience of naming is where the inner name of the soul hears the outer sound of the name and recognises it for the first time. The name of the soul and the name of the body are one; the secret access to the recesses of one’s God and one’s own being is the intimate, vital invitational naming by the Supreme Best Shepherd. The sound force of a name holds the real meaning of God’s love ‘poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given us’ (Rom. 5:5).

4.2.3 Good Shepherding

Good shepherding begins and ends with the power of obedience that the grain of the shepherd’s voice casts upon his flock. Chapter 10 in the Fourth Gospel gives three ‘good shepherd parables’ spoken by Jesus. Raymond Brown writes that Mary Magdalen’s conversion ‘is accomplished when Jesus calls her by name—an illustration of the theme enunciated by the Good Shepherd in 10:3-4: He calls his own by name, and they know his voice. Mary is sent to proclaim...’⁵⁴¹

The symbol of shepherding is one of the most persistent in Scripture.⁵⁴² This metaphor is immediately implicated with the oral and aural; it is the sound of the familiar voice that brings the hearers to safety. Everything is in the sound of that voice and in

⁵⁴⁰ Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p.224.

⁵⁴¹ Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p.359. Brown makes this connection firstly in *The Gospel According to John*, p. 1009, published in 1966.

⁵⁴² Sheep and goats are the important domestic animals in the realm of the Bible. So too are lambs, which are young sheep less than one year old.⁵⁴² The world of the Old and New Testaments abounds with numerous references to these roaming animals, valuable for their flesh and fleece. Particularly in the Old Testament, sheep-related references are largely literal and provide endearing insights into the life of the sheep herder and the animals’ gregariousness, that is, how the sheep live together in flocks. For example, The Suffering Servant of the Lord in Isaiah is like a sheep who is prone to wandering and who is submissive and defenceless (Is. 53:6, 7).

trusting that sound, 'he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his *name*'s sake (Ps.23). As von Balthasar summarises, 'God is the Shepherd of Israel: in this image authority and life are perfectly identical at their source.'⁵⁴³ The shepherd must keep before him the power in his voice to convey to the sheep a sense of direction. He must 'gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep' (Is. 40: 11). To name God 'the true Shepherd', to name humanity 'the lost sheep' is the perfect theological symbol of the Old Testament. 'Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel' (Ps. 80:1) is the psalmist's heartfelt plea for God's saving grace in the midst of devastation. You who are the Supreme Shepherd must now listen to the sound of your flock bleating in disarray. Here is a plea for compassion. Jesus is God's answer to the chaotic flock. According to Karl Rahner, Jesus using the allegory of good shepherding 'only derives its true meaning from these preceding words: "I am".⁵⁴⁴ Because Jesus is there and real to every human being, identifiable in the comforting sound of his voice, there is no possibility of being lost. The voice is not just any sound; it is the sound of salvation and perfect existence. It is a grace unimaginable but concrete in its sound if only humanity learns to discern the grain of the divine voice. The truth of 'I am', which must echo 'I am who am' is the message of Christian faith, a faith dependent on and originating in hearing and the hearing comes from Christ (Rom. 10: 17).

PART THREE: THEOSONY, SILENCE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Chapter Five: Theosony and Silence

'[W]hen a man is silent, he is like man awaiting the creation of language for the

⁵⁴³ von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic*, p.142.

⁵⁴⁴ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 7, p. 174.

*first time...In the silence, man is as it were ready to give the word back to the Creator from whom he first received it. Therefore, there is something holy in almost every silence.*⁵⁴⁵

Introduction

The introductory quote by Max Picard⁵⁴⁶ insists on both the interconnectedness and the sacred nature of all silence and sound. This chapter seeks to define *silence* because, in silence, the human word and God meet and are at one. In the Middle Ages, the word ‘symphony’ (from the Greek meaning ‘a sounding together’⁵⁴⁷) referred to any consonant combination of two notes. In the ‘symphony’ of God’s self-communication, silence and sound are the two main themes or subjects. The aim of this chapter, which is fragmentary in style, is to explore the wide-ranging connections between the two themes and to chart the same extent of indifference to silence in Western theology. Part Two of this thesis begins with this chapter on the role of silence⁵⁴⁸ in the larger picture of theosony. Silence, like sound, is a reality of God’s self-disclosure to humanity. More specifically, silence is a linguistic idea which reflects a more solitary, personal expression of divine revelation. Simply, silence primarily permits the space for humanity to pray. To know the experience of silence is to be able to put words on it. But this phenomenon of silence in Western Christianity has been undervalued and passed by.

⁵⁴⁵ Max Picard, *The World of Silence*, Chicago: Gateway Edition, 1952, trans. Stanley Godman from *Die Welt des Schweigens*, Switzerland: Eugen Rentsch Verlag, 1948. p.33.

⁵⁴⁶ This publication remains a classic on the realm of ‘silence’. Referring to its excellence, Bachelard writes: ‘Particularly, if we were to describe how silence affects not only man’s time and speech, but also his very being, it would fill a large volume. Fortunately, this volume exists. I recommend Max Picard’s *The World of Silence*.’ See *The Poetics of Space*, p. 182.

⁵⁴⁷ See *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Percy Scholes, p. 1003.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Firstly, the lack of attention to silence in the major reference sources is reviewed. **5.1:** outlines a concise phenomenology of a listening silence. **5.2:** focuses on the silence and the discourse directed towards God. **5.2.1:** considers the transformative aspects of silence as a virtue. The trilogy of sound, listening and silence can be such perfect capacities of spiritual development. **5.3:** looks at some silent moments in Scripture and **5.5** draws a conclusion in agreement with Ambrose Wathen who claims that ‘silence is essential for the life of intimacy with God to which man is called.’⁵⁴⁹

Theological scholarship has ignored any serious discussion of silence as it has on the area of listening and hearing. Here follows a selected theological literary review of silence.

The second edition of *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* carries no entry under silence in its recent publication. Interestingly, however, the previous edition of 1967 includes two short contributions on silence: one on ‘Silence, Practice of,’ by N. Lohkamp, the other on ‘Silence in Worship’ by G. Mensching.⁵⁵⁰ Both articles merely scratch the surface⁵⁵¹ but, on the other hand, the authors still emphasise the necessity of the practice of silence for spiritual growth. As Mensching puts it: ‘In the communication

⁵⁴⁸ This chapter will, as far as possible, focus on the non-mystical silence; a silence that follows an alternative, although inter-related, set of criteria and practices.

⁵⁴⁹ Ambrose G. Wathen OSB, *Silence: The Meaning of Silence in the Rule of St. Benedict*, Washington DC: Cistercian Publications, 1973, p. xi.

⁵⁵⁰ *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII: ‘Silence, Practice of.’ by N. Lohkamp, p.213; ‘Silence in Worship’ by G. Mensching, p. 213.

⁵⁵¹ Particularly the article on the practice of silence which ends with a rather irrelevant conclusion. The article begins with a facile point that for people in the midst of ‘chatter and noise’ the practice of silence is to be recommended. Then, a good point follows: to become sensitive to the Holy Spirit emanates from a space of ‘quiet attentiveness’. Next point is that silence is particularly relevant for the religiously professed. And it concludes, however, that since love is the essence of the religiously consecrated one and, as already stated, silence is the rule of religious, that, however, ‘there are times when silence defeats love.’ There is a confusion here between two different concepts of silence; silence freely chosen and silence imposed. It is

of the individual soul with God...there is a preparatory silence. If God is to speak, man must be silent.'⁵⁵² Yet, the most recent edition includes no separate entry for silence. Even within the comprehensive section of articles on all aspects of the liturgy,⁵⁵³ including music, gesture etc., there is no specific entry on the liturgical role of silence. So it would appear from this inconsistency that the realm of silence is actually diminishing in Roman Catholic theology.

There are two very valuable contributions on the theme of silence in reference sources. Mircea Eliade's *The Encyclopedia of Religion* has a three-page article by Elizabeth McCumsey, making two important points; the primacy of silence in religion, on the one hand, and the paucity of literary sources in the area on the other. She opens with a statement that silence 'is one of the essential elements in all religions,'⁵⁵⁴ but in relation to further reading suggestions, she concludes that '[b]ooks devoted to silence are few.'⁵⁵⁵

The *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* has an entry by one of the editors, Rino Fisichella: 'Theologians have neglected silence'⁵⁵⁶ is the first sentence. In their 'keenness to become scientists, they have relegated this essential medium for theological thought to the realms of mysticism and spirituality, so running the constant risk of falling short of their purpose.'⁵⁵⁷ A cross-reference to an article on 'language' is relevant here.

Contributed again by Fisichella, he warns theologians not to be afraid of counting silence as one of the components of their theological language; 'silence is both the source and the

vaguely reminiscent of the confusion around the role of celibacy but discussion and clarity in this latter area is far more educated and advanced in contemporary Western theology than on the role of silence.

⁵⁵² *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967 ed., Vol. 13, p. 213.

⁵⁵³ See *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2003 ed., Vol.8, pp. 671-729. There are over one hundred pages in this liturgical section.

⁵⁵⁴ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, Vol. 13, p. 321.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁵⁵⁶ *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 1001.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1001.

end of any theological language when confronted with the revelation of the trinitarian mystery of God.’⁵⁵⁸

Of the series of six *New Dictionaries* published by Michael Glaxier, Inc., originally intended to ‘take stock of the remarkable developments in the church and in theology’⁵⁵⁹, only two of the six make any reference to silence at all. *The New Dictionary of Theology* contains no article on silence. Neither does *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, *The Concise Dictionary of Early Christianity* and *The Liturgical Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*. The two source references are the *New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* and the *New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* and the quality of these entries do nothing to compensate for the lack in the others.

The first gives a short but perceptive contribution by Bob Hurd who highlights what he calls ‘the dark side of silence’⁵⁶⁰ in the life of the Catholic Church. This is a silence that represents repression and he sees Vatican II’s liturgical reforms as a step in the right direction in remedying this repression. In the second, published in 1990, the emphasis on the role of silence is within the liturgical context. Three snippets of Michael Downey’s article reflect the importance of silence: ‘Silence is a *vital* dimension of liturgical prayer...that dimension which enables the person and community to be brought more fully into the mystery of Christ’s presence...a necessary dimension of all liturgical activity.’⁵⁶¹

A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship edited by J. G. Davies, allows W. Jardine Grisbrooke to call for more areas of silence ‘for in an age of far too little silence they

⁵⁵⁸ Rino Fisichella, ‘Language’ in the *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 603.

⁵⁵⁹ See Editorial Preface both in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, p.v, by Joseph Komonchak, and in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, p.vii, by Michael Edward Downey.

⁵⁶⁰ Bob Hurd, ‘Silence’ in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, p. 884.

could be of great devotional and psychological value.’⁵⁶² The *Modern Catholic Dictionary* includes a two-sentence entry calling silence ‘the conscious effort to communicate with God...a precondition for recollection of spirit or the perceptible effect of being recollected.’⁵⁶³

The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*⁵⁶⁴, the three-volume *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology* and the international theological encyclopedia, edited by Karl Rahner among others, *Sacramentum Mundi*, three significant theological reference books,⁵⁶⁵ contain no reference to silence.

In summary, of the *sixteen* major reference sources consulted, only *seven* contain any specific reference to silence. Of these seven, three articles were cursory and bordering on the superficial. Yet, the paradox remains: two of the three references call, at least, for a greater attention to the role of silence in worship and accentuate its essential capacity in theology. The realm of silence, as the realm of listening, is wide open for serious theological speculation, definition and praxis.

As already stated, Western Judaeo-Christian tradition has tended to be word-heavy and logo-centric. Christianity, along with Judaism and Islam as religions of the Word, stand in stark contrast to the primarily silent, spiritual traditions of the East.

⁵⁶¹ Michael Downey, ‘Silence, Liturgical Role of,’ in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, p.1189. Italics mine.

⁵⁶² W. Jardine Grisbrooke, ‘Silent Prayer’ in *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1972, p. 349.

⁵⁶³ *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, ed. John A. Hardon, S.J., p.505.

⁵⁶⁴ This dictionary has an entry on the argument of silence which is the deduction that an author was ignorant of a subject if he did not refer to it which apparently was carried to extreme lengths in the nineteenth century and in now in disrepute.

⁵⁶⁵ It is acknowledged here that *Sacramentum Mundi* is somewhat outdated at this stage in theological scholarship.

Indeed, the ‘retreat from the word’⁵⁶⁶ ...startling and disconcerting in late nineteenth century art’⁵⁶⁷ had little or no effect on Christian religious values. Having acknowledged the rational preponderance of verbal analysis in theological speculation, very little of that verbosity centred on the religious dimension of silence. This lack of attention to silence is not just applicable to theological discourse. Silence, after-all, Elizabeth McCumsey reminds us ‘lies behind the words, supports the rituals, and shapes the way of life, whatever the words, rituals, and way of life may be’.⁵⁶⁸ Guardini, ten years ago, summed up the situation aptly: ‘The topic [silence] is very serious, very important and unfortunately neglected; it is the first presupposition of every sacred action.’⁵⁶⁹

5.1 Towards a phenomenology of silence

Max Picard makes the connection between *listening* and silence: ‘[L]istening is only possible when there is silence in man: listening and silence belong together’.⁵⁷⁰

Etymologically, ‘*phenomenon*’ comes from two Greek inter-related words:

‘*phainomenon*’ which means ‘that which appears’ and ‘*phainem*’ which means ‘to bring to light’ or ‘to shine’.⁵⁷¹ Experiencing silence ‘brings to light’, ‘shines’ on aural sensory perception. Silence is the source and the destiny of every *sound* as well as every listening.

John O Donohue summarises this point: ‘All good sounds have silence, near, behind, and

⁵⁶⁶ Kane, see fn. 22, presumably borrows this terminology from an essay written by George Steiner in 1961 entitled *The Retreat from the Word* and subsequently published in *Language and Silence*, pp.30-55.

⁵⁶⁷ Leslie Kane, *The Language of Silence: Of the Unspoken and Unspeakable in Modern Drama*, London and Toronto, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984, p.22.

⁵⁶⁸ Elizabeth McCumsey, ‘Silence’ in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, Vol. 13, p.321.

⁵⁶⁹ Cited by Silvano Maggiani, O.S.M., ‘The Language of Liturgy’, in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Fundamental Liturgy*, Vol. II, edited by Ansgar J. Chupungo, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998, p.244.

⁵⁷⁰ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p. 174.

⁵⁷¹ The sensory linking of sight and hearing is further explored in a theological context in Chapter Two on hearing.

within them.’⁵⁷² Sounds, listening and silence are a trilogy of human and religious experience; hence the relevance of silence in this work and the argument for devoting an entire chapter to the subject.

Silence is an original, primary event like birth and death. To be in this still inner world is to listen and hear. Out of listening silence, an obedient response is revealed. ‘Silence is always in a state of listening...’⁵⁷³ Listening is always in a state of silence. Silence, like the phenomenon of listening, is always obedient, waiting for sound to set it in motion. William Wordsworth describes the poetics of his own solitude: ‘obedient as a lute/That waits upon the touches of the wind.’⁵⁷⁴ Silence waits obediently and freely for the touch of sound. Silence is not a spectator; it participates in the work of the ear.

Silence is a positive reality that is a powerful means of self-expression. An intimate knowledge of silence is integral to human meaning and is synonymous with human existence. Silence brings self-understanding back to the being who chooses and creates it. The hush of stillness is the great self-challenger. In the great space of stillness, limitations and expectations are exposed and confronted. ‘Man does not put silence to the test; silence puts man to the test.’⁵⁷⁵ Theologically, an awareness of God puts silence to the test; silence nourishes the possibility and potentiality of God for humanity that has long since lain like a dry withered leaf.

Silence rehabilitates. To choose stillness is ultimately to desire personal, wholesome self-transformation. It is an opportunity to listen. John O’ Donohue makes the connection between the trilogy of sound, listening and silence with some personal advice: ‘Give

⁵⁷² O’ Donohue, *Anam Cara*, p. 70.

⁵⁷³ M.F. Sciacca, *Come si vince a Waterloo*, Milan: Marzorati, 1963, p. 183.

⁵⁷⁴ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book Third, 136-139, p. 108.

⁵⁷⁵ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.1.

yourself the opportunity of silence and begin to develop your listening in order to hear, deep within yourself, the music of your own spirit.’⁵⁷⁶ In the space of silence, the inner contradictions that work against well being are addressed and healed.

On the other hand, there is the dark side to silence and discourse, a darkness which words and language share; hearing words and silence can become distorted in the perception and interpretation. Silence can confuse and become the centrepiece in clash of communication. Leslie Kane puts it simply; ‘[l]anguage...often serves to perpetuate barriers of misunderstanding.’⁵⁷⁷ A silence can be persuasion to turn from speech on account of fear or adversity. So too can silence be abused and misunderstood in relationships carrying a variety of meanings from dismissal, exclusion and total refusal.⁵⁷⁸ Silence can, in this regard, be a vice if it is enforced or fear-filled. So cultivating a healthy silence means quelling an addiction to both superfluous noise, babble and much more.

The important point is that silence is a contradiction in terms, in that to try to define or articulate it, one has to break it, interrupt it, and surprise it. Picard states this paradox emphatically: ‘In no other phenomenon are distance and nearness, range and immediacy, the all-embracing and the particular, so united as they are in silence.’⁵⁷⁹ Such earthly inaudible sound and silence are the essence of Theosony. It is the silence of our being – a

⁵⁷⁶ O’Donohue, *Anam Cara*, p.72.

⁵⁷⁷ Kane, *The Language of Silence*, p.19.

⁵⁷⁸ In conversation with one Benedictine monk on the practice of day and night silence in monasticism before Vatican II, he highlighted this negative element in silence, which was quite widespread in community. Although he, and many other monks would regret the absence of silence in contemporary monasticism, he was quite clear that this malevolent abuse of silence was good riddance.

⁵⁷⁹ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.2.

strange, aural race, Emily Dickinson held. ‘*And Being, but an Ear, /And I, and Silence, some strange Race/ Wrecked, solitary here* —⁵⁸⁰

The inner sound of silence resides in the caverns of the imagination. Silence is a world of imagined sound.⁵⁸¹ In the stillness of silence, the imagination forms the conversation space with God. On the other hand, the imagination can run riot, noisily filling the gap where God is waiting; silence is then knocking on the door of the deaf one.

Other disciplines are aware of the transformative nature of *listening*; there is an attention being paid to *silence* in other areas of research. Indeed, it is also the case in both listening and silence that theology has much to gain from such commentaries. Philosophy, psychoanalysis and musicology are just three disciplines from which observations are drawn here.

In philosophical discourse, Gemma Fiumara’s theory on silence proposes ‘the creation of a co-existential space which permits dialogue to come along.’⁵⁸² Philosophy is recognising the silent power. Such insights as Fiumara’s have immense potential in a theological context: ‘Silence...can be a very fertile way of relating, aimed at the inner integration and deepening of dialogue...letting the deeper meaning and implications of that relationship emerge.’⁵⁸³ Silence is as essential to listening as breathing is to existence. It is also the locus which allows for and enhances a *response* to that which is heard in silence. Silence is the *maieutria*⁵⁸⁴, the mid-wife, to true response.

⁵⁸⁰ *Emily Dickinson, The Complete Poems*, London/Boston: faber and faber, 1970, p.129.

⁵⁸¹ I am indebted to Andrew Lawrence Love for this insight.

⁵⁸² Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.99.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.102.

⁵⁸⁴ This is a term borrowed from Socratic philosophy and is developed in Chapter Seven here. See *Socratic Questions: New Essays on the philosophy of Socrates and its significance*, eds. Barry Gower and Michael C. Stokes, London/New York: Routledge, 1992, p.4.

In psycho-analytical discourse, the listening work of the psychoanalyst is in the essential reading between the spoken words of the analysand. 'The psychoanalyst has to learn how one mind speaks to another beyond words and in silence.'⁵⁸⁵ In theological discourse, however, the essential function of sacred silence is to propose and win the motion of a theosonic listening, which is dialogical and reciprocal in any triune divine/human relationship. The realm of silence is a theological listening and, in turn, an answering to the sound of God.⁵⁸⁶

Some musical observations are appropriate at this juncture. The contemporary classical music composer, John Tavener,⁵⁸⁷ suggests, that while contemplating on the eschaton, the discipline of silence of the Holy Spirit was enhanced for him. The 'Voice' of the Holy Spirit speaks in the silence of contemplation. 'In a series of recent eschatological works I feel that finally I have begun to find 'The Voice'. I know now that it is not a matter of finding what to say, but of how to be silent and to hear the Spirit speaking in this silence.'⁵⁸⁸

It is another contemporary composer, John Cage (d. 1992), who highlighted the positive notion of silence.⁵⁸⁹ Cage was an avid devotee of eastern Indian religion, eastern philosophies and Zen Buddhist tradition, and all cultures where chance elements and the

⁵⁸⁵ Reik, *Listening With the Third Ear*, p.146.

⁵⁸⁶ Both 'response' and 'answer' are derived from the Latin verb '*respondere*' meaning 'to answer, reply'. See *Collins Latin Dictionary*, p. 187.

⁵⁸⁷ I first met this composer in 1993 following a telephone invitation to visit him in London when he would share his newest composition with me entitled 'Mary of Egypt'. The was, he claimed, inspired by the Holy Spirit through a recording of a prehistoric '*caoine*' or lamentation of my own singing. (*Caoineadh na Maighdine*, CEF 084 Gael Linn, track 7). During that meeting, I recall, he spoke of this Spirit-filled silence.

⁵⁸⁸ Tavener, *The Music of Silence*, op. Cit. P.90. See footnote 86 below where silence, closely allied to serenity, is suggested as an eschatological virtue along with gratitude, serenity, vigilance, humility and joy.

⁵⁸⁹ One of the leading figures of twentieth century *avant-garde* music, John Cage, relates how that in 1951 he entered a sound-proof, anechoic, six-walled studio and was acutely aware of two audible sounds: a high-

role of silence in personal awareness are paramount. Cage's innovations, particularly in the 1950s, dispelled any understanding of silence as merely absence of either sound or speech as outdated, narrow and inadequate. Silence is not the absence of sound, he held. '[T]ry as we may to make a silence, we cannot.'⁵⁹⁰ In short, the realm of silence is a positive ground or horizon of sound.

⁵⁹¹ illustrated this point in a composition entitled '4'33' composed in 1952. John Stanley goes so far as to label this work 'notorious'.⁵⁹² The piece is loosely intended for any number of performers and any random combination of instruments gathered together on a concert-hall stage in silence, for the duration of time, which is the title. This work of art proves that an ambience of complete absence of sound is impossible to create and sustain. The listening ear is never silent; it is open to the ambient sonic demands all around.

Stanley summarises the influence and effect thus: 'Presumably a Zen-inspired composition, its "music" consists of any audible sound from the audience or outside, and the emphasis is thus shifted from "understanding" to "awareness".'⁵⁹³

Andrew Love suggests that Cage's motivations in this composition are more philosophical than musicological⁵⁹⁴: this thesis would argue that the piece, '4.33', is more in the realm of the religious. There are five issues called into being through this piece, which are deeply theological. One has to do with losing oneself in silence. Another has to

pitched sound which he learned subsequently was his own nervous systematic operation and a low sound which was blood circulation. See John Cage, *Silence*, p.8. and 13.

⁵⁹⁰ Cage, *Silence*, p.8.

⁵⁹¹ John Cage was very articulate and passionate on this paradox in silence and I discussed it with him at length in Huddersfield in 1991, the year before he died.

⁵⁹² John Stanley, *Classical Music: The Great Composers and their Masterworks*, London: Mitchell Beazley, 1994, p.246. Even this particular comment indicates a scepticism of silence in contemporary classical music criticism also. Cage's works of the fifties were met with hostility and rage and at one performance in New York of a work, 'Atlas Elipticalis' in 1964, the orchestra sabotaged the event and many of the audience walked out.

⁵⁹³ Stanley, *Classical Music*, p. 246.

do with the power of the listening context. A third highlights an experience that is new, unexpected and surprising. The fourth is the fact that each listening is different and unique to every person in every situation. The final point that this piece offers to religious experience is the power of the listening silence to break down barriers. Some cursory remarks on the five points are relevant *albeit* tantalising, in that, the scope of this present work only allows for superficial speculation, with in-depth explorations and correspondences postponed.

1. In the so-called silence, an existential silence, one can no longer lose oneself in rational external sound. Humanity in such existential silence digs deeper below the layer of understanding to the level of self-enlightenment.
2. Then there is the distinction to be made between first-hand and second-hand, even first-ear and second-ear hearing here: In the actual performance context, the ritual of being in physical attendance is the spiritual/religious act; in the second-ear context, in listening to a recording, the power ceases to exist or at least is greatly diminished. The theological overtones are both on an aural and a silent level: being present to the Sound and the Silence which reveals God is being present to the actual moment which is not disembodied.
3. John Cage seeks to convey in sound, precisely timed, the message that the hidden, the unexpected, the surprising, the improvised in human existence is revealed through a certain kind of listening within a certain time frame. Since all sound and hearing is the graced sound event of God's self revelation, then the message for theological speculation translates into a new kind of listening which has to do with stillness, silence and time.

⁵⁹⁴ Andrew L. Love, 'Listening to Silence: A Liturgical Perspective,' unpublished paper, 2003, p.5.

4. No two silent listenings to the inner voice of God's self-disclosure are the same. No two listenings to Cage's silence are identical either. The praying/listening moment changes each time and is different for everyone; one must become comfortable in the improvisatory silence, that is, a silence that is on the spur of the moment, open and free to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit. Simply, it is playing silence by ear.
5. John Cage sought to eliminate the marked distinction between 'art', the 'concert-hall' and 'being' and 'living'; the role of a listening silence can break down the barriers between 'theology', the 'church', 'humanity' and the triune God. Such 'silent' listening, as Cage experimented with, has enormous theological implications and possibilities.⁵⁹⁵ It is an area of research outside of the scope of this present work.

These few, by no means exhaustive, interdisciplinary reflections, drawn from philosophy, psychoanalysis and music, have much to propose to theology and to a theory of theological listening; in the hush that holds the self-communication of God for humankind is the peace of connectedness and loving response. In short, a true two-way conversation with God is the calm, the pure stillness of becoming fully alive to the world and to the Holy Spirit.

In summarising this section on the multidimensional ontology of silence, three points arise. The first is that silence is the positive ground or horizon of sound. It is an infinite commodity in that it surrounds all sounding. Within the realm of the silent, the meaning of the sound is processed long after the sound has ceased. It is a definitive state of

⁵⁹⁵ For instance, in the silent solemnity of the space which is the sacred space/'concert-hall', the human *being* is touched, moved and converted through the sound of silence.

activity. The ancient Chinese proverb, ‘the sound ceases but the sense goes on’ summarises true silence. A listening in the silence is irretrievable. According to Seamus Heaney, ‘[T]he silence breathed/ and could not settle back.’⁵⁹⁶

Secondly, sound and silence are in the strict relationship of cause and effect: sound is nourished and nurtured by silence. ‘[S]ounds... “sound” because silences are in function.’⁵⁹⁷ There could be no sound without silence and no true silence without sound. ‘We perceive sound only because there is an un-manifested state of absolute silence, the state from which all sound originates.’⁵⁹⁸ Sound is sustained by silence. Silence is the natural milieu of sound and sound is unimaginable without silence. Silence and sound are not opposites, but are paradoxically and fundamentally correlatives, bound together in mutual or complementary relationship. In iconic, ironic, metaphor, they form a diptych; two sides of a coin of human listening and being. The optical image conveys this aural insight. They create an inseparable duality. Thus, stillness and its corresponding resonance simply ‘are’. Silence is the *cantus firmus* of life; all sound merely interacts with the constant vibrating silent hue of nature.

Finally, the innovative contemporary composer, John Cage, proposed a musical paradigm of silent self-consciousness. Here is a silence that gives access to self-consciousness but also heightens awareness of circumambient cosmic and incidental sounds. ‘Hectoring, guilt-making, fantasizing, narcissistic wool-gathering just do not hold up day after day against the silences that invade prayer. They fall into their own silences.

⁵⁹⁶ Heaney, *Station Island*, p.61.

⁵⁹⁷ Sciacca, *Come si vince a Waterloo*, p.26. Quoted in Fiumara.

⁵⁹⁸ Randall McClellan, *The Healing Forces of Music: History, Theory and Practice*, Rockport, MA:Element, 1991, p.3.

The silences swallow them up.’⁵⁹⁹ In other words, the fact of silence is a given in life and theology, as is the sense of hearing; it is crucial that its neglect is acknowledged and ways of inserting silence and hearing back into theology are explored and practised. Suggesting an ontology of theological silence, therefore, is to refer to that quiet state as the first principle or category involved in sound. Recognising and then experiencing the presence of God in auditory terms means arguing for the existence of the God of sound founded on the assumption that silence is a discoverable property in the very concept of that auditory and silent religious experience. The ground and source of all the multidimensional facets of the religious auditory and silent experience is in the *a priori* existence of God.

5.2 The Base⁶⁰⁰ of the Triangle – Silence and Divine Discourse

Silence and the word are two forms of human communication, which are inextricably linked.⁶⁰¹ Speech is patterned, structured verbal sound. Ambrose Wathen summarises this point: ‘Words do not exist without silence, for silence is an essential part of intelligible sound and without silence there would be no language’.⁶⁰² Any act of speech breaks the silence and resurrects it again on cessation. ‘One can hear silence sounding through

⁵⁹⁹ Ann and Barry Ulanov, ‘Prayer and Personality: Prayer and Primary Speech’ in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. Jones/Wainwright/Yarnold, London: SPCK, 1986, p.28.

⁶⁰⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar describes the mundane spoken word as the ‘point of a triangle on the ground that opens out upward into the infinite.’ See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, trans. Sr. Mary Theresild Skerry, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989, p. 39. God’s word is the possibility offered for ascending to this opening. This title adopts an opposite dyadic analogy where the *base* of the triangle is the metaphor for the sacred silence which embraces human sound and discourse which is horizontal. The base of the triangle is, in this analogy, placed on the ground; a listening and response which, disparate and unfocussed initially, gradually reaches and stretches to the fine point of the triangle which is the present presence of God and the ultimate eschaton. The two sides of the triangle represent the Trinitarian constituents of the incarnated Word and Silence of God and the vital principle of God’s self-communication that are the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁰¹ In philosophical reflection particularly, speech and silence are conjoined consistently from the pioneering thoughts of Max Picard who held that without silence there would be no speech or language. Particularly the Italian philosopher, Michele Federico Sciacca who greatly influenced the reflections of contemporary philosopher Gemma Fiumara, reiterated this.

⁶⁰² Wathen OSB, *Silence: The Meaning of Silence in the Rule of St. Benedict*, p.xii

speech. Real speech is in fact nothing but the resonance of silence'.⁶⁰³ Speech is complete in relationship with the silence that gives rise to and contains it. Joanne Daly believes that silence and discourse are naturally in equilibrium, which is aural terminology: 'Silence is not the enemy of dialogue, but its natural counterpoise.'⁶⁰⁴ Silence keeps discourse balanced.

What is important here is to make the theological connection between the Word of God and the Silence of God. Reflecting on God begins with a listening in the silence of the temple of one's own thoughts. Teresa of Avila speaks of this silent experience gracefully: 'Every way in which the Lord helps the soul here, and all He teaches it, takes place with such quiet and so noiselessly that, seemingly to me, the work resembles the building of Solomon's temple where no sound was heard. So in this temple of God, in this His dwelling place, He alone and the soul rejoice together in the deepest silence.'⁶⁰⁵ Teresa is surely the patron saint of silence through this infinitely rich phrase. In true silence, she believes, all things are accomplished despite the ambient sounds. Her model is Solomon's temple, miraculously and silently built when 'neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the temple while it was being built (1 Kings 6:7).'⁶⁰⁶ Teresa of Jesus' message of silence is one of 'abundant and joyful life from faithfulness to

⁶⁰³ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.11.

⁶⁰⁴ Sister Joanne Daly, "Out of the depths," in *Sisters Today* 38, 1967, p.195.

⁶⁰⁵ Quoted from *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 2 vols. Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976, "The Interior Castle" 7.3.11, Vol. 2:441-442.

⁶⁰⁶ This imaginative architectural point would appear to be quite irrelevant to the commentators. I consulted just four sources and no attention was paid to this silently constructed edifice: *Bert Olam series: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry*, ed. David W. Cotter, *1 Kings*, Jerome T. Walsh, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996, pp.102-104; *1-2 Samuel: 1-2 Kings*, Charles Conroy, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1983, p.150-154; William Sanford LaSor, 'Temple: Solomon's Temple' in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, pp. 732, 733; Roland E. Murphy, 'Solomon' in *The Oxford Dictionary to the Bible*.

God'.⁶⁰⁷ Her anthem is: 'But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!' (Hab. 2:20).

Philosophically speaking, Fiumara portrays the mental leap between word and silence: 'The thoughtful mind out of silence bursts forth in the relentless concert of the logos-in-progress.'⁶⁰⁸ Words once spoken out of the silence fade into another silence from out of which meaning and understanding gradually emerge. T.S. Eliot's meaning of words, spoken and heard, and eventual silence implies dynamism, movement and success in establishing communication. 'Words, after speech, reach/Into the silence...'⁶⁰⁹ Words along with silence reach out to God.

Paradoxically, most reflection resides within the interior silent castle of the mind precisely because we are at a loss for words to break out of the silence. This is particularly true about the name above all names, which is God. Once spoken, the rest is silence. Karl Rahner is aware of this paradox. Writing about the ineffable, elusive power of the word of God, he says that the word 'God' 'means 'the *silent* one' who is always there, and yet can always be overlooked, unheard...'⁶¹⁰

The dilemma for the Christian believer, Hans Urs von Balthasar holds, is that 'everything is decided by the question of whether God has spoken to man – about Himself, of course, and then about His intention in creating man and his world – or whether the Absolute remains *silent* beyond all earthly words.'⁶¹¹ Karl Rahner expresses a similar quandary in the form of prayerful questioning: 'Is Your silence...really a

⁶⁰⁷ This is how Elizabeth Achtemeier ultimately defines *The Book of Habakkuk* from which the next verse is taken. See 'Habakkuk, The Book of.' In *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p.266.

⁶⁰⁸ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p. 95.

⁶⁰⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'Four Quartets: Burnt Norton, V', *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*, Suffolk: Faber and Faber, 1963, p.194.

⁶¹⁰ Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, p. 46. Italics mine.

⁶¹¹ von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, p.7. Italics mine.

discourse filled with infinite promise, unimaginably more meaningful than any audible word You could speak to the limited understanding of my narrow heart...?’⁶¹² These theologians, the most important of the few commentators on the role of listening and silence in theology, conjoin the aural and the silent in God’s self-disclosure. The silence of alert attentiveness and reply in this essentially aural theology are complementary. Since the essence of Christianity is the self-communication of God’s Word to humankind, through his incarnated Son, then theological praxis must concern itself with silence and discourse. For Ambrose Wathen, silence is about communicating with God. In this vital conversation, ‘man must listen and so be silent, and when man wishes to respond, he must use silence as well as words to make himself intelligible.’⁶¹³ Silence and sound listening are inseparable. Silence is the shore of the ocean of sound.

In all human discourse, a listening silence is present. For Max Picard, ‘[w]hen two people are conversing with one another, however, a third is always present: Silence is listening’.⁶¹⁴ This is important in the theology of listening which this work explores. God’s self-revelation can be disclosed in the very silence between the divine/human discourse. The triune God communicates with humanity from the depths of stillness and sound. The inner being of the Trinity demands a vocality, an expression and a silence. It is like the supreme mantra in the Hindu tradition: *Om* is formed from three letters, a diphthong merges ‘a’ and ‘u’ and with ‘m’ in a trinity which is one sound only. In Christian tradition, God and Jesus are the diphthong; the silence of the Holy Spirit is the ‘m’. In this Christian trilogy of silence, the past, present and the future is to be heard. All that is beyond the triad of hearing, listening and silence, God fills and goes way beyond.

⁶¹² Karl Rahner, *Encounters with Silence*, trans. James M. Demske, London: Burns & Oates, 1975, p.21.

⁶¹³ Wathen, *Silence*, p. xiii.

Silence can speak and can be the grace of God freely and lovingly bestowed. Silence can also be the heart of the soul that reveals the friendship with oneself.

David Tracy hints at the importance of silence in religion. ‘Silence may indeed be the final and most adequate mode of speech for religion.’⁶¹⁵ God alone reveals the silence which is mindfully heard in an eternal, two-way dialogue. Furthermore, Picard confirms that ‘[I]n the human mind, silence is merely knowledge of the *Deus absconditus*, the hidden god’.⁶¹⁶ The God who freely reveals will be known not only in names but also in silence. This silence does not reduce God to absence or mere emptiness, but is the fullness, which is a Trinity of Persons. It is almost as if the Trinity is not composed of just three parts but of four: the fourth is the silence that reveals the triune God to the universe and wherein cosmic sound disappears. Human silence, which human ears can perceive, arises out of the silence that cannot be heard yet which is drawn back to the world by an organic momentum. The Word is the fruit of the silent seed of divine/human encounter. To taste the full fruit is to taste the revelation of God in and through the dialogical Trinity. This still place of God is where the human being can encounter a symbol or sign that expresses and directs attention towards the presence of God. In the silent revelation of God’s Word, human experience is touched and endowed with a discipline of love. For Mark Patrick Hederman, ‘every word of revelation has a margin of silence.’⁶¹⁷ That being the truth, in fundamental theology, which focuses on divine revelation, discourse and silence, must be inclusive in the discussion. In theology, one cannot survive, indeed exist, without the other.

⁶¹⁴ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.8.

⁶¹⁵ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 174.

⁶¹⁶ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.14.

⁶¹⁷ Mark Patrick Hederman, *Anchoring the Altar*, Dublin:Veritas Press, 2002, p. 13.

Silence and divine discourse are the concern of discipleship. The listening disciple's mind is silent, patient, virtuous, listening, receptive and responsive. '*Nam loqui et docere magistrum condecet, tacere*⁶¹⁸ *et audire discipulum convenit* – Speaking and teaching are the master's task; the disciple is to be *silent* and *listen*.'⁶¹⁹ The disciple's tacit inner ear mirrors the absolute silence from out of which God's Word breaks forth. It is a discipline acknowledged and imposed even by the pre-Christian religious and political order founder Pythagoras who imposed on new disciples five years of total silence. The primacy of sound, its definition and organisation is an important aspect of Pythagorean legacy. The discovery of the numerical basis of all musical concordances is attributed to him. It could be speculated that he was keenly aware not only of the paradox but also of the synonymous nature of both silence and patterned sound, which is music. Nine hundred years later, Ambrose of Milan cautioned that: 'It is more difficult to know how to be silent than how to speak'.⁶²⁰ For the disciple who submits to or chooses this discipline of yearning, it carries its own infinitely creative risks also.

The discourse with God, which is of the essence of all theological reflection, is integrated and deepened in the space of silence. The realm and practice of silence is just one other manifestation of God that embraces the word and implicates the ear. '[I]nterior silence carries the word that sounds, justifies it and gives it efficacy.'⁶²¹ To access the

⁶¹⁸ It is interesting to note the various interchanges of choice of Latin words for silence in the Rule of St. Benedict indicating subtle nuances concerning silence. Wathen states that the verb '*silere*', used twice in the RB and its corresponding noun '*silentium*', used four times, is more significant and carries a wider context than '*tacere*' (used three times) and '*taciturnitas*' (used five times). However, having made this point, Wathen goes on to state that ultimately all four words were not appreciably different and were used interchangeably. See Wathen, *Silence*, pp.13-19.

⁶¹⁹ *The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry OSB, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1981, p.190/191.

⁶²⁰ Ambrose of Milan, *Three Books on the Duties of the Clergy*, quoted from *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.323

⁶²¹ von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation*, p.171.

quiet voice of God, silence must be tempered or heightened. It is not a suppression of sounds but an appropriate shaping of expression that empowers listening to the intonation of God.

Every human being moves toward the silent mystery of God before which all sounds disintegrate and fade. In this Divine silence, the human encounter and quest is as ever for 'one who was always here before I was.'⁶²² God is the silent one, who when heard and addressed in prayer begins to sound. For the praying listener, there is 'a time to keep silence and a time to speak' (Ecclesiastes 3:7, Sir 20:1-8). In the *Book of Job*, the underlying theme is one of God's silent timing. 'God...kept silent'⁶²³ until Job in his own time handed sound over. When Job fell into silence, God could be heard.

There is a time, therefore, for silence that is, at one and the same time, a time for listening. The two-roomed *locus silentiae* or space of silence waits to realise the message of God's grace in what appears to be a void, which can never be anticipated or prepared for. The prayer of the silent one is defined by Merton as the 'attentive, watchful listening of 'the heart.'⁶²⁴ The wisdom of silence in Scripture is a 'famine of the word.' (Amos 8:11-12). Again, Wathen makes the aural connection: 'In order to hear God speak man must listen, and in order to listen he must be silent...Silence is necessary for prayer.'⁶²⁵ So here is the full cyclic pattern of prayer: the listening to God which of its essence craves for silence and the prayerful response to God also has the same hankering. Silence, therefore, is the prayer base of the triangle, which reaches up to the summit of God. From this prayer-filled base of still calm the cloud of alienation lifts. It is as if the realm of

⁶²² von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, p.85.

⁶²³ Michael D. Guinan, 'Job' in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary* p.700.

⁶²⁴ Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*, London:Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975, p.33.

⁶²⁵ Wathen , *Silence*,p.xi.

silence is the vertical, where heaven meets earth; being in the listening space of the base of that silent triangle is the horizontal, where silence penetrates the human body through the human sense of hearing. Max Picard makes a similar analogy: ‘The word and therefore man is in the center between two regions of silence...the lower human silence...and the higher silence of God.’⁶²⁶ But this stops short: God’s silence is not only wedded to the human world and experience, there is the primeval silence of God. This divine silence of the imagination is the poetry of God because ‘poetry is the language of silence.’⁶²⁷

5.2.1 Silence in ‘the great Trilogy of ... virtues’⁶²⁸

Placid Spearritt refers to silence as a virtue. A virtue in its widest sense of meaning is, according to Karl Rahner, ‘any perfectly developed capacity of man’s spiritual soul, or the development itself.’⁶²⁹ To claim that silence is a virtue is to suggest the *transformative nature* of silence and its theological possibilities. A virtue is according to Paul Wadell, a ‘characteristic way of behaviour which makes both actions and persons good and which also enables one to fulfil the purpose of life...conversely, a lack of virtue constitutes a deprived nature and a diminished self.’⁶³⁰ Of its very nature, a virtue grows and increases through repeated behaviour and reveals both the character and subsequent action of oneself. Therefore, as Wathen suggests, ‘silence is a moral virtue.’⁶³¹

⁶²⁶ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.232.

⁶²⁷ O’Donohue, *Anam Cara*, p. 67.

⁶²⁸ Placid Spearritt, ‘Benedict’ in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds., Jones, Wainwright, Yarnold, London: SPCK, 1986, p.152.

⁶²⁹ Karl Rahner, ‘Virtue’ in *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner, London: Burns & Oates, (1975), 1981, p. 1794.

⁶³⁰ Paul J. Wadell, ‘Virtue’ in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, p.998. On a minor note, it is interesting that no entry under ‘virtue’ appears in *The New Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, eds. Latourelle/Fisichella, 1994.

⁶³¹ Wathen, *Silence*, p. xiii.

Virtues are transformative. On repeated practice, a process of change can occur, what Thomas Aquinas terms, a ‘modification of a subject’ which is the primary proponent of a Christian virtue ethics.⁶³² Wadell finds: ‘That is why virtues are central to Christian spirituality.’⁶³³ Through the decision to become silent, one can, if one chooses, allow oneself to be open to a transformation filled with, and by, God’s self-communication.

Transformative silence, therefore, takes its place beside the supernatural theological virtues⁶³⁴, the natural cardinal virtues⁶³⁵ and the eschatological virtues.⁶³⁶ They are the custodians and harbingers of the knowledge and service of the overall purpose of life which is the deeper movement into God.⁶³⁷ It is precisely these virtues that predispose and enable fullness of encounter with God.

Exercise of the virtue of silence allows for full potential to be achieved. The goal is ultimate human excellence. The virtue of silence is teleological; from Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas, the realm of silence targets the good. Silence can be a process by virtue of which God shapes us gradually in love. It is a conversion through the grace of God’s loving silence. After all, as Tracy summarises, ‘[t]he only God there is the God who is love.’⁶³⁸

⁶³² See St. Thomas Aquinas, *The “Summa Theologica, of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1923, Pt.1-11, q.49, a.2, p.282.

⁶³³ Wadell, ‘Virtue’ in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, p.998.

⁶³⁴ Scripture (1 Cor 13:13), compounded by Tradition, singles out faith, hope and love.

⁶³⁵ The cardinal or ‘hinge’ (*L. cardo*) virtues are prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude.

⁶³⁶ Although not mentioned in the ‘Virtue’ entry in *Concise Theological Dictionary*, p.483, James J. Walter, in his article on ‘virtue’ stresses the importance of these eschatological virtues of gratitude, humility, vigilance, serenity and joy in the context of theological discourse within the Catholic tradition. See *New Dictionary of Theology*, p.1083. Perhaps it is within this category that silence – allied to serenity – finds its rightful place.

⁶³⁷ See Chapter Two for further elaboration of this point in the overall context of the religious dimension in human hearing.

⁶³⁸ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 431.

The quality of the virtue eventually becomes the quality of oneself. Choosing to don the robe of silence it is to court *conversion*. It is argued therefore, that the aural sense can be a central force in one's conversion. Paul Wadell claims '[m]en and women move to their end through the virtues, but the movement is not a change of place but a change of person, which is why conversion is a fitting name for what the virtues do.'⁶³⁹In this context, when one acquires silence, obedience and humility, one becomes silent, obedient and humble. 'That is why virtues – and vices too – are not ornaments of the self but the deepest expression of oneself.'⁶⁴⁰ Silence is virtuous because, as in all the virtues, it is not what is done but how it is done. Donning the silent cloak is not enough. One must walk in silence. The important union between the virtue of listening, silence and obedience draws this discourse to a close. 'No sooner did he hear than he obeyed me' (Ps 18:45).

A word here on the concept of monastic silence since it was in the context of Benedictine monastic silence that Placid Spearritt referred to silence, along with obedience and humility, as one of the 'great trilogy of *monastic* virtues.'⁶⁴¹ As has already been pointed out, the concept of 'obedience' is aural etymologically; to be obedient is simply to listen keenly to one another or to God. Therefore, in monastic virtue, two of the trilogy are virtues of aurality.

Elizabeth McCumsey presents silence entirely in monastic terms – environmental, communal, personal and mystical. Even mystical silence cannot be defined apart from the articulated mystic's experience. '[E]ven the silence of the mystic is an expression of a meaning produced by a speaker.'⁶⁴² Monasticism so finely tuned and articulated by St.

⁶³⁹ Wadell, 'Virtue' in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, p.998.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., p.998.

⁶⁴¹ See Spearritt, 'Benedict' in *The Study of Spirituality*, p. 152. Italics mine.

⁶⁴² Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 175.

Benedict in his Rule, which ‘became almost the sole norm of Western monasticism’⁶⁴³, highly values both the aural centred virtues of hearing and silence. Choosing silence is about self-transformation. Ambrose Wathen holds that in monasticism ‘[o]ne thinks in silence, one reflects in silence, one meditates and contemplates in silence.’⁶⁴⁴ Benedictine silence⁶⁴⁵ is at one and the same time a virtue of obedience. The retreat from speech as Benedict understands it ‘is one of penance and self-discipline...a method of avoiding sin...’⁶⁴⁶ Placid Spearritt states that ‘[s]ilence is the second of the monastic virtues...’⁶⁴⁷ The first is ‘obedience’ which is the subject of Benedictine Rule, Chapter 5, although it forms a consistent thread throughout the entire Rule. However, it is more accurate to say that both silence and obedience are conjoined, neither being first or second; silence is the *primus inter pares*. It is obedient to itself in its listening and response. ‘Connected with listening...silence is integrally related to obedience...Silence is the necessary prerequisite for obedience.’⁶⁴⁸ One must obediently listen; one must obediently search out silence. If one or other experience is absent, the timbre of the Divine Voice of revelation is muffled

⁶⁴³ *The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry OSB, p.113.

⁶⁴⁴ Wathen, *Silence*, p.xii.

⁶⁴⁵ It could be argued that the consistent, constant realm of silence advocated by St. Benedict in The Rule is more akin to mundane silence which focuses more on the spoken word of the abbot than on the interior, mystical, transcendental silence explored here. Wathen states that the silence which emanates from a lack of communication is “the primary aspect of silence in the RB.” *Silence*, p. xvi. He labels this silence as external. Internal silence, on the other hand, “which is characterized as internal tranquillity and peace...which is not the primary object of investigation in the RB.” P.xvi. ‘St. Benedict urges actual silence and quiet, not just a spirit of silence.’ (*The Rule of St. Benedict* ed. Fry, p. 190 fn.) Furthermore, silence was a necessary punishment for sin in Benedictine monasticism the most extreme punishment being a total silence even from oral participation in the daily monastic offices. Finally, there is the devotional silence, which characterises Quaker worship. Rudolf Otto describes this devotional silence as threefold: the sacramental silence which invites the ‘numen praesens’, the presence of God. This character of silence, he maintains, is the essence of the moment of transubstantiation in Roman Catholicism; secondly, there is a waiting silence which he eloquently describes as preparation to become ‘the pencil of the unearthly writer, the bent bow of the heavenly archer, the tuned lyre of the divine musician.’ (*The Idea of the Holy*, p. 211); finally there is the completion of the former two types which culminates ‘inward oneness and fellowship of the individual with invisible present Reality and the mystical union of many individuals with one another.’ (p..212)

⁶⁴⁶ Love, ‘Listening to Silence’ p. 6.

⁶⁴⁷ Spearritt, ‘Benedict’ in *The Study of Spirituality*, p.154.

beyond any comprehension or understanding. This next section focuses on Scriptural silence. Silence is like a pair of bookends. One is placed at each end of the Two Testaments of Scripture, holding upright and together the silent message of *Deus Semper Major*.

5.3 Silence – The book ends of Scripture

Scripture is one long conversational story between Creator and created which emerged from silence. God is the silent one, the hidden one of the Old Testament. God, the conversation partner of the Old Testament, keeps bringing the conversation back to covenantal memories that are both aural and visual. The purpose now is to make the point that within Scriptural silence, God's Voice has always been revealed. In other words, through an understanding of the concept of silence in Scripture, God is Word and Silence uniquely revealed and uttered in the fullness of the Trinity. This revelation is both sonic and silent. Hans Urs von Balthasar refers to the incarnate Word of Jesus Christ as 'the wordless but still resounding Word.'⁶⁴⁹ Out of the completeness of the Trinity, God utters the incarnate Word that is a symbol of creation. '...[A]ll utterable words are enveloped by an aura of silence and of the silent One, for he is more than utterable.'⁶⁵⁰

The Old Testament silence of God is also about seeing. 'Do not hide your face from me' (Ps. 27:9). Silence is the hidden sight and sound of God. God's face and sound are synonymous in both the Old and New Testaments. 'I will hide my face'⁶⁵¹ from them' promises the Lord to Moses (Deut. 31:17). But in the eternal covenant of love, God owns

⁶⁴⁸ Wathen, *Silence*, p.31

⁶⁴⁹ von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, p.41.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 82.

⁶⁵¹ A term for a state of silence rather than silence itself. See Hebrew word here and others eg., *damah, sakat, hasah/hasah, haras, elem, haster panim*.

that moment when he hid his face from them (Is 54:8) when he was silent in their defence. This silence holds in it deep healing after punishment. '[F]or I have hidden my face from this city...I am going to bring it recovery and healing' (Jer. 33:5-6). Through this silence of the hidden face, therein lies wholeness and healing which has to be found in the absence or presence of sound.

God is to be *both* seen and heard. 'Do not hide your face from your servant...make haste to answer me' (Ps. 64:17) the psalmist cries in a prayer for deliverance from persecution which demands visual and aural assurance. God of my eye is also God of my ear. And again, another of our afflicted, psalmist forefathers calls for the exact theosonic circle which sums up the work of this thesis: God is called upon in prayer (Ps. 102:1) he must not hide his face, i.e. be silent before our cry (v.2); God must aurally incline to us (v.2b); and God must be *maieuteria*, the midwife, to us all as yet unborn in the praise of the Lord (v.18).

Psalm 30 also endorses that sense of the hidden God who dismays, hiding in sight and sound (Ps. 30:7b). Dismay from both verbal and visual concealment is breath taking: it is death itself: 'When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath. They die' (Ps. 104:29).

A silence, an absence of spoken words, befalls Ezekiel in isolation. He cannot go to speak to his people to try to convert them. The very sound of the voice of the Lord in Ezekiel's ear is the latchkey for these rebellious house of Israel which will open the mouth of Ezekiel and will 'let those who will hear, hear; and those who refuse to hear, refuse...(Ez. 3:19). From out of this silence revelation is born. In short, God's silence is God's saving presence. 'For God alone my soul waits in silence' (Ps. 62:1). God is my

saviour in silence; ‘from him comes my salvation’ (Ps. 62:1b). God’s silence is the key that is lying around to unlock the bolt of the door through which humanity goes to God and God comes to humankind. Not only does a key give access to another space; it also protects and secures that space. Once admitted therefore to ‘stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God’ (Ps. 135:2), the key of silence secures and controls the entrance into that mysterious, graced divine presence.

According to John Rybolt, the author of the *Book of the Wisdom of Solomon*, although depicting a movement from peace to mourning, ‘sets the stage carefully...when the personified word of God appears.’⁶⁵² ‘When peaceful silence lay over all, and the night had run half of her swift course, your all-powerful word, O Lord, leaped down from heaven, from the royal throne’ (Book of Wisdom 18: 14-15). Von Balthasar links this ‘all-powerful word with the Word made flesh in John.’⁶⁵³ This scenic description resonates with another passage from *The Apocalypse*: peaceful silence reigned in heaven, not on earth, not for half the *night* but for ‘*about*’ half an *hour* (Rev. 8:1). Such celestial silence is beyond all human imagination; even John of Patmos lost all conception of time in its midst of the stillness.

In the unfolding of Scriptures, sound and silence are constantly revisited as the *loci* of God’s self-communication. A divinely decreed and ordained plan of salvation which God had prepared through the ‘still small voice’ of Elijah was first heard out of the not-so-peaceful silence of Horeb. For the Christian, as Max Picard writes,

‘since Christ the Divine Word came down to men from God, the ‘still small voice’, the way of the transformation of silence into speech was traced out for all time. The Word that appeared two thousand years ago was on the way to man

⁶⁵² John Rybolt, ‘The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon’ in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, p. 720.

from the beginning of time, and therefore from the very beginning there was a breach between silence and speech. The event of two thousand years ago was so miraculous that all silence from time immemorial was torn open by speech.

Silence trembled in advance of the event and broke in two'.⁶⁵⁴

Silence marks the embryonic reality of God's incarnate Son, a fact that David Tracy describes as 'the not-yet always present in the always-already reality disclosed in Jesus Christ.'⁶⁵⁵ In the silence of the Marian womb, the Word of God is muted for the appropriate gestation period. Hans Urs von Balthasar writes that 'the birth is preceded by nine months...of deepest silence, so that, in so far as the event whereby "the Word becomes flesh" occurs precisely at the conception, the act of the Word's becoming man means an act of becoming silent.'⁶⁵⁶ This new silence embraces the mystery of the triune God. Silence precedes the historical and prophetic word. For Angelus Silesius, silence is a stillness that is filled with the will of God. 'Nothing resembles naught than to be silent, still: For silence nothing seeks but what He wills, my will.'⁶⁵⁷

The ultimate word of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ in turn transforms into a new silence of the eschatological Kingdom of God - *Basileia Tou Theo*. One aural theosonic symbol is the silence of the Cross into the transformed prayer of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus Christ resolutely embraced the silence of the Cross-, the moment of silence is the birth of the new Creation. Now the silent God shatters his own silence in the new song of victory over darkness and death. Golgotha, aptly named by Mircea Eliade as

⁶⁵³ von Balthasar, *The Glory of God*, p. 117.

⁶⁵⁴ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.15.

⁶⁵⁵ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.430. He eloquently plays on this paradoxical idiom on pp. 429-431.

⁶⁵⁶ von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, VII, Theology: The New Covenant*, p.143-144. This is not true in biological data terms. However, it does not detract from the logical conclusions of von Balthasar vis-à-vis silence and the Word.

⁶⁵⁷ Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 67.

‘the summit of the cosmic mountain’,⁶⁵⁸ is the everlasting symbol of silence. ‘Man lives between the world of silence from which he comes and the world of the other silence to which he goes – the world of death.’⁶⁵⁹ For Christians, therefore, the world yet to come is one of divine silence, to be embraced at the summit of each one’s cosmic mountain. On the other hand, the absence of the Sound of God means death for Gelineau because ‘[I]f he no longer speaks and is silent we should take the initiative to cry to him in order that he should reply, for silence is death.’⁶⁶⁰

Words and deeds of Christ issue from his own still integrity of silence, which is his openness and oneness with God, all human beings and the entire cosmos. It is, at one and the same time, an obedient listening and humble response. The incarnate God-man, who is the fullness of the Father’s Word, lived in word and died in silence to return that ultimate divine Word to that same Father. In Jesus Christ, God’s silence ceases.

The Symphony (the sounding together) of the divine begins with the theme of creation. An awareness of the world is an awareness of oneself through the evocation or ‘vocation’ of God. Every word he speaks, every act he makes, is God’s Word in all its human guises. ‘The concrete, spoken (or *silent*) Word cannot be detached from the Word that he himself is. And this Word...does not intend...to reach us, perhaps up to our physical or spiritual ear, but to let his words...touch the inmost core of our person.’⁶⁶¹ Yet Jesus’ words and gestures are his silence also. ‘...there is no Word or gesture of Jesus of

⁶⁵⁸ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987, p.39.

⁶⁵⁹ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.25.

⁶⁶⁰ Gelineau, ‘The Path of Music’ p. 137.

⁶⁶¹ von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, p.35. Italics mine. Although this quote serves the purpose of elaboration here, I find, nonetheless, the inclusion of ‘the spiritual ear’ superfluous and even confusing in this context.

which we could say: that has nothing to do with me.’⁶⁶² Therefore, every silence of Jesus has to do with all Christian believers. His obedient silence is the guarantee of cosmic salvation. Salvation is the trust of the Son of God in silence. ‘For God alone my soul waits in silence, from him comes my salvation (Ps 62:1). Human silence represents the vast oceans of existence while the Incarnate silence in contrast is the *terra firma*, infinitely smaller but filled with the sound ground of God’s silent self disclosure.

Throughout the pivotal moments of Christ’s profound silence before his accusers, his silent patience, grief and suffering, radically become first person experiences. Darkness⁶⁶³ and solitude evoke the fact and act of christological silence.⁶⁶⁴ That same darkness and solitude evoke the fact of a death and resurrection in that same silence. ‘Yes, in solitary, silent, vague darkness, the Awful One is near.’⁶⁶⁵

5.4 Summary

A methodology of the aural experience of God’s revelatory Word is a symbiosis of listening, speech, sound and silence. Silence, the attention of this chapter is the *ison*, the eternity note that is the everlasting silence of God.⁶⁶⁶ In the cumulative levels of theosony, the realm of silence is the third note; the first being cosmic sound, the second being speech or self-aware communication, in the theosonic symphony which is fully heard and performed by Jesus Christ and conducted by the Holy Spirit, under the baton of the triune God. In Christ, silence and sound are consonantly combined. According to

⁶⁶² Ibid., p.36.

⁶⁶³ The connection between darkness and creativity, darkness and prayer was touched on in Chapter Four.

⁶⁶⁴ Two Scripture references in particular conjoin solitude, darkness and prayer – Mark 1:35 and Matthew 14:23.

⁶⁶⁵ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p.221.

⁶⁶⁶ For a concrete application of this metaphorical notion, see conversation with spiritual composer, John Tavener, in *The Music of Silence: A Composer’s Testament*, p.154-155, where he identifies this Eastern Byzantine tradition of the *ison* with the silence of God and also with the notion of sacred time.

Thomas Carlyle, 'Speech is of Time, Silence Eternity.'⁶⁶⁷ God's self-revelation is one of both word and silence. God's story unfolds in the spoken and the unspoken. There is no turning a blind eye to God; there is no turning a deaf ear to God. Karl Rahner speaks theologically: '[T]he absolute being of God appears as a being that speaks or remains silent, in other words as the God of a possible revelation through his word, because he is the God of a necessary revelation through speech *or* silence.'⁶⁶⁸ Taking this statement to be absolutely true, the question recurs again and again: how can humanity experience these divine sonic and mute expressions?

The religious experience, which is silence, is about being what Karl Rahner terms a 'free listener'.⁶⁶⁹ Listening freely is being 'attentive to the speech or the silence of God in the measure in which he opens himself in free love to this message of the speech or the silence of the God of revelation.'⁶⁷⁰

In the divine/human encounter, the silent space is threefold: on the one hand, it is the space of *listening* to the voice of God; on the other hand, it is the vital non-verbal *communication* space wherein the praying human *responds* to that voice; in third place is the capacity of silence to overcome, to camouflage and hush up the sounds that side-track and draw true being away from true conversation which is with the triune God. To return to Rahner again, '[w]hat man always and essentially hears is the speaking or the *silence* of a free God who subsists in himself alone.'⁶⁷¹ Silence is the space between the said and the saying. Stillness effects the true dialogue with the ineffable Divine Other. It is a

⁶⁶⁷ Thomas Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* Book III, Chapter III quoted in Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*.

⁶⁶⁸ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, 1969, p.94.

⁶⁶⁹ This is the title of Chapter 8 in *Hearers of the Word*, p.94.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.108. Incidentally, this summarises Rahner's formulation of a second proposition of a metaphysical-religious-philosophical anthropology, an entire formulation that is the subject of the entire book.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.92, Italics mine.

philosophical consideration also according to Fiumara: '[O]nly when we know how to be silent will that of which we cannot speak begin to tell us something.'⁶⁷² Theosonic silence, therefore, is both a radical listening and a simultaneous response to the triune God who is best revealed out of the mists of silence. The greatest deficit of the aural and the silent is that it can hear but it cannot see. But in the dialectic between silence and darkness, stillness and shade are not comparable; one hears in both sound and silence, one cannot see in darkness, but one can hear in silence. In the words of the seventeenth century mystical poet, Johann Scheffler, better known as Angelus Silesius, 'God far exceeds all words that we can here express/In silence He is heard, in silence worshipped best.'⁶⁷³

God's self-revelation is not only in sound and listening but is also of necessity in silence. 'The silence of praise is thine, O God' (Ps. 65:2). The triune Godhead's hidden nature captivates and overcomes his own people in silent sounds that transcend human creation. The religious experience of silence and sound are, for von Balthasar, a 'dimension of this Word that cannot be detected by human ears.'⁶⁷⁴ 'Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter' in Keats's memorable lines.⁶⁷⁵

Sacred silence is absurd, limitless and ineffable. God as silence is ineffable. In the threshold of prayer where the spirit of God speaks to humanity, silence is the underlying principle. Even, as Rahner simply says, 'if God does not speak, man's spirit hears God's very silence.'⁶⁷⁶ Silence is prayer itself; in other words, it is a noiselessness

⁶⁷² Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.101.

⁶⁷³ *Angelus Silesius: The Cherubic Wanderer*, p.49.

⁶⁷⁴ von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, p.44.

⁶⁷⁵ John Keats, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', II,11,12, *John Keats: The Complete Poems*, ed. by John Barnard, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973, (1978), p.344.

⁶⁷⁶ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.92.

communicating the sound of God which largely eludes language and dismisses it.⁶⁷⁷

From out of the silence emerges slowly an aural manuscript of the inner voice of God, which becomes the perfect facsimile of human response. In the attempt to probe the depths of Divine/Human encounter, Word yields to the Word in silence. '[S]ilence is the nature of God; but in that nature... everything is word and silence at the same time.'⁶⁷⁸

Relinquishing the world of words and sounds, the God-seeker bridges the hiatus between heaven and earth. The lacuna is silent. By a subtle play of silent light and silent shade, God shows in silent relief. In the experience of listening silence, Christianity truly listens before Jesus, with Jesus and after Jesus. Karl Rahner answers the swarms of questions raised in a revelation of silence thus: 'Perceiving the silence of God can also be an answer, made meaningful by listening, because man can become what he must be even through God's silence.'⁶⁷⁹ Silence and listening permit going beyond thought and knowledge into God's surpassing love; this is an epistemology which is made of silence and listening. This chapter was towards the role of silence in that epistemology; the next chapter attempts to integrate both concepts in defining theosony as religious experience. The realm of poetry can suggest these interactions of dynamic sound, listening and silence in silent relief; interactions according to George Steiner, which 'are actions of the

⁶⁷⁷ The 'retreat from the word' which has been the tendency of modern dramatists is comprehensively outlined by Leslie Kane in *The Language of Silence*. However, the modern playwright, articulately expressed by Pinter and Beckett, turns to silence more as a technique of linguistic experimentation in the light of the ineffability of acute experiences of doubt, isolation, terror and fear, all of which exceed the boundaries of human speech consciousness. Unlike a theosonic silence and more akin to Kierkegaardian holistic silence, the dramatist's world of silence is 'to communicate perpetual crisis and illimitable chaos.' (p.182)

⁶⁷⁸ Picard, *The World of Silence*, p.230.

⁶⁷⁹ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p. 174.

spirit rooted in silence. It is difficult to *speak* of these, for how should speech justly convey the shape and vitality of silence?’⁶⁸⁰

*‘Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.’*⁶⁸¹

Chapter Six: Theosony and Religious Experience

*To speak of God, the theologian must
have experienced God and been taught by
God. What we can expect of the theologian
is an intelligent and self-conscious faith that
combines the sympathetic understanding of
an insider with the detachment of an
outsider.*⁶⁸²

⁶⁸⁰ Steiner, *Language and Silence*, p.30.

⁶⁸¹ T.S. Eliot, Burnt Norton V, *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot*, London: Faber and Faber, 1969, p.175.

⁶⁸² O’Collins, S.J., *Fundamental Theology*, p.6.

*'We had the experience but missed
the meaning,
And approach to the meaning
restores the experience'*
T.S. Eliot. The Dry Salvages⁶⁸³

Introduction

Chapter Five considered the role of silence in theosony. In the marvellous interaction between sound, (cosmic and human), silence, (cosmic and human), and listening, (human and divine) there is a constant 'question and answer' dynamic in God's self-revelation. In musical terminology, this trio of human experience form a *quodlibet*, where well known tunes are sung simultaneously to create a concordant sound. Chapter Six is towards an epistemology of theosony, (which is inclusive of silence) and religious experience. It attempts to define a three-fold taxonomy in an aural experience of God's loving revelation. **6.1:** outlines the parameters of human religious experience in fundamental theology. **6.2:** presents three theories of religious experience as described by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto and William James. **6.3:** suggests a classification, a methodology, a taxonomy of three kinds of theosonic religious experience arising from Scripture; comic theosony (**6.3.1**); kerygmatic theosony (**6.3.2**) and silent theosony (**6.3.3**). The chapter concludes with a summary in **6.4**.

6.1 Religious experience, fundamental theology and theosony

The work of all religions is to reveal God; even where there is no conscious adherence to divine Revelation. Fundamental theologians argue strongly on behalf of religious

experience. Jean-Pierre Torrell welcomes ‘the renewed place given to *experience* in theology’ and which ‘must be of concern first and foremost to fundamental theology’.⁶⁸⁴

The multi-faceted experiences of God in the world, in life, are, according to Dermot Lane: ‘some of the basic elements that make up fundamental theology’,⁶⁸⁵ which Gerald O’Collins sees as embracing ‘the reality of faith, the nature of human experience and the role of reason.’⁶⁸⁶ The *sine qua non* of any such exploration must be a personal awareness of the Divine presence in our world, that ‘*numen praesens*,’⁶⁸⁷ which motivates the fundamental theologian to reflect on the nature and act of religious experience.⁶⁸⁸

Fundamental theology cannot limit itself to a study of this world and the spectrum of human experience alone. Such specific study ‘logically presupposes also the existence of those *conditions* in human experience which make men and women *open to receive revelation*, whatever form it takes and whenever it comes.’⁶⁸⁹ It is through real, personal experience of God that revelation becomes apparent. John Henry Newman uses the apposite metaphor of ‘voice’ to draw the primary distinction of the discipline of fundamental theology, the difference between where we come in and where God comes

⁶⁸³ *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969, p.184.

⁶⁸⁴ Jean-Pierre Torrell, ‘New Trends in Fundamental Theology in the Postconciliar Period’ in *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, eds. René Latourelle/ O’Collins, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1980, p.20. Italics mine.

⁶⁸⁵ Dermot A.Lane, *The Experience of God: An Invitation to do theology*, Dublin: Veritas, 1981, p.3.

⁶⁸⁶ O’Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, p.21.

⁶⁸⁷ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p.11.

⁶⁸⁸ Gerald O’Collins argues strongly for the link between practice and theory. According to him, ‘revelation is essentially a personal encounter with the Triune God...Over and over again and from different points of view, this book has put the case for a proper union between the critical, scientific understanding and committed, spiritual practice as the right way into fundamental theology.’ *Fundamental Theology*, p. 262.

⁶⁸⁹ O’Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, p.22.

in, between prayer and revelation. 'As prayer is the voice of man to God, so revelation is the voice of God to man.'⁶⁹⁰

Roman Catholic fundamental theologians of the Vatican II conciliar period focused almost exclusively on a theology of revelation, the tenets of which are proposed in the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* of November, 1965. The true doctrine of divine Revelation is 'the personal self-communication of God to people in the history of salvation which reaches its fullness in the person of Jesus Christ'.⁶⁹¹ Self-communication of divine love through Jesus Christ is a personal faith invitation to the human being to enter into a new life of fellowship with him.⁶⁹²

The conciliar fathers were keenly aware of the necessity to widen the boundaries of credibility with regard to such revelation. They emphasised the anthropological aspect of this Christian revelation. 'God's revelation would have no meaning for us if it was not also revelation of the meaning of human existence'.⁶⁹³

To have a religious experience is to be mysteriously transformed at some level. Karl Rahner holds that '[m]ystery...is the underlying substrate which is presupposed to and sustains the reality we know'.⁶⁹⁴ He elaborates on this *a priori* disposition of humanity to receive revelation as 'a certain prior apprehension which transcends every particular concrete reality'.⁶⁹⁵ David Tracy approaches the paradox from another angle: 'When religious persons speak the language of revelation, they mean that something has

⁶⁹⁰ Newman, *A Grammar of Ascent*, p. 314.

⁶⁹¹ Lane, *The Experience of God*, p.48.

⁶⁹² See *Dei Verbum*, Chapter 1 in *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Flannery, pp.750-765.

⁶⁹³ Henri Bouillard, *The Logic of the Faith*, Dublin/Melbourne: M.H. Gill and Son Ltd, 1967, p. 23. This professor of fundamental theology, Jean-Pierre Torrell describes 'human experience as the starting point of fundamental theology'. Torrell, 'New Trends in Fundamental Theology in the Postconciliar Period' p.20.

⁶⁹⁴ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 11, Chapter 6 "The Experience of God Today", London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974, p.155.

happened to them that they cannot count as their own achievement.⁶⁹⁶ This is the paradox of religious experience: it is and has to be my experience; and at the same time it is and has to be entirely God's doing. Otherwise it is an invention of my subjectivity.

How does the religious experience of God's self-revelation transform us? In the words of Donald Maloney, 'God's communication of himself ... affects our consciousness, affects the way we experience ourselves and our relationships to the world around us'.⁶⁹⁷ There has to be some antecedent interior grace, which Dermot Lane believes, 'develops from within nature'.⁶⁹⁸ The duality of religious experience is the revelation of God on the one hand and on the other the recognisable 'experience' of the one so graced. David Tracy's insight is important here: 'Experience of grace...is as large as the Christian experience of life. It is experience of man's capacity for self-transcendence, of his unrestricted openness to the intelligible, the true and the good.'⁶⁹⁹ The fundamental truth of this thesis is to propose that of all the existential preventient sites where nature prepares for the event of revelation, the human ear is the most sensitive and theologically attuned. What Dylan Thomas calls 'the round Zion of the water bead/ And the synagogue of the ear of corn'⁷⁰⁰ was constructed by the creator with such biological complexity, such physiological ingenuity, that it can go way beyond itself in its operational capacity as a purely sensory organ. As already expounded upon in detail, whereas the eye ceases to be effective when it enters alienating atmospheres like fog or darkness, the ear continues to function in every situation and all through the night. The

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., p.155.

⁶⁹⁶ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.173.

⁶⁹⁷ Donald, G., Maloney S.J., "Revelation and Experience" in *Doctrine and Life*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, March 1975, p.196.

⁶⁹⁸ Lane, *The Experience of God*, p.33.

⁶⁹⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.* ed Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985, p.32.

natural grace of the ear held into the alienating atmosphere of silence far from rendering us impotent provides the positive and the negative combination which allows the electricity of divine energy to percolate through. The ear is the acoustic chamber, which allows the voice of God to sound, almost as a seashell placed against it can echo the sounds of the ocean. The object is the seashell, yet the inherited sound is that of the roaring sea, the sound which the seashell has imbibed from the echo of the sea and continues to resound long after the shell is separated from the sea. The truth of the divine sound is not confirmed until it changes the religious experience in an attunement in keeping with the true potential of human hearing. Initially, the listening is false because theosony, the sound of God is actually hidden and drowned out by the quotidian, everyday sound of living. Discerning the aural distractions that deflect one's attention to theosony is the theological application of being 'all ears'. In this obedient theosony, the listening becomes an organ of religious experience, religious being. To recall Dylan Thomas once more: 'Shall I let *pray* the shadow of a sound.'⁷⁰¹

God's self-disclosure is always a two-way revelation: on the one hand, it is the self-manifestation of God to humanity, and on the other, it is an experienced communication from our side. Theological reflection on religious experience, specifically on the epitome of such experience which this thesis holds to be 'theosonic', is of primary importance to fundamental theology.

Karl Rahner has hinted at such reflection and there are two quotations that are important here. Firstly, he argues, that the true Christian either misses or makes the mark in the choice to be receptive to experience or not. The mystique of mysticism is forever

⁷⁰⁰ Dylan Thomas, *A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London*

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Italics mine.

dispelled. ‘The devout Christian of the future will either be a mystic, one who has ‘experienced’ something, or will cease to be anything at all’⁷⁰² is his radical prognosis.⁷⁰³ Secondly, this experience is all about a certain kind of hearing – a theosonic experience. The true believer is one who ‘does not hear "something" in addition to himself... but hears himself as the self-promised word in which God sets up a *listener* and to whom he speaks himself as an answer.’⁷⁰⁴ It is what Steiner would call ‘[t]hat which comes *to call on us*...spontaneous visitation and summons.’⁷⁰⁵ In aural terminology, Zuckerkandl’s articulation of this certain kind of listening wins the day. ‘A world of the purely audible opens a domain in which the ear is lawgiver...the existence of such a domain confers an entirely new dignity upon the audible world as such...we should speak rather of the gift the Creator bestowed upon the visible world – the gift of sharing in the audible, in the dignity of being audible...The phenomenon is unique.’⁷⁰⁶

A brief critical word on theology’s approach to religious experience draws the first half of this section to a close. Within the documented theory of Western religiosity, so-called ordinary human experience of God, was little acknowledged and therefore scantily charted. Apart from the separate, yet conjoined area of mystical encounter with the Divine, a theological empiricism⁷⁰⁷ was held to be an unproductive approach towards articulating God’s self-communication to the believing one.

⁷⁰² Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol.17,p.15. Also called” Doctor mysticus” of the twentieth century, (see Harvey D. Egan SJ in Rahner’s *I Remember an Autobiographical Interview with Meinhold Kraus*, NY Crossroad, 1985, p.3.), he highlighted the necessity to do theology which is rooted in the mystical experience of all faithful Christians.

⁷⁰³ Rahner’s (d. 1984) theology has been described as “the most significant Catholic writing on mysticism of the recent decades”. See McGinn, *Foundations*, p.285.

⁷⁰⁴ Rahner, *The Practice of Faith*, p.81. Italics mine.

⁷⁰⁵ Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.179.

⁷⁰⁶ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician*, p.87.

⁷⁰⁷ From the Greek, which translates as *experience*. *Experience* springs from Latin *experientia*, f.*experire* meaning *to try*.

Karl Rahner pioneered a phenomenological approach to human experience of the Divine. One should not be silent about experience because of language limitation, ‘be silent about it [experience] on the grounds that we cannot speak “clearly” about it.’⁷⁰⁸ The sense of hearing must be examined as the locus for a two-way revelation, which involves the mysterious conjunction of antipodean opposites. The auditory becomes the catalyst of a new creation, a relational entity which, according to David Tracy, means ‘being caught up in and by the power of this manifestation to the point where they both radically participate in the whole while yet, with equal radicality, are distanced from the whole.’⁷⁰⁹ It is both distant yet near, fleeting yet permanent, *pianissimo* yet *fortissimo*.⁷¹⁰ It is the attraction of opposites, which is the essence and fascination of Divine loving relationship. ‘Surely this commandment...is not too *far* away...the word is very *near* to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart’ (Deut.30: 11,14).⁷¹¹

This is why the second subject under discussion in this section is the religious experience of divine revelation that is specifically aural as suggested by the word ‘theosony’. Theosony can be a positive, human capacity to communicate with the triune Godhead. Humanity sounds back at God. Finally, this section ends with Karl Rahner’s aural phenomenology: the hearer must hear out of his or her own prior experience of giving ear to God.

⁷⁰⁸ Rahner, *Theological Investigations, II*, p.159.

⁷⁰⁹ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 173.

⁷¹⁰ The superlatives of the musical terms ‘piano’ and ‘forte’ are intended here. See *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, Vol. 1, p.708 and Vol. 2, p. 1420 respectively.

⁷¹¹ Italics mine. In the light of such an important quotation from Deuteronomy, it is appropriate to recall the words of Duncan Derrett already cited in Chapter One: ‘Deuteronomy...is not concerned with esoteric meanings, but combines the ideas of (i) of functioning ears and (ii) a resolution to obey.’ *The Downside Review*. See Bibliography for details.

‘We are and will be what we experience’.⁷¹² We are always more than that too and theosony is beyond the one sense of the ear. But hearing can make us fully alive, can change the register of our human experience and excavate our archaeological capacity for Divine relationship: such is the primary hypothesis of this present work. Since every life experience for the Christian is the locus where God is revealed, then every religious experience is about an intimate relationship with God and a deepening self-awareness. The aural experience that permits God’s self-communication is intrinsically a religious experience. Every experience proceeds from prior experience. There is a cumulative element where every experience increases and expands incrementally.

Cardinal Newman’s perception on human experiences is that ‘enough for himself...he can only bring his own experiences to the common stock of psychological. He knows what...satisfies himself...if, as he believes and is sure, it is true, it will approve itself to others also, for there is but one truth.’⁷¹³ The apparatus in this case is the ear through which the incarnate word offers freely and lovingly to humanity access to God. ‘But those who do what is true come to the light’ (Jn. 3:21). God created the Word; Christ sounds the Word and the Holy Spirit is the persistent recurring whisper that is never silent – *et vocem eius audis*.

How does one discern the aural experience of truth? The message can be heard, according to Rahner, ‘*only if* he has not restricted the absolute horizon of his openness to being in general...*only if* he has not removed in advance the possibility of the word of God addressing him as he pleases, of meeting him in the form he desires to assume.’⁷¹⁴

⁷¹² O’Collins, *Fundamental Theology* p.35.

⁷¹³ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 300.

⁷¹⁴ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.108

Keenly attending to the presence of God in our day-to-day lives is alighting our own humanity and guiding that humanity to flourish in the earshot of God. The ear will ensure that the fire does not burn out; otherwise there is nothing to guide. The message of the Good News stays the Good News however it is experienced. Theosony is about both the sacred in the act of listening and the act of listening in the sacred. This accumulation ultimately enhances and intensifies the sacred encounter that is to be understood and acknowledged in the future.

David Tracy defines a relationship of encounter. 'There is no ready-made recipe available before the encounter of the subject matter to guarantee success'.⁷¹⁵ Relationship with God cannot be bought 'made and all'.⁷¹⁶ Theosony is giving 'true welcome, into one's own small granary of feeling and understanding',⁷¹⁷ to an aural and oral relationship with God. There is no standard religious experience. Experiences for each and everyone are, George Steiner, believes, 'patterned singularly to his own receptive and communicative internality'.⁷¹⁸ All auditory responses are potentially theosonic, the sound of God if only one can listen in and through the internality. Given that fact, therefore, the crucial point is to define and identify the received, in this case aural, communication with God, which is distinctly through the ear.

Cultivation of aural experience through skill and discernment, 'adapting our muscles, our nerves, our cerebral cortex, to respond to [a system of symbols] accurately and precisely,⁷¹⁹ is the elusive strategy of the praying one. No two experiences stand

⁷¹⁵ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.429.

⁷¹⁶ This was a phrase which my grandfather coined for a suit of clothes which he bought in a shop as opposed to one either he made himself or was made for him by a local tailor.

⁷¹⁷ Steiner, *Real Presences*, p. 161.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.184.

⁷¹⁹ Lonergan, *Third Collection*, p.127

isolated or alone. Each aural experience is in direct relationship with former experiences and lives insofar as it will act as midwife to the experience that is to come.

The vocation, the invitation to listen and respond, is not remote or vague. It is direct and dynamic. The experience of listening, generally, is, Fiumara states, ‘a positive experience (even if it is sad), since it is one of the most “direct” that humans can have. And when the event is “unthinkable” – something absurd or incomprehensible – we cannot summon the words we need to talk about it.’⁷²⁰ Merton, musing on silence, touches on something similar when he says that ‘if you dare to penetrate your own silence and risk the sharing of that solitude with the lonely other who seeks God through you, then you will truly recover the light and the capacity to understand what is beyond words and beyond explanations because it is too close to be explained: it is the intimate union in the depths of your own heart, of God’s spirit and your own secret inmost self, so that you and He are in all truth’.⁷²¹ The Word of God is close to one’s own experience and sense of solitariness; God is truly in the deep silent caverns of the heart.

Aural religious experience, as it occurs at a particular instance in time and space, is a moment of personal encounter, an occurrence of something specific; the level of awareness of such experiential moments and the subsequent understanding and interpretation, will vary from experience to experience. No authentic religious experience will go unnoticed or unregistered. It is from the woven chain of each single, sacred experience that the total encounter with the Divine evolves Here again an anthropology

⁷²⁰ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Listening*, p.123.

⁷²¹ Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religions Experience and Social Concerns*, selected and edited by William H. Shannon, New York:Farrar/Straus/Giroux, 1985, p.158.

is explicit; the inmost self can communicate with the loving God through the human senses.

In summarising the diversity of humanity's experience of God's self-disclosure, the articulations of three people are important here; a poet and two theologians. For Silesius Angelus (Johann Schleffer), the sound of the heart in tune with God is unimaginably sweet. 'There is no sweeter tone heard in eternity/Than when my heart with God resounds in harmony.'⁷²² There is melody, rhythm and harmony, the three fundamental elements in Western classical music, at the disposal of the imagination through these words. Furthermore, they harmonise with the olfactory experience of the psalmist; 'How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey in the mouth! (Ps. 119: 103). Secondly, Rudolf Otto held that all human beings potentially possess this sense of religious experience: '[T]his inborn capacity to receive and understand, is the essential thing. If that is there, very often only a very small incitement...is needed to arouse the numinous consciousness'.⁷²³ Through the receptive aural experience, the *numinous* is heard. There is a specifically religious, 'graced' dimension to all human listening. Anthropology embraces theology through the senses. Thirdly, the imaginative listening which is a potential possession of the human being must be accompanied by the Rahnerian notion of 'good will.' The sound of God 'must always count on the 'good will' of the hearer. For what he is supposed to hear is not what is contained immediately in the concept itself.'⁷²⁴ Finally, the God-experience of self-disclosure is a three-fold activity of

⁷²² *Angelus Silesius: The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 95.

⁷²³ *Otto, The Idea of the Holy*, p.61.

⁷²⁴ *Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 26.

the imagination that is absurd,⁷²⁵ ineffable, and precisely ‘too deep for words’, it is a *positive, persistent* experience nonetheless.

6.2 Three theories of religious experience: Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto and William James

The construct of religious experience is not simple empirical datum: it is a highly complex theoretical construct. It is from the critical period of German Liberal Protestantism that the genesis of a new enduring theology of religious experience started. The intellectual rationality of Protestant Scholasticism, ‘with its acceptance of dogmatic formulas and the practice of ecclesiastical usage’,⁷²⁶ yielded to eighteenth-century German Lutheran Pietism; a movement which challenged ‘the worldliness and apathy of the church’,⁷²⁷ urging ‘that the value of Christian doctrines can in a real degree be measured by their significance for practical religious life.’⁷²⁸ Indeed ‘the positive message of Pietism was more ethical than theological’.⁷²⁹ The Rationalists of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, Mackintosh summarises,⁷³⁰ distrusted authority and tradition in favour of reason and understanding as the primary criteria of truth and orthodox faith. Yet, their concept of that same process of reason remained unformulated. It is from out of this theological melting pot that Schleiermacher, and later his disciple, critic and editor, Rudolf Otto emerged. Three significant systematic ‘varieties of religious

⁷²⁵ This word takes its root from the Latin ‘*surdus*’ that originally had auditory implications, meaning ‘harsh-sounding’ or ‘deaf’. To use the word also means something which is contrary to reason or common sense. This suggestion is made in Chapter Seven here.

⁷²⁶ H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1937, 1945 ed., p.11.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.13.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.13-19.

experience’⁷³¹ will be presented in outline here: These are the ‘descriptive’⁷³² varieties of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto and William James.

Schleiermacher is ‘the chief figure in the modernization of Christian thought...the father of modern theology’.⁷³³ His still important contribution lies, according to James Thrower, ‘in his attempt to ground theology in religious experience and to identify the specific feeling or sentiment out of which religion arises’.⁷³⁴ Schleiermacher proposes ‘a “consciousness” of the deepest reality of the world around us’.⁷³⁵ Such intuition arises from what he describes, in audiocentric terms, as a devout desire⁷³⁶ ‘to *overhear* the universe’s own manifestations and actions.’⁷³⁷ An intrinsic quality of religious experience is the feeling of absolute dependence. In short, Avery Dulles suggests that this ‘feeling of absolute dependence Schleiermacher defines as religion’.⁷³⁸

Schleiermacher’s theology is one of sentiment, feeling, relationship; a theology, Thrower claims, ‘which marked the start of modern Protestant Christianity’s emphasis on “subjectivity” and its insistence that knowledge of God is inward and experiential and open to all’.⁷³⁹

In the second of his five seminal speeches, initially published anonymously in 1799 and addressed to religion’s cultured despisers or educated classes, he argued for an

⁷³¹ A term borrowed from the seminal publication on religious experience by William James, published in 1902.

⁷³² For a comprehensive analysis of this ‘descriptive’ approach to religion see John Macquarrie, *20th Century Religious Thought – Study Edition*, London: SCM Press, 1963. pp.223-225.

⁷³³ David L. Edwards, *Christianity: the first two thousand years*, London: 1997, p. 414, 416.

⁷³⁴ James Thrower, *Religion: The Classical Theories*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.p.55.

⁷³⁵ Edwards, *Christianity*,p.416.

⁷³⁶ The various biographies of Schleiermacher, particularly Mackintosh and Thrower, highlight his strong sense of religious life which he constantly reiterates himself in his writings. ‘To a pious mind religion makes everything holy and valuable’. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 109.

⁷³⁷ Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, p.102. Italics mine.

⁷³⁸ Avery Dulles, *Revelation Theology*, London: Burns & Oates Ltd, 1969, 1970 ed., p.62.

⁷³⁹ Thrower, *Religion*, p.50.

approach to religion for which '[e]verything that exists is necessary ...and everything that can be is... a true indispensable image of the infinite'.⁷⁴⁰ The nub of it all, however, is 'a question of finding the point from which one's relationship to the infinite can be discovered'.⁷⁴¹ The religious intuition is 'by its very nature, connected with a feeling.'⁷⁴²

The introduction of the senses as essential mediators of the Divine/human encounter makes Schleiermacher's presuppositions pertinent to theosony. 'Your senses mediate the connection between the object and yourselves...your whole nervous system can be so permeated by it [religious feeling] that for a long time that sensation alone dominates and *resounds*...' ⁷⁴³ The sensual mediation hinted at here will be elaborated in the final chapter.

For Schleiermacher⁷⁴⁴ the 'essence of religion' is threefold: the 'first and most essential'⁷⁴⁵ concept is that of the *miraculous* in the Infinite/finite sense and feeling; secondly, the *interiority* of self-revelation; and finally, the fundamental role and drive of the *divine Spirit* who 'speaks and acts out of holy inspiration'.⁷⁴⁶ Schleiermacher's theology is Thomist, which was developed, re-defined and revolutionised by Karl Rahner.⁷⁴⁷ In Rahnerian logic, all historical, concrete human experience carries within it the possibility of self-knowledge and also the 'experience of the infinite openness of the future which is inexhaustible promise'.⁷⁴⁸ In this sense, human experience, *per se*, is the

⁷⁴⁰ Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, p.109.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., p.109.

⁷⁴² Ibid., p.109.

⁷⁴³ Ibid., p.109. Italics mine.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 134, *On Religion*, Schleiermacher states that these three concepts are 'the first and most essential ones, if religion must indeed have some concepts'.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid., p.134.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., p.134.

⁷⁴⁷ Rahner outlines his theme of 'transcendental experience' in *Foundations of Christian Faith*, pp.19ff., 31ff., 51ff.

⁷⁴⁸ Rahner, *Theological Investigations II*, p.158.

medium, '[t]he locus⁷⁴⁹ of God's revelation to us'.⁷⁵⁰ In addition, '[t]his experience of God is not the privilege of the individual "mystic", but is present in every man even though the process of reflecting upon it varies greatly from one individual to another in terms of force and clarity'.⁷⁵¹ Any connection with the Infinite is experiential; the process and aftermath of personally observing, encountering, understanding and ultimately remembering the presence of God's abiding love, as it occurs in the course of finite time, is nurtured within the realm of human experience.

As a summary of Schleiermacher's thought, Herbert Farmer's assessment is helpful. It 'began a new era of thought...by insisting that 'piety' is not theological or philosophical theorizing about ultimate things...but is just piety – the response of the soul, in what can only be called joyous abasement, to the ultimate and infinite and worshipful reality which holds all things in its grasp and on which all things in a peculiarly final and absolute way depend'.⁷⁵²

Rudolf Otto was both a disciple⁷⁵³ and critic of Schleiermacher. As disciple, he endorsed and expanded the latter's analysis. The most valuable part of Otto's study, John Macquarrie holds, 'consists of his careful analysis of the feeling-states which constitute the numinous experience'.⁷⁵⁴ The notion of God falls far short of the actual religious experience of God. As critic, Otto argues that Schleiermacher's integral element in

⁷⁴⁹ Jean-Pierre Torrell defines the broad spectrum of experience as 'locus' and 'theological locus', in turn borrowing from G. Geffré's explanations published in "Le déplacement de la théologie" in *Le Point Théologique* 21:Paris, 1977, pp.6 and 175-177. Torrell, 'New Trends in Fundamental Theology in the Postconciliar Period', p.22.

⁷⁵⁰ Lane, *Experience of God*, p.35.

⁷⁵¹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations,II* p.153.

⁷⁵² Farmer, *Towards Belief in God*,p.43..

⁷⁵³ Otto writes that 'Schleiermacher was the first to attempt to overcome this rationalism...and his theory of the "feeling of absolute dependence", ...give a representation of the first stirring of the feeling of the numinous'. *The Idea of the Holy*, p.108.

⁷⁵⁴ Macquarrie, *20th century Religious Thought*, p.215.

religious experience of the 'feeling of dependence' is 'open to criticism',⁷⁵⁵ on at least two levels: firstly, this feeling serves merely as an analogy rather than an actual description of the religious experience. Naming it, Otto proposes instead 'to call it "creature-consciousness" or creature feeling';⁷⁵⁶ secondly, Otto's creature-consciousness principle seeks to redress in Schleiermacher's principle, Thrower suggests, 'an inherent subjectivism.'⁷⁵⁷ According to Otto, 'immediate and primary reference to an object outside the self... is..."the numinous"'.⁷⁵⁸ This non-rational, visual, character, he termed, the *numinous*. However elusive and vague that concept might be, Macquarrie is clear that, inconceivable and all as it may be, the numinous is both holy and non-conceptual: '[I]t is pointed to in the word "holy"... in the most fundamental sense, the word 'holy' stands for a non-rational character... a character which cannot be thought conceptually...'⁷⁵⁹ Anthropologist Mircea Eliade takes this further: 'All religious experiences are numinous (from Latin numen, god), for they are induced by the revelation of an aspect of divine power.'⁷⁶⁰ Yet, the numinous is somewhere within grasp awaiting to be called.⁷⁶¹ It is a feeling, Macquarrie observes, which 'cannot be "taught", it must be "awakened" from the spirit'.⁷⁶² Religious consciousness of the *numen*, the majesty of God, is in Otto's theological thought a keen awareness of a distinctive object

⁷⁵⁵ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p.9.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., p.10.

⁷⁵⁷ Thrower, *Religion*, p.56.

⁷⁵⁸ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p.10/11.

⁷⁵⁹ Macquarrie, *20th Century Religious Thought* p.214.

⁷⁶⁰ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p.9.

⁷⁶¹ See Chapter Two here on neurotheology, which is the biological dimension of religious experience. Newberg and d'Aquili suggest that such subjective experiences of the numinous, the mysterious and the awesome can be explained biologically. Although they do consider its probability they write that this experience is the neurological 'deafferentation of those neural circuits with the verbal-conceptual association area...in the case of numinosity and deafferentation of the causal operator in the case of the *mysterium tremendum*.' d'Aquili/Newberg. *The Mystical Mind* p.11.

⁷⁶² Macquarrie, *20th Century Religious Thought*, p.60.

or reality which is mysterious, infinite, indescribable, transcendent and wholly other.

Ultimately, Otto's reflections 'are driven back to the statement that basically God must be known simply as God. However, Otto displays his own cultural Western bias in his reflections on this God as being 'wholly other'.

William James (1842-1910) was an American philosopher and psychologist who, as 'an extraordinarily many-sided thinker', according to James Gouinlock, 'played a conspicuously creative role in the development of twentieth-century thought.'⁷⁶³ He influenced the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, literature and was crucial to the psychology of religion. James, out of the culture of American transcendentalism, was a pioneer in devising and classifying an ontological, systemic vocabulary for the 'varieties of religious experience'.⁷⁶⁴ Religion means 'the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine'.⁷⁶⁵ On the evidence of his diverse case studies, he concluded that there is no specific, abstract, distinctive religious emotion. Religious experience draws on 'a common storehouse of emotions upon which religious objects may draw. So there might conceivably also prove to be no one specific and essential kind of religious object, and no one specific and essential kind of religious act'.⁷⁶⁶ James's religion is individual-centred and non-institutional and the 'solitude' constituent in his definition of religion is important. Ultimately, James's focus was 'on rehabilitating the element of feeling in religion and subordinating its intellectual part'.⁷⁶⁷ In the pursuit and

⁷⁶³ James Gouinlock, 'James, William' in *Thinkers of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical, Bibliographical and Critical Dictionary*, eds. Devine/Held/Vinson/Walsh, London: Macmillan Publishers, 1983. P. 278.

⁷⁶⁴ This is the title of his important book first published in the United States in 1902.

⁷⁶⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, London:Collins/Fontana, 1902, ed. 1960, p.50.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.47, 48.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.478.

expression of the emotional, theosony, the ear that listens to God is crucial as an experiential apparatus. Listen, feel and believe.

In short, for Schleiermacher, '[e]verything human is holy, for everything is divine.'⁷⁶⁸ For Otto, religious experience 'lives in reverent attitude and gesture, in tone and *voice* and demeanour...than in all the phrases...which we have found to designate it'.⁷⁶⁹ William James contextualises experience as two connected and interdependent parts: the objective which is 'the sum total of whatsoever at any given time we may be thinking about';⁷⁷⁰ and the subjective which is 'the inner state in which the thinking comes to pass...which is our very experience itself'.⁷⁷¹

In conclusion to these historical perspectives on religious experience, theosony, the aural religious experience, fulfils what Steiner, describing the power of poetics and the arts, calls 'a spatial sense, awaitings, needs we knew not of.'⁷⁷² One such unknown, unplanned for, listening is God's free self-announcement to the obedient one. Here is the voice and ear of God resounding and listening in silence to every human being. Waiting patiently and obediently in the wings of every life of grace, God listens as intently now as to that one incarnate *logos* of the Easter Christ-story. This is one salient theosony experience, poetically captured by the Welsh parson poet, R.S. Thomas.

So it must have been on Calvary

In the fiercer light of the thorns' halo:

The men standing by and that one figure,

The hands bleeding, the mind bruised but calm,

⁷⁶⁸ Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, p.188.

⁷⁶⁹ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p.61. Italics mine.

⁷⁷⁰ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 476.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.476.

*Making such music as lives still.
And no one daring to interrupt
Because it was himself that he played
And closer than all of them the God listened.*⁷⁷³

6.3 A Taxonomy of Theosonic Religious Experience in Scripture

The *aural experience* of divine self-communication recorded and transmitted through Scripture falls into three broad theosonic varieties. **Cosmic** theosony is an anthropomorphic, metaphorical attentiveness to the voice of the ambient world from out of which a consciousness of God's presence emerges. Birds, fowl, beasts, wind through trees, sound in falling water, sing the praises of God. God created these sounds to reveal the ingenuity and generosity of the divine love. 'Did you call me/Or was it the wind/On my ill-carpentered window?'⁷⁷⁴ If you cannot hear me, listen to the sounds of the universe around. No human being could even imagine the totality of those sounds. **Kerygmatic**⁷⁷⁵ theosony incorporates a clear message or confrontation, 'an instinct for the essential'.⁷⁷⁶ The ear too has an instinct for the vital, the essential spiritual knowledge. Then, **Silent** theosony, 'the sound of sheer silence' (1 Kings 19:12), is the

⁷⁷² Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.179.

⁷⁷³ R. S. Thomas, The Musician, excerpt, *The Faber Book of Religious Verse*, edited by Helen Gardner, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1972, p.337.

⁷⁷⁴ Patrick Kavanagh, 'The Call', 1-3, in *Patrick Kavanagh: The Complete Poems*, p. 64. Fully cognizant of the variety of meanings which this technical, theological term evokes, I use it here in accordance with the following definition by the founder of 'literary criticism' William A. Beardslee. Kerygmatic is 'the style of...proclamation, whereby the *hearer*...is personally confronted.' (Italics mine) See *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*, p.84.

⁷⁷⁶ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 110. This is his articulation of the actual experience, the truth of a moment of art which is transforming of ourselves, 'our lives, our sense of possibilities and actuality, our destiny. (p.110).

paradox of ‘My Beloved...the silent music, the sounding solitude.’⁷⁷⁷ Silent theosony resonates with the mystical state of silence, which is a form of mysticism, apparently first practised by fourteenth-century Mount Athos monks⁷⁷⁸ called ‘hesychasm’. Silent theosony is a quiet⁷⁷⁹ or still interior state where God resounds in the ear of the heart. The mystic, Meister Eckhart puts it simply: ‘There we hear without sound...’⁷⁸⁰ The one who reaches this silent state is re-calling the tradition of the hesychast who, according to Kallistos Ware, ‘in an interior sense... practises inner prayer and seeks silence of the heart.’⁷⁸¹ Silent theosony is not manipulable: it can only be *experienced*. It is a mystical state that is silent, literally to the core. Elizabeth McCumsey, referring to mystical silence, puts it thus; there is ‘nothing of deprivation in it, but rather a fullness beyond words. Such silence – in form so like, and in essence so unlike, everyday silence – has no place in mundane reality and therefore bewilders the mind.’⁷⁸²

6.3.1 Cosmic Theosony

An alertness to natural surrounding sounds can surpass all other sensual receptivity.⁷⁸³ Gerard Manley Hopkins speaks of the possibility for Divine encounter: ‘All things therefore are charged with God, and if we know how to touch them, give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him...God's utterance of himself in himself

⁷⁷⁷ St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIII. *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans.ed. E. Allison Peers, Wheathampstead-Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke, Burns and Oates Ltd., (1935), 1978, Vol. 2, p. 72. Stanzas XIII and XIV are extremely rich and helpful metaphorically on voice, listening, hearing as the graced gifts of God's self-revelation. Indeed it presents the research possibilities for an entire dissertation in itself.

⁷⁷⁸ See *The Liturgical Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, p. 120.

⁷⁷⁹ The literal meaning of the Greek word ‘hesychasm’.

⁷⁸⁰ M. Walshe, *Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Treatises*, Vol. 2, London: Element Books Ltd., 1979, p.214.

⁷⁸¹ Kallistos Ware, ‘The Hesychasts: Gregory of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, Nicolas Cabasilas’ in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. Jones, Wainwright, Yarnold, London: SPCK, 1986, p.243.

⁷⁸² Elizabeth McCumsey, ‘Silence’, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 13, pp. 321,322.

⁷⁸³ The highly developed, elaborate nature of the sense of hearing is presented in Chapter Two here.

is God the Word.’⁷⁸⁴ God echoes in the sound of all living creatures. The power of God is heard in the thunder storm and the chiming of bells.

Cosmic theosony is a listening obediently to these distinctively human words and sounds of the cosmos. ‘Listen!/There is surely something to be heard...O there is a flying word about us? For earth ears...Let us listen! /Let us listen!’⁷⁸⁵ It is a hearing that calls forth a clarity of understanding, a keenness to the sound of the world. It is the first step in hearing beyond and before the natural range of hearing. Re-sonating with and to the created sound of God awards the empathetic listener with an indelible emblem of the divine Other. Scriptural cosmic theosony is rich and wide-ranging. A comprehensive presentation of and commentary on the entire subject in Scripture is the work of another project. This present work marks some cosmic theosonic moments from the Old and New Testaments.

First, there is the double deception story of Isaac, deceived both by Rebekah on the one hand, and all of his senses, *except* the ear, on the other. Isaac, old and blind, himself conceived through the word of God, blesses the wrong son because he did not trust his own ears. ‘The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau’ (Gen. 27). The nearly blind Isaac uses three other senses – touch, taste, and smell. As David Tracy puts it, ‘[t]he fourth, hearing, tells the truth: ‘The voice is the voice of Jacob...’⁷⁸⁶ But Isaac, like Zechariah, refuses to listen and the consequences are immense. Unlike Rebekah, Isaac ignores what he hears and so is deceived. As a result of not hearing, he eats Jacob’s tasty meal and gives away the first-born’s blessing, rather as Esau himself

⁷⁸⁴Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Prose Commentary on the Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Pick 1966, p.404, 16.

⁷⁸⁵Patrick Kavanagh, ‘Listen’, 1,2,4,5,9,10, *Patrick Kavanagh: The Complete Poems*, pp.31, 32.

⁷⁸⁶David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 428.

had given away his first-born's birthright for a gulp of pottage.'⁷⁸⁷ The critical moment is lost because of the '*hatta*' of disobedience, the sin of not listening. On the other hand, Rebekah has a genius for listening. Thomas Brodie muses on this woman's aural brilliance. Rebekah,

'in contrast to Isaac...is attentive and active. Above all, she still hears, and does so in the context where hearing suggests awareness and openness, including openness to the wider world of God's word (cf.26: 2,5,6). She 'hears' Isaac's instructions, and in her conversation with Jacob there is an emphasis on hearing, commanding and obeying...Rebekah is remarkable... by her involvement in the world of hearing and obeying.'⁷⁸⁸

Although, it must be acknowledged, she does put her keen listening skills to less than honourable use.

Secondly, the psalms alive with and through sound are loaded with cosmic sonic imagery. Eight psalms are noteworthy here. For the psalmists, 'the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord' (Ps. 33:5). In turn, the universe glorifies the majestic name of God (Ps.8: 9). The gibberish of childish voices is God's buttress (Ps. 8:2). This auditory metaphor is reminiscent of the taxonomy of J.L. Austin on the different modes of saying things. He makes three rough distinctions of sound;⁷⁸⁹ the phonetic act, which is 'merely the act of uttering certain noises.'⁷⁹⁰ This first stage of human sound chants on the glory of divine majesty and human dignity: 'Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark (Ps.

⁷⁸⁷ Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, p.309.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.308.

⁷⁸⁹ His classifications are the phonetic relevant here; the phatic and rhetig. See pp. 92,93 for precise meanings.

8:2). Psalm 8 sings that humanity is only a little lower than God and that the human *Imago Dei* as ruler of all the universe has but one mission which is to proclaim the divine majestic name of the creator.

Psalm 29 listens to the cosmic voice of God extolling his power through the sound of nature. The voice of God thunders first and foremost for the psalmist over the waters. Here God's creation completes the circle. As Berendt puts it, '[I]t was that divine, creative voice which moved upon the face of the waters when God created the world.'⁷⁹¹ Then the psalmist goes on in an inspired metaphorical outburst where the voice of God 'breaks the cedars of Lebanon', 'flashes forth flames of fire', 'shakes the wilderness', 'causes the oaks to whirl' and 'strips the forest bare'. How does one describe in words the sound of flames of fire, the whirring of oaks? What human mind can imagine verbally the gentle breath of the Holy Spirit? If the Holy Spirit had a sound, would it be *like* the gentle breeze or the still small voice?

Psalm 62 makes the divine/human connection in auditory (and in silent)⁷⁹² terms. 'The auditory element in Psalm 62 is salient.'⁷⁹³ 'Once God has spoken: twice have I heard this' (Ps. 62:11). Signer argues that God spoke one covenant, which is both revealed and concealed in Hebrew scriptures. But the important point is that it offers two distinct interpretations of that covenant, 'one in the Oral Torah for Jews, and one in the incarnate word for Christians.'⁷⁹⁴ This Psalm 62 hints imaginatively at the notion of the divine voice of God who can speak all things intelligibly at once. The human voice can

⁷⁹⁰ J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, p. 95.

⁷⁹¹ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.24.

⁷⁹² Verse 1 of this psalm is already referred to in the chapter on Silence, Chapter Five above.

⁷⁹³ Michael A. Signer, 'Conversation One: One Covenant or Two: Can We Sing a New Song?' in *Reinterpreting Revelation and Tradition: Jews and Christians in Conversation*, eds. Pawlikowski/Perelmuter, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2000, p.18.

only say or sing one thing at a time. God, on the other hand, can ‘hear...and give ear to the words’ (Ps.54: 2) of every mouth and tongue in the universe. God is forever simultaneously translating. On the other hand, the mystic hears this verse, this voice of God, in dual theosonic terms: Meister Eckhart hears a true divine Trinitarian voice which faintly reverberates in every cosmic sound; ‘His utterance is but one. In His Words He speaks His Son and the Holy Ghost and all creatures, which are all one utterance in God...I heard God and the creatures.’⁷⁹⁵ In the reading of this one verse of the psalmist, cosmic, kerygmatic and silent theosony are embraced.

Enthronement psalm 98 is acoustically anthropomorphic and cosmic; the supreme methodology for praising God is for the entire world, humanity and nature alike to ‘[m]ake a joyful noise to the Lord’ (v.4). At the presence of the Lord, the environment assumes human sonic expressions. The psalmist invokes the ocean and its waves⁷⁹⁶ to roar with all its sea-life and with every single being in the world.

Yet again, St. Augustine’s theology is relevant on cosmic theosony. Augustine teaches humanity how to listen to the God-created world. Listening cosmically is to question the whole universe about its creator:

‘And what is my God?’ I put my question to the earth. It answered, ‘I am not God’, and all things on earth declared the same. I asked the sea and the chasms of the deep and the living things that creep in them, but they answered, ‘We are not your God. Seek what is above us’...I spoke to all

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., p.19.

⁷⁹⁵ Walshe, *Meister Eckhart*, p.148.

⁷⁹⁶ The standard biblical translation throughout this thesis is the *New Revised Standard Version*, however, Boylan’s study of the Vulgate Psalter – *The Psalms: A Study of the Vulgate Psalter in the Light of the Hebrew Text*, Dublin, Gill and Son, Ltd., 1931 - provides very different interpretations and translations. For example, ‘*moveatur*’ is translated as ‘roused’ rather than ‘roar’ and ‘*plenitudo*’, Boylan translates as ‘waves’ rather than ‘all that fills’. (p.151)

things that are about me, all that can be admitted by the door of the senses, and I said, ...[t]ell me something of my God'. Clear and loud they answered, 'God is he who made us'.⁷⁹⁷

All the senses play a role in the relationship between humanity and God. This is the clear message of Augustine; the senses are created *by* God yet the senses are *not* God and can only afford a faint image of God. The five senses unite us to the cosmos; the five senses are the expression and essential mediators of religious feeling and experience. Friedrich Schleiermacher paved the way, unconsciously in sonic terms: listening to the message of God is one that resolutely resonates. This quotation has already been used but it is relevant yet again at this point. 'Your senses mediate the connection between the object and yourselves...your whole nervous system can be so permeated by it [religious feeling] that for a long time that sensation dominates and *resounds*...' ⁷⁹⁸

6.3.2 Kerygmatic Theosony

Kerygmatic theosony is an aural experience that embodies a specific message or *kerygma*. It leaves little ambiguity about its content or the subsequent action to be taken. The human voice speaks, calls out, evokes and summons either to its own sound, as it seeks to communicate personally and with others, or the sound of other human voices; the human ear listens and understands on whatever level. Kerygmatic listening seeks to communicate, create and express. The use of the term 'kerygma' needs explanation.

The Greek term 'kerygma' represented for New Testament writers 'a central reality of Christianity. It can indeed be regarded as one of the key concepts for the

⁷⁹⁷ English translation from *St Augustine's Confessions*, Penguin: England, 1975, p. 212. Latin original Gibb and Montgomery, p. 279.

description of revelation.’⁷⁹⁹ Macquarrie writes of ‘the content of theology as a kerygma or proclamation of the revelatory and saving acts of God’.⁸⁰⁰ The range of meanings outlined by Simons all have to do with the oral and aural; these words are ‘address’, ‘call out’, ‘summons’ and ‘preaching’.⁸⁰¹ *Kerygma* expresses the New Testament writers’ ‘conviction that ‘salvation’ is essentially linked with the...reality of the *word*: God himself in his epiphany is *word* and expresses himself as such.’⁸⁰² According to Eberhard Simons, it ‘denotes both the act and the message.’⁸⁰³ Oskar Sohngen links divine kerygma with hearing and vocal utterance: ‘The kerygma of God’s miraculous deed in Jesus Christ is also *akoē*, hearing. That music stems from the realm of the auricularia, audible things – as does the Gospel – that it has a heavenly origin, and that it comes to us in the same way, namely, through the voice....’⁸⁰⁴ A new graced word is heard as revelation in Christian social life.

Four of the many instances of biblical kerygmatic theosony provide sufficient illustration: The silence within which Elijah hears the voice and message of God (1 Kings 19:11-18); the calling of Samuel to prophetic activity (1 Sam. 3:2-12); thirdly, *Jesus Christ* as kerygmatic theosony incarnated; finally, *The Book of Revelation* as the narrative of the triple theosonies.

Elijah searches on the mountain of God for the Lord who ‘is about to pass by’ (1 Kings 19:11). But not in the great wind, or in the ensuing earthquake and fire, is the Lord

⁷⁹⁸ Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, p. 109. Italics mine.

⁷⁹⁹ Eberhard Simons, ‘Kerygma’ in *Encyclopedia of Theology*, p.797. This is an excellent article on Kerygma in Scripture and theological reflection, pp.797-800.

⁸⁰⁰ Macquarrie, *20th Century Religious Thought*, p. 320.

⁸⁰¹ Simons, ‘Kerygma’, p.797.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, p.797. Italics mine.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 797.

found but only in the ‘sound of sheer silence.’⁸⁰⁵ The wind (Ex. 3:2), the earthquake (Ex. 19:18), fire (Ex. 19:18), the trilogy of cosmic forces, ‘the theophanic procession’⁸⁰⁶ have revealed God heretofore.⁸⁰⁷ But this is something else above and beyond nature. As Jerome T. Walsh puts it: ‘Yahweh’s appearance is heralded by natural upheavals, but it is ineffably more: it is a ‘sound of sheer silence.’⁸⁰⁸

Three interesting points are of significance here. The first has to do with the actual, *original sound* of the three-word symbol, the other is about the distinctive *images* — aural and tactile — thrown together in this symbol of divine revelation, and the third point refers to the actual *meaning* of the Hebrew word ‘sound’ that also means ‘voice’.

Walsh suggests that the Hebrew ‘phrase "voice/sound" is rich in *sound*’.⁸⁰⁹ This richness has to do with the arrangements of the consonants; the order of *q-d-m* in one clause is inverted in the other *m-d-q*. This answers the *why* it is rich in sound, but it does not address the really interesting questions about the *how* is it that this one word should carry a sonic excellence which brings us to the threshold of our hearing powers. This suggests that the mysterious sound of God’s self-disclosure is experienced in *pure sounds*, not necessarily by meaning. Could it be that this sound and sacred sounds like it appeal to a *sixth* sense, a sense that comes to life when one is experiencing the revelation of the triune God through listening and silence? To return to the topic of this oxymoron, there is a subtle combination of sensory images, which is both sonic and tactile. Sound and silence are auditory; ‘sheer’ is described by Walsh as a tactile word. For something to

⁸⁰⁴ Oskar Sohngen, “Music and Theology”: *A Systematic Approach*, in *Sacred Sound: Music in Religious Thought and Practice*, ed. Joyce Irwin, Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983, p.13.

⁸⁰⁵ NRSV, p. 327.

⁸⁰⁶ Jerome T. Walsh, *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry: 1 Kings*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996, p.276

⁸⁰⁷ See *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 52 and Walsh, *Berit Olam*, p.276.

⁸⁰⁸ Walsh, *Berit Olam*, p.276

be described as ‘sheer’ means that it is tangible. The third point is illustrated through the diversity of translations of this trilogy: transliterations of the Hebrew phrase vary from ‘the still, small *voice*’⁸¹⁰, ‘the *sound* of a gentle breeze’⁸¹¹ to the preferred one here ‘the *sound* of sheer silence’⁸¹².

In the kerygmatic silent voice, God despatched Elijah to Damascus (1 Kings: 19:11-19). Elijah must *obey* the command. This is a listening which transcends the stormy listening experience: ‘A listening experience would actually come across like a storm and overwhelm us – silently – distancing us from the constant of the discourses that saturate our culture, ready at all times to convey the most sophisticated “philosophical” devices *against* the storm.’⁸¹³

Samuel, after three failed calls to him by God as he lay in the temple, eventually, on the advice of his master Eli, listens intently to God who promises ‘that he will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle’: Samuel is impelled to share God’s message of opposition against Eli’s house with Eli himself (1 Sam. 3:2-12).

From kerygmatic theosony in the Old Testament, we move to the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, the kerygma in person. Twenty-seven writings of the New Testament right up to *The Apocalypse* comprise parables, story-telling and verbal miracles urging people to listen to the Messianic message of *Basileia tou Theou* (*The Kingdom of God*).

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid., p.276 Italics mine.

⁸¹⁰ The various translations of this phrase are extremely interesting ranging from ‘a low murmuring sound’ (*The New English Bible*, p.380), ‘a tiny, whispering sound’ (*The New American Bible*, p.316), ‘*fuaim chogair bhig*’ (a small whispering sound) (*An Bíobla Naofa*, p.286). Walsh is highly critical of all translations; he claims that such interpretations lose the numinous power of the word ‘sheer’ which is tactile in imagery. He favours the NRSV. p. 276.

⁸¹¹ *The Jerusalem Bible*, p.387.

⁸¹² NRSV, p. 327. See fn. 126 above for other renderings.

⁸¹³ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p. 122.

The Book of Revelation is perhaps the loudest listening-centred biblical writing in Scripture. It is the culmination of early Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism. Jean-Louis D’Aragon in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* notes that some fifty-four Holy Spirit visions and sixty-seven angelic interventions reveal God’s mysterious revelation to the supposed author, John of Patmos.⁸¹⁴ This unfolding of ‘what must soon take place’ is highly charged with *listening* — a theosonic revelation. According to Adela Yarbro Collins: *The Book of Revelation* is a ‘narrative of a special kind. It narrates extraordinary...*auditions* that concern things normally...*unheard* by human beings.’⁸¹⁵ From the beginning of *The Apocalypse*, there is a theosonic approach: one must only read *aloud* the words of the prophecy, (Rev. 1:3) and ‘blessed are those who hear’ (Rev. 1:3) the voice of the pages. Also important in the first verse is John’s description of the voice of God heard on Sunday, the Lord’s day, on Patmos. ‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying’ (Rev. 1:10). This is the revelatory moment for John and the allegorical reference to the trumpet sound is in keeping with biblical tradition. ‘The sound of a trumpet was traditionally used to describe a theophany (Exod. 19:16,19).’⁸¹⁶

Chapters two to four contain seven pastoral letters or messages to the churches of Asia Minor – each message reiterating some Fourth Gospel topics. But each one of these messages issues a consistent invitation: ‘Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying.’ Hearing the word of God is not sufficient. ‘Let everyone who hears, say...’ (Rev 22:17).

⁸¹⁴ See Jean-Louis D’Aragon, S.J. in ‘The Apocalypse’ in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 468.

⁸¹⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, ‘The Apocalypse (Revelation)’ in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 996.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1001.

The opening verse of chapter eight is interesting and has already been referred to in Chapter Five on silence. ‘When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for *about* half an hour’ (Rev. 8:1).⁸¹⁷ It was after this imaginary length of silent time that the trumpets are handed to the angels. From silence to sound, the message is clear. The scroll defining God’s will (Rev. 5:1). is opened out of silence to sound. The sounding of the trumpet, the important sound of theophany as already noted, causes devastation and plague. On the other hand, the sound announces the day of the Lord (Rev. 11:15-19). The seventh trumpet sound in ensemble with the strong, resounding heavenly voices, seems to mirror the seventh seal, the seal of silence. ‘The *sálpinx* plays a key role in Revelation, where the themes of judgement, devastation, and the announcement of the day of the Lord come together in the trumpet scenes.’⁸¹⁸

The voice John heard he clearly believes to be from heaven (Rev. 14:2). The cosmic sounds of rushing water and startling thunder, all familiar cosmic sounds of theophany as noted, vaguely describe the sound. John further compares the sound to singers accompanying themselves on harps. For St. John of the Cross, this singing is gentle and he makes the connection between the cosmic and the silent theosony thus: ‘This voice [Rev.2] is infinite, for...it is God Himself Who communicates Himself, speaking in the soul...He produces in the soul great delight and grandeur.’⁸¹⁹ This is the ‘sounding solitude’ which is ‘silent theosony’.

Arising from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John of Patmos hears the voice of an angel. Thomas Allen Seel makes the point about the ‘grain’ of the voices of revelatory

⁸¹⁷ Italics mine.

⁸¹⁸ Melissa L. Archer, ‘Trumpet’ in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 1337.

angels who assume the role of the prophets who spoke in the Old Testament. Of the voice of the Book of the Apocalypse, Seel has this to say: ‘Characteristic of revelatory vocal ψωνή (phone) is the empowered strength and clarity of its tone. While prophets in the Old Testament were able to ‘speak’ for Yahweh, only angels will be able to be sanctioned to carry the Godhead’s message in eschatological time.’⁸²⁰

In the final pages, John the Divine narrates his theosonic and visual revelations, acknowledging the *aural* nature of the experience initially: ‘I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them...’ (Rev 22:8). This aural precedence reflects also the experience of Job and is referred to in the course of the discussion on silent theosony. A final word from St. John of the Cross about the aural religious experience of his namesake, the narrator of the Apocalypse. Theosony, God’s aural self-disclosure, appeals to the ‘spiritual faculties’; it is ‘silent to the sense and the natural faculties, it is a most *sounding solitude* to the spiritual faculties.’⁸²¹

6.3.3 Silent Theosony

To term a theosony ‘silent’ is an oxymoron. A silent theosony is in the realm of the mystical; the space in which to pray. Already acknowledged above, this theosonic definition was inspired by two images from the *Spiritual Canticle* of John of the Cross. A religious listening encounter can be purely mystical: ‘Now a word came stealing to me, my ear received the whisper of it...there was silence, then I heard a voice’ (Job 4:12,16b) is the silent audio-centric experience of Eliphaz, one of the three comforters of Job. Here is the same oxymoron that the title – silent theosony – refers to. In the midst of the night,

⁸¹⁹ St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIV, The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 78. Delight and grandeur are just two of the five spiritual gifts received in the soul through listening to the spiritual voice; the other three are strength, power and glory according to this mystic.

⁸²⁰ Thomas Allen Seel, *A theology of music for worship derived from the Book of Revelation*, p. 103.

the ear remains alert to receive the sheerly silent. In the 'sound of sheer silence', Yahweh is heard. Hearing comes before vision too for Job. In his last words, he answers his Lord 'I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you' (Job 42: v.5).

The most spectacular moment of silent theosony, is told of in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2). The coming of the Holy Spirit envelops all present with complete at-one-ness, redressing and dispelling the inherited confusion of the Tower of Babel. All the mellifluous sounds of all the languages of the universe resound throughout the house. Here 'sound' and 'voice' in the one word, make perfect sense to the hearer; the truth is heard as if one eloquently said it oneself. For Silesius, the sound of two words places him firmly in the space between chaos and the Godhead. 'Two words I like to hear, and they are from and toward: From Babel and myself, toward Jesus and toward God.'⁸²² From out of the sound of humanity's word, the Word of God is faced toward.

This Pentecostal advent of the Holy Spirit is defined as a heavenly sound. According to St. John of the Cross. 'This spiritual voice and sound was heard in the spirits of the Apostles at the time when the Holy Spirit, in a vehement torrent...descended upon them...[it] is accompanied...by grandeur, strength, power, delight and glory; and thus it is as an immense and inward sound and voice, which clothes the soul with power and strength.'⁸²³

Luke tries to describe this ineffable theosony but no cosmic sound is adequate – no mundane images can describe the 'sound *like* a violent wind' which filled the entire house where they were sitting (Acts2: 2). Symbolising the breaking in of the Holy Spirit

⁸²¹ St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIV, The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 85. Italics mine.

⁸²² Angelus Silesius: *The Cherubinic Wanderer*, p. 66.

through a sound 'like' the wind conforms not just with the Greek language wherein 'wind' and 'spirit' are phonetically related but also the same Hebrew word signifies both 'wind' and 'spirit' as has already been recognised here. In Aramaic and in Greek 'breath', 'spirit' and 'wind' are one and the same word. The author of the Fourth Gospel symbolises that same breath of God in another play on words or sounds in chapter 3 of his Gospel: 'The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it...So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit' (Jn. 3:8). The only reliable faculty in religious experience is the aural, Jesus himself proclaimed. The farewell discourse of the apostle Peter in Jewish apocalyptic imagery foretells the day when all of God's cosmic creation will be disclosed. How will it be recognised? Purely through the sound and the listening when 'The heavens will pass away with a loud noise' (2 Pet. 3:10).

To conclude, the experience of the silent aural is a very personal way of being alone and open to God's self-communication. Platonist philosopher, Plotinus, contemplating on the Good or One tells us that it is simply the 'flight of the alone to the Alone.'⁸²⁴

⁸²³ St. John of the Cross, 'Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIV:10', *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 77. From such eloquent descriptions of the aural religious experience here and elsewhere, the reader is keenly aware of the truth of such an experience for the Carmelite apophatic theologian and mystic.

⁸²⁴ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, London: Penguin Group, (1917-1930), 1991, 6.9, p.546.

6.4 Summary

By way of summarising the religious experience, which is theosony, the following table outlines the four stages of the listening process.

<p><i>1. Primeval listening</i></p> <p>Prior to any exercise of human will and human hearing, God's love and self-communication for every individual is pure grace, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. The divine listening relationship of love is the continuing graced possibility of divine/human encounter. This is</p>	<p>1. Quotidian listening:</p> <p>Cosmic Theosony</p> <p>When the human ear begins to hear the dim echo of the divine in the infinite timbres of creation, God and creation harmonise simultaneously and agreeably, in a graced listening that surprises. When one really hears God's creation, God's self-disclosure, as if for the first time, then,</p>	<p>2. Mature listening:</p> <p>Kerygmatic Theosony</p> <p>When listening to sounds - cosmic, speech and human - as God's presence, a conversion occurs. Sound, listening to it and silence are a triad of God's gifts, all skilfully designed to nourish the love of God which is 'poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been</p>	<p>3. Listening beyond the self:</p> <p>Silent Theosony</p> <p>Since hearing is one of God's miraculous gifts, employing this sense in an act of personal and transpersonal gratitude – a silent gratefulness that leaves room for no ambiguity - is one, clear, clue to the true religious experience. Only when the capacity to recognise the divine in all the sounds of</p>
--	--	---	---

<p>the sacred saga of humanity. The implications of this are that God is the sublime, original sound of which humanity only carries a whisper. The offer to listen to God's self-disclosure is already there; no one is deaf in God's eyes. The experience does not cease in the listening. There is a 'force'⁸²⁵ which is carried through the performative, the very act of sounding the word.</p>	<p>the cosmos is transposed to another divine pitch. Knowing and hearing the marvellous harmonics of the natural world is pure echo of the aural triune God.</p>	<p>given us (Rom. 5:5). This is the basic Christian message. Every human word and thought shimmeringly reflects what God has in store for humanity in the Kingdom that is to come. The truth of the fact is mysteriously contained in the medium through which God reveals the divine voice to the cosmos. The Kerygma is clearly an evocation, a calling, and a gathering in through</p>	<p>the universe and only when the ear is habitually competent to listen in this manner, can the possibility of silent theosony be entertained. Silent theosony is gathering in the unheard divine Voice to be still and silent in its presence. At this point of theosony, the aural religious experience, God's self-communication abandons both cosmic and human sounds.</p>
--	--	---	--

⁸²⁵ See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, p.100.

		the ear.	
--	--	----------	--

The human ear is one faculty through which one experiences external objects and bodily changes. Listening is not just descriptive of human experience it is prescriptive; the work of the ear is to prescribe and give directions as to the course to be followed in life's experiences. Listening is dialectical and experiences sounds co-rationally. Theosony, the symbiosis of sound and the sacred, nourishes not only a sensibility to what Teresa of Avila called 'the consciousness of God's presence',⁸²⁶ but more importantly, furnishes the appropriate natural response. The graced theosonic response which is the heart of the experience of God 'exists *everywhere* in virtue of God's universal will to save all men by bestowing himself upon them as grace'.⁸²⁷

The Christian religious auditory experience is an organic process, that proceeds from a unique personal encounter with God and subsequently moulds and sculpts one's *Tao* or way⁸²⁸ in love and wisdom. Organic, in that the ultimate reality of what was for the unknown writer of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, 'a meek stirring of love'⁸²⁹ is dynamic. As John Macquarrie puts it: 'Man does not search out God, but rather the reverse is true.'⁸³⁰ William Johnston describes the divine encounter, "that it moves towards us as we move towards it, that it searches us out before we go in search of it".⁸³¹

⁸²⁶ McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, p.xiii. McGinn uses this definition as the deeper and most immediate understanding of Christian mysticism. Teresa of Avila, in writing of what she felt was mystical theology "...a consciousness of the presence of God of such a kind that I could not possibly doubt that he was within me or that I was wholly engulfed in him." *The Life of Teresa of Jesus: The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers, New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1960, p.119.

⁸²⁷ Rahner, *Theological Investigations 11*, Chapter 6 "The Experience of God Today", p. 164.

⁸²⁸ Tao, the 'way', is a basic Chinese philosophical concept. As well as its relevance to oriental thought, it is also deeply biblical, occurring 880 times in Septuagint. It also appears in Synoptics, John and Paul. As in the orient, 'way' is figurative.

⁸²⁹ Chapter 3, line 1 of *Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. Evelyn Underhill, Element:USA, 1997, p.53.

⁸³⁰ Macquarrie, *On Being a Theologian*, p. 53.

⁸³¹ William Johnston, *Silent Music*, Suffolk: Collins, 1974, p.49.

The revelatory, auditory, religious experience, in its myriad forms, is about all kinds of listening in all kinds of situations. What Wordsworth called the ‘fleshly ear’,⁸³² however, must forget its quotidian function and, for once, learn to sleep undisturbed. This is the secret of what ‘takes place by *listening* to the Word of God that comes to us in the Scriptures, in the celebration of the sacraments...and the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian community and the world at large’.⁸³³

‘When a person, in the Spirit and by grace, experiences himself as the one spoken by God to himself and understands this as his true essence to the concreteness of which the gratuitous grace of God’s self-communication also belongs, and when he admits this existence and freely accepts it in prayer as the word of God in which God promises himself to man with his Word, his prayer is already dialogic, an exchange with God. The person then hears himself as God’s address...’⁸³⁴

⁸³² This was quoted in the Introduction.p.12. It is from William Wordsworth, ‘The Prelude, Book Second’, 415-418.

⁸³³ Lane, *The Experience of God*, p.49. Italics mine.

⁸³⁴ Rahner, *The Practice of Faith*, p.81.

Chapter Seven: Towards a conclusion

*'[T]heological work is always unfinished.'*⁸³⁵

'Sight says too many things at one time.

*Being does not see itself...it **listens** to itself.'*⁸³⁶

*'Hear it calling out to every creature⁸³⁷ ...the collect of a new epiphany⁸³⁸ ...it's time to swim out on your own and fill the element with signatures on your own frequency...'*⁸³⁹

Introduction

The central theme of this thesis – the aural experience of God's self-disclosure – poses at least five questions even in its first two words; 'aural' and 'experience'. Is all human aural experience religious? How does one hear the Sound, the voice of God in human existence? Does talking about the primacy of the sense of hearing in divine self-communication exclude the physically deaf? Is Christian aural experience any different from, for example, the mystical sonic experience of the sound 'om' for the Hindu or indeed any other type of religious experience? What is happening precisely in the aural experience of God's self-disclosure? The answer to the first four questions is in the taxonomy of theosony; every sound ever to have existed in human history is the Sound of God from the sound of the

⁸³⁵ Gerald O'Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, (1981), 1982, p.20.

⁸³⁶ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 215. Italics mine.

⁸³⁷ Seamus Heaney, *Station Island*, London: Faber & Faber, 1984, p.90.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.93.

silent stone to the shrill screech of the blackbird, to the secret sound of one's voice, to the silent sound of the praying space. This is inclusive of everybody and no different from any aural or oral religious experience imaginable. The fifth question is its own answer: In posing the thought linguistically, the actuality of the aural experience of God's love is actualised and understood. The only meaningful way is through language, listening and silence inferred in the concept of theosony. The psalmist, in mixed metaphor, compares his own speech with the silent meditation of his heart and with what God communicates as salvation through natural imagery, seeing and hearing: 'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock, my redeemer' (Ps. 19:14).

The methodology of this chapter is as follows: By way of introduction, some important concepts already encountered are revisited: the metaphysical nature of theosony; the two-way revelatory conversation between Creator and created; the neglect of the aural sense in Western culture; musicology has much to offer theology in areas of listening, temporal concepts and improvisation. There are three main sections in the chapter. 7.1: the function of the ear in graced religious experience is elaborated with reference to the image of midwifery, the person of Socrates and the role of the Holy Spirit. 7.2: asks and answers the question of how to become sensitive and alert to the revealing mystery of God through the ear. 7.3: defines the character of listening that attends to God and describes traits of theosonic experience to do with intimacy and imagination. 7.4: is a summary.

⁸³⁹ Ibid., p.94.

The metaphor of conversation has been one particular *leit-motif* throughout this work. A conversation is self-revelation to and with another. Yet, human language only hints at defining the self-revelation of God. For the biblical scholar, Sean Freyne, human language ‘calls for a special attuning of the ear to hear that deeper voice.’⁸⁴⁰ In stretching the human word to ‘incline the ear of the heart’ to God, a theosonic methodology proposes an accompanying utterance or sounding of that human word to amplify the force of that deeper voice.

Defining what this particular attunement might be has been neglected in Western Christian theology. The sublime in God is heard and not seen, perhaps because the eye is impatient. It wants to see everything within and beyond the horizon: the ear can only take in one thought at a time and each meaningful **thought** takes its place in a pattern of what went before and what is coming next. This is what Gaston Bachelard intimates in the mixed metaphor of the introductory quote to this chapter: the visual is a babble of image, the auditory is being itself – an auditory ontology. Since listening is so intimately bound to the origins of being, something so precious must be revered, treasured and carried over into the way we listen. Although not addressing a theology of listening, Berendt concurs that it is now ‘appropriate that the culture of hearing and the miracle of the ear should be rediscovered at a time when patriarchy is losing power.’⁸⁴¹ Today, some thirty years after this statement, the power-loss is almost complete and now it is clearly time to restore ear-culture. The English voice therapist, Paul Newham, puts it this way: ‘What reaches the audience is not the linguistic sophistication, but the phonational depth of affect.’⁸⁴²

⁸⁴⁰ Freyne, *Texts, Contexts and Cultures*, p. 95. Mark Patrick Hederman uses the same metaphor of attunement.

⁸⁴¹ Berendt, *The Third Ear*, p.27.

⁸⁴² Newham, *The Singing Cure*, p. 222.

Praying to God is simply the living union of saying something and listening. The symbiosis is in the 'sonans', the sounding.

7.1 Socratic midwifery and the daimonion: Jesus, the Holy Spirit and St. Paul

Midwifery is the practice and art of assisting women at childbirth. *Maieutics* is an intellectual philosophical discipline that refers to a method of instruction of the Athenian philosopher immortalised by Plato. Socrates preached an aural/oral/listening method that assisted the birth of ideas.

Introducing the Athenian philosopher, Socrates, at this late point is to suggest that hearing well is birthing a new consciousness on a personal and spiritual level.

Socrates worked, according to Plato, on two very audio-centric levels. He worked orally and aurally to act as midwife and to birth an intellectual conversion in his hearers. Secondly, his inner voice, the personal power or discernment with which he was graced to bring about this, he could only vaguely describe as the *daimonion*, an inner, elusive figure which prompted him constantly aurally.

Socrates (469? -399 BC) was son of a midwife.⁸⁴³ Immortalised in Plato's dialogue, *Theaetetus*, Socrates asks the intelligent, although confused, young man Theaetetus, if he has not heard that he, Socrates, is the son of 'a very famous and solid midwife, Phaenarete.'⁸⁴⁴ Socrates poses this question by way of introducing himself as a midwife in certain aspects of that metaphorical role.

⁸⁴³ '[T]hough it is by no means clear that there was any such profession recognised in Athens at this time.' Barry Gower, in *Socratic Questions: New Essays on the philosophy of Socrates and its significance*, eds. Barry Gower and Michael C. Stokes, London/New York: Routledge, 1992, p.4.

⁸⁴⁴ *The Theaetetus of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Hall Kennedy, Cambridge: University Press, 1881, p.111.

But Socrates' 'art of midwifery' is very selective and distinct from the common art of midwifery on two counts: firstly, it attends only to men and secondly, it is concerned only with the delivery of the soul. Its relevance here is that his philosophy was audiocentric. In other words, what is important in the light of this dissertation is that this process or technique of Socratic midwifery was essentially *aural*. Socrates asked questions. 'The philosopher Socrates is the one who does not write.'⁸⁴⁵ Socrates is the *maieutria* – the midwife - of true conversation. True conversation that ends in the silence of understanding is rare and was so even for the patron of intellectual communication himself, Tracy jests.⁸⁴⁶ But two other important Platonic points about midwifery are interesting for this discussion of religious experience and sound: only women who were mothers themselves were allowed to act as midwives, 'because human nature is too weak to acquire an act of which it has no experience.'⁸⁴⁷ Secondly, a midwife hastened or delayed the birthing process 'by chanting incantations.'⁸⁴⁸

These facts have theosonic implications. The actual experience of listening to the Voice of God is a grace endowed freely by God on every human person. Once experienced and once the experience is acquired, the human person is graced even further to become expert on the subject and becomes an expert in birthing it for others. Socrates considered himself the *maieutria*, the midwife of self-knowledge, *par excellence*; Jesus is also *maieutria* to a new birth in the Kingdom of God through the sound or voice of the Spirit (Jn. 3:8). The Spirit binds us through sound to Christ and we come to share in the

⁸⁴⁵ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Listening*, p. 137.

⁸⁴⁶ Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 101.

⁸⁴⁷ *Theaetetus*, p.111.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.112.

present transfigured moment where the glory of the past is not lost but carried forward towards the future of *Basiliea Tou Theou*. Present, past and future are continuous and uninterrupted in the new feat of divine listening. The covenant is now between the heard and listened for Word of God. The one dissimilarity between Christ and Socrates is, as Kelber puts it, that '[u]nlike Socrates, Jesus did not have a single literary heir to collect and interpret his message.'⁸⁴⁹ Jesus of Nazareth had four heirs. The ultimate similarity is that both men died for the message they proclaimed.

Alongside the imagery of midwifery, Socrates talked through another metaphor which has audiocentric connotations; the *daimonion*. This was a gnome/spirit like voice that dwelled in the lobe of his ear prompting him into action. The *daimonion* was 'his household spirit, living with him in close companionship – kept off everything that need keeping off...and advised him of all that he needed to know in advance.'⁸⁵⁰

The prophetic voice whispers itself into the consciousness of being. Socrates *daimonion* was *cosmic*, *kerygmatic*, and *silent* at various times. In the following quote, in pre-Christian thought, and related through Zenophon, Socrates outlines a taxonomy of voices somewhat akin to the three thesonies outlined in Chapter Four.

'As for introducing "new divinities" how could I be guilty of that merely in asserting that a voice of god is manifest to me indicating my duty? Will any one dispute either that thunder utters its "voice," or that it is an omen of the greatest moment? ...But more than that, in regard to god's

⁸⁴⁹ Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, p.21.

foreknowledge of the future and his forewarning to whomsoever he will, these are the same terms, I assert, that all men use, and this is their belief. The only difference between them and me is that whereas they call the sources... "birds," "utterances," "chance meetings," "prophets," I call mine a "divine" thing.' ...I have revealed to many of my friends the counsels which god has given me, and in no instance has the event shown that I was mistaken.'⁸⁵¹

This summarises the tripartite modality of theosony: In the plethora of cosmic sounds, God, the Creator, has to be present and correct.

Midwifery in the Bible is a metaphor for God 'creating the cosmos, birthing the first humans, beginning each day, and delivering the eschaton.'⁸⁵² God birthed creation into existence through the *sound* of the wind on the face of the waters. From out of silence, the sound of God's own voice called the cosmos into being (Gen.1). The first chapter of the Book of Exodus suggests that there were women named apart to play the role of midwife. There are two named here - Shiphrah and Puah, both displaying great inventiveness in the face of Pharaoh's plot for the infanticide of Hebrew baby boys (Ex. 1:15-21).

The *Old Testament* confirms that early Israelite mothers had midwives by their sides. Indeed they had important roles in the birthing process; their role was not only to console the woman giving birth but also, on occasion, to suggest the name of the fruit of the womb according to the manner in which the baby

⁸⁵⁰ Apuleius, *De Deo Socratis*, XVII, 157, trans. A. H. Armstrong. Cited in Micheline Sauvage, *Socrates and the conscience of man*, New York:Harper, Men of Wisdom Books, 1962, p.126.

⁸⁵¹ Quoted from 'Zenophon on Socrates' Defence to the Jury' *Philosophers Speak for Themselves: From Thales to Plato*, ed. T.V. Smith, Chicago: Chicago Press, 1934, p.107.

appeared.⁸⁵³ Tamar's assisting nurse at birthing is responsible for naming. The resourceful Tamar, one of the four women mentioned in Matthew's account of the ancestors of Jesus⁸⁵⁴, is birthing twin sons of Judah. In the original 'breach' birth, the midwife errs in assuming that the first little hand to appear out of the womb is that of the first born. She tags the first-seen hand with crimson thread. But the brightly-tagged hand withdraws again into the womb and provides the breach or gap for the second son to emerge first. The son with unthreaded hands is named Perez, which means 'breach'. His name will always recall and refer to the midwife's exclamation at first sight. 'What a breach you have made for yourself!' (Gen. 38:28).

Christian writers from the early centuries have compared Socrates and Jesus Christ.⁸⁵⁵ Both were men of the word; both profoundly moved their listeners even to recording the words they spoke; both were guided by an inner, transcendental voice; and both sought to influence the lives of their pupils/disciples for the good.

What Jesus pinpointed forcefully as aural, the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:8), Socrates called the *daimonion* – the animate inner voice sitting in his ear lobe. God lives in his ear – the divine *Daimonion* – whom, as Jesus promises, can be heard and learnt about through him (Jn.6: 45). This divine *Daimonion* resides in the *Holy Spirit* who crowns the revelation of Jesus Christ. As Francesco Lambiasi writes: 'All revelation...is a love story that comes 'a Patre per Filium in Spiritu Sancto ad Patrem.''⁸⁵⁶ The Holy Spirit will

⁸⁵² See 'nurse' entry in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 976.

⁸⁵³ Other instances of this naming on birth manner are cited earlier here in Chapter Four.

⁸⁵⁴ Matt.1:3.

⁸⁵⁵ An excellent literary review and overview from the writings of the Fathers up to the present day is in an article by P. J. Fitzpatrick entitled 'The Legacy of Socrates' in *Socratic Questions: The philosophy of Socrates and its significance*, pp.153-208.

⁸⁵⁶ Francesco Lambiasi, 'Holy Spirit' in the *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p.456.

teach the apostles to listen and recall the sound of the incarnate word of God (Jn. 14:26). The Holy Spirit of truth will enlighten and guide following the message of what the Spirit hears. '[F]or he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears' (Jn.16: 13). Kelber too is convinced of the work of the Spirit in an aural understanding of the Word of God: 'If we are to understand gospel in terms of the efficacy of the sounded word, the agency of the Spirit cannot be neglected.'⁸⁵⁷

Angelus Silesius allegorically describes the role of the Holy Spirit in aural and musical terms: 'God is the organist, we are His instrument, His Spirit sounds each pipe and gives the tone its strength.'⁸⁵⁸ It is in the presence, the *locus*, of the Holy Spirit that divine and human nature speaks; the Spirit is the interpreter for both. The 'pneuma' translates what is said and what is to be listened for by both. This Greek word 'pneuma' means 'wind', 'spirit' and 'breath'.

Jesus as God's anointed *Christos* is the ultimate Spirit of God. Through baptism of the Sound-Spirit, also claimed by Paul for himself and other Christians, humanity forevermore is anointed by God through the reception of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21-22). 'The same Holy Spirit who shaped Christ's body and humanity...used the sacred writings of Israel to shape Christ's religious vision, His way of looking at things and events, of speaking to God and men.'⁸⁵⁹

St. Paul's theology is *both* audio-centric and spirit-filled. 'My speech and proclamation were...with a demonstration of the Spirit' (1 Cor. 2:4). Paul, an ardent lover and reciter of the oral Talmud from his Jewish heritage, is now unashamedly committed to the incarnate Word of God, the second person of the Trinity with God the Father and

⁸⁵⁷ Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, p.145.

⁸⁵⁸ Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 125.

the Holy Spirit. The Spirit functions to teach St. Paul to speak the truth. Then on speaking this truth, the listener holds it in the lobe of the ear. The Spirit of God, who reveals God, now turns to the receiver of the teaching 'interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual' (1 Cor. 2:13). Paul's teaching is brought to perfection in God's people, the people who love Him, through that Spirit from God. He calls the members of the churches of Galatia foolish and asks them five angry, rhetorical questions. The first and the fifth clearly state that God's own Spirit is received not by doing but by hearing, by 'believing what you heard' (Gal 3:2,5). It is the Spirit, therefore, that acts and gives life and freedom. The gifts of the Spirit of God are freely given through ear (1 Cor. 12:8).

To summarise: the ear is the highly qualified midwife not just to sounds of the world around, but to the presence of God *through* those sounds. The one midwifery technique in the birthing of this presence is obedience; complying with the preaching of the Obedient Son of God is allowing the ever-new, ever-old message to be heard and then to act upon it. 'But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers (James 1:22). Humanity's openness to the womb of divine sound, the conversational interplay between the Creator and the created is both the oneness and twoness of true prayer.

From its inception, this work has had to be midwife even to the birthing of a new word to embody its implications. 'Theosony' is listening *in a certain way* to the message deep down in the voice of God – a 'new act of listening'⁸⁶⁰ that God is summoning us to. This certain way demands a listening which is receptive and responsive; in the listening and silent space God and self are intertwined in the communication. In the womb of God's self-revelation that carries the Christian, all other sounds are set free to make room

⁸⁵⁹ Guillet, *A God Who Speaks*, p.68.

⁸⁶⁰ Sachs, *The Dignity of Difference*, already quoted in Chapter One.

for the sound of the divine. In human terms, it is enough, in fact plenty, for the little resident in the womb to just listen to every foetal tone; determining the precise pitch or meaning of the foetal symphony is irrelevant. Experiencing the mature soundscape of God, which is Silent Theosony, is deeply embedded in the dual archetypal elements that have traditionally and unfortunately been categorised as *either* masculine or feminine. In terms of human communication, Kelber defines this three-way encounter as interaction. ‘As words are carried from persons to persons, an interaction develops between speakers, hearers and message. The process of communication is contingent on the nature of this interaction.’⁸⁶¹ Such reciprocal human action calls forth a further step in the journey towards, and conversation with, the Divine. ‘The movement towards listening requires...a second letting go, the abandoning of a more subtle and more tenacious pretension than that of onto-theological knowledge. It requires giving up () the human self in its will to mastery, sufficiency, and autonomy...It is here where God has been named.’⁸⁶²

7.2 Ten aspects of theosonic alertness

To speak of theosony is to speak of human beings in their relationship with God through an obedient *alertness*⁸⁶³ to the Voice of the *triune God*. Revealing the mystery of Trinity by a listening heart ultimately reveals one’s own mystery as a human being. The interpretative key that unlocks the secret of theosony is, in the final analysis, to be found in a Trinitarian theology. Theosony, the listening religious experience, clears a neutral space that creates the possibility of hearing what needs to be listened for with accurate

⁸⁶¹ Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, p.23.

⁸⁶² Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p.224.

understanding and response. Theosony is a theory of aural vigilance, being on guard to the sound of the divine utterance, which is understood, in universal sounds, in human communicative speech and in the transcendental sound of silence. Ten central themes are reiterated over the next few pages. The first has to do with what is aurally hidden and aurally revealed in the world of darkness.

1. This praying space which is aural is no way passive or docile; it is the most intelligent avenue towards divine attunement. The discordant echoes of sin and evil can be clearly discerned along this path. It does not intend to offer a rosy, easy, surface experience. That the triune God is hidden and mysterious is an experience that most Christians encounter at one time or another in the journey through prayer life. What is hidden and mysterious also conjures up in the imagination a twilight or even *darkness* experience. A creative listening occurs quite naturally in a dark, night-time reality when the distractions of the visual sense are silenced. The routine of early Irish poets was one of darkness. In order to enhance the birthing of perfect phrase idiom and sound, Robin Flower imaginatively paints this way of the dark night of the poetic soul. This, he does, not merely to describe the method of the poet in quest of truth, but even more importantly, to highlight the extraordinary importance which this creative darkness sourced in the life and soul of the Irish language: '[I]f the spoken Irish of to-day is...the liveliest, the most concise, and the most literary in its turns of all vernaculars of Europe, this is due in no small part to the passionate preoccupation of the poets, turning and re-turning their phrases in the darkness of their cubicles, and

⁸⁶³ “Alertness” borrowed from the theological method of Bernard Lonergan SJ. See *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, University of Toronto, 1959, p. 36.

restlessly seeking the last perfection of phrase and idiom.’⁸⁶⁴ The fierce, wild, engrossing relationship with God can favourably be tuned and re-tuned in cubby-hole darkness into the last perfection of faithful prayer. In the ‘holy, unspeakable, mysterious Night’,⁸⁶⁵ the praying soul is permitted to sing: The darkness, physically and spiritually, was dispelled through sound for St. John of the Cross, and the poem *The Spiritual Canticle* echoes that song. Written in 1584, it is one of the greatest Spanish poems ever written, according to Margaret Rees.⁸⁶⁶ ‘In one of the darkest of the dark nights which he had to endure, we can imagine him breaking into a song...a song as passionately inspired and as skilfully wrought as any that has ever come from human lips.’⁸⁶⁷ *Bis orat qui cantat* (the one who sings, prays twice), as Augustine suggests.

James Joyce was conscious of this all-pervasive nature of the ear. His final masterpiece, *Finnegans Wake*, was the product of the night, he maintained, full of nighttime activity and dream language. According to his biographer, Richard Ellman, Joyce ‘justified its content as a third of human life – the night third.’⁸⁶⁸ Ulysses, the work of Joyce’s stream of consciousness, where the mind talks to itself, is a book of the light and the daytime. ‘Having written Ulysses about the day, I wanted to write this book about the night.’⁸⁶⁹ What is interesting is that when explaining the mysterious, nocturnal, language of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce himself advocated

⁸⁶⁴ Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1947), 1979, p. 106. This quotation, in part, was cited in the Introductory Chapter referring to another point on the connection between auditory language and the body.

⁸⁶⁵ Novalis, *Hymns to the Night: Spiritual Songs*, p.9.s

⁸⁶⁶ See Margaret A. Rees, ‘John of the Cross’ in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, p.350.

⁸⁶⁷ E. Allison Peers, ‘Spiritual Canticle:Introduction’ in *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, Vol. 2, p.1.

⁸⁶⁸ Richard Ellman, *James Joyce*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1959), 1983, p. 703.

⁸⁶⁹ Quoted in Ellman, *James Joyce*, p. 695.

listening to it rather than reading it.⁸⁷⁰ Rational understanding is the daytime work of the eye; understanding both the rational and the absurd or that which is not in accordance with reason is the full-time work of the ear.⁸⁷¹

Joyce experimented with such aural sounding in his later writing particularly. His word was primarily chosen for its sound. Joycean word-choice did not always represent the object it referred to but depended, according to Alex Aronson, ‘on the sonority and intonation of the speaker’s voice.’⁸⁷² On the completion of ‘Finnegans Wake’, ‘[t]o those who found it unreadable, he [Joyce] suggested not reading but **listening** to it.’⁸⁷³ This great book of *nighttime* activity is to be listened to. David Norris suggests that at ‘night in darkness...the ear takes precedence over the eye.’⁸⁷⁴ Of the book, Joyce himself wrote in a letter to his daughter: ‘In a word, it is pleasing to the ear...That is enough, it seems to me.’⁸⁷⁵ According to Richard Ellman, Joyce ‘defended its technique or form...on the importance of sound...’⁸⁷⁶ ‘The reader’s Golden Rule’ according to Norris, ‘is **when in doubt, read aloud**.’⁸⁷⁷ In short, ‘Joyce addressed the listener rather than the reader.’⁸⁷⁸ The golden rule of Scripture is also: when in doubt, read aloud.

2. Secondly, theosony has an *anthropological* purpose. It is a listening to and for the divine word that resounds throughout the mystery of human being. Yet there is a

⁸⁷⁰ This point is made by David Norris in *Joyce for Beginners*, Cambridge: Icon Books, 1994, p. 150 and is quoted directly here in Chapter Three.

⁸⁷¹ The all-pervasive adaptability of the ear in comparison to the eye is a fact that recurs again and again throughout this work; in darkness, the ear comes alive and even stimulates the brain into creativity and imaginative states as is exemplified in the Irish poetic tradition presented briefly below.

⁸⁷² Alex Aronson, *Music and the Novel*, New Jersey: Rowmann and Littlefield, 1980, p.40.

⁸⁷³ Norris, *Joyce for Beginners*, p. 150.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 150. Italics **mine**

⁸⁷⁵ James Joyce in a letter to Lucia Joyce, June 1, 1934, quoted in Ellman, *James Joyce*, p. 702.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 703.

⁸⁷⁷ Norris, *Joyce for Beginners*, pp.4/150.

⁸⁷⁸ Aronson, *Music and the Novel*, p.40.

question of knowing how to listen, whether one is capable of right theological listening or not. As Rahner puts it, ‘a true philosophy of religion in the final analysis is nothing other than the command to man to turn his *ear* towards his history to discover whether the word of God has been *sounded* there.’⁸⁷⁹ Every physical act is a spiritual one. There is a spiritual dimension in the function and functioning of the ear. There is a spiritual quality that surrounds the aural field if one chooses or wants to hear. Fiumara writes on how to listen. ‘A salient criterion to invoke...is the distinction between not being able to do something and not wanting to do something even though one has the “power” to do it.’⁸⁸⁰ That power for the Christian resides in the Holy Spirit who is ready and able to assist the one who wants to converse with God and who knows that the power is there for the asking.

3. The third theme that is heard in the hermeneutics of theosony is the theme of *grace*. Listening to this Son of the Father and Word made flesh in the midst of humanity is a moment of grace. It is ‘an openness to God’s grace.’⁸⁸¹ This Divine gift, the Spirit of absolute love, gathers all human beings, if they consent, into the harmony, the oneness, the tonic of this love – ‘for God is love’ (1 Jn. 4:8).
4. The fourth fact that is important in theosony is that it is really theo-logical, that is *speaking about and to* God. A theology without theosony is when listening becomes separated from a conversation with God. The subject becomes dislocated from the object and the delicate links between humankind and the Divine

⁸⁷⁹ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.31. Italics mine.

⁸⁸⁰ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Listening*, p.157.

⁸⁸¹ Charles Davis, ‘The Theology of Preaching’ in *Preaching*, ed. Ronan Drury, Dublin: Gill & Son, p.22. Incidentally, this is an interesting article although the focus on preaching *per se* is outside the scope of this thesis. It is relevant on two points; firstly, he refers to the paucity of theological writing or attention to the *hearer* to date; secondly, he highlights the importance of openness to God’s grace as being the prime mover of both preacher and listener. (See pp.12,22,23).

presence are imperilled. Without a keen attentiveness to the actual experience of listening to God, 'a man at prayer is still only talking to himself.'⁸⁸² The subjective, the ego, dominates the relationship which is 'a reduced-by-half rationality (only capable of speaking) can do more than mirror itself or ignore the relationship of the other.'⁸⁸³ Refusing to listen is a turning away from the soul-full sound of the triune God. Being specific about Christian theosony is to start from the source of that Word-sound, which is Christ, and not from the muted nature of Augustinian outward ears of the body.⁸⁸⁴ Christ is the sounding board who enhances the power and quality of the Sound of God and who also directs the sound in the way of the human listening audience.

5. Theosony proceeds from disposition, through habit to *virtue*, a point made in the theory of silence presented here. Listening is not a virtue until it becomes so much ingrained to be truly a quality of self. That is precisely why the sacred dimension of listening expects a genuine divine/human encounter. Being receptive to the sound of God is a paradox; a listener can only hear by standing back from, and renouncing, human sound. In the understanding of Karl Rahner, revelation 'remains always an unexpected thing, in spite of all the calculating and waiting...It is the unique self-subsistent action of a free person.'⁸⁸⁵ True faith in God must begin within that wellspring which Christians believe to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit. As Zuckerkandl eloquently summarises in a musical context: 'A

⁸⁸² Rahner, *The Practice of Faith*, p.79.

⁸⁸² Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.189.

⁸⁸³ Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, p.189.

⁸⁸⁴ St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John, The Fathers of the Church*, trans. Rettig, tr.106.6, (2), p. 272.

⁸⁸⁵ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.157.

god's gift comes from the inside; he opens men's hearts and unseals their lips.'⁸⁸⁶

This gift is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ is the gift bearer and supreme human archetype who opens our hearts and promises fluency in the language of God.

6. Alertness to the activity of God at once highlights a particular *ignoring* of its presence in contemporary theology and theological practice. This is precisely what John Cage calls for in music, that is 'an attention to the activity of sounds.'⁸⁸⁷ Listening to God is an instance of being answerable or accountable to God that is within one's own power and free will.
7. Theosony is the language of *feeling*. Human emotions are continually aroused through sound encounters. 'Emotion takes place in the person who has it. And sounds, when allowed to be themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly.'⁸⁸⁸ Theosony is 'sonic-to-spiritual transubstantiation.'⁸⁸⁹ Can the accomplishment of the ear manage to sound the way praying feels? It is a question of crossing the bridge between physical and inner sounding. In the words of Zuckerkandl, '[o]nly in the most obvious physical sense do the sounds come to the listeners from outside themselves; the true source is inside the listeners.'⁸⁹⁰ What we are trying to describe is on the threshold between the ear, on the one hand, and emotion on the other. The realm of emotions, Storr suggests, is most readily accessed through the ear. 'What seems certain is that there is a closer relation between *hearing* and emotional arousal that there is between seeing and

⁸⁸⁶ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician*, p.12.

⁸⁸⁷ Cage, *Silence*, p.10.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁸⁸⁹ Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, p. 100.

emotional arousal.’⁸⁹¹ All emotion precedes conceptualisation. Theopathy,⁸⁹² responding feelingly and emotionally to God, is conforming to the sympathetic feelings, which the ear symbolises.

8. The eighth theosony is an *active* way of listening. It is both active and passive, concrete and abstract, receiving and yet giving. It constitutes a constant underground river of sonic experience in the living encounter of the body with the world at large. ‘Whoever is from God hears the words of God’ (Jn, 8:47). To hear these words is simply to believe. Not to hear them means ‘that you are not from God’ (Jn. 8:47).
9. Theosony is an *obedience*. Obedience is the English translation of the Hebrew ‘sama’, which refers to the physical act of hearing. The Greek words for obedience are also related to the same words for hearing.⁸⁹³ An act of obedience therefore, is an act of the ear. As Rick Byargeon puts it: ‘If one truly hears the word of God, then obedience is inevitable.’⁸⁹⁴ In short, ‘[b]lessed...are those who hear the word of God and obey it’ (Lk. 11:28). These words of words are forever. ‘Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away’ (Mt. 24:35). The sound of God through the sound-message of Jesus Christ will not pass away but will continue sounding. Kelber, in describing the continuity process in ancient orality writes that ‘[t]hrough the agency of the oral medium [the speaker’s] voice

⁸⁹⁰ Zuckerkandl, *Man the Musician*, p.13 concerning Gregorian chant as prayer form.

⁸⁹¹ Storr, *Music and the Mind*, p.26.

⁸⁹² This term was introduced in Chapter Two.

⁸⁹³ See article on ‘Obedience’ in *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol. 2, p.616.

⁸⁹⁴ Rick W. Byargeon, ‘Obedience’ in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 981.

carried the voice of Jesus, and Jesus continued speaking in their words.’⁸⁹⁵ To hear Christ is to hear the loving voice of the Father.

10. Finally, theosonic alertness to God is being *absurd*, inconsistent with reason, but in no manner ridiculous or preposterous. The word ‘absurd’ has aural and oral connotations. It takes its etymology from L. *surdus* that means ‘deaf’ or ‘indistinct’. ‘Surd’ in English is a mathematical term of a quantity not capable of being expressed in rational numbers. It is therefore irrational and often contrary to common sense. In Algebra, a surd denotes ‘an algebraic root which cannot be expressed in finite terms. It lies outside the commensurable and the decidable.’⁸⁹⁶ Again a plausible definition of infinite, ineffable listening to God’s self-revelation. God communicates love and goodness, in this case, through the divine initiative of graced hearing. God speaks, and that very word whispered is the listener’s being and existence. Vedantic scripture, the wisdom of the Yogis who were the prophets of India, have revered the Sound and Word God. In the articulation of such a philosophy, there is an aural mysticism, a mystery of sound, listening, hearing and speaking inherent. This ‘new sort of naiveté’,⁸⁹⁷ as Rahner defines dialogical prayer is, simply, how that very sense of hearing is appropriated and programmed to respond to God’s initiative. God hears and responds through the interior ear. In every act or function of the ear, called or not called, the sound of God is there. Humanity lives in an ear-world of God and of itself. To put it another way, this thesis is primarily about being in, and knowing, the triune God

⁸⁹⁵ Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, p.20.

⁸⁹⁶ Steiner, *Real Presences*, p. 127.

⁸⁹⁷ Rahner, *The Practice of Faith*, p.82.

in an ear-to-ear, heart-to-heart conversational discourse. It is a conversation with the nearest and dearest.

In short, discerning the Voice of God — theosony — is neither this nor that, neither one thing nor another, neither one word nor another, but is in all things touched by truth. Herein lies the guarantee of salvation and the secret is in the aural reception of the Word of God: '[Y]ou also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory' (Eph. 1:13,14).

7.3 A theosonic 'Approach-Road' to God

Hans Urs von Balthasar names seven general 'approach-roads' or qualities that enhance the divine/human encounter.⁸⁹⁸ Is the sound of God's revelation in the dimmest, tiniest whisper of the soul, in the sheer sound of silence? Is that sound outside of time and space, beyond all airwaves and vibrations, beyond all one-to-one conversation? Can it be asserted that God speaks to every human being that chooses to listen? The answer to all three questions is 'yes'.

These concepts are in philosophical terms, meta-empirical – beyond the field of human experience. Thus, they are difficult to articulate and to define. Yet, as Rahner states about such concepts in verbal revelation, 'they make up the concrete reality of

⁸⁹⁸These seven general approach-roads to God with appropriate NT citations are childlikeness, simplicity, peace, prayer, joy, thanksgiving and insight. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, Vol.VII, p. 267.

Christianity.’⁸⁹⁹ The truth of a religious aural experience is completely beyond words yet it is completely thrown back on words to communicate even the tiniest glimmer of the experience to oneself and to others. ‘To the extent that it has now become evident that even supra-mundane existence can be revealed through the human word, we are now able to say also that man is at least the one who must listen for a revelation from this free God speaking in *human words*.’⁹⁰⁰ Putting theosony across in human word communication reflects an intimate revelation of God’s word first and foremost; once verbalised, it becomes distinct without affecting the former intimate integrity of relationship. Put another way, a silent theosony, once articulated, becomes an objective theosony in the very act of sounding it out through verbalisation. ‘As a human word may be intimate and distinct (it is intimate insofar as it reflects a person – proceeds from a person’s body and spirit – yet, because it goes out from the person, it is distinct), so the Word, in relationship to God, is intimate yet distinct.’⁹⁰¹

The only technique of listening to the Word of God in human terms has to be approached from the realm of the *imagination*. Everyone approaches God in his and her own way: ‘[I]n the end this great matter of belief in God must be left to the reader to settle in the intimate places of his own personal being and life. He alone can translate the abstractions of generalized statement into the concrete and pungent realities of living experience.’⁹⁰²

⁸⁹⁹ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 26.

⁹⁰⁰ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p.155.

⁹⁰¹ Brodie, *The Gospel According to John*, p.136.

⁹⁰² Farmer, *Towards Belief in God*, p.114.

7.3.1 Theosony - the metaphor

In Christianity, the word is a metaphor, which in the context of this discussion is that the triune God is not any particular word. The Christian word-metaphor is instructive and useful particularly when it points towards the listening process required; the listening act, which is a listening beyond the power of the human word. It is the likeness of the act of 'word' itself, which is the salient point, not any particular word but the experience of the word-beyond-word which transforms and reveals. There is another theological significance and validity when the metaphoric utterance 'word' appears; the 'Word' of God clearly refers either to the written word of God in Scripture or to the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. In other words, 'word' in theology has more than one literal meaning. It is like the *sound* of a word, which of its essence has to be heard of and listened out for. Scripture, on the other hand, is not called the 'Language of God'; neither is the Son of God referred to as 'the incarnated Language of God'.

A figure of speech is a literary device or expression in which words and language are used outside their literal sense. Scripture abounds in figurative speech: God is the good shepherd, people are the flock, '[t]he voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire (Ps. 29:7). 'Metaphor in language – the prime mover...' ⁹⁰³ is the key that unlocks the imagination. 'Sound', 'silence' and 'God' are three very distinct terms that, in one sense, defy and resist combination. But lining them both up in the metaphor of 'the Sound of God' releases a new understanding of divine presence. The world of sound in its turn assumes a religious dimension and a new self-understanding in the process.

There are four basic metaphoric elements in theosony. 'Only from afar, by metaphors and analogies, do we come to apprehend what it [the mysterium] is in itself,

and even so our notion is but inadequate and confused.’⁹⁰⁴ Metaphors borrowed from one sphere where they are ‘natural’ and applied to another where they cannot exist are analogies. All our descriptions of God’s demeanour, psychology and behaviour are ‘analogous’ to our own. When we say that God is a rock, lends an ear, loses his temper, walks in the cool of the evening, we are using metaphors analogously. Theosony uses metaphors of its own and applies these to God analogously.

Firstly, there is the *ear* itself, both in human and divine terms, referring to the human ear, the ear of the incarnate Son of God, and the Divine Ear. Secondly, there is the *voice*:⁹⁰⁵ The human voice, the voice of Christ and the Voice of God; the sound of the human, the sound of Jesus and the Sound of God. Thirdly, there is the metaphor of silence, which is the focus of Chapter Five.

Is the term ‘the voice of God’ any more than a metaphor? Can the voice of God reveal and echo our origins, evoke our uniqueness and sanctity and allow us to be allies of the Spirit? ‘We are here confronted with a unique characteristic of aural perception, which can only be described metaphorically by words from the realms of other senses. Talking about the rise and fall of tones is using a metaphor, and nothing more.’⁹⁰⁶ Most of our language is metaphorical. However, when we use these images analogously we travel with the metaphor towards the object we are clarifying and we invest that object with meaning even as the metaphor itself fades into desuetude or anachronism. This is the difference between using metaphor as a rhetorical device and using it as a semantic ruse.

⁹⁰³ Steiner, *Real Presences*, p.182.

⁹⁰⁴ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p.34.

⁹⁰⁵ See Chapter Four where ‘voice’ and ‘sound’, are synonymous; ‘wind’, ‘breath’ and ‘spirit’ are also synonymous in Hebrew and Greek linguistic sources. This work finds helpful that the Hebrew and Greek words are at one and the same time both voice and sound.

⁹⁰⁶ Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol*, p.86.

In referring to the particular imaginative language that one addresses to and listens for in Christianity, praying is always in the language that comes naturally but it evolves from and transcends all human language. Our ‘father’ as opposed to our ‘mother’ tongue is more a language of pure sound. Simone Weil expresses this succinctly: ‘the words we exchange with him do not matter, but only the *sound* of his voice, which assures us of his presence.’⁹⁰⁷ Thus hearing conveys immediacy and immersion. Biologically, as already explored, the inner ear perceives sound not only by means of the outer ear but also directly from vibrations within our skull, and we feel sound.

Theosony, tuning into God’s self-unveiling through the various facets of the sense of hearing, is intoned through the *imagination*. This chapter proposes theosony as *one* of the constructs of imagination that is integral to any human participation in the creative act of God. Imagination and the senses intersect in God-made-man. To quote von Balthasar, ‘[e]verything is concrete and must be represented with the senses and the imagination, without which a mere intellect would not even be human and would not at all correspond to the Word made flesh; with the senses and imagination of a believer which as such become of themselves ‘spiritual’ sense and a ‘spiritual’ imagination, since they are at the service of faith, and together with their ‘object’ – the man Jesus Christ, who is open to God and reveals God – they in turn open up to the divine.’⁹⁰⁸

The vital creative activity of prayer disturbs, awakens and nourishes the imagination. The ear of the imagination harbours the unimaginable sound of God’s timbre. John O’Donohue describes the soul-work of the imagination: ‘The imagination is the creative force in the individual. It always negotiates different thresholds and releases

⁹⁰⁷ Weil, *Waiting on God*, p.38. Italics mine.

⁹⁰⁸ von Balthasar, *Christian Meditation*, p. 23.

possibilities of recognition and creativity that the linear, controlling, external mind will never glimpse.’⁹⁰⁹ The work of prayer is negotiating alternative imaginative ways of catching echoes of the sound of God. Angelus Silesius (Johann Scheffler) puts it like this: ‘Nothing is without voice: God everywhere can hear/Arising from creation His praise and echo clear.’⁹¹⁰

Every believer lives and prays out of the world of the imagination. To pray is to imagine. Rilke defines the artist in spiritual terms as one ‘who develops the five-fingered hand of his senses...to ever more active and more spiritual capacity.’⁹¹¹

Imagining, forming mental images of what is not perceived by the senses is the work of imagination. This faculty reproduces images already stored in the memory and these images can be aroused through associated images; new heretofore-unknown images emerge through a combining of former experiences.⁹¹² The scope and focus of the process of imagination permeates all aspects of human existence and as Happel states, cannot ‘be relegated to one area of human life’.⁹¹³ Religious imagination, through its multifaceted, interdisciplinary constructs, acts as mediator of meaning and understanding of religious experience. Symbol, narrative, myth and iconography – both visual and aural – make sense of the totality of religious experience.

Richard Kearney outlines the two Western concepts of imagination. ‘The human ability to ‘image’ or ‘imagine’ something has been understood in two ways throughout the history of Western thought – 1) (*sic*) as a *representational* faculty which reproduces

⁹⁰⁹ O’Donohue, *Anam Cara*, p.145.

⁹¹⁰ *Angelus Silesius: The Cherubic Wanderer*, p. 51. In a footnote to this couplet, Josef Schmidt states that this notion of echoing or resounding God was a very popular concept in sixteenth and seventeenth century poetry, ‘in fact, a whole subgenre ‘echo-poems’ developed from it.’ Fn. 35, p. 51.

⁹¹¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Where Silence Reigns: Selected Prose by Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. G. Craig Houston, New York: New Directions Books, 1978, p.55.

⁹¹² See *American Dictionary*, p. 603

images of some pre-existing reality, or 2) as a *creative* faculty which produces images which often lay claim to an original status in their own right.⁹¹⁴ Imagination liberated discovers relationships between things, creates symbols and finds new meanings. A theosonic imagination of intimacy discovers harmonious concordances between God and God's creation. In auditory, as opposed to visual terms, theosony as imagination allows God to sound the divine in the soul in whatever way possible. Theosony as imagination is present in silence as much as its sound. It is an aural imagination, which is about to be heard in its not-yet reality. The hidden, mysterious, yet intimate Divine Ear of God awaits the silent song of the imagining one. Imagination, according to the artist M.C. Richards is 'singing to a wide invisible audience.'⁹¹⁵ For Farmer, imagination and *memory* go hand in hand as 'transcendent capacities.... Memory is the basis of all systematic knowledge, and memory and imagination together make possible that foresight and creativeness without which man with his puny physical equipment would never have survived, still less evolved into civilised life'⁹¹⁶

7.4 Summary

Theosony is ultimately the search for a listening knowledge of God. It is what von Balthasar calls the 'vertical aspect', which also permits 'that in a man's voice the very voice of God is to be heard, that God speaks along with him.'⁹¹⁷ It is the listener, not necessarily the theologian, who picks up this divine knowledge. The theologian seeks to

⁹¹³ See Stephen Happel 'Imagination, Religious' in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, p. 508.

⁹¹⁴ Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination: Toward a postmodern culture*, London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., p.15.

⁹¹⁵ M. C. Richards, *Imagine Inventing Yellow*, New York: Station Hill Literary Editions, 1991, p.xii.

⁹¹⁶ Farmer, *Towards Belief in God*, p.66, 67.

⁹¹⁷ von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation*, p.152. This vertical aspect is the culmination of all religion, he states, whereas the horizontal aspect, which he understands as fulfilment corresponding to promise, is the culmination of all art. See p.152.

know the why and how of God's being. But the theologian is also a listener thus theosony, a listening epistemology of God, is open to all. But 'He will never give himself the opportunity to know [the message of God] unless he gives himself the opportunity to hear,'⁹¹⁸ which means that 'among the many voices of the world he must tune his ears to hear the message which is the message of God.'⁹¹⁹ The secret of the message is, at one and the same time, hidden and revealed most in the sound. 'For the listener music is not, as for the composer, a thing to be made, nor is it, as for the scholar, a thing that has been made; for him music simply *is*, a naked presence. And in the face of that naked presence one question only remains appropriate: *what* is it?'⁹²⁰ Theosony allows us to say: 'It is the Lord!'

The one appropriate question that theosony presents is not so much what Jesus Christ and his message of the Kingdom of God is, but how does one hear the hint of it, and how does one respond to the harbinger? Hans Urs von Balthasar succinctly puts it thus by way of conclusion: 'God speaks his word within man. Not only what man utters but all that he is becomes God's organ of communication. What man is and can be is only revealed in its fullness when God makes of him his alphabet, his sounding board and sense organ.'⁹²¹

The ear is our most characteristic organ of existential reality. Like the heart, it is ever awake. When the event of listening to the sound of God's self-revelation occurs within the human frame, theosony is accomplished. This accomplishment has been

⁹¹⁸ Barclay, *New Testament Words*, p.180.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.180.

⁹²⁰ Zuckerkandl, *The Sense of Music*, p.243.

⁹²¹ von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation*, pp.108/109.

documented here in as far as such introspection, observation, analysis, and the verbal recording of a spontaneous reality are possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achtemeier, Paul J. 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity', in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Volume 109, 1990.
- Adams, Charles J. 'Qur'an.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987:156-176.
- Agnew, Una SSL. *The Mystical Imagination of Patrick Kavanagh: 'a buttonhole in heaven?'*, Dublin: Columba Press, 1998.
- Alling, Frederic A. 'Listening for God with the Third Ear.' In *Journal of Religion and Health*, Volume 39, No. 4, Winter 2000: 305-317.
- Ambrose of Milan, *Three Books on the Duties of the Clergy*, cited by McCumsey in 'Silence' in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 13, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987:323.
- American College Dictionary, The*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1951.
- Aquinas, Thomas, St. *The "Summa Theologica, of St. Thomas Aquinas*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1923.
- Archer, Melissa L. 'Trumpet.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000: 1337.
- Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God: The 4,000 - Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1993.
- Aronson, Alex. *Music and the Novel*, New Jersey: Rowmann and Littlefield, 1980.

- Ashton, John. *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*, edited by J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962 (2001).
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*, translated from the French by Maria Jolas, Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 (1969).
- Bach, M.M. 'Sense Knowledge.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967: 89-90.
- _____. 'Sense Knowledge.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Editorial staff: Marthaler/LaNave/Tan/McCarron/Obermeyer/McGonagle, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003: Volume 12, 909-911.
- Barclay, William. *New Testament Words*, London: SCM Press, 1971.
- _____. *The Gospel of John*, Volume 2, Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1955.
- Barr, J. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, London: SCM Press, 1961.
- Barthes, Roland. *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*, translated by Linda Coverdale, London: Jonathan Cape, 1985.
- _____. *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, translated by Richard Howard, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985.
- Beardslee, William A. *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1970.
- Begbie, Jeremy. 'The Gospel, the arts and our culture. In *The Gospel and*

- Contemporary Culture*, edited by Hugh Montefiore, London: Mowbray, 1992.
- Begg, C. T. '1-2 Kings.' In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 edition: 175-185.
- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Berdyayev, Nicholas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, 1916 London: Victor Gollancz, 1995.
- Berendt, Joachim E. *The Third Ear: On Listening to the World*, 1985, Dorset: Element Books Ltd., 1988.
- Bíobla Naofa, An. Fear Eagair: Pádraig Ó Fiannachta*, Maigh Nuad: An Sagart, 1981.
- Blackwell, Albert L. *The Sacred in Music*, Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. 'Deuteronomy.' In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 edition: 94-109.
- Bohmbach, Karla G. 'Names and Naming.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000: 944-946.
- Bordo, Susan. *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture*, Albany: New York State University Press, 1987.
- Borgeaud, Philippe, 'Memorization.' Translated from French by Marie-Claude

- Hays-Merlaud, In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade,
New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 365-370.
- Bouillard, Henri. *The Logic of the Faith*, Dublin/Melbourne: M.H. Gill and Son
Ltd., 1967.
- Boulez, Pierre. Cited without source by Don G. Campbell in *Physician for Times to
Come*, Illinois: Quest Books, 1991.
- Boylan, Patrick Canon. *The Psalms: A Study of the Vulgate Psalter in the Light of
the Hebrew Text*, Dublin, Gill and Son, Ltd., 1931.
- Braun, Joachim. 'Music.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David
Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,2000: 927-930.
Britannica World Language Edition of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.
Prepared by William Little, London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Brodie, Thomas L. *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological
Commentary*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- _____. *Genesis as Dialogue, : A Literary, Historical and theological
Commentary*, New York:Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*, New York: Doubleday,
1996.
- _____. *The Gospel According to John*, Two Volumes, London:
Geoffrey Chapman Ltd., 1966.
- _____. *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary*, New
York: The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1986.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *The Gospel of John. A Commentary*, Philadelphia: Westminster,

1971.

_____. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, translated by John Marsh,

New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Bumbar, Paul E. 'Notes on Wholeness.' In *Aesthetic Dimensions of Religious Education*, edited by Gloria Durka and Joan Marie Smith, New York: Paulist Press, 1979: 47-68.

Burnaby, John, *Amor Dei – A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, 1938 The Canterbury Press: Norwich, 1991.

Byargeon, Rick, W. 'Obedience.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000: 981.

Cage, John. *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, London: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd., 1987.

Cahill, P. J. 'Fundamental Theology.' In *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 6, Editorial staff: Marthaler/LaNave/Tan/McCarron/Obermeyer/McGonagle, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003: 26-27.

Carey, Greg. 'Emmaus.' in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000: 405.

Carlyle, Thomas, cited by Morton T. Kelsey in *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*, London: SPCK, 1976.

Cassian, John. *The Monastic Institutes: On the Training of a Monk and The Eight Deadly Sins*, trans. Jerome Bertram, London: The Saint Austin Press, 1999.

Cheney, Emily. 'Ephphata.' in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000: 416.

Chomsky, Naom. *Language and Problems of Knowledge*, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988.

Cloud of Unknowing, The, edited by Evelyn Underhill, USA: Element Books Ltd., 1997.

Cloud of Unknowing and other treatises, The, edited by Justin McCann, London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1947.

Confessions of Augustine, The, edited by John Gibb/William Montgomery, Cambridge: University Press, 1908.

Confessions of Saint Augustine, The. Translated by John K. Ryan, New York: Doubleday, 1960.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. 'The Apocalypse (Revelation).' in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990: 996-1016.

Collins, Gregory OSB. *The Glenstal Book of Icons: Praying with the Glenstal Icons*, Dublin: Columba Press, 2003.

Collins Latin Dictionary Plus Grammar, Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997.

Collins, Raymond F. *Introduction to the New Testament*, New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1987.

Conley, K. 'Wisdom.' In *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Editorial staff: Marthaler/LaNave/Tan/McCarron/Obermeyer/McGonagle, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003: Volume 14, 784-787.

Coogan, Michael D. 'Literacy in Ancient Israel.' In *The Oxford Companion to the*

- Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger/Michael D. Coogan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993: 437-438.
- Cozzens, Donald B. *The Challenging Face of the Priesthood*,
Collegeville/Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Cresswell, John. *Teach Yourself Esperanto*, London: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1968.
- Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments, Revised Edition*,
1930. Guildford/London: Lutterworth Press, 1982.
- Cunningham, M. P. 'Prudentius.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 11,
Editorial staff: Marthaler/LaNave/Tan/McCarron/Obermeyer/McGonagle,
Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003: 792-793.
- Daly, Joanne. "Out of the depths," in *Sisters Today* 38, 1967.
- Dann, K. 'See, Vision, Eye.' In *The New International Dictionary of New Testament*, Volume 3, edited by Colin Brown. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978: 511-518.
- D'Aragon, Jean-Louis S.J. 'The Apocalypse.' In *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*,
editors: Brown/Fitzmeyer/Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman Ltd., 1968:
466-493.
- Davis, Charles. 'The Theology of Preaching.' In *Preaching*,
by Ronan Drury, Dublin: Gill & Son, 1962.
- '*Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.*' In *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P.,
Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975.

- Denny, Frederick Mathewson. 'Names and Naming.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 10, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 306.
- Derrett, J. Duncan M. 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Mark 4:9 and parallels). In *The Downside Review*, no.417, October 2001.
- de Veaux, Roland. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, translated by John McHugh, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961.
- Dickinson, Emily. 'Prayer.' In *The Complete Poems*, London/Boston: Faber and Faber, 1970: 210.
- Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994.
- Dictionary of Music*, edited by Alan Isaacs/Elizabeth Martin, London: Hamlyn, 1982.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Domeris, William R. 'Ear.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,2000: 361.
- _____. 'Voice.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,2000: 1360.
- Donceel, J.F. 'Sensation.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967: 84-86.
- _____. 'Sensation.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Editorial staff: Marthaler/LaNave/Tan/McCarron/Obermeyer/McGonagle, Volume 12, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003: 906-909.

- Downey, Michael Edward. 'Editor's Preface.' In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993: vii-x.
- _____. 'Silence, Liturgical Role of.' in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, Editor: Peter E. Fink, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990: 1189-1190.
- Duffy, Joseph. *Patrick in his own words*, Dublin: Veritas, 2000.
- Dulles, Avery. *Revelation Theology*, 1969, London: Burns & Oates Ltd, 1970.
- Dundes, Alan. *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore*, New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 1999.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.
- Edwards, David L. *Christianity: the first two thousand years*, London: Cassell, 1997.
- Egan, Harvey D. 'Foreword.' In *I Remember an Autobiographical Interview with Meinhold Kraus*, by Karl Rahner, New York: Crossroad, 1985.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *Theology of the Old Testament*, Volume 1, London: SCM Press, 1961.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987.
- Eliot, T.S. 'Four Quartets: Burnt Norton, V.' In *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*, Suffolk: Faber and Faber, 1963.
- _____. 'To Walter de la Mare.' In *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, London: Faber and Faber, 1969.

- Elliott, David J. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Ellman, Richard. *James Joyce*, 1959, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, edited by Johannes B. Bauer, London/Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1967, (1970).
- Encyclopedia of Religion, The*, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987.
- Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, An.* By the Rev. Walter W. Skeat, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882.
- Esnoul, A.M. 'Om.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 11, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 68-70.
- Farmer, Herbert H. *Towards Belief in God*, London: Student Christian Movement Press Ltd., 1942.
- Filson, Floyd V. *Saint John*, London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1963.
- Fisichella, René. 'Silence.' In *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994: 1001-1006.
- _____. 'Language.' In *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994: 595-603.
- Fiumara, Gemma Corradi. *The Other Side of Language: A philosophy of Listening*, translated by C. Lambert, London/New York: Routledge, Chapman and

- Hall, Inc., 1990.
- Flanagan, Neal M. 'John.' In *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, General Editors: Dianne Bergant/Robert Karris, Collegeville/Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988: 981-1020.
- Flower, Robin. *The Irish Tradition*, 1947, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Forge, A. and T. Wright, 'The Molecular architecture of the Inner Ear.' In *British Medical Bulletin – New developments in hearing and balance*, Volume 63, No. 2, 2002: 21.
- Freyne, Séan. *Texts, Contexts and Cultures*, Dublin: Veritas, 2002.
- Fries, Heinrich. 'Fundamental Theology.' In *Sacramentum Mundi*, Volume II, New York: Herder and Herder, 1968: 368-372.
- Gamble, Harry Y. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Gelineau, Joseph. 'The Path of Music.' In *Music and the Experience of God*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1989.
- Gerhardsson, Birger. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, ASNU 22., Copenhagen:Ejnar Munksgaard, 1961.
- Gilson, Etienne. 'Foreword.' In *Writings of Saint Augustine*, Volume 6, Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1950.
- Goodenough, Erwin. 'Pagan Symbols in Judaism.' In *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman World*, Volume 8, New York: Bollingen Foundation, Pantheon Books, 1958.

Gower, Barry, In *Socratic Questions: New Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates and its significance*, Editors Barry Gower/Michael C. Stokes, London/New York:Routledge, 1992.

Gouinlock, James. 'James, William.' In *Thinkers of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical, Bibliographical and Critical Dictionary*, editors: Devine/Held/Vinson/Walsh, London: Macmillan Publishers, 1983.

Greek-English Lexicon, A. compiled by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, 1843, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

Grisbrooke, W. Jardine. 'Silent Prayer.' In *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, edited by J. G. Davies, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1972: 349

Guillet, Jacques. *A God Who Speaks*, trans. Edmond Bonin, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979.

Guinan, Michael D. Guinan, 'Job.' In *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, *Collegeville*, Minnesota: The Order of St. Benedict Inc., 1989: 675-700.

Guirand, F. 'Greek Mythology.' In *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, Middlesex: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1959: 87-198.

Gunn, David M. 'David.' in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger/Michael D. Coogan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993: 153-156.

Guthrie, Donald. 'John.' In *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, Consulting editors: D.A. Carson/ R.T. France/J.A. Motyer/G.J. Wenham, Leicester: Inter-varsity Press, 1994: 1021-1065.

Happel, Stephen. 'Imagination, Religious.' In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Editors: Joseph A. Komonchak/Mary Collins/Dermot A. Lane, Dublin: Gill

- and Macmillan, 1987: 502-508.
- Hartley, John. *Teach Yourself Esperanto*, London: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1968
- Hawkins, D.J. B. 'On the Nature and Person in Speculative Theology.' in *The Downside Review*, Volume 80, no. 258, Jan. 1962: 11.
- Heaney, Seamus. *Station Island*, London: Faber & Faber, 1984.
- Hederman, Mark Patrick. *Anchoring the Altar*, Dublin: Veritas Press, 2002.
- _____. *Tarot: Talisman or Taboo?*, Dublin: Currach Press, 2003.
- _____. 'Personal Prayer.' In *The Furrow*, Volume 52, No.3, March 2001.
- Heiler, Fredrich. 'Contemplation in Christian Mysticism.' In *Spiritual Disciplines: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, New York: Pantheon, 1960.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *Prose Commentary on the Exercises of St. Ignatius*, London: Pick 1966.
- Hughes, Ted. *By Heart: 101 Poems to Remember*, London: Faber & Faber, 1997.
- Hurd, Bob. 'Silence.' In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993: 883-885.
- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, London: Collins/Fontana, 1902, (1960).
- Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus*, London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1962, (1970).
- Jerusalem Bible, The*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1966, (1974).
- John of the Cross, St. 'Spiritual Canticle, Stanzas XIII, XIV' In *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, edited and translated by E. Allison Peers,

- Wheathampstead-Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke, Burns and Oates Ltd., 1935, (1978).
- Johnson, Luke, Timothy. *The Gospel of Luke, Sacra Pagina*, edited by Daniel J. Harrington, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991.
- Johnston, William. *Silent Music*, Suffolk: Collins, 1974.
- Joseph, Arthur Samuel. *The Sound of the Soul: Discovering the Power of Your Voice*, Florida: Health Communications Inc., 1996.
- Jaffee, Martin S. *Teaching Oral Traditions*, edited by John Miles Foley, New York: The Modern Language Association, 1998.
- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, London: Collins/Fontana Publishers, 1902.
- Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus: Revised Edition*, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1972.
- Kane, Leslie. *The Language of Silence: Of the Unspoken and Unspeakable in Modern Drama*, London and Toronto, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984.
- Karris, Robert J. 'The Gospel According to Luke.' In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 edition: 675-721.
- Kavanagh, Patrick. *Patrick Kavanagh: The Complete Poems*, edited by Peter Kavanagh, Newbridge/Ireland: The Goldsmith Press, 1972, (1992).
- Kearney, Richard. *The Wake of Imagination: Toward a postmodern culture*, London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1988, (1994).

- Keats, John, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn.' In *John Keats: The Complete Poems*, edited by John Barnard, Middlesex/England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973, (1978): 344-346.
- Kelber, Werner H. *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- _____. *Teaching Oral Traditions*, edited by John Miles Foley, New York: The Modern Language Association, 1998.
- Kelsey, Morton T. *The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*, London: SPCK, 1976.
- Kennedy, G. A. *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Khan, Hazrat Inayat, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, Volume 2, Geneva: The International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, 1960 (1991).
- Kierkegaard, Soren. *Either/Or*, Two Vols., translated by David F. Swenson/Lilian Marvin Swenson, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944, (1959).
- _____. *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, translated and selected by Alexander Dru, New York/Evanston: Harper & Row, 1959.
- King, Winston, L. 'Religion.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 12, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 282-293.

- Kivy, Peter. *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Knobel, Peter. 'Shema.' In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, editors in chief: R.J. Werblowsky/Geoffrey Wigoder, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997: 630-631.
- Knott, Eleanor. *Irish Classical Poetry: Filíocht na Sgol*, 1957, Cork: Mercier Press, 1978.
- Komonchak, Joseph A. 'Editorial Preface.' In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Editors: Joseph A. Komonchak/Mary Collins/Dermot A. Lane, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987: v-vi.
- Lafont, G. 'Language: Philosophical.' In *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994: 595-600.
- Lambiasi, Francesco. 'Holy Spirit.' In *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994: 455-462.
- Lane, Dermot A. *The Experience of God: An Invitation to Do Theology*, New York: London: Fontana, 1971 and Dublin: Veritas edition of 1981.
- Leclercq, Jean OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, translated by Catharine Misrahi, London:SPCK, 1974.
- Life of Teresa of Jesus, The: The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, translated and edited by E. Allison Peers, New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1960.

Lightfoot, R. H. *St. John's Gospel: A Commentary*, 1956, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Lindars, Barnabas. *The Gospel of John*, London: Oliphants, 1977.

Liturgical Dictionary of Eastern Christianity, The, compiled by Peter Day, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1993.

Lohkamp, N. 'Silence, Practice of.' In *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967: 213.

Lonergan, Bernard. *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985.

Love, Andrew L. *Musical Improvisation as the Place where Being Speaks: Heidegger, Language and Sources of Christian Hope*, Ph.D dissertation, University of Hull, 2000.

_____. 'Listening to Silence: A Liturgical Perspective,' unpublished paper, 2003.

Mackintosh, H. R. *Types of Modern Theology*, 1937, London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1945.

Macquarrie, John. *Paths in Spirituality*, London: SCM Press, 1972.

_____. *20th Century Religious Thought – Study Edition*, London: SCM Press, 1963.

MacRory, Joseph. *The Gospel of St. John*, Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1923.

Madaule, Paul. *When listening comes alive: A Guide to Effective Learning and Communication*, Canada: Moulin Publishing, 1994.

Maertens, Thierry OSB. *Bible Themes-A Source Book*, Two Volumes, Belgium:

- Biblica, 1964.
- Maggiani, Silvano O.S.M. 'The Language of Liturgy.' In *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Fundamental Liturgy*, Vol. II, edited by Ansgar J. Chupungo, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Maloney, Donald G. S.J. 'Revelation and Experience.' In *Doctrine and Life*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, March 1975.
- Marrow, Stanley B. *The Gospel of John: A Reading*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995.
- Marsh, John. *Saint John*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968.
- May, William E. 'Sin.' In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph Komonchack/Mary Collins/Dermot A. Lane, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987: 954-967.
- McCarter, P. Kyle, Jr. 'Abraham.' In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000: 8-10.
- McClellan, Randall. *The Healing Forces of Music: History, Theory and Practice*, Rockport, MA:Element, 1991.
- McCumsey, Elizabeth. 'Silence.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 13, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 321-324.
- McGinn, Bernard. *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism. The Flowering of Mysticism*, Volume III, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998.
- _____. *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism.*

- The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century*, Volume 1, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992.
- McIntyre, John. *The Holy Gospel according to Saint John*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1899.
- McKenzie, John L. *Dictionary of the Bible*, London/Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965.
- McPolin, James. *John*, Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1979.
- Mensching, G. 'Silence in Worship.' In *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967: 213.
- Menon, Raghav R. 'Introduction.' In *The Penguin Dictionary of Indian Classical Music*, New Delhi, India: Penguin Books, 1995: vii-xvii.
- Merton, Thomas. *Contemplative Prayer*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975.
- _____. *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religions Experience and Social Concerns*, selected and edited by William H. Shannon, New York: Farrar/Straus/Giroux, 1985.
- Modern Catholic Dictionary*, edited by John A. Hardon, S.J., New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980.
- Moloney, Francis J. 'Johannine Theology.' In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 edition: 1417-1426.
- Moody Smith, D. 'John.' In *Harper's Bible Commentary*, General Editor: James L. Mays, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988: 1044-1076.

- Moore, Sebastian. 'Four Steps Towards Making Sense of Theology.' In *The Downside Review*, Volume III, no. 383, April 1993: 79-100.
- Mundle, W. 'Hear, Obey.' In *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol 3, edited by Colin Brown. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978: 172-180.
- Murdoch, Iris. *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge, 1970.
- Murphy, Gerard. *Ossianic Lore: Fianaíocht agus Rómámsaíocht*, 1955, Cork: Mercier Press, 1971.
- New American Bible, The*, Washington D.C.: World Bible Publishers Inc., 1991.
- Newberg, Andrew and Eugene d'Aquili. *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.
- _____. *Why God Won't Go Away*, New York, Ballantine Books, 2001.
- New Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus in one volume, The*. Managing Editor: William T. McLeod, London & Glasgow: Collins, 1990 edition.
- New English Bible, The*, Oxford: University Press, 1970.
- New Oxford Companion to Music, The*, General Editor: Denis Arnold, Two Volumes, 1983, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- New Revised Standard version of The Holy Bible, containing The Old and New Testaments with The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books***, London, HarperCollins Religious Publishers, 1998.
- Newham, Paul. *The Singing Cure: An Introduction to Voice Movement Therapy*, Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc., 1993.
- Newman, John Henry. *A Grammar of Ascent*, New York: Doubleday & Company

Inc., 1870 (1955).

Ní Riain, Nóirín. *Gregorian Chant Classics*, Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1997.

_____. *The Nature and Classification of Traditional Religious Song in Irish*, MA dissertation, University of Cork, 1980.

Norris, David. *Joyce for Beginners*, Cambridge: Icon Books, 1994.

Novalis, *Hymns to the Night: Spiritual Songs*, translated by George MacDonald, London: Temple Lodge, 1897, (1992).

O'Collins, Gerald. S.J. *Fundamental Theology*, 1981, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1982.

_____. 'Fundamental theology' In *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Alan Richardson and John Bowden, London: SCM Press, 1983: 224.

O'Donohue, John. *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997.

Ong, W.J. *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*, 1923 English edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Oxford Companion to Music, The. By Percy A. Scholes, London/New York/Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1938, (1955).

Oxford Companion to the Bible, The, edited by Bruce M. Metzger/Michael D. Coogan, New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993.

Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion, The. Editors in Chief: R.J. Zwi

- Werblowsky/Geoffrey Wigoder, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Peers, E. Allison. 'Spiritual Canticle:Introduction.' in *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*, 1935, Wheathampstead-Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke, Burns and Oates Ltd., 1978.
- Perelmuter, Hayim Goren. 'Conversation Two: A Response to Clemens Thoma.' In *Reinterpreting Revelation and Tradition: Jews and Christians in Conversation*, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2000.
- Perreault, A.M. 'Senses.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967: 90-93.
- _____. 'Senses.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 12, editorial staff: Marthaler/LaNave/Tan/McCarron/Obermeyer/McGonagle, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003: 911-914.
- Perkins, Pheme. 'The Gospel According to John.' In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London:Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 edition: 942-985.
- Picard, Max. *The World of Silence*, Chicago: Gateway Edition,1952, translated by Stanley Godman from *Die Welt des Schweigens*, Switzerland:Eugen Rentsch Verlag, 1948.
- Pierce, John R. *The Science of Musical Sound*, New York, Scientific American Books Inc., 1983.
- Pious Miscellany and other poems by Tadhg Gaelach or Timothy O' Sullivan, The.* edited by John O Daly, Dublin, 1868.

- Plotinus. *The Enneads*, translated by Stephan MacKenna, London: Penguin Books Ltd., (1917-19300, 1991.
- Poems of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*, translated by Alan Bancroft, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996.
- Pottmeyer, Hermann J. 'Tradition.' In *The Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, edited by René Latourelle/Rino Fisichella, Slough/United Kingdom: St. Paul's, 1994: 1119-1126.
- Powell, Mark Allen. *What is Narrative Criticism? A New Approach to the Bible*, London:SPCK, 1990.
- Rahner, Karl. *Encounters with Silence*, translated by James M. Demske, London:Burns & Oates, 1975.
- _____. *Foundations of the Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1978 (2000).
- _____. *Hearers of the Word*, translated by Ronald Walls, London: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1969.
- _____. *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality*, edited by Lehmann/Raffelt, London: SCM Press 1983.
- _____. *Theological Investigations*, Twenty Volumes. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966.
- _____. *The Spirit in the Church*, London: Burns & Oates, 1979.
- _____. 'Virtue.' In *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, edited by Karl Rahner, London: Burns & Oates, 1981: 1794.
- _____. 'Systematic Grace.' In *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of*

- Theology*, Volume 2, edited by Karl Rahner, New York: Herder and Herder, 1968: 415-422.
- Reik, Theodore. *Listening with the Third Ear*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Co., 1949.
- Rees, Margaret A. 'John of the Cross.' In *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, edited by Adrian Hastings/Alistair Mason/Hugh Pyper, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: 350-351.
- Richards, M. C. *Imagine Inventing Yellow*, New York: Station Hill Literary Editions, 1991.
- Riley, Bridget. *The Eye's Mind: Collected Writings 1965-1999*, London:Thames & Hudson, 1999.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated by C.F. MacIntyre, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.
- _____. *Where Silence Reigns: Selected Prose by Rainer Maria Rilke*, translated by G. Craig Houston, New York: New Directions Books, 1978.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*: Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Roche, David. 'Music and Religion in India.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 10, edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 185-191.
- Rule of St. Benedict, The*, edited by Timothy Fry OSB, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1981.
- Russell, Ralph Dom. 'St. John.' In *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*,

- edited by Reginald C. Fuller/Leonard Johnston/Conleth Kearns, London:
Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969: 1022-1074.
- Rybolt, John. 'The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon.' In *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, General Editors: Dianne Bergant/Robert Karris,
Collegeville/Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988:XXXX
- Ryken, Leland. 'Literature, The Bible as.' in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*,
edited by Bruce M. Metzger/Michael D. Coogan, Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1993: 460-463.
- Sachs, Jonathan. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilisations*,
London/New York: Continuum, 2002.
- Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, Vols. 1-6, edited by Karl
Rahner, New York: Herder and Herder, 1968.
- Saint Augustine Confessions*, translated by Vernon J. Bourke, Washington, D.C.:
The Catholic University of America Press, 1953.
- Saint Augustine, Confessions*, translated by R.S Pine-Coffin, Middlesex: Penguin
Books Ltd., 1961.
- Saint Augustine. *The City of God*, translated by Walsh/Mohan,
Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1952.
- _____. *The Trinity*, translated by S. McKenna, C.S.S.R., Washington, D.C.:
The Catholic University of America Press, 1963.
- Sauvage, Micheline. *Socrates and the conscience of man*, New York:Harper, Men of
Wisdom Books, 1962.
- Sawyer, John F. A. in *The Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, edited by

- R. Coggins/J.L. Houlden, London: SCM Press, 1999:617.
- Sciacca, M. F. *Come si vince a Waterloo*, Milan: Marzorati, 1963.
- Scheffczyk, Leo. 'God.' In *Sacramentum Mundi, An Encyclopedia of Theology*, Volume 2, edited by Karl Rahner, New York: Herder and Herder, 1968: 381-390.
- Schillebeeckx, Edward. *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, London: William Collins & Co Ltd, 1974.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Schnackenberg, Rudolf. *The Gospel according to St. John*, Three volumes, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1992.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. 'Born Anew.' *Theology Today*, 44, 1987/88: 195.
- _____. 'Hermeneutics.' In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown/Joseph Fitzmeyer/Roland E. Murphy, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 edition: 1158-1160.
- _____. 'History and Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel.' In *L'Evangile de Jean: Sources, Redaction, Theologie*, BETL 44, edited by Marinus de Jonge, Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1977.
- Schroeder-Sheker, Therese. *Transitus: A Blessed Death in the Modern World*, Missoula, USA: St. Dunstan's Press, 2001.
- Seel, Thomas Allen. *A theology of music for worship derived from the Book of*

- Revelation*, Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1995.
- Signer, Michael A. 'Conversation One: One Covenant or Two: Can We Sing a New Song?' In *Reinterpreting Revelation and Tradition: Jews and Christians in Conversation*, editors: Pawlikowski/Perelmuter, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2000.
- Silesius, Angelus. *The Cherubic Wanderer*, translated by Maria Shradly, New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Simons, Eberhard. 'Kerygma.' in *Encyclopedia of Theology*, 1975, edited by Karl Rahner, London: Burns & Oates, 1981: 797-800.
- Smalley, Stephen S. 'John, The Gospel According to.' In *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger/Michael D. Coogan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993: 373-377.
- Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991,
- Smith's Latin-English Dictionary*, London: Wm. Clowes and Sons, 1874.
- Sohngen, Oskar. 'Music and Theology.' In *A Systematic Approach, in Sacred Sound: Music in Religious Thought and Practice*, by Joyce Irwin, Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Spence, Alexander P. and Elliott B. Mason, *Human Anatomy and Physiology*, Menlo Park, California: The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company Inc., 1979: 414-424.
- Spearritt, Placid OSB. 'Benedict.' in *The Study of Spirituality*, edited by Jones/Wainwright/Yarnold, London: SPCK, 1986.

- St. Augustine. *Exposition on the Book of Psalms by S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, Volume 2, Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847.
- Stanley, John. *Classical Music: The Great Composers and their Masterworks*, London: Mitchell Beazley, 1994.
- St. Augustine Tractates on the Gospel of John, The Fathers of the Church*. Volume 90, translated by John W. Rettig, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953 (1996).
- Steiner, George. *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978-1996*, London/Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996.
- _____. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- _____. *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966*, London: Faber and Faber, 1967.
- _____. *Real Presences*, London: Faber and Faber, 1989.
- Storr, Anthony. *Music and the Mind*, New York: The Free Press, 1992.
- Stuger, Alois. 'Obedience.' In *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Volume 2, edited by Johannes B. Bauer, London/Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1967, (1970).
- Tame, David. *The Secret Power of Music*, Northamptonshire, England: The Aquarian Press, 1984, (1988).
- Tavener, John. *The Music of Silence: A Composer's Testament*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1999.
- Temple, Christine. *The Brain: An Introduction to the Psychology of the Human Brain*

- and Behaviour*, London: Penguin, 1993.
- Temple, William. *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1963.
- Theaetetus of Plato, The*. Translated by Benjamin Hall Kennedy, Cambridge: University Press, 1881.
- Thierring, Barbara. *Jesus the Man*, 1992, London: Corgi Books, 1993.
- Thomas, Dylan. *A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London* ***
- Thomas, R. S. 'The Musician.' Excerpt. In *The Faber Book of Religious verse*, edited by Helen Gardner, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1972.
- Thrower, James. *Religion: The Classical Theories*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.
- Tilley, T. W. 'Narrative Theology.' In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph Komonchack/Mary Collins/Dermot A. Lane, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987: 702-703.
- Tomatis, Alfred. *The Conscious Ear*, Barrytown/NY: Station Hill Press, 1991.
- Torrell, Jean-Pierre. 'New Trends in Fundamental Theology in the Postconciliar Period.' In *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, editors: René Latourelle/ O'Collins, translated by Matthew J. O Connell, Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1980.
- Tracy, David. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.
- Trocme, Etienne. 'Lamb of God.' In *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger/Michael D. Coogan, Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 1993: 418.

Ulanov, Ann and Barry. 'Prayer and Personality: Prayer and Primary Speech.'

In *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. Jones/Wainwright/Yarnold, London: SPCK, 1986.

Van Fleteren, Frederick. 'Confessiones.' In *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999: 227-232.

Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P., Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975.

Vawter, B. 'Genesis.' In *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, edited by Reginald C. Fuller/Leonard Johnston/Conleth Kearns, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969: 166-205.

Viviano, Pauline A. 'Genesis.' In *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, General Editors: Dianne Bergant/Robert Karris, Collegeville/Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988: 35-79.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *Christian Meditation*, translated by Sr. Mary Theresild Skerry, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989.

_____. *Hearers of the Word: Essays in Theology I*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1969.

_____. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, Volume VII, translated by Brian McNeil, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989.

_____. *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, translated by Graham Harrison, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987.

- _____. *Word and Revelation: Essays in theology I*, translated by
A.V. Littledale in cooperation with Alexander Dru, New York: Herder and
Herder, 1964.
- Von Rad, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic
Tradition*, Volume Two, London: SCM Press, 1975.
- Wadell, Paul J. 'Virtue.' In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, edited by
Michael Downey, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1970: 997-1007.
- Waida, Manabu. 'Cocks.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 3, edited by
Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987: 552.
- Wallace, W. A. 'Sound.' In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington,
D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967: 474-476.
- Walsh, Jerome T. *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry: 1 Kings*,
Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- Walshe, M. *Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Treatises*, Three Volumes, London:
Element Books Ltd., 1979.
- Walter, James J. 'Virtue.' In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Editors: Joseph A.
Komonchak/Mary Collins/Dermot A. Lane, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987:
1081-1085.
- Ware, Kallistos. 'The Hesychasts: Gregory of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, Nicolas
Cabasilas.' In *The Study of Spirituality*, editors: Jones/ Wainwright/ Yarnold.
London: SPCK, 1986.
- Wathen, Ambrose G. OSB. *Silence: The Meaning of Silence in the Rule of St.
Benedict*, Washington DC: Cisterican Publications, 1973.

Watt, Montgomery, W. 'Muhammed.' In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 11,
Edited by Mircea Eliade, New York/London: Collier Macmillan
Publishers, 1987:137-146.

Weil, Simone. *Intimations of Christianity, among the Ancient Greeks*, translated by
Elisabeth Chase Geissbuhler, London: Routledge Keegan and Paul, 1957.

_____. *Waiting on God*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1951.

Widmer, Kingsley. 'Weil, Simone (Adolphine).' In *Thinkers of the Twentieth
Century*, edited by Devine/Held/Vinson/Walsh, London: Macmillan
Publishers, 1983: 609.

Wijngaards, John MHM. *Experiencing Jesus: Scripture, the witness of saints and
mystics, and a life of prayer show the way*, Notre Dame, Indiana/Ave Maria
Press, 1981.

Williams, Rowan. 'Trinitate, De.' In *Augustine Through the Ages, An Encyclopedia*,
edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B.
Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999: 845-851.

Wordsworth, William. 'The Prelude.' In *William Wordsworth, The Prelude: A
Parallel Text*, edited by J.C. Maxwell, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971.

Wunderlich, R. A. 'Physico-Chemical Factors in Sensation.' In *New Catholic
Encyclopedia*, Volume 13, Washington, D.C.:The Catholic University of
America, 1967: 86-89.

Yeats's Poems, edited by A.N. Jeffares, London: Gill and Macmillan, 1989.

'Zenophon on Socrates' Defence to the Jury' *Philosophers Speak for Themselves:
From Thales to Plato*, edited by T.V. Smith, Chicago: The University of

Chicago Press, 1934, (1956).

Zuckermandl, Victor. *Man the Musician: Sound and Symbol*, Volume 2,

translated by

Norbert Guterman, Bollingen Series XLIV, Princeton N.J.: Princeton

University Press, 1973.

_____. *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World*, translated by

Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series XLIV, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton

University Press, 1969, (1973).