**The Critical Listening Journal**

A few ideas, possible questions that might be approached in your Critical Listening Journals. This list is not prescriptive, and by no means exhaustive.

--Is there a theoretical stance (concerning poetics, performance, etc.) implicit in the reading of the poem?

--Does the performance of the poem corroborate or challenge actual theories attributed to the poet (for example, is there an elocutionary theory underlying the reading of “The Bells” that we listened to)?

--What does “the literary” sound like?

--What are the audile techniques (listening methods) of literary studies?

--Are spoken word performances automatically dialogical, or explicable in terms of Goffman’s concept of “footing” (in a Romantic sense, then, antithetical to “lyric” expression)?

--What is the status of audiotexts in relation to literary canons?

--What role has sound and listening played in literary studies since the nineteenth century?

--What is the context, situation of the performance, and how does that alter our interpretation of it?

--What methods of notation are most effective for describing a literary performance?

--What are the formal scales of interpretation that inform audiotexts—thinking of Schafer’s ideas of sound objects, sound events, soundscapes.

--What are the important differences between the performed poem, and the poem on the page, as regards a critical interpretation?

--How is the written work altered in the performance?

--In what ways does a listening audience differ from a readership?

--How can we interpret the reading audience of a recorded literary performance before a live audience?

--What kinds of sociality can we hear in a documentary recording of a literary reading?

--What methods may we apply for interpreting the representation of sound in printed works, as compared to the methods we may use for interpreting audiotexts?

--In the case of a recorded live performance: How do (visual and other) aspects of the performance alter our understanding of the sound recording (for instance, how does knowledge of gesture in a performance alter our interpretation of the audiotext)? What does a video-recording add or detract from our interpretation of a literary performance?

-- How do we articulate the effects of a reader’s intonation upon a text? For example, how does the author's reading ironize or render more serious a text?

--How does the appearance of a "serious" discourse (such as poetry) in a medium used mostly for popular entertainment alter each?

--The impact of celebrity performance of literary works upon each.

--What kinds of historical/cultural contexts can we construct around a spoken recording?

--What is the difference between reading and acting?

--What assumptions do we bring to listening, as opposed to reading silently (for instance, what do we simply assume when we are listening, that we can't when we are reading, and vice versa)?

--When listening to a performed literary work, do we still supply voice (shape it to our own ideas and inner hearings) or are we simply subject to the voice we hear.

--How does spoken performance inform our reception of a literary work?

--How do we explain the absence of a critical heritage concerning literary recordings?

--How do audiotexts alter our conception of the history of interpretation?

--How is (cultural) legitimacy played out in recorded poems versus published ones?

--What is the relationship between the recording technology and performance? Another way of asking this: What is the relationship between media affordances and generic ones?

--How are temporal and rhythmic aspects of a work different in a recording than in a printed work?

--What were the reasons for producing the recording?

--How does a literary work stay with us after listening as opposed to reading silently?

--How is our conceptual (critical) and emotional relationship to the work different in reading it silently as compared to hearing it read out loud?

--What might we learn from comparing different performances of the same text (whether contemporary or of different periods)? And comparing these to the performance recorded by the author him/herself?

--To what uses have specific recordings been put (i.e. relaxation tapes, self-esteem tapes, language learning, etc.) and to what critical effect do we interpret these differences?

--How does a performance of a poem serve as evidence of an “elocutionary” culture?

--Are written texts always meant to be read aloud? What kinds of literature resist effective reading aloud?

--What effects might we propose sound recording technologies have (have had) upon literary production? And, how do we go about describing and 'proving' these effects (i.e. what can we use as evidence for such arguments)?

--What effects have recorded literature had on subsequent written literature (or subsequent literary recordings)?

--What issues concerning 'authenticity' and the nature of the subject are raised by a work recorded by its author?

--What are the difficulties of listening as opposed to reading?

--Is there a mode of allusion or intertextuality that is specific to recorded literature, as opposed to written? (i.e. in print we use quotation marks, in performance we can allude to a voice or attitude with change of tone, but not change of content?). Another version of this: What is the nature of intertextuality in the audiotext?

--What is the history of recorded literature as it pertains to accessibility, disability, etc. ? (Talking Books for the blind, for the illiterate...)

--Distinctions in "navigation" (how we work through a text or audiotext) between listening and reading.

--Relationship/influence of recorded music upon recorded literature?

--Who is the audience of spoken word recordings?

--What cultural changes have allowed for recent ascendancy of talking books within publishing industry?

--What is the significance of distinct sound media in audio recordings?

--Develop ideas towards a psychology of listening/voice, a phenomenology, a materialist history, an aesthetics, etc.