

Introduction

Elvis Leaves the Building

I want to begin by relating a tale about Elvis *leaving the building*. Not the flesh and blood Elvis, who came and left hundreds of venues during his illustrious career. Nor any of the roughly eighty-five thousand impersonators who attend conventions and parties, or appear at one of the many places associated with the King, like Graceland, Sun Studios in Memphis, or the Las Vegas strip. The Elvis I refer to is neither living nor dead. He is, in fact, a statue that resides at Mama's Mexican Kitchen, a culinary staple in the Belltown neighborhood of Seattle. The Elvis statue has been the restaurant's unofficial mascot since 1998, when it was given to owner Mike McAlpin for his burgeoning collection of Elvis memorabilia at the establishment. McAlpin had a friend paint the gray, unfinished veneer to furnish Elvis with a brown leather jacket and blue jeans, as he may have appeared during his earliest recording sessions with Sam Phillips. The refurbished *pièce de résistance* of King chic was then placed against a railing by the front door that fenced in the outdoor seating deck, an ideal spot to feature the statue for maximum exposure to restaurant patrons and passersby on the sidewalk. For years, Elvis welcomed patrons and silently posed for pictures with fans and detractors alike, with little incident save the weathering expected from living outside in rainy Seattle for most of the year. On the evening of March 10, 2013, though, Elvis had more problems than the weather. After

the restaurant had closed for the night, an unknown assailant nonchalantly picked up the unrestrained statue from the railing, carried him off down a side alley, and disappeared without a trace. A witness who saw the abduction did not contact police or alert McAlpin until the following morning, thinking that Elvis was simply being taken for some much-needed repairs. McAlpin took to the streets and the airwaves in search of Elvis, offering to not press charges if he were returned to his spot, no questions asked. After three weeks with no sign, the owners of another neighborhood establishment happened to spot the statue laying under a white sheet at a nearby rummage sale. Upon inspection, they found him relatively unscathed. The proper authorities were notified, and Elvis was reunited with his perch as if nothing had happened. The only evidence of the abduction was a handwritten note the perpetrator(s) had placed with the body prior to obscuring Elvis beneath an uncharacteristically plain cloak. The scrawl, not a ransom but a wink, read, "Thank You Very Much."

Though the theft may have been a mere prank, it was not one to go without a reciprocal response. To celebrate his triumphant return, it was decided to let Elvis have a little fun of his own at the expense of the public. On April Fools' Day, Seattle's NBC affiliate (with the apropos designation KING5) filmed a segment in front of the restaurant detailing a strange habit Elvis had begun to exhibit upon his return. Amidst the noise of construction and traffic on the surrounding streets, some unnamed patrons had claimed that they could hear Elvis *singing*. The KING5 reporter filming the piece painted a mysterious backdrop for the audience. No wires were found protruding from the body, no externally mounted speakers, no obvious source for the incumbent sounds, only a small microphone mounted by the news crew to help amplify any sound over the excess environmental noise. Then, as if he knew that local skeptics would decline to take him at his word, the journalist proceeded to ask people passing by on the street to listen closely to the Elvis statue and describe what (if anything) they heard. Many claimed to hear nothing amidst the urban cacophony. Others seemed struck by the sheer oddity of the question itself ("I mean . . . who hears stuff from a statue?" a woman asked with a clear expression of incredulity). Some, though, admitted to catching the faintest trace of Elvis crooning his hits—"Blue Hawaii" or "Hound Dog," depending on when they were asked. Many hearing these sounds espoused a hint of bemusement and wonder, perhaps sensing the nature of the joke. A few seemed genuinely bewildered, unable to grasp the happenstance confronting their own ears. One particular woman, though, betrayed a strange and fascinating aura of

unease. The camera captured her slackened face and exhausted eyes, which may have had nothing to do with her pondering the prospect of a magical, singing Elvis statue haunting the sidewalks of Seattle but certainly added to the dramatic effect of the scene unfolding. After a beat of terse contemplation, as if cued for a perfect cinematic moment by an out-of-frame director, she turned to look at the camera and said, with a hint of dread undergirding a soft chuckle, "It's kind of creepy, actually."¹

I can think of no better allegory, even drawing from the depths of my own fertile imagination, to capture the web of fascination, ambivalence, and dread attached to the figure of the sounding statue in the Western imagination as the one presented by this publicity stunt foisted upon unassuming strangers. It speaks with wondrous precision to the questions revolving around performativity and being, themselves spinning off the implications of wedding ambiguous sound and anthropocentric form, that I will explore in depth throughout this book. One is hard pressed to find a stranger marriage in Western aesthetics than sound (mobile, ephemeral, heard) and the statue (staid, solid, observed). This is part of the reason why singing Elvis was considered by some to be so jarring and weird, even with an obvious rational recourse to sound reproduction technology available. However, the spectacle of animation that sound represents in the case of Elvis is one small part of a broader and more diverse narrative regarding the relationship between sound and statuary. Examples of sounding facsimiles in the style of singing Elvis are not difficult to find and have deeper roots than one might expect. The more pressing avenue of inquiry, for me, is understanding what drives the complicated history of reception and comprehension of sounding statues, and how Western aesthetic thought has proven lacking when relied upon to explain these phenomena. Discourses on sculpture, much less music, have had little to offer regarding the needling metaphysical quandaries inherent in sounding statues that modernity has been unable to excise. A different way of approaching these issues is needed to more fully appreciate the various cultural manifestations of the sounding statue, one that gives credence to aural reception and an intersubjective imaginary as much as sonic source. Into this breach steps the concept of *aurality*: an emergent term within the area of sound studies regarding cultural histories that embed the act of hearing into specific social and artistic practices, technologies, and the shaping of hierarchies of race, class, ethnicity, and power. Aurality, at base, has been instrumental in critiquing the sensory dominance of vision (embodied through the eye) and orality (embodied through the voice and language),

while turning the ear from an organ of passive engagement to one of active inquiring. It is thus a productive conceptual counterweight to the gravity of an object-centered discourse that pervades the history of sculpture. Outlining the failures of this discourse toward sounding statues, as well as how aurality helps to reframe the needling problems inherent at the juncture of sound and metaphysics, will be the first step in creating a more nuanced history of hearing and querying the relationship between sound and statuary. Yet engaging with aurality also begins to address the privileging given the conceptual viability of the sculpted over the presence of the sonic in occurrences like the singing Elvis. This privilege of the sculpted can even be found at the level of language, where the very use of a term like *sounding statue* subtly reinforces an object orientation, as if the sounds themselves were property of the statue and no other. The case studies that I utilize seek to complicate and nuance this idea. Instead of thinking about the sounding statue as an objective unification between disparate parts that Western aesthetics has had difficulty placing together, I understand it as an event that occurs in the encounter between sound and statuary, something that extends beyond that encounter into the imaginative unfoldings of performance and cultural discourse.

The word *event* may seem, at first thought, a rather odd choice from which to proceed. For one, it is a term most at home not in aesthetics or cultural studies but in a speculative ontology that developed from the legacy of René Descartes and Baruch Spinoza questioning the constitution of matter, substance, and the spatio-temporal nature of bodies. And within this body of thought, *event* has often been ontologically defined in contradistinction to the concept of an object. Events occur, permeate space, and take up time; objects exist, occupy space, and persist through time.² By these attributes, sound is an event; statue is an object. Yet there are ways of thinking about the concept of event that are not so beholden to this rigid dichotomy with objectivity. A more expansive idea of the event is developed through a lineage of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Alfred North Whitehead, and Gilles Deleuze, one that rests on a notion of creativity and transformation, instead of being, as the driving forces in an existential metaphysics. Elucidating the broader discourse connecting creativity and event will take more time and space than is available here.³ Nevertheless, Deleuze offers an intriguing definition of the event *vis-à-vis* the creative spark in his book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, one drawn through the thought of Whitehead that is useful for my limited purposes. For Deleuze, an event manifests as a winnowing down of

the possibilities in a chaos of multiplicity, and he identifies four essential components in Whitehead's philosophy that contribute to this formative process. The first is *extension*, in which one element encapsulates separate ones into a common series (the concept of *sounding statue* extending over the presence of sound and the object statuary in space and time). The second, *intension*, constitutes the individual and ascertainable attributes within the extended event (sound has timbre and volume; statuary has measurements, material, and represents something). The third, *prehension*, refers to the ability of attributes within the event to connect and overlap with other attributes based on shared points of contact within their own historical, social, or epistemic milieus (in its simplest form, a recording of "Jokerman" creates a connection to a statue of Bob Dylan, just as a Dylan statue may spark thought of the song "Jokerman," let's say). And the fourth, *ingression*, is the creation of something new and meaningful out of the disparate parts overlapping together within the field of the event (the acknowledgment of a statue making sound as a sounding statue, or any number of performances, ideas, discourses, and ideologies that spin off of the particular event and become purveyors of *affect* in the world themselves). Together, in ways far more complex than my little example can fully capture, these attributes of the event meld together into a ceaseless "opening onto the new" that defines both Whitehead and Deleuze's concept of creativity.⁴

My only caveat is that because their shared notion of the creative also distances from the classic notion of a coherent bourgeois subject, I think there needs to be a way to write some sense of the subject back into the event. Alain Badiou offers an elegant addendum to event metaphysics in this regard. Badiou has argued that while the event manifests primarily within the field of broader ontological mechanisms, the subject alone holds the ability to define its parameters, what he calls a "capacity for indiscernment."⁵ Granted, his notion of ontology is grounded in the more materially abstract realm of mathematics, and his regard toward the indiscernible suggests a trait of negation at the center of subjective engagement. Yet his recourse to the indiscernible does much to articulate something beyond the purview of the creativity espoused by Whitehead and Deleuze: how weird and ephemeral many have considered the very idea of the sounding statue. As we shall see, these are difficult events to pin down, often besotted by conceptual doubt and epistemological barriers. And though they may manifest as actual occurrences or throbs of experience, they only gain meaning through the human capacity to define them as meaningful.

I argue that the concept of event gives us a platform through which we can begin the difficult work of uncoupling the relationship between sound and statuary, and its meanings, from the reductive language of sculpture. All the same, we must resist the urge to move too far in the other direction, as working exclusively within the milieu of the sonic does us no favors either. Unlike other projects dealing with sound, there cannot be an assumption that an immersive sonic autonomy can be extracted from a surrounding artifice. On the contrary, these are encounters laden by the impossibility of divorcing the entity of sound from an embodied, representational referent. This quality lends a certain level of odd abstraction not only to the encounters themselves, but to attempts to describe and rationalize them, as well as using them as the basis for performative reimaginings. As the anecdote regarding the singing Elvis tells us, these events present an ontological convergence for which aesthetic thought, even language itself, leaves us unprepared. The impetus, then, should be in creating a way to think about and articulate these events between (and extensions of) sound and statuary in all of their metaphysical, theological, folkloric, political, and aesthetic clothing. Aurality and the ear are as central to this work as the statues themselves, even as one cannot be abstracted from the other. That is why when I utilize the term *sounding statue* throughout this book, I intend for it to refer to subjective or intersubjective constructions of these events as much as to an object as such.

Any history or philosophy of the sounding statue is inevitably a theory of those who shape themselves as vessels to hear them. Singing Elvis, and other similar events, may bewitch us, confuse us, and upset our very notions of the real. But such bewitchment only occurs because we are willing to countenance its possibility, whether consciously or not. To truly articulate this possibility in all of its guises and portals, we must weave together the language that dictates the experience of statuary with a language drawn from the mentality and experience of sound. The sphere in which these languages of concept come together in the purview of the subject is what I call the *sculpted ear*.

I think it best to introduce my reasoning in conceptualizing the sculpted ear through what amounts to a cautionary tale. In 2016, I wrote an article about the Colossus of Memnon, a statue located near the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes that was renowned throughout Mediterranean antiquity as an object that emitted sound in the light of the morning sun.⁶ The only surviving evidence that the sound existed at all comes from the litany of testimonial epigrams carved into the surface of the Colossus, writing that

became a driving force in how the totality of this multiepochal discourse took shape. Such was the cultural power of these epigrams that even after the sound ceased sometime in the third century CE, under as mysterious circumstances as its emergence some three centuries prior, the Colossus continued to attract the speculative fascination of scientist and poet alike. A space was thus opened for countless explanations ranging from spiritual possession, crafty hoaxes, intricate machinery, heated gas escaping from cracks—whatever might fit the interests and biases of the speculator. My own take on this discursive thrust was to notice how it has often been constructed tautologically, casting premodern interest in the sound in terms of the vagaries of metaphysics (this is a *voice* coming from *somewhere*) while casting modern interest in terms of the disclosure of the physical sciences (this is a *sound* made by *something*). This reliance on a narrative portraying an ancient gnosis that is banished by modern scientific inquiry fails to capture how the two have been intimately intertwined and articulated throughout the entire range of writing on the Colossus. I argued that this intertwinement could best be captured through the word *phonography*, which references both the origins of modern sound reproduction technology and some obscured ontotheological connections between writing and voice within the diffuse metaphysics of antiquity. My thought was that phonography could serve as a means to epistemologically suture together the ephemerality of sound and the stony permanence of statue, traits often deemed aesthetically and metaphysically incompatible, through the Greek and Roman idea that epigrams were in fact a type of sonic inscription. This alliance produced an intriguing consequence: a manifestation of what Jonathan Sterne saw as the post-Enlightenment project to ground cultural understandings of the sonic through the lens of physical preservation within the unexpected confines of the Roman world.⁷ Thus, when thought about in phonographic terms, the Colossus transformed from mere curiosity into something whose existence brought into question the ways in which we have constructed the genealogy of modern aurality and sound reproduction.

What I have come to understand in the course of writing this book is that the concept of phonography is limiting in its own right, while also selling short the implications of the paradigm shift it is meant to encapsulate. Part of the problem lies with the sheer difficulty of disentangling phonography from the cultural pessimism that greeted its spread and influence during the early twentieth century. It was precisely this liminality attached to the phonograph that made it an alluring signifier to capture the disregard

given the sounding statue within the same circles of cultural criticism. When Adorno, for one, cast the phonograph as an object perpetuating a culture of listless aural consumption, he fit all too well in a broader history of continental aesthetic thought questioning the efficacy of the sounding Colossus as a work of sculpture.⁸ Yet the danger inherent in constructing this kind of phonographic milieu is that such thinking falls right into the ideological trap that Sterne warns about through his concept of the *audiovisual litany*.⁹ At base, this litany serves as a way to chart the various ahistorical dichotomies that have alternatively valorized and denigrated the respective senses of hearing and seeing with regard to one another. But Sterne is also conscious that while the transcendental claims the litany attaches to sound are grounded in easily historicized social and cultural constructions, scientific discourses about sound cannot escape the historical weight of their theological associations. Sterne's solution to this quandary is to historicize the very notion of experiencing sound, and while such a conceptual move to rethink sound itself would carry its own problems for my project, the lesson of hedging upon a decidedly sonic metaphor to describe an event between sound and statue must be duly considered. Regardless of whether it is framed in terms of its technological or ontotheological attributes, phonography is still a concept that by its very nature privileges the ethos of the heard over the seen (not to mention the touched, an important distinction in the phenomenology of sculpture that will be addressed later). A phonographic Colossus, then, truly does become an empty container for a sounded mystery, and nothing more.

The sculpted ear is my attempt to get at the same questions I tried to articulate through phonography while cognizant of the problems that the audiovisual litany presents for any such project. Thus the chapters in this book, in pursuance of articulating a sculpted ear, draw from an expansive notion of contextualized hearing in tandem with an equally expansive notion of the social mobility of statuary. Sounds and statues are less an endpoint than a platform to expound upon subjective, intersubjective, and cultural readings of these complex and richly detailed assemblages. Actual sounds, imagined sounds, desired sounds, inscribed sounds, transcendent sounds, theoretical sounds, and silent sounds come into play, weaving paths from the infancy of Western metaphysics to present-day Chicago. These sonic imprints become associated with actual statues, ruined statues, statuesque objects, allegorical statues, people performing as statues, and statuesque people questioning their statuesque qualities. At the nexus of these assemblages are those whose ears are sculpted, attuned to the possibility of an

encounter with an event between sound and statuary and, in turn, using this attunement to create extensive avenues to perform and perpetuate its efficacy. This is a visage borne from the forge of what Jacques Rancière calls the “sensible fabric of experience,” something not beholden to ideology or tradition so much as to the “welcoming of images, objects and performances that seemed most opposed to the idea of fine art,” and to a ceaseless repetition aimed at broadcasting the magic of the encounter through alternative means.¹⁰ As those familiar with Deleuze know, repetition and difference share the same table. Although each chapter features a particular event between sound and statuary at its core, the path taken from that event diverges through uniquely crafted philosophical corridors. Some of these concepts and ideas will dovetail into the sphere of other chapters and weave together a brief but potent conceptual sinew. Others will remain more contextualized, capturing the unique qualities of a particular historical moment. By keeping the theoretical trajectory of the book somewhat fragmented, I am trying to avoid replacing one tautology of epistemic closure with another, one that memorializes the sounding statue with the material and craft of intellectual labor. Rather, I want to produce a text that echoes the almost limitless diversity of these encounters, perhaps spurring readers to recount their own encounters with events between sound and statuary, and ruminating upon the extensions of those events and recognizing a sculpting of their own ears that had perhaps escaped notice.

I begin *The Sculpted Ear* within the fulcrum of the anxiety surrounding animation. Because this idea has beset the sounding statue almost from the start, it will first be necessary to address a history where this anxiety was sourced in the possibility of some elusive and all-powerful animating catalytic substance, and the potential consequences inherent in the belief that such a catalyst exists. Chapter 1 will begin this work by grounding animation within discourses on modern aesthetics, sound art, and terminologies of listening/hearing. Central to this grounding will be the argument that an anthropology of the senses represents the best means by which we can elucidate the sounding statue as event. Chapter 2 will continue it through the tableaux of a well-worn aesthetic critique that has carried dire implications for the sounding statue: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s 1766 essay on the statue of Laocoön. Lessing famously used the stoic mouth on the ancient statue of the Trojan priest to argue that sculpture could not properly capture the emotional fervor of a scream. The essay, in a sense, did much to facilitate the aesthetic silencing of the statue that persists to this day. However,

within Lessing's critique lies a potent conceptual legacy of sounding—the substance known as *pneuma*, a universal medium based in air that informed a litany of philosophical, religious, and scientific cosmologies from antiquity until the nineteenth century. There is a long history implicating *pneuma* as an ontotheological presence suturing together sound and voice in statues, and its declining influence beginning in the Enlightenment coincided with both the broader rejection of the metaphysical vocality of statued sound. By the nineteenth century, *pneuma* was considered no more existentially prevalent than premodern magic. However, there is also a fervent material and scientific history behind *pneuma* that complicates this narrative. Its pervasive power was centered in the inability of premodern science to render *pneuma* in an observable state while simultaneously unable to disprove its existence. As such, *pneuma* holds to important implications for this project. First, because it continually bifurcated the metaphysical and material strata, *pneuma* alters the potential social consequences of the sounding statue. Instead of a mere magical curiosity, it becomes an object that could portend a destabilization of established authority and power through the mechanism of the voice. Second, because *pneuma* was thought to be a central motivator to the entire sensory schema of human experience, it unveils a history where aurality was considered multisensory, intersubjective, and embodied. A pneumatic hearing, then, presaged many of our modern perspectives on what it means to hear, and the sounding statue was one of the most fervent sites through which such a hearing could unfold.

Chapter 3 takes the multifaceted aurality surrounding the relationship between *pneuma* and hearing and juxtaposes it to a particular type of sculptural object: the automaton. More specifically, I seek to challenge the historical status of the automaton as a means to ground the sounding statue as a technological object within the bounds of the Enlightenment's rational aesthetic order. The case I use to demonstrate is an infamous statue/automaton/organ known as Tipu's Tiger, which depicts a European man being mauled by a tiger with requisite screams and growls activated by an assembly of bellows triggered by an external crank. The Tiger was a military spoil captured by the British from Tipu Fath Ali Khan of Mysore in 1799 and has been prominently displayed in various London museums since that time. Its potent notoriety in nineteenth-century Britain, I argue, complicates a prevailing narrative casting the automaton as a more rational, modern cousin of the sounding statue due to its mechanical apparatuses. On one hand, the British public engaged with it as an oddity tied to a sense of Imperial exoticism.

At the same time, many of those people connected the sounding portions of the mechanism to the world of magic and the occult. In hearing the mauling growl, muffled scream, and peculiar organ, the Empire's cosmopolitans were themselves consumed by the aurality inherent in the tiger's seductive power.

Chapter 4 expands the relationship between sound and statuary into another level of representational abstraction, that of humans performing as statues in the theatrical and musical arts. Central to this concept is the relationship between sound and materiality, borne out of the fact that the performer is not made of the material implied by the statue he or she is representing. I argue that this relationship between human voice and performing inanimate material was profoundly affected by the reappearance of the Commendatore in the form of a statue during Act II in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Specifically, I hold that the way Mozart wrote the vocal part for the Commendatore reflected an awareness of the material illusion presented by the character: in other words, trying to imagine what an actually existing singing statue of stone would sound like. This awareness carried two broader implications. First, the Commendatore character refigured the prevailing tradition of writing the animated statue in opera (evident in various tellings of the Pygmalion myth throughout the eighteenth century), creating a potent legacy for those wishing to inhabit the sounding statue as a performative trope. Second, and most important, it represented a new perspective in elucidating the interplay between aurality and the ontology of sound within the rubric of the statue. Instead of trying to conceptualize the meaning of a sonic presence by making a statue more human, the Commendatore represented an attempt to understand it by making a human more statue-esque.

Chapter 5 takes the juncture of sound, material, and performance introduced through the Commendatore and expands it into questions of race, gender, and identity in the avenue of self-representation and, by proxy, a sort of hearing-oneself in material composition. I unpack this issue through a contemporary wax sculpture of singer Josephine Baker in a museum at her former estate at Milandes in France. Recent scholarship has attempted to show the ways in which Baker's performing body was constructed as a sculptural object reflecting both the metallic sheen of the modern surface, and the exotic beauty of the black feminine body. The material of bronze would seem ideal to capture this embodied duality, yet she chose to represent herself in the ephemeral and duller material of wax. I argue that this wax body represents an intersection between three interrelated discourses regarding stuated aurality. The first is the long and problematic history of

juxtaposing the material bronze with black skin in Western sculpture. The second are literary examples where sonic vibrations emanating from metal statues are imagined to control the minds and bodies of listeners. The third is the use of wax as one of the first materials in the mass reproduction of sound and in the late nineteenth century. Taken together, they create a means to understand Baker's wax visage as an object of sonic memory—obliquely referencing her voice without preserving it as such. Wax, in essence, creates a material apparatus that silently reinforces the presence of her denigrated and silenced singing voice.

Chapter 6 takes the specter of silence introduced through Baker's wax and expands its importance in two significant ways. First, it acknowledges the lack of sound in statues as a trait that is *heard* and given meaning by those who engage with them. Second, it explores how hearing silence in statues evokes a visceral political dimension, as well as a cultural or aesthetic one. In making these points, I consider the bronze statue of Aleksandar Nikolov, a Bulgarian violinist and comedian from the city of Plovdiv active during the early Communist period (ca. 1944–1989). Popularly known as “Sasho Sladura,” Nikolov was arrested and killed in an internment camp in 1961, an event still considered tragic by an older generation of Bulgarians. I argue that Nikolov's bronze statue in Plovdiv, which mimetically captures him as he looked during his peak, paradoxically represents his sounded life through the lack of emanating sound. This sculpted silence mirrors the destruction both of Nikolov's physical body, and the attempts by the state to erase all traces of his existence after his death (including arrest records and recordings). In essence, the only means by which the sonic life of Nikolov can be preserved is through the ironically silent form of the statue, and the actual physical silence creates a space of sonic memory invoking the repression and political silencing common during that era of Bulgarian history.

The political resonance of silence in the aurality surrounding statues and the violence it entails has also found resonance in the physical sciences during the twentieth century. Recent work in sound studies has attempted to frame vibration as a field of affect that operates on the body prior to the interposition of signification, often in connection to tropes of state control and aural violence. Chapter 7 critiques this particular stance with regard to the relationship between sound and statuary through the writings of Donald Hatch Andrews, a professor of chemistry at Johns Hopkins University who published several works in the 1960s and early 1970s conceptualizing of the quantum vibrations of subatomic particles in terms of musical sound.

He proposed that every statue carried a unique molecular sonic signature existing beyond the range of human hearing that could be catalogued by machinery and used to create a new music theory based on the temperament of vibrating particles. Though his dream never became manifest, Andrews's work did lay the groundwork for using technology to transform statues into objects of aural performance in the public sphere. And we are beginning to hear Andrews's dream of spaces populated by sounding statues, in sympathetic resonance with the people who surround them, though in a very different medium than he envisioned. Such is the case with *Statue Stories Chicago*, a program employing actors to record short monologues in the persona of statues throughout the city that people can listen to using their mobile devices. One of the statues, that of Chicago native Bob Newhart at Navy Pier in the guise of his character from the eponymous 1970s television show, has dialogue recorded by Newhart himself. Newhart embodying Newhart with his own voice, I propose, brings the long and troublesome tautology regarding the relationship between sounding statues and the metaphysics of vocal presence full circle. It creates a unique condition in which a living person voices his own representation, an act that turns the relationship between sound and death on its head. This opens up a very different possibility for an anthropology of sounding statues similar to work being done on contemporary sound art, sound installations, and sonic architecture in urban spaces that centers upon the public relationship between object and hearer, rather than the presence of the object itself. It represents nothing less than a move toward making an event-based experience of the sounding statue in the contemporary public sphere an ordinary phenomenon.

At this juncture, I should elucidate my reasons for emphasizing the concept of *hearing*, rather than *listening*, as the cornerstone for aurality that will appear throughout this book. Although the two words are often colloquially synonymous, there have been attempts to delineate important differences between them as means of articulating the perception of sound. These manifest into a kind of *auditory litany*, divided within the realm of the sonic in a fashion not unlike the audiovisual litany developed by Sterne. In the most basic sense, this *auditory litany* unfolds as such: listening is considered active and psychological, while hearing is understood as passive and physiological. Listening is of the mind; hearing is of the body. Following this logic, one would expect listening to encompass the epistemological, thinking ear, and hearing the ontological, resonant one. However, a clear dichotomy cannot be built between them with such ease. The connections

between listening and epistemology can be easily ascertained. Listening depends on an active aural engagement with a sound or an object emanating sound, treating that sound as an object. Listening is inherently directional, focusing on what the subject chooses to hear, and filtering based on preconceived personal, social, and cultural criteria of what is worth *listening to*. Listening is also implicated in the perpetuation of power and surveillance regarding the cementing of social and cultural hierarchies, as well as in acts and mentalities that attempt to undermine them.¹¹ As such, it draws a certain companionship with rationalizing, thinking sight still at the heart of constructing the sensory subject in the West, making ear into another kind of eye. Or, as Salomé Voegelin suggests, the act of listening generates the meanings imagined in that which is heard.¹² But hearing carries a rich, relevant epistemological life as well outside of its cornering within the bounds of the litany. Hearing lacks the more obvious object orientation, transcends the engagement with physical sound, and basks in its ephemerality. Recognizing the specific lack of object association, Heidegger associated hearing as an engagement with sound (via language) “already underway, without ever coming to be limited to the self or to presence.”¹³ Hearing goes even further, specifically engaging with the noncochlear unsounds that also permeate the social, historical, and methodological dimensions of sounding and sound reproduction. The kind of hearing that results from transforming the act of *punctuation* (as in periods and question marks) into an act of *auscultation* (applying the ear directly to the body to hear its internal sounds), what Peter Szendy calls the “otology of thinking.”¹⁴ This step, into the *thinking sounds that do not sound*, makes hearing the more resonant word when considering the relationship between sound and statuary, separating it from the object presence inherent in *listening to*. In other words, the epistemology of listening is dependent upon the ontology of sonic presence; the epistemology of hearing is self-emergent, growing out of the act of thinking about hearing itself (no actual sounds need apply).

Mapped back upon the subject of this book, such a designation parses the language I use to describe that subject with a dose of anecdotal flair. Consider it a mantra to keep in mind when reading this book, if you will. A sounding statue is an object that you *listen to*; an event between sound and statuary is something that you *hear*.