Editors' Introduction: Intonation

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Verse makes use of the entire stereophony of speech; why is it that most prosodic criticism restricts itself to noting patterns of stress and unstress, beat and offbeat?

The purpose of this special issue is to attend to those higher-level rhythmic contours, upon which theories of versification, and metre handbooks, have historically been silent. This immediately implies a host of related features: pitch, tempo, cadence, tone, phrasing—without these, verse would not cast such intellectual fascination, let alone inspire such aesthetic delight. Already in our 'Scansion' volume of two years ago, contributors evinced a frustration with the narrow aspirations that scansion set itself; the aim there was to explode the concept of scansion to encompass further levels of pattern, further nuances of inflection. In this special issue, we home in on one feature that scansions have tended to leave out—or rather, a single term under which we find these multiple interweaving phenomena: intonation.

'Intonation' may be a simple enough term, but it is a horribly complex concept, or cluster of concepts—indeed, our hesitancy in deciding whether it constitutes a single concept or a cluster is indicative of a problem at the very heart of what this special issue sets out to disentangle. The vocabulary that we as critics, theorists, readers, writers, of verse have at our disposal to make sense of such features is largely nonexistent, and where existent, despite being central to some of the finest

writing on verse that has been produced, it remains at best provisional.[1] Even by the standards of most verse terminology, these terms seem at best improvisational, and often metaphoric. It is not merely that we lack concepts or terminology with which to describe our intuitions: the intuitions that lie behind remain themselves unclear. Lacking concepts, lacking terms, we cannot make out what we intuit, nor even *how* to intuit. Anthony Fox, the former head of the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics at the University of Leeds, offers this inauspicious introduction to the topic of intonation in his book *Prosodic Features and Prosodic Structures: The Phonology of Suprasegmentals*: 'Scholars have frequently drawn attention to the difficulties and uncertainties surrounding its analysis, its systematic description, and its incorporation into linguistic models and theories. These difficulties have doubtless contributed to its relative neglect; it is often treated as an optional element, which may be effectively disregarded, or at best assigned to the periphery of the subject.'[2] But it is this complexity which draws us to the term—not as a work of disambiguation, so that we are able to work out what intonation *is*—but because of what questions and problems the term opens up. Are we to understand intonation as a purely phonological phenomenon, divided into tonicity, tonality, and tone? Should we attempt to make intonation measurable, bringing it into 'units' which can then be analysed in relation to acoustic correlates such as duration or in relation to linguistic units such as syntactic phrasing, semantic units, or rhythmic phrasing, etc.? It might be wiser to

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[1] Examples of particularly powerful writing include Richard Cureton's *Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse* (London; New York: Longman, 1992), which discusses both metrical verse and free verse; for metrical verse, see David Crystal 'Intonation and Metrical Theory', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 70.1 (November 1971), pp. 1-33; Alan Holder, *Rethinking Meter: A New Approach to the Verse Line* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995); and John R. Cooper, 'Intonation and Iambic Pentameter', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 33.4 (Autumn 1997), pp. 392-421. For an account of the role of intonation in general free verse, see G. Burns Cooper, *Mysterious Music: Rhythm and Free Verse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Clive Scott, *Vers libre: The emergence of free verse in France, 1886-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Miroslav Červenka, 'The Principle of Free Verse', *Travaux du cercle linguistique de Prague*, Vol. 4, ed. Eva Hajičová, Petr Sgall, Jirí Hana and Tomáš Hoskovec (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 2002), pp. 365-76; and Natalie Gerber, 'Intonation and the Conventions of Free Verse', *Style* 49.1 (Spring 2015), pp. 8-34.
[2] Anthony Fox, *Prosodic Features and Prosodic Structure: The Phonology of Suprasegmentals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 269.

see intonation's resistance to fungibility as part of its importance. Fox has argued against a 'bottom-up approach' of establishing intonation contours out of phonemic units, because such an approach fails to accommodate satisfactorily the features of higher-level units'.[3] Fernando Poyatos, speaking of 'paralanguage'[4] more broadly, goes further, suggesting 'that it does not always offer a "unit" analogous to the phoneme, susceptible of being built up into larger structures'.[5] The search for a 'unit' could either be a necessary means to working out what intonation is, and what its explanatory value for verse rhythms, inflections, cadences, might be—or a violence on the very phenomena we attempt to grasp. However, we might wonder whether treating intonation solely from the stance of constituent linguistic/phonological structure is in fact helpful. Would we be wiser to understand intonation in terms of interpretation, be it hermeneutical or performative—the construction of speaking personae and of fabricated speech communities and contexts, the disambiguation (or proliferation) of plural semantic possibilities, the poem as a vital speech act linked to issues of register, address, and (a term no less imprecise, perhaps comfortingly so) 'tone of voice'?

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[3] Fox, *Prosodic Features and Prosodic Structure*, p. 363.

[4] This linkage between intonation and paralanguage is widely assumed and equally problematic. In *Intonational Phonology*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), D. Robert Ladd agrees that 'The close acoustic and semiotic connection between intonation and paralinguistic cues is unquestionably the most important conceptual problem in studying intonation' (p. 42). However, as he quickly says, 'this is only a problem, not an insurmountable hurdle' and there are 'good scientific reasons for trying to draw a clear distinction between paralinguistic uses of suprasegmental features and intonation' (p. 42).

[5] Fernando Poyatos, *Paralanguage* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1993), p. 130.

Different essays in this volume take different stances on these questions, and it is not the job of this introduction to pre-empt them in any way. What we would like to do, however, is trace a history of how the constellation of phonological and interpretive questions around 'intonation' has been imagined, and why it is that 'intonation' is the term most useful to approach this constellation. As with our scansion issue, Joshua Steele's *Prosodia Rationalis* offers a helpful starting point.[6] Steele's aim was to demonstrate, and then describe and notate, 'the melody of speech'; in verse, this leads to a dissatisfaction with the binary categories long/short (to which we might add stress/unstress, weak/strong). Whilst he does not himself employ the word 'intonation' in this sense, when he provides the following scoring of the opening to Book IV of Pope's *Essay on Man*, it is clear that the phenomena he wishes to grasp would in today's usage fall under that heading:

Figure 1 Scansion of *Essay on Man* from Joshua Steele, *Prosodia Rationalis*, p. 38.

He charts rises and falls, pauses, tremolo, vibrato, timbre, dynamic, and even proposes a ground bass—and all this in what would appear a perfectly uncomplicated instance of 'iambic pentameter'. But it is fascinating that Steele himself becomes increasingly uninterested in the integrity of the verse line itself as an autonomous entity. When trying to make sense of the famously metrically-jarring opening to *Paradise Lost*, which had confounded so many eighteenth

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[6] Joshua Steele, *Prosodia Rationalis: Or, An Essay Towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be Expressed and Perpetuated by Peculiar Symbols* (2nd edn., London: J. Nichols, 1779).

century critics and poets, we get a mapping of what would be a prose rendering of it—highly oratorical, but not seeing its metre as in any way formative of its performance:
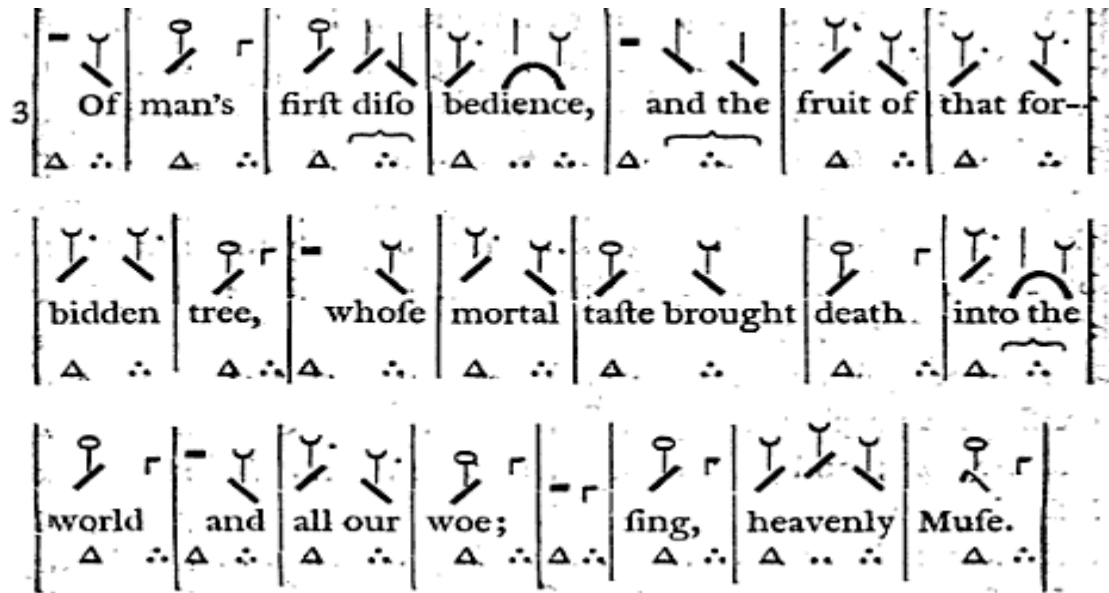

Figure 2 Scansion of the opening of *Paradise Lost* (*Prosodia Rationalis*, p. 77)

Steele invokes the then-relatively-new practice of musical notation as the basis for describing speech melody, as does Sidney Lanier over a century later (when the practice is no longer new, and indeed when the diatonic system with which it had coincided was starting to give way, in advanced music at least, to chromaticism). Indeed, Lanier makes two rather extreme claims on the basis of this. Firstly, that the human voice should, by virtue of a sound production process that engages vocal cords, buccal cavity, etc., be imagined as a musical instrument akin to the oboe, but with the added advantage of being able to vary tone colour, from which it follows that 'For all purposes of verse, words are unquestionable musical sounds produced by a reed-instrument—the human voice'.[7] And secondly, that 'print and writing are systems of notation for the tone-colors of the human speaking-voice' (p. 52). Lanier here merges music with biological process, but also

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[7] Sidney Lanier, *The Science of English Verse* (2nd. edn., New York: Scribener, 1909), p. 49.

with the melodics of speech, and these three regularly converge in attempts to grasp intonation (the 'breath-unit' is a staple of such discussions[8]) in a manner that many readers and theorists will find problematic in its essentialising tendencies.

This can lead to the classic standoff between 'stressers' and 'timers', with intonation a phenomenon of interest to the latter group, and deployed by them as an argumentative move.[9] As noted, Steele's account of the melody of *Paradise Lost* leads him to disregard the verse line altogether, something of an outlier given that most of his prosodist peers would prefer to refit Milton's blank verse to a more correct conception of the heroic line (or else dismiss it as an aberration).[10] But if such attention to melodics leads one to disregard metrical feet and line ends altogether, it will be of little surprise to discover that verse handbooks should have overlooked this feature. As still they continue to do to this day: *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, revised as recently as 2012 and billing itself as ' the most comprehensive and authoritative reference for students, scholars, and poets on all aspects of its subject: history, movements, genres, prosody, rhetorical devices, critical terms, and more',[11] still lacks an entry for intonation.

It strikes us, then, that there are two reasons for this benign neglect. Firstly, there is the sheer difficulty of description, the lack of conceptual clarity, which is

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[8] Allen Ginsberg's 'Notes Written on Finally Recording "Howl"' regards each line ideally as 'a single breath unit' (*On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg*, ed. Lewis Hyde, University of Michigan Press: 2002, p. 81). Charles Olson similarly insists in 'Projective Verse' upon 'a part that breath plays in verse which has not...been sufficiently observed or practiced' ('Projective Verse', in Donald Allen and Benjamin Friedlander eds. *Charles Olson: Collected Prose*; Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 239-249, p. 241).

[9] The central rift in English prosody between the 'timers' and 'stressers' has been discussed many times, including in Derek Attridge's *Rhythms of English Poetry* (London: Longman, 1982). But the clearest elaboration of these differences lies in the clarifying chart tracing the different schools of metrics in T. V. F. Brogan's *English Versification, 1570-1980: A Reference Guide with a Global Appendix* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 142. Thanks to Tom Cable for suggesting this source.

[10] For the fate of Milton's prosody in subsequent centuries, see Ben Glaser's piece in the scansion issue: 'Milton in Time: Prosody, Reception, and the Twentieth-Century Abstraction of Form' (*Thinking Verse* III (2013), pp. 169-85). Reuven Tsur discusses Milton's 'divergent' style in our interview, pp. 180-82.

[11] 'The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics: 4th edition', http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9677.html, 12 Sept. 2015, Accessed 15 January 2016.

at best off-putting, especially to a discipline disposed to rule-based exemplification;[12] secondly, there is the extent to which the kinds of phenomena being described are actually in conflict with what metrical handbooks are trying to achieve. Do Steele and Lanier not fall into the very trap that John Hollander warns against, of being 'performative systems of scansion, disguised as descriptive ones'?[13] Perhaps then, with a handful of notable exceptions, intonation is typically left out of twentieth century accounts because of their exclusive focus upon the text as a valid object of inquiry and concomitant derogation of performance as accidental (a view, we should add, that is still widespread).

Indeed, most metrical handbooks, whilst easily accessible for scholarship, provide little detail as to how poets actually write verse, or how readers actually read it—the handbooks describe just how (some) people tell them to. As historical sources, they are deceptively authoritative. But when we turn to poets' own descriptions of their practice, it seems that intonation is a crucial category, and that, once again, it defies easy description.[14] Timothy Steele describes Robert Frost's attempts to provide a theoretical account of sentence sounds as 'fiddling with his terminology in a way that suggests he cannot focus his meaning to his own satisfaction', concluding: 'That Frost realized that his ideas might puzzle others, that he never wrote the essay or two he hoped to write, that he recognized that he was being "a little extravagant"—all of this may indicate that he intuited

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[12] Happy exceptions can be found though, for example, in James Longenbach's *The Art of the Poetic Line* (St. Paul, Minn.: Graywolf, 2008), which remarks upon intonation without elaborating upon it as a full-fledged dimension of verse prosody.

[13] John Hollander, 'The Music of Poetry', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15.2 (December 1956), pp. 232-44, pp. 238-39.

[14] Beyond the poets' own writings, we can turn for quantitative evidence to the not yet complete Princeton Prosody Archive, a searchable database created by Meredith Martin with the support of Meagan Wilson. A search of the poetry collection, reveals over 700 references to intonation, all from the twentieth century. (Also, of interest is that the many acoustic correlates of intonation, including duration and tone, as well as related effects, such as pause, are robustly attested in the Poetry collection as well.) But if we widen our search to include all four of the Archives' collections—grammar, history, speech, and poetry—we find more than 4,700 separate mentions in 787 books since the eighteenth century. It is important to note that these other collections include material that is not exclusively about versification or about the metrical practice of poets at all; indeed, the lag of nearly 200 years gives a sense of the currency of discussions of intonation before their surfacing in relation to poetry and poetics. *Princeton Prosody Archive*, Meredith Martin, editor. Center for Digital Humanities, Princeton University.

that this aspect of his thought was not wholly workable.'[15] It might, but it could just as well indicate that Frost was *searching for a language*, and conducting this search *through* language, here in his prose just as elsewhere in his verse. The constant revision, instead of being a failure of 'meaning', could be the process through which we 'mean'. Similar pronouncements about other twentieth century poets addressing what are at base intonational phenomena are not hard to find. As just one comparison, we might look to Hugh Kenner's more positivist and empathic yet still wry assessment of Williams's struggling with 'inherited terminology' to identify what he meant by the American idiom and the variable foot: 'Visitors in his last decade heard him repeat those phrases with the urgency of a man recalling clues from a treasure-map glimpsed in a dream. Explicate them he couldn't.'[16]

What Williams was trying to grasp was '[a] world of sound in which things occur in unused relationships.'[17] It is perhaps not for nothing that our examples come from early twentieth century verse concerned with an American poetic vernacular, and with ambivalent relations to metrical forms; it might be that it is only at a certain moment in the history of verse that intonation becomes explicitly a problem. Joshua Steele might in this regard be an unexpected precursor to free verse. But as a problem *for us*, it will unlock features of verse practice, and thinking, from across history, allow us to develop our auditory palettes (if the gentle reader will excuse the synaesthetic mixing of metaphors) from monochrome to technicolor. Whether this leads to 'explication', we cannot promise: but here, as elsewhere, one of the things we will strive for is a guided hearing.

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[15] Timothy Steele, '"Across Spaces of the Footed Line": the Meter and Versification of Robert Frost', in *The Cambridge Companion to Robert Frost*, ed. Robert Faggen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 123-53, p. 146.

[16] Hugh Kenner, 'The Rhythm of Ideas', *Sagetrieb*, 3.2 (Fall 1984), pp. 37-41, p. 37.

[17] Letter to Louis Zukofsky, 18 January 1931, in *The Correspondence of William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky*, ed. by Barry Ahearn (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), p. 78. Williams writes 'realtionships' for 'relationships'.

The one interview and five essays in this volume sketch out ways in which analyses of intonation can extend our understanding of the intricacies of verse rhythm, but also the significant challenges that confront any ambition to do so. As Reuven Tsur (pp. 172-213) points out, intonation gives us a powerful lens to consider the 'musicality' of verse lines that might otherwise be bluntly dismissed as unmetrical by generative and traditional stress-based theories. At the same time, intonation is not only a compositional element in the sonic texture of a poem: it is, to build on Lacy Rumsey's contribution (pp. 15-50), a tool that enables us to grasp a poem's discourse structure, and its orchestration of syntax, lineation, layout—amid a host of other decisions, allowing us to secure—and destabilize—any interpretative act/performance/reading/understanding of a text. For these reasons, intonation may even be, as Rumsey speculates, 'the ideal analytical level on which to consider the formal consequences of a whole variety of phenomena that influence the reader's derivation of an utterance, and a form, from a written text.'[18]

And yet, as the range of objects, arguments, and approaches embraced by these essays testifies, intonation presents no single set of stable terms, no agreement as to what object an intonational analysis should be directed at, nor indeed how such analysis might proceed. Even where there is a shared belief that intonation is integral to how we understand poetry, there is no shared understanding of intonation itself. Indeed, in her reading of the resistances of Durs Grünbein's poetry, Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge (pp. 50-74) goes so far to suggest that 'a poetic account of the tensions internal to the conceptual field of intonation itself can draw on the resources of figurative language, paradox, and resistance that are central to poetic thinking.'[19] Intonation as a term becomes the meeting point of different conceptual vocabularies, different forms of attention, different linguistic registers, different attitudes towards language.

Indeed, what the diverse meanings of the term 'intonation' open up are the plural levels at which intonation/s may be operative. Both Summer J. Star (pp. 116-148) and Joseph Acquisto (pp. 149-171) propose the term 'intoner' in the

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[18] Lacy Rumsey, '"Da-DA-da-da-da": intonation and poetic form', p. 22.
[19] page ref.

place of 'reader'—even if by 'intoning' they envisage slightly different acts. For Acquisto intonation is to be grasped as integral to any hermeneutics of poetry, integral to our participation in a poem's construction of meaning. Intonation can provide a means of disambiguating tensions between syntax and lineation, but will not eradicate these tensions and ambiguities so much as heighten our appreciation of their expressive possibilities. For Star, by contrast, along with other contributors such as Rumsey and Tsur, intonation involves the dictates of the poet regarding performance. This is not to say that text is irrelevant: as Rumsey puts it, intonation is 'a mobile phenomenon' with 'strong roots in the text' (p. 49). Rumsey attends to the aesthetics of performance, especially through his analyses of paratones: that is, sequences of intonation-groups, instead of the individual intonation-group. It turns out that higher-level groupings are deployed, in Pound's *Pisan Cantos* to manage the syntactic and polyphonic complexities generated throughout; in Ginsberg's incantatory anaphora, these groupings enliven us to pattern and variety that the overall structure might appear to foreclose but which orchestrate our reading, intoning participation. For her part, Star looks at tensions between lexical stress and higher-level intonation contours in order to revisit the abiding enigmas of Hopkins's sprung rhythm, particularly those points, so characteristic of Hopkins, at which terms like 'stress' and 'pitch' straddle phonological and theological registers. At the same time, she shows how subvocalised intonations become crucial to Hopkins's poetics, arguing that 'what would seem to be a performative, audience-orientated event, is actually one that turns the reader inwards, towards a meditative, dialogic experience of how tone patterns interact with meaning' (p. 118). Tsur argues against the standard model of performance as necessarily disambiguating intonation cues into a single (as it were, 'univocal') voicing, and shows how individual readings might manage 'the simultaneous processing of conflicting patterns' (p. 177)

Tsur's use of wave plots and F0 extracts suggest performers' and readers' appeal to voiced solutions that retain nuance and indeterminacy. His experiments reflect fascinatingly on Acquisto's account of how Mallarmé holds in abeyance interpretive possibilities by balancing the options between rising and falling intonation, or Rumsey's attentiveness to the strategic use of key to 'bring...

discontinuity to the perception of apparently simple texts, and ... [to bring] a degree of coherence to that of apparently fragmentary ones' (p. 17). For Tsur performance is 'a problem-solving activity, constrained by the linguistic and versification patterns, on the one hand, and the reader's and listener's cognitive processes, on the other' (p. 174), and Acquisto makes a similar point, if with a wholly different focus, when 'suggesting that while the actual act of voicing the intonation involves a decision as to whether the final lines are a question or an exclamation, the process of intoning, not only as a question or exclamation but also in terms of the extent of the rise or fall by which one would mark those intonations, is the road by which we are led to these questions, and thus to the consciousness of how the poem both comes to an end and allows larger questions of meaning to remain open and undecidable' (p. 165).[20] It seems that we find a problem-solving activity which remains committed to keeping these problems constitutively unresolved (or at least, un-dissolved). As Vandegrift Eldridge puts it, 'the ability to treat conflicts and contradictions as productive rather than problematic is precisely what poetic accounts of intonation and prosody have to offer empirical accounts' (p. 59). And yet, where Tsur focuses on detailed empirical analyses of actual performances, and Star maps out one specific reading, Acquisto's and Rumsey's ostensible concern is with 'more and less representative or probable performance decisions' (Rumsey, p. 21).

What then happens is that our attention to intonation opens up interpretive and metrical possibilities hitherto unheeded. Tsur points out that, where we normally restrict ourselves to degrees of stress to analyse verse rhythm, performances of complex lines yield a far more nuanced sense of both the intricacies of verse rhythm and how readers are able to give voice to such intricacies (both aloud, and by implication, in subvocalised, silent reading). It transpires that it is the intonation of performers that accounts for metricality: their ability and willingness to alter the intonation contours of metrically problematic

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[20] Although he continues, diverging somewhat from Tsur: 'Is there a way to give voice to all of the possibilities at once? No, and in that sense the ideal performance would be silence, but such an ideal, from the perspective of poetry, is not worth having at all, since it would abolish the poem itself' (ibid.). That said, Tsur only says *multiple* possibilities, not *all*.

sequences resolves the lower-level rhythmic issues by compensating in the timing and pitch movement. Thus, where a generative-metrical tradition may be inclined to reduce the multidimensionality of poetic lines to sets of binary judgments (i.e., metrical or unmetrical), Tsur demonstrates how attention to intonation contours and to phonetic markers (e.g., glottal stop, stop release, and late peaking) gives us another means to consider the musicality of verse.

As other contributors point out, however, there are still further levels of expressivity at work in intonation than those which would fall under the habitual domains of prosody (be it as linguistic or literary field). For Vandegrift Eldridge, the resistance to any impulse to resolve contradiction takes on an ethical, as well as epistemological, dimension, resisting a scientific progress that reduces the human body and vivid imagery to abstract thought. What starts as intimation of the danger of an empirical-scientific drive that could potentially cast aside the 'perplexities' of intonation's 'material presence caught between subject and object, mind and brain, material and meaning', in favour of 'attention to the minutest levels of linguistic and bodily material', becomes an argument against reductionism more broadly, which would consign 'the material particulars to a theoretical chain of deductive steps' (p. 51). In place of this, she points to the importance of 'Time embodied—time *in* the body', not just as a resource that poetry makes use of, but as 'the product of poetry, which creates and foregrounds moments of imagistic intensity or presentness within the meaningless tick-tock of merely successive everyday time and speech' (p. 64).

Acquisto and Star take similar turns against the primacy of phonological and prosodic mechanisms, demonstrating how in two of the great philosopher-poets of the nineteenth century, Mallarmé and Hopkins, each formal nuance attains metaphysical significance. As Acquisto puts it: 'If poetry is ultimately about breaking silence, intonation clearly has a key role to play' (p. 157)—key, but contradictory and fraught, given Mallarmé's own valorisation of silence and the blank page, as well as the 'tension in Mallarmé between, on one hand, the desire to cede initiative to the words and, on the other, to "orchestrate" (and thus impose greater control over) the reading of the poem' (p. 166). Intonation becomes crucial not only through drawing together hermeneutic and musical interpretation,

but also because it remains 'a suspended flight', allowing Mallarmé's poetics to inhabit its multiple layers simultaneously. For Star, Hopkins' continual focus on both the oral and aural dimensions to language (particularly what Star, borrowing from Edwin Gordon, terms 'audiation', pp. 139-41), on the physiological as well as hermeneutic work through which we voice and parse the poem, leads, perhaps paradoxically, to a readerly *inwardness*. But, Star goes on to suggest, such inwardness is not simply a means of attaining communion with the divine (though it is certainly that); it also allows for a *community* between reader and text, even reader and poet. It is this that, she speculates, allows Hopkins to achieve 'his uncanny intimacy with the reader' (p. 148). As with Mallarmé, the poetry inhabits different dimensions simultaneously, but what, on Star's account, distinguishes Hopkins is the way his very personal relationship to his 'self-designated "public" of one' (p. 116), is interiorised into the intonational practices of the poems themselves.

This is the point at which poetics and speculative philosophy converge, and Vandegrift Eldridge, along with Eric Powell (pp. 75-115), turn to more recent writing that has implications for how we understand not just intonation, but the place of paralanguage more generally. Vandegrift Eldridge cites work in neuroaesthetics and evolutionary aesthetics, whilst Powell draws together iconic models of sound symbolism with psychoanalytic and phenomenological accounts of language acquisition, notably Didier Anzieu's account of the 'sound bath'. In all these cases, paralanguage is endowed with semantic, if not always referential, significance. Vandegrift Eldridge points out that paralanguage holds both ontogenetic and phylogenetic significance in language development: might it be that the pleasures of prosody can be ascribed to its capacity 'to reawaken our phylogenetic past and with it a sense of wonder at the powers of language'? (p. 57). She remains cautious on that front, not least because the powers of language will take us in different directions from our origins. Powell is more willing to speculate: following Merleau-Ponty, he argues that 'the superstructure of language as a system of phonemic oppositions is built upon, and always retains, a deeper basal level in the body and the world' (p. 112). Instead of the canonical opposition of sound to sense (as passed down by the standard reading of Pope's *Essay on*

Criticism and Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*), we find a language always embedded in a flesh of multiple perceptual modalities—visual, oral, aural, textual—and poetry is uniquely placed to rework and release these modalities anew: 'For the infant whose world is as yet unarticulated into different sensory modalities, the skin is a site of multiplicity, not just a symbolic matrix but a field rich with iconic possibilities, a mould opening auguries and potentialities. The music of poetry is the flesh of poetry, the liminality of the phonemic unconscious through which thought and affect pass into the poem' (p. 114). If Vandegrift Eldridge wishes to trouble any 'linear narrative [...] moving from the physiological to the metaphysical' (p. 60), Powell's insistence on the physiological as a 'flesh of the world' would unsettle any straightforward opposition of the two.

Asserting a vital role for intonation, then, opens out, not closes down, analytical options and perplexities. It engages us in the ethical tasks of addressing the constitutive roles of phonotext, 'voice', reader, and community/relationships, as much as the mechanical yet important processes of specifying or describing 'the intonation entangled somehow in the syntax idiom and meaning of a sentence.'[21] Whether or not intonation is 'the ideal analytical level',[22] as Lacy Rumsey speculates, we may agree with him that 'the possible fragility of intonation as a vehicle for poetic form is a problem for criticism, and for poetics, more than it is for prosody, whose primary role in such a debate should be to provide a greater sense of what poetry in English can achieve, and has achieved' (p. 23). The variety of phenomena noted in these pages are not all phonological, not all interpretive, and yet do converge in the diverse meanings of 'intonation' that the various contributions to this special issue flesh out. Perhaps it is no surprise that, if intonation is to grasp such variety, it will itself remain intrinsically various.

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[21] Robert Frost, 'To Sidney Cox' (19 Jan 1914), in *Robert Frost: Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays*, ed. Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson (New York: Library of America, 1995), pp. 670-672, p. 670.
[22] Lacy Rumsey, "Da-DA-da-da-da': intonation and poetic form', p. 22.