

Research Article

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Noise in the “Aeolus” Episode in Joyce’s *Ulysses*: An Exploration of Acoustic Modernity

<https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2024-0007>

received November 27, 2023; accepted April 22, 2024

Abstract: This article delves into the intricate connections between noise and the socio-historical contexts within James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The focal point is the Aeolus episode, which vividly depicts the auditory landscape of 1904 Dublin. Rather than focusing on clear technological transitions, Joyce accentuates the deepening of historical appreciation via modern sonic experiences. Joyce weaves a narrative that echoes the prevailing spirit of the state. His portrayal evokes a sense of a waning epoch, setting the grandeur of ancient Greece against the present-day stagnation and gloom of Dublin. Ultimately, this aural cultural historical design highlights Joyce’s sonorous narrative that exemplifies his drive to depict history with multifaceted depth.

Keywords: Modernism, noise, James Joyce, *Ulysses*, prosody

1 Introduction

The discourse on noise within the realm of contemporary existence is predominantly characterized by its antithetical nature. Douglas Kahn posits that the phenomenon of noise is paradoxical: it is either perceived where it is not expected or it fails to maintain coherence where it should. Defining “noise” is complicated due to the negativity inherent in its conceptualization; it is typically defined in opposition to another sound or phenomenon. Noise is thus a sound that is sometimes marginalized, abated, and excluded (Attridge, 2009). Kahn (2001) contends that this suppression of noise only augments its persistence and hinders a deeper understanding of the intricacies of its suppression. Consequently, noise is not merely an aesthetic determination but embodies a broader cultural implication. The management or abatement of noise is indicative of broader cultural regulatory efforts as embedded in countries’ intellectual property or environmental legislations.

Nowadays, aural culture studies have illuminated the cultural and institutional foundations of sonic modernity (Samuels et al., 2010). Researchers delve into how scientific discoveries, such as those by Hermann von Helmholtz and Charles Babbage, as well as technological inventions like the telephone and phonograph, have influenced nineteenth- and twentieth-century auditory experiences. In Saint-Amour’s (2015) argumentative analysis of the pianola and its coevals, he draws attention to the technological assemblage of sound-reproduction instruments during these centuries using special samples of literary works. His focus on gramophonocentrism in Joyce’s works helps to elucidate and further rationalize this paper’s attraction to the soundscape in *Ulysses*. These advances in understanding and controlling sound, especially in differentiating it from noise, have reshaped our engagement with physical spaces and modified our social sentiments.

Notably, influenced by scientific and technological breakthroughs, the period spanning the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed a profound shift in our relationship with sound. Indeed, Samuel and

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others attribute the history of a soundscape to that of mediation and changing technologies that enabled particular kinds of listening. The invention and development of sound machines was as revolutionary as the printing press. As it relates to the period of Joyce's oeuvre, the integration and attention to sounds surrounding the intricacies of daily life became more pronounced as the field of aural culture expanded. James Joyce's intricate relationship with noise offers a noteworthy perspective in this context. While acknowledging Joyce's primary medium is language, his linguistic endeavours in *Ulysses* possess a distinct musical quality, oscillating between harmony and disruption but intertwined with sounds of intimate and industrial life that tease the ethnographic ear. Literary scholars have extensively explored Joyce's profound engagement with the tactile nature of sound, particularly its challenges to seamless integration into clear meaning (e.g., Ellmann, 2009; Starkowski, 2022; Zimmerman, 2002). Joyce's efforts to emulate musical nuances in *Ulysses* through language, therefore, manifests a disruptive essence. This kinesis does not propose a break from the discipline but rather incites a re-examination of literary history as an intrinsically sounded one.

Recent scholarly contributions have centralized the themes of noise and sound within Joyce's oeuvre. The special section of volume 16 of the journal *Modernism/modernity* features several insightful articles related to James Joyce. Notably, Margot Norris explores Joyce's 1929 recording of "Anna Livia Plurabelle" in "The Music of Joyce's Vernacular Voices" (2009, pp. 377–382). In addition, Ellmann delves into the sonic facets of *Ulysses* in her piece titled "Joyce's Noises" (2009, pp. 383–390), and Vincent J. Cheng analyses Joyce's unique approach to rhythm and meter in "'The Twining Stresses, Two by Two': The Prosody of Joyce's Prose" (idem: 391–399). These discussions examine the implications of noise intertwined with Joyce's linguistic exploration, highlighting the way Joyce underscores the inherent noises within language that resist incorporation into distinct meaning or intent. Smyth posits that the urban landscape significantly moulded Joyce's artistic inclinations. He suggests, "James Joyce's status as an inveterate urbanite has accounted (in this view) for the recurring thematic emphases and, more interestingly, the formal originality of his work" (2020, p. 238). Smyth further highlights Joyce's attunement to urban sounds, suggesting that "Joyce heard in the shanty a musical analogue of his own developing literary concerns" (2020, p. 236). I propose that this noisy book of prose is a medley of soundscape, aesthetics, and visual stimuli, evoking an entire "theatre of the mind" (Ferrington, 1994).

This article aims to provide an interdisciplinary analysis of noise by merging sociocultural and historical insights with literary perspectives. It marries the theoretical frameworks of scholars like Douglas Kahn and Jonathan Sterne with Joyce's literary expressions, offering a comprehensive understanding of noise's complexities and its echo within the Irish society of the 1900s. By using an aural cultural historical methodology, the work seeks to examine the context, and the milieu that contribute to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and to unearth further deep, rich data within the text. A focal point of this exploration is the evolution of sonic experiences during this transformative period, with a special emphasis on Joyce's linguistic innovations and his interaction with sonic textures in the "Aeolus" episode of *Ulysses*. The approach connects the nature of the linguistic phenomenon and the historical moment in which it occurred and should expand readers' appreciation of the social and aural experiences of Joyce's Dublin.

2 Machine Sounds and the Press Industry

In the Aeolus episode, which is set in a newspaper office, Joyce probes the nascent era of mass media. The physical attributes of the newspaper – its subtle page rustlings and the pronounced din of the printing press – serve as auditory allegories for the soundscape of the city. This sonic expansion is not merely ambient noise; it emblematically represents the inundation of information and the multitude of voices seeking acknowledgment, "Dear Editor, what is a good cure for flatulence?" Amidst this sonorous chaos (with Mr. Bloom slipping his words deftly in the pauses of the clanking Joyce, 1946, p. 112), the auditory ambiance of the newspaper office crystallizes as a reflection of a nation's quest to ascertain its identity in the throes of urban metamorphosis.

Gilbert points out that the Aeolus episode is rooted in the tale of Aeolus's island from the *Odyssey*. He highlights that the signature sound of the King of the Winds' residence is not the cheerful clamour of the day, but the ceaseless cries of trapped winds (1955, p. 183). However, one cannot help but notice the proximity of the

title of Episode 7 to the “Aeolian” Company, the American company credited with not only selling the pianola but for advertising it widely using full-page colour advertisements. Ironically, the instrument’s performance involves “a binary machine language encoded in perforations on a paper roll” (Saint-Amour, 2015, pp. 16–17) not unlike the “obedient reels feeding in huge webs of paper” (Joyce, 1946, p. 112) into the printing press. Part of the attraction of *Ulysses* is undoubtedly its critical acclaim of multiple interpretations and Joyce’s tendency to withhold pertinent information (Kenner, 1987, pp. 62–63).

Joyce places a special focus on the sounds of the printing press, presenting it as an essential part of Bloom’s day. “Sllt. Almost human the way it sllt to call attention” (Joyce, 1946, p. 113). As the city’s soundscape changed, so did the ways in which its people interacted with it. Joyce portrays two distinct aural engagements: Bloom’s inward journey amid the dominating machine sounds contrasts with Stephen Dedalus’s outward connection with the vocal exchanges in the newsroom. Together, the sound elements in Aeolus represent a merging of old and new listening practices – one rooted in the nineteenth century, and the other signalling the twentieth century’s new dawn.

In the discourse on sonic environments, the concept of “soundscape,” first conceptualized by R. Murray Schafer in his seminal work, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, encompasses the entirety of sounds echoing within a specific milieu and the temporal evolutions of such environments, primarily due to anthropogenic influences. Emily Thompson augments Schafer’s foundational idea, delineating a soundscape as more than just an “acoustic field of study” (1977, p. 7). For Thompson, the soundscape is concurrently a tangible realm and a perceptual modality towards that realm; it is an amalgamation of a world and the cultural constructs formulated to comprehend that world. The cultural facets of a soundscape integrate both scientific and aesthetic auditory modes, emphasizing the listener’s interplay with their surroundings. Analogous to a landscape, a soundscape, she posits, is predominantly a product of human civilization, perpetually evolving and under transformation (idem: pp. 1–2). Extrapolating this to the domain of literature, cinema, and theatre, a soundscape encapsulates the sonic dimensions of a narrative, comprising sounds audible to characters, sounds emitted by them, and the author’s supra-textual sonic interjections. Schafer underscores the notion that literary artefacts often encapsulate evocative “earwitness accounts” of modern sonorities, positing authors as meticulous chroniclers of their era’s soundscapes, invaluable for any historical acoustic reconstruction (1977, p. 9). Moreover, literary narratives can be invaluable for assessing the evolution of what Thompson (2007, p. 6) denotes as “aesthetic ways of listening,” especially with the influx of novel technological apparatuses in human habitats. Saint-Amour speaks of the “cultural ambidexterity” of the pianola, for example, its placement as a “durable good” within brothels and living rooms, dance halls and concert halls...and materialising the recording, storage, and playback technology we call the novel (17).

The structure of the Aeolus episode can be viewed, at multiple strata, as a literary embodiment of what Schafer terms a “lo-fi soundscape,” an ambiance marked by a “predominant noise-to-signal ratio,” complicating the task of discerning distinct auditory entities (1977, p. 272). Joyce crafts this narrative by infusing it with “noise,” disrupting the reader’s typical interpretative flow and encapsulating Bloom within a soundscape dominated by overwhelming mechanistic sounds, compelling him to modulate his verbal expressions for audibility.

Upon entering the newspaper precincts, Bloom is enveloped in an auditory spectrum, encompassing both external and narrative sounds. Inside the building, there is a hive of activities – grossbooted drayment, liveried porters, typesetters, foremen, newsboys, etc., without counting the customers. The noise of the machinery is inescapable “Thumping Thump Thump, thump, thump,” but within that sound, there is also danger as Joyce acknowledges this machinery can “Smash a man to atoms if they got him caught” (1946, p. 110).

The chapter’s textual layout is segmented, with each division prefaced by a headline that interplays whimsically with the ensuing text. These headings, while predominantly serving as newspaper captions, introduce an element of external auditory disturbance to the reader. Gilbert comments on the evolving nature of these captions, observing the transition from the “classically allusive” Victorian style to a representation of the modern press’s unabashed candidness (1955, p. 179). This sequential reading experience can prove jarring, given the often-elusive linkages between headlines and content. Some, like “IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS,” directly set the narrative stage, plunging the reader amidst the hustle of Dublin (Joyce, 2022, p. 112), while others, like “EXIT BLOOM,” forecast impending events (Joyce, 2022, p. 124). Yet, a few, especially the series of question marks “???” (Joyce, 2022, p. 127), retain a sense of ambiguity.

Lawrence (2015) contends that the headings in the episode appear arbitrary and whimsically disconnected, often emphasizing the seemingly inconsequential, thus posing a reading challenge. These captions, she suggests, tend to obfuscate rather than clarify. However, Joyce's recurrent emphasis on the ostensibly mundane spans the entirety of *Ulysses* and is not exclusive to the Aeolus episode. In this specific episode, the headlines construct a structural lo-fi soundscape whereby the very format of the episode masks the underlying content. Such a structure forces readers to discriminate between varying elements of the narrative. However, Grandt (2003) provides yet another explanation for this seeming disruption. Grandt recounts Joyce's Zurich adventure and his association with two expatriates, the American music student Otto Luening and the Frenchman Philip Jarnach who he credits for his introduction to the contrapuntal theory and *fuga per canonem* – the latter of which dictated the format of "Sirens." Grandt attributes this period to Joyce's transformation to inventing an "innovative composition of language" (p. 77) in his writing of *Ulysses*, as he sought to alienate himself from the English language. During his European sojourn, Joyce's teaching of English as a second language allowed the opportunity to observe how non-native speakers approach "English from without" (p. 88). Therefore, the rather foreign phrasing or ambiguous sub-titles forces the "othering" of the text in Aeolus, where the audience becomes "both exiled readers and involved performers" (Grandt, 2003, p. 77).

Paulson (2010) posits that literary works inherently embrace a form of "noise" or ambiguity, which interferes with clear interpretations. Joyce's narrative tactic in Aeolus intentionally interweaves this "noise," emulating the disruptive auditory landscape of modern urban life, as articulated by the likes of Russolo (1986), Schafer (1977), and Thompson (2004). This technique seeks to mirror the clamorous urban environment on the literary canvas, demanding that readers sieve through a plethora of information to discern underlying meanings. As Albright remarks, if prose were to emulate machinery, it would need to be "concise, sudden, effective, and blaring" (2004, p. 173). This appears to mimic, precisely, the style of Aeolus, reminiscent of the relentless newspaper production that Bloom observes. The contrapuntal language continually challenges the reader's inclination to highlight main story details by introducing sharp, concise, even if distracting, headlines that might or might not spotlight the essential themes of the subsequent text.

Moreover, Joyce captures the contemporary cacophony not merely through the audible exchanges of characters but intertwines them with the mechanical sounds of the office environment, curating a diegetic lo-fi soundscape that mirrors the chapter's format. The episode unfurls with a barrage of tram announcements and subsequent mechanical reverberations, plunging readers into an immediate sensory overload reminiscent of Bloom's own experience. Cheng (2009) applauded the sound effects and prosody of Joyce's prose. Joyce's auditory portrayal seems to echo Russolo's (1986) futuristic compositions, with a profusion of street noises meshing to form an auditory tapestry emblematic of modern urban sprawl.

The chapter began with a bewildering list of tram stops immediately followed by the timekeeper's shout and the tram's journey over the cast steel tracks. Right from the outset, the reader's experience mirrors that of Bloom, confrontation with noise. This emanates both from the information overload due to the tram announcements and the actual sounds of the tram:

Before Nelson's pillar trams slowed, shunted, changed trolley started for Blackrock, Kingstown and Dalkey, Clonskea, Rathgar and Terenure, Palmerston Park and upper Rathmines, Sandymount Green, Rathmines, Ringsend, and Sandymount Tower, Harold's Cross. The hoarse Dublin United Tramway Company's timekeeper bawled them off:

— Rathgar and Terenure!

— Come on. Sandymount Green! Right and left parallel clanging ringing a doubledecker and a singledeck moved from their railheads, swerved to the down line, glided parallel.

— Start, Palmerston park! (Joyce, 2022, p. 112)

This cacophony is soon joined by other urban sounds:

Parked in North Prince's street His Majesty's vermilion mailcars, bearing on their sides the royal initials, E. R., received loudly flung sacks of letters, postcards, lettecards, parcels, insured and paid, for local, provincial, British and overseas delivery. (ibid.)

Grossbooted draymen rolled barrels dullthudding out of Prince's stores and bumped them up on the brewery float. On the brewery float bumped dullthudding barrels rolled by grossbooted draymen out of Prince's stores. (ibid.)

Subsequently, "The door of Rutledge's office creaked again" (idem: p. 113), which captures Bloom's attention a bit later on. This array paints a sonic tableau, evoking what Russolo might have labelled a futurist symphony. From the "6 families of noises," Russolo identifies in his manifesto (1986, p. 28), Joyce incorporates four just on the initial page of *Aeolus*. Echoing Lenehan's enigma, the soundscape in Joyce's 1904 Dublin resonates more with "rows of cast steel" than with the melodic strains of *The Rose of Castile*. The former epitomizes the noisy clamour of modernity, while the latter evokes a bygone era of classic nineteenth-century opera. In terms of content and structure, Joyce crafts this chapter to highlight a distinct lack of clarity amidst a deluge of sound and information. The responsibility for distinguishing meaningful content from mere noise falls squarely on Bloom's shoulders, a theme that is recurrent till his departure from the newspaper premises.

Within the confines of the *Aeolus* episode, emerging auditory paradigms are evident. Analogous to the gramophone, which began its rise to prominence in the 1890s and was swiftly overtaken by other pneumatic playback instruments, the overpowering volume of machinery necessitated a unique, more insular mode of listening, primarily because its decibel level hindered interpersonal communication. This episode suggests that machines, too, are endowed with a distinct linguistic rhythm, which could aptly be termed the "technological sublime." In the cacophony of the office, Bloom reacts with a mix of awe and trepidation to these machine sounds, which are juxtaposed against Stephen's more conventional auditory engagement. Essentially, this episode becomes emblematic of a transformative era, wherein novel listening modalities co-evolved with burgeoning technology.

3 Acoustic and Historical Textuality

Joyce masterfully interweaves the acoustic environment with historical narratives. The headlines, snippets, and fragments found in newspapers in that period become vocalized instances of Ireland's present, reflecting its tumultuous past. The episode oscillates between sounds and silences, each carrying historical weight, signifying Ireland's struggles and its complex relationship with its colonial past. The blending of sound with text makes history palpable, bringing it alive in the present moment.

Set in the pulsating heart of the city, *Aeolus* unfurls amidst symbols of power and tradition. The narrative begins near Nelson's Pillar on Sackville Street, an iconic structure representing Britain's colonial gaze. Here, funeral cabs seem to offload passengers like Simon Dedalus, Ned Lambert, and Hynes, who seem to head straight to the *Evening Telegraph* office. Following them is Bloom, entering from the side of Prince's Street. As we trace the pathways from Nelson's Pillar to the Freeman offices, we encounter various landmarks and figures, including the diligent timekeeper Richard Delany and the historically significant General Post Office. Beyond the physical journey, the dialogues in the newspaper offices serve as a whirlpool of opinions, debates, and discourses surrounding commerce, history, rhetoric, and journalistic standards. It is as if the walls of these offices echo the living history of Ireland, juxtaposing the contemporary debates with the country's rich past. This cacophony of voices and the lack of an authoritative discourse mark a significant departure from the "initial style" of *Ulysses*, introducing a new and elusive narrative consciousness, perhaps that of the editor or a narrator. It is a shift from a structured modernist approach to what seems like a nuanced postmodern narrative.

Joyce's adept use of "Hibernian" (Joyce, 2022, p. 112) reflects his deft skill in intertwining historical context into his storytelling. By fusing Roman and Greek linguistic elements, he underscores the intertwined legacies of these influential empires. This language dance subtly sets the stage for professor McHugh's juxtaposition: Greek intellectual luminosity against Roman imperial dominance. The assertion that Rome never annexed Ireland emerges more potently, especially when juxtaposed against Britain's indelible mark on Ireland. Lenehan's obviously Francophone interjections and accent support Norris's (2009) dismissal of Joyce's Ireland being one of a monolithic culture as his appellations extend beyond accents. Joyce does not conjure up any

sense of misunderstanding between the language groups, suggesting perhaps that cosmopolitanism is alive and thriving in Dublin.

Nelson's Pillar, inaugurated in 1808, stands as a sentinel in "Hibernia." Its establishment, a mere 7 years after the Union with Ireland, evokes deep-seated historical resonances. This iconic edifice becomes the magnetic core around which the city's heartbeat revolves – the ebb and flow of trams, dynamic trade activities, and the resonant clatter of Guinness barrels. While the description of the trams' daily operations might appear superficial on the surface, the word "terminus" lends profound weight; emblematic of conclusions and determination, it whispers of deeper implications. The majestic Pillar is not merely a geographical reference but resonates with Stephen's reflections in "Nestor." It beckons one to reflect: Do events like the demises of Pyrrhus and Caesar set a predetermined course for the annals of history?

Progressing from the initial to the subsequent frame, a vivid play on words emerges as the tale transitions "from pillar to post": towards the Post Office and the striking red mail cars of His Majesty. The "subeditor" emphasizes the underlying ideology: "THE WEARER OF THE CROWN." In a chapter where rhetoric leans heavily on enthymeme, the amalgamation of these introductory captions echoes an implicit logical proclamation: IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS, THE WEARER OF THE CROWN. The Crown, by association, recalls the emblematic insignia of the British monarchy. This is analogous to the *divisa* or device, signifying territorial conquest and division, akin to how Nelson's Pillar and the British monarchy epitomize the annexation and bifurcation of the nation. Through inventive captioning, Joyce ingeniously elevates division as the predominant motif. Notably, the final refinements of Aeolus, inclusive of these pioneering captions, culminated just a few months before the official partition of Ireland.

The episode's headlines provide a unique resonance, often contrasting and at times complementing the proceeding text, forming a narrative layer of their own. One of the most poetic and metaphoric of these captions is "O, HARP AEOLIAN" (Joyce, 2022, p. 123). This alludes to an Aeolian harp, which is played not by human touch but by the whims of the wind. This instrument, laden with historical overtones, embodies the spirit of Ireland, with Vico's assertion that words are both the symbols and remnants of deep-rooted history where time and space interweave to define a narrative's texture. In Aeolus, this interplay is profound. Joyce crafts a chronotopic milieu in which every street, every landmark, and every uttered word bears the weight of time. The narrative's movement from peripheral locales like Sandycove and Sandymount Strand to the central heartbeat of the Hibernian metropolis underscores this shift. This centralization brings to focus the dialogues in the newspaper offices, reflecting Vico's emphasis on civil society and its pivotal role in shaping history.

MacHugh takes a moment to make music. Using dental floss extracted from his pocket, he artfully plucks it between a pair of his unwashed teeth. He plays a tune, "Bingbang, bangbang," (idem: p. 123) on this makeshift harp. While Crawford's actions in the backdrop remain ambiguous, MacHugh's act of flossing in a professional setting raises eyebrows. This jarring moment occurs amidst discussions about Ireland's battles for freedom, symbolized by the harp. If Crawford portrays a feigned noble, MacHugh comes off as a counterfeit bard, belittling the nation's emblem.

Amidst their chatter, the commotion of boisterous newsboys in the hallway breaks their conversation. After MacHugh admonishes a latecomer, their voices rise in the song "The Boys of Wexford," a ballad that commemorates the Irish Rebellion of 1798. They sing:

*We are the boys of Wexford
Who fought with heart and hand. (p. 120)*

This anthem, cherished in Aeolus, not only celebrates the rebels' triumph at Oulart (the Wexford Rebellion) but also mourns their tragic end at Vinegar Hill. Different versions of this song resonate differently. The singing, which precedes the heading A COLLISION ENSUES, is reminiscent of "The Croppy Boy," another Irish ballad of another doomed rebel.¹ Tom Kernan highly compliments Ben Dollard's "trenchant rendering" (Joyce, 1946, p. 84) of the ditty although Martin Cunningham is more scathing of this description. The tenor, John McCormack's

¹ The Croppy Boy was written by Irish poet William B. McBurney aka Carroll Malone, in 1845.

rendition of “The Croppy Boy,” contemporary to Joyce’s time, likely echoes in the ears of *Ulysses*’ characters. Interestingly, later interpretations, like that by The Wolfe Tones in the 1960s, amend the lyrics significantly, replacing some of the verses with more nationalist sentiments and less of the theme of deception. In the contemporary version, there is little explanation of how the young lad is captured by Cornwall. Other vitally popular songs in the era were revolutionary ones influenced by the French (“Plant, Plant the Tree,” and “Freedom Triumphant”), and post-rebellion English/Irish songs (“Billy Byrne of Ballymanus,” “Sliabh na mBan,” and “The Croppy Boy”) (Cronin, 2001).

The songs of rebellion could also allude to Joyce’s rendezvous on the continent as he sought to “exile himself from the English language” (Grandt, 2003, p. 75). James Joyce’s love for music was never in doubt, but his mastery of musical traditions has provided food for fodder among literary critics. In this instance, the veracity of claims that the structure of “Sirens” on *fuga per canonem*, or whether it more resembles a *fugue* (Zimmerman, 2002). Indeed, Grandt (2003) notes that Joyce’s friend Luening recognized Joyce’s visual challenges while reading the musical scores and playing certain instruments although the extraordinary richness of his voice was not in doubt.

In Episode 11, “Sirens” encourages the reader to stumble over soundscapes so vibrant that the section salivates with the richness of the natural elements that are so reminiscent of rural Ireland of old and its contemporary metropolitan status. There is a ruddiness to the human facades which juxtaposes harshly with the shallow, jaundiced face of the printer in Aeolus. Joyce is in his element “with a cock carracarracarra cock. Cockcock” (Joyce, 1946, p. 267) – a bawdy and crude tribute to the two birdwomen (Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy) for whom the episode is named. Here, we are greeted with “deep bronze laughter” (Joyce, 1946, p. 246) by Miss Douce albeit the inner monologue that ripples through this section could as easily be mistaken for drunken musings. The overtures commence with restrictive, contentious constraints of the *fuga per canonem* which dictates the form of this chapter (Grandt, 2003). As Bloom wallows in his own iniquitous lifestyle he reminisces about the naiveté of the “Croppy Boy” as Dollard belts out the ballad. The clear recollection of the song may be attributed to reconciliatory efforts between the Irish, British, Republicans, and Unionists at the bicentennial celebrations of the 1798 United Irishmen Rising (Gering, 1999). Ironically, the nobility and honourability that prompted these revolutionary ballads are antithetical to the pub scene. The betrayal and suffering that prompted these songs can, however, serve as cautionary tales for the men at the *Evening Telegraph* office. As documented elsewhere, the vice of drinking has been the undoing of many there – the working poor – with Bloom being an exception. Even the ambitious Stephen, previously aspiring to develop a unique Irish conscience, currently fritters his earnings on alcohol with colleagues. The recurring theme in *Ulysses* is the stagnation of Irish ethos, attributed to alcohol, and a licentious style of living. Crawford’s inebriated antics further blur historical realities. They remember the heroic episodes, but the essence is lost in the haze.

The scene starkly contrasts with the episode’s portrayals of Ireland: Dan Dawson’s eloquent descriptions of its pristine beauty and the valiant rebels of “The Boys of Wexford” and “The Croppy Boy.” As Zach Bowen’s “Musical Allusions in the Works of James Joyce” notes, these so-called protectors of Irish heritage, much like the Wexford boys, are losing their cause for similar reasons. He forewarns that today’s singing lads could be tomorrow’s barflies. The scenario brings to bear Ellman’s discussion surrounding the “disacousmatized” voice. In this instance though, the “deity loses his charisma” (Ellmann, 2009, p. 386) because it lacks the revolution behind the action – the voice is paradoxical.

Concluding on a curious note, a 1909 antiquities consignment from London’s Fenton & Sons Old Curiosity Shop to Canada listed a “Bronze Sword” from the 1798 Wexford Rebellion. This enigmatic artefact later underwent scrutiny at the Royal Ottawa Museum by archaeologist Francis Pryor. Pryor surmised that the ancient sword may have been wielded in the 1798 Battle of New Ross, a military engagement that followed the fall of Wexford. Intriguingly, this sword, potentially contemporaneous with Homer’s *Odyssey*, mirrors Ireland’s timeless spirit. This blade, possibly retrieved from a bog, might have been reclaimed during the uprising, embodying the indomitable spirit of an Irishman. The image of a young rebel, brandishing an ancient sword in the 1798 skirmish, endures as a poignant testament to Ireland’s resilient legacy. It also illates the noise of battle (Cheng, 2009).

This seamless blend of sound with text is what sets Joyce apart. He understands that history, especially for a land as historically rich and conflicted as Ireland, is not a linear progression: it is a complex tapestry in which events of the present are deeply interwoven with those of the past. By vocalizing these moments through the acoustic environment, he makes the past alive, immediate, and resonant. It is not viewed from a distance but felt viscerally, reminding the reader of the cyclical nature of history and the echoes of the past that permeate the present.

In conclusion, Joyce's blending of the acoustic environment with historical narratives is a testament to his unparalleled storytelling prowess. Through headlines, snippets, and fragments, he vocalizes Ireland's present, making its past reverberate in every word and silence. This episode serves as a poignant reminder of the indelible marks history leaves on a nation's psyche, shaping its present and echoing in its future. With every oscillation between sound and silence, Joyce captures the heartbeat of Ireland, making history not just a subject of study, but a living, breathing entity, forever intertwined with the present.

4 Conclusion

In the Aeolus episode of *Ulysses*, Joyce captures the evolving soundscape of 1904 Dublin, a city echoing the mechanical clamour of its burgeoning modernity and the historical lessons of its past. The aural cultural methodology incorporates into the work and its literary tradition previously overlooked concepts of noise and sound within the prosodic language in Aeolus. As Otter (2008) astutely notes, technologies, while blending into daily life, subtly alter existing norms and experiences. In this instance, Joyce infuses the novel with non-lexical onomatopoeia to develop a novel language of literary communication. Aeolus does not foreground explicit technological disruptions; instead, it accentuates how contemporary auditory encounters deepen historical understandings. Joyce employs a rich tapestry of time-space reasoning, metaphors, and multiple literary devices to craft a narrative that resonates with the individual spirit. The cacophony of city life and the conversations, set against a backdrop of introspective silences, soundscape, and industrial noises, evoke a bygone epoch. While he incorporates modest aspects of the grandeur of ancient Greek civilization with the landscape of the commercial setting of Aeolus, the underlying rhetoric of national struggles is more strident, evident as it is through the hardscape and soundscape of Dublin. This tapestry of sounds and silences is a testament to Joyce's ambition to create a multifaceted, nuanced historical narrative incorporating the aurality, demonstrating the linguistic polyphony throughout the book. At first, reading the novel might appear sham-bolic, however, re-reads can persuade even the intransigent to listen instead to the prose as Joyce "wrote" them.

Acknowledgments: We extend my heartfelt thanks to the reviewers for their invaluable assistance in enhancing this article.

Funding information: The authors state no funding involved.

Author contributions: Xiaoshan was responsible for conceptualization, writing the original draft, and revising the manuscript. Fuying Shen contributed to the review and supervision of the work.

Conflict of interest: The authors state no conflict of interest.

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