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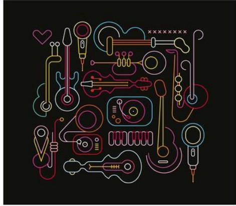

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Ciro Scotto, Kenneth Smith, John Brackett

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ANALYSE THIS

Types and Tactics of Self-Referential Songs

Bethany Lowe with Freya Jarman

Introduction[1]

When listening to songs, we can focus more on the lyrics or more on the music, but in most cases "it is how they interact that produces significance."[2] When the singer remarks "But how strange the change / From major to minor" in Cole Porter's song "Ev'ry time we say goodbye," most listeners understand this as a technical description of what happens in the harmonic underpinning, even while the lyrics evoke, on another level, the emotional experience of parting from a loved one. Likewise, when Maria von Trapp melodically instructs "When we sing, we begin with do-re-mi," or when Gloria Estefan tells us "the rhythm is gonna get you," we recognise that the connection between lyrics and musical content has been pulled a little tighter than usual (and perhaps a little weirder). The presence of music-specific terminology in song lyrics raises the possibility of self-reference, a process whereby the words explicitly recognise, describe, or analyse aspects of the music's function. The strange quality of self-referential songs, in explicitly pointing our attention towards their own musical contents, emerges more vividly from close inspection. What is it that self-referential songs are doing, and what does it have to say about the general operation of the text-music connection that is often taken for granted?

This chapter's notion of self-referentiality is rooted in the work of cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter, who identified the way that "many systems have the capability to represent or refer to themselves somehow, to designate themselves (or elements of themselves) within the system of their own symbolism. Whenever this happens it is an instance of self-reference."[3] Hofstadter confines his attention in the key chapters mostly to sentences and other verbal utterances, which is a useful starting point for us as these form the basis of song lyrics.[4] Classic examples of self-referential statements would include "This sentence no verb," the paradoxical "This statement contradicts itself," and "I have nothing to say, and I am saying it," as well as the whimsical "Please, oh please, publish me in your collection of self-referential sentences" (a request whose ambition has now been realised).[5] But self-reference is not limited to verbal function, of course. Hofstadter explains that self-reference can occur whenever "a system (sentence, picture, language, organism, society, government, mathematical structure, computer program, etc.) twists back on itself and closes a loop."[6]

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The compound nature of the song naturally leads to rich creative possibilities as the words can twist around and point at aspects of the music within the loop of the song system as a whole. Hofstadter further points out that self-referential statements can be, as he calls them, "healthy" or "neurotic." "A healthy sentence," Hofstadter explains, "is one that, so to speak, practices what it preaches, whereas a neurotic sentence is one that says one thing while doing its opposite."[7] Healthy examples would include "Be concise!" while the old joke "I've told you a million times not to exaggerate" is a neurotic sentence.[8] Many instances of both styles are given throughout this chapter (e.g. in the section on harmony) where songs either obey or defy themselves.

Self-reference can be compared and contrasted with other ludic artistic practices that may be more familiar. A song talking about itself is perhaps a reflexive cousin of the more commonly cited "intertextuality," the phenomenon by which a song refers to another artwork thereby pointing outside its own hermetic bubble.[9] The explicitly musical description in self-referential examples initially distinguishes the practice from the much more common "word-painting" where the shape or quality of the music merely illustrates any general idea from the lyrics, ranging from Weelkes's madrigal "As Vesta Was," with its descents and ascents, the sound effects of "Knock Three Times" by Tony Orlando, the emotionally mimetic effects of a slow sad ballad, or an angry *stile concitato* aria. And there are also relationships with and distinctions from practices such as diegetic/non-diegetic play in film and the use of music language as a metaphor, as we shall see.

There are few precursor writings on the topic of self-referential songs. Werner Wolf has investigated what he terms "metareference" in the arts more broadly, with familiar examples from the novel *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, the artworks of Escher and Magritte, and films such as Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*.[10] Martin Butler has made a preliminary foray into self-referential songs under the same aegis and has made some useful observations. However, Butler considers only a small number of songs and focusses on the lyrics rather than the music, acknowledging that because his selected songs are mostly of a politically motivated nature, his typology is consequently restricted.[11] Many of these limitations also apply to his follow-up article.[12]

The composer and critic Constant Lambert implicitly singled out self-reference in popular song when he lampooned certain musical developments in the 1930s:

> The most irritating quality about the Vo-dodeo-vo, poo-poop-a-doop school of jazz song is its hysterical emphasis on the fact that the singer is a jazz baby going crazy about jazz rhythm. If jazz were really so gay one feels that there would not be so much need to mention the fact in every bar of the piece. Folk songs do not inform us that it's great to be singing in six-eight time, or that you won't get your dairy-maid until you have mastered the Dorian mode. [...] What should we think of a concert aria which kept harping on the fact that the singer's mouth was open and that her vocal chords were in prime condition?[13]

Though Lambert picks on the jazz song, in fact both folk and classical traditions do have something to say about their own processes: perhaps he has never looked afield to folk songs such as "An Acre of Land" that exhorts listeners to join in with a "Hey ho, sing ivy," or the several psalms that do likewise (for example, "Sing unto Him, Sing psalms unto Him" in Psalm 105)? The Broadside ballad convention of inviting listeners to "Gather round and I'll sing you a song" is functionally/musically self-aware, while

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Tosca in Puccini's opera knows that she is a musician and sings of it (Act I: "Tonight I am singing" / "stasera canto") as do David, Walther, Hans and Beckmesser throughout Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* (e.g. in I/ii, I/iii, and II/vi). Folk music includes a prominent sub-tradition of talking about its own musical instruments, sometimes with a metaphorically sexual element.[14] Classical music can boast some beautiful paeans to the art of music itself, ranging from Purcell's "Music for a While," Schubert's "An die Musik," Herbert Howells' "King David," and parts of Steve Reich's *The Desert Music* (if a choral cantata can provisionally be included as song).

Nonetheless, this chapter will focus primarily on popular songs from a wide variety of styles—including indie numbers, country songs and rap tracks alongside pop hits, Tin Pan Alley classics and 70s ballads—though with other manifestations of "song" juxtaposed where they add to our understanding of self-referential practice. Though all manifestations of explicit songfulness are of interest, songs within the classical tradition (in the broad sense of western art music from 1600 to 1900 and beyond) largely set pre-existing texts—some of which may fortuitously talk about the medium of music in which they later get set—so the repertoire largely lacks the self-referential text-music synergy of songs that are written either by a single artist or by two (or more) working closely together.[15] We have enthusiastically collected over 500 self-referential songs, and I'll be investigating the functional quirks of around 150 of them in this paper through six constituent, even traditional, parameters of *musical content*: harmony, melody, rhythm, instrumentation, silence, and structure.[16] Thus I aim to develop some analytical insights into the operation of self-referential songs, along with the beginnings of what Butler has called a "systematic and comprehensive typology of the forms and functions of metareference in popular music."[17]

Parameters of self-referentiality are indicated in the text with a hashtag—so, for instance, a #harmony song is a song whose lyrics refer to its own harmony. Such keywords highlight themes running through and across the network of song self-reference, since many song examples fall into several potential categories, including broader ways of being self-referential (such as the #esoteric or #didactic, or through topics of #dance or #aesthetics).[18] Songs that constitute a *tour de force* of various types of self-reference will be tagged as a #bombtrack (in honour of Rage Against the Machine's self-referential song of that name); such tracks make excellent introductions to the possibilities and practice of self-reference. Songs are referred to throughout by their title, together with the name of the associated artist (performer and/or songwriter(s) as appropriate).[19] A public Spotify playlist accompanies this chapter and includes almost all of the songs referred to herein. (Songs marked with an asterisk in the text are not currently available on Spotify.)[20]

#HARMONY

Leonard Cohen's song "Hallelujah" is a song that, unusually, presents a partial musical analysis of itself (Figure 5.1). The lyrics namecheck the harmonic underpinning in the #bass: "the *fourth*, the *fifth*" refer to the degrees of the scale on which the chord is built at that moment, and the "minor" and "major" describe the construction of each chord accompanying those words. The full potential of these lines seems to have been revealed by Jeff Buckley's "often considered definitive" version of the song.[21] In Buckley's version, the bass line *falls down* to the A minor root, and *lifts up* to the F major root (1'13", as shown in Figure 5.1).[22] Using technical musical terminology embedded in the lyrics for ongoing self-description gives

Figure 5.1 "Hallelujah"

the song a strange and #esoteric quality: as Jon Bon Jovi remarked, "If you were really trying to write simple, you wouldn't engage the audience in music theory in the first verse."[23]

"Hallelujah" doesn't confine its self-referentiality to these lines, and in fact forms a case study for several types of self-referential behaviour (a #bombtrack). The topic of #harmony is set at the very start with mention of a "secret chord," and the field of #music confirmed explicitly in the third line. However, the qualities of absence of both of these in the text—that the chord is described as secret, and that the addressee doesn't care for music—are both belied by their appearance in the music: the first, in Cohen's own performance, by the keyboard player illustratively spreading a shimmering A minor chord (vi) above the texture, and the second by the protagonist proceeding to sing about music anyway. Each of these constitutes a #falsepositive, setting a lyric of absence to music of presence, thus contradicting it, a pervasive category in the collection that suggests that music (like the unconscious) doesn't recognise verbal negation.[24] Cohen's fourth verse has lines that possibly allude to the #composition of the song: he admits that "I did my best; it wasn't much … / And even though it all went wrong / I'll stand before the Lord of Song" (2'48")—before whom he should indeed be able to hold his head high, given the desperately protracted creative process over five years that generated around 80 potential verses of this song.[25] And the target of the word #you shifts around variously in the song between an intimate, King David, Samson, and "one" generally.[26] But only one "you" addresses its listener directly, concerning their #perception of the song's interpretative ambiguity: "There's a blaze of light in every word / *It doesn't matter which you heard* / The holy or the broken Hallelujah" (2'10", emphasis added).

Looking more closely at the first verse, the pointing finger of #this ("it goes like *this*") in line 4 should set warning bells ringing (as in Magritte's *Treachery of Images* whose "This is not a pipe" makes us question what its referent is).[27] If the baffled King David in the story is composing "Hallelujah" to sound "like this," then David's Hallelujah must have sounded much like Cohen's in its subsequent chord progression. But how far does that commonality stretch? There is a confusion of #levels, between the song (by Cohen) being sung and the music (by David) being described (a confusion also found for instance in "The Talkin' Song Repair Blues" by Alan Jackson which discusses a song being composed, 1'47"). The lulling repetition of the word "Hallelujah" further compounds the #collapse of the lyrics into pure music with no narrative progression—as Bryan Appleyard argued, rather "like *la la la* or *yeah yeah yeah*."[28] The perhaps surprising popular success of this song (pronounced "baffling" by Cohen's long-time engineer and producer Leanne Ungar, in an echo of the song's lyrics) may have been partly a result of the brain-tickling potential of its self-referentiality (qualities shared by certain other songs such as Neil Diamond's "Song Sung Blue" and Camper van Beethoven's "Take the Skinheads Bowling," both of which exceeded their writers' stated expectations).[29]

Many other self-referential #harmony songs refer to their own chords by name or type, or to their key, but rarely in a straightforward way. Koufax's "Minor Chords" proclaims itself "still waiting for the right time / For a minor chord" (2'29")—but this heavily emphasised

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arrival point defers the expected G minor (the tragic-sounding chord iv, as in Cole Porter's example) by a few seconds, to accompany the question "Why is it every song needs one?" (2'41"). Each of "Play the C chord" by Starflyer 59, "Thanks for the G chord" by John Michael Montgomery, and "G Chord Song" by Suzzy Roche mention a particular chord in the title, but surprisingly none of them use the said chord—at least to the innocent ear. The twist comes in the #performance as the guitars use techniques such as down-tuning or a capo to transpose what we hear into a different key from that in which the performer's fingers are playing—in the latter case, the fingered "G chord" coincides with its mention in verse 2 (1'02"), but the capo on the fifth fret shifts everything a perfect fourth higher. If it seems curious to still name the song after a chord which would only be evident to experienced guitarists with a good line of sight of the fretboard (or accurate sheet music), this is a version of the #esoteric trip based on insider knowledge of #instrumentation.[30] Tonal areas also feature: James Brown announces in "Doing it to Death" that "In order for me to get down, I got to get in D [...] funky D" (3'24"–3'46"), which he then does (as his band obediently modulates on cue), while Billy Bragg's "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" mostly *isn't* (though he does talk about his unique ability to #sing), and Paul Simon's "Take me / I'm an ordinary player in the key of C" (in "Outrageous," 2'31") must be regarded as just a #metaphor for the most straightforward key on the piano (even though it's played on guitars). Daniel Bedingfield (in "All the Little Children," 0'35") and Frank Black (in "Bullet," 1'20") give themselves instructions for harmonic alterations that they respectively don't follow and superficially do follow (*#neurotic*), while George Harrison (in "Only a Northern Song," 0'14") and a-ha (in "Minor Earth Major Sky," 0'57"–1'43") purport to criticise themselves for harmonic infractions that we may or may not join them in condemning (*#aesthetics*). And Fran Healy of Travis uses #intertextuality to point back to the chord sequence he has stolen as he asks "What's a wonderwall anyway?" (on "Writing to Reach You," 2'39"), invoking the then-popular Oasis song that is implied as playing on the radio (*#levels*).[31] All in all, referring to chords or keys in a song lyric is a twisty business with barely a single straightforward instance.

When a lyric or poem mentions the *absence* of a musical feature, such as a harmonic progression, this gives the composer who chooses to set that text a special sort of challenge: to collude in omitting it (arguably a missed musical opportunity) or to defy the text in including it, creating a contradictory #falsepositive. Arthur Sullivan rises grandly to the challenge when he sets Adelaide Procter's "Lost Chord," the story of an improvised chord sequence that the protagonist sought to rediscover but in vain. For the poet, it is enough to evoke in words the chord(s) that "quieted pain and sorrow [...] into one perfect peace," but the musician has to find a progression distinctive enough to live up to these expectations. Sullivan opts for an unusual interrupted cadence from V onto IV^6_3 for the words "great Amen," next moving further to the flat side with chord IV-of-IV to begin his repetition of the crucial line (Figure 5.2). David Temperley agrees that this ♭VII degree is the mysterious chord of the title.[32] Benedict Taylor, however, appears to focus on the rest of the phrase as more significant.[33] That Sullivan manages to make the identity of the special chord not entirely obvious shows his skill in resolving the issue of whether to set it or not. The harmonic distinctiveness of the gesture contributed to the song's immense popularity, and has made it an exemplar of a #falsepositive setting of a negative textual reference.[34]

As the song's story is told in flashback, with a paradoxically superimposed present (when the chord is lost) and past (when it appeared), it is helpful that Clara Butt's magisterial recording of "The Lost Chord" colouristically separates the two out for us by using a

Figure 5.2 "The Lost Chord"

neutral piano sound for the simple poetic narrative (0'26") and blending into the remembered organ sound for the experience of the musical discovery (0'58").[35] Pedants could point out that to make "the sound of a great Amen" requires *two* chords, traditionally IV–I—though Procter's poem mentions only "*one* chord of music"—but even they may have underestimated the compositional requirements: a *great* Amen is normally a more extended setting of the word interposed by a choir at the end of a long section of liturgy.[36] Thus, Sullivan's compositional reading with its melismatic repetition of this key line is particularly apt, the more so for its creative redoubling of the subdominant relation that most listeners would associate with the standard "A-men" progression.

#MELODY

In contrast to the #esoteric theme in self-reference to #harmony, referring to aspects of a song's #melody often has an aspect which is #didactic or pedagogical. The *locus classicus* is Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Do-Re-Mi" (from a musical which is self-referentially titled *The Sound of #Music*). The solfège syllables, traditionally used to teach a melodic outline, are here incorporated into the song lyrics, normally used to tell a story, thus conflating two types of melodic verbalisation usually kept studiously separate. Each syllable is matched to the correct degree of the scale, featured at the start of a line in rising order, and given a mnemonic in English (0'41"). (In this it is the opposite of the medieval hymn *Ut queant laxis*, whose melody became self-referential only once Guido d'Arezzo used its line-opening syllables to name the notes of his hexachord.[37]) The song's aim was for the guitar-strumming governess to teach vocal pitching to her seven pupils (and many thousands of real-world listeners) by using #didactic lyrics to point through to this aspect of musical construction, later using the children as human scale-degrees on which to play a melodic accompaniment ("do-mi-mi, mi-so-so" etc., 4'13").

Intervals of melody can also be set to their own description to help students grasp them: for instance Django Bates' Latin jazz "Interval Song"* ("This is a minor second, and this is a perfect fourth," see Figure 5.3), or David Rakowski's "Music Theory Song (Intervals

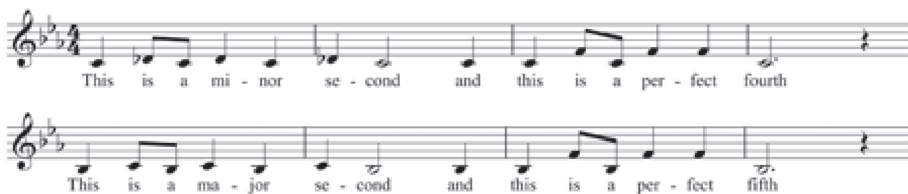

Figure 5.3 "Interval Song"

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Roasting)"* (a re-wording of the famous Christmas song). Perhaps because of the odd juxtaposition between style and function, these examples carry an element of #humour, which is another pervasive theme throughout the collection of self-referential songs. The #didactic effect reaches out beyond melody in "All You Need to Make Music" by Hoagy Carmichael and Stark Reality, which sings about treble clefs (a feature not audible as such), counting the #rhythm, "the first seven letters of the alphabet" (setting them as a rising scale, 2'14"), flats/sharps, and so on. Though whether this is a song, as such, is debatable, since it is the theme music of a children's television programme.

The *ne plus ultra* of #melodic self-reference is merely to use descriptive letters, numbers, and/or solfège syllables to set the notes, without any attempt to construct a narrative in normal sentences. Philip Glass ended up in this position with passages of his opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1975–6), "retain[ing] the use of numbers and solfège as the choral text when Glass, having thus rehearsed the largely untrained chorus, decided to leave his pedagogy exposed in these mnemonic notations of rhythmic and pitch patterns."[38] The poetical content suppressed from such lyrics (for instance, the "1234 123456 [1]2345678" #rhythm and "la sol do" #melody of "Knee Play 1," 2'05") is detached into overlapping spoken recitations, the lack of sung narrative set against the vocal expectations of the genre adding to the overall surreal quality. Glass had already tried out abstract lyrics in his piece *Music in Twelve Parts* (1971–4), a tour-de-force of minimalist textures that uses a voice only secondarily. The composer may have been influenced here by his studies in Indian vocal music, where *sargam* syllables are commonly used for improvisational passages and where whole compositions (*Sargam Geet*) can be sung to such texts. Furthermore, he may have been familiar with the particular type of song (*Lakshan Geet*) which itself names the raga and gives instructions for singing it.[39] Though these pieces might appear to have a predominantly #didactic quality, they are respected artistically in certain schools of Dhrupad practice where the perfection of notes (*swara*) is taken very seriously.[40]

Such self-referential practices can appear to simply #collapse the function of words back into the musical process. It is possible—even common—to find songs whose lyrics show #collapse yet without obvious self-referentiality in the many cases, for instance of "la la la" or "da da dee"—the way that Leonard Cohen ends each of his first three albums (all entitled *Songs*…) as a dissolving back into inarticulacy—or other verbal nonsense as in "Prisencolinensinainciusol," a parody of the sound of American English by Adriano Celentano. In other songs with #collapsed lyrics, the self-reference sneaks back elsewhere, as in "Chanson d'Amour [Ra ta-da ta-da…]" (with Manhattan Transfer), the irritating "Good Morning Starshine" ("Our early morning singing song / Gliddy glup gloopy… [etc.]", 0'46", from *Hair*), or "Blah, Blah, Blah" where one has to pity both Ira Gershwin for having to produce yet another clichéd love-song text ("I've written you a song…") *and* his brother George whose swooping melody received such a half-finished and ironic lyric. Oddly enough, the song still seems to "work" expressively as a sentimental serenade.

Not all songs with potentially #melodic terminology in their titles/lyrics have the relevant musical features to make them self-referential, though some do so in ways that are not obvious. Some "Do Re Mi" songs are *not* underpinned by these scale degrees. For instance, the song by Woody Guthrie (who worked without music notation) just misses the relevant notes, and instead uses the phrase (with "do[ugh]" as in money, 0'42"/0'47"/1'10") as a euphemism or #metaphor for not having the wherewithal to flourish on the West Coast; likewise the one by Blackbear which selects a pentatonic scale instead.

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Figure 5.4 "ABC"

Similarly, it appears at first sight that the Jackson 5's "ABC" ("Easy as 1, 2, 3 / ah, simple as Do Re Mi," 0'25") has no relevant melodic equivalent to any of these lines, despite its pedagogical opening verse ("You went to school to learn, girl [...] I'm gonna teach you"), preferring scale degrees $\hat{5}$–$\hat{6}$–$\hat{8}$ for its pentatonic melody (Figure 5.4). However, the sheet music lets us in on the secret: the chord symbols spell out A♭, B♭-m^7 A♭/C, leading the eye to the bass line, which repeatedly spells out *a♭–b♭–c*, which are also scale degrees $\hat{1}$–$\hat{2}$–$\hat{3}$, and do-re-mi, and so pleasingly fulfil all the self-referential terminology being offered. This song is thus self-referential in the category of #bass (like Cohen's "Hallelujah"), but in an #esoteric way that might only become evident to bass players in cover bands and music theorists.

Finally in the #melody category, some song lyrics refer to "melody" but without further specifics or merely in the context of #genre or #aesthetics (as Irving Berlin's "Play a Simple Melody"). Berlin's "No Strings (I'm Fancy Free)" proclaims "Like an unwritten melody / I'm free..." (1'27"), a poignant claim given his own musical illiteracy, and one whose self-reference would have changed from #healthy to #neurotic once the staff arranger prepared it for publication. Sade informs a manipulative lover (in "Love Affair With Life"*) that "You can't play me, I'm not a melody" (using the terminology here as a #metaphor), but the saxophonist does play back at her, and her voice slides and becomes abstract so it appears that he can, in fact, play her (*#falsepositive*). These apparently simple cases include more examples where the words and music point at each other but may not be in agreement.

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#RHYTHM

Rhythm is a musical parameter that songs love to refer to, especially when they want to encourage us to #dance. And insofar as self-reference makes the listener feel more involved with the song's rhythmicity, such self-reference could be regarded as #manipulative. The club classic "Rhythm is a Dancer" by Snap! instructs the listener "You can feel it everywhere / Lift your hands and voices / Free your mind and join us" (0'46") and thus aims to be self-fulfilling, like Gloria Estefan's slightly earlier "Rhythm is Gonna Get You." The mention of "rhythm" in the latter track doubles as a #metaphor for sexual activity (judging from the context of night and bed: 0'47"/1'02"), as also in "New York City Rhythm," an unusually raunchy number for Barry Manilow in which an oom-cha-cha cross-rhythm imitates car horns (0'50"). The Noisettes' instruction "Don't Upset the Rhythm" seems to be carried out successfully (not a #falsepositive, but instead a double negative), and is backed up with other #manipulative lines ("It's the rhythm you've been waiting for […] Go baby, go!" [0'42"/1'04"]) and a metrical countdown to the chorus ("four, three, two, one," 1'02"). The song is in fact a #bombtrack that also has self-referential #instrumentation ("Kick, snare, hat, ride," parts of the drum kit, at 0'47", though some of these instruments appear on beats other than where they are named) and #technology ("We'll crank the stereo, even when the speakers blow," 1'29"—a #manipulative device to help this song meme promote itself).

Mentioning #rhythm in a popular song was a craze in the 1920s and 1930s, as Tin Pan Alley discovered the syncopations of ragtime that derived from the polyrhythms of African music. Here the Gershwins and their working method pushed the boundaries of rhythmic-lyric relations: Ira preferred to set words to pre-composed melodies, and George's complex metrical patterns often provided some challenges which they would argue over for days.[41] The tune that began life as "Syncopated City" has a 7-beat melodic cycle set over a 4-beat accompaniment pattern, and Ira came up short on the lyrics before deciding it had a "Fascinating Rhythm"—so here the lyrics do describe the music.[42] The equally poetically troublesome chorus of "I Got Rhythm" sets strings of dotted crotchets over 4/4, and does fulfil the boast the composer is implicitly making (or is it the song itself talking?). Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing" could equally be a comment on #genre, but it illustrates its rhythmic qualities with a wordless syncopated "doo-ah, doo-ah, doo-ah" (0'30", adding "All you got to do is #sing […] Just give that #rhythm everything you've got"). Self-awareness of rhythm in styles of black origin continues through to the beats of rap tracks from the turn of the millennium: Jurassic 5's statement of #aesthetics in "Concrete Schoolyard" gives us "Original beats from real live MCs" (1'32"), while the Beastie Boys' "Super Disco Breakin'" promises "All you need / A little beat for the rhythm and some words to read" (1'19").

There are more specific ways to talk about rhythmic or temporal aspects in a song. Paramore proclaim "To this 4/4 beat, I'm in time with you / To this 4/4 beat I would die for you" (0'24", in a track called "#Stop This #Song", as it also does at 3'05"). The questionably titled "Beat Me, Daddy, Eight to the Bar" is just one of the hits by the Andrews Sisters that evokes the rhythmic quality of boogie-woogie style, though the variety of performance versions (in equal quavers or swung quavers) leaves the listener in doubt about its detail. Madonna's "4 minutes" (with Justin Timberlake) sounds like a likely duration for the song, but this varies widely depending on which mix version you're listening to. Perhaps the most complex example here is Jacques Brel's "La Valse à Mille Temps" with its elusive

French puns on aspects of time: its "valse à trois temps" can mean a waltz in 3/4, or a waltz performed three times or in three types of weather or three moments of your life, and it works its way up through "une valse à cent temps" (which could be a waltz with 100 beats per minute) which sounds the same as "une valse à cent ans" (a waltz of 100 years) and "une valse ça s'entend" (a waltz you can hear).[43] More specifics on tempo are given by various songs that mention their own "beats per minute," though not always accurately. "Speed" by DJ Quik correctly logs its own 124 bpm (1'02"), while Carcass should really swap the 72 bpm mentioned in their "316L Grade Surgical Steel" (2'45") with the 100 bpm in "Futures"* by Mindless Self Indulgence for them both to be closer to the truth (to be fair, the latter does state that "100 beats per minute, baby / Don't mean shit to me," 0'13"). If speed can be self-referential, a prime candidate is Barry Manilow's "Why Don't We Try a Slow Dance" which obeys by cutting from an up-tempo introduction to a gently swinging ballad. The "Largo to presto… the accelerando" of Solefald's "The New Timelessness" (0'30") reflects a move towards a tighter metrical structure. Finally, Belle and Sebastian's "This is Just a Modern Rock Song" turns abruptly into a self-referential #bombtrack partway through (4'39") and metrically counts out its own #structure: "I count '3, 4' and we start to slow / Because this song has got to stop somewhere" (6'52")—just like this section.

#INSTRUMENTATION / #TECHNOLOGY

Some songs reference their own #instrumentation/scoring, and different categories of instrumental allusions tend to generate different aspects of self-referentiality. "Piano" songs seem to lead to reflections on one's identity, as a "Piano Man" for Billy Joel or a "Piano Picker" for Richard Carpenter/Randy Edelman (*#me*), or on the intimate relationship between the player and the instrument: Tom Waits blames it for his tipsy rendition of "The Piano Has Been Drinking (Not Me)," while in "If I Sing" (from *Closer Than Ever* by Maltby and Shire), the musician-persona emotively thanks his piano-playing father for his musical inspiration, describing an impossible loop where he played him "this tune" (*#temporality*). "Guitar" songs are many, and also include some gratitude numbers (e.g. "More Than Just This Song" by Brad Paisley), plus several whose self-referentiality is borderline such as "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" (where the solo is played by Eric Clapton rather than George Harrison himself, and not that gently). The chorus of the Ting Tings' "Great DJ" combines "the girls, and the boys, and the strings" with "the drums, the drums, the drums" (at 1'00", with "the bpm" at 1'44" *#rhythm*), describing an uplifting musical experience which, by extension, may be holistically #manipulative of our experience of the song. Drums are often announced in songs, e.g. "So here it comes, the sound of drums" in Rogue Traders' "Voodoo Child" (0'57"), or "Clint steps in to establish the beat" in Cursive's "Sink to the Beat" (0'27"–0'44"), a #bombtrack from an artist known for his self-reference. But the best example of deferred and then gratified percussive expectation is in the unrelated middle section of Tegan and Sara's "You Went Away," where only a quietly strummed acoustic guitar accompanies "My loud guitar comes in, my thumpin' drums come through" twice before the full band explodes with said sonorities (1'02").

The notion of "bass" (whether instrument or register) is so rich with overtones (!) that the musical self-reference reaches easily into pun and metaphor in songs such as Maltby and Shire's "Back on Base" where the singer interacts with the (double) bass player on stage, and Meghan Trainor's "All About That Bass." Trainor was inspired, by the given title line combined with the shape of a bass guitar, to write a pop hit defending women with

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normal bodily curves, but her addition "no treble" is confusing in terms of both the metaphor and the self-reference (a musical #falsepositive). Natasha Bedingfield (with her piano in the #bombtrack "No Mozart") and George Formby (in "With My Little Ukulele in My Hand") both resort to instrument metaphors to allude to sexual matters ("Your fingers know just where to go," Bedingfield, 1'05"), and, despite her protestations, Meghan Trainor might be thought be to making double entendres in "Bang Dem Sticks" (1'34", from the album self-referentially titled *Title*).

Wind instrument references seem to be more elusive. Fleur East's X-factor output "Sax" is a missed opportunity with only a synthesised generic "horn section" to support the instrumental mimers in the video, while Joni Mitchell's "For Free" explores her own #aesthetics, #performance, and remuneration (*#me*), but does eventually let us hear (at least in the studio version, 3'59") an evocation of the clarinet playing that sparked her reflections. Comedy and parody return with the contrafactum "Ill Wind" by Flanders and Swann which uses a piano and vocal arrangement of the finale of Mozart's Horn Concerto, No. 4 to tell the story of a lost horn, its sound evoked through #intertextuality and lyrics though not literally present. Steve Reich may have made a #falsepositive in his setting of "It is not a flute note either" from *The Desert Music* (second movement, 0'59"–1'40", scored to include flutes and piccolos), but it is hard to imagine how to evoke the ensuing "relation of a flute note to a drum" without using any such instruments. Whistling often brings a #manipulative or imperative dimension, as Eric Idle tells us to "purse your lips and whistle, that's the thing" (in "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life", 0'53"), perhaps following the advice in Rodgers and Hammerstein's "I Whistle a Happy Tune" from *The King and I* (and both do whistle during their songs, as a structurally integral part of the melody). The many instances of #sing include some imperatives and manipulatives too, such as Joe Raposo's "Sing [Sing a Song]" (famous from The Carpenters) whose refrain "la la-la la-la / la la la-la la-la / la la la la-la-la laaa" (1'11"/1'46") is presumably the response to that instruction, plus Travis's song also called "Sing," and the grammatically conditional "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" whose massive popularity did partly achieve its aim.

Introductions of the band (or instructions to them), if spoken while the music is playing, can raise questions of #framing or liminality: is this part of the song, or peripheral to it while still part of the musical event? Jazz ensembles often blur these boundaries naturally in live performance so that their spoken introductions form a type of paratext that mediates the music to the listener.[44] But such instrumental introductions are written centrally into the melodic song content in Cole Porter's "Now You Has Jazz" and Sly and the Family Stone's "Dance to the Music." These could be considered partly #self-constituting since the lyrics provide instructions on how to construct such a song. Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* (from 20'18") and Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* similarly announce their own instrumentation, but move outside the song genre to a peculiar narrated instrumental format.

Tracks can cite their own use of #technology, both electronic instrumentation and their means of recording and dissemination.[45] The classic Roland 808 drum machine is name-checked lovingly by the Beastie Boys ("Nothing sounds quite like an 808," emphasised in "Super Disco Breakin'," 0'37") as well as J. Cole's #me-based "Cole World" (1'26") and Far East Movement's "Like a G6" (2'33"; this title also refers to the #harmony outlined in the riff). The title of De la Soul's "This is a Recording (For Living in a Full-Time Era)"* shows straightforward awareness of its own mediality—like much rap more broadly (classic examples might include Run DMC's "Jam Master Jay" and Jurassic 5's "The Influence").

Edith Piaf impersonates an old record player in "Le Disque Usé" (from 3'20"), complete with clicks/skips, wow-and-flutter, and running down at the end; other record-related tracks seem to be either just #manipulative ("Put Your Records On" by Corinne Bailey Rae) or punning ("Single," by Natasha Bedingfield, which was released as such). Brand New's song called "Mix Tape" complains (to an ex?) that "You don't appreciate Brand New" (*#me/us*) but still thereby provides her with "the first song for your mix tape." Tape-rewinding noises demonstrate how music can manipulate time and establish parallel realities on "Tell Me, Tell Me … Baby" (by NSYNC, 0'04") and "Empty Cans" (by The Streets, 2'55").[46] The CD format gets a look-in with The Streets' #bombtrack "Let's Push Things Forward" ("Guaranteed Accuracy Enhanced CD") amongst other technological and aesthetic references. Zero 7's song "Throw it All Away" even shows awareness of its own track position: "Side one, track two / On a record of you / I'm even stuck in a groove…" (2'12")—a skill that it shares with Blur's "Song 2" ("Woo-hoo"), a working title that stuck. Geri Halliwell's "Ride It" has lots of #manipulative dance elements but includes a direct message to get itself played (not just a sexual metaphor): "You're a DJ I'm the song, take me out and turn me on" (1'01"), perhaps picking up the conceit from Joni Mitchell's "You Turn Me On, I'm a Radio," which was written to appeal to DJs.[47] Giving voice in the first person to the song or the medium itself is a classic self-referential move whose peculiarity is perhaps underappreciated by a casual listener.

#SILENCE

"Music is an ordered arrangement of sounds and silences," though the latter often receives less credit than the former.[48] Songwriter Robert Fripp has observed more poetically that "music is the cup which holds the wine of silence."[49] And John Cage's "silent piece" *4'33"* (1952) is normally construed as a piano or ensemble piece, but given its origins could equally well be considered as (and rendered as) a ground-breaking song.[50] Since #silence is as fundamentally important as sound in creating music it, too, can be used as an element in self-reference, but this is a particular challenge for the songwriter, who has to work extra hard to point at the silence that is being indicated.

The *locus classicus* of assertive song silence is in Alanis Morissette's "All I Really Want," where she asks "Why are you so petrified of silence? / Here, can you handle *this*?" (3'00"), followed by a clear gap in the musical texture, before she picks up the questioning. Though we assume she is primarily addressing a particular person as #you in the song, the challenge about silence also aims itself through the speakers to every listener, asking whether we can indeed handle having our attention directed to nothingness in the middle of a pop song.[51] The silence is directly indicated by the word #this, the deictic element that is used by many self-referential songs to allude to (parts of) themselves.[52] Few artists have the boldness to make a total silence for long: Dream Warriors' "Wash Your Face in My Sink" asks "Why do you frown, it's the end of the sound?" (3'20") but fill the ensuing short lacuna with three soft cowbell notes to keep the beat, while MC Hammer's famous "Stop! Hammer time" (in "U Can't Touch This," 1'54") maintains a light cymbal riff as continuity. In "We Rock the Most,"* DJ Trax gives us 11 seconds of only a dull electronic throb, but sees fit to warn us beforehand "Get your speakers ready" and afterwards asks us "D'you like it if I pause? Yeah, you sure would!" (1'05"–1'30"). These instances reinforce Cage's point that silence is not the "clearly defined opposite" of sound but only a relative phenomenon.[53]

The sonic cut-outs in Madonna's "Don't Tell Me" foreground artificial glitching of the CD #technology to reflect the #stop of the lyrics, and so pretend to constitute, in

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Danielsen and Maasø's terms, a "medium silence" (caused by equipment failure) rather than a textual silence (a gap in communicative content).[54] (This setting of the "don't stop" constitutes a #falsepositive, since the music does stop.) In contrast, the self-referential gap in "Throw it All Away" by Zero 7 is a textual silence—specifically what Dennis Kurzon would call a conversational silence (like that used by Alanis Morissette).[55] For Kurzon, conversational silence is a deliberate part of a speech act: it relies on a sense of musical phrase structure to discern that the words "Just sing me the tune […] I'll wait for your cue" followed by a trumpet solo suggest that the singer has either missed their cue or is still waiting (0'33"–0'47").[56] Suzanne Vega pausing to listen to the bells of the cathedral (1'32", not audible to us) in the unaccompanied "Tom's Diner" would be a further conversational silence. Silence can be logically paradoxical, as when Dizzee Rascal's "Bonkers" tells us that "a heavy bass line is my kind of silence" (0'25"), in a passage *without* any bass line (so does this make a silence or a lack of it?)—or when Seal sings, quietly, that "Silence can't be any louder / when you're gone" (in "Silence", 1'29").[57] Finally, Eminem satirises the principal usages of song silence in his comedic #bombtrack "Just Lose It", which has a "Stop!," a CD glitch, and an admission that "I don't have any lines to go right here," a case of vaunted compositional #failure that opens up a broader potential category.

#STRUCTURE

Songs that refer to their own structure span a wide range of types and styles. The distinctively accumulative shape of Barry Manilow's "One Voice" is outlined in the lyrics, which go beyond referring to vocality as a form of #instrumentation.[58] The sections of standard song construction are flagged in songs such as the Ramones' "Judy is a Punk" ("Second verse, same as the first", 0'21"), Pavement's "Gold Soundz" ("And they're coming to the chorus now", 0'23"), and Butch Walker's ambivalent "Song Without a Chorus" (a #composition #failure story). James Brown is famous for verbally telling his band to "Take it to the bridge," variants of which appear in his "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a) Sex Machine" (2'03"–2'12") and "Super Bad" (1'32") as well as his self-conscious "I'm Real" (2'44"–3'02"). Later songs allude to Brown's catchphrase, straightforwardly in the case of Robbie Williams' "Strong" (0'40") and Justin Timberlake's "SexyBack" (0'30"–0'48"), but as humorously #neurotic in Led Zeppelin's "The Crunge" (which ends "Where's that confounded bridge?," 3'00"–3'16"). "Microphone Fiend" by Eric B and Rakim seems to explain its own structural #aesthetics: "Music orientated so when hip-hop was originated / Fitted like pieces of puzzles, complicated" (0'25"). And holistic tours-de-force of song #structure alongside several other parameters are provided by "The Song That Goes Like This" (by Eric Idle), "How to Write a Love Song" (by The Axis of Awesome), and "I Really Do Write the Songs" (by Barry Manilow), all examples of #humour with a #didactic twist (#bombtracks).

Folk songs and children's songs provide examples of circular structure which can be paradoxical in its #temporality or in jumping in and out of levels. In "The Two Sisters" (4'14"–6'18") and "The Famous Flower of Serving Men" (4'09"–4'58"), the singer recounts how an enchanted harp or a bird emerges and sings *this song* to another character to reveal the story—which would produce an infinite recursion if it sings of itself singing the song. The "maiden singing in the valley below" of "Early One Morning" sings the chorus and the central verses of this very song, but presumably not the framing verses that describe herself being overheard. Likewise "this sweet serenade" that "The Hippopotamus" of Flanders and

Figure 5.5 "I Know a Song That'll Get on Your Nerves"

Swann sings is presumably only the chorus ("Mud, mud …"), signalled by the pointing finger of #this at the end of the verse.[59] The unattributed "I Know a Song That'll Get on Your Nerves" (distinct from, but related to, Norman Martin's "The Song That Never Ends") uses its self-replication to be deliberately annoying (Figure 5.5): the implied second-time bar ("Get, get, get on your nerves") can be eschewed in favour of infinite looping for maximum effect.[60] Equally provocative is Weird Al Yankovich's "(This Song's Just) Six Words Long," which was intended as a parody of George Harrison's "Got My Mind Set on You" and voids its own titular claim by first expanding its lyrics to "This song *is* just six words long" and then by rambling about its own compositional #failure. For those of us who find repetition engaging rather than irritating, Steve Reich's *The Desert Music* (third movement, part 2) lyrically points to the way his music is habitually constructed ("It is a principle of music to repeat the theme, repeat and repeat again …"), and King Crimson's "Indiscipline" ("I repeat myself when under stress," 6'41") and Rage Against the Machine's "People of the Sun" ("It's comin' back around again," 0'51"–1'09") both refer to repetition as part of their creative strategy, while Sy Oliver and Sid Garris's catchy "Opus No. 1" (*#title*) incorporates its description ("The melody's dumb, repeat and repeat," 0'15") into a holistic #bombtrack that also considers which artists might give it a memorable #performance.

Vocal pieces that are more thoroughly self-constituting come from both ends of the #classical music tradition. Machaut's *Ma fin est mon commencement* was written in the 14th century as a two-part half-length puzzle fragment, with lyrics that are instructions for how to construct the complete three-voiced song: "My end is my beginning and my beginning my end. […] My third voice–three times only–turns back on itself and thus ends."[61] It is a pleasing example of the song text speaking in the first person (*#me*).[62] Adrian Willaert's *Quid non ebrietas?** of 1524 is a motet in praise of drunkenness, in which the tenor slips through the circle of fifths, ending on E♭♭ while the other parts reach a cadence on D. The accidentals are not notated and rely on contemporary melodic logic to deduce, an #esotericism that is clued in the words which refer to revealing secrets and teaching new skills.[63] Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969) consists of a short text that describes its subsequent process: "I am sitting in a room […] recording the sound of my speaking voice, and I am going to play it back into the room [and record the result] again and again until […] any semblance of my speech […] is destroyed."[64] Though the definitive performance is Lucier's own, the musical/sonic qualities of the piece could be reconstructed merely by following the text which is both instructions and content. This is vocal music that is a song only in the most extended sense—along with other electronica such as its album-mate *English Phonemes* by Arrigo Lora-Totino (more #collapse than self-ref) and the comedian Bill Bailey's "Jean Michel Jarre is a Fraud"* whose content reveals itself to be its own #aesthetic criticism.

Conclusions

Allan Moore has observed that "song is clearly a heightened situation, a situation designed to emphasize certain features and to play down others […] But singing the popular song is

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a situation that nonetheless has to deal with its 'unnaturalness' carefully."[65] While a "normal" song keeps the lyrical level well propped away from the musical activity so as to create an imagined world where one is expressing thoughts/wishes/feelings in denial of one's current songfulness, the appearance of self-reference in a song returns us to the reality of the song's own materiality. In contrast to the examples of self-referential songs given here, we can see that the function of a normal song—to tell a story or evoke an emotional experience—relies on an "unnatural" suspension of awareness of the song(ful) process itself. As Werner Wolf has explained, the narrative artwork by default privileges heteroreference, "the 'normal' intended quality of signs [...] to inform us about the world."[66] In the case of a song this is normally a world evoked rather than present, which, can therefore be easily disrupted by the stark reality of musical production poking into its bubble. The reaction on the part of the listener to this disruption can range from disorientation and exasperation to amusement and fascination.

When self-reference predominates in a song, then, does it represent a higher level of communicative sophistication, or merely a lack of the element of effective storytelling that would usually be present? Wolf clearly feels that on balance self-referentiality raises the complexity and interest of a piece in ways that include providing amusement, engaging the intellect, and bolstering its status as an artwork.[67] Wolf's use of the term "metareference" (with his description of it as "logically higher") betrays his spatialised assumptions of the practice's superiorising qualities.[68] However, that self-referential songs are somehow *less* developed than regular songs is also arguable, from the way that they show a preoccupation with their own substance, and hence a "failure to launch" fully into the imaginative task that song-writing seems to demand.[69]

Paradoxically this may be where the interest in self-referential songs ultimately lies: by bouncing our attention back outside of any convincing narrative dream world (or in twisting that imagined world back out to share our reality), self-referential songs are the "red pill" that show us the bizarreness of normal evocational song functionality and how we collude in song-making's process of deception. (Of course as listeners we are free to go back into the song matrix at any time, only hopefully with, as John Cage put it, "[our] feet a little off the ground.")[70] Hofstadter has argued that although instances of self-reference may seem anomalous, they have been fundamental to developing understanding of the systems that they occupy, and hence also of intelligence and consciousness—to which we might add creativity.[71] Further quirks of songfulness could certainly be explored—for instance, do songs successfully written about writer's block contradict their own claim of creativity interrupted? Are we really so vain that we think Carly Simon's song is about us? And how old could Paul Simon logically have been when he wrote "Leaves That Are Green"? Continued investigation into self-referential songs, particularly for their handling of the compositional and performing processes, the contradictions of temporality inherent in these, and the nebulous identities of the writer/performer and the listener/audience, will reveal deeper paradoxes in song practice that are not normally brought to awareness.

Notes

1 This chapter was written by Bethany Lowe based on research undertaken jointly with Freya Jarman for a co-presented paper at PopMAC, University of Liverpool, July 2013. Her enthusiasm and our lively discussions have been much appreciated. If it takes a village to raise a child it has certainly taken a network to suggest songs for our purposes (including some in areas that we

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might never have encountered); there are too many to name but 'those without whom' include Sarah Kerton and Tim Allan, with notable contributions by Kelly O'Connor, Leah Thompson, Matt Thomas, Michael Fagg, and our colleagues at the Universities of Liverpool and Newcastle. This chapter also could not have been researched, ordered, and written without the technologies and applications that have developed since the idea was conceived.

2 Allan F. Moore, *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 3.

3 Douglas Hofstadter, "On Self-Referential Sentences," in *Metamagical Themas: Questing for the Essence of Mind and Pattern* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), 7.

4 Poetry too can be self-referential, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's short poem 'The Homeric Hexameter' which both describes and exemplifies that poetic metre: "Strongly it bears us along in swelling and limitless billows …."

5 Taken from Hofstadter, "On Self-Referential Sentences," 6, 7, 16 (quoting John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1968), 109), and 17 respectively. The often playful and paradoxical quality evident in these examples is reflected in plenty of the songs in the collection (for instance the song titles by Drew Danburry, "This is my favourite song on the album" and "Giving this song a title wouldn't give you any idea of what it's really about").

6 Hofstadter, "On Self-Referential Sentences," 3.

7 Hofstadter, "On Self-Referential Sentences," 33. No judgement on either category (of "healthy" or "neurotic") is intended.

8 These examples are adapted from ibid., 33.

9 As summarised by Macksey in the Foreword to Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (Literature, Culture, Theory)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xi–xxii.

10 Werner Wolf, ed., *Metareference Across Media* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009): 4, 42–49, and 7 respectively.

11 Butler, Martin, "'Please Play this Song on the Radio': Forms and Functions of Metareference in Popular Music," in *Metareference Across Media*, ed. Werner Wolf, 299–318 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009): 311–312 and 300.

12 Butler, "Making Sense of the Metareferential Momentum in Contemporary Popular Songs," in *The Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media*, ed. Werner Wolf, 507–524 (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2011).

13 Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* (London: Hogarth Press, 1985), 183–184.

14 Vic Gammon, *Desire, Drink and Death in English Folk and Vernacular Song, 1600–1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). See especially 51–82.

15 Katherine Williams and Justin A. Williams explore the identity of the popular singer-songwriter and the expectation that we have from them of "authentic individual expression." See their Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2. Songwriters such as Dufay and Dowland are from the much earlier art-music tradition of the Renaissance, and hence do show a more integrated text-music relationship—including musical references, such as "I am overjoyed and wish to sing" ("Resjoys sui et vueil chanter" from Dufay's 'Mon cuer me fait tu dis penser', 2'57" on accompanying playlist as below) and the self-referential "To earth, impart I *this*" (from Dowland's "O Sweet Woods," 1'09", emphasis added). The pointing finger of "this" and its oddities are explored in sections of the text below.

16 A second set of songs which refer to their own *process*—composition, performance, identity, audience, failure, and temporality—will be perused in a subsequent article.

17 Butler, "Please Play this Song on the Radio," 312.

18 The hashtag format alludes to hyperlinks on blog sites that provide for alternate regroupings of the content (though with a nod to Twitter usage), and the reader should understand them as part of the sentence, except where they are italicised as shorthand (#*thus*).

19 The number of songs referenced in this chapter makes a full discography impractical. The notion of who is communicating with us—what it means to say "I" or "me"—in a song is a complex self-referential topic for a subsequent paper.

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20 The playlist can be found at: spoti.fi/2uIRue0

21 Alan Light, *The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley and The Unlikely Ascent of 'Hallelujah.'* (New York: Atria Books, 2012), xix.

22 Since even Cohen's version doesn't bring this out, writers seem confused about the meaning, and assume that the words "fall" and "lift" are some combination of emotional #metaphor and description of the #melody (e.g. Allan F. Moore, "The Bitter Taste of Praise: Singing Hallelujah," 5. Available online at www.mus.ulaval.ca/lacasse/texts/04Moore.pdf).

23 Quoted in Alan Light, *The Holy or the Broken*, 150.

24 Freud pointed out that negation is a way of acknowledging the repressed; music, like psychoanalysis, "take[s] the liberty of disregarding the negation and of picking out the subject-matter alone." See Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id, and Other Works* (London: Vintage Books, 2001), 235.

25 Light, *The Holy or the Broken*, 3.

26 The mutability of the "I" and the "you" in songs is discussed in Keith Negus, "Authorship and the Popular Song," *Music & Letters* 92, no. 4 (November 2011): 617.

27 There is more about 'this' and Magritte in Andreas Mahler, "The Case is '*this*': Metareference in Magritte and Ashbery," in *Metareference Across Media*, ed. Werner Wolf, 121–134 (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2009).

28 Tim Footman, *Leonard Cohen, Hallelujah: A New Biography* (New Malden, Surrey: Chrome Dreams, 2009), 211. Examples of various types of self-referential behaviour are scattered throughout Cohen's oeuvre; we found at least eight other artists for whom the self-referential lightning has struck three times or more in different songs.

29 Light, *The Holy or the Broken*, 217.

30 Though there is a paradoxical mix of pragmatism and playfulness. Suzzy Roche comments that "We adjusted the key to fit our voices. There is no mysterious reason other than that." (Personal communication 15 October 2015.) She adds "However, I like the idea that songs, things, people … are not always easily identified by their names!"

31 This is a development of the type Hofstadter mentions as "allusion as similarity of form" ("On Self-Referential Sentences," 16).

32 Nicholas Temperley, *The Romantic Age, 1800–1914* (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 129. This progression has also been described as mixolydian. See Derek Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlour* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989), 145.

33 Benedict Taylor, "The Lost Chord: Sentimentality, Sincerity, and the Search for 'Emotional Depth' in 19th-Century Music," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 40, no. 2 (December 2009): 217–220.

34 Arthur Jacobs, *Arthur Sullivan: A Victorian Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 106–107, 124.

35 Joanna Swafford has provided a feminist reading of the song based on the 19th-century disapproval of women playing the church organ. See Swafford, "In Search of the 'Lost Chord': Sounding the Silent Song of Procter's Poem." *Songs of the Victorians: An Archive and Analysis of Parlor and Art Song Settings of Victorian Poems*. Available online at www.songsofthevictorians.com/sullivan/analysis.html. Swafford argues that, because the piece was penned by a woman poet, composed by a male composer (who supplied the missing chord), and generally sung by female singers with male harmonic accompaniment, the song dramatises a pattern of having/not having (of the mysterious chord) that could well attract a Freudian/Lacanian interpretation.

36 In a parody of this song, Jimmy Durante asserted he was "The Guy Who Found the Lost Chord" which in amongst all the musical references he made very clear was a diminished seventh high up in the piano's register (0'58"/1'10"/2'15"/2'40" etc.).

37 Richard H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 60–63.

38 Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 227.

39 Self-reference in Indian music is discussed in Priyadarshi Patnaik and Gouri Karambelkar, "Self-Reference in Indian *Gayiki* Tradition," *Muse India*, 59 (January/February 2015): 1. A *Lakshan*

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Geet is explored in Sobhana Nayar, *Bhatkhande's Contribution to Music: A Historical Perspective* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan Ltd., 2011), 234–236.

40 My thanks to David Clarke for discussing this repertory and its practice with me. (Personal communication, 28 March 2017.)

41 Deena Rosenberg, *Fascinating Rhythm: The Collaboration of George and Ira Gershwin* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 91.

42 Robert Wyatt and John Andrew Johnson, eds., *The George Gershwin Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 68.

43 Thanks to Miranda Griffin for help with the subtleties of the French here, and to Freya Jarman for the initial explanation.

44 Genette, *Paratexts*, xviii.

45 Anne Danielsen and Arnt Maasø point out that mediating technologies are "a constitutive aspect" of popular music, since "the recording is [its] primary medium." See Anne Danielsen and Arnt Maasø, "Mediating Music: Materiality and Silence in Madonna's 'Don't Tell Me'," *Popular Music* 28, no. 2 (May 2009): 127.

46 "Music unfolds in time. Time unfolds in music. [...] If we believe in the time that exists uniquely in music, then we begin to glimpse *the power of music to create, alter, distort, or even destroy time itself, not simply our experience of it*." (Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* [New York: Schirmer Books, 1988], 1, 5. Emphasis in original.) A cassette, like other recording formats, presents peculiar encapsulations of the temporal into the spatial dimension(s).

47 Steve Rosen, "Joni in Person," *Sounds Magazine* (9 December 1972). Available online at http://jonimitchell.com/library/view.cfm?id=2265.

48 Thomas Clifton, *Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 1.

49 Robert Fripp, "The Vinyl Solution," *Musician, Player, and Listener* 24 (April–May 1980): 34–5.

50 One of Cage's precursor thoughts was to sell a silent record to the Muzak Company in order to provide some minutes of relief from background listening—which would indeed contexualise this piece as a sound-free song. The piece's duration of four and a half minutes was based on a standard length of canned music on a 12-inch disc. See Kyle Gann, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33"* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 125–128.

51 Morissette thanks silence twice in her later song "Thank U" (*1'05"*). She has an interest in spiritual writers such as Eckhart Tolle, who recommends embracing stillness and silence (e.g. in his *Stillness Speaks: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment* (Vancouver: Namaste Publishing, 2003), 1–10). See Maranda Pleasant, "Alanis Morissette Talks Enlightenment and 'the Divine Feminine'." *Origin* (25 May 2013): 57.

52 Andreas Mahler would class this more specifically as a 'cataphoric' *this*, as it refers to something that is to follow. See Mahler, "The Case is "*this*'," 124.

53 Cage, *Silence*, 13. See also 7–8 and 14.

54 Danielsen and Maasø, "Mediating *Music*," 129–130.

55 Dennis Kurzon, "Towards a Typology of Silence." *Journal of Pragmatics* 39, no. 10 (October 2007): 1675–7.

56 Michal Ephratt gives as a useful definition that "where the rule is 'Speak', not speaking is communicative." See Ephratt, "The Functions of Silence." *Journal of Pragmatics* 40, no. 11 (November 2008): 1911.

57 Conversely, the Dirty Heads' take on "Silence" ("the silence deafening", 3'27") is closer to deafening.

58 Its country cousin "One Voice" by The Wailin' Jennys has a similar vocal build-up but is more strophically delineated.

59 Glenn Gould's fugal "So You Want to Write a Fugue," arising from his Bach studies, verbally encourages the creation of a fugue but puzzlingly indicates that this process would begin only at the end of the piece.

60 This gem has achieved popular familiarity in Britain probably thanks to the 1980s/90s comedian Joe Pasquali, who gives it a particularly annoying performance on the *Des O'Connor Tonight*

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show. Available online at https://youtu.be/k8wuxdEqfDY?t=7m6s. (Accessed 8 December 2017.) An alternative second-time bar in the song's folk tradition is the looping "and #this is how it goes."

61 Jennifer Bain, "'…et mon commencement ma fin': Genre and Machaut's Musical Language in His Secular Songs," in *A Companion to Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. Deborah McGrady and Jennifer Bain, 79–101 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 82.

62 The piece is unusual even in the #esoteric Machaut's collection. His other puzzle pieces hide the name of the desired lady. See Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, "'Ma fin est ma commencement': The Essence of Poetry and Song in Guillaume de Machaut," in *A Companion to Guillaume de Machaut*, eds. Deborah McGrady and Jennifer Bain, 69–78 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 72. Hoppin notes that no other puzzle pieces by Machaut use retrograde motion in all parts. See Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 427.

63 Wibberley, Roger. "Quid non ebrietas dissignat?: Willaert's Didactic Demonstration of Syntonic Tuning." *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 1 (February 2004): §2. Thanks to Howard Wilde for this suggestion.

64 Strickland, *Minimalism*, 199.

65 Moore, *Song Means*, 188–9.

66 Wolf, "Metareference Across Media," 18.

67 Wolf, "Metareference Across Media," 65–68.

68 Wolf, *The Metareferential Turn*, v.

69 Wolf compares this situation to "a man who, in the face of the oncoming winter, should build a house for shelter but instead endlessly reflects on the tools he should use for that purpose." ("Metareference Across Media," 69.)

70 John Cage, *A Year from Monday* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 96.

71 Hofstadter, *Metamagical Themas*, 3.

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