"How you call to me, call to me": Hardy's Self-remembering Syntax
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The phonograph, in one sense, knows more than we do ourselves. For it will retain a perfect mechanical memory of many things which we may forget, even though we have said them.[1]

What should we make of Thomas Edison's claim that "the phonograph [...] knows more"? Edison is hesitant, carefully delimiting his assertion to "one sense," and cautiously non-committal, applying to an unarticulated consensus about what we ourselves know and so preserving the primacy of human knowledge. And yet his claim is bold: the phonograph will surpass humanity in its characteristic activity of *knowing*. The reality and tragedy of this is felt in the belated second clause of the second sentence – "even though we have said them." The perfected "mechanical memory" overrules any authorial right to knowledge, intruding upon this most intimate relation of human identity, the self-reflexive knowing that constitutes the sense of self. This is what is at stake when Edison claims the "phonograph [...] knows more." But he is careful to hedge his assertion round with qualifications to prevent this conclusion. It is hard to talk about what it means to "know" – we can only talk about it in "one sense" or the other – and it is particularly hard when knowledge is distanced from the human mind, retained within a "mechanical memory."

It is this difficult distancing of knowledge from human consciousness and its inscription as material text that is the distinctive form nineteenth-century phonographic experiments give to epistemological questions. From Alexander Melville Bell's Visible Speech which graphically depicted sound in the human mouth, to Isaac Pitman's phonographic shorthand in which the "*very sound of every word is made* VISIBLE,"[2] to Edison's wax cylinders traced with the voices of Tennyson and Browning, these attempts to inscribe sound – to make voice occur outside of the body – were shadowed by questions about knowing occurring outside the mind. For as fugitive, temporal, embodied utterances were given permanent, reproducible, graphic form as phonographic writing or recordings, so knowledge, expressed and witnessed to by words, seemed to become unmoored from human consciousness.

Phonographic inscription not only dislocates voice from the speaking body, it also transforms it. Words become grammalogues or needle-etchings, sound becomes visual notation. And this new material existence requires a new way of listening – a listening that begins with reading a text, interpreting grammalogues or running a needle across the cylinder. The transformation that accompanies dislocation similarly reformulates ideas about what knowledge is and how it might be known. Edison's claim is that the phonograph "knows" – it does not merely possess "knowledge" but actively "knows," cognition fully transposed from the human mind to the phonograph's "mechanical memory." But what does it mean for the phonograph "to know"? Can it still mean awareness of sensory impression, or perception of truth, or recognition of pattern, or acquaintance with a thing, or insight into

oneself, or self-reflexive consciousness? Given the transformation that occurs in phonographic inscription, even the basic elements of human knowledge – consciousness, temporal sequencing, self-reflexivity, and so on – are open to transformation as phonographic technologies replicate and surpass our patterns of knowing.

Hardy's well-known poem, "The Voice" (1912), reverberates with the sound of these questions:

> Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me
> Saying that now you are not as you were
> When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
> But as at first, when our day was fair.[3]

The disembodied voice ("Woman much missed"), the call that summons presence ("how you call to me, call to me/ Saying"), the alteration of form when it becomes memory ("that now you are not as you were") when it becomes inscribed as text – these questions can be heard here, echoing on the edges of the poem's soundscape. But when I say that this poem *reverberates* with these questions, I mean precisely that; the *form* registers their presence and re-expresses it as internalised pattern, as vibration, instead of re-sounding them as verbal content. Phonography, after all, transforms sound into text as it is remembered. For Hardy, these questions about forms of knowledge and knowing reverberate in the repeated syntactical phrase.

The opening line illustrates Hardy's characteristic use of the repeated syntactical phrase. It is a moment of syntactical and referential coincidence. The woman's call is only posited, its tonality, content, and extension unheard. But as syntax progresses through time it generates a textual pattern that is conterminous with the unheard projection of sound. The rhyme and repetition of "call to me, call to me" becomes a form of textual continuity, movements of sound temporally extended as they are heard to repeat. And so the woman's unheard 'call' finds textual presence in the ordered recurrence of "call." The inaudible voice is demarcated by the text, the connection established when "call" refers to the absent sound *and* begins to recur as syntactical pattern. After this moment of coincidence syntactical pattern and voice recur independently of each other but continue to bear the impress of the initial association. The newly involuted phrasing of the second and third lines distinguishes them from the repetitions of the first, suggesting a shift of attention from the sound of the woman's "call" to a gloss of its content. The syntactical phrase, however, is repeated in the third line as "who was all to me," recalling its original association with the woman's voice, the echo sounded more loudly by its prominent rhyme with "call to me." As the syntactical pattern continues, it reproduces its initial association with voice, giving it an ongoing formal presence despite a changed semantic context. The woman's voice is no longer the subject of attention and description but rather of explication and translation. The repeated syntactical phrase which gives voice (and, its ghostly companion, presence) textual form, is the characteristic feature of Hardy's best poetry. This syntax, in its recursions and evocations and

re-soundings, shares many formal features with nineteenth-century phonographic technologies, and focuses attention on forms of disembodied knowing.

A brief note on syntax. By "syntax" here I mean *poetic syntax*. Poetic syntax quite properly begins with the construction of sentences according to the principles of grammatical well-formedness – it begins as *syntax*. But in poetry it is not only syntax that governs word-order: versification – rhyme, rhythm, metre, lineation, echo, repetition, and so on – also circumscribes the ordering of words. And then prosody moves in and across this dyadic organisation. Timbre, stress, accent, tonality, pitch, duration – the qualities peculiar to a lyric text, a text with some thought for its vocal possibilities – negotiate a particular spoken form of the poem that has sound and extension. But prosody is not just a third organisational mode, adding its own demands to the sometimes competing, sometimes divergent orders of syntax and versification. Prosody also mediates towards particularity, the possibilities of syntax and versification constrained to possible vocal configurations. But when we read silently, these configurations remain undecided, suggestive of particularity but remaining legion. Eric Griffiths elegantly describes this strange quality of silent prosody:

> The intonational ambiguity of the written text may create a mute polyphony through which we see rather than hear alternatively possible voicings, and are led by such vision to reflect on the inter-resonance of those voicings.[4]

Poetic syntax consists in this coexistence of syntax and versification and prosody – and the animation of all by the latter. It is formed in these coincidences and dissonances, relations and irrelevancies, and in their ongoing rubbings alongside each other. Thus, "call to me" is a syntactical pattern but versification (rhyme, dactylic shape, stanzaic position) strengthens its repetitions and echoes while prosody foregrounds the interplay between text and (un)heard voice. The repeated syntactical phrase is therefore a part of verse in which syntax, versification, and prosody co-operate to give the phrase a distinctive form and unity, a formal identity which persists through its repetition. Nevertheless, despite the inflections of versification and prosody, the more basic form of syntax as sentence-ordering, uninflected by readerly attention, retains its priority in Hardy's poetic syntax. This is because the syntactical phrase determines what gets repeated and prosodic elements find continuation, repetition, or variation within it.

Returning, then, to the consonance between Hardy's syntactical repetitions and phonographic technologies. Some innovative interdisciplinary work has investigated the effect of phonographic developments on the Victorian imagination. Friedrich Kittler's landmark *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999) traces the phonograph's influence on the late nineteenth-century fascination with haunting and the supernatural. He suggests that the development of phonographic technologies was enabled by the "immaterials" of scientific thought – namely, the gradual scientific-materialist dismantling of the human soul until it became merely "the nervous system, and the nervous system [...] so many facilitations" (p. 29). Within this framework the "soul" takes on inverted commas, a scientific untruth. But, expelled from the body, the disembodied 'soul' becomes a sign for the material body. It is

this metaphorization of "soul," Kittler argues, that enabled the late Victorian imagination to conceive of the disembodied voice as a real presence, as a representation of the entirety of being, and so opening the door to ghostly voices and spectral presences. In turn, these ghosts gave cultural form to the scientific "immaterials."

For Kittler, the growth of phonographic sciences paradoxically prompted a resurgence of interest in the occult and supernatural. An alternative narrative of demystification is charted by John Picker's *Victorian Soundscapes* (2003): sound is transformed from a "sublime *experience* into a quantifiable and marketable *object* or *thing*, a sonic commodity" (p. 10). Although Kittler and Picker consider the interaction between phonography and poetry, their discussion remains limited to the inflexion given to verse by an awareness of these alien technologies. They do not consider how poetry may re-imagine the phonographic endeavour in idiosyncratically poetic terms. Tim Armstrong attempted to apply some of these observations about the effect of phonography on the Victorian imagination more directly to Hardy's poetry in *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory* (2000). His attempt, however, remains focussed on the imaginative forms given to scientific "immaterials," considering the haunting (and hauntologies) of Hardy's verse primarily as a thematic – rather than poetic – phenomenon.

Just as these studies of the cultural forms of phonography do not extend their observations of mechanical technologies to the *poetic* re-formulations of the recorded, disembodied voice, so critical studies of Hardy's verse-technique perceptively comment on the construction of his texts without acknowledging that these insights are ultimately about the nature of Hardy's poetic syntax. The best critics move towards observing the strange recurrence of his syntactical phrasing as it circles against his more linear narratives. Here is Dennis Taylor on Hardy's "metrical rhythms": "The patterns language assumes are momentary, they grow out of one time configuration of mind and reality, they grow old, they bind us for a while in their obsolescing frames."[5] With characteristically well-weighed words, Taylor captures the tone and movement of the repeated syntactic phrase: it moves through time, recalling an original but lost "configuration" of subject and form, of voice and syntax. Yet despite the straining of his language towards connoting a *poetic* phenomenon – the conjunction of syntax and prosody in the "patterns" of "language" – this discussion is firmly and repeatedly delimited to the prosodic, "the basic nature of English accentual-syllabic form." Similarly, Eric Griffiths observes the double-nature of Hardy's poems in which articulated thought is shadowed by alternative structures of knowledge: "the printed voice of his poetry allows for the kind of contemplated wistfulness with regard to the implausibility of what he still desires [...] and which defeats his powers of expression [...]."[6] Nevertheless, this observation remains confined to the local equivocations over pronunciation which leave unvoiced alternatives or meanings wrong-footed by unexpected stress-patterns.

While Taylor and Griffiths comment incisively on the particularities of Hardy's verse, neither discern that the instances of divergence they observe between form and thought are part of the broader phenomenon of a poetic syntax that offers an alternative way of knowing – a way of knowing which derives from, diverges with, and returns to inflect articulated

knowledge. Donald Davie remains the most astute observer of Hardy's verse. Following *Articulate Energy* (1955), Davie's studies in Hardy are a practical extension of this inquiry into the syntax of English poetry. Attending to syntax as a locus of meaning is particularly productive with Hardy because, as I noted earlier, the repeated syntactical phrase is a favourite mode and a characteristic feature of his best verse. Davies observes that Hardy's poetry, in its insistent foregrounding of alternative, syntactical structures of knowing, can make difficult reading:

> For readers, it seems, will always take more readily to the subjective making demands on the objective, than to any traffic the other way. And for this reason most readers, even in England, will always find Hardy's poetry, however estimable and touching, insufficiently exciting.[7]

These "objective demands" are the demands of a poetry that is expressive on its own terms, insisting on attention to its own structural patterns, rather than conforming to readerly habits of knowing. Davie's observation reflects the uncertain critical reception of Hardy's verse, veering between moments of praise for its technical accomplishment and decades of inattention. However, Davie wrongly implies that the "objective demands" are most felt by the reader. For Hardy, the possibility that syntax offers an alternative form of knowing is most immediately a puzzle and a resource for the poet.

Returning to "The Voice," the repeated syntactical phrase – already in complex relationship to voice in the first stanza through their initial coincidence and subsequent divergence – undergoes further convolutions.

> Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,
> Saying that now you are not as you were
> When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
> But as at first, when our day was fair.
>
> Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,
> Standing as when I drew near to the town
> Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
> Even to the original air-blue gown!
>
> Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness
> Travelling across the wet mead to me here,
> You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,
> Heard no more again far or near?
>
> Thus I; faltering forward,
> Leaves around me falling,
> Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,
> And the woman calling.

The first stanza seems to establish the pattern that "call to me" syntactically represents the woman's voice. But *what* is represented by syntax? The sound of her voice, or the content of her call, or the memory of the sound, or the real presence of the woman, or the hallucination of her presence – or does syntax represent none of these, merely telling a story about its own re-callings? And how this representation works is also unclear. Is the connection between syntax and "voice" technical, or formal, or epistemological, or ontological – or merely the result of an initial coincidence, impressing on syntax an arbitrary association with voice?

After attending to the woman's call as repeated syntactical phrase in the first stanza, Hardy's attention gains a new analytic acuity in the second. Taking the first stanza's repetitive patterning of the syntactical phrase (twice in the first line, once at the end of the third), the second stanza demands that this syntactical repetition prove its ability to represent voice. At first, "Can it be you that I hear?" seems a statement of simple disbelief – is that really Emma's voice? But, remembering the questions the first stanza raised, it soon sounds a more cunning question – can it be *you* that I hear? (Or am I only hearing syntax?) And the experiment begins – "Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then." The construction in which the woman is grammatically present as "you" is repeated in its syntactical ordering and with its internal rhymes; if this is indeed a syntactical trace or analogue of her voice, then, Hardy challenges, she should appear through its repetition. The syntactical phrase repeats in the third line – "yes, as I knew you then" – making further time for the woman to appear by continually invoking her as a pronoun and the syntactical context in which she appears.

This experiment is inconclusive and the third stanza attempts a new experiment with the repeated syntactical pattern. "It" is exchanged for "you"; calling and hearing are exchanged for the meaningless sound of the "breeze." This is an experiment in proving the converse, that the repeated syntactical phrase can represent missed-ness as much as presence, its recurrence conjuring only "listlessness" and "wan wistlessness." The woman is emphatically absent, or, as the earlier draft put it, "consigned to existlessness." The final line needlessly confirms the representational failure of syntax – "Heard no more again far or near."

And so Hardy seems to have reached a cynical impasse that refuses to believe the pleasing lie that syntactical recurrence represents – if only by a one time configuration of form and sound – voice and, with it, presence. He does not deny that momentary representational inflections can occur as syntax moves through time. Indeed, the woman's disappearance from the soundscape is not stated but hypothesised in a question. Hardy's experiments, however, insist on a divergence between text and reading, a divergence of the kind described by Taylor and Griffiths. Syntax is not a straightforwardly mimetic feature of the text, always leading back to voice, returning textuality into sound; it maintains a stubbornly textual identity as a pattern of verbal organisation, a syntactical shaping of form. And the poem occurs out of this syntactical resistance, as Hardy works with and against the self-remembering, self-knowing returns of syntax to question the basis, substance, and reality of his own knowledge.

The final stanza turns the tables on this assumption that syntactical repetition only gains patterns of meaning when presented to the knowing human consciousness:

> Thus I; faltering forward,
> Leaves about me falling,
> Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,
> And the woman calling.

The anxious experiments with syntactical representation are exchanged for a hopeless and lonely perseverance, abandoning the magical thinking of the earlier stanzas and moving on in a new, leaner stanza-form. The wind – the sound of nothingness, emphatically *not* the woman's voice – extends its long vowels into a long line, breaking with the shape of the repeated syntactical phrase and asserting the continuance of its own, unknowing sound. And yet, the "leaves around me falling" quietly re-sound the woman's "call", eventually falling into an unforeseen, unasked for evocation of "the woman calling." The repeated syntactical phrase quietly recurs, remembering itself and calling up its initial association with voice.

Previously, syntax recurred unknowingly, unaware of the meaning of its returns. Remembering was a form of cognition only for the attentive poet or reader who, prompted by syntactical returns, continued the work of re-calling associated meaning. Now, however, syntax remembers its own associations after attention has lapsed, spontaneously evoking its original voice. This recalls Edison's comment that the phonograph "knows more than we do ourselves" by virtue of the out-lasting perfection of its record. For Edison, time would reveal the phonograph's superior knowledge as memories – eventually forgotten even by their authors – remained present to it in their original form. But "knowledge" is the wrong word for what the phonograph "knows"; the perfection of its recall is a present-tense phenomenon, its "knowledge" extracted from the linearity of time and always available to return. It is much more like the persisting gerund-form of *knowing,* of continual consciousness of what is and what has been. And this present self-recalling, self-knowing activity is also what becomes evident in Hardy's syntax once the creative mind has ceased to interpolate meaning. Shelley eloquently describes this strange habit of apparently inanimate forms to reveal a lasting, unshakeable, and strangely present form of *knowing* long after their encounter with the mind and the mutual impression of cognition:

> The curse of this life is, that whatever is known can never be unknown. You inhabit a spot, which before you inhabit it, is as indifferent to you as any other spot on earth, and when, persuaded by some necessity, you think to leave it, you leave it not; it clings to you – and with memories of things, which, in your experience of them, gave no such promise, revenges your desertion.[8]

As long as the human mind is attentive to form – and to the poetic syntax through which it is formed – the knowledge it appears to represent seems the result of the interpretative action of the human mind. Creative participation in the structural returns of form and interpolation of the original association generates a pattern of conscious remembering co-authored by human

mind and syntax. However, once the human mind becomes inattentive, the divergence between human knowledge and the knowing of the inanimate form becomes evident; the form continues to *know* unaided, remembering itself, calling up its own instantiations, and evoking its past meanings.

Dennis Taylor's comments on Hardy's "metrical rhythms" are again instructive if they are allowed to describe the prosodic *and* syntactical phenomenon of the repeated syntactical phrase embedded in the patterns of poetic syntax:[9] "the metrical rhythms which initially served as a conventional frame for the story becomes part of the story's plot and reveals its culmination."[10] Taylor is describing the habit of the "metrical rhythm" – or, to fully characterise it, the syntactical phrase – to move from being a structural element, organising and carrying sense, to participating in and eventually controlling narrative progression. Poetic syntax shifts from being a knowledge-ordering structure to an actively *knowing* form. Thus, in "The Voice" the repeated syntactical phrase comes to intervene in the narrative, re-calling the woman's voice despite the inattention of the poet. But how is "metrical rhythm" – or the patterning of poetic syntax – able to "know" in this way? Taylor describes these knowing forms as "obsolescing frames," the dying reverberations of a "one time configuration of mind and reality." Poetic syntax as a temporal phenomenon gives an ongoing but fading life to the associations generated by momentary coincidences of ordering principles and semantics. The signifying power of poetic syntax is therefore derivative from semantics; it does not inhere in its own organisational patterns. Their efficacy in prophesying the narrative outcome comes not from foreknowledge so much as an original insight into the basic dynamic of the narrative, the principles along which action will occur – its effect is revelatory rather than formative. At heart, Taylor's understanding makes syntactical knowing an hallucination, a haunting of syntax by ghostly knowledge which has its true significance and origin in a prior historical and semantic moment.

While Taylor's "obsolescing frames" is beautiful in its plangent fatalism, it settles the nature of syntactical knowledge and knowing more than Hardy's verse allows. Part of the fascination and beauty of Hardy's verse is that it never goes on long enough to reveal whether syntactical 'knowing' is derivative (by becoming obsolete) or inherent (by continuing and inflecting). Both possibilities are kept in play: that poetic syntax is the shadow of knowledge, a fatalistic recurrence; and that it is ontologically independent, patterning reality and determining outcomes. Because its nature remains unsettled, Hardy is able to maintain a productive resistance between his own knowledge and the patterns of knowing present in poetic syntax. This resistance advances the question as to whether the "knowledge" offered by poetic syntax is a disembodied echo of one's own knowledge, or whether it witnesses to an external consciousness, another form of knowing coming into dialogue with the creative mind.

Hardy's "The Shadow on the Stone" (begun 1913: finished 1916) explores what kind of knowing – derivative, inherent, or something else – syntactical patterning might represent:

I went by the Druid stone

> That broods in the garden white and lone,
> And I stopped and looked at the shifting shadows
> That at some moments fall thereon
> From the tree hard by with a rhythmic swing,
> And they shaped in my imagining
> To the shade that a well-known head and shoulders
> Threw there when she was gardening.
>
> I thought her behind my back,
> Yea, her I long had learned to lack,
> And I said: 'I am sure you are standing behind me,
> Though how do you get into this old track?'
> And there was no sound but the fall of a leaf
> As a sad response; and to keep down grief
> I would not turn my head to discover
> That there was nothing in my belief.
>
> Yet I wanted to look and see
> That nobody stood at the back of me,
> But I thought once more: 'Nay, I'll not unvision
> A shape which, somehow, there may be.'
> So I went on softly from the glade,
> And left her behind me throwing her shade,
> As she were indeed an apparition –
> My head unturned lest my dream should fade.[11]

These "shifting shadows," falling early in the poem, are the invitation to listen to Hardy's syntax. The pairings of the earlier lines – "white and lone," "stopped and looked" – measure and ponder the movement from one idea to the next, the transitions marked and delayed. The "shifting shadows" disrupt this singular and slow syntax, the "lone" speaker and stone overtaken by sudden numerousness, the parts of which are hidden within an obscuring plural. Simple, clearly delineated thought is put into sudden, rushed animation; once demarcated relations register only as grammatical traces within the compression. This grammatical and syntactical shift occurs as part of a larger instance of alteration within the poem's structural patterning. The roughly iambic character of the opening lines and their prominently stressed monosyllables switch into syncopation. The long-vowelled rhymes of "stone" and "lone" are lost to the crammed syllables and close /sh/ sounds of the "shifting shadows." The "shifting shadows" mark a stylistic shift within syntax as sentence-ordering and within the broader category of poetic syntax. The "shifting" of these shadows initiates a moment of coincidence between semantics and syntax. Intransitively shifting (if such a thing is possible) across the surface of the stone, they also register their own *shifting* of the syntactical structure.

This trick of using syntactical patterning to draw syntax and "shadows" under the "subject" of the poem ("shifting shadows") makes syntax the origin and primary reference of

the subject, turning our reading back to the origin and ordering of meaning, the *knowing* in syntax. Words and subject embedded within the poem's structures occur as annotations of syntax. They have an independent and coherent existence yet are secondary to the syntactical structure, instantiations of it, only finding a larger connected context within it. Once again the primacy of syntax as the structure of knowledge is affirmed by its greater coherency. This trick occurs again in the following lines:

> And I stopped and looked at the shifting shadows
> That at some moments fall thereon
> From the tree hard by with a rhythmic swing.

The syntax and lineation of the fourth and fifth lines produce an awkward twisting – "That at some moments fall thereon" stands as a coherent unit, completing sense and the requirements of rhyme, and describing the shadows' movement upon the face of the stone. The fifth line, however, introduces a belated causality to the shadows' movement. This does not change the sense of the fourth line but it does necessitate an awkward recalibration: attention momentarily shifts to the tree that suddenly looms close-at-hand and its previously unnoticed agency, only to find that attention is actually directed towards the shadows' movement, from tree to stone. Reaching the "rhythmic swing," it again has a double-meaning; it describes the movement of the shadows on the stone and the awkward syntactical parabola articulating the cause of this movement. Moreover, "rhythmic swing" picks up the disruptive sounds of "shifting shadows" (the /i/ vowel-sound and the internal /-ing/ rhyme) and repeats the moment of syncopation. The shadows' identity within the poem (as a particular syntactical pattern) is once again embodied within a description of itself: the "rhythmic swing" is indeed a rhythmic swing. This consolidates the dual identity of the shadows as a poetic-syntactical phenomenon and as an envisioned occurrence.

From this point on, however, the "shadows" do not feature in the poem's lexicon, only finding a belated and modified existence as the woman's "shade." Nevertheless, the shadows do recur as a repeated syntactical phrase:

> And they shaped there in my imagining
> To the shade that a well-known head and shoulders
> Threw there when she was gardening.

These lines twice recall the moment of the shadows' fall – as the tree's shadows prompt a remembrance of the woman's shadows, and then the original moment of the woman's shadows falling on the ground. With each moment of recall, elliptically described without giving lexical form to the shadows, we hear their rhythmic swing – "imagining," "gardening." This is a *description* of how these shadows prompt the remembrance of another set of shadows occurring alongside an *enactment* of the shadows' recurrent falling. The first occurs in the narrative in which the shadows are absent, while the latter occurs as a syntactical form, containing their rhythmic, metrical, and rhyming patterns.

From the moment of complete synonymity, syntactical pattern and semantics begin to diverge. The shadows' rhythmic swing no longer quite coincides with the point at which they are verbally present. The rhythmic swing instead occurs at the end of the lines in which the shadows are implied, while the repetitions of the "rhythmic swing" as a recurrence of poetic syntax ("imagining," "gardening") no longer directly refer to the shadows, only the associated phenomena, even shifting away from the noun into new grammatical forms. The identity that occurred in the original "rhythmic swing" is unloosed. But the power of that moment continues to be felt – now patterned syntax alone signifies the shadows' recurrent fall.

This patterning of syntax not only decoratively enacts the verbal narrative; it sustains the moment of "rhythmic swing," its trace continually recalling the moment of the shadows' fall which is the ground for the narrative meditation on its significance. This syntactical patterning does something that the words of the poem alone cannot do; namely, create and sustain a single moment of recurrence. Rhythmic patterning signifies a distinct and differently shaped narrative to the progression of articulated, linear sense. The importance of the interplay between syntax and the sense of the words it orders is evident in the poet's conclusion: as long as the shadows fall on the ground, so long can he enjoy the imagined presence of the lost woman. This interplay suggests a new thought. It is not simply that the co-presence of different patterns of knowledge is a check and restraint to articulated, authorial knowledge, revealing its limitations, its hallucinations, its ultimate trajectory. Instead, the particular form authorial knowing takes is determined by the knowing of patterned syntax; it is the *difference* between the knowledge expressed through the progression of semantics and the knowing of recursion, that enables each pattern of knowledge to exist. The continual remembering of the falling shadows in syntax provides the origin and ongoing motive for the narrative's linear reflection on the scene. It is in their difference that the particularities of each form of knowing are sustained.

But where does this other syntactical form of knowing originate from? Is the syntactical awareness the poet's unconscious perception of the falling shadows, still present to the mind yet forgotten as it turns his thoughts to the woman? In this case, the recursions of syntax against the linear meditation cause the mind to discover the origins of its own thoughts, the knowing behind its knowledge. Or is this syntactical awareness truly another form of knowledge, the arbitrary association between falling shadows and a particular syntactical movement, giving substance to the unconscious returns of syntax's self-recalling "mechanical memory"? This is truly a different form of knowledge, the same knowledge shared at the moment of association but then processed and remembered differently, *known* through different structures.

Hardy himself wonders about these co-present forms of knowing which bring the woman into being. "How did you get into this old track?" This "track" could be the garden path beside the Druid Stone at Max Gate, the woman physically present within the objective, external reality. Or "track" could be the familiar habit of thought, the woman present as a many-times recalled memory. This is the dilemma of whether syntactical knowing is

derivative or inherent; whether it represents the reverberations of past knowledge or an ontologically distinct reality, an alternative form of knowledge and knowing. But this "track" could also be an allusion to the tracks or grooves of the phonograph. In this case the woman's presence is neither in the mind nor in the garden but exists as inscription – really present but transposed into text, fully present but distilled into a form awaiting replay.

This sense of "track" as inscription is present in all three meanings. The garden "track" comes into being through repeated journeys, becoming the abstract marker of movement through the co-presence of its borders with the historical passages through it. Similarly, the mental "track" of habitual thought is the familiar shape of many rememberings, not a memory in itself but a record of distinctive and repeated occurrence in the mind. And the wax-tracings of the phonographic cylinder are not themselves sound but the edges of the hollow through which the running needle recalls the recording. This touches on the strange relationship between forms of *knowing* and forms of *knowledge*. For the place where knowing exists – where recorded instances are ever-present – is very different to the knowledge it expresses: the track is very different to the amble in the garden, the needle-etchings are very different to Tennyson's recital – the poet's knowledge of the woman's "presence" is very different to the syntactical form of knowing that facilitates it. Knowing stands as the negative shape of knowledge – the phonographic record to the voice, the plaster cast to the bronze – a means of reproduction that is very unlike the thing it reproduces. And yet, knowing and knowledge, syntax and semantics, cannot be separated.

Taylor recognised the significance of inscription in Hardy's poetry:

When Hardy sees his poems as recorded 'impressions', he is conscious of them as inscribed impressions, impressions of a world long gone. An impression is a one-time conjunction of mind and world; it is by nature 'fugitive', and can only be preserved in an inscription.[12]

Inscription is what is left by transient impressions; textuality becomes a form of knowing that enables a return to – or of – that initial moment of knowledge. It is in attention to the particularities of the text that lost knowledge recurs. Griffiths nicely puts this dynamic between text and reading, knowing and knowledge:

An achieved version of the transcriber's plight, of this phantom understanding in the hollow of an ambiguity between the contexts of writing and speech dominates much of the greatest English poetry of the nineteenth century [...][13]

Griffiths suggests "understanding" lies in the divergence between text and reading, in the choices made and the choices not made as text becomes reading and voice. But Griffiths overlooks a further form of "phantom understanding": the knowing that occurs textually, in the self-rememberings of poetic syntax. This textual understanding is an experience of knowing rather than knowledge, a gerund rather than a noun, a felt presence rather than a quantifiable reality.[14] And in this sense Griffiths' "phantom understanding" is apposite: just

as the phonograph breeds ghosts out of its recorded voices, so textual inscription indicates the activity of understanding without translating it into a noun, into an "understanding" that can be imparted, separated from its form, and given away.[15]

Recently, interest has intensified in questions of cognitive poetics, of the kinds of knowledge and knowing that might be available in poetry. The self-rememberings of Hardy's syntax, however, trouble a too-easy re-formulation of poetic "knowledge" as "an experience of knowing."[16] In Hardy we experience multiple forms of knowing: the knowing witnessed to by articulation, the knowing of the syntax that remembers its associations, the knowing that lies in the divergence of semantics and syntax, the knowing of textual inscription, and so on. And the status of these knowings is unsettled; is syntactical knowing ontologically distinct from or the reverberation of the poet's knowledge, the patterns of his thought running through into form? Are there two forms of knowing or two knowings in one form? Hardy habitually leaves these questions undecided, continuing each poem for just long enough to reveal the clinging of knowledge to form, the persistence of memories in things, the habit of what is known to return suddenly and "revenge its desertion." But these questions are not merely unsettled; they are also productive. The resistances and coincidences between the different forms of knowing develop a sustained and self-reflexive meditation on the quality and substance of the poet's knowledge. Hardy's uncertainty about what the poem might know amplifies Angela Leighton's caution: "If we shall need 'to ask what literary forms might know or know of', this might also mean rewriting the terms of such knowledge, and being willing to listen to the strange things that are said."[17]

But *shall* we need to ask? To press the question too hard is to forget that poetry does not offer knowledge but forms of knowing. Hardy does ask how poetic form knows and what knowledge it might give but his question receives no answer:

> [...] there was no sound but the fall of a leaf
> As a sad response; and to keep down grief
> I would not turn my head to discover
> That there was nothing in my belief.

It seems unanswerable, the poem mute about its operations. But there is a response – of sorts. A "sad response." How does the "leaf" answer? It falls in the same stanzaic position as the "rhythmic swing," remembering the initial coincidence of semantics and syntax and the subsequent memory of semantics in syntax. The falling leaf recalls how syntactical self-remembering once prompted other forms of memory, of returns to other forms of knowledge. And yet as the rhyme scheme falls into completion, Hardy refuses to return his attention to the falling shadows and "discover/ That there was nothing in my belief." He seems to abandon the idea that syntax might be a real form of knowing. And yet – there is something in his belief. That returning, remembering "leaf" quietly falls once more, prolonging the hope that as long as poetic syntax is allowed to remember itself without the interpolative remembering of the poet or reader, so long will these delicate forms of knowing be sustained.

1 Thomas A. Edison, "The Perfected Phonograph," *The North American Review* 146, no. 379 (June 1, 1888): 649–650.

2 Isaac Pitman, *A Manual of Phonography, Or, Writing by Sound: A Natural Method of Writing by Signs That Represent the Sounds of Language, and Adapted to the English Language as a Complete System of Phonetic Short Hand*, 7th ed. (London: Bath: Samuel Bagser and Sons; Isaac Pitman, Phonographic Institution, 1845), p. 8.

3 Thomas Hardy, *Thomas Hardy: The Complete Poems*, ed. James Gibson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 346.

4 Eric Griffiths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 66.

5 Dennis Taylor, *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody: With a Metrical Appendix of Hardy's Stanza Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 121.

6 Griffiths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry*, p. 220.

7 Donald Davie, *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 50–51.

8 Letter to Peacock, Milan, 20 Apr. 1818, quoted in Adam Piette, *Remembering and the Sound of Words: Mallarmé, Proust, Joyce, Beckett* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 6.

9 Indeed, the need to extend any discussion of 'metrical rhythms' into a discussion of poetic syntax is intuited by Taylor in his repeated returns to Hardy's comment that, 'where the thought-form is new the stanza-form will give, in combination with it, a new variety of its own cadences'. Taylor, *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody*, 131.

10 Taylor, *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody*, pp. 118.

11 Hardy, *Complete Poems*, p. 530.

12 Taylor, *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody*, pp. 175.

13 Griffiths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry*, p. 24.

14 This corrective to the grammar of aesthetic knowledge has been argued for by Michael D. Hurley, "How Philosophers Trivialize Art: Bleak House, Oedipus Rex, 'Leda and the Swan,'" *Philosophy and Literature* 33, no. 1 (2009): 107–25, 107.

15 This insight is the basis for a couple of studies attempting to establish some of the unique forms of knowing that occur when the textuality of a poem is attended to: Theodor W. Adorno, "Punctuation Marks," trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, *The Antioch Review* 48, no. 3 (July 1, 1990): 300–305; Simon Jarvis, "To the Letter," *Textual Practice* 25, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 233–43.

16 Hurley, "How Philosophers Trivialize Art," 107.

17 Angela Leighton, *On Form: Poetry, Aestheticism, and the Legacy of a Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 28.