

SUBLIME NOISE: MUSICAL CULTURE AND THE MODERNIST WRITER

By

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ENGLISH

December, 2008

Nashville, Tennessee

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First thanks go to the members of my incomparable dissertation committee. Mark Wollaeger's perceptive critiques and (somehow) relentless optimism have been deeply appreciated, and Carolyn Dever's clarifying questions and sound advice have proven invaluable. As teachers, mentors, and readers of my work, Mark and Carolyn have been models of professionalism and generosity since I first arrived at Vanderbilt. Joy Calico's near-omniscience and keen critical eye have aided this project from its inception, and she has graciously tolerated my encroachment on her disciplinary terrain. Jonathan Neufeld has in many ways helped me grapple with the complex philosophical issues at stake (more complex than I had imagined!). To all four, I extend my sincere gratitude.

My research has been funded by a grant from the College of Arts and Sciences; by the Robert Manson Myers Graduate Award in English; and by a year-long fellowship at Vanderbilt's Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. Mona Frederick, Galyn Martin, and Sarah Nobles have worked tirelessly to make the Warren Center a pleasant and intellectually vibrant environment, and while a fellow there I benefited greatly from the collegiality and wisdom of Michael Callaghan, Megan Moran, George Sanders, Nicole Seymour, David Solodkow, and Heather Talley. My thanks and best wishes to all of them.

It has been a privilege to spend graduate school surrounded by such an extraordinary group of graduate-student colleagues: energetic intellectual fellow-travelers and first-class friends. Starting with the colleagues who shared my entire journey through graduate school—Nicole, Katherine Fusco, Ben Graydon, Christian Long, and Jeff Menne—I wish to acknowledge and thank Beau Baca, Yeo Ju Choi, Emily Hines, and Brian Rejack for their wisdom and

friendship. Rebecca Chapman, Sarah Kersh, and John Morrell, terrific friends by any measure, deserve special thanks for carting me around Nashville after Beau's air-tight perimeter defense left me temporarily immobilized. Diana Bellonby, Brian Essex, and Megan Minarich offered useful and surprising contributions to my research; and during the late stages of writing and revision, I was enormously grateful for the brilliance and big-heartedness of Tom "o' Bedlam" Armstrong and Caroline "C-Lion" Heaton.

The Vanderbilt English Department has consistently encouraged and supported my work. Every conversation I have had with Jay Clayton, Roy Gottfried, or Paul Young has taught me something important about modernism. While researching at King's College, Cambridge, I benefited from the generosity of Bridget Orr and Jonathan Lamb. I have much admired Lynn Enterline's Ovidian wisdom, and always appreciated the patient and cheerful assistance of Donna Caplan, Sara Corbitt, Carolyn Levinson, Janis May, and Dori Mikus. And a tip of the hat to the undergraduates on whom I have inflicted these texts and arguments; they have responded with curiosity, insight, panache, and good humor.

My debts extend even beyond the boundaries of Music City: Marsha Bryant, Natalie Gerber, Chris Goddard, Scott Klein, Patricia Maguire, Wendy Moffat, and Matthew Smith have all allowed me to draw on their time and energies. I frequently recall and appreciate the wisdom of my professors and mentors from the University of Puget Sound, particularly those who instructed me in the ways of words and music: Douglas Cannon, Peter Greenfield, Duane Hulbert, Priti Joshi, David Luper, and J. David Macey Jr.

Finally, I wish to express heartfelt thanks to my father, Richard Epstein, for his unflagging assistance with the work of personhood over the last twenty-seven years. To him this dissertation is dedicated with love and appreciation.

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## PREFACE

Literary modernism, driven by a desire to fragment and then reassemble artistic form, turns and returns to music: a "universal language" and a provincial one; sometimes a call to reflection and sometimes a call to arms; resistant to explanation and, for that very reason, the subject of constant inquiry. Alongside the modern soundscape of urban traffic, new media and recording technologies, and the sounds of warfare, the seemingly numinous qualities of music acquire specific and material kinds of significance. This dissertation argues that modernist writing interprets and engages with modernist music as an art form with a range of cultural and institutional effects. It contends that a chief ambition of modernist writing and music is to critique and mediate the increasing presence of noise, and in so doing, to reconsider the cultural and institutional forces underpinning artistic production.

It is almost a cliché to begin an account of "modernism" by acknowledging both the need to define the term and the hopelessness of doing so. What all such accounts acknowledge, however, is the experimental quality of modernist form: its "testing of the limits of aesthetic construction."<sup>1</sup> Put differently, Walter Pater's nostrum (after Arthur Schopenhauer) that "*All art constantly aspires to the condition of music*"<sup>2</sup> means just what it says: arts do not merely represent or comment, but aspire, moment by moment, such that the experience of art can enable the continuous reinvention of a creatively interpretive subject.<sup>3</sup> Modernist literature aspires to the cultural effects of music by rethinking how language relates to other musical and non-musical kinds of sound. The salient structural properties often attributed to modernist writing—narrative discontinuity, fragmentation of voice, emphasis on subjective and psychic states, allusion and intertextuality, resistance to realism, mimesis, and representationality—can be considered as

aspirations not just to music's aesthetic condition, but to its cultural effects: as a means of cultural commentary, as a historically emplaced comment on the properties of art *per se*, and as fuel for the "hard, gemlike flame" of aesthetically lived experience. Considerations of the aesthetic "condition of music" invite a complementary account of music's *material* condition: its status as a constructed artifact, and its relation to the social and economic stuff of daily life.

This dissertation focuses on two elements of music, dissonance and rhythm, as competing engagements with the pervasive presence of noise in the early twentieth century. Understood in this context, modernist form can be grasped as a set of reactions to *noise* by means of textual *dissonance*, whose movement through time is marked by the (often irregular) forward motion of *rhythm*. Both dissonance and rhythm are under significant pressure in twentieth-century musical culture, and modernist texts implicitly and explicitly debate the relative value of dissonance and rhythmic experimentation as ways of interpreting modernity. Arnold Schoenberg's effort to "emancipate the dissonance," to expand the possibilities of harmonic expression, gave dissonance a particular kind of cultural and political cachet in the early twentieth century. Theodor Adorno's philosophical reflections on dissonance, which should not be conflated with Schoenberg's own program, emphasize its negative critical potential, its ability to expose the false rationality of mainstream systems of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> A literary effort to reproduce the emotional or cognitive effects of dissonance requires the writer to test the limits of representational language, to struggle against too-transparent modes of reading the world.

Rhythm, similarly, is perceived to have certain kinds of potential for commenting on the noise of modern life, for structuring images, sounds, harmonies into a communicable narrative. On just these grounds, T.S. Eliot interprets Igor Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* (1913) not just as an experiment with "primitive" or folk music, but as a commentary on the modern:

The effect was like *Ulysses* with illustrations by the best contemporary illustrator [...] In everything in the *Sacre du Printemps*, except in the music, one missed the sense of the present [...]; but it did seem to transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, and the other barbaric cries of modern life; and to transform these despairing noises into music.<sup>5</sup>

Stravinsky's piece apparently exemplifies what Eliot came to call Joyce's "mythical method," a "continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity."<sup>6</sup> According to Eliot, Stravinsky performs a double transformation: first transforming the "rhythm of the steppes" into all of the "barbaric cries of modern life," and then transforming those "despairing noises into music." The music interprets and transforms the dance itself into the "despairing noises" of "the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, and the other barbaric cries of modern life." The "sense of the present" is located in the experience of sound, in all of those "despairing noises" that Eliot interprets as the "barbari[sm] of modernity" and as the potential site for the transformative currents of modernist art. Music needs a new language, like the one provided by Stravinsky, precisely because modernity has intensified the presence and experience of sound.

In the same year that Stravinsky's ballet premiered to riots in the stands, the Italian Futurist Luigi Russolo began proclaiming noise itself as grounds for musical exploration. Russolo's 1913 manifesto *Arte Dei Rumore* ["Art of Noises"] asserts, "*We must break out of this limited circle of sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds.*"<sup>7</sup> Russolo argues that rhythmic and harmonic innovation alone, though important, cannot fully appease the ears of modern listeners, already accustomed to the sounds of machinery and traffic. Russolo's collaborations with F.T. Marinetti, in continental Europe but also in Britain, resulted in the widespread notoriety of his manifesto, and efforts to perform his noise-music with instruments of his own invention. Thus just as modernist writers test the limits of literary form and genre by aspiring to the condition of music, modernist music in particular, musicians in certain spheres



find themselves aspiring to the condition of noise, drawn to the affective and conceptual possibilities offered by seemingly non-musical sounds: sirens, airplane propellers, train whistles, noises with different timbral qualities and explicit real-world associations. Though modernist composers such as George Antheil, Edgard Varèse, and Arthur Honegger tend to deny that their experiments with noise are mere imitations of trains and machines, these sounds never lose their real-world associations in the cultural imagination. Noise-music addresses the material presence of noise while claiming for itself the non-representational, phenomenological function of music.

Modernist writers were well-attuned to the increasing value of noise within musical culture. Immersed in the same social circles as modernist musicians, and to varying degrees conversant with the music itself, modernist writers understood the conjunction of noise and music to have its own kinds of cultural and institutional purchase. They recognized that musicians increasingly understood noise as a kind of raw material to be celebrated rather than avoided; and in the midst of any number of musical scandals, they knew that there was also much to detect in the noises emanating from the mezzanine. Thus Stravinsky's *Sacre* comes to exemplify the relation between music and noise; both because the "rhythm of the steppes" seems to suggest something about the modern condition, and because the event of the performance (if not the music itself) resulted in an outburst of audience pique and, to date, ninety-five years' worth of hype, publicity, and rumor about what actually produced the riots at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.<sup>8</sup> As Neil Blackadder argues, the early twentieth century—the "heyday of the theater scandal"—was characterized by an increasing resistance to passive spectatorship, to the extent that scandals would be urged on by playwrights and producers aiming to unsettle rather than absorb an audience.<sup>9</sup> The noises of discontent often signify the presence not of a crowd of philistines but of a more actively engaged audience, a sign of success and not of failure.

The different values ascribed by modernists to noise and dissonance pivot on differing notions about the autonomy of art. As Adorno becomes disenchanted with Marxist narratives of historical inevitability, he emphasizes "the social function of [art's] functionlessness":<sup>10</sup> a critical purpose to which noise, by virtue of its easy associability with real-world "functions," is less well-suited than harmony (dissonant or consonant). For Adorno, art operates in its own social realm that runs against the grain of "the means-end rationality of daily bourgeois existence" (Bürger 10). While Schoenberg's innovations derive from the anxious influences of musical tradition, a point to which I return in Chapter One, Russolo's and Marinetti's uses of noise to destroy "the Sublime in Art with a capital A"<sup>11</sup> represent assaults on the autonomous art object. Even as composers such as Antheil and Honegger insist that their noise-music is "music alone,"<sup>12</sup> susceptible of appreciation irrespective of their programmatic qualities, nobody (myself included) seems to take them at their word. These noises resonate not only with the material realities of technology, industry, and violence, but with the ambition of the "art of noises" to draw music out of its autonomous sphere and into public life.<sup>13</sup>

The association of noise with public forms of discourse is embedded in the language: the *arte dei rumore* is, very often, an art of rumors.<sup>14</sup> The public success of composers such as Antheil derived not only from their use of musical noises, but from tireless efforts and unusual skill in building social connections and networks, appropriating artistic slogans, using the popular press, and disseminating rumors about their works in progress. F.R. Leavis's claim that Edith Sitwell belongs to "the history of publicity rather than poetry"<sup>15</sup> draws on just this distinction: for Leavis Sitwell's work is too much rumor and not enough art, such that it cannot be neatly integrated into the autonomous sphere of Literature-with-a-capital-L.

The real-world associations and newfound artistic salience of noise make it a useful concept for a study of modernism, and a useful theoretical complement to Adorno's conception of dissonance: an immanent feature of music which gains critical strength by virtue of music's (contingent) separation from everyday social life. This project draws on various interpretive conceptions of noise, the most polemical of which is Jacques Attali's *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1977). Attali argues that music—more and more economically centralized since the advents of musical notation, commercial performance, and recording—acts as a means of mediating and sublimating the rebellious, violent, or carnivalesque noises of daily life. On one hand, music makes these noises palatable for systems of power, while on the other hand, it retains some of its sublimated subversive content. Music thus speaks to the institutional and material circumstances that make it possible ("the political economy of music"), while also prophesying noisy real-world upheavals. It is no coincidence, Attali argues, that Russolo's "Art of Noises" appeared in 1913, on the eve of World War I.

In many ways, Attali and Adorno represent a mutually corrective pair: Attali's account of noise is more capacious but radically less precise than Adorno's reflections on dissonance. *Noise* acknowledges that harmony is not the only terrain on which musical innovation can critique a social context, and thus helps redress Adorno's frustrating tendentiousness with respect to jazz or to the music of Stravinsky. But Adorno's dismissals have a pointed argumentative thrust that underscores the bluntness of Attali's argument, which proves unable or unwilling to distinguish among various genres or types of music *within* a given moment of musical history. That is, for Attali, "music" *writ large* always stands in for a larger social or institutional presence. Whether or not one shares Adorno's normative assessments about which sorts of music are more or less progressive, that debate itself has to be approached through the analysis of musical form itself,<sup>16</sup>

an approach that Attali's broad historical analogies don't enable. Thus Attali's argument offers usefully reductive categories for thinking about music's institutional basis—"music" as a category opposed to "noise" illuminates much—but for considering the relative cultural importance of different musical productions, his argument is a non-starter. This project therefore draws on the more nuanced work of Jean-Jacques Nattiez, who investigates the "semiological" significance of musical noise with respect to three levels of analysis: *poiesis* (composition), *ethesis* (interpretation), and the immanent properties of the music itself (called, alternately, the "material" and "neutral" level).

Composition, reception, and realization produce musical meaning only in the material presence of human bodies, the subjects, objects, and means of interpretation. Music facilitates the interpretation of the crises of modernity because the bodies producing and interpreting music have been subjected to those same crises: modernity's assaults on the body are registered by the presence of noise, latent or salient, in modernist music. The question for modernist writers, then, is which kinds of noisily musical sounds are better equipped to critique, palliate, or (as for Russolo) exacerbate one's experience of hyperstimulus, discontinuity, or violence. While Adorno, for example, stridently resists the appeals of jazz rhythms to collective bodies, his promotion of dissonant music in terms of "shock" and "gesture" suggests music's call to individual bodies, believing that suffering is best redressed by private experiences of art.

One finds more sympathetic attitudes towards rhythm in critics more optimistic about the collective experience of cultural narratives. For Adorno, the collectively experienced patterns of "culture" are suspect, and for that reason the promise of modern art relies (contingently) on its autonomy. For Georg Lukács, who believes that this *art pour l'art* mentality represents a solipsistic, complacent capitulation to capitalism, an artwork can communicate meaningfully

only if its "rhythm of words" is "set by the rhythm of cultural progress."<sup>17</sup> Paul Fussell, whose book *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) has shaped much of the historicist work on modernism, suggests elsewhere that the rhythms of poetry intensify the physical tempi of the body—that "since the beat in most accentual poetry is slightly faster than the normal heart beat, [...] the heart beat [...] actually speeds up in an effort to 'match' the slightly faster poetic rhythm."<sup>18</sup> And Raymond Williams, who aims to historicize the communicative faculties of art on the basis of shared cultural patterns, promotes the power of rhythm to "transmi[t] a description of experience" in the form of a bodily response: "not merely as an 'abstraction' or an 'emotion' but as a physical effect on the organism."<sup>19</sup>

Williams's passage is frequently and approvingly cited by historically minded musicologists working under the rubric of the "new musicology."<sup>20</sup> A musicological approximate to literary-critical "cultural studies" (of which Williams may be the paterfamilias), the new musicology proclaims issues of ideology and cultural history to be within the scope of musicological inquiry. Just as literary cultural studies influenced similar movements in musicology,<sup>21</sup> the new musicologists remind literary critics that music derives not only from individual creative energies and choices, although those are indispensable, but also from a matrix of historical, institutional, and psychological pressures.

Though influenced by Adorno's account of music as an ideological artifact, new musicologists grow increasingly resistant to his shrill and prescriptive allegations against popular music, and to his complicated commitment to the autonomy of art. Conversely, one finds it hard to imagine Adorno putting much stock in cultural studies and the new musicology, a fact that will not keep me from employing them as my chief methodological models. If Adorno believed Nietzsche to be a positivist for seeking out the psychological and cultural roots of drama, one

wonders what he would make of Susan McClary's accounts of how music encodes erotic subjectivity; Richard Taruskin's research on Stravinsky's uses and abuses of the Russian tradition; Linda and Michael Hutcheon's investigations of the medical, cultural, and operatic significance of diseased bodies; or Raymond Williams's anticipation that science might confirm the physiological basis for the power of rhythm.<sup>22</sup> While this dissertation does not provide a thoroughgoing philosophical examination of Adorno's claims, such claims speak importantly to modernism as a historical moment and as a complex of anxieties about the ideological work of artistic composition and reception—anxieties dialectically implicated with the modernist artwork's radical aesthetic innovations.

Throughout this project I maintain the underlying assumption that the "new" musicology and culturalist literary criticism are more alike than different. In light of the new musicology's blend of formal analysis, historicism, gender theory, postcolonial theory, and the histories of ideas and (indeed) aesthetics, it no longer makes sense to critique literary representations of music through Paterian eyes: the study of modernism and music need not make New Critics of us all. As concepts and as material presences, "noise" and "music" reflect assessments of value with respect to the cultural significance of sound: to call a sound "music," or a sequence of lines a "poem," represents an argument about what institutional or ideological weight that cultural production will be accorded.

The first chapter reflects on the theoretical ramifications of noise, dissonance, and rhythm for a reading of musico-literary modernism. It examines the problem of interpreting musical meaning in language, the very existence of "musical meaning" being a subject of some controversy. All such efforts, I argue, point back to the presence of a body: music offers modernism a way of rebridging the perceived gap between body and voice, deriving from the

technological displacements associated with modernity. Dissonance, rhythm, and the "art of noise" offer competing ways of addressing the embodiment of interpretation. Insofar as Adorno, Antheil, Attali, Eliot, Lukács, Russolo, and Williams all differ markedly on what music does or ought to do, those differences reflect different models of culture, a concern about music's effect on collective bodies as well as individual ones.

Chapter Two addresses Adorno and Eliot in terms of their responses to the embodiment of music. Both often cast as "High Culture" elitists and, not incidentally, as somatophobes, Adorno and Eliot contemplate the cultural significance of music, and of rhythm in particular, by virtue of its ability to make bodies respond in particular ways. Both Adorno and Eliot interrogate the disciplinary effects of rhythm, the extent to which rhythm's ability to mobilize collective responses also make those collectives vulnerable to control. I examine *The Waste Land* (1922) in the context of Eliot's writings about Symbolism, the music hall, and the "music of poetry," and in the context of new-musicological investigations of bodily degeneration. A key figure in this cultural conversation is Richard Wagner, whose presence in *The Waste Land* indexes historically specific anxieties with respect to the degenerating syphilitic body. I consider *The Waste Land* not in terms of Wagner's mythic world-view, nor in terms of an abstract "High"/"Low" cultural divide, but as an exercise in what Eliot termed the "auditory imagination": the reinvention of poetic sound enables a new approach toward allegorical treatments of bodies.

Chapter Three, "The Antheil Era," examines the career and significance of George Antheil, whose score to *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) brought him to the attention of the Anglo-American and European avant-garde, including his fellow American expatriate Ezra Pound. Pound claimed to detest the "art of noise" represented by Italian Futurists such as Russolo, but he became one of Antheil's most important promoters. Though Pound's praise of Antheil tended to

promote the music's rhythmic features, Pound too proved unable to resist the associative temptations of noise, reimagining *Ballet Mécanique* as a musical factory. The product of musical and technological innovation, but also of publicity stunts and social networking, *Ballet Mécanique* reveals the cultural and institutional labor required to produce an ostensibly autonomous artwork, labor brought into focus by the image of the factory.

Among Antheil's friends and supporters was James Joyce, who proposed an (ultimately abandoned) collaboration with the composer on the "Cyclops" episode from *Ulysses* (1922). I begin Chapter Four with an account of this collaboration before examining Joyce's career as an increased unleashing of noise. Joyce's *Chamber Music* poems and early non-fiction writings tend to sublimate or repress noise; *Dubliners* sets the musical "epiphanies" of its characters against the material circumstances from which music emerges; *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* depicts Stephen Dedalus's obsession with the properties of music and rhythmic language in his search for an authentic, autonomous aesthetic space; *Ulysses* calls into question the authenticity of musical expression by considering its relation to other ludicrous or mundane forms of sound. As the proposed collaboration with Antheil suggests, *Ulysses* represents a kind of noise-music, using noise and music to critique and explore one another. Though the presence of noise increases throughout Joyce's work, he consistently treats music and noise as material and mutually reflective features of the modern soundscape.

The question of authenticity motivates Chapter Five, on Edith Sitwell's collaboration with William Walton on the 1922 "entertainment" *Façade*. Given Leavis's assertion that Sitwell belongs only to the history of "publicity," I suggest that *Façade* itself examines the relation of "publicity" to art. For the Sitwells, I argue, art and publicity are dialectically enhancing spheres of influence: *Façade* attempts to illustrate the aesthetic and performative elements of social life,



while also entangling aesthetic influence with "publicity." For example, I investigate *Façade's* debts to the Ballets Russes, a pervasive presence in the Sitwells' social circles for both social and aesthetic reasons, and engage the Sitwells' fascination with *commedia dell'arte*, a formulaic, improvisational theatrical genre that enjoyed a resurgence in modernist musical culture. *Façade's* conspicuous influences lay bare its desire to aestheticize social life itself.

The final chapter examines the cultural force of dissonance and noise in the work of E.M. Forster and Benjamin Britten, examining each individually before considering their collaboration on *Billy Budd* (1951). Throughout his career, Forster uses the term "noise" to register music's indeterminacy and hence its limitations for certain political or cultural work. In *Howards End* (1910), Forster's narrator describes Beethoven's Fifth as a "sublime noise," capable of disseminating so many inconsistent interpretations that it can scarcely be marshaled for the sake of reform; in *A Passage to India* (1924), Godbole's "maze of noises" signifies the inability of Empire to pin down the colony. In Britten's *Peter Grimes* (1946), noise represents not a marginalized experience but (by way of its associations with rumor) the means by which social collectives repress and marginalize; these noises are internalized and sublimated within *Grimes'* ambiguously functioning dissonances.<sup>23</sup> In *Billy Budd* it is consonance rather than dissonance that effects instability and critique: Britten's consonances defamiliarize the very metaphorical qualities generally accorded consonant harmony—nationalism, solidarity, transparency—and bring the sublimated noises of daily life back to the surface. In the waning years of modernism, Forster and Britten rethink the cultural effects of dissonance and consonance, rhythm, music and noise, so as to rethink the very foundations and definition of a "culture."

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2000), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), 86.

<sup>3</sup> On Pater's musical aesthetics and their bearings on literary modernism, see Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002). Hereafter cited parenthetically. On music and late nineteenth-century Aestheticism, see also David Wayne Thomas, "The 'Strange Music' of *Salome*: Oscar Wilde's Rhetoric of Verbal Musicality," *Mosaic* 33.1 (2000). Thomas argues that *Salome* attempts to "enact and also to destabilize the very idea of a verbal-musical conjunction," and that in *Salome* music operates as the "signal art of opposition, difference, and otherness" (18-9).

<sup>4</sup> The relations between negative dialectics and deconstruction have garnered some attention, by virtue of their shared interest in exposing *aporia* and "nonidentities" through the practice of formal analysis. See, *inter alia*, Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984); Christoph Menke, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida*, trans. Neil Solomon (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999); Sabine Wilke, "Adorno and Derrida as Readers of Husserl: Some Reflections on the Historical Context of Modernism and Postmodernism," *boundary 2* 16.2/3 (1989); Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996); Robert Kaufman, "Negatively Capable Dialectics: Keats, Vendler, Adorno, and the Theory of the Avant-Garde," *Critical Inquiry* 27.2 (2001); David Wood, *Thinking After Heidegger* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002). See also Jochen Schulte-Sasse's preface to Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>5</sup> T.S. Eliot, "London Letter," *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), 189.

<sup>6</sup> T.S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt, 1975), 177.

<sup>7</sup> Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, trans. Barclay Brown (New York: Pendragon, 1986), 25. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>8</sup> "The first showing of *The Rite of Spring* is one of the most appallingly, nay absurdly, overdocumented events in the history of music." Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1996), 1006.

<sup>9</sup> Neil Blackadder, *Performing Opposition: Modern Theater and the Scandalized Audience* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), xi. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>10</sup> Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, qtd. in Bürger, *Theory*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> F.T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre," *Modernism: An Anthology of Documents*, eds. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998), 256.

<sup>12</sup> I take the phrase from Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990). Kivy acknowledges Honegger's claim that *Pacific 231* (1923), an homage to a train, should be experienced simply as music, but seems disinclined to take the claim seriously. Kivy organizes much of his book around the Beethoven concert in E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910).

<sup>13</sup> It is on these grounds, for example, that Walter Benjamin considers the abilities of mechanically reproducible art either to aestheticize politics (à la Russolo and Marinetti) or to politicize the aesthetic (à la Bertolt Brecht). Walter

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Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968).

<sup>14</sup> The OED entry on "rumour" suggests that early uses of the term oscillated between negative and positive connotations: the term could, for example, refer to a favorable report, or simply to the fact of being reported about ("rumour" being more or less synonymous with "reputation"). The first cited usage is Chaucer's *Boethius* (ca. 1374).

<sup>15</sup> F.R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), 73.

<sup>16</sup> This argument is indebted to Peter Bürger's account of dialectical criticism in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, liv.

<sup>17</sup> Georg Lukács, "Aesthetic Culture," *The Lukács Reader*, ed. Arpad Kadarkay (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 154.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*, Rev. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 5. Fussell cites a similar assertion made by I.A. Richards, admittedly not the most historical of critics. The critical mindsets of both Fussell and Richards are very much shaped by modernist outlooks on poetry; it is Richards, after all, who praises Eliot's *Waste Land* for its "music of ideas." I.A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 276.

<sup>19</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Orchard Park: Broadview, 2001), 24. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *LR*.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Ben Sidran, *Black Talk*, New ed. (New York: Da Capo, 1983), 8; Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1991), 23; Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1996), 222; Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 86. McClary hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>21</sup> McClary, in particular, acknowledges the need for musicology to benefit from culturalist literary criticism: "even those scholars who produce work resembling the old-fashioned New Criticism of literary studies still count as radicals in musicology" (20).

<sup>22</sup> See McClary, *Feminine Endings*; Williams, *The Long Revolution*; Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999); Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996). Notwithstanding Adorno's critique of positivism, scientific examinations of music's effects on the body are still going strong, and have been since Darwin's discussion of music in *The Descent of Man* (1871). See Anne J. Blood, Robert J. Zatorre, Patrick Bermudez and Alan C. Evans, "Emotional responses to pleasant and unpleasant music correlate with activity in paralimbic brain regions," *Nature Neuroscience* 2.4 (1999); Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda, eds., *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001); Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (New York: Norton, 1999); Norman M. Weinberger, "Music and the Brain," *Scientific American* Nov. 2004. A full examination of these is well beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>23</sup> This account builds on Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004). Esty argues that the formal developments of "late modernism" facilitate an inward "anthropological turn" and a means of consolidation and "contraction" in the face of Britain's imperial decline. Esty also suggests that these developments lay the ground for Marxist English history and cultural studies, in the molds of E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTERPRETING MODERNIST BODIES: MUSICAL CULTURE AND THE ARTS OF NOISE

Now is gossip put on trial,  
Now the rumours either fail  
Or are shouted in the wind  
Sweeping furious through the land.  
—Chorus, *Peter Grimes*, Act III<sup>1</sup>

The term "noise" has always been imbricated with the most powerful and threatening manifestations of language: with the productive yet dangerously uncontrollable force of rumor, gossip, publicity, propaganda, and rhetorical violence. The signifying powers of noise are etymologically embedded in the Latinate elements of the English language: the French for "noise" is *bruit*, as in Claudius's proclamation, "And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again, / Re-speaking earthly thunder" (*Hamlet* 1.2.128-9); and the Italian, as we have seen, is *rumore*. The main goal of this chapter is to outline the theoretical and cultural significance of rhythm, dissonance, and noise for modernist literature and music, particularly as rhythm and dissonance mediate and aestheticize the noises of everyday life. Insofar as a principal challenge of modernist writing is to approximate these noise-sublimating musical properties in language, the linguistic and literary-historical significance of noise itself deserves some comment.

Modernists never exorcise the cultural anxiety about noise, given nineteenth-century expression in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" (1867): the "confused alarms of struggle and flight" that threaten cultural solidarity, juxtaposed against the Sea of Faith's "slow, withdrawing roar" and "eternal note of sadness" harmonized into a "tremulous cadence."<sup>2</sup> The creation of music, or of poetry that aspires to the condition of music, involves the sublimation of these

threats to cultural unity. Yet modernists appropriate noise not only to suggest an incursion or threat to Arnoldian culture, but as a means of disseminating culture—or as a way of calling attention *to* culture's reliance on *rumore*. If, as Ezra Pound nicely put it, "Literature is news that stays news,"<sup>3</sup> that news is circulated and mediated by language around and about the artwork. Literary "news," that is, is disseminated through the functions of language associated with "publicity": rumor, gossip, social and economic maneuvering. Lawrence Rainey has posited the category of modernism itself to be the product of marketing and salesmanship, arguing that the Futurist exhibitions in London urged on the creation of Anglo-American modernism, encouraging Pound, Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis (et al.) to reconstruct an intellectual aristocracy "within the world of the commodity."<sup>4</sup> The Futurists' assault on the autonomous art-object forced modernists to create a niche wherein literature could benefit from the avant-garde appeal of noise, while attempting to shield itself from the assaults of noise on High Art as such.

Rumor and its (or, very often, "her") counterpart "fame" are important participants in the very traditions on which Eliot and Pound build, right down to the Roman epic. Dryden's translation of the "House of Fame" passage from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* offers an acoustics of rumor,<sup>5</sup> using spatial metaphors to think about how news, and lies, are disseminated:

'Tis built of brass, the better to diffuse  
The spreading sounds, and multiply the news:  
Where eccho's in repeated eccho's play:  
A mart for ever full, and open night and day.  
Nor silence is within, nor voice express,  
But a deaf noise of sounds, that never cease.  
Confus'd and chiding, like the hollow roar  
Of tides, receding from th' insulted shore,  
Or like the broken thunder heard from far,  
When Jove at distance drives the rousing war.  
The courts are fill'd with a tumultuous din  
Of crouds, or issuing forth, or entering in:  
A thorough-fare of news: where some devise  
Things never heard, some mingle truth with lies;

The troubled air with empty sounds they beat,  
Intent to hear, and eager to repeat.<sup>6</sup>

"Fama" is a figure of excess ("multiply the news," "for ever full"); of "diffuse[ness]" and "spreading"; and of hybridity (which is why her house is built of brass). Fame's effort to "mingle truth with lies" results in a "deaf noise of sound" and a "hollow roar," so much static that a signal can barely get through, too diffuse to be precisely located and too hybrid to be distilled. Its core is "hollow" and its sounds are "empty," but nonetheless persistent, communicative, and in play. In describing the rape of Philomel, Ovid seems to get his information from *fama* herself:

Yet, after this so damn'd, and black a deed,  
Fame (which I scarce can credit) has agreed,  
That on her rifled charms, still void of shame,  
[Tereus] frequently indulg'd his lustful flame (6.563-6)

Noise and rumor may be counterpoised against fact and "credit" in theory, but are even more ominous when they get things right, or when they threaten the recurrence of events that have already taken place. Dryden's phrasing seems to anticipate the gynophobia of Eliot's *Waste Land*: he places at the center of this crisis Philomel's charms, "still void of shame," by which he may also mean "a void of shame," a vacuum (the root of *void*) around which noise circulates. And as Eliot's appropriations of Ovid and Dryden make clear, this is news that stays news: "And still she cried, and still the world pursues."<sup>7</sup> In Melville's *Billy Budd* (pub. 1924), the source of Forster's and Britten's 1951 opera, rumor identifies Billy as both the favorite son and the scapegoat, setting up the death of Claggart and Billy and then, like Ovid's *fama*, spreading the news.

In modernist writing, the presence of disruptive noise in the landscape is often matched with the representation of a character's psychological state: immersion in or withdrawal from external noise creates a kind of mental echo-chamber. It is on these grounds that Georg Lukács criticizes the modernist novel. According to Lukács, the modernist emphasis on the individual's

psychological states, experienced in discrete moments of time, represents a solipsistic withdrawal from and capitulation to historical forces. Modernism, for Lukács, represents an extension of naturalism's descriptive rather than narrative drive, a demotion of the large-scale rhythms of history in favor of non-narrative catalogues of detail; it represents, moreover, an extension of a decadent, art-for-art's-sake mentality.<sup>8</sup>

A useful case-study for the qualities of modernism that Lukács resists, Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900) offers a wedge into the modernist musical and literary treatment of noise. An intensely difficult novel in which rumor, gossip, and the search for "fact" produce a great deal of narrative static about its actual events, *Lord Jim* represents and recursively regenerates the competing signals within Jim's own conscience and consciousness; the noise in Jim's head indeed seems to signify a withdrawal from the material world. Though Conrad does not feature largely in this dissertation, he is representative of the modernist imperative to put language under the utmost strain, a strain that conventional narrative voice can't quite withstand. To signify the psychological and institutional pressures of modernity, or to signify the dialectical relation between sound and silence, strains the English language to the point that at moments of crisis it collapses into noise or into silence. These dilemmas also charge Conrad's language with meaning to the extent that they result in a recognizably dense, stylized, dare I say musical prose.<sup>9</sup>

If the psychological noises of *Lord Jim* make it regressively solipsistic (in Lukács's model), the novel is in equal part savvy about the ideological force of silence. Jim's internal noise resounds most intensely in moments of near-silence (what Dryden's Ovid calls a "deaf noise of sounds"). The novel suggests an institutional alignment of material facts with noiselessness, an imperative to keep things quiet in the service of the facts (whose reliability the novel repeatedly questions). Thus one of the nautical assessors taps his fingers "without noise";



the turbaned "peons" move "noiseless as ghosts."<sup>10</sup> The end of the novel, however, comprises external noises prophetic of decay and colonial incursion, as if Jim had merely unleashed his perverse solipsism onto the space of Patusan. Jim, the "obscure conqueror of fame," finds his ultimate surrender met with both a hush and an "outburst of wailing": "rumours flew in whispers, filling the hearts with consternation and horrible doubts. The robbers were coming back, bringing many others with them, in a great ship, and there would be no refuge in the land for any one" (347; ch. 45). Patusan is destined for the noise of returning invaders, the only alternative to which is acquiescence, Jewel's "soundless, inert life" in Stein's house (352; ch. 45).

Although Jim's psychological crises aren't literal "noise," they serve a similar function, producing signals that impede narrative clarity and question the imperative to silence noise in the service of transparent narratives. The resistance to transparency makes music intriguing to the modernist writer: a mode of expression that can disseminate *or delimit* meaning, music sublimates and encodes noises into an artifact requiring an actively engaged reader.

### Interpreting Writers Interpreting Music

The interpretation of music on its own terms is difficult enough; the interpretation of a writer's interpretation of music, or (as in Forster's *Howards End*) of a narrator's interpretation of a character's interpretation of music, more challenging yet. The consideration of music with respect to noise introduces the problem of analogy: music might sound "like," or particularly *unlike*, sounds of the "real world." As music itself *is* a sound of the "real world," its similarity to or difference from other sounds endows it with specific kinds of critical significance and authority. The problem of "imitative music," the relationship between music and mimesis, is

itself a longstanding question at the heart of musical aesthetics, under particular scrutiny in modernist inquiries into the cultural potential of art.

In some respects, the very difficulty of accounting for music in language makes music appealing to the modernist writer, both because in certain circles difficulty itself was perceived as a value, and because music arguably enabled more active modes of interpretation—and often multiple ones simultaneously. Inescapably bound up with the problems and opportunities of performance, music leads the modernist writer to reflect on the performative nature of language: "performative" in the sense both that it hearkens to the stage and that it has the transactional potential of a speech-act. The very production of music as a sonic object invokes questions of agency, of who or what is producing the sound; my critical (and pedagogical) assumption about poetry, similarly, is that it is not just a written text but something to be read aloud. It is not enough, for instance, to note that *The Waste Land* quotes passages of Wagner; rather, the form of the poem begs us to ask where these sounds are coming from, who is singing them or what kind of machine is producing them, and in what context. *Façade* is spoken by the poet from behind a curtain: ostensibly, if Osbert Sitwell is to be believed, for the purposes of avoiding the "blush-rose of shame" that the bodily presence of a lecturer inevitably brings to the faces in the crowd.<sup>11</sup> Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique* was to be performed by sixteen pianolas, Pound's *Cantos* and operas performed over the radio, the principal roles of *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes* performed by Peter Pears, the composer's partner. The technologies of realizing a musical/literary "score" into sound turn attention to the identity of the person (or mechanical object) ultimately producing that sound. Always referring back to a performance, a literary representation of music invokes the image of a *body*, individual or collective: that of the performer, that of the auditor, and in both cases, that of an interpreter. Adorno's assertion that the truest way of interpreting a piece of

music is to play it—thereby conceiving, experiencing, and mastering it as a structural whole—is in this respect a genuinely modernist ideal.<sup>12</sup>

In addressing the relations among a musical text, a body, and a cultural moment, this dissertation draws both on the culturally minded "new musicology" and on a subfield of musicology known as "musical semiology," an effort to explain the production of semiotic, linguistic, or literary properties in music. As Raymond Monelle demonstrates in *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (1992), the inquiry into the linguistic or semiotic properties of music is not a new one. Monelle elaborates, for example, eighteenth-century theories of musical "imitation," which debated the value of musical onomatopoeia or of using music to imitate language itself, to "reproduc[e] the tone of voice and gestures of a person moved by passion."<sup>13</sup> Monelle argues that theories of musical meaning underwent a shift from "imitation" to "expression," emphasizing sympathy and identification, but argues that the imitative perspectives are "much nearer to semiotic theory than the Romantic views that succeeded them" (namely, the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Arthur Schopenhauer). Peter Kivy argues that music acquires its meaning according to cognitive experience and interpretation, that music's universal appeal lies not in assigning associative "meaning" to music but in somatically perceiving and experiencing its "rightness" and profundity. I take it as emblematic that Kivy uses characters from *Howards End* as metaphors for his argument, assessing whether we really experience Beethoven's Fifth as a Ruskinian, goblin-ridden "sublime noise." The passage speaks to a relationship between music and language, for both specific audiences and larger cultural patterns, and suggests modes of musical listening that compel the assignation of "meaning" expressed in language.

While some semiological accounts of music use (for example) structuralist grammatical linguistic approaches, the field has become increasingly attentive to the embodied, performative

nature of music.<sup>14</sup> In seeking an interpretive model that approaches musical "meaning" both immanently and extrinsically, I employ the model offered by Jean-Jacques Nattiez in *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (1990). Deeply informed by musical history and by sociology, Nattiez's account recognizes the historically specific nature of "meaning" (of music or of anything else): "An object of any kind takes on meaning for an individual apprehending that object, as soon as that individual places the object in relation to areas of his lived experience—that is, in relation to a collection of other objects that belong to his or her experience of the world."<sup>15</sup> Meaning is something not only apprehended, but actively produced, not just by one interpretant but by a "web of interpretants" interacting with a specific object. Thus, Nattiez suggests, a semiology of music will have three components:

- (1) Poiesis: study of the process of producing a work of art, compositional choices that draw on preexisting traditions and material. Thus poiesis, like what literary critics might refer to as "authorial intention," can and should be historicized.
- (2) The "neutral" realm, which he also refers to as the material "trace" of the music. This more or less equates to the "text," in its material manifestations (i.e. realized through performance into the sonic universe). Such a text can be interpreted according to its immanent formal properties. The term "neutral," problematic though it may seem, simply indicates a level of analysis in between intention and reception. That is, Nattiez views the text not as a static object but as an interaction of various interpretants.<sup>16</sup> To wit:
- (3) Ethesis: the act of interpretation and production of meaning. Ethesis, therefore, also has a poietic or creative element.

The ethesic dimension of music (and literature) ultimately feeds back into the poietic dimension both because composers (and writers) are grappling with poetic tradition, whether cooperatively or agonistically or both; and because, as Roland Barthes puts it in "Musica Practica" (1970), "to compose, at least by propensity, is *to give to do*, not to give to hear but to give to write."<sup>17</sup>

Nattiez likely inherits the term "material" from Adorno's insistent use of the term, wherein "the tendency of the material" has an "inner historicity,"<sup>18</sup> a conflicted relation with both a musical tradition and a social situation. The term also abounds in Eduard Hanslick's 1854 tract *On the Musically Beautiful*, which in insisting on the intrinsic beauty of "absolute" music (as opposed to programmatic music) differentiates the "raw physical material" provided by Nature from the "subject matter" or "represented idea" of the musical composition itself. Hanslick then refers to the realization of this music in the "material moment" where music has its physiological effect.<sup>19</sup> Hanslick's argument that musical beauty emerges only from immanent "sequences" and "forms," with "no content other than themselves" (78), establishes the possibility for this "neutral" sphere of music, in which musical ideas are *only* musical ideas and not conceptual or historical ones. Nattiez and Adorno, each with his own notions of musical meaning and value, nevertheless share the sense that the meaning of this "material," produced by composers and by interpreters, is shaped by historical forces.

Nattiez, better than Attali, allows one to question how noise and music are defined against one another, as the result of specific but culturally situated poietic choices, audience responses, and cultural value judgments. Nattiez suggests that within each of these three realms—and also in the interaction *among* those three realms—the definition of noise and music is highly contingent (Fig. 1).

poietic (composer)	"neutral" (acoustics)	ethesic (perception)
<b>music</b>	<b>music</b>	<b>music</b>
	<b>noise</b>	<b>noise</b>
<b>noise</b>		

Figure 1: Nattiez's model of noise and music (adapted from Nattiez, *MD* 46)

Both within and among these three spheres, the boundary between noise and music is highly unstable. As the gaps among them signify, at any given moment what might count as "music" for the composer might not correspond to what counts as "music" for the audience, let alone what counts as music on a technical or acoustic level (what Russolo discusses in terms of regular versus irregular vibrations). In the poietic or compositional realm, the boundary generally shifts downward, such that the category of music is broader, though Nattiez also suggests that the shift can move in the other direction. The Futurists, for example, would claim that "physically defined 'noise' *alone* has the right to occupy the musical domain" (*MD* 49, his emphasis); in other words, there might be sounds formerly considered "musical" that a composer (e.g., of the revolutionary Futurist stripe) will no longer consider "news."<sup>20</sup>

Importantly, Adorno and Barthes tether musical "meaning" (in its poietic, material, and ethetic manifestations) to the experience of a body. Adorno anticipates and influences Barthes' critique of a flat, static, or "identitarian" conception of music divorced from the physical behaviors of composition and performance. Like many of the modernist figures addressed in this project, Barthes suggests that the standardization of music through mechanical reproducibility has resulted in the atrophy of musical interpretation. Barthes' essay "The Grain of the Voice" (1972) sponsors an interpretive relation to music that exceeds a simple ascription of an *ethos* or a description with an adjective: "If one looks to the normal practice of music criticism [...], it can readily be seen that a work (or its performance) is only ever translated into the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective. [...] The adjective is inevitable: the music is *this*, the execution is *that*."<sup>21</sup> Such descriptions are inadequate in their insistence on "perfection" and connoisseurship, and in their devaluation of the erotic or performative dimensions of music. Such a tendency, Barthes suggests, ultimately serves a socioeconomic function: it allows the listening subject to reconcile himself to "what in music *can be said*: what is said about it, predicatively, by Institution, Criticism, Opinion" (185). Hence much of Barthes' essay is devoted to the promotion of one singer (Charles Panzéra) on the grounds that he "patinate[s]" the language, imbuing it with lived experience; and just as much is devoted to the demotion of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau for merely "translat[ing]" emotion in ways describable in those merely adjectival terms acceptable to Institution and Criticism. Fischer-Dieskau's failure, specifically, is to give a sense only of his lungs and not of the parts of the vocal tract (throat, teeth, mucous membranes) that accentuate the bodily action of vocal delivery (the lungs are weak organs, incapable of "erection," and suggestive only of resonance and empty space). Regardless of genre or convention, music should ultimately produce an erotic identification with a body: "I shall not

judge a performance according to the rules of interpretation, the constraints of style (anyway highly illusory) [...], but according to the image of the body (the figure) given me" (188).

The location of a body with respect to a recorded voice is distinctively a late Victorian and early modernist problem. As Ivan Kreilkamp has argued, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* exemplifies the "phonographic logic" of a disembodied voice, enabling formal innovation but also destabilizing "human agency and authorship."<sup>22</sup> Thomas Campbell has, similarly, demonstrated the influence of Marconi's wireless radio on the poetry of Pound and the ambitions of Futurism to destroy syntax.<sup>23</sup> Many of the texts in this dissertation rely on the distantiating of body from voice: Ezra Pound rewrites his operas, his late *Cantos*, and his anti-Semitic lunacies for radio broadcast; Edith Sitwell speaks her poetry from behind a curtain through a large megaphone; in *A Passage to India*, voices are either multiply attributed to the uncontainable landscape of India or collapsed into an echo. This distantiating of voice enables fragmentation and seemingly unstable syntax, but also often compels an ultimate *reunification* of body and voice: the seemingly disembodied thunder at the end of *The Waste Land* is manifested in the "blood shaking my heart" (V.402) and the "heart [...] beating obedient / To controlling hands" (V.420-21). These benevolently dictatorial "controlling hands" contrast decisively with the mechanical "automatic hand" that lowers the needle on a gramophone. The "controlling hands" of a poet attempt to offer a means of mediating other "controlling hands"—those of a conductor, pianist, or stage director—without losing "the grain of the voice" and the body which it registers. For a more wry approach to the problem one can look to Jean Cocteau's practice of reinventing dancers as human phonographs: "controlling hands" directing "automatic hands," such that automata have a satirical function for audience and performer alike. It is here that the problem of rhythm often comes to the foreground: setting noises to rhythm seems in some ways to make



more palpable the ideological and the physical implications of noise and its artistic mediations.<sup>24</sup> Before turning to rhythm, though, I shall elaborate on Russolo's "art of noise," one of the earliest, most important modernist efforts to bring music into the sphere of art (with a lowercase "a"), and therefore to index the material and institutional basis motivating that dancing body.

### Noise, Music, and Culture

"Beethoven always sounds to me like the upsetting of a bag of nails, with here and there also a dropped hammer."

-- John Ruskin

"It must be generally admitted that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man."

-- E.M. Forster, *Howards End* (1910), chapter 5.

"You could have had them both done by now if you hadn't spent the whole morning skulking in there listening to that racket."

"Racket"? That's *Brahms!* Brahms's Third "Racket"!"

-- Sybil and Basil Fawlty, "A Touch of Class," *Fawlty Towers* (BBC, 1975)

The anxious class politics of Britain have a way of getting triangulated through the German sounds of Beethoven and Brahms. To the narrator of *Howards End*, Beethoven's Fifth is a "sublime noise"; to Ruskin it is merely noise. Though opposed in aesthetic terms, Beethoven and Ruskin share a social and cultural status, at least as Forster sees it. Neither can save Leonard Bast, whose efforts to appreciate Ruskin and Beethoven mark him as a social climber and leave him depressed and dead: Bast's loss of his umbrella at the concert hall foreshadows the deadly shower of books that will reward his efforts to read his way up the social ladder. To Basil Fawlty, Brahms's Third Symphony represents an escape from the noise of his work, and evokes his desire to give Fawlty Towers a "touch of class" by attracting a newly aristocratic clientele. To his wife Sybil, the music itself is a "racket": a noise keeping him from the work of hanging a

(very possibly English) landscape painting. Whatever one thinks of Sybil's summary dismissal of Brahms, she does recognize the falseness of Basil's desperate, Leonard-Bastian search for a "touch of class" (as it turns out, the aristocrat staying at the hotel is a con-artist—a racketeer).

Noise is often acknowledged but rarely defined, except by negation: whatever noise is, it isn't a "signal," silence, a clear sound, or "real" music. Two citations, from two important noise-music advocates, speak to this point. As American composer Henry Cowell puts it in an essay entitled "The Joys of Noise" (1929), "If a reviewer writes 'It is not music, but noise,' he feels that all necessary comment has been made."<sup>25</sup> And Douglas Kahn writes that noise must paradoxically "explain itself in the face of the possibility that there is no such thing as noise":

With so much attendant on noise it quickly becomes evident that noises are too significant to be noises. We know they are noises in the first place because they exist where they shouldn't or they don't make sense when they should. [...] Suppressing noise only contributes to its tenacity and detracts from investigating the complex means through which noise itself is suppressed, while celebrating noise easily becomes a tactic within the suppression of something else.<sup>26</sup>

If noise could be categorized, it wouldn't be noise; the act of categorizing noise imparts the desire to control or suppress it. Or, at least, erasing the boundary between "sound" and "noise" results in the attempt to consolidate a different boundary. The liberation of noise by modernists such as Russolo and Pound justifies itself in terms of "expansion," or of a widening circle of aural material from which to choose; but given the political leanings of Italian Futurism and of Pound, it becomes clear that this "expansion" can have a more sinister implication. As Kahn claims, the celebration of "noise" results in the suppression or conquering of something else.

To define "music" or "poetry," therefore, is by exclusion to define "noise," to decide what does or doesn't lie within that expanding sonic circle. Such a question calls attention to the personal and an institutional basis of art: noise is the stuff that institutions refuse to admit, and with each institution the meaning of "noise" will vary. As Kahn argues, "Noise can be

understood in one sense to be that constant grating sound between the abstract and the empirical" (25), and that same oscillation motivates my project as well. Most importantly, thinking about the "oscillation" of noise between the abstract and the empirical serves as a necessary reminder that a similar oscillation is taking place—*within* musical and literary form—between the ideational and the material. Thus it is that many of the forbearers of this project are decisively materialist: Theodor Adorno, Raymond Williams, Georg Lukács, Fredric Jameson, and Jacques Attali acknowledge and critique "literature" or "music" as categories of cultural production, as well as the work performed by a specific text's immanent formal qualities.

The aesthetics of modernist artworks such as *The Waste Land* are produced out of institutional imperatives, and the act of artistic creation carries with it an attendant anxiety about the material roots of production. The "fragments shored against *our* ruin" have to be shored *by* something, or someone, and the nature of that "ruin" defined. Eliot's discourse on music in *The Waste Land* reveals a deep anxiety about who gets to constitute that "our," and about how those acts of consolidation both redress and facilitate violence against individual and collective bodies. Similarly, Ezra Pound, ever-anxious about the cultural value of sounds, words, and images, attempted to conceive of a *paideuma*, or "new learning," that would enable an organic, abundantly ominous cultural, economic, and social hierarchy. And the relations between Eliot and Pound—in Eliot's selective edition of Pound's *Literary Essays*, or in the "better craftsman's" slashing-and-burning of *The Waste Land's* early drafts—demonstrate these same anxieties about what form the "new learning" might take. By drawing noise into the sphere of art, modernism makes immanent the "constant grating sound" between the material and the abstract, and in a sense makes imminent these very concerns about the "empirical," real-world life of a piece of art.

## Modernist Vibrations: Russolo, Cowell, and Schopenhauer

The hum of the thresher, which prevented speech, increased to a raving whenever the supply of corn fell short of the regular quantity.

—Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, ch. XVII

Russolo's *Arte Dei Rumore* is an attack on the autonomy of art: pursuant to Marinetti's desire to destroy the sublime in art, Russolo desires to draw music back into the sphere of daily life, while disavowing the "imitative" component of noise-music. Noise ought to "excite our sensibility" and offer new "sensations," to derive "special acoustic pleasure" from the wider range of sound to which our ears have acclimated. The way to reinvigorate the orchestra is to listen more attentively to urban noise:

Let us cross a large modern capital with our ears more sensitive than our eyes. We will delight in distinguishing the eddying of water, of air or gas in metal pipes, the muttering of motors that breathe and pulse with an indisputable animality, the throbbing valves, the bustle of pistons, the shrieks of mechanical saws, the starting of trams on the tracks, the cracking of whips, the flapping of awnings and flags. We will amuse ourselves by orchestrating together in our imagination the din of rolling shop shutters, the varied hubbub of train stations, iron works, thread mills, printing presses, electrical plants, and subways. (26)

As I discuss in Chapter Three, though Pound assails Futurists like Russolo as sentimentalists, he implicitly acknowledges their appeal by using Antheil's music to reorchestrate the factory.

Russolo poses a relation, albeit a murky one, between the increasing range of noises present in modern life and the increasing range of harmonies available to the modern orchestra. His chief concern appears to be wideness of range, sonic or timbral. Conventional orchestras can no longer excite the senses, given that the ears of audiences are now accustomed to "modern life, rich in all sorts of noises":

In order to excite and stir our sensibility, music has been developing toward the most complicated polyphony and toward the greatest variety of instrumental timbres and colors. It has searched out the most complex successions of dissonant chords, which have prepared in a vague way for the creation of

MUSICAL NOISE. The ear of the Eighteenth Century [*sic*] man would not have been able to withstand the inharmonious intensity of certain chords produced by our orchestras (with three times as many performers as that of the orchestra of his time). But our ear takes pleasure in it, since it is already educated to modern life, so prodigal in different noises. Nevertheless, our ear is not satisfied and calls for ever greater acoustical emotions.

Musical sound is too limited in its variety of timbres. The most complicated orchestras can be reduced to four or five classes of instruments different in timbres of sound: bowed instruments, metal winds, wood winds, and percussion. Thus, modern music flounders within this tiny circle, vainly striving to create new varieties of timbre.

*We must break at all cost from this restrictive circle of pure sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds.* (24-5, his italics)

Russolo's claim ultimately addresses timbre, or tone color: he goes on to state, "Futurist musicians should substitute for the limited variety of timbres that the orchestra possesses today the infinite variety of timbres in noises, reproduced with appropriate mechanisms" (28). Like the sounds of Hardy's thresher, the bigger sounds of the orchestra suggest that it is running out of raw material.

Russolo's efforts to expand the circle of musical language lead him to interrelate musical noise and musical dissonance. Russolo suggests that the current language and material of music has been stretched to its breaking point, calling for the introduction of new categories of sound. While the size and complexity of modern orchestras have so exercised the ears that they can accommodate new kinds of "inharmonious intensity," an intensity that appears somehow to comprise both dissonance and noise, the variety and quality of timbres available to an orchestra are still too limited. "Do you know of a more ridiculous sight," Russolo asks, "than that of twenty men striving to redouble the mewling of a violin?" (25).

Thus what looks like a bait-and-switch argument—praising increasingly dissonant orchestral music only to damn the limitations of the orchestra—serves to advance a relatively conventional argument about musical evolution: dissonance is pushing music into "noise-sound,"

much as the late Romantics (Wagner, Mahler, Strauss) pushed tonality to its limits and prompted Schoenberg to abandon it. At the same time, poetic uses of dissonant or chromatic harmonies may sound like "noise" to an audience. Nattiez cites Luciano Berio's assertion that the Tristan Chord (the functionally ambiguous opening chord of *Tristan und Isolde*) in its time would have sounded like "noise," by virtue of its lack of clear structural function and context. Similarly, Russolo writes that the ears are ready for "bigger acoustic sensations" and timbres. The slippage between the "ears" and the "arous[al]" of "emotion" indicates that despite Russolo's refusal of "imitative" noise-music, he still means to benefit from the affective and associative qualities of noise, the glorification of technology and machinery characteristic of Futurism. It is important to remember, moreover, that Russolo's and Marinetti's futurist exhibitions were performance pieces, and that their musical noises, like Wagner's, were intended to serve a theatrical function, if not precisely a musical-dramatic function in the Wagnerian sense.

By relating dissonance to noise, Russolo argues that these extramusical sounds can function within already acceptable musical syntax:

In fact, we note in the talented composers of today a tendency toward the most complicated dissonances. Moving ever farther from pure sound, they have almost attained the *noise-sound*. This need and this tendency can be satisfied only *with the addition and the substitution of noises for sounds*. (28, his italics)

One cannot, on the basis of Russolo's manifesto, simply align noise with extra-musicality. As Kahn argues, in modernist culture "there was an operative exchange between the distinctions of sound and musical sound from the perspective of music," on one hand, and distinctions of "sound and noises within the sphere of extra-musicality," on the other (69). Hence Russolo is offering not a neat distinction but a continuum between "pure sound" and "noise," a continuum operative both within and without the musical sphere, in the poetic, material, and ethetic realms.

These distinctions harken back to the Pythagorean cosmology, in which astronomy, mathematics, and music resonated as "the single string" of a "monochord." Kahn links this unified monochordal universe to a "neo-Pythagorean" experimentation with synaesthetic arts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, efforts to appropriate multiple art-forms towards the same aesthetic end—the Wagnerian total art-work chief among these. In this revived version of Pythagoreanism, the monochord creates a harmonic system that banishes the "powerful nemesis of noise." The monochord and the Wagnerian art-work represented "synesthetic systems" that created "proportionate relations" among various "perceptual and affective registers" (74), and created hierarchies within each of these registers. The trope of the monochord acted as a way of excluding whatever counted as noise (consonants, aperiodic sounds), and of intensifying whatever it included: "its single string was simultaneously [...] an intensification and a reduction, an inclusion of everything and a boundary against much" (Kahn 74-5). For Wagner, the "purely auditory" aspect of language is represented by the vowel;<sup>27</sup> and for T.S. Eliot, the vocative vowel "O" enables the sonic resonance of musical-poetic expressions: a modified sailors ballad ("O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter"), Verlaine's reflections on *Parsifal* ("*Et O ces voix d'enfants!*"), the public bar on Lower Thames ("O city city"), and the "Shakespearian Rag." Notwithstanding Eliot's putative anxieties about a cultural divide, these forms are all given status and intensified within the auditory space of Eliot's "monochord."

Among the modernist interlocutors for Pythagoras was Ezra Pound, who suggests that the vibrations of this monochord should be driven by the vibrations of a Great Bass. In terms of these vibrations' effects on the body, however, it is Arthur Schopenhauer who most conspicuously informs modernist aesthetics. Promoting music's function as "a direct copy of the Will," Schopenhauer argues that music "exhibits itself as the metaphysical to everything physical

in the world." Music is a copy, not of a thing, but of a kind of metaphysical motion, an underpinning drive manifested in the actions of the body. Hence Walter Pater celebrates music's potential to enact particular kinds of pleasure and ecstasy, to burn with a "hard, gemlike flame" whose "content" is its ability to burn, an ability manifested in the material form of the flame.

Modernist appropriations of Pater and Schopenhauer emphasize its physical, material qualities as much as its "metaphysical" ones. Schopenhauer's conception of music as our closest approximation of the Will leads him into a peculiar reflection on the organization of Nature itself, in which a "ground-bass" is analogous to, well, the ground, "inorganic nature, the mass of the planet."<sup>28</sup> The higher pitches (soprano, alto, tenor voices)

always sound faintly at the same time, and it is a law of harmony that a bass-note may be accompanied only by those notes that actually sound automatically and simultaneously with it (its *sons harmoniques*) through the accompanying vibrations. Now this is analogous to the fact that all bodies and organizations of nature must be considered as having come into existence through gradual development out of the mass of the planet. This is both their supporter and their source, and the high notes have the same relation to the ground-bass. [...]

Therefore, for us the ground-bass is in harmony what inorganic matter, the crudest mass on which everything rests and from which everything originates and develops, is in the world. Further, in the whole of the ripeness that produce the harmony, between the bass and the leading voice singing the melody, I recognize the whole gradation of the Ideas in which the will objectifies itself. Those nearer to the bass are the lower of those grades, namely the still inorganic bodies manifesting themselves, however, in many ways. Those that are higher represent to me the plant and animal worlds. The definite intervals of the scale are parallel to the definite grades of the will's objectification, the definite species in nature. [...] In fact, the impure discords, giving no definite interval, can be compared to the monstrous abortions between two species of animals, or between man and animal. (I.258; ch. 52)

A similar sort of reasoning underpins musical "creations of the world" after Schopenhauer, the most conspicuous of the nineteenth century being the triadic harmonies that open Wagner's Ring Cycle, although where Schopenhauer conceived of dissonances as "monstrous abortions," Wagner often conceived of them as indexes of unresolved erotic desire.<sup>29</sup> Hence the limitations



on dissonance in Schopenhauer's "law of Harmony" will come to be conceived not as an ontological fact about music but as a historically contingent constraint, such that (as Adorno has it) the emancipation of dissonance serves a radical critical function.

One also finds modernists, and materialist critics of modernism, reappropriating Schopenhauer's aesthetics in terms of the social and economic structure of daily life. In *A Guide to Kulchur* (1938), Pound cites music as the fundamental grounds for organizing culture and ritual, citing Pythagoras and Confucius. One can also detect the influence of Schopenhauer on Pound's theories of "absolute rhythm" and the "Great Bass." While Schopenhauer claims that music structurally, not semantically, parallels the natural order, with bass-notes whose vibrations produce the higher orders of life, Pound insists that the establishment of a ground-bass motivates the motion of all the other voices, and extends this analysis to social and economic hierarchies. Pound does not share Schopenhauer's distaste for "discords"; he's not much interested in harmony per se, dissonant or consonant, but in the horizontal, rhythmic organization of a piece, for the correctly gauged intervals of time between one note or chord and the next: "Any series of chord can follow any other, provided the right time-interval is discovered. The interesting sequences are probably those that DEMAND very set and definite intervals." Similarly, when Pound ultimately compares the music of Antheil to a factory, he is addressing more the horizontal organization of chords than their vertical "content."

Pound's notions of rhythm are not always consistent in this respect: at times they more resemble Adorno's aesthetics, suggesting that the ground bass enables freer melodic and contrapuntal invention that is nevertheless driven by a sense of internal necessity. *A Guide to Kulchur*, however, is anything but Adornian. In his gestures towards Pythagoras and, implicitly, Schopenhauer, Pound compares the organization of music (motivated by the Great Bass) to the

top-down economic organization of a society, such that undisciplined or imprecise use of time in music is a symptom of an inorganic relation between labor/production and the monetary system. Hence Fredric Jameson's claim in *The Political Unconscious* (1981) that modernist texts move to the "ground bass of material production,"<sup>30</sup> not unlike Attali's impassioned paean to the merits of noise, reads as a commentary on modernism couched in the rhetoric of modernism: the materially grounded "absolute rhythm" that drives the modernists' insistence on aesthetic self-containment is detectable (if repressed) in narrative form.

Even as they assault the sublime elements of art, the Futurists seem indebted to Schopenhauer's rhetoric. Russolo, for example, emphasizes that underneath the new timbral qualities of a noise ought to lie a more fundamental vibration: "There always exists, as with a pitch, a predominant rhythm, but around this there can be heard numerous other, secondary rhythms" (28). While Russolo wants to expand the range of sounds available to the composer, he recognizes the need for some kind of underpinning structural principle. Russolo thus wishes to invent new mechanical instruments (*intonarumori*) that will approximate the tone quality of a particular noise in a specific, reproducible way. Russolo reassuringly insists that "Giving pitch to noises does not mean depriving them of all irregular movements and vibrations of time and intensity" (27), but rather assigning a pitch to a strong "fundamental" vibration.

Pound, Schopenhauer, and the Futurists share a strong distaste for the imitative function of music, a preference instead for music's aspirations to noumenal or transcendent states ("Will," "Great Bass," and the like) or, for Russolo, the "predominant vibrations" that give mechanical noises their affective power. Pound is especially inconsistent on this point, in ways that speak to his ambivalence about Futurism: the Schopenhauerian rhythmic pulse of the universe, and the Futurist vibrations of noise, seem to join forces in Pound's writing. Conrad's prose, which aspires

to test the extremes of literary language, is similarly driven by a Schopenhauerian ambition. His "Preface" to *Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* is one of modernism's more famous statements of purpose, often quoted in light of the novel's visual aspirations to make the reader "see" the essential and otherwise inaccessible "substance of its truth." This visually oriented preface begins with an implicit musical gesture, an invocation of the Paterian-Schopenhauerian line that all arts "aspire to the condition of music": "A work that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line."<sup>31</sup>

Modernists inherit much this Schopenhauerian drive from French Symbolism; in Baudelaire's "Man and the Sea" (*L'homme et la Mer*; 1857), for example, the speaker proclaims the "infinite sea" to be a mirror to the "bitter" "abyss" of the mind—a complex relation ultimately detectable in the noise/rhythm of a heartbeat:

You take pleasure in plunging into the heart of your image;  
You embrace it with eyes and your arms, and your heart  
At times forgets its own rhythm [*rumeur*]  
In the noise [*bruit*] of that wild and tameless complaint.<sup>32</sup>

The mirror of the sea effects an interlocking relation between rhythm and noise, the sound of the heartbeat and the noise of a noumenal vibration. The heart is distracted from its own noisy heartbeat (*rumeur*) by the sound of a fundamental "tameless" noise (*bruit*). With the word *bruit* Baudelaire presents the sea not as a static thing but as a crucible of desire, mirrored by the rhythmic *rumeur* of the body's heartbeat. The speaker accesses this fundamental noise only by surrendering to the rhythms of the body, of the sea, and of the verse itself. Similarly, Edith Sitwell's conspicuously Symbolist poetry attempts to make language musical by imitating dance-rhythms, attempting to access aesthetic consciousness by appealing to socially situated body.

## Musical Noise After Russolo

Modernist writers were cognizant of the increasing value of noise within *musical* culture, aware that the musicians themselves increasingly saw noise as a kind of raw material to be celebrated rather than avoided. In the midst of any number of musical scandals, they knew that there was also much to detect in the noises that emanated from the mezzanine. After the premiere of Edgard Varèse's intentionally noisy *Amériques* (1926), a tribute to New York City from a Parisian in America. A reviewer noted that "jeers and cheers, hisses and hurrahs, made the audience's reception of this radical work almost as deliriously dissonant as was the 'music' itself."<sup>33</sup> *Amériques* is something of an urban homage to *Le Sacre du Printemps*, beginning with a chromatic, recognizably *Sacresque* alto-flute solo, and climaxing with an increasingly noisy and rhythmically intense collective battery of voices.

The conception of *Amériques*, as Varèse describes it, calls attention to the ability of noise to vacillate between the literal and the metaphorical, between dreams and hard facts. On the conception of *Amériques*, Varèse claimed that he was "still under the spell" of his "first impressions of New York":

Not only New York seen, but more especially heard. For the first time with my physical ears I heard a sound that had kept recurring in my dreams as a boy—a high whistling C-sharp. It came to me as I worked in my Westside apartment where I could hear all the river sounds—the lonely foghorns, the shrill peremptory whistles—the whole wonderful river symphony which moved me more than anything ever had before. (Qtd. in Thompson 139)

A similar impulse can be detected in Antheil's claims that the music of *Ballet Mécanique* originated, first, in his (pre- and post-natal) experience of industrial Trenton and, second, in music that occurred to him in a dream (music whose precise quality Antheil could never again access).<sup>34</sup> Antheil and Varèse attribute their music both to the imaginative and psychological dream-world, and to the hard material facts of urban life. Theirs is a soundscape not only of a

city, but of an "Unreal City."<sup>35</sup> While Antheil (more than Varèse) claimed a neoclassical justification for music, emphasizing clarity, precision, and structural unity, in discussing the *origins* of that music he waxes romantic indeed.

Hence Cowell's essay on "The Joys of Noise," "calculated to undermine musical standards," attempts to demonstrate that contemporary "noise-makers"—composers such as George Antheil, Edgard Varèse, and himself—were developing noise into a "natural" musical material. Far from emphasizing the modern industrial elements of noise, Cowell argues that "noise-sounds" derive from the "primitive" elements of music. While ritual music is motivated by a rhythmic pulse, Cowell writes, this pulse comprises noises rather than pitched tones:

All primitive music consists in part of beating on percussion instruments, which produces noise-sounds. Without the impelling rhythm induced by these sounds, the backbone of the entrancement of the music would be removed. No primitive can sing comfortably without a flow of beats on some drum-like instrument to support him; and the piling up of the hypnotic spell, which will lift primitives to fanatical ecstasy, is impossible without the ceaseless percussion thuds. When the same rhythm is marked by tones rather than by noises, the force of the music is immeasurably weakened. ("Joys" 250-1).

Cowell's argument looks conventional in its resemblance to the primitivist jargon that motivates so much of modernist art, music, and literature. The relationship between the sounds of primitive ritual and the sounds of technological modernity is a common feature of modernist writing on music, as evidenced by T.S. Eliot's review of *Le Sacre du Printemps* for the *London Letter*: "the *Sacre du Printemps* [...] did seem to transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, and the other barbaric cries of modern life; and to transform these despairing noises into music." As Emily Thompson demonstrates, critics of jazz employed an inversion of this logic, representing jazz as a kind of noise, and that instead of modernizing the primitive à la Eliot on Stravinsky, regressed back *into* the primitive.

The rhetorics of primitivism and futurism merged into an anxiety about collectively experienced music. Thompson writes, citing critics from the '20s and '30s,

Jazz was attacked "not only for returning people to the jungles of barbarism but also for expressing the mechanistic sterility of modern life." It was perceived to reflect "an impulse for wildness" even as it was "perfectly adapted to robots." It stimulated the "half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds" while simultaneously constituting "the exact musical reflection of modern capitalistic industrialism."  
(131)

The racial element in such a critique can barely even be called a subtext, and as Thompson points out, indexes a larger anxiety about the shifting demography of the city. The simultaneous rhetoric of race and technology suggests that mechanization and racialization were both perceived as threats to white middle-class domesticity—both thus consigned to the sphere of noise. Composers such as Antheil who reclaimed noise, still marshaling a highly problematic rhetoric of primitivism, celebrated jazz and other kinds of "Negro music" as enabling a kind of embodied experience, one that would salve the wounds of Western warfare: in Antheil's words, "Negro music made us remember at least that we still had bodies which had not been exploded by shrapnel" (qtd. in Kahn 66). A brief passage from Antheil's pseudonymously published detective novel, *Death in the Dark*, suggests that for good or ill, Antheil too understood jazz as a kind of noise, capable of summoning up images of "hideous, monotonous clanging, jangling tin cans, thin, breakable fingernails scraped across glass, the screeching brakes of locomotives, sour painted leering lips, bad hips, fat legs, paunchy stomachs, dead and glazed eyes, sweat, and cheap lavender electric lights under faded paper flowers."<sup>36</sup>

In both a figurative and a technical sense, modernists such as Antheil and Cowell perceived rhythm to embody more elemental kinds of sound. Whereas Antheil acknowledges the power of jazz to *evoke* modern noise, Cowell in "The Joys of Noise" suggests that the rhythms of ritual *consist* of noise. (Though I do not mean that the rhythms of jazz and those of ritual are the

same, Antheil and Cowell tend to describe them with the same kinds of rhetoric.) Cowell argues that the ostensibly elemental, primitive rhythms of ritual can be broken down into something more elemental yet: the "noise-sound"; and, conversely, suggests that subtly "primitive" rhythms, layered on top of each other, would create a kind of aesthetically pleasing noise. The performance of these rhythms might require mechanical interventions: devices such as the gramophone, the piano roll, and the "rhythmicon" (invented by Léon Theremin) would enable the realization of "a harmony of several different rhythms played together," in cases where "primitive" rhythms might otherwise be too subtle or irregular for European- or American-trained composers to perform.<sup>37</sup> Whereas Russolo associates noise with dissonance—both being pleasingly harsh assaults on the senses—Cowell associates it with a "harmony of [...] rhythms" that lifts the listener into hypnotic ecstasy.

By the 1930s, noise was so explicit a conceptual presence in the modernist music scene, and so clichéd as grounds for dismissing modernist music, that Cowell composed a setting of "Three Anti-Modernist Songs" (1938), each based on a journalistic piece of doggerel making fun of a progressive musician (Wagner, Richard Strauss, and Stravinsky).<sup>38</sup> An innovator in the rhythmic, harmonic, and timbral dimensions of modernist music, Cowell sets these public responses to Strauss, Stravinsky, and Wagner in a pithy, accessible, and consonantly harmonized song cycle, in ironic deference to the "anti-modernist" mainstream. The third of these songs is an assault on *Le Sacre*, appearing originally in 1924 as a letter to the editor of *The Boston Herald*:

Who wrote this fiendish "Rite of Spring"?  
What right had he to write the thing?  
Against our helpless ears to fling  
Its crash, clash, cling, clang, bing, bang, bing?

And then to call it "Rite of SPRING,"  
The season when on joyous wing  
The birds melodious carols sing

And harmony's in every thing!

He who could write the "Rite of Spring,"  
If I be right by right should swing!

Leaving the composer unnamed, the writer attempts to restore order through his own ostentatious play with consonance and internal rime, punning "rite" with multiple senses of the words "write" and "right," and suggesting that the composer should, like the victim of Stravinsky's ballet, be sacrificed for the good of the collective. Speaking on the behalf of "our" collective "helpless ears," the writer banishes the remainder into the murky inferno of noise; trying to define what about the *Rite* is so offensive, he shifts into onomatopoeia, the last refuge of someone who isn't using his grown-up words: "crash, clash, cling, clang, bing, bang, bing."

When a riot broke out at the premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, more than a decade before *The Boston Herald* printed this letter, the very literal noise of the event had little to do with the music itself. There were some individual objections to some of Stravinsky's musical techniques—Camille Saint-Saëns apparently disapproved of the opening bassoon solo, but at the tender age of seventy-eight he was unlikely to start a riot on his own. Most of the collected *furor* was directed at Nicholas Roerich's "neo-Scythianist" set design and at Nijinsky's primitivist choreography; the music itself was drowned out, such that even the dancers couldn't keep time (a difficult task even when the music is audible). By the time *Le Sacre* reached the ears of Boston and the pages of *The Boston Herald*, the reputation of the piece was already saturated with a different kind of noise: that of an infamous, disputatious public response.

The public imagination as represented by the *Boston Herald* doggerelist would imagine avant-garde music, not even of the self-consciously Antheilian "noisy" kind, as too-quickly slipping into the category of noise. In addition to this broadside against Stravinsky, Cowell sets a 1909 attack on Richard Strauss, "Hark! from the pit a fearsome sound," and an 1884 poem,



originally entitled "Directions for Composing a Wagner Overture," which also slips quickly between complaints about dissonant harmony and accusations of mere noise:

A sharp where you'd expect a natural,  
A natural where you'd expect a sharp;  
No rule observe but the exceptional,  
And then (first happy thought!) bring in a Harp.

No bar a sequence to the bar behind;  
No bar a prelude to the next that comes;  
Which follows which, you really needn't mind;—  
But (second happy thought!) bring in your Drums!

For harmonies, let wildest discords pass;  
Let key be blent [*sic*] with key in hideous hash;  
Then (for last happy thought!) bring in your Brass!  
And clang, clash, clatter, clatter, clang, and clash.

The language of the Wagner satire is almost indistinguishable from the clatter of the anti-Stravinsky invective (the goal is solidarity, not originality), but the language of each verse is hyper-stylized to match its content; for example, the clash of the two end-rimes, "pass" and "hash," is itself a kind of dissonance. While noise has a literal, often technically specific role in the music of the twentieth century, it also has this salience in popular discourses of music, where whatever doesn't "count" as music, or as what music ought to be, gets cast into the lake of noise. In this popular imagination noise acts as the intensification of discordant musical phenomena: "let wildest discords pass," blend "key [...] with key," and your last recourse will be the clatter and clash of percussion, sounds with no meaningful semantic equivalent.

So while Attali claims "noise" as a concept underlying every musical production throughout history, modernism brings it to the surface of the musical consciousness, for reasons represented by Russolo and by Cowell: one of whom wished to use noise to destroy Art, the other to advance it. With this in mind, I will turn to Attali, whose account is best appreciated both as a commentary on and a product of modernist innovations.

## Theoretical Indiscipline: Attali's *Noise*

According to Attali, music is not only a "sublime" "noise" but a *sublimation* of noise. Attali defines noise as "a resonance that interferes with the audition of a message in the process of emission," which "does not exist in itself but only in relation to the system within which it is inscribed" (26). Hence noise can be defined only dialectically against whatever attempts to deny or subject it: at least ostensibly, his subject is not just noise but "noise," not just the sonic object but the category. The act of composition, he argues, serves to moderate otherwise painful experiences ("noise"), making them institutionally palatable; but insofar as music retains a residue of the noises being mediated, it possesses a radical, subversive, prophetic quality: "I would like to trace the political economy of music as a succession of *orders* (in other words, differences) done violence by *noises* (in other words, the calling into question of differences) that are *prophetic* because they create new orders, unstable and changing" (19, his italics).

*Noise* offers "a call to theoretical indiscipline" in an effort radically to resist music's insistence on order (5), much as Russolo and Marinetti promoted noise and the destruction of syntax as a resistance to the rarefaction of art. The book's history of music is thus self-consciously, but usefully, reductive. It attempts to sketch out a history of music, from its ritual basis to its modern condition as a mechanically reproducible object of commercial exchange, and to a future state of liberated "composition." His history looks roughly as follows:

- (1) *Ritual*: A sphere in which music, as it existed "prior to all commercial exchange," "simulates the social order." Circulated orally through festival and religious ritual, music consolidates communities and disseminates myths and symbol-systems. Music sublimates socially and ritually acceptable kinds of violence ("sacrifice") so as to "make people forget" what Attali cryptically calls "the essential violence."

Throughout his book he insists on the ritual basis of music, even as music becomes commodified and mass-produced. Music is a "simulacrum of the ritual-sacrifice" in that "listening to noise is a little like being killed; that listening to music is to attend a ritual murder, with all the danger, guilt, but also reassurance that goes along with that" (28).

- (2) *Representation*: Attali argues that starting in the eighteenth century, the "ritualization" or "channelization" of violence was replaced by "the spectacle of the absence of violence": music imitates ritual within the "closed space"—and the commercialized space—of the concert hall. "Representation" relies on the commodification of music, both in performance and in the circulation of printed scores. Thus music replaces "sacrificial" value (ideologically consolidated but economically decentralized) with "use-value." This function of music attempts not only to "make people forget" the violence of daily life, but to "make them believe" that (the representation of) social order cannot exist outside of commercial exchange.
- (3) *Repetition*, or mechanical reproduction. The ideological function of repetitive music is to "silence" noise—essentially, to drown it out by mass-producing music. Attali's discussion of "repetition" is conspicuously indebted to Adorno's critique of the "culture industry" and Walter Benjamin's ambivalence about the loss of aura: Adorno, in the sense that purchasing music itself becomes a kind of labor in the service of conformity (i.e., the marginalization and silencing of noise); and Benjamin in the sense that music is now "repeatable outside the spectacle of its performance" (Attali 100). Attali seems to side with Adorno, lacking even Benjamin's faith that mechanically reproduced art might lead to democratization.

(4) *Composition*. A future, yet-unrealized phase in which musicians somehow create "new relations among people and between men and commodities," in such a way that the composition of music represents the experience of lived time and not the "stockpiling" of it.

The self-conscious reductiveness of Attali's account enables him to establish useful historical and broad theoretical categories. Yet it seems to possess much of the conspiratorial paranoia of Adorno's culture industry without the analytical acuity or the eye for dialectic. Although *Noise* recognizes musical differences among different historical moments, the book treats "music" within each historical moment as a univocal cultural product. This serves his argumentative purpose, particularly with respect to "repetitive" music, among which he sees no real differences. That is, his categories are in many ways reductive, rigid, and static because he is using them to explain a political economy of music that he sees as increasingly reductive, rigid, and static. Thus while Adorno offers more nuanced and more rigorous development of the relation between musical progress and the actual composition, Attali offers a more sweeping sense of what "musical progress" or regress looks like, in terms of repressing or silencing marginal statements within the social collective.

I will close this chapter by returning to the two main forms of aesthetic innovation—dissonance and rhythmic experimentation—that I associate with modernism. As competing handlings of noise, dissonance and rhythm are at the center of modernist debates over the cultural value of music. Whereas noise often stands in for something like Arnold's "anarchy," "ignorant armies crash[ing]," rhythm often indexes the patterns of culture: ordering and narrating the experience of noise, rhythm enables the transmission of shared narratives. While Adorno argues that microrhythmic innovation feeds back into cultural conformity, or subjects the

audience to violence and discipline, other modernist writers (such as Eliot) consider rhythm a means of jolting the audience into a more critical relation towards its social situation.

Adorno defends his preferred means of shocking the listening body, dissonance, as a more psychologically raw expression, a denial of cultural conformity and one of many, embodied ways of aestheticizing noise. The significance of dissonance in this dissertation is largely informed by Adorno's argument that dissonant music, within his historical context, best speaks to the homogeneity, falsity, and contingency of the "consonant" social structures complicit with the so-called culture industry. His is not the only model of dissonance, however, and not all modernist writers accept or anticipate Adorno's strict Schoenberg/Stravinsky dichotomy. What they do tend to share is the notion that the perceived "difficulty" of dissonance compels a more critical stance towards harmony in general.

#### The "Supervention of Novelty": Dissonance and Tradition

Dissonance (like any other kind of harmony) relies on the simultaneity of multiple sounds. How, then, do writers approximate the effects of harmony, consonant or dissonant, within the linearity of the English language? It is not just dissonance, but harmony in general—the attempt to represent simultaneities in language—that provides modernism with one of its central innovations. Pound's definition of the image as "that which presents an intellectual or emotional complex in an instant of time" attempts to reconfigure horizontal language in vertical terms: to take syntax and narrative and compress them within the same temporal unit.

A dissonance has three dimensions: (1) Vertical: a dissonance is a simultaneity of two or more sounds sounding at once. In a broader sense, they needn't even be sounds; Albright, for example, considers multi-generic works in which a dissonance may exist between/among words,

images, and musical sounds. (2) Horizontal: a dissonance has some kind of syntagmatic function with respect to the "simultaneities" that precede it and follow it. (3) Qualitative: dissonance is granted particular affective, aesthetic, intellectual, and social significance. Whatever these qualities are, they are generally defined negatively, against something else: dissonance, whatever it is, is not consonance, not concordance, not assonance, not euphony. It is from the normative insistence that dissonances "ought to" resolve into something else that Schoenberg and, for *very* different reasons, Adorno wish to emancipate the dissonance. For Adorno, the "negative" quality of dissonance speaks more truly than the affirmative "truths" promoted by mainstream society and by consonant art palatable to that mainstream.

The interpretive aspect is particularly important for Adorno, for whom a critique of music implicates a critique of listening practices. He calls attention to interpretation as a cultural practice in and of itself, as in his promotion of "structural listening" (concentrated listening that interprets the structure of music as it unfolds) and demotion of "fetishistic" or "regressive listening" (which listens too easily, fixating on atomized and easily digested melodies and rhythms). In a convincing deconstruction of Adorno's promotion of Schoenberg and dismissal of Stravinsky, Rose Rosengard Subotnik argues that Stravinsky's music (and others') calls for different but no less radical listening practices than Schoenberg's.<sup>39</sup> Subotnik's argument furthers, rather than refutes, the historically contingent nature of musical listening, suggesting that Adorno's judgments very often impede the radical historical specificity he claimed to promote. One need not share either Eliot's or Adorno's specific judgments about music (and these judgments differ in important ways) in order to engage them as participants in the modernist conversation on music's structural relation to the social sphere.

Adorno emphasizes that music communicates only through performance and interpretation, and is thus particularly trenchant in his skepticism about searches for the ontological origins of music. This skepticism reveals itself, moreover, in a rejection of "the search for meaning of music itself," which can easily take the form of a search for intentions ("Contemporary" 139). For this reason, Adorno is not bothered if his promotion of Schoenberg's music differs from the composer's own stated intentions. Music, Adorno argues, seeks the "pure naming" or "unity of object and sign" that escapes human language, but can do so only constellationally, through a processual unfolding of musical form. He writes,

Music gazes at its listener with empty eyes, and the more deeply one immerses oneself in it, the more incomprehensible its ultimate purpose becomes, until one learns that the answer, if such is possible, does not lie in contemplation, but in interpretation. In other words, the only person who can solve the riddle of music is the one who plays it correctly, as something whole. Its enigma apes the listener by seducing him into hypostasizing, as being, what is in itself an act, a becoming, and, as human becoming, a behavior. ("Contemporary" 139)

For Adorno, Schoenberg's music enacts this kind of interpretive, dialectical unfolding through an immanent structural density that obviates the need for tonality. Schoenberg's music is "highly organized in a way that is without precedent," meaning that it so intensifies the "density of the relation among the several simultaneous voices" that "the question of harmonic progression becomes superfluous" ("Contemporary" 152).

Adorno rejects dissonances that are merely vertical juxtapositions, rather than emerging out of the development of musical material. For Adorno, one of the important structural features of Schoenberg's music—and what gives it its qualitative radical dimensions—is that it unfolds dialectically through time, while each particular dissonance calls attention to its own constituent elements. In *The Philosophy of New Music*, he argues that dissonance "is more rational than consonance, insofar as it articulates with great clarity the relationship of the sounds occurring

within it—instead of achieving a dubious unity through the destruction of those partial moments present in dissonance, through homogenous sound" (49). The dissonant artwork prefers to preserve the specificity of each individual dissonance rather than assimilating its sounds into a homogeneity. By calling this dissonance "rational" Adorno contrasts it with the ostensibly rational positivism of "Enlightenment reason" that he associates with domination and power. Articulating the tensions among sounds while preserving their individuality, the dissonant artwork speaks to its own individuality and alienation rather than allowing itself to be homogenized into music that comports with mainstream "listening habits." Crucially, Adorno does not endow dissonance with any kind of stable ontological status that makes it inherently more radical than consonance. Rather, he emphasizes the extent to which dissonance is radical within a social structure that mandates consonance (musical and otherwise). Part of the qualitative force of dissonance lies in a dialectical analysis of the ways in which an artwork critiques or complies with its own social situation.

Other varieties of dissonance, such as that identified by Albright as "dissonance among [...] component media,"<sup>40</sup> also have an important place within this project, especially insofar as much of modernist music derives largely from the theater, or responds to theatrical music (such as Wagner's). Modernist theater responds in several ways to Wagner's ambitions to immerse the audience in a spectacular fusion of poetry, drama, music, and visual design, and one such response is to emphasize discordance where Wagner emphasized synthesis. By drawing on these internal dissonances among the visual, verbal, and auditory, these modernist texts also implicate a dissonance between the artwork and its social context. Works such as Edith Sitwell's and William Walton's *Façade*, whose iterations of nonsense rhymes to complex rhythms, more or less in the form of a patter song, draw on various influences of music, visual art, literary art, and



theater in a way that illustrates the Sitwells' own sense of estrangement and social difference. The work on which they draw most conspicuously, Schoenberg's expressionist melodrama *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), is itself a fusion of various "media"—atonal music, underpinned by imagery of the Pierrot figure from *commedia dell'arte* theater, expressed through (translated) French Symbolist poetry, intoned in *Sprechstimme* (speech-singing). If each of these components weren't itself a sufficient expression of social and psychological alienation, the dissonances among them would be. Insofar as the poetry and the music of *Pierrot* both seem vaguely nihilistic, it befits the artwork to approach its "meanings" only constellationally, through suggestion and ongoing development rather than through resolution. Unlike *Pierrot*, many of the other contemporary theatrical artworks appropriated by Sitwell and Walton, such as Stravinsky and Diaghilev's *Petrushka* (1911) and Satie and Cocteau's *Parade* (1917), are precisely the kind of the rhythmic, folksy, pranksy musical work detested by Adorno, a fact that adds a productive *post hoc* theoretical dissonance to the historical importance of *Façade*: a dissonance among various modernist conceptions of the social role of music and poetry. Each of these influences—expressionism, surrealism, cubism, Symbolism, *commedia dell'arte*, melodrama, Wagnerian opera—has its own history, and to invoke all of them at once is to implicate a new set of tensions.

The question of aesthetic tradition is an important one to Adorno and Eliot, who have different but mutually revealing positions on the relation between tradition and the individual, a question readily framed in terms of harmony (consonant or dissonant) and rhythm. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," the classic modernist celebration of impersonality, posits a consonance between the poet and the poets before him:

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them.

The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

Eliot posits a historical narrative constantly under duress and revision from the position of the present. The modernist tension, exemplified by Adorno and Eliot, between the "really new" and the not-so-really new pivots on the "supervention of novelty: on a productively unstable relation between tradition and the individual talent. In Eliot's account, the "ideal order" of tradition resembles a kind of homeostatic ecosystem in which the "supervention of novelty" is compensated for by a general "readjust[ment]" back into stability—where the individual poet interjects brief dissonances into the narrative, the "order" will resolve them into newly meaningful whole. Whereas Adorno emphasizes the ability (and the need) for a "really new" artwork to shock the system by calling attention to its contradictions and falsities, Eliot emphasizes the "surrender" of the individual poet to tradition itself. Whereas Adorno emphasizes the falsity and contradictions at the heart of tradition, Eliot emphasizes conformity and totality. Whereas Adorno emphasizes dissonance, Eliot emphasizes resolution.

Notwithstanding this important distinction, both Adorno and Eliot evaluate the qualitative nature of consonance or dissonance (literal or metaphorical) in dialectical terms. Dissonance represents the site of a continuous and ongoing struggle not only between "tradition" and "talent," but between the artist and his own material—the place where the artist strains against the limits of what he can articulate: "That is not what I meant at all. / That is not it, at all."<sup>41</sup> For Eliot, the way to grapple with this tension, and thereby to allow the totality or "order" to work its magic, is for the poet to extinguish his own personality and sacrifice himself to a larger good:

What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career. What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

As Adorno sees it, among the central merits of Schoenberg's music is his struggle with musical "tradition" so as to "gain insight into challenges which remain unresolved and which left flaws behind in the music."<sup>42</sup> The musical material benefits from, and interrogates, the music (and musical regimes) that came before it. But Adorno's emphasis on music's potential to expose the contradictions at the heart of tradition, and at the heart of mainstream culture, clashes with Schoenberg's own more teleological and more Eliotic notion of art. As Lydia Goehr argues, Schoenberg is especially conscious of his own place within the larger historical trajectory of music (and German and Austrian music in particular), positioning atonal music within a continuous relation to the tonal tradition" of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, and claiming that

this tradition develops logically according to eternal aesthetic laws dictating principles of form, unity, coherence, comprehensibility, and beauty. Further, atonal music is a natural development out of tonality: It solves all the problems—harmonic, formal, orchestral, and emotional—tonality created. (226)

Thus as a musical and aesthetic phenomenon, Schoenberg's emancipation of the dissonance is aimed as a continuation of, not a break with, musical tradition. An actively creative reader of Schoenberg, Adorno is willing to ascribe historical or extra-musical qualities to the innovations of atonality; but he does acknowledge that atonal music emerged as a way of working through musical "problems" inherited from Brahms, Mahler, Wagner, et al. Adorno's philosophical intervention is to make the confrontation with tradition symptomatic of the alienation of genuinely authentic musical creation. This tendency leads him to refuse attempts to solve musical "problems" of different musical traditions, in which art does *not* consider itself alienated from the social.<sup>43</sup>

Historically and culturally minded musicologists have been willing to ascribe metaphorical and historical significance to dissonance, and to probe the metacritical stakes of pursuing (or ignoring) the specific import of specific dissonances in specific historical moments. In a polemical revision of the "decidedly Gentile" realm of "historical musicology," Alexander Ringer argues that Schoenberg's assiduous formalism, including his fight-to-the-death with tonality, was a "condition of inner survival" as a turn-of-the-century Viennese Jew. Hence Ringer analogizes Schoenberg's emancipation of musical dissonance to an emancipation of "historical dissonances"<sup>44</sup>—his refusal to capitulate to anti-Semitic political authority or to assimilate culturally. A similar attempt to draw out the metaphorical qualities of dissonance is present in Thomas Harrison's *1910: The Emancipation of Dissonance*, a "symptomatology" of various cultural and aesthetic manifestations of internal and political dissonances: the realizations in art, literature, and music of tragedy, degeneration, disaster, disease, misery, bereavement, suffering, nihilism, angst, anxiety, and *Weltschmerz*, particularly in "dissonant" sites within the larger "hyphenated empire[s]" of Austro-Germany and Austro-Hungary. Helpfully, for the reader of English literature, Harrison gestures at Virginia Woolf's suggestion that "On or about December 1910, human character changed," but detects this change more in the expressionism of Middle and Eastern Europe than in British exhibitions of Post-Impressionism. Like Ringer, Harrison draws on Schoenberg's alienated status as a Jew within Germany and Austro-Hungary, but cautions against framing this context in terms of Schoenberg's "intentions":

Few artists in 1910 are interested in articulating the "historical foundations" of their art. [...] That function can be performed by much lesser artists. If anything, the artistic "chaos" of 1910 seeks an order that is *missing* from historical "experience": new modes of comprehension transcending the historical and stubborn dualities (cause/effect, male and female, consonance/dissonance, Aryan/Jew, belonging/not belonging). This, if anything, is the "final cause" of the antagonisms of 1910.<sup>45</sup>

Dissonance resists the ordering narratives of culture, narratives which rely on often oppressive "stubborn dualities." For this reason, writers such as Adorno are tentative about rhythmic innovations that appear to narrate dominant narratives too transparently. Other modernist writers believe rhythm to have its own kinds of critical power. Inasmuch as it registers the patterns of culture, an analysis of rhythm enables the sort of cultural-historical account of modernism that this project, in the spirit of cultural studies and the "new musicology," attempts to carry out.

### The Rhythms of Modernist Culture

Rhythm is among the most oft-cited terms in modernist literary aesthetics. E.M. Forster announces rhythm as a chief formal aspiration of the modern novel, and Stephen Dedalus (after Aquinas and Aristotle) declares rhythm the chief formal relation between part and whole. Henri Bergson uses the language of rhythm to theorize the relation between experienced temporality and perceived temporality; Yeats understands it as the constitutive trait of symbolist poetry; Eisenstein uses rhythm to explain the political potential of montage, Artaud the "theater of cruelty"; Fry uses rhythm to describe Matisse; Rebecca West to describe the inner rebellion of Evadne (and the rhetorical device of suffragism) in "Indissoluble Matrimony." Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* imagines the rhythms of the sea as akin to the process of artistic creation itself: Lily Briscoe feels something "dictat[ing] to her" a "rhythm [...] strong enough to bear her along with it on its current" (148). Stevens searches for the "rhythm of this celestial pantomime" and Pound for the "absolute rhythm" of the "Great Bass." Fascinated by the creative energies of jazz, ragtime, ballet, and the music hall, modernists are greatly intrigued by the cultural implications of organizing sounds according to the beat, and asking who gets to set the tempo.<sup>46</sup>

Adorno's perspectives on rhythm are important as one particular strand of modernist thought: that which conceives of self-consciously rhythmic music as obedience or conformity. One can detect such thinking in the "Malthusian Blues" and whizz-clicking conveyor belts of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), rhythms which represent a authoritarian means of controlling noise, but which in other contexts add up to the production of more noise. In *The Perennial Philosophy* (1944), Huxley describes the twentieth century as the "Age of Noise," he includes in this "assault on silence" "a babel of distractions—news items, mutually irrelevant bits of information, blasts of corybantic or sentimental music, continually repeated doses of drama that bring no catharsis, but merely create a craving for daily or even hourly emotional enemas."<sup>47</sup> Though he does not refer to musical rhythm in this passage, he does refer to regularity, "daily or even hourly," and to the ritual, "corybantic" kind of music being produced according to schedule. Thus it seems to me a deeply Adornian passage at heart, especially when read against *Brave New World*: suggesting not only that popular music assaults the intellect but that this assault is in some ways a preparation for totalitarianism. The relation between rhythm and empire, a key focus of "primitivist" music, is equally detectable in Marlow's confounding of "the beat of the drum with the beating of [his] heart" (not to mention the "rhythmically clinking" line of enslaved Africans) in *Heart of Darkness*.<sup>48</sup> Marlow's auto-auscultation, a sign both of his withdrawal into solipsism and of his anxieties about "the conquest of the earth," derives from a desire to make the material (subject matter) of literature audible both in the bodies of its characters and in what Nattiez calls the "material" of the text itself.

Not all appeals to musical rhythm bear their politics overtly. Eduard Hanslick, for example, writes that "rhythm" is the "animating principle of music"—the one and only element of musical form that can be traced back to nature. That is, although rhythm does not constitute

music in and of itself, it (and it alone) constitutes the natural basis for musical creation. Harmony and melody are cultivated and evolved through compositional theory and practice; music is not found in nature, even if our means for producing music are naturally evolved. Hanslick refers to rhythms on both a smaller scale and on a larger scale, "as the co-proportionality of a symmetrical structure" (28). Adorno, in his insistence on the immanent properties of music, finds Hanslick's categories compelling: it is the former "microrhythmic" kind of innovation that Adorno finds ideologically and aesthetically unsound in the music of Stravinsky. Adorno opposes this rhythm, fragmented and emphasized for its own sake, to the symmetrical holistic rhythm of musical structure in Schoenberg that enables individual dissonances to assert themselves, and argues that Stravinsky offers an illusion of freedom that is in fact nothing more than "legerdemain." Given Hanslick's notion that rhythm is the one feature of music that emerges from nature, "the earliest [musical element] to develop in children and animals," one is not surprised to see Adorno consistently describe Stravinsky as "childish," adolescent, puerile, or hebephrenic—or to see Edith Sitwell using Stravinskian puppetry images to idealize the childlike.<sup>49</sup> Adorno's objections to intensely rhythmic and primitivistic music lie in its appeals to origins (and its appeals in general). Adorno argues that primitivism seeks an origin for music that is somehow outside of history, and that it seeks an abstract or conceptual justification for its technique rather than an immanently musical one. Eliot's assertion that poetry begins with a savage beating on a drum may justify this point, both because it claims a "beginning" for poetry, and because it cites the Aristotelian function of rhythm whose purpose is imitative rather than critical.<sup>50</sup>

Whatever the philosophical merits or deficiencies of Adorno's argument, he is not inventing things when he associates rhythm with the structures of capitalism. An 1896 volume by the Swiss economist and anthropologist Karl Bücher, entitled *Labor and Rhythm* (*Arbeit und*

*Rhythmus*), argues that poetry derives from music, and that the rhythms of both derive from the bodily movements of labor. Bücher argued that the "joyous work" of "primitive cultures," which he observed at the 1889 World Exhibition in Paris, was "diametrically opposed to the alienated labor of modern industrial societies."<sup>51</sup> Bücher's critique of Taylorist economics leads him to argue that the rhythms of machines need more closely to approximate the natural rhythms of the human body, that "industrial machinery alienates human labor because it does not operate at a human tempo; on the other hand, large-scale, 'uniformizing' ('einformige') work is of 'the greatest benefit for a person, so long as he can determine the tempo of his bodily movements.'"<sup>52</sup> This critique nevertheless is offered with the hope that the rhythms of man and machine can be appropriately synchronized and the "joy" of work rehabilitated.<sup>53</sup> As Michael Cowan argues, "Bücher's focus on 'rhythm' as the mark of bodily being formed part of a much broader medical mapping of the body as a network of organic 'rhythms' by physiologists and psychologists"—choreographers and filmmakers as well—at the turn of the century (228). Cowan names Georg Simmel, Emil Jaques-Dalcroze, Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann, and Fritz Lang; others include Bronislaw Malinowski, Friedrich Engels, and Havelock Ellis.<sup>54</sup>

Thus the influence likely extends to Anglo-American modernism, and one can detect similar attitudes in Ezra Pound's treatise on George Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique* (1924): Antheil may have associated these rhythms with primitive ritual, but for Ezra Pound they serve as a basis for reorganizing the factory, so that a worker's experience of the "grindings" of labor leaves him exhilarated rather than dehumanized. Such a critique may well have benefited from Bücher's critique of Taylorism, and though I'm sure Adorno did not know Pound's treatise on Antheil, *Ballet Mécanique* seems to put Adorno's critique of rhythm on somewhat firmer ground. The Pound/Antheil axis represents each of the two, equally false forms of rationalization that Adorno



hears in the rhythms of "primitivism": a positivistic search for the ontological origins of music and, at the same time, a pretext for capitalist domination. Similarly, Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1946) underscores the association of music with the rhythms of labor—a connection that grounds their critique of Enlightenment positivism and of the "culture industry" in the structures of ancient myth: "For the vanquished [...], the recurrent, eternally similar natural processes become the rhythm of labor according to the beat of cudgel and whip which resounds in every barbaric drum and every monotonous ritual."<sup>55</sup> Thus, Adorno and Horkheimer suggest, the "dread" communicated by these rhythms come to be treated as a more permanent or ontological state of being, an illusion on which systems of power rely.<sup>56</sup> The ultimate result of this, in theory, is that the experience of "amusement" becomes merely another kind of labor, where pleasure "moves rigorously in worn grooves of association"(DE 137).

As I state in the Preface, one tends to find greater sympathy towards rhythm in figures, such as Raymond Williams and Georg Lukács, more optimistic about cultural solidarity and more skeptical about art's autonomy from social life. Williams, whose passage on the ability of rhythm to "transmit" narratives to the body has inspired much of the new musicology, argues hopefully that art is being "reintegrat[ed] [...] with the common life of society." For Lukács, the autonomy of art produces decadent modernist writing that is all noise and no signal, consisting in solipsistic interior monologues and unselectively treated naturalistic catalogues of detail, and lacking a redemptive narrative drive that accords with the "rhythm of cultural progress." Lukács's writings on music are isolated and rarely translated into English. As Robert Lilienfeld summarizes it, Lukács occupies a middle ground between Hanslick (music as an autonomous language with no programmatic "content") and Schopenhauer (music as the expression of a metaphysical Will), suggesting that music is mimetic of the language of emotions.<sup>57</sup> Lukács's

exemplary musician, personal acquaintance, and fellow Hungarian was Béla Bartók, whose use of folk and peasant idioms offered musical material drawn from outside the turning wheels of capitalism.<sup>58</sup> Not unlike Attali, then, Lukács hears music auguring a simultaneously pre-capitalist and post-capitalist sphere in which composition occurs spontaneously as part of authentic social ritual. Later critics, who find Lukács as ahistorical as the autonomous art he critiqued, would no doubt find his political appeals to primitive precapitalism equally fantastical.<sup>59</sup> On different grounds, Adorno would argue that they represent a false search for the equally false hope of finding an origin. False or not, these hopes constitute an equally important part of the modernist project, and an important reason why modernist writers draw on music: music's ritual basis offers one particular way of thinking about how to reorient fragmented experience and how to draw the body back into a more organic relation with society.<sup>60</sup>

For both Williams and Lukács, "art for art's sake" aestheticism is a false lead (although Williams more carefully historicizes whence such an attitude arose), suggesting a divide between art and society that must ultimately be rebridged. Figures such as Sitwell offer a preemptive twist on this logic by aligning rhythm *both* with the "transmission" of culture *and* with Paterian modes criticized by Williams, who is very much put off by Pater's notion that "a man can himself become, can confuse himself with, a made work" (CS 168). Yet Sitwell and Williams share the notion that the social frameworks of these very modes can be made transparent; that rhythm's appeals to the body can not only aestheticize social life, but also in the process call attention to the social emplacement of art. For modernist writers, the "sublime noise" of music serves the double function of aestheticizing noise, and of calling attention to the roots of art in the sonic experiences of modernity.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Britten, *Peter Grimes: Vocal Score*, ed. Erwin Stein (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 2003), 247-8. Hereafter references are to this edition, cited parenthetically by act, scene, and page.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach," *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Christopher Ricks (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1934), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Rainey, "The Creation of the Avant-Garde: F. T. Marinetti and Ezra Pound," *Modernism/Modernity* 1.3 (1994): 209.

<sup>5</sup> This formulation is indebted to Matthew Steggle, "Paradise Lost and the Acoustics of Hell," *Early Modern Literary Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature* 7 (2001), April 23 2008 <<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/emls/07-1/stegmil2.htm>>. As his epigraph, Steggle cites T.S. Eliot's essay "Milton I": "I cannot feel that my appreciation of Milton leads anywhere outside the mazes of sound."

<sup>6</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. John Dryden, ed. Samuel Garth (London: Wordsworth, 1998), 12.67-82. Hereafter cited by book and line.

<sup>7</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2006), II.102. Excerpts from *The Waste Land* are from Rainey's edition, hereafter cited parenthetically by section and line number.

<sup>8</sup> For two classic examples of Lukács's resistance to modernist solipsism and naturalistic description, see Georg Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism," *The Lukács Reader*, ed. Arpad Kadarkay (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Georg Lukács, "Narrate or Describe?," *Writer and Critic*, ed. Arthur D. Kahn (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> See Ronald Schleifer, *Rhetoric and Death: The Language of Modernism and Postmodern Discourse Theory* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1990), 192-3. With respect to *Heart of Darkness*, Schleifer argues that Kurtz's final utterance "is indistinguishable from breath, indistinguishable from the noisy nonsense of stertorous breathing [...]. That is, his 'words' may not be enunciated words at all, but simply noise that Marlow hears—arbitrarily—as words" (192-3). See also Quentin Bailey, "Heroes and Homosexuals: Education and Empire in E. M. Forster," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 48.3 (2002). Bailey suggests a parallel between the echoes at the center of *A Passage to India* (1924) and the "unspeakable" homoeroticism at the center of *Maurice* (1913; pub. 1971).

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*, eds. Cedric Watts and Robert Hampson (London: Penguin, 1986), 66; ch. 4. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>11</sup> Osbert Sitwell, "A Few Days in an Author's Life," *All at Sea: A Social Tragedy in Three Acts for First-Class Passengers Only* (London: Duckworth, 1927), 31.

<sup>12</sup> Theodor Adorno, "On the Contemporary Relationship Between Philosophy and Music," trans. Susan Gillespie, *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2002). Hereafter cited parenthetically as "Contemporary."

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Monelle, *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood, 1992), 3.

<sup>14</sup> In his 1976 lectures at Harvard, Leonard Bernstein somewhat licentiously compares the "transformations" of motivic development to those of Chomskyan "transformational grammar." Leonard Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006).

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<sup>15</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), 9. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *MD*.

<sup>16</sup> For work on "neutrality" in the novel, and its relation to narrative form, see Josh Epstein, "'Neutral Physiognomy': The Unreadable Faces of *Middlemarch*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 38.1 (2008).

<sup>17</sup> Roland Barthes, "Musica Practica," trans. Stephen Heath, *Image—Music—Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 153, his emphasis.

<sup>18</sup> "The presumption that the musical means themselves have a historical tendency contradicts the traditional interpretation of the material of music. [...] [T]he composer's struggle with the material is a struggle with society precisely to the extent that society has migrated into the work, and as such it is not pitted against the production as something purely external and heteronomous, as against a consumer or against an opponent." Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006), 31. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *PNM*.

<sup>19</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), 58, 68. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>20</sup> In ethnomusicological terms, since some languages possess no word for "music" writ large (only for specific musical *practices*), Nattiez cautions against universalizing the noise/music dichotomy: the "problem of the schism between music and noise clearly illustrates the *mobility* of interpretants that separates 'musical' from 'nonmusical'" (*MD* 54). Nattiez insists on the relevance of all three spheres of musical analysis to all cultural situations.

<sup>21</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," *Image—Music—Text*, ed. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 179, italics in original. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>22</sup> Ivan Kreilkamp, *Voice and the Victorian Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 182.

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, Timothy C. *Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> See Amy Koritz, *Gendering Bodies/Performing Art: Dance and Literature in Early Twentieth Century British Culture* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> Henry Cowell, "The Joys of Noise," *Essential Cowell: Selected Writings on Music*, ed. Dick Higgins (Kingston, NY: McPherson and Company, 2001), 29. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as "Joys."

<sup>26</sup> Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 21. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>27</sup> Wagner thought vowels were "purely auditory," whereas consonants were related to "visual rhythm and gesture, 'the eye of hearing' [Das Auge des Gehörs]." Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002), 44. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Mineola: Dover, 1958), 258; ch. 52. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>29</sup> Wagner's discovery of Schopenhauer's work in 1854, after he finished *Das Rheingold*, marked a turning point in his career, after which music predominates over the visual and dramatic elements of his total art-works. On Wagner and Schopenhauer, see Philip Alperson, "Schopenhauer and Musical Revelation," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 40.2 (1981); Elizabeth Wendell Barry, "What Wagner Found in Schopenhauer's Philosophy," *The Musical Quarterly* 11.1 (1925); Alexander Coleman, "Calderon/Schopenhauer/Wagner: The Story of a Misunderstanding," *The Musical Quarterly* 69.2 (1983); L. Dunton Green, "Schopenhauer and Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 16.2 (1930). Wagner's enthusiasm for Schopenhauer was apparently not reciprocated.

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- <sup>30</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981), 215. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>31</sup> Joseph Conrad, "Preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*," *Modernism: An Anthology of Documents*, eds. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998), 131. On Schopenhauer's influence on Conrad, see Mark Wollaeger, *Joseph Conrad and the Fictions of Skepticism* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990), 33ff.
- <sup>32</sup> Charles Baudelaire, "L'Homme et la Mer," *Flowers of Evil and Other Works/Les Fleurs du Mal et Oeuvres Choises: A Dual-Language Book*, ed. Wallace Fowlie (New York: Dover, 1992), lines 5-8.
- <sup>33</sup> Qtd. in Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933*, New ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 140. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>34</sup> George Antheil, *Bad Boy of Music*, New ed. (New York: Samuel French, 1990). Hereafter cited parenthetically as *Bad Boy*.
- <sup>35</sup> See Juan A. Suárez, *Pop Modernism: Noise and the Reinvention of Everyday Life* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007). Suárez briefly compares Antheil to Eliot (135) and usefully draws on the poem's various "modes of inscription," signification, and "textual mechanics" (122-3).
- <sup>36</sup> Stacey Bishop, *Death in the Dark* (London: Faber and Faber, 1930), 238.
- <sup>37</sup> Carol Oja cites this passage, arguing that "the machine [...] freed composers to push beyond the limitations of acoustic instruments and human performers." Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 70. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>38</sup> Henry Cowell, *Three Anti-Modernist Songs*, CD, Naxos, 2005.
- <sup>39</sup> Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996).
- <sup>40</sup> Daniel Albright, ed., *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004) 103.
- <sup>41</sup> T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, 1962), lines 96-7. Hereafter cited parenthetically as "Prufrock."
- <sup>42</sup> Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, quoted in Lydia Goehr, "Dissonant Works and the Listening Public," *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. Thomas Huhn (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 235.
- <sup>43</sup> Adorno's attitudes toward Béla Bartók are intriguing in this regard, though a full examination of them exceeds my current scope. Though often summarily dismissive of the "folk" elements in Bartók's music, Adorno acknowledges the tensions between these folk elements and more classical forms.
- <sup>44</sup> Alexander L. Ringer, "Assimilation and the Emancipation of Historical Dissonance," *Constructive Dissonance: Arnold Schoenberg and the Transformation of Twentieth-Century Culture*, eds. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1997), 24. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>45</sup> Thomas Harrison, *1910: The Emancipation of Dissonance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1996), 31.
- <sup>46</sup> On modernist writing and dance, see Koritz, *Gendering Bodies*; Terri A. Mester, *Movement and Modernism: Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Williams, and Early Twentieth-Century Dance* (Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1997).

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- <sup>47</sup> Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper, 1970), 218.
- <sup>48</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Cedric Watts (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), 232.
- <sup>49</sup> The representation of "primitives" as children has a well-developed history within primitivist art. This was partly premised on an evolutionary analogy paralleling the ontogenetic stage of children with the phylogenetic stage of "primitives." See Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994).
- <sup>50</sup> T.S. Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum," *The Nation & the Athenæum* 6 Oct. 1923: 11-2.
- <sup>51</sup> See Michael Cowan, "The Heart Machine: 'Rhythm' and Body in Weimar Film and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*," *Modernism/Modernity* 14.2 (2007): 228. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>52</sup> Michael Golston, "'Im Anfang war der Rhythmus': Rhythmic Incubations in Discourses of Mind, Body, and Race from 1850-1944," *Stanford Electronic Humanities Review* 5 (1996), May 1 2008 <<http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-suppl/text/golston.html>>.
- <sup>53</sup> For the pertinence of rhythm to labor-management, see Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1990).
- <sup>54</sup> For Bücher's influence on Malinowski and Engels, see Feliks Gross, "Young Malinowski and His Later Years," *American Ethnologist* 13.3 (1986): 560. See also Michael W. Young, *Young Malinowski: Odyssey of an Anthropologist, 1884-1920* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004). Young includes a chapter on Malinowski with respect to the Leipzig music scene. Havelock Ellis cites Bücher in *The Dance of Life* (1923): "Karl Bücher has argued that work differs from the dance, not in kind, but only in degree, since they are both essentially rhythmic." I am grateful to Diana Bellonby (Vanderbilt Univ.) for bringing the Ellis passage to my attention.
- <sup>55</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1972), 21. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *DE*.
- <sup>56</sup> In Adorno's and Horkheimer's retelling of the myth of Odysseus and the Sirens, music becomes part of a dialectic from which both Odysseus and his workers suffer. Odysseus, tied to the mast, listens without experiencing real danger, whereas the workers (whose ears are stopped) experience danger without pleasure (*DE* 32ff).
- <sup>57</sup> Robert Lilienfeld, "Music and Society in the 20th Century: Georg Lukács, Ernst Bloch, and Theodor Adorno," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 1.2 (1987): 127.
- <sup>58</sup> On Lukács's relation to Bartók, see Judit Frigyesi, *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2000).
- <sup>59</sup> Lukács makes a similar argument with respect to Paul Gauguin, whose turn to Tahiti allowed him to "make himself useful" by entering art into a new relation to a public (as opposed to decadent *l'art pour l'art* autonomy of late nineteenth-century aestheticism). See Georg Lukács, "Paul Gauguin," *The Lukács Reader*, ed. Arpad Kadarkay (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). Fredric Jameson argues that Lukács substitutes "ethical judgment" for "historical perception," and that Lukács's privileged mode of narrative realism (or, eventually, socialist realism) is subject to its own ideologies, grounded in "the life of commerce" "inseparable from the development of capitalism." Fredric Jameson, "Beyond the Cave: Demystifying the Ideology of Modernism," *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 8.1 (1975): 9.
- <sup>60</sup> On the term "organic," see Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia UP, 1983), 263-4. Williams argues that while the term was initially synonymous with "mechanical" or "instrumental" (an "organ" being something like a *tool*), critiques of materialistic and industrial models of society led it to take on a different, more holistic and agricultural connotation. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *CS*.

## CHAPTER II

### HEARING THE KEY: ELIOT, ADORNO, AND ALLEGORICAL EMBODIMENT

I have heard the key  
Turn in the door once and turn once only  
We think of the key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison  
T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, I.1-7

The whole is the false.  
Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*<sup>1</sup>

Reflecting on the relations between noise and musical rhythm, *The Waste Land* suggests that all forms of culture are embodied, and that this embodiment motivates both the productivity and the terror of musical expression. Through the mutual presence of noise and music, *The Waste Land* constantly invokes the body, its degeneration, and its subjection to authority and discipline. The poem takes part in a cultural conversation about the disciplinary function of rhythm, musical and poetical: like figures both before him (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Symons) and contemporary to him (Stravinsky, Adorno, Clive Bell), Eliot uses rhythm to register the embodiment of music and culture. *The Waste Land* is, as Eliot himself put it, a "piece of rhythmical grumbling"; what it means to grumble rhythmically, for the body and for cultural in general, motivates not only *The Waste Land* but the ideologies of modernism.

A pivotal figure in this conversation is Richard Wagner, who motivates many of the aesthetic, political, and cultural discussions in which *The Waste Land* takes part. For Eliot, Wagner signifies kinds of music that rely on, and dramatically affect, the human body. Wagner's name and notoriety bear specific cultural meanings: not only as an allegorically minded

mythmaker interested in sweeping historical narratives, but as a site of culturally recognizable kinds of embodied performance, desire, violence, and degeneration.

Specifically, Wagner's presence in the poem, especially when considered in conjunction with Verlaine and Baudelaire, points to the degeneration of body through venereal disease. Michael Levenson has suggested that the poem's generally insensate opening lines are uttered a nearly dead corpse,<sup>2</sup> to which I will add the suggestion that this corpse is near-dead from syphilis: that of The Fisher King, and his Wagnerian analogue (Amfortas in *Parsifal*), whose syphilitic body manifests a variety of nineteenth-century anxieties about the wages of sexual desire. *The Waste Land's* overarching voice or consciousness allows Eliot to draw connections between diegetic and mimetic forms of expression, which he then interprets exegetically through the abstracted critical consciousness of his own footnotes. What Eliot calls the poetic "auditory imagination"—his search for unconscious association through aural media—leads him to appropriate a variety of cultural forms whose salient feature is *allegorical embodiment*. These include Wagner, whose operatic representations of embodied "memory and desire" make him a point of constant poetic, musical and philosophical contention; the French Symbolists, whose attempts to elevate poetry into music tend to revolve around sexualized, racialized, decadent, diseased bodies; and *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's farewell to the art of drama, simultaneously an exploration of enslavement. *The Waste Land* invokes the allegorical possibilities of the body—particularly the female body, and, insofar as it can indict its hypocrite readers/auditors, particularly the violated female body. The bodies of Wagner's characters, like those of Philomel, of Ariel, and of the music hall singer, exist in *The Waste Land* not as allegorical participants in an abstracted "cultural divide," but as historically specific objects of disease and sexual violence.



Wagner's use of damaged bodies makes them both victims and agents of critique, a duality that motivates Adorno's ambivalence toward the total art-work. Adorno critiques the total art-work as a totalizing negation of the individual (both historically and aesthetically), in which the "formal premisses [*sic*] of an internal logic are replaced by a seamless external principle in which disparate procedures are simply aggregated in such a way as to make them appear collectively binding."<sup>3</sup> The total art-work's "totality" emerges from the outside in, in such a way, Adorno argues, that its "external" "collectively binding" quality emerges from a rhythmically inflexible structure, reinforced by the controlling hands of the conductor:

The giant packages of his opera are divided up by the notion of striking, of beating time. The whole of the music seems to have been worked out first in terms of the beat, and then filled in; over giant stretches, especially in the early stages of the actual music-drama style, the time seems to be a kind of abstract framework. (*Search* 22)

In a later essay Adorno argues that Wagner's gesturally violent music critiques the very "mythological" structure from which it derives: "when, in his work, violence expresses itself in pure form, unobscured, in all its terror and entrapment, then the work, despite its mythologizing tendency, is an indictment of myth, willingly or not" ("Wagner's Relevance" 589).<sup>4</sup> These moments of violence enter the text, according to Adorno, as moments of "noise": dynamic excesses in which Wagner marshals "pure sound" in opposition to the "moderate cultural consensus," producing music that "simply cannot be listened to with delectation" (595). Though Adorno does not abandon his critique of the temporally static quality in Wagner's music, he does acknowledge the way in which that music offers critical points of entry, laying bare the "cracks" in the "façade" of its own totalizing mythology.

In exposing these "cracks" Adorno draws on the language of injury and disease. As Karin Bauer puts it, "It is the decaying form and the injured subject that give expression to the

nonidentical and give rise to the new and the different by revealing, to use the phrase from the essay on the culture industry, the 'trace of something better.'"<sup>5</sup> In Adorno's words,

whatever makes Wagner better than the social order (to whose dark powers he aligned himself) owes itself to decadence, to the damaged subject's incapability of playing sufficiently by the rules of the existing social order. In this way he fails to meet the expectations of health, cleverness, communication, and mutual understanding, and turns silently against the power in whose service his language stands. It is not the unshakably self-assertive form, but rather the decaying form that indicates the coming of the new.<sup>6</sup>

As I discuss in Chapter One, where Adorno emphasizes the falsity and contradiction at the heart of a totality or tradition, Eliot emphasizes the ability of a "social order" to internalize and accommodate the "supervention" of the "new." For Adorno, "the whole is the false," and thus he argues that the ideology of the total art-work predicts the ideology of the culture industry. That said, Adorno's reading of Wagner illuminates a similar problem addressed by Eliot: the resolution at the end of *The Waste Land* does not merely cure the "decaying bodies" of Wagner or of the eponymous waste land, but *relies* on these bodies to exceed and critique the totalizing impulses of the "existing social order," heralding a "new" kind of order.

The twentieth century's ambivalence towards the significance of the total art-work has been powerfully articulated by Matthew Smith, who writes that the total art-work gestures at once towards the Utopian and towards the concrete—that it is both "modernity's leviathan," a herald of universally mobilized power, and "modernity's polestar," "a longing for unity amidst fragmentation, for collectivity amidst alienation."<sup>7</sup> With respect to Wagner, Adorno defines "ambivalence" itself as "a relation towards something one has not mastered" ("Wagner's Relevance" 587). *The Waste Land* and the writings of Adorno represent efforts to "master" the ethical and cultural significance of artistic creation, and to do so through the difficult, paradoxical languages of modernist art and philosophy.

A similar ambivalence is at the center of Eliot's relation to Wagner, and to jazz and to the music hall, all of which feature the acculturated singing and dancing body. Eliot's attention to popular music has recently inspired a great deal of critical comment, much of which upsets the conventional reading that *The Waste Land's* citations of music hall, jazz, and ragtime are purely condescending, or that the poem wants to reject "low culture" per se.<sup>8</sup> Barry Faulk has argued that Eliot's investment in the "popular" allows him to appreciate Marie Lloyd as both "*representative and his representative*," for her ability to stand in both for the working class and for Eliot himself, as "an idealized version of the poet and critic vis-à-vis the community" (606, his emphasis); Lloyd represents the ability of an artist to transcend boundaries of taste historically indexed to boundaries of class. According to Faulk, Eliot's essay riffs on the late Victorian genre of the music-hall lament, a genre which also served to reinforce the bourgeois critic's own cultural authority.<sup>9</sup> Among these critics is Arthur Symons, who lingers over *The Waste Land* and over Eliot's critical consciousness. David Chinitz reads the Marie Lloyd essay (1922) as a panegyric to the declining sense of working-class community and to the "vanishing levels of culture that ought to have been simultaneously available to him."<sup>10</sup> Chinitz notes Eliot's ambivalence (his update of Empson's "ambiguity") about these "levels of culture": "ambivalence" represents, in Chinitz's words, "the one mature response to most of the cultural phenomena of the modern world [...] which are themselves full of contradiction, never monolithic, and seldom coherent" (10). Faulk's and Chinitz's work not only reasserts Eliot's critical engagement with jazz and the music hall, but underscores Eliot's recognition of art and music as ideological and aesthetic artifacts.

While Eliot's interlocking of music and ideology has been increasingly explored by way of the music hall, his relation to Wagner and to Stravinsky is no less ideologically fraught. As

Terri Mester has argued, Eliot's theories and implementations of rhythm owe to his experience of the ballet, all the way through the *Four Quartets* ("Keeping time / Keeping the rhythm in their dancing" ["East Coker," 39-40]). The cultural and ideological implications of Eliot's embodied rhythms merit more attention than they have received, particularly insofar as Eliot's dancing bodies in *The Waste Land* are subjected to violence and discipline. Indeed, as Adorno and Clive Bell illuminate, modernists would not have considered Eliot's debts to Wagner or to Stravinsky (or, as Nancy Hargrove suggests, Satie and Cocteau) to be autonomous, unmediated, elite, nonideological artifacts of "high culture."<sup>11</sup> In this sense *The Waste Land* can be read as a manifesto of the "new musicology" *avant la lettre*, in which musical form and genre are revealed to be shaped by and critical of their social contexts.

Satie, Cocteau, and Stravinsky loom large in modernist culture not only as artists but as anti-Wagnerians. Satie's and Cocteau's critique of and rebellion against Wagner took the form of an "art of the everyday," in which ballet staging and music would be inflected with the noises (literal and metaphorical) of popular culture: sirens, typewriters, car-horns, advertisement texts read through megaphones, disruptive of the phantasmagoric Wagnerian illusion. Clive Bell quotes Stravinsky's putative remark that people should drink and chat while hearing his music (noting that Stravinsky would probably have been extremely annoyed to see such a thing actually happening).<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Rainey has argued that Anglo-American modernist writing incorporates the music hall and "variety theater" as a response to the experiments of Italian Futurism, incorporating popular genres into the ostensibly autonomous realm of art in order to create a new kind of market.<sup>13</sup> Eliot's appropriations of Stravinsky and Satie, and their appropriations of jazz, ragtime, music hall, and the "popular" seem, if not to critique the "high"/"low" boundary, then at least to acknowledge its fuzziness.<sup>14</sup> Rainey has more recently argued that *The Waste Land's*

"histrionics of non-relationship" and use of the music hall "undermin[e] the modes of connectedness (repetition, narrative) that the poem elsewhere takes pains to assert"; the poem's efforts to set its lands in order are destabilized by "modes of cultural production which thrive on wild exaggeration, hyperbolic repetitions which pivot on the play of likeness and illusion, a grotesque machinery of extremism."<sup>15</sup>

Eliot's interest in Wagner, I argue, is part of this same interest in the hyperbolic "machinery" of art. Though Wagner's central place in *The Waste Land* has frequently been discussed, rarely has the criticism accounted for Wagner's and Eliot's shared interest in the damaged body.<sup>16</sup> Margaret Dana argues, for example, that Eliot would have been attracted to Wagner's ability to construct complex characters through chromatic, dynamically intense, and tonally ambiguous music, yet I part from Dana's assertion that the "Wagner who would have interested Eliot would not have been the manipulator of grandiose stage effects and hypnotic illusions who concealed the gigantic orchestra to enhance the spell of the music drama" (268). *The Waste Land* queries both the artistic implications and the cultural resonances of these "effects" and "illusions"—which is not to say that Eliot (let alone Adorno) *approved* of those effects. Eliot draws on Wagner for the same reason that he draws on *The Tempest*: a desire to expose the spectacles of embodied violence and discipline underpinning the fabric of art. In this respect, Rainey's comparison of Part III of *The Waste Land* to a "grisly puppet show" rings true.

More recent work in modernist studies has found the "total art-work" a useful master trope for understanding modernism's fusions of artistic media and genres. Studies of the modernist total art-work have proven more willing to historicize the cultural significance of these aesthetic innovations: Sarah Danius has addressed the (novelistic) total art-work's relations to sensory technologies, Matthew Smith its relations to commodity culture, mechanical

reproduction, and the emergence of mass media (concomitant with the decline of the bourgeois public sphere). Yet, despite the surfeit of criticism on Eliot and Wagner, *The Waste Land's* relation to the historical and technological anxieties of the total art-work goes curiously undiscussed.<sup>17</sup> In the process, the specific cultural and ideological resonances attendant to Eliot's uses of Wagner are swept aside.

In this respect the "new musicology" offers a new lease on *The Waste Land*. Eliot's response to Wagner is as ambivalent as Adorno's, and as ambivalent as Eliot's reactions to the music hall, and this ambivalence derives from an uncertainty about the poetic and cultural meaning of the vulnerable or damaged body, which enables a critique of the "spell of the music drama" and the illusionist who subjects it to rhythmically expressed violence.

### Wagner and the Syphilitic Body

Specifically, Wagner's *Parsifal* centers on a syphilitic body. The operatic imagery associated with syphilis has been powerfully excavated by Linda and Michael Hutcheon, whose work on opera draws on the notion of the "cultural cliché": some image or other index of specific cultural anxieties, which a contemporary would readily recognize provided that she possesses the "basic cultural and medical mathematics" to do so (69). The Hutcheons argue that *Parsifal* calls on a set of cultural clichés labeling Amfortas (*Parsifal's* analogue to the Fisher King) as a syphilitic, hence paving the way for Nietzsche's turn against the moralism and repressive *Weltanschauung* of Wagner's last, most Christian opera. They explain in some detail the "mathematics" of this cliché, pointing out that one of the main features of Amfortas's wound is that it will "never close" (69). Wagner's text also offers a specific mode of "soothing" for

Amfortas's wound: "taking baths in the holy lake" (Hutcheon and Hutcheon 69). The Fisher King, whose never-closing wound motivates Eliot's entire poem, wishes to die by water.

Similarly, Mrs. Porter and her daughters, "washing their feet in soda-water," appear to be searching for a cure for venereal disease; as Lawrence Rainey explains, the ballad "Mrs. Porter" "originally had the word 'cunts' instead of feet" (*Annotated Waste Land*, 105). Eliot mutually implicates Wagner with the bawdy soldier's ballad in order to suggest not a strict division but a mutually productive dialectical tension between these two musical genres, which despite their different venues, contexts, and class affiliations, rely equally on the presence of a sick body. Mrs. Porter and Wagner are introduced in the same breath: one through the sailor's ballad and another through Verlaine's meditation on *Parsifal*, transitioning then into the inarticulate utterances of the violated Philomel:

But at my back from time to time I hear  
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring  
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.  
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter  
And on her daughter  
They wash their feet in soda water  
*Et, O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*

Twit twit twit  
Jug jug jug jug jug jug  
So rudely forc'd.  
Tereu. (III.196-206)

A rewriting of Marvell's "To a Coy Mistress" ("But at my back I always hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near"),<sup>18</sup> the lines also resonate with Eliot's article on *Le Sacre du Printemps*, which seemed to "transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, and the other barbaric cries of modern life; and to transform these despairing noises into music." Eliot conspicuously links the ballad and the line from Verlaine by means of the great vocative O (on which he also perorates before the

Shakespearian Rag). The O, a syntactic indication of direct address, is for Eliot also a marker of stylistic difference and intertextuality. In sonic terms it is pure vowel—unstopped musical sound, which transforms and mediates other kinds of sound, musical or non-musical. The difference between vowel and consonant is an important concern of the Wagnerian theater, and for the modernist one. Wagner thought vowels were "purely auditory," whereas consonants were related to "visual rhythm and gesture, 'the eye of hearing' [Das Auge des Gehörs]" (Puchner 44); for Russolo, "*Vowels represent sound in language while consonants clearly represent noise*" (56, his italics). Thematically and formally, Philomel's intensely consonantal language interrupts the stream of sound offered by the "O" of Verlaine's and Eliot's poetic voices; and similarly invokes the presence of her body through "visual rhythm and gesture." Philomel's "twit twit twit / Jug jug jug" is associated with the ekphrastic visual description of her violation, creating a formal dissonance with the musical tones of Verlaine's poetry. That is to say, the "despairing noises" and "barbaric cries" of the violated body, ostensibly "transform[ed] [...] into music" by Verlaine, in Eliot's hands seem to break through the serene, Symbolist musical surface of the poem.

Verlaine's line is itself about singing voices, which makes the juxtaposition with Philomel's guttural cries all the more poignant: Eliot's poem questions what cultural noises are dissolved into choric sublimity. Noting Eliot's miscitation of the sailors' ballad, Christina Hauck reads Verlaine's "children's chorus" as an ironic commentary on the consequences of the prostitution that pervades the poem. Additionally, Hauck makes a powerful case that Madame Sosotris, the main "illusionist" of the poem, critiques and resists enforced ignorance ("blindness") with respect to sexual disease, and terms her the poem's "midwife/abortionist," attempting to control reproduction in defiance of masculine authority (embodied and poetic). Madame Sosotris has "a bad cold"—an early twentieth-century euphemism for venereal



disease<sup>19</sup>—and yet as the "wisest woman in Europe" she maintains a subversive role in the poem: her diseased body makes her both a site of anxiety and an agent of critique.<sup>20</sup> In the drafts of the poem, the infected body ("Staggering, or limping with a comic gonorrhoea") makes a "drunken ruffian" an object of derision, but one that exposes the falsity of the clean, well-kept masculine body of the sailor: "Liking to be shaved, combed, scented, manucured [*sic*]." <sup>21</sup>

The problems of injury, sickness, and decadence inform Adorno's ambivalence towards Wagner, and Adorno is chiefly concerned with how Wagner's reactionary/radical tendencies are detectable in musical form. Notwithstanding his frustrations with Wagner, Adorno casts him as

the first case of uncompromising musical nominalism [...]: his work is the first in which the primacy of the individual work of art and, within the work, the primacy of the figure in its concrete, elaborated reality, are established fundamentally over any kind of scheme or externally imposed form. He was the first to draw the consequences from the contradiction between traditional forms [...] and the concrete artistic tasks at hand. ("Wagner's Relevance" 588)

Notwithstanding Wagner's emphasis on allegory and *Weltanschauung*, Adorno argues that Wagner's is a horizontal art in which figures (e.g. leitmotif) refer only to other figures—in short, that Wagner is a proto-modernist, and that like the literary modernists after him, he presents (rather than *represents*) violence as the "decisive truth" of modernity: violence "breaks through as the same law that it was in the prehistoric world. In these thoroughly modern works, prehistory persists as modernity itself" ("Wagner's Relevance" 589). This musical "nominalism," Adorno argues, allows for composition according to the demands of the music, not to the norms of "tact" and "taste" (*PNM* 48). Stravinsky was largely motivated by his hostility to Wagner, a fact that Adorno attributes to Stravinsky's bourgeois "stuffy and dense narrow-mindedness."

Adorno's anxiety largely revolves around the potential of rhythmic music to discipline the body; in this respect his critique of Stravinsky and his critique of Wagner are mutually illuminating. While Adorno's critique of Stravinsky is in many ways attributable to his

enthusiasm for Schoenberg—a too-strict dichotomy that allows him to bash one in the service of the other—the rhetoric and logic of his argument art are revealing as artifacts of modernism. Whereas Eliot seems to appreciate the ability of music to register the noises that make it possible—and the ability of poetry to unsubmit those noises and defamiliarize aesthetic transformation—Adorno suggests that Stravinsky fetishizes musical technique for its own sake. That is, Adorno argues that Stravinsky has inherited Wagner's technical prowess for "manipulat[ing] physical impulses by finding their most haunting technical correlates," but has fetishized the musical-technical elements themselves, at the expense of the structural whole of the piece, and without sufficiently commenting on the dramatic rendering of suffering (*PNM* 128-9). By detaching rhythm from the overall structural "whole rhythm" of the piece, Adorno argues, Stravinsky disciplines the body to experience rhythmic shock as "existent in itself," ontologically independent of the artwork rather than part of a subjective experience. The seemingly liberated syncopations of *The Rite of Spring* are, Adorno writes, intended

to conjure the complex and strictly disciplined rhythms of primitive rites. [...] Not only does the invariably, rigidly maintained meter, in Stravinsky's music, beginning with *The Rite of Spring*, lack all subjective, expressive flexibility, but it also lacks any coherently successive rhythmical relation to the structure, to the inner compositional makeup of the work, to the "whole rhythm" of the form. The rhythm is emphasized but detached from the musical content. (116-7)

Suggesting two kinds of rhythm—one, the complex, shifting, yet constricting pulse of primitivism; another, the "whole rhythm" deriving from a work's structural organization—Adorno argues that Stravinsky fetishizes the former, and that his rhythms do not derive immanently from a subjective confrontation with modernity, but rather from an adolescent obsession with "newness" that is solely decorative. Adorno ridicules the primitivism of Stravinsky's music, "'researched' with a positivistic detachment" (Adorno cites Sir James Frazer, Eliot's acknowledged influence), resulting in a mimetic simulation of ritual sacrifice offered

without diegetic comment: "The music initially says, *So it was*—and provides no more commentary than does Flaubert in *Madame Bovary*" (PNM 111-12, his italics).<sup>22</sup>

Recalling Eliot's review of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, one notes that Eliot feels much the same way, though he often sees opportunity where Adorno sees fatalism. In Eliot, and Stravinsky, the act of violence creates implicit links between the modern and the mythical. It is this link that motivates Adorno's simultaneous attraction and repulsion, for Adorno is speaking from the other side of the horrors of the Holocaust, with which Wagner will now always be associated. In his critique of Wagner, Adorno begins to resemble George Lukács, suggesting that Wagner's art presents a political capitulation in its motivic recapitulations: "Wagner's aesthetic weaknesses spring from the metaphysics of repetition, from the idea that 'This is the way things are, and always will be; you don't escape, there is no way to escape'" (599). Suffering and psychopathology become, as Lukács puts it, an inescapable "*condition humaine*," an ontological fact rather than a resistible and contingent historical fact.<sup>23</sup> Arguing that Wagnerian *leitmotif* forestalls real musical development in deference to mere, exhausting repetition, Adorno poignantly links the experience of Wagner's music to the experience of a prison camp, which cannot be escaped. Or, as *The Waste Land* protests, "Thinking of the key, each confirms his prison": the musical aesthetic of repetitive, rhythmically enforced aesthetic holism make the contingent seem ontological. Wagner's music moves not, as Lukács would like, to the rhythms of history but, as Adorno criticizes, to the artificial, externally imposed rhythms that make the total art-work a "whole," but a "false" whole.

According to Adorno these rhythms mandate, perhaps even are premised on, the presence of a conductor, whose beating of time makes evident the music's violently gestic quality. The fascist-conductor trope also lies behind Adorno's critique of *The Rite of Spring*, and in this case

the body of the conductor himself is disciplined by the very authority that the music has granted him. Adorno argues that the small blocks of rhythm in *Rite*, self-consciously unpredictable and divorced from the "whole rhythm," force the conductor to "walk a tightrope for the sole purpose of using convulsive blows and shocks [...] to hammer into the dancer and the audience an immutable rigidity" (*PNM* 117). The dancer, the audience, and the conductor are in Adorno's formulation subjected to the same immutable rhythmic violence.

Though Eliot does not share Adorno's rejection of Stravinsky, he resembles Adorno in his assertion that the individual rhythms of words and verses should add up to the "whole rhythm" of a form. In "The Music of Poetry" (1942), Eliot suggests that poems should create a "rhythm of fluctuating emotion" between individual "passages of greater and less intensity." Eliot tenuously differentiates poetry from music, suggesting that language (unlike music) carries meaning: "We can be deeply stirred by hearing the recitation of a poem in a language of which we understand no word; but if we are then told that the poem is gibberish and has no meaning, we shall consider that we have been deluded—this was no poem, it was merely an imitation of instrumental music" (30). Eliot indicates, here, the tenuousness of the distinction between music and poetry: "we" (whoever that is) may mistake the sounds—the mere phonemes—of words for poetry, or we may learn that their lack of semantic content identifies them as "imitations" of music. Eliot again indicates the inadequacy of an impressionistic criticism, suggesting that being "deeply stirred" is not a critical response. For Eliot, all art aspires not to music, but to the "music of poetry", a musical organization of meaningful sounds.

One of the functions of poetic rhythm (both micro- and macro-) for Eliot is to create and transmit effects of consonance and dissonance. Arguing that "[d]issonance, even cacophony, has its place," he appears to be referring to the sounds of specific words: "a poem is not made only

out of 'beautiful words.'"24 The music of poetry operates relationally, creating consonance or dissonance by means not only of sound but of association and meaning: "The music of a word [...] arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association" (32-3). Poetic language acquires its musical meaning just as music acquires its "semantic" meaning: through the ethesic element of musical interpretation.

Eliot's terminology is imprecise, even impressionistic, for example in his conflation of "dissonance" and "cacophony," a conflation found in many critical responses to dissonant music. Eliot's limited (by his own admission) technical knowledge of music, however, is matched by an engagement with the contemporary music scene, and by a concentration on the aural phenomena of social life, especially in the city. If his essayistic use of the term "dissonance" is a little off, his poetic use of dissonance is a little more subtle, as in the poem's opening lines:

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers. (I.1-7)

Without wishing to be too literal about the associations between musical and poetic sound, I suggest that these lines offer certain effects of verbal dissonance to match its effect of cognitive dissonance (between the Chaucerian April and the cruel Eliotic one), the most jarring being the fourth and seventh lines: the words "dried tubers," to put it simply, clash with what is expected, cognitively, sonically, and syntactically. Eliot, consciously or un-, seems to be mimicking the form of a musical period (an antecedent cadence followed by a consequent one), both of whose

cadences end in dissonances. The limping trochaic rhythm of the lines merits attention as well, beginning on strong syllables and ending on weak ones. Again, both sonically and semantically, those infamous participles intensify the anticipation of a resolution—ultimately, an unclimactic one, as the "period" ends with dried tubers.

Just as the sterility of the opening period offers a cognitive dissonance, the presence of the diseased body poses a thematic or conceptual dissonance for the poem as a whole. Much as Adorno considers Schoenberg a more radical extenuation of Wagner, better able than Wagner to lay bare the raw psychic life of a damaged subjectivity, the presence of injury or sickness in Wagner, and in *The Waste Land*, critiques and threatens the stability of the coherent, non-subjective, externally imposed total package. In *The Waste Land* Wagner signifies not only a total art-work but a total abyss, figuring the inescapable and incomprehensible state of the "dead land," whose death derives from a "heap of broken images" and a "dry stone" that offers "no sound of water." In the "hyacinth girl" passage of *The Waste Land*, the social intimacy of a Chopin Prelude has now been exploded into a Wagnerian abyss:

I could not  
Speak, and my eyes failed. I was neither  
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing.  
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.  
Öd und leer das Meer. (I.38-42)

The poem begins with a "dead land"; it then proceeds to offer the sound of water in the form of a citation from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, "Öd und leer das Meer" ("The sea is empty and desolate"). The speaker's ability to produce these songs emerges out of its inability to "speak," "see," exist, or know. Music in the poem emerges out of a typically modernist abyss of nihilism and epistemological crisis, and at the same time links that crisis to a Wagnerian excess of sight and sound. Wagnerian opera does not cure the "heap of broken images"—it exaggerates the

abyss by producing heaps of broken sound on top of it. Just as the most memorable portions of *The Waste Land* are probably those that illustrate (rather than redress) fragmentation and nihilism, Wagner leaves one stunned into "silence": the sounds of Wagner replace a Conradian heart of darkness with a "heart of light," a "silence" that emerges from an excess, not a lack, of imagery and sound.

To experience the shocks of these dissonances requires, much as Hutcheon and Hutcheon suggest, a "cultural mathematics" that will enable one to appreciate the poem's cultural clichés with full force. The notion of the clichéd or the trite is, for Eliot, also linked to the problems of poetic forms and sound. In his essay on Matthew Arnold (1933), Eliot forwards his notion of the "auditory imagination," which offers a model of criticism, and of rhythm, that relies on unconscious "thought and feeling":

What I call the "auditory imagination" is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality.<sup>25</sup>

The rhythmic "symmetrical structure" (which Eduard Hanslick identifies as the "animating principle" of musical expression) is extended by Eliot to historical and cultural meaning: Arnoldian disinterest, "taste" and "authority" (111) fail to "go deep enough" (112) in their inability hear history in the rhythms of language. Without this imagination, Arnold was "so conscious of what, for him, poetry was *for*, that he could not altogether see it for what it is" (111): rhythm is what allows poetry to register and transmit experience, not merely to serve a function. This rhythm—the imagination's ability to "wor[k] through meanings"—derives not just from a self-contained universe (what Adorno insistently refers to, in Schoenberg, as the

"immanence" of the "material"), but from a concatenation of the "ordinary," the "trite," the "current" and the "ancient" and the un-"civilized." Associating rhythm with a "primitive" and "penetrating" consciousness, Eliot revises Arnold's notion of culture as orderly experiences of sweetness and light, into a notion of culture as an imaginative fusion of experiences. Similarly, he revises Arnoldian notions of "meaning": access to the best that is known and thought now requires an ear for rhythm, for the unconscious, for the lived experiences of the "ordinary" which also access their primitive origins. Eliot's language demonstrates a concern not only with literary meaning but with the interpretation of the "trite," the "ordinary," and the clichéd.

Eliot's search for an "auditory imagination," rooted in the primitive and the primal, suggests that the "dark" and "desolate" Wagnerian sea (from 1865) may serve as an auditory-imaginative substitute for Arnold's "Sea of Faith," "retreating" with a "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" ("Dover Beach," lines 21-5): *The Waste Land* in several respects reaches back to the abysmal seas of nineteenth-century poetry, music, and music-drama, seeking a primal source of poetic association and "feeling," not merely "Faith" and "certitude" ("Dover," 34). In "Man and the Sea," from *Flowers of Evil* (1857), Baudelaire merges the noisy heartbeat (*rumeur*) of "Man" with the untameable "noise" (*bruit*) of the sea. Through Baudelaire, *The Waste Land* addresses the reader ("You! *hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!*" [I.76]) by appealing to his heartbeat ("My friend, blood shaking my heart" [V.402]), implicating the reader in the construction of an auditory imagination, an audible network of unconscious "contexts" and relations. Also like Baudelaire, Eliot seeks out the moral significance of the syphilitic bodies that mediate such auditory experience. In a gesture to the opening line of "Dover Beach" ("The sea is calm tonight"), *The Waste Land* closes by exploring, and perhaps even celebrating, the



heartbeat's subjection to discipline and control: "The sea was calm, your heart would have responded / Gaily, when invited, beating obedient / To controlling hands" (420-2).

Adorno would certainly reject Eliot's search, through rhythm, for the "primitive" "origin" of poetry (or of anything else): such a search would to Adorno represent an illusory escape from history. An alternate argument, posited by Raymond Williams, is that rhythm accesses shared cultural narratives and registers the patterns of lived experience. As I discuss in Chapter One, Williams cites the ability of rhythm to effect an audience response: "rhythm is a way of transmitting a description of experience, in such a way that the experience is re-created in the person receiving it, not merely as an 'abstraction' or an 'emotion' but as a physical effect on the organism—on the blood, on the breathing, on the physical patterns of the brain" (*Long Revolution* 24). What leads modernists such as Eliot to associate "rhythm" with the primitive and the ancient can largely be found in its physical appeals, and therein lies the impossibility of detaching the "auditory imagination" from human bodies. Raymond Williams argues that art, notwithstanding individualistic models of artistic vision, must communicate experience to other "organisms," and to do so by "means of a learned communication system" (24)—including, perhaps, what Eliot calls the "trite" and "current" manifestations of language. While an artwork can shape the physical and affective experience of an organism through rhythm, an experimental form of rhythm could well provide as a means of "altering or extending" various "cultural rules" by "bringing in new or modified rules by which an extended or different reality can be experienced" (18). Notwithstanding Adorno's argument that jazz, for example, merely replicates the same forms while providing a narcotic illusion of freedom, Williams's conception of rhythm (and his model of cultural studies generally) suggests that variation within received forms is the means by which artworks reflect *and evolve* their cultural moments.

Adorno and Williams are not entirely incompatible in this respect, both recognizing rhythm as a transcription of historical and cultural patterns, legible by virtue of the listener's body. If Williams seems more sympathetic to rhythm, it is because he more values the communal *reception* of art, a belief that Eliot aligns with working-class consciousness. Adorno's objection to jazz as a form that can be understood solely for its "function," never for what it "is," refuses to believe that jazz could ever be a "plebiscite phenomenon" rather than the conspiratorial, centralized workings of the culture industry.<sup>26</sup> He, too, locates the invidious effects of jazz on the human body, arguing astonishingly that "the skin of the black man functions as much as a coloristic effect as does the silver of the saxophone" ("On Jazz" 477). Adorno's rhetoric buttresses his claim that the social and communal features of jazz invite this sort of moralistic "analysis" precisely in its surface-level attempts to subvert moralism.

What he misses, perhaps, is that he too is a product of his time; that the rhythms of jazz, and the larger milieu in which they operate, have marked Adorno's own analytical language. As I discuss in Chapter One, Adorno does not reject the body per se—in fact he believes it central to the interpretive enterprise—but in the imaginations of his readers, Adorno's rhetoric has tended to eclipse his deductive analytical conclusions: he is frequently and unapologetically cast as a somatophobe.<sup>27</sup> Though I think Adorno himself is much to blame for this misinterpretation of his work, it also derives from an inductive and associational logic: the works that he resisted the most—jazz, ballet, Wagnerian opera—make their most recognizably embodied appeals.

### Stravinsky, Jazz, and the Music Hall

Clive Bell's "Plus de Jazz," a 1921 article published in *The New Republic*, predicts and delights in the impending death of the "Jazz spirit," and regrets that his contemporary "genuine

artists [...] have drawn inspiration, or sustenance at any rate, from Jazz" (94). His two examples are Igor Stravinsky and T.S. Eliot, whose "syncopations flou[t] traditional rhythms and sequences and grammar and logic," and "whose agonizing labors seem to have been eased somewhat by the comfortable ministrations of a black and grinning muse" (94). Jazz is a "midwif[e]" who motivates Eliot's "demurely irreverent" and "primly insolent" "attitude," and Stravinsky's "note of defiance" and "will to insult" (94); one will recall Hauck's assertion that Sosostris acts as the "midwife" (and also the abortionist) of *The Waste Land*, her own diseased body manipulating the poem's various labors through wisdom and illusion. Bell reiterates his preference for the term "rag" over the term "jazz," asserting that "Jazz rags everything" (93), replacing "Irony and wit" with mockery and "impudence."<sup>28</sup> Bell argues, therefore, that jazz is a set of "tricks of self-advertisement" used by otherwise consummate artists as a way of appealing to artistic dilettantes just as Racine and Molière (and Johann Strauss) appealed to *la bonne compagnie*. Fortunately (as Bell sees it), *la bonne compagnie* is now declaring, "Plus de jazz!," expressing its exhaustion with "the encouragement [Jazz] has given to thousands of the stupid and vulgar to fancy that they can understand art and to hundreds of the conceited to imagine that they can create it" (95).

Bell's argument against Jazz resembles Adorno's in its emphasis on reception and appropriation: he resents jazz's influence on great artists insofar as it gives "encouragement" to those who are not great artists, and at the end of the article perorates extensively and repetitiously on the faculties of artistic and critical selection. Bell's concern is not merely with the aesthetic deficiencies of jazz (namely, its rhythmic obsession with syncopation), but also with the way in which jazz reflects on its social settings. Whereas art should be "a matter of profound emotion and of intense and passionate thought," these are

things rarely found in dancing palaces and hotel lounges. Even to understand art a man must make a great intellectual effort. One thing is not as good as another; so artists and amateurs must learn to choose. No easy matter that: discrimination of this sort being something altogether different from telling a Manhattan from a Martini. To select as an artist or discriminate as a critic are needed feeling and intellect and—most distressing of all—study. However, unless I mistake, the effort will be made. The age of easy acceptance of the first thing that comes is closing. Thought rather than spirits is required; quality rather than color; knowledge rather than irreticence, intellect rather than singularity, wit rather than romps, precision rather than surprise, dignity rather than impudence, and lucidity above all things: *plus de Jazz*. (96)

Bell's anxieties go beyond purely aesthetic or intellectual objections to jazz art, which he associates with race—with what he calls a "troupe of niggers, dancing" (93); with specific social settings, such as dance halls and hotels, that fail to allow for what Adorno might have called "concentrated listening"; and, intriguingly, with gender. When Bell suggests that jazz, "like short skirts, [...] suits thin, girlish legs, but has a slightly humiliating effect on gray hairs," he draws on the sexualization of jazz music to laugh at those dilettantes who would pretend to enjoy it—one of whom is Eliot, to whose "agonizing labors" jazz serves as a midwife. Bell uses metaphor to sexualize jazz, as the thin legs of the cabaret dancer, and to domesticate it, as in Eliot's poetic midwife. Like Adorno, Bell hears the rhythms of jazz as a narcotic, which promotes intellectual licentiousness, and which palliates the intellectual "agony" of artistic production.

Bell's essay constitutes part of his larger project to promote aesthetic formalism and denigrate affective responses to art, a tendency to which both Stravinsky and Eliot are frequently aligned. The pieces of Stravinsky to which Bell is likely referring—the *Ragtime for Eleven Instruments* (1920) and the "ragtime" section of *L'Histoire du Soldat* (1918)—marked what Stravinsky saw as his "final break with the Russian orchestral school" and a shift into neoclassicism. The rhythmic and orchestral clarity led French critics such as Jacques Rivière to cite him as an "anti-Impressionist" and anti-Wagnerian; Nancy Perloff suggests that those who

associated Stravinsky with Wagnerian Romanticism, an emphasis on sonority and mood rather than precision and distinctness, did so largely out of self-promotion.<sup>29</sup>

Even as they emphasized lucidity and rhythmical precision, Stravinsky and *Les Six* rejected the notion that music could, or even should, be isolated from its social settings. Bell reserves especial contempt for the social situation of music, citing Stravinsky's assertion that

he would like people to be eating, drinking and talking while his music was being played (how furious he would be if they did anything of the sort), so, when a boxful of bounders begin chattering in the middle of an opera and the cultivated cry 'hush!', the inference is that the cultivated are making themselves ridiculous. (95).

Bell must recognize that Stravinsky's music experienced precisely such a reaction, when the "cultivated" made themselves ridiculous at Champs-Élysées in 1913. Insofar as Stravinsky's music invites rather than silences the noise of reception, its idiomatic borrowings of jazz invite suggestions of a social resemblance as well. Syncopation leads to an experience of art that does not reflect and criticize, but "romps" and "surprises."

Bell's resistance of an interactive or social model of art calls on longstanding debates over the status of the music hall in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, debates reflected in Eliot's 1922 essay on Marie Lloyd. The influences of ostensibly working-class art forms, such as the music hall, and its relation to the cultural production of so-called "high modernism" have motivated important critical work questioning the rigidity of the "culture divide." Some criticism has attended to Eliot's relation to art music (Wagner and, less frequently observed, Stravinsky and Satie), some to Eliot's fondness for jazz. Yet readers of Eliot have not reflected sufficiently on the interdependence of jazz and twentieth-century art music. Just as Eliot uses jazz to "rag" the literary classics, Stravinsky and Satie were doing the same thing. In

other words, Eliot's uses of jazz and his consciousness of Wagner and Stravinsky are very much entwined, both within his own poetry and within his cultural context.

In 1921, for example, the Ballets Suédois premiered *Les Mariés sur le Tour Eiffel*, with a scenario and text by Cocteau, music by Satie and the French composers known collectively as "Les Six." Influenced by fauvism, jazz, American film, the music hall, Italian Futurism, and the "folkloric, brightly colored" *image d'Epinal*, the ballet is narrated by two "human phonographs":

The first platform of the Eiffel Tower. The backdrop represents a bird's-eye view Paris. Upstage, right, a camera at eye level: the black funnel forms a corridor extending to the wings, and the camera front opens like a door to permit the entrances and exits of the characters. Downstage, right and left, half hidden by the proscenium arch, two actors costumed as Phonographs: their bodies are the cabinets, their mouths the horns. It is these Phonographs which comment on the action and recite the lines of the characters. They should speak very loudly and quickly, pronouncing each syllable distinctly. The action is simultaneous with the comments of the Phonographs.<sup>30</sup>

Scenes such as these lead Daniel Albright to call the ballet "George Eastman's and Thomas Edison's dream play" (*Untwisting* 280): its phonographs are simultaneously extrinsic and intrinsic to the text, commenting on human action, yet inhabiting the stage as human bodies. Cocteau, Satie, and *Les Six*, much like Eliot, aspire to a manic mixture of popular and "high" culture; of "distinct" pronunciation and the seemingly absurd blurring of aesthetic boundaries. The phonographs are diegesis incarnate, both as internal commentators on the action of the ballet, and as floating signifiers within the narrative. Like the drumbeats in *The Waste Land*, the thunderclaps and the cry of the barkeep, these phonographs both mark time and comment on its significance. These phonographs signify Cocteau's "art of the everyday," the extent to which music is not a utopian ideal, but rather an intensely social (and, in this case, collectively composed) mixture of "action" and "commentary," mimesis and diegesis, music and noise.

For Theodor Adorno, as for Clive Bell, it is the communal experience, the drive of spectators to join in a communal experience, that makes the music hall—and other forms of the "culture industry"—particularly invidious. That working man in the audience is, according to Adorno, produced as an active participant in reinscribing his own subjugation. Adorno associates this reinscription not only in ostensibly working-class forums such as the music hall, nor merely in jazz, but also in the ostensibly bourgeois forms of art music exemplified by Stravinsky. Framing his critique as a rejection of music that is "ornamented" rather than immanent, "rationalized" rather than subjective, Adorno suggests that the empowerment of these rhythmic forms of music is illusory: that in presenting their listeners with an illusion of freedom, these forms actually compel their listeners to march in lock-step. The audience member who sings along with the chorus is merely confirming the producer's ability to predict and control his experiences. Adorno argues that *L'Histoire du Soldat*, the surrealist and ragtime-inflected chamber piece, is one of Stravinsky's few genuinely dialectical pieces insofar as its rhythms and its citations are satirical and critical, calling attention to the (ostensible) puerility of dance music, much as the Marx Brothers bring down the sets of Italian opera.

Eliot, on the other hand, promotes the liveliness and audience interactivity of the music hall, which he contrasts to the contrasts favorably to the middle-class's impending death "from pure boredom." The potential of the music hall relies on the working-class man's performance, which also relies on his ability to fulfill his part in the chorus.

With the decay of the music-hall, with the encroachment of the cheap and rapid-breeding cinema, the lower classes will tend to drop into the same state of protoplasm as the bourgeoisie. The working man who went to the music-hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the act; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art.<sup>31</sup>

The music hall represents for Eliot a Dionysian maelstrom in which walls between actor and spectator begin to crumble, individuation begins to break down, and Apollonian representation and mimesis are discarded in favor of interactive and communal norms of expression. Eliot associates the mechanization of music, transportation, and narrative with "the decay of the music hall," and the concomitant degeneration of the working class into bourgeois "protoplasm," continuing to suggest that "when every theatre has been replaced by 100 cinemas, when every musical instrument has been replaced by 100 gramophones, when every horse has been replaced by 100 cheap motor-cars, when electrical ingenuity has made it possible for every child to hear its bedtime stories from a loud-speaker," the "entire civilized world" will rapidly follow the fate of the Melanesians" (174).<sup>32</sup> Eliot's simultaneous pseudo-ethnography of the working class and mockery of the "bourgeois protoplasm" follows intriguingly from a 1919 article entitled "War-Paint and Feathers" in which he promotes "Primitive art and poetry" as a form of artistic experimentation that can "revivify the contemporary activities."<sup>33</sup> In the process, however, Eliot ridicules the trendiness and camp of "war-paint and feathers" in the American drawing-room, exemplified by the "romantic Chippeway" hired to sing the "Maple Sugar Song." "What are we to do with him," Eliot archly protests, "except to feed him on maple sugar?" In the very same issue of *The Athenæum*, E.J. Dent argues that anthropological musicology has become "a lucrative musical industry," and that suggests that folk song cannot in and of itself access a historical origin.<sup>34</sup> Referring to English folk song, he writes, "Those sixteen printed bars in the mixolydian mode can never evoke for a strange reader that dear old lady who crooned them in the kitchen of the sweetest little cottage in the world."

Dent and Eliot, both here and in the essay on Marie Lloyd, critique a bourgeois tendency towards unreflective appropriation—the sort of pure, unsedimented citationality that Adorno



would hear in Stravinsky's primitivism (as he would, later, critique Stravinsky's neoclassical rewritings of Pergolesi). Eliot's attitudes toward this kind of citation and appropriation seem, again, ambivalent: it can promote a shared language and musical experience, as in the music hall, but can also become a kind of inauthentic jargon, assimilated unreflectively into the drawing room. In a letter from July 1919, Eliot cites the Ballets Russes, "when liked by people who know nothing of the art," as one of many fashionable "contemporary tastes" that people "assimilat[e] [...] without making them personal" (*Letters* I.317). Eliot's model of culture requires "something personal: one book or painter made one's own" (317). Eliot clearly made the Russian Ballet "personal," and as his early poems search for "changing forms" of expression that can account for personal frictions and dissonances, they draw on imagery from the ballet.

### "Changing Forms": From "Portrait of a Lady" to *The Waste Land*

T.S. Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady" (1917) in many ways reads like a preparation for *The Waste Land*, in its thematics and in its specific imagery. The poem revolves around moments of dissonance, which Eliot puts at the formal and thematic center of the poem. The poem is framed by a performance of a Chopin prelude, which signifies the potential of music to effect what Eliot will later call "the awful daring of a moment's surrender" between two companions:

We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole  
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and fingertips.  
"So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul  
Should be resurrected only among friends  
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom  
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room." —  
And so the conversation slips  
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets  
Through attenuated tones of violins  
Mingled with remote cornets  
And begins.<sup>35</sup>

The lines describe interactions between the audience and this "intimate" composer whose "soul" is resurrected through performance, the "transmi[ssion]" of Chopin's Prelude, and then through reception, as those in attendance "rub" and "question" the flower that is produced. Thus the performance of the piece creates a series of erotic charges, one which produces a "bloom" and one which fingers it. As speech begins to fade away or "sli[p] into velleities," the speaker begins mentally to orchestrate Chopin's prelude, reimagining it as the "attenuated tones of violins / Mingled with remote cornets." Eliot manages an impressive formal gimmick, here, in pressing his speaker to expand and orchestrate the prelude into an "attenuated" and "remote" orchestral arrangement, while the poet himself is *condensing* an expansive novel of manners—the source of Henry James' million-windowed "house of fiction"—into a compressed poetic prelude.

The musical background to the poem's central conversation must therefore be not only transmitted by the performer, but received by the body, and then reimagined by that body's organizing consciousness. The result is a set of dissonances between speaker and auditor, but also within the speaker's own consciousness.

Among the windings of the violins  
And the ariettes  
Of cracked cornets  
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins  
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,  
Capricious monotone  
That is at least one definite "false note."  
—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,  
Admire the monuments,  
Discuss the late events,  
Correct our watches by the public clocks.  
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks. (lines 28-40)

The individual consciousness is marked not by the nuanced "intimate" "windings" of Chopin, but by the "dull" rhythm of the speaker's private consciousness. Yet this "monotonous" tom-tom is also "capricious": with the speaker's distance from his surroundings comes his inability to

maintain a steady beat. This rhythmic music is a temporary escape from historical time, to which the speaker subsequently returns as he sets his watch to the public clock. The speaker attempts to maintain a private rhythmic "prelude," only to find that rhythm, like harmony, is relational and dialectical: relying on but also internalizing "public" time.

Eliot uses musical metaphors throughout the poem, casting the speaker's companion as "the insistent out-of-tune / Of a broken violin on an August afternoon" (56-7), whose voice always clashes slightly and dissonantly with what the speaker desires. The poem's tension, therefore, lies in the speaker's tenuous ability to maintain his "self-possession"—the attenuation of this ability is always described in terms of music and dance:

I remain self-possessed  
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired  
Reiterates some worn-out common song  
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden  
Recalling things that other people have desired.  
Are these ideas right or wrong? [...]  
And I must borrow every changing shape  
To find expression ... dance, dance  
Like a dancing bear,  
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.  
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance— (78-83, 109-13)

The mechanical piano differs both from the speaker's own internal tom-tom and from Chopin—the intimate form that must be shared only among private companions. Thus the street piano, reproducing these "worn-out songs," forces the speaker to confront not only his own interactions with the piece, but also with those "things that other people have desired"; and as he begins to confront the foreclosed desires of his companion, the speaker feels compelled to "dance / Like a dancing bear, / Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape." Like the piano performing a "worn-out common song," the speaker responds by attempting to "borrow" forms and expressions, like a parrot or an ape. The speaker takes on mimetic forms of bodily performance that Adorno

associates, as Puchner points out, with the theatrical, crudely mimetic gestures of Wagner and Stravinsky: "what stands behind his critique of Wagner and Stravinsky is a critique of a primitive form of mimesis that reminds Adorno of the acts 'android apes perform in the zoos'" (4).

"Portrait"'s dancing and chattering animals recall *Petrushka*, Stravinsky's balletic tableaux of the Russian fairground, whose mechanical hand-organ Adorno describes as "the shock of an already-lapsed modernism, degraded to the childish" (*PNM* 111). I discuss this "fairground" aesthetic at greater length in Chapter Five, with respect to the Sitwells' efforts to appropriate, and also to defamiliarize, the social cachet of "childish" art.

The rhythmical structure of the thunder marks time—backwards, into what Eliot sees as the temporal remoteness of an Eastern jungle. Eliot writes in "The Beating of a Drum" that Aristotelian theories of rhythm, "applied to words, sounds, and movements of the body" allow for dramatic imitation and catharsis, arguing that modern rhythmic art can rejuvenate, if not completely transcend, categories of tragedy and comedy:

An unoccupied person, finding a drum, may be seized with a desire to beat it; but unless he is an imbecile he will be unable to continue beating it, and therefore satisfying a need (rather than a "desire"), without finding a reason for so doing. [...] The next generation or the next civilization will find a more plausible reason for beating the drum. Shakespeare and Racine—or rather the developments that led up to them—each found his own reason. The reasons may be divided into tragedy and comedy. We still have similar reasons, but we have lost the drum.<sup>36</sup>

*The Waste Land* beats incessantly on drums, attempting to recreate a ritual art which has a "sense of the present," and which nevertheless penetrates through modern intellectual categories into the "desires of the past." In this sense, Eliot anticipates Williams's claim that rhythm operates "not merely as an 'abstraction' or an 'emotion' but as a physical effect on the organism." Thus, Eliot suggests earlier in the essay, the comic spectacle of a juggling act accesses the rhythms of the body so as to give it more "cathartic" potential than an Ibsen drama. The "dull tom-tom" in

"Portrait"—not only a nod to the "primitive" drum (and a suggestion that the speaker has a headache), but also an infantilization of the Eliot's own first name—similarly invests rhythm with comic and satiric potential, wherein Eliot seeks a series of "changing forms," like the dancing bear and puppet of *Petrushka*, that can satirize a social context while reflecting on the artistic consequences of such a satire. At the same time, it suggests the poet "Tom-tom" himself is being pushed forward by a kind of rhythm that the "public clocks" can't account for.

The treatment of "primitive" races as both older and more infantile is a commonplace of primitivist art, and so it makes sense that Eliot would both infantilize his own persona while suggesting, as he does in *The Use of Poetry*, the poet is "older" than other people: "Poetry begins, I dare say, with a savage beating of a drum in a jungle, or it retains that essential percussion or rhythm; hyperbolically one might say that the poet is older than the other human beings—but I do not want to be tempted to ending on such a flourish." *The Waste Land* ends precisely with such a flourish: the poem's controlling voice, the (now-syphilitic) Fisher King, is forever old, "dying with a little patience." The poem's final thunderclaps question, much as Adorno does, whether the artist's insistence on those "rhythms" enables him to "control" their dissemination. Yet Eliot uses that control to create and manage and dramatize certain kinds of "sympathy," operative through operations of the body. *The Waste Land*, in its problematically aestheticized treatments of female bodies, insists that the communal experience of rhythmic aesthetic artworks, the desire to sing with "inviolable voice," is precisely what puts that body in peril.

Eliot himself appears to be seeking these "changing" shapes of expression, and thus writes *The Waste Land*. The smell of now-distant hyacinths, abstracted as the speaker listens to the mechanical piano, hearkens back to the physical presence of the "blossom" produced by the Chopin Prelude. It also anticipates the *The Waste Land*'s hyacinth girl, whose inability to speak

melds with the dark and empty sea of *Tristan und Isolde*. In *The Waste Land*, that insistent "out-of-tune" violin becomes the "pleasant whining of a mandoline" (III.261); an appealing sound precisely because of its shrill timbre. That mandoline sounds within a noisy "clatter and a chatter" of the fishermen in a public bar (III.262), as Chinitz argues, a working-class music hall context.<sup>37</sup> The "fishmen" scene is pivotal in several ways: the citation from *The Tempest*, "This music crept by me upon the waters" (III.257), suggests that Eliot is performing a Prospero-like transformation before setting his lands in order. The fishermen recall the enslaved fish-man Caliban, an idealized identity contrasted with Eliot's notion of the morbid middle-class.

The music hall context of the pleasantly whiny mandoline transitions directly into the "Thames-daughters," Eliot's version of the Rhine-maidens from *Götterdämmerung*; in the process, as Lawrence Rainey explains, Eliot appropriates Wagner's "two-beat measure" ("The river sweats / Oil and tar" [III.266-7]), setting the choric, diatonic music of the Rhine-maidens to the "beating oars" moving down the Thames (III.280). The transition suggests a formal as well as an ideological association between the music hall and the music of Wagner. These exultant hymns, the communal (and generally consonant) songs of the Rhine Maidens, eventually transition into their guttural "Wallala leialalas" (III.290-1). Eliot claims to excerpt these inarticulate sounds from *Götterdämmerung*, though they also reprise the opening of *Rheingold* wherein the Rhine-maidens tease and ridicule Alberich, the "lustful beast" [*lüsterne Kauz*] characterized by sexual and material lasciviousness. The Rhinemaidens engage Alberich in an act of musical theater, designed both to titillate him and to keep him at arm's length; as a result of their appeals to Alberich's deformed body, both the maidens and the Rhinegold are imperiled.

The shift from the Lower Thames Street bar back to Wagner recalls Bernard Shaw's socialist reading of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, in which Shaw argues that the mine in *Rheingold*, for

example, "might just as well be a match-factory, with yellow phosphorus, phossy jaw, a large dividend, and plenty of clergyman shareholders. Or it might be a whitelead factory, or a chemical works, or a pottery, [...] or any other of the places where human life and welfare are daily sacrificed in order that some greedy foolish creature may be able to hymn exultantly to his Plutonic idol."<sup>38</sup> Though Shaw reads *Götterdämmerung* as the abandonment of Wagner's revolutionary allegory, Eliot hears in those vowels the sounds of a theatrical confrontation with history—perhaps just the confrontation needed to revivify the protoplasmic middle class.

### The Roots of Eliot's Rhythm: Symons and the Wagnerian Symbolist

"When you were a tiny boy, learning to talk, you used to sound the rhythm of sentences without shaping words – the ups and downs of the thing you were trying to say. I used to answer you in kind, saying nothing yet conversing with you as we sat side by side on the stairs at 2635 Locust Street. And now you think the rhythm before the words in a new poem!"

— Ada Eliot Sheffield, to T.S. Eliot, 13 April 1943<sup>39</sup>

Eliot's introduction of Wagner into *The Waste Land* is motivated not just by a need for a thematic outlet, and not only by an aesthetic aspiration to music, but by a need to grapple with his literary critical predecessors. Eliot demonstrates consistent contempt for overly abstracted criticism, such as that of the poor writer in "The Perfect Critic" whom Eliot considers a "distinguished representative" of the "degenerate" abstract method of criticism, characterized by a "verbal disease." Eliot is equally skeptical of the "impressionistic critic," Arthur Symons, whom Eliot describes as a mere body of accumulated experiences: a critic who

would be said to expose a sensitive and cultivated mind—cultivated, that is, by the accumulation of a considerable variety of impressions from all the arts and several languages—before an "object"; and his criticism, if anyone's, would be said to exhibit to us, like the plate, the faithful record of the impressions, more numerous or more refined than our own, upon a mind more sensitive than our own. [...] I imagine—though here one's thought is moving in almost complete darkness—that Mr. Symons is far more disturbed, far more profoundly affected,

by his reading than was Swinburne, who responded rather by a violent and immediate and comprehensive burst of admiration which may have left him internally unchanged. The disturbance in Mr. Symons is almost, but not quite, to the point of creating; the reading sometimes fecundates his emotions to produce something new which is not criticism, but is not the expulsion, the ejection, the birth of creativeness.<sup>40</sup>

Like a Jamesian American abroad, Symons is a receptive and sensitive "plate" that can "record" and "accumulate" impressions, which is internally changed by those experiences but cannot expel them in a newly creative act. Eliot's reading of Symons's and Swinburne's criticism leads him towards a reading of Symons and Swinburne themselves. Eliot distinguishes their fecundated emotions from Arnoldian "disinterest," which Eliot dismisses as the goal of a *critic*, not of a *criticism*. Like the "object" placed before Symons the critic, Symons himself becomes an object of reflection and careful study, a writer on whom nothing is lost.

Symons's "sensitive and cultivated" criticism of the late nineteenth-century music hall, and of the French Symbolist tradition, makes him particularly useful for a study of *The Waste Land*, particularly insofar as Eliot manipulates both of those traditions as a way of indexing music's invigoration and imperilment of the human body. Barry Faulk has read Symons's interactions with the music hall as a means of cultivating Symons's own critical authority, while challenging the "amateur/expert binary" constitutive of "traditional notions of cultural hierarchy" (*Music Hall* 51-2). Writing on "The Spanish Music Hall," Symons notes that Spanish dancing "is a dance in which the body sets itself to its own rhythm," and invokes that notion again in his discussion of the "Malagueña." Describing the experience of a shrill timbre moving to a regular pulse, Symons writes, "A few words seemed to be repeated over and over again, with tremulous, inarticulate cries that wavered in time to a regularly beating rhythm. The sound was like nothing I have ever heard. It pierced the brain, it tortured one with a sort of delicious spasm." The accusation of "impressionistic criticism" seems partially just, given that Symons doesn't appear



even to understand the language; less impressionistic and more technical are Symons's observations of the song's rhythmical flux, a "regularly beating rhythm" over which the singer's cries "wave[r] in time." All of these various manifestations of rhythm and inarticulate sound have a cumulative effect of simultaneous pleasure and pain, manifesting themselves in a spasmodic emotional and bodily response. Symons's writing on the French Symbolists similarly refers to the "rhythm, absolutely without words," of the "mental sensation" that informs the process of poetic creation—and which serves as the "executive soul (as, in Aristotle's definition, the soul is the form of the body)" to allow words to "shap[e] the message."<sup>41</sup> One can detect Symons' influence in Eliot's "Music of Poetry," where the "rhythm" of poetic creation enacts poetic creation: "a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it expresses itself as words, and [...] this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image" (53).

Eliot's citation of Baudelaire's "hypocrite lecteur" (I.76) transitions into the layered theatrical stagings of "A Game of Chess," stagings in which Eliot's notorious anxieties about the female body and the "glitter of her jewels" are in full force. The section begins with a set of rich descriptions, characterized by Decadent synaesthesia, by a "troubled, confused" "profusion" of sense impressions, from which the sense of hearing is temporarily absent: the beginning of the second section is like the "heart of light, the silence" (I.41)—an excess of visual responses that silently frames "The change of Philomel,

by the barbarous king  
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale  
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice  
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,  
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears. (II.99-103)

Sound enters the stage of "A Game of Chess" precisely in a moment of sexual violence, and that violence also implicates the "dirty ears" of its audience. Like Baudelaire's hypocrite reader, those

dirty ears are themselves implicated in the act of rape. Eliot's version of audience complicity and "pursu[it]," though framed with decadent imagery, offers an aural version of the experience of "dirty" or "hypocritical" reading Eliot's invocation of the mythic past, of the "inviolab[ility]" of Philomel's voice, relies on the violability of her physical body. Conversely, the ekphrastic glorification of sexual violence can only indict its viewers through inarticulate noise.

"A Game of Chess" ends with several highly pronounced manipulations of rhythm: in the "Shakespearean Rag," and then in the theatrical barroom scene punctuated by constantly marked reminders of the time. The poem offers several manifestations of public time, akin to "Portrait's" "public clocks"—the "dead sound of the final stroke of nine," the violen[t] hour that brings the typist home at teatime—but more than any of these, the barkeep's repeated cry, "HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME" (II.141), offers what Eliot refers to as a "rhythm of fluctuating emotion. The repetition of this cry marks time *within* the passage, and also between various temporal moments in the speaker's and Lil's pasts. These pasts are associated with various other pasts, such as Philomel's: the lines "But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling. / You ought to be ashamed to look so antique" (II.155-6) recall the "antique mantle" constantly re-"telling" Philomel's rape. Like Stravinsky, Eliot uses an insistent, pulsing pressure to move forward as a way to push back into the past. Thus, Adorno might argue, the seemingly progressive and inventive qualities of rhythmic play in fact mark a historical regression.

Yet the singing body in *The Waste Land* proves more dialectical than that: initially exposed to sexual violence and aggression, these bodies implicate and even indict their audience. If Eliot's use of the female body, like Symons's, is overly impressionistic or even complicit in the ekphrastic glorification of sexual violence, the visual depiction of a singing body intensifies that body's relation to its historical surroundings and enables interpretation. As Richard Leppert has

argued, "sight acts as an organizer of musical semantics" and "connects sonoric phenomena with the social."<sup>42</sup> In a provocative series of analyses of the surfaces of pianos and harpsichords, Leppert argues that visual and verbal inscriptions on women's pianos make music "the sonoric analogue to her imprisonment" (122), insofar as pianos were a gift from spouse to spouse, and that the visual depictions of violence make "force and imputed violence the agents of art" (128). Eliot's depiction of Philomel's rape dramatizes the aural and visual "aestheticization of violence," in Leppert's phrase. Yet Philomel's song is not a consonant and harmonious song but a series of inarticulate noises: Eliot refuses to use Philomel's song as what Attali would call the consonant "pacification of noise." The juxtaposition of (decadent) visual violence with inarticulate noise reinforces the need of an "auditory imagination" to interpret the historical implications of a visual artifact. The most imaginative and most historical sounds, Eliot seems to believe, are not the consonances, but the cacophonies.

Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes themselves were constantly grappling with Wagner in ways that must have been recognizable to T.S. Eliot, and certainly to Adorno. As I discuss at greater length in Chapter Five, the early experiments of the Ballets Russes drew from the tradition of the total art-work, attempting to harmonize various aesthetic forms under the "controlling hands" of a producer and a choreographer (often metaphorized as a puppet-master). As Lynn Garafola writes, with respect to Diaghilev, "the assembling of a human corps sympathetic to a choreographer's vision assumes a vital artistic function."<sup>43</sup> In some sense Diaghilev is another puppet-master and another Prospero figure choreographing the baseless fabrics of a vision. The increasing avant-gardism and (especially in France) anti-Wagnerism of the 1910s and '20s saw a shift from "harmony" among these various forms, to discordance among them, to an emphasis on absurdity and surrealism. Adorno sees in Stravinsky's obsession

with collective experience an exaggeration of Wagner's obsession with allegory and the universal, always turning "to the disadvantage of the *principium individuationis*" (124). At the same time, Adorno's ambivalence (rather than pure hostility) towards Wagner's music acknowledges a "sensational" quality that enables its partial escape from its externally planned, *Gesamtkunstwerk*ian "phantasmagoria": "the music belongs to an occidental art whose highest exaltation is the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, in which the individual, on the basis of the sensation, enjoys his own annihilation" (*PNM* 124).

For Eliot, Baudelaire's technical virtuosity and concomitant interest of "the problem of good and evil"<sup>44</sup> are manifested in his ability to conjoin seemingly paradoxical images, an update and an improvement of the Metaphysical conceit. In his essay on John Dryden, Eliot praises Baudelaire's ability to "see profounder possibilities in wit, and in violently joined images, than ever were possible in Dryden's mind."<sup>45</sup> Eliot's writing on Baudelaire often resembles his reflections on Stravinsky in the parallels drawn between the conventional and the "modern" (and, specifically, the modern metropolitan):

besides the stock of images which he used that seems already second-hand, he gave new possibilities to poetry in a new stock of imagery of contemporary life. [...] It is not merely in the use of imagery from the sordid life of a great metropolis but in the elevation of such imagery to the *first intensity*—presenting it as it is, and yet making it represent something much more than itself—that Baudelaire has created a mode of release and expression for other men.<sup>46</sup>

Notwithstanding the stock imagery of "prostitutes, mulattoes, Jewesses, serpents, cats, corpses" that, according to Eliot, form a dated and overly romantic "machinery" ("Baudelaire" 233)—a machinery that Eliot ironizes in the second section of *The Waste Land*—Baudelaire's mastery of form, "perfection of phrasing," and "command of words and rhythms" allows him to transform that machinery into an intense bodily experience of Sin and Redemption. Baudelaire "was at least able to understand that the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the

natural, 'life-giving', cheery automatism of the modern world. For Baudelaire, sexual operation is at least something not analogous to Kruschen Salts" (236). Like Marie Lloyd's ability to draw in an audience, sex is, if nothing else, a means of not being bored to death.

*The Waste Land* employs violently joined images in investigating acts of violence, mediating a depiction of violence, paradoxically, to intensify its emotional immediacy. Packed into the conceptually and idiomatically disorienting scenes of rape, death, and abortion in "A Game of Chess" are the paradoxical, proto-Symbolist conceits of Shakespeare's *Tempest*: "The pearls that were his eyes." Even to approach the significance of the damaged body requires, for Eliot, an "auditory imagination" that can match the effects and the cultural significance of music; in return, poetry can expose what musical performance does *to* the body. Like the figures of Stravinsky and Wagner, the characters of *The Tempest* loom in the background of *The Waste Land*: if *The Waste Land* is a fictive "baseless fabric," it is also (to reuse Rainey's phrase) a "grisly puppet show" that illustrates the costs of such an illusion.

### *The Waste Land and The Tempest, Revisited*

The "Shakespearian Rag" section of the poem raises many questions as to Eliot's interactions with music hall culture, recognizing that this "rag" is associated (by whatever overarching consciousness oversees the poem) with Ariel's song from *The Tempest*. Ariel's status in the poem as slave, as artistic creator, and as the catalyst of audience response, is clarified by Symons's chapter on Verlaine in *The Symbolist Movement*, whose general sentiments Eliot clearly knew well; Symons makes the words of a poem the Ariel to Verlaine's Prospero:

words become Ariel to him. They bring him not only that submission of the slave which they bring to others, but all the soul, and in a happy bondage. They transform themselves for him into music, colour, and shadow; a disembodied music, diaphanous colours, luminous shadow. They serve him with so absolute a

self-negation that he can write *romances sans paroles*, songs almost without words, in which scarcely a sense of the interference of human speech remains. (216)

Words, like the "Jug Jugs" of Philomel's song, are simultaneously subordinated and given their own agency; like Whistler's painting, Symons writes, Verlaine's poetry "passes almost into the condition of music" (217), by virtue of its ability to "transform" itself, to evoke and to connote, without relying on the "interference of human speech." Eliot's accusation of "impressionistic" criticism, based on this passage, seems more than just, and yet *The Waste Land's* consideration of the music hall, of Verlaine, of Verlaine's Wagner, and of Ariel all seem indebted (albeit critically) to Symons. Eliot attempts to understand rhythm and dissonance as means of developing a more historical understanding of this "happy bondage": *The Waste Land's* citationality, while calling attention to the poet's ability of a poet to "control" his materials, or of a Prospero to control his Ariel, also reflects on the historical forms that this control can take.

Eliot rewrites Ariel's story by giving him a body—a body that makes him easier to manipulate, but which also enables a critique of that manipulation. I will preface Ariel's lines by recalling Eliot's assertion in the "London Letter" (21 July) that the Ballets Russes accomplish a "simplification of current life into something rich and strange" (184):

Full fathom five thy father lies;  
The coral from his bones are made.  
Those were the pearls that were his eyes.  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.<sup>47</sup>

Eliot and his auditory imagination look to the Ballets Russes as a model for how to find the primitive roots of present sounds: whether through "simplification" or, as with *Le Sacre*, through "transformation," this music effects a sea-change no less than the songs of Ariel. Within *The Waste Land*, Ariel's song is linked first to the drowned Phoenecian Sailor, and its significance

itself undergoes a kind of sea-change throughout the poem. Madame Sosostris's advice to "Fear death by water" obviously resonates throughout the poem, as Phlebas the Phoenecian "enter[s] the whirlpool" and allows the undercurrent to "pic[k] his bones."

The "death by water" of Ferdinand's father in *The Tempest* is not a death at all. Alonso's bones have been assimilated into the sea only insofar as the sea-changes of the play operate within the fictive reality, backed by nothing other than Prospero's massive library of books. "The wisest woman in Europe," similarly, appears to be weaving a similar kind of fictive narrative, and doing so through the appropriation of song. If, as Michael Levenson argues, the poem's first section emerges from the overarching consciousness of a near-dead corpse, that corpse too undergoes sea-change: whether into the condition that comes after "near-dead," or into the urbane settings of the passages that follow: the beer hall, the closed car, and the music hall.

All of these associations, including the association with the music hall, are underwritten by Ariel's cultural authority as well as Shakespeare's. A less-degraded version of Madame Sosostris, Ariel tells Ferdinand his fortune while simultaneously allowing him to maintain the illusion of his father's death. One readily remembers, reading Eliot's poem, that Ariel's lines are distinctively differentiated from the speech of other characters. Eliot's poem relies on stylistic differentiation, but by the same token it attempts to efface stylistic differentiation. His auditory imagination attempts to hear, in the more modern rhythms of the beer hall and Big Ben, the "primitive and forgotten" origins of that speech, thereby matching those different voices to the same drumbeat. The poem ends with several drumbeats—DA DA DA, Shantih Shantih Shantih—and urges the listener to internalize them, "beating obedient / To controlling hands" (420-2).

Ariel's song offers a third reminder: the precondition of his song is his enslavement. By associating the music hall with Ariel, Eliot, like Adorno, suggests that the ostensible stylistic freedom and sexual suggestion are another manifestation of enslavement, suggesting that the "elegant[ce]" and "intelligent[ce]" of the Shakespearean is obediently produced under the "controlling hands" of a master, even if a benign one. Prospero therefore has a presence in this poem whose critical crux has always been where to locate the voice; by locating Prospero as the source of "control" in the poem, one can also think of him as a manifestation of the culture industry. In associating the music hall not just with Shakespeare, but with Ariel, *The Waste Land* reflects on the "controlling hands" under which theatricality functions.

The poem's neurotic voice in "A Game of Chess" shifts from vocalized anxieties about the disembodied "noise" of "the wind under the door" (l. 116), to Ariel's song (l. 125), to the apparently empty head of its auditor ("Have you nothing in your head?") (l. 126). But that auditor does have something "in [his] head"—something catchy at that:

O O O O That Shakespearean Rag—  
It's so elegant  
So intelligent

"What shall I do now? What shall I do?  
"I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street  
"With my hair down so. What shall we do tomorrow?  
"What shall we ever do?" (l. 128-34)

The nearly rag-like dactylic rhythms of "What shall I do now? What shall I do?" contrast with the Prufrock-like iambic overtones of the following line, suggesting that the auditor is shaping the speaker's voice to the rhythms in his own "head." The poem vacillates between two types of neurosis—one fixated entirely on this one manifestation of culture industry, another with no sense of culture whatsoever. This vacillation manifests itself in a shift from the (contracted) present of "It's so elegant" to the (elaborated) future of "What shall I do now? [...] What shall we



do tomorrow? What shall we ever do?" The auditor, immersed in the Shakespearean Rag, shapes his experience of the present to a song; the neurotic speaker, however, obsesses with what it "shall" do at the expense of what it is doing now—or with what is being done to it.

Eliot's poem focuses insistently on neurotic women with shrill voices, merging his frequently noted misogyny with his anxious relation to technological ubiquity. At the same time, the poem implies that those neuroses can derive from various forms of physical and artistic violence against the female body. The typist section of the poem entangles the technologies of the typewriter and the gramophone with the mediating technologies of poetry, and with the human body—such that the body itself becomes a mediator of noise. In merging the typist's hand with the gramophone, the poem presents a highly wrought metaphysical conceit, what Samuel Johnson called the conjunction of two "heterogeneous images" "yoked by violence together."<sup>48</sup> "Ransack[ing]" nature and art for "illustrations, comparisons and allusions" (Johnson 20) and conjoining these images and sounds into a quasi-total-art-work, *The Waste Land* considers the technologies of poetry—rhythm, voice, the metaphysical conceit—as modes of critical response to the embodied "violence" of technological modernity, even if (as Adorno suggests of Wagner and Stravinsky) such a response enacts a different kind of violence.

### What the Gramophone Says

If Eliot's and Adorno's ambivalence about music after Wagner derives from its propensity for disciplining or liberating bodily expression, their ambivalence is amplified (as it were) by music's technological mediation.<sup>49</sup> Friedrich Kittler has argued that Wagner's willingness to explore the extremes of musical dynamics, and their attendant theatrical effects, make him a precursor of modern-day media. The context of technological reproduction in some respects

attenuates the relation between musical sound, in some respects merely exaggerates the need for an actively interpretive mode of listening. In "Musica Practica," Roland Barthes writes that the performance of music is a fundamentally bodily activity: "the body controls, conducts, coordinates, having itself to transcribe what it reads, making sound and meaning, the body as inscriber and not just transmitter, simple receiver" (149). Barthes casts the body as a sort of embodied gramophone: able to transmit sound, but not *just* to transmit it—also to control, coordinate, and interpret. Barthes locates the power of Romantic music with the interpretive performer, mourning the decline of musical performance in the bourgeois household, and a related decline in the quality of music: from a "manual, muscular, kneadingly physical" form (which draws one into a desire to *perform* it), to a "merely liquid, effusive, 'lubrificating'" forms.

The typist in *The Waste Land* "smoothes her hair with automatic hand" and, unable to express her own thoughts (as a typist—a mere transmitter of meaning), "puts a record on the gramophone." Eliot underscores this automatism by emphasizing the artificiality of the forced rhyme between "automatic hand" and the word "and": devoid of performative gestures (such as that produced by the music itself), the figure of the typist/human gramophone gives the jarring imaginative conceit and the purely syntactic utterance ("and") equal poetic weight. Yet this cold artificiality then transforms, through Ferdinand's voice, into a series of vibrant human sounds engaged with their own histories. The transition enacts both Barthes' critique of the static, gramphonic performance as well as the need to imagine a body behind that performance.

The gramophone enables Eliot and Adorno to interrogate the relationship among the sound produced by the musician, the sound produced by the machine, and the sounds produced in the social setting in which that machine appears. Adorno's 1927 essay entitled "The Curve of the Needle" argues that "[m]ale voices can be reproduced better than female voices," because "in

order to become unfettered, the female voice requires the physical appearance of the body that carries it."<sup>50</sup> Attempting to discern the device's limits of fidelity, Adorno ascribes the "shrillness" of the recorded female voice to its distance from her body: "Only there where the body itself resonates, where the self to which the gramophone refers is identical with its sound, only there does the gramophone have its legitimate realm of validity" (274).

The technology of the gramophone produces anxiety for Adorno and for Eliot in the often-inadequate ways that it interacts with artistic creation. In addressing the relationship between artistic creation and technology, both Adorno and Eliot call on the body. The gramophone in *The Waste Land*, like that in Adorno's essay, calls on a perception of the "shrill" female voice, and locates that shrillness with respect to the body from which it emerges—bodies suffering material physical damage, both imposed and self-inflicted, and being eventually morphed into the "automatic hand" of the gramophone itself. That female voice is, far from being "shrill," entirely silent: the gramophone signifies not a lack of fidelity to an original voice, but the silencing and obfuscation of the original voice.

"The Curve of the Needle" argues that the gramophone initially signified a subversive "power to penetrate rationally the reigning artistic practice" in attempting "to present objects themselves in as unadorned a fashion as possible" (271), suggesting the possibilities of the phonograph as a technology of storage (not as a technology of mass reproduction).<sup>51</sup> Yet in its initial attempts at "concrete fidelity," Adorno writes, the technology calls attention to its own inability to keep its promise, and "the exactness one has ascribed to [it] is exposed as an illusion by the very technology itself" (271). All of this signifies an acquiescence to the "ideological need of the ruling society, which demands subjective reconciliation with these objects" (271)—as the gramophone becomes assimilated into bourgeois households, it no longer has as its essential

purpose the presentation of the "unadorned object." As such, it ceases to be used to reproduce new artworks, merely replicating the familiar and the comfortable—a replication that also implicates the increasing complacency of musical performance. The "new music" suited to Adorno's taste—that which requires free interpretation on the performer's (and the listener's) part if it is to be made intelligible—"begin[s] to become unreproducible." On the other hand, the neoclassical, Stravinskian varieties of new music, ostensibly having eliminated the "subjective aspect" of music, "do not require any further reproduction" in the first place (272). In terms of those efforts to "penetrate" the ruling ideology, the gramophone is a wash: it can only present already-familiar objects characterized by "adornment" and not by immanent expressiveness.

The typist in *The Waste Land*, subjected to the unwelcome but seemingly unavoidable advances of a carbuncular clerk, cannot produce a song that implicates the "dirty ears" and voyeuristic eyes of the witnesses to her assault; thus she "smoothes her hair with automatic hand / And puts a record on the gramophone" (III.255-6). As the boundaries between the subject and her gramophone begin to dissolve, the typist (already defined by her relation to mechanized language) is assimilated into the collective "human engine." As Attali suggests, those who "stockpile" records are in fact stockpiling "coded noise with a specific ritual function"; that is to say, the purchase of a record is the purchase of another's "use-time":

For we must not forget that music remains a very unique commodity: to take on meaning, it requires an incompressible lapse of time, that of its own duration. Thus the gramophone, conceived as a recorder to stockpile time, became instead its principal user. [...] The major contradiction of repetition is in evidence here: *people must devote their time to producing the means to buy recordings of other people's time*, losing in the process not only the use of their own time, but also the time required to use other people's time. Stockpiling then becomes a substitute, not a preliminary condition, for use. *People buy more records than they can listen to. They stockpile what they want to find the time to hear.* (101, his italics)

"The typist home at teatime" earns the means to acquire others' time; the shift to the fishmen's bar suggests a recognition of those "others" as workers. Eliot's reproduction of reproduction suggests that to reproduce "unreproducible" popular artifacts does not obscure labor but lays it bare. The gramophone record becomes one of many ways of marking historical and not just poetic time: one of many sites at which the rhythms of divine thunderclaps seem to be premised on the patterns of daily life. The rhythms and the dissonances of *The Waste Land*—the harsh non-rimes, sharp contrasts in idiom, violently yoked-together conceits—build on an "auditory imagination" attuned not just to relations built on sound, but to relations built on context and association. Through these associative contexts, particularly the modern resonances of Wagner, *The Waste Land* explores the embodied cultural effects of music. While Adorno critiques the total art-work attempt to conceal its own labor in the service of an orchestral illusion, *The Waste Land* sublimates labor into the large-scale rhythmic time of art—but not without a nuanced sense of how this sublimation might provoke, or depend on, a damaged body.

The materiality of time is a central problem of modernist poetics, and one that motivates Chapter Three. In the music of George Antheil and the writings of Ezra Pound, the presence of rhythm comes to stand for more than a purely aesthetic relation: the rhythms of poetry and music are imbricated with the rhythms of labor. This symbolic, extramusical significance is thrown into relief by the presence of noise, which calls attention to the material, economic, institutional basis of music and abrogates the autonomy of art.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 50.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 172. Hereafter cited parenthetically.<sup>3</sup> Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 91. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *Search*.

<sup>4</sup> Theodor Adorno, "Wagner's Relevance for Today," *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2002), 589. Hereafter cited parenthetically as "Wagner's Relevance."

<sup>5</sup> Karin Bauer, "Adorno's Wagner: History and the Potential of the Artwork," *Cultural Critique* 60 (2005): 81-2. The internal quotation is taken from Horkheimer and Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 143.

<sup>6</sup> Adorno, "Selbstanzeige des Essaybuches 'Versuch über Wagner'" (1952), qtd. in Bauer 81.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Wilson Smith, *The Total Work of Art from Bayreuth to Cyberspace* (London: Routledge, 2007), 8.

<sup>8</sup> See Barry Faulk, "Modernism and the Popular: Eliot's Music Halls," *Modernism/Modernity* 8.4 (2001); David Chinitz, *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003); Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999). Critical responses, especially modernist and New Critical responses, to music in *The Waste Land* have been usefully addressed in Stephen Benson, "Modernism, Melocentrism, and Literary History: The Case of The Waste Land," *Word and Music Studies* 4.1 (2002).

<sup>9</sup> Barry Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery Of Popular Culture* (Athens: Ohio UP, 2004). Hereafter cited parenthetically as *Music Hall*.

<sup>10</sup> Chinitz, *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*, 103. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>11</sup> Nancy D. Hargrove, "The Great Parade: Cocteau, Picasso, Satie, Massine, Diaghilev—and T.S. Eliot," *Mosaic* 31.1 (1998).

<sup>12</sup> Clive Bell, "Plus de Jazz," *The New Republic* 21 Sept. 1921: 95. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998). Hereafter cited parenthetically as *Institutions*.

<sup>14</sup> With respect to Stravinsky's ostensibly "jazzy" *L'Histoire du Soldat*, Richard Taruskin has argued that many of its rhythms "might even be called 'anti-jazz.'" Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1996), 1311.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence Rainey, *Revisiting "The Waste Land"* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2007), 51.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Stoddard Martin, *Wagner to "The Waste Land": A Study of the Relationship of Wagner to English Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Margaret Dana, "Orchestrating *The Waste Land*: Wagner, Leitmotiv, and the Play of Passion," *T. S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. John Xiros Cooper (New York: Garland, 2000); Philip Waldron, "The Music of Poetry: Wagner in *The Waste Land*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 18.4 (1993).

<sup>17</sup> Sara Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002); Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama*; Smith, *The Total Work of Art from Bayreuth to Cyberspace*, 21. All hereafter cited parenthetically.

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<sup>18</sup> Rainey notes that Eliot inverts the logic of Marvell's rhyme, in which time's "winged chariot" does not promise a union but, rather, threatens to interrupt it (*Annotated Waste Land*, 102).

<sup>19</sup> Marshall McLuhan, "Pound, Eliot, and the Rhetoric of The Waste Land," *New Literary History* 10.3 (1979).

<sup>20</sup> See Christina Hauck, "Abortion and the Individual Talent," *ELH* 70.1 (2003). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>21</sup> Valerie Eliot, ed., *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (New York: Harcourt, 1971) 55 (ms. of "Death by Water").

<sup>22</sup> On Adorno's critique of Stravinsky and its relation to mimesis and bodily gesture, see Puchner 34-40.

<sup>23</sup> Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism," 189.

<sup>24</sup> T.S. Eliot, "The Music of Poetry," *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 32. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>25</sup> T.S. Eliot, "Matthew Arnold," *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986), 111. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>26</sup> Theodor Adorno, "On Jazz," *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2002), 475.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. McClary: "Adorno overlooks or denigrates as regressive [...] pleasure or the body" (29).

<sup>28</sup> Knowingly or unknowingly, Bell is performing major rhetorical prestidigitation: rag and jazz are by no means the same thing. Stravinsky himself knew as much, and as Taruskin suggests, jazz and ragtime have very different kinds of salience in Stravinsky's work, particularly with respect to rhythm. In the "Ragtime" section of *L'Histoire du Soldat*, "[m]uch of the rhythmic writing might even be called 'anti-jazz'" (*Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, vol. 1, 1311).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Nancy Perloff, *Art and the Everyday: Popular Entertainment and the Circle of Erik Satie* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993).

<sup>30</sup> Jean Cocteau, "The Eiffel Tower Wedding Party," trans. Dudley Fitts, *The Infernal Machine and Other Plays* (New York: New Directions, 1963), 161.

<sup>31</sup> T.S. Eliot, "Marie Lloyd," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt, 1975), 174. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>32</sup> See North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern*. North outlines anthropological work on the Melanesians from the 1920s, suggesting that Eliot's reference to them is common in its willingness to link cultural health with a "unified popular culture," original in its willingness to apply that lesson to London itself (56). See also Robert Crawford, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

<sup>33</sup> T.S. Eliot, "War-Paint and Feathers," *The Athenæum* 17 Oct. 1919.

<sup>34</sup> Edward J. Dent, "Landscape with Figures," *The Athenæum* 17 Oct. 1919.

<sup>35</sup> T.S. Eliot, "Portrait of a Lady," *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, 1962), lines 8-18. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>36</sup> Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum," 12.

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- <sup>37</sup> On Eliot's use of jazz and stage-music prior to *The Waste Land*, see also David Chinitz, "A Jazz-Banjo, Not a Lute: Eliot and Popular Music before *The Waste Land*," *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. John Xiros Cooper (New York and London: Garland, 2000).
- <sup>38</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite: A Commentary on the Nibelung's Ring* (New York: Dover, 1967), 17.
- <sup>39</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot, vol. 1 (New York and London: Harcourt, 1988), xxxi.
- <sup>40</sup> T.S. Eliot, "The Perfect Critic," *The Sacred Wood and Major Early Essays* (Mineola: Dover, 1997), 2.
- <sup>41</sup> Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, Rev. ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1919), 197.
- <sup>42</sup> Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1993), xxvii. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>43</sup> Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York: Da Capo, 1989), 4. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>44</sup> T.S. Eliot, "The Lesson of Baudelaire," *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), 144.
- <sup>45</sup> T.S. Eliot, "John Dryden," *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), 180.
- <sup>46</sup> T.S. Eliot, "From 'Baudelaire'," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (Orlando: Harcourt, 1975), 234, his emphasis. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>47</sup> William Shakespeare, "The Tempest," *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), I.ii.400-5.
- <sup>48</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (New York: Octagon, 1967), 20.
- <sup>49</sup> See Rainey, *Revisiting*, as well as Hugh Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988).
- <sup>50</sup> Theodor Adorno, "The Curve of the Needle," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2002), 274. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>51</sup> Eliot's interest in media technologies has been noted by Suárez, Kreilkamp, Kenner, Sebastian D.G. Knowles, "Death by Gramophone," *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.1/2 (2003).



## CHAPTER III

### THE ANTHEIL ERA

Ezra Pound long protested his belief in "an 'absolute rhythm', a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed."<sup>1</sup> At some point in 1924, Pound ceased to emphasize the "absolute rhythm" and moved on to something else: the "hard bit," a single, isolatable, "elementary" particle of rhythm.<sup>2</sup> Concomitant with this shift is Pound's increasing association with George Antheil: the American composer who assisted Pound with the completion of his operatic melodrama *Le Testament de Villon* (1923) and served as the subject of Pound's monograph *Antheil* (1924), and whose *Ballet Mécanique* debuted the same year.<sup>3</sup> Conceived of as the soundtrack to Fernand Léger's film of the same name but performed on its own, *Ballet Mécanique* proved one of the most infamous and most noisy musical experiments of the 1920s: scored for "three pianos, four bass drums, tam-tam, two pianists, seven (or so) electric bells, a siren, three airplane propellers, and sixteen synchronized player-pianos,"<sup>4</sup> the piece premiered to infamously boisterous audiences.

Antheil exemplifies the central contentions of this dissertation: first, that modernist literature and music can be understood as a means of mediating and responding to noise; second, that noise implicates the material realities and institutions enabling the production of the cultural artifacts of literature and music; and third, that noise precipitates lurking questions about the autonomy of modernist art. Notwithstanding Antheil's assertion that the music of *Ballet Mécanique* "had nothing whatsoever to do with the actual description of factories, machinery" (*Bad Boy* 139), Pound would compare the piece to a musical factory: an analogy that gestures

back to Russolo and forward to Pound's own totalitarian vision of "kulchur."<sup>5</sup> Pound's discussions of *Ballet Mécanique* reveal the potential of noise to signify, beyond the composer's stated intentions, the musical factory from which "hard bits" of rhythm emerge.<sup>6</sup>

The presence of noise in *Ballet Mécanique*, and the kinds of noise (publicity, rumor, scandal) circulating around Antheil himself, make palpable the cultural and economic basis of art: a basis that the Futurists had already explored, but that Antheil's music reenergized within the scope of Anglo-American modernism. A relentless self-publicist, a near-ubiquitous presence in the social circles of modernist art, and a noise-music composer whose performances were major social events, Antheil serves as a noisy vortex, at which several significations of noise converge. The person of Antheil himself usefully amplifies the social and institutional basis of music, the extent to which artistic personae and audience responses are themselves produced by the institutions and rhetoric of modernist culture. Much as *Ballet Mécanique* attempts to channel noise into music, Antheil himself orchestrated publicity, down to the very riots at his own premieres, and for that very reason produced himself as the "bad boy" of modernist music.

This chapter rethinks "the Antheil era" of modernism in terms of the intersection of noise and art: not just as the aesthetic productions and energies of Pound, Eliot, Yeats, and Joyce, but as the circulation of noises caused by and responsible for those productions. Even independent of his actual music, Antheil's embroilment in modernist networks makes him an intriguing figure for studies of modernist art and its social circulation. Antheil knew or collaborated with Pound, Eliot, Yeats, *and* Joyce, as well as Margaret Anderson, Sylvia Beach, Cecil B. DeMille, Ernest Hemingway, Hedy Lamarr, Fernand Léger, Wyndham Lewis, Dudley Murphy, Elliot Paul, Frances Picabia, Erik Satie, Gertrude Stein, and Igor Stravinsky. Antheil's accomplishments are as wide-spanning as they are uneven, impressive by virtue of quantity if not always quality. He

aided Pound in the composition of two operatic melodramas later produced for radio, and helped facilitate Pound's theories of "absolute rhythm" and the "Great Bass"; he collaborated with W.B. Yeats on the masque drama *Fighting the Waves* (1929); proposed and began work on an operatic treatment of the "Cyclops" chapter from Joyce's *Ulysses*; published in popular periodicals and literary and artistic journals, ranging from Margaret Anderson's *Little Review* to Elliot Paul's *transition* to the German periodical *Der Querschnitt* to periodicals associated with the Dutch artists of *De Stijl*; composed film scores for Cecil B. Demille; wrote a maladroitly overstuffed detective novel entitled *Death in the Dark* under the pseudonym Stacey Bishop (and with Eliot's and Yeats's editorial assistance); and published an anonymous monograph called *The Shape of the War to Come* (1940) which speculates proleptically on the end of the Second World War. Perhaps his most unpredictable accomplishment came at the behest of Hedy Lamarr who, having read *The Shape of the War to Come* along with Antheil's primer on "glandular criminology" (*Every Man His Own Detective*; 1937), shared with the composer a patent on a new radio-guided torpedo technology, using slotted pieces of paper akin to a player-piano roll (an innovation that has since made possible the cellular phone).<sup>7</sup> With respect to Jacques Attali's assertion that music prophesies social change by sublimating noise, a dose of skepticism is in order, but Antheil amplifies what modernists perceived as the material force of musical culture: the extent to which the physical, material stuff of music is the material, physical stuff of commerce and warfare.

Paradoxically, it may be *because* of his ubiquity in these social and aesthetic circles that Antheil has received little attention, although (for the same reasons) this attention has increased as the field of modernist studies has taken a more historical, interdisciplinary turn.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, though Antheil's reputation in musicology has not held up unusually well, it has been energized by the new musicology's cultural and historical turn, by cultural histories of sound, by

reconstructions of both the music and the film of *Ballet Mécanique*, and by a recent dramatization of the Antheil/Lamarr collaboration.<sup>9</sup> By and large, critical work on Pound's musical theories has focused exclusively on aesthetic doctrine; and even when those doctrines are seen to intersect with Pound's political views, the criticism has tended not to attend to the *specific* cultural significance of the music Pound championed. That is to say, while critics have reflected usefully on Antheil's relation to Pound's aesthetic doctrines, both in the Imagist/Vorticist modes and in the fascistic *Guide to Kulchur* mode, a fuller account is needed of the cultural significance and implications of the Pound/Antheil nexus.<sup>10</sup>

I would suggest two reasons for this oversight. First, Antheil seems to represent, as F.R. Leavis said of Edith Sitwell, a figure of publicity and not of art: a jack of several trades that he never mastered. On the grounds of aesthetic accomplishment, Antheil seems marginal to the mainstream narrative of modernism: a pale imitation of Varèse and Stravinsky who ultimately resorted to writing mediocre film scores for DeMille's *The Plainsman* (1936) and *The Buccaneer* (1938).<sup>11</sup> Much as I argue in Chapter Five that the Sitwells' citations of musical culture dialectically implicate publicity and poetry, Antheil recognized that self-promotion and artistic production, music and noise, could enhance one another. As I discuss in Chapter One, the epithet "noise" often signifies a gap between *poiesis* and *ethesis*, invention and interpretation, one terrain of this tension being "material" or "neutral" surface of the performed musical text. Yet while the riots at Antheil's premieres may seem to represent an spontaneous audience response—an example of what happens when poietic and ethetic definitions of noise don't match up—in fact these scandals were largely premeditated. Antheil's success exposes the intertwining of artistic creation and interpretive response, a link that points both ways: if an audience can object to what it considers "noise," the artist can turn that objection to his own advantage. As Neil Blackadder

writes, the decades between the 1880s and the 1930s represented a "key transitional phase" in the history of the theater, the "heyday of the theater scandal."<sup>12</sup> So, when Peter Yates writes that *Ballet Mécanique* "was most successful in its headlines," he may mean more than he says: the music certainly shaped audience response, but was not the only or even the most direct means of doing so. Antheil reveals that the musical text, to torque Nattiez's terms, is always material and never neutral: an object loaded with social and economic implications, made more salient yet by the interventions of active, very noisy interpreters themselves contributing to a cultural narrative.

Second, Pound's championing of Antheil seems anomalous, an interruption of the otherwise relatively coherent trajectory of Pound's career. The Pound who blasted Russolo and Marinetti, who insisted on stylistic economy, and who championed musical and poetic medievalism would eventually turn to a kind of pseudo-Confucian, pre-capitalist "new learning" devoted to abolishing excess and "usury" in both art and society: not the only way his career could have gone, but a story with its own internal logic. That in the midst of that career Pound would champion an American composer writing music for airplane propellers and sirens, and that Pound would approvingly compare this music to an industrial factory, seems aberrational to say the least. Antheil the noisy anomaly has largely been sublimated into a narrative of modernism in which literature aspires to music in the name of disinterested aesthetic doctrines.

Antheil's judgment that Pound's musical criticism had everything to do with his own doctrines and antagonisms, nothing to do with what Antheil himself was doing, has been generally reinforced by more recent criticism, often in ways that usefully situate both figures within modernism. Daniel Albright, for example, argues that Pound's interest in Antheil marks a more general interest in "quantum poetics," in the discrete, elementary quanta ("poememes") of artistic energy that formulate a poem. Brad Bucknell analyzes Pound's *Testament du Villon*,

written with Antheil's help, as a realization of Pound's Imagism, arguing that Pound's musical and poetic aesthetics are driven by a desire to hierarchize sound, a desire with fascist implications.<sup>13</sup> As William Walter Hoffa puts it, Pound explores "the 'new music' of George Antheil" mostly as a "revivified exemplification of Vorticist ideals" (60). Almost as an aside, Hoffa writes that by 1923 Eliot's reputation was already solidified and Pound needed a new American "in need of his polemical skills" (54).

What Hoffa takes as an aside, I take as a pivotal point: while the study of doctrine has much to offer studies of both musical and literary modernism, it is a mistake to treat the doctrines too credulously or to overlook their cultural context and (mediated) social circulation. Odd though it may seem, at least one fellow American expatriate in Paris believed that Pound's Antheil treatise did Pound more good than it did Antheil. In his memoir *Confessions of Another Young Man* (1936), Bravig Imbs writes that the treatise "was an excellent stroke of publicity for Mr. Pound, for stocks on George were doubling daily, but it gave the average reader the idea that George was more of a pathological case than a composer, and put more people off George's music than you could shake a stick at."<sup>14</sup> Whether or not Imbs was right, the perception itself is important: Antheil represented not only a talented aesthetic sensibility, nor merely an empty vessel for Pound's own Vorticist bloviations, but an artistic celebrity whose stock was rising.<sup>15</sup>

Pound was never inclined to think art autonomous from society or economics: a quasi-Ruskinian at heart, he was deeply and increasingly committed to the social and economic significance of aesthetics.<sup>16</sup> But the most familiar version of Pound, the Imagist who promoted concision, condensation, directness, and stylistic economy and who wrote that poets should aspire to "write in the sequence of a musical phrase," very often comes to the modern-day reader mediated by the editorial pen of T.S. Eliot. As Michael Coyle has argued, Eliot's edition of the

*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* "restages modernist ambivalence over choosing an intractable political world over a potentially perfectable aesthetic one. While Eliot never entirely relinquished his reformist hopes, he did withdraw them from the arena of immediate political contest" (34). Ambivalence, as I have earlier suggested, represents a characteristic modernist response to questions of literature's and music's social purchase, and Pound is as conflicted in this respect as any literary figure in the twentieth century. Pound "came to challenge romantic conceptions of 'literature' as a mediation of the most stultifying and disabling kind" (Coyle 34), amplifying and modifying the attitudes expressed in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920): skepticism towards kitsch and mass-production, fear of the public square, and anxiety about the degradation of "the sublime."<sup>17</sup> Among the chief degraders of "the sublime" in *Mauberley* is the pianola (the hero of *Ballet Mécanique*), which stands in for the same unthinking and repetitious "march of events" responsible for the First World War.

Thus it is somewhat surprising to see Pound promote Antheil's music as the basis for reorganizing the factory. In his 1926 *Treatise on Harmony*, published along with a revision of the *Antheil* monograph, Pound writes,

Three years ago [1923] Antheil was talking vaguely of "tuning up" whole cities, of "silences twenty minutes long *in the form*," etc. [...]

With the performance of the Ballet mécanique one can conceive the possibility of organizing the sounds of a factory, let us say of boilerplate or any other clangorous noisiness, the actual sounds of the labour, the various tones of the grindings; according to the needs of the work, and yet, with such pauses and durées, that at the end of the eight hours, the men go out not with frayed nerves, but elated—fatigued, yet, but elated.<sup>18</sup>

In complete opposition to *Mauberley*'s solitary artist meme, closer (though not entirely equivalent) to the drift of *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound's musical workshop offers a conspicuously totalitarian way of thinking: Pound posits a formal or aesthetic immanence to the workday, organized from the top down, which at the same time realizes an organic relation between the

sounds of labor and the material itself.<sup>19</sup> The interpretation of Antheil's music as a musical factory was not unique to Pound: in the American Marxist journal *New Masses*, where Pound would recycle the same passage, *Ballet Mécanique* would draw criticism on much the same grounds that Pound praised it. Antheil's clangorous noises, set to erratically pulsing rhythms, hinted anxiously or hopefully at the noises and rhythms of capitalism.

As early as the 1914 *Blast!*, Pound and Wyndham Lewis had expended a great deal of energy ridiculing Italian Futurism, even as the Futurists left a recognizable imprint on the early output of the "Vorticist" project. In theory, the difference between the Vorticist machine and the Futurist one centers on the question of mimesis: whereas the Futurist imitates the machine in order to glorify and sentimentalize its brutality and violence, the Vorticist composition is a machine in itself. As Pound argues, an artist can approach a natural object only from the outside, whereas the very existence of a machine is "already an expression of his own desire for power and precision" (260). Thus aesthetic representation *of* a machine becomes pointlessly redundant: "A painting of a machine is like a painting of a painting." As Fernard Léger states, in a remark that Pound quotes approvingly in *ABC of Reading*, "Man should be prouder of having invented the hammer and nail than of creating masterpieces of imitation."<sup>20</sup> For Pound it is music, not painting, that provides the appropriate medium for "mechanistic" expression, since the machine's *raison d'être* consists in "movement and energy" and not in "form," requiring an art that moves through time and not simply through space. Hence Pound celebrates Antheil's rejection of a conventional metaphor for musical structure—"architecture"—in favor of "mechanism," which suggests movement and energy themselves as constituents of form and structure. Yet Antheil's music, Pound insists, derives from computation rather than imitation: the "new vorticist music would come from a new computation of the mathematics of harmony not from mimetic



representation of dead cats in a fog horn (alias noise tuners)." This music, Pound continues, "was part of the general vorticist stand against the accelerated impressionism of our active and meritorious friend Marinetti" ("Antheil (Retrospect)," 253).

Pound's use of the term "impressionism" as an epithet has a complex history, whose implications for modernist doctrine have been rigorously clarified by Michael Levenson. Pound had championed the "impressionist" project of Conrad and Ford for its ability to merge a realist impulse with a radically subjective one, but came to reject the programmatic impulses of "impressionism." Pound's stand against "impressionism" shifts away from radical subjectivism and individualism, towards formalism and abstraction. Yet even Pound-the-Vorticist would not fully extirpate the subjective element from his doctrines. As Levenson argues, early modernism retains a "persistent ambiguity": a deep-seated entanglement of the "objective principles" of form and the "romantic individualism" of the artist (135). Pound and Lewis took a "vorticist stand" against the "sentimental" appeal of "the Future and the Past," insisting instead on a forceful art that "plunges into the heart of the Present" (*Blast!*, qtd. in Levenson 78).

By the mid-to-late 1920s, Antheil and Pound are sentimentalizing the Future and the Past, often in the same breath. Indeed, a decade after the first *Blast!* volume claimed impressionism and Futurism to be the "corpses of the VORTEX," and even as Pound continued to disavow the importance of Russolo and Marinetti, he was cribbing liberally from the assertion in Russolo's "Arts of Noise" that noise-music could reorganize the factory. Echoing Russolo's assertion that "We must break out of this limited circle of sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds" (25), Pound writes that Antheil's music enables a move out of the "concert hall" and out of the self-referential universe of Music-with-a-capital-M: "With the Ballet mécanique [*sic*] we emerge into a wider circle of reference. [...] this work definitely takes music out of the concert

hall, [...] it deals with a phase of life not hitherto tackled by musicians and freighted [...] with reference to already existing musical reference." Pound consciously promotes the extension of music from the self-referential sphere of *art pour l'art* and into the social and economic realm.

While this shift could conceivably be read as Antheil's influence on Pound, more likely it gives the lie to Pound's assaults on Futurism in the 1910s. In moving out of his self-referential universe of troubadour poetry into the public sphere, Pound adopted techniques of publicity and self-promotion from Marinetti himself. As Lawrence Rainey argues in *Institutions of Modernism* (1998), when critics disavow the connection between the Pound and Marinetti they are "following a script that originated with Pound himself."<sup>21</sup> In Rainey's more thoroughly historicized script, British modernism was compelled by the Futurist competition to imitate its theatrical assaults on the autonomy and sublimity of art. The 1912 Futurist exhibitions in London ushered Pound away from his "self-referential discourse" and archaic troubadouriana, towards the embrace of "art as a public practice," and they were not well-received by the London public. As a reviewer for *The Times* put it, Marinetti had to "put up with a rude reception from a gallery which seemed fully qualified to give him a lesson in his own 'Art of Noises.'"<sup>22</sup> Than the Futurist exhibitions, Rainey writes, "Nothing could have made plainer the value of a concerted polemical onslaught, the formation of a collective identity buttressed by theatricality and publicity" (29).

Wyndham Lewis, who had dedicated his early years to disowning Italian Futurism as "impressionistic," was not to let Pound get away with coopting the rhetoric of Marinetti and Russolo. In *Time and Western Man* (1927), Lewis accuses Pound of assimilating the very techniques he claimed to reject by glomming onto Antheil's music, and Antheil himself, in the service of *sensation*. Calling Pound nothing more than a Russolo clone in antique, self-made clothing, Lewis cites the "musical factory" passage as evidence that Pound had the same

"sensation-loving tastes" as the "milanese prefascists" of Italian Futurism. Lewis argues that in Pound's musical factory,

Marinetti is rehabilitated by Pound—music, provençal airs and ballads of Villon, as far as he personally is concerned, taking him paradoxically to the great throbbing, singing heart of the great god, Industry. I should be tempted to think it had taken Ezra a decade to catch up Marinetti, if I were not sure that, from the start, the histrionics of the milanese prefascist were much to his sensation-loving taste. I observe rather that he has not moved from where he was.<sup>23</sup>

What Pound truly wants from an artist, Lewis argues, is not a genuine commitment to new aesthetic principles but, rather, "*disturbance*," and "*action*"—this, Lewis writes, "is the form [Pound's] parasitism takes" (39). Much as *Blast!* had accused in 1914, an accusation now directed at Pound, the sentimentalizing of the future and obsession with the archaic both speak to the same "histrionic" poetic personality. The "revolutionary simpleton" of modernist culture delights, according to Lewis, in "big and noisy, six-foot advertisers' claims; all the 'Greater than Shakespeares,' the 'Death to the Pasts,' the announcement of the enterprise as that of an absolutely new era, with which you have long been familiar" (42). Moreover, as Coyle explains, Lewis associates this kind of sensationalism with music, the time-centered art *par excellence*: the "valuation of the musical 'moment'" enables an expansion beyond the concert hall, not into a Ruskinian universe of moral "sensibility," but into the world of publicity and advertising: "Music provided a means of delivering his charge that the clamorings of the avant-garde were no less informed by a relentless attempt 'to startle into credulity' than were the ubiquitous slogans of the marketplace" (160). Pound's embrace of music, as Lewis would have it, belies *Maubertley's* righteous satire of the "mendacities" "[d]ecreed in the market place" (II.7, III.16).

Lewis's response suggests that whatever aesthetic principles Pound found attractive in Antheil, the noises of and surrounding his work are what made him a sensation, a "big and noisy [...] announcement" of modernist novelty. Antheil himself claimed that *Ballet Mécanique*, and

his other "mechanistic" pieces, had no real programmatic elements, and in his autobiography *The Bad Boy of Music* (1946) explicitly disowns Pound's interpretations of his music. Particularly as he circulates through the networks of the European avant-garde, Antheil comes to defend his music as a musical exploration of time, the "raw canvas of music." While Lewis claims a fondness for Antheil's unbridled musical enthusiasm, his assault on the time-centered art in *Time and Western Man* cuts to the core of Antheil's stated aesthetic philosophy, and the cultural resonances of *Ballet Mécanique*, from every possible direction—an Adornian-Lukácsian one-two punch. The piece's fixation on time for its own sake makes it solipsistic, ahistorical, putatively autonomous from social life; the piece's uses of noise arguably makes it crudely mimetic and (though Lewis would not use the term) non-dialectical, driven by "sensation" extrinsic to the problems of composition and development. Adorno's critique of Wagner, whose externally imposed beats Adorno compares to the rhythms of capitalist production, seem in light of the "musical factory" image to have significant cultural travel.<sup>24</sup>

### The Bad Boy of Music: A Sensation Materializes

Antheil's premieres, not just as compositions but as events, were "productions" in many respects: his success in circulating through social networks benefited, and benefited from, his ability to produce a good scandal. The theater scandal was an important feature of avant-garde Futurist and Dadaist theater in France since Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896), so much so that Antheil would express disappointment when his pieces were met with silence rather than noise. In arranging their scandals Antheil and his managers do not appear to have been aiming for radical political defamiliarization, as in many of the scandals discussed by Neil Blackadder, but for entertainment and publicity. Publicity and entertainment can of course have sociopolitical

resonances as well: as in Marinetti's Variety Theater, which counterpoises a collaborative audience against an audience of "stupid voyeur[s]" (qtd. in Blackadder 188).

To the extent that Antheil's career (like anyone else's) builds largely on the establishment of personal and professional networks, it is worth sketching out the details of his career leading up to *Ballet Mécanique*. Much of this discussion is based on *The Bad Boy of Music*, a memoir with suspiciously literary qualities. Antheil recalls asking James Joyce for reading recommendations, having expressed some embarrassment about his lack of education in French and English literature; Joyce suggested he begin with *The Red and the Black* and *The Charterhouse of Parma* (*Bad Boy* 154). The recommendation was a good one; Stendhal became one of his favorite authors, and *The Bad Boy of Music* occasionally bears the influence. *The Red and the Black* (1830), for example, opens with a striking aural description of Verrieres:

Hardly have you entered the town than you are deafened by the racket of a noisy machine of terrible aspect. Twenty massive hammers, falling with a boom that makes the street tremble, are raised up in the air again by a wheel driven by the torrential current. Every day each of these hammers makes I don't know how many thousands of nails. Fresh, pretty young girls feed the gigantic hammer blows with little pieces of iron that are promptly transformed into nails.<sup>25</sup>

Like *The Red and the Black*, Antheil's autobiography begins with an aural description of his upbringing in Trenton, New Jersey. He was born "across the street from a noisy machine shop," a fact that gives "ammunition into the hands of those who claim there is such a thing as prenatal influence," referring to the industrial glorification of noise and machinery that would come to distinguish his music (13). His parents moved to a house in an industrial neighborhood—Antheil writes that he was "still too young to know that factory districts, broken machinery, sand pits, smokestacks, and all that sort of thing, could not possibly be beautiful"—in a house across the street from the Trenton State Penitentiary. There, too, Antheil claims to remember the noises around him, from two women next door pounding popular songs on pianos. The "incessant piano

playing [...] had been a cover for the noise of digging an underground tunnel from the cellar of the house next door to the prison yard." These two piano-playing "old maids" thus accomplished two significant tasks: one, to enable "one of the most sensational prisonbreaks in the history of Trenton Penitentiary," and two, to foster young George Antheil's love of piano music (14).

After a high school career that saw him expelled (perhaps, as Linda Whitesitt writes, for "editorials" that "exceeded the bounds of propriety") but eventually reinstated,<sup>26</sup> Antheil received a "severe theoretical training" from a Philadelphia musician named Constantin von Sternberg, an acolyte of Liszt. A conservative but rigorous teacher, Sternberg influenced Antheil's career in important ways, even beyond his teaching: first, by referring him to Ernest Bloch, under whose tutelage Antheil produced his first symphony; second, by referring him to Mary Louise Bok, a music lover on whose financial generosity Antheil would repeatedly draw. "Mrs. Bok's" patronage, Bloch's free music instruction, and six months' free rent in the home of Margaret Anderson enabled Antheil to focus his energies entirely on composition (*Bad Boy* 19). Though Mrs. Bok did not entirely approve of Antheil's peculiar musical style, she believed in his talents strongly enough to fund his 1922 trip to Europe to the very noisy tune of \$6,000 (Whitesitt 7), where Antheil would give a series of piano concerts in London, Budapest, Berlin, Vienna, and Paris. Antheil found the Germans maddeningly insular, patronizing or even oblivious to the efforts of composers outside of Germany, Austria, or Hungary, but it was in Berlin that Antheil would meet his hero, friend, and rival Igor Stravinsky.

Stravinsky invited Antheil to Paris in 1923, a move that enabled the composer to immerse himself in the avant-garde terrains of music, literature, and the visual arts. Living above Sylvia Beach's bookstore, Antheil interacted closely with Joyce, Pound, Ray, Hemingway, Picasso, and Léger, and as Whitesitt points out, benefited from the ascendant influence in Paris of Tristan

Tzara and Dadaism beginning in 1920. Dadaism, among many other things, enthusiastically promoted Marinetti's and Russolo's Futurist experiments with the "art of noises" (Whitesitt 14), which Pound and Lewis had "blasted" yet drawn from. The experiments of futurism had a marked influence on Antheil's early piano pieces, *Sonata Sauvage*, the "Airplane" Sonata, and *Mechanisms*. The last of these, Antheil insists, inspired the proposed collaboration on *Ballet Mécanique*, though Léger of course insists that his images came first.<sup>27</sup>

At the 1923 premiere of his piano music at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, a riot ensued, making the concert a cultural success if not a musical one. The riot appears to have been something of a publicity stunt, plotted for use in Marcel L'Herbier's film *L'Inhumaine* (music by Darius Milhaud, set design by Léger), though Antheil claims not to have known this until afterwards:

One year later I went to see a movie called *L'Inhumaine*, featuring Georgette LeBlanc. In this silent movie (still preserved by our New York Museum of Modern Art) you can if you wish see a vast rioting public, including such illustrious figures as James Joyce, Picasso, Les Six, the Polignacs, the Prince of Monaco, the surrealist group, and Man Ray—although a good many of these remain seated. They riot, scream, yell, jump up on the seats; and also, their rioting seems directed against the character which Georgette LeBlanc plays; she is supposed to represent an "inhuman" opera songstress, who, because she has previously done something or another dreadful, compels this snob audience to riot instead of listen to her. [...] I naturally asked Margaret Anderson about it, not without a grin of appreciation. She said yes, it had been a *sort* of plot at that, but a plot in which she and Georgette had been sure I would greatly profit. (How right they were!) (*Bad Boy* 136, his italics)

The *scandale* is itself a recurring theme of musical modernism: "Paris," Antheil writes, "hadn't seen such a good time since the premiere of Stravinsky's 'Sacre du Printemps.'" Even if the premiere of Satie and Cocteau's *Parade* (1917) was another such "good time," both together fueled Anderson's belief that a public incident would work to Antheil's benefit. Satie was one of the rioters at the Antheil concert, and Antheil recalls his "shrill voice saying, 'Quel precision!

Quel precision. Bravo! Bravo!" while "clapping his little gloved hands" (*Bad Boy* 133). Satie was contributing to a specific kind of performance art that comprised this sort of scandalous premiere; he was citing a specific cultural phenomenon, the concert-hall *scandale*, that was becoming an increasingly central component of modernist musical *culture* (especially in France). This is true even if the scandal's relation to the modernist *artwork* bordered on factitious or occluded the actual artwork itself. These scandals were, it must be said, plotted, framed, and orchestrated in advance: fulfillments of aesthetic needs and social ones, using publicity as the material of art (L'Herbier) and the means of art to circulate publicity (Anderson).

Another example may illustrate the point. Spurred by the "success" (or *succès du scandale*) filmed by L'Herbier, Antheil went to work on the *Ballet Mécanique*, culminating in two performances: a 1925 private performance of three player-piano rolls to an audience including Joyce, Beach, and Elliot Paul; and then a public performance in 1926 at Pleyel Concert Hall. For the public performance, again, Antheil and his promoters would not leave the piece's fame to chance. American journalists in Paris facilitated Antheil's success by drawing not only on a listening public, but also on a reading public, i.e. an audience reading *about* the "listening public" if not themselves attending a concert. Bravig Imbs, a friend of both Antheil's and Paul's, used the Paris *Chicago Tribune* to disseminate a story that Antheil had been lost in the Tunisian deserts, possibly eaten by a lion, and eventually rescued by the French Foreign Legion (Imbs 27). After the performance, the reception of the piece was more the story than the music itself: the noise-making electric fans created such a breeze that several audience members began brandishing their umbrellas. (As Blackadder points out, the theater scandal requires significant creative energies on the part of an audience.) The event climaxed, as Imbs recollects, with Pound leaping to his feet and shouting, "*Vous êtes tous des imbeciles!*" (101).



Antheil suggests that the *succès du scandale*, particularly as a mechanism for publicity, was specific to Paris, where the idea is "where there is smoke there might be fire." The attitude in New York, on the other hand, is that "There is too much smoke, let's get out of here, it has a bad odor." Hence Antheil writes that the premiere of *Ballet Mécanique* at Carnegie Hall "would be a pale carbon copy in comparison" to the scene at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées (*Bad Boy* 133-4). The 1927 New York premiere was, as Antheil's manager Donald Friede put it, "a complete anti-climax," a fact exemplified by a headline in the *New York Evening Post*: "Expected Riots Peter Out at George Antheil Concert—Sensation Fails to Materialize."<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps this assessment was not entirely fair; the performance was certainly a sensation, largely because it went so badly (a characteristic of many avant-garde premieres). The air-raid siren, once started, couldn't be shut off, and many in the audience left holding their ears. The premiere was made more notorious by the giant painted backdrop, which Friede described as

a cyclorama with a futuristic city of skyscrapers as a background; and in the foreground a series of noise-making machines: whistles, riveting machines, airplane propellers, spark plugs, excavating machines; and in the left-hand corner a more-than-life-size figure of a man jumping off a diving board that seemed to be attached to a curved pipe of the sort generally used in connection with a toilet.<sup>29</sup>

Antheil, on the other hand, referred to it as a "gigantic, rather tasteless curtain" that "single-handedly [...] gave an air of charlatanism to the whole proceedings" and sent him crawling back to Europe (*Bad Boy* 193).<sup>30</sup> A Parisian audience may have responded better (i.e. more violently) to the backdrop: Picasso's painted backdrop had been one of the defining markers of Satie's *Parade*, and as I discuss in Chapter Five, the innovation of the notorious "backdrop" made it to England as a new way of thinking about poetic authority and voice. Accordingly, Pound's interest in Antheil bespeaks a concern, found throughout Pound's work, about audience passivity: though Pounds attitudes toward noise vary widely throughout his career, consistent is his concern

about how noise prompts or debilitates active interpretive engagement with a cultural production. Pound uses the term "noise" in various inconsistent ways to suggest the expanding circle of reference partaken by artistic sound: as an aesthetic excess that causes the interpreting ear to atrophy; as a symptom of usurious or inefficient labor management; related, as a productive invitation for mathematical calculation and oversight (as in the musical factory); and as the resonance of rhetorical "boilerplate"— in *Mauberley*, the byproduct of a drive to war.

### Boilerplate: Pound, Antheil, and the Pianola

Bravig Imbs's defense of Antheil and unflattering portrayal of Pound suggests a meeting not just of minds and personalities, but of two "idioms," each "highly personal." Attempting to save George Antheil from his "band wagon" of defenders, Imbs writes,

It was a pity, I thought, that such writers as Ezra Pound had jumped on his band wagon, for George could handle all the was to be written about his music quite well himself. He always felt grateful to Pound for the latter's opus, but I thought the gratitude should be the other way around. Pound [...] did not write a line of praise about George until he was absolutely certain, from the publicity of the *Little Review* and the esteemed word of Mr. James Joyce, that George was a sure fire genius. Then, in his confused highly personal idiom, he attempted to explain the meaning of George Antheil's limpid highly personal idiom. The resultant book was an excellent stroke of publicity for Mr. Pound, for stocks on George were doubling daily, but it gave the average reader the idea that George was more of a pathological case than a composer, and put more people off George's music than you could shake a stick at. (21)

According to Imbs, and echoing Lewis, Pound was parasitic not only on Antheil's music but on the *publicity* of Antheil's music, on its reputation in the *Little Review* and in the cosmopolitan artistic circles responsible for creating this "band wagon." Antheil seems to share Imbs's assessment, claiming in *The Bad Boy of Music* that Pound didn't have "even the slightest idea of what [he] was really after in music," but "merely wanted to use" Antheil "as a whip with which to lash out at all those who disagreed with him, particularly Anglo-Saxons." He argues that

Pound's cause, the promotion of a "cold," "icy," anti-romantic modernist ideal, had long since been won and perhaps even "superseded by the equally cold neoclassicism" (*Bad Boy* 119-20). Claiming not simply to pile on the poet who had "fallen into disgrace," Antheil admits that being associated with Pound helped him access the "tight-as-a-drum" French salons, but claims to regret allowing Pound to publish a book bearing his name.

Imbs resists not just Pound's misinterpretation of Antheil's music, but also Pound's "confused" "idiom," which attaches "pathological" associations to the music itself. That said, Pound's writings shed considerable light on the cultural and aesthetic import of Antheil's "idiom." In his *Antheil* treatise and in his music criticism written for *The New Age* under the name William Atheling, Pound tends to dwell less on the specifics of the music itself, more on its contributions to his own artistic doctrines and attitudes: towards musical sound, poetic sound, artistic style (what Imbs might call "idiom"), and so forth. Similarly, Pound understands *Ballet Mécanique* not only as an artistic manipulation of the noisy raw material of sound, but as a sonic intervention into a "wider circle of reference," taking music "out of the concert hall." Pound's alternative to the concert hall is the space of urban everyday life—specifically, the temporal management of labor (the daily grind) which, like Russolo, should be interpreted in light of musical aesthetics. Music enables one to "organize the sounds of a factory" according to the proper "pauses and durées."

Pound was not alone in hearing the *Ballet Mécanique* as a retuning of the factory; the piece's heavy reliance on noise, combined with the title of the piece, compels a search for extratextual association (beyond the "concert hall"). Two months after Pound's article appeared, *The New Masses* published a cartoon by I. (Isidore) Klein that satirically imagines *Ballet Mécanique* as a profit machine, a blueprint for more efficient production (fig. 2).



*Drawing by I. Klein*

### **BALLET MECHANIQUE**

"This Antheil is a genius. Since introducing his theory of orchestration into the boiler factory, our profits have almost doubled."

Figure 2: I. Klein, "Ballet Mechanique," cartoon from *The New Masses*.<sup>31</sup>

The aesthetic of Klein's cartoon invokes broader cultural anxieties about the possibilities and dangers of fascism. It imagines Antheil's music as the futuristic glorification of technology and war. It associates the "mechanical ballet" with the "dreamt-of metalization of the human body" promoted by Marinetti and cited by Walter Benjamin as the fascistic quality of aestheticizing the political in "an age of mechanical reproduction"; and it anticipates, in its gestures at a separate autonomous realm of aesthetic experience, Benjamin's assertion that fascism "attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate."<sup>32</sup> In Klein's vision, the property structure is not affected but

transplanted—*into* the concert hall—and organized in the service of self-affirming bourgeois aesthetics. Klein creates a visual divide between the factory-concert and the audience, and a visual parallel between the fat female spectator and the aggressively tacky angel sculpture; Klein thus inculcates the spectator into the aesthetics of her surroundings just as seamlessly as Antheil (ostensibly) inculcates the laborers into theirs. Klein, like Pound, associates the piece specifically with a "boiler factory," gearing up for the war to come. And Klein seems to share Pound's contempt for the "aesthetes" in the audience: all-too-eager to listen to the noise-music of the factory, complicit in this "property structure," romanticizing industrial labor from the mezzanine in the name of their own "profits." Pound does not believe, or hope, that the reformation of the labor system will emerge from "the masses" (wishing instead for an "orchestrated" workshop), and in that respect Klein would no doubt count Pound among the objects of his critique.<sup>33</sup>

Klein's depiction of Antheil's "theory of orchestration" seems to anticipate Adorno and Horkheimer's later argument that makes the inability to enjoy art *or labor itself* a defining trait of modernity. Their argument, emerging from a High Modernist skepticism about positivism and realism (and the equally modernist suggestion that modernity is interpretable through the structures of myth), frames economic and social domination in terms of rhythm, arguing that as domination becomes naturalized it also becomes standardized: "For the vanquished [...], the recurrent natural processes become the rhythm of labor according to the beat of cudgel and whip which resounds in every barbaric drum and every monotonous ritual" (21). *Ballet Mécanique*, which contains long passages in which the pianolas are playing in unison, relies not just on mechanical instruments but on instruments automated to play simultaneously. While on one level this simply amplifies the volume, it also evokes the anxieties of automata taking over for human

agents: the title suggests machines choreographed to patterned movements, linking the ritualism of music to the repetitive rhythms of mechanized labor.

Pound's earlier gloss on the *Ballet Mécanique* makes the political implications of his musical theories complex and, to say the least, problematic. If the quality or appropriateness of a musical progression relies not on the chords themselves, but on the temporal spacing between them, the elation of the workers (even in their simultaneous fatigue) will derive from being properly arranged, not from any substantive difference in the work itself. The question remains, "properly gauged by whom?"; conspicuously unmentioned in Pound's imagining of "the possibility of organizing the sounds of a factory" is the identity of the organizer. Whoever it is, the workshop orchestrator will think not just about the "raw material" of production itself.

The production of "boilerplate" in the factory offers a particular rubric for reading *Mauberley*, which is much concerned about boilerplate in the rhetorical sense. *Mauberley's* strange mixture of elitism and hyperpopulism is a little more nuanced than the transparent political programs of Klein's and his own pieces for *The New Masses*. One of the stylistic tics of the poem is its incessant use of quotation marks, which Pound uses to illuminate the eroding distinction between a cliché and a cultural benchmark:

For three years, out of key with his time,  
He strove to resuscitate the dead art  
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"  
In the old sense. Wrong from the start –

No, hardly, but, seeing he had been born  
In a half savage country, out of date;  
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;  
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait:

\* \* \*

His true Penelope was Flaubert,  
He fished by obstinate isles;  
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair  
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events",  
He passed from men's memory in *l'an trentiesme*  
*De son eage*; the case presents  
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem. (section I, lines 1-8, 13-20)

Pound's poem begins by positing Mauberley as a cultural anachronism. There is no longer such a thing as the sublime—merely "the sublime" (in quotation marks), "In the old sense." The "march of events" that passes Mauberley by in the thirtieth year of his age has both a "factitious" and a militant register, both made easier by the phrase's easy quotability. The line "*l'an trentiesme / De son eage*" from Villon's *Testament*, on which Pound would later base his operatic "melodrama," marks Mauberley's downfall as well as his state of political and cultural repression. Pound's melodrama features Villon penning his testament having committed several, heterogeneously venial crimes in resistance to the authority of the church, after which he is sentenced to die. (As Margaret Fisher writes of the opera, "Each director mounting the production must decide" whether Villon is among the six hanged criminals at the end of *Le Testament*, as "history has left no trace.")<sup>34</sup> Pound thus draws parallels among Mauberley, Villon and his compatriots, and the soldiers returning home from the "march of events" in Europe, a march urged forward by the production of literary and material boilerplate:

some believing,  
pro domo, in any case ...

Some quick to arm,  
some for adventure,  
some from fear of weakness,  
some from fear of censure,  
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,  
learning later ...

some in fear, learning love of slaughter;  
Died some pro patria,  
non "dulce" non "et decor" ...

walked eye-deep in hell  
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving  
came home, home to a lie,  
home to many deceits,  
home to old lies and new infamy;

usury age-old and age-thick  
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.  
Young blood and high blood,  
Fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,  
disillusions as never told in the old days,  
hysterias, trench confessions,  
laughter out of dead bellies. (IV. 2-27)

Among these "old lies" are the "dulce" and "decor" that have become yet another sundial motto. Again, the motto is contrasted against more authentic, and more embodied, kinds of expression, and as the poem begins to recount the "disillusions" and "hysterias" and "confessions" emerging out of the soldiers' return home, the verse itself assumes a hysterical quality, repeating and repeating itself conceptually and stylistically: "came home, home to a lie / home to many deceits / home to old lies and new infamy." A more authentic form of repetition (or repetition-compulsion) than the repetition of slogans and "old lies," the hysterical confessions of the "fair cheeks, and fine bodies" derive from physical, embodied experience: the "wastage" of the body itself. Hence the drive to return home is subject to the dual disappointments of "old lies" and "new infamy," to tawdry cheapness and the virtues of "fortitude as never before / frankness as never before, / disillusions as never told in the old days." Written the same year as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), *Mauberley's* illustration of hysteria as an experience of repetition-compulsion (and a kind of death-drive; the last section begins "There died a myriad") culminates



in the expressionistic angst of "laughter out of dead bellies," before the more distant critical voice of the final section bemoans the "botched civilization," "an old bitch gone in the teeth."

The opening metaphor of the poem, "out of key with his time," is at a basic level a figure of cultural dissonance. *Mauberley* is an Adornian poem at heart, expressing both profound exasperation with the regnant noises of "tawdry cheapness" of "our days," and at least some faith in the ability of art to offer a critical "shock," even (or especially) if that shock is available only to a cultivated aesthetic consciousness. A developed consciousness such as Mauberley's might otherwise find itself overcome by the sounds of the pianola, which "'replaces' Sappho's barbitos" and therefore comes to figure the "tawdry cheapness" of modernity. Pound quotes the word "'replaces,'" a sign that this unfortunate substitution has itself become a cheap cliché, in such a way that the music of a pianola is inherently replaceable.<sup>35</sup>

Such a critique informs Pound's early writings on music, which emphasize the noisy assaults of repetitive music on the increasingly passive ears of an audience. Much of Pound's late writings (as in *Guide to Kulchur*) critique aesthetic excess by virtue of its associations with usury, "age-old and age-thick." Antheil himself disavows "impressionism" and attempts to rehabilitate time itself as the "canvas" of musical expression. Time is also the medium of Pound's factory overseer, who organizes the noises of labor to the proper pauses and durées. Hence I do not mean to argue a straightforward narrative in which Antheil overhauled Pound's conceptions of noise and aesthetic temporality. Rather, the factory image illuminates the material implications of an art such as Antheil's and Pound's, and precipitates the noises sublimated into the principles of classical form.

## Pound and the Noise of Impressionism

In his writings on Arnold Dolmetsch in the 1910s, Pound seems highly suspicious of noise; in *A Guide to Kulchur* Pound attends more to what he sees as the social and economic implications of aesthetic and intellectual excess. This excess corresponds to the presence of usury: "finer and future critics of art will be able to tell from the quality of a painting the degree of tolerance or intolerance of usury extant in the age and milieu that produced it" (27). Hence he proposes to sketch out a "paideuma," a "new learning" consisting of "the history of ideas going into action," wishing to confront these "ideas" directly without resort to an intellectual monetary system, a racket of "nomenclatures" and "terminologies" that occlude the "ideas." He writes, "This total PAIDEUMA is anti-usura. A tolerance of gombeen men and stealers of harvest by money, by distortion and dirtiness, runs concurrent with a fattening in all art forms" (109). Pound drops Antheil's name a few times in *Guide to Kulchur*, but does so in terms of rhythm rather than noise, promoting Antheil's tendency to "demand bits of SOLIDITY, [...] short hard bits of rhythm" rather than the vaporous sounds of impressionism (*GK* 94).<sup>36</sup> More precisely, he says that Antheil "did *once* demand bits of SOLIDITY," suggesting that this demand had been watered down by his lack of "learning" and his foray into mainstream film music.

By 1938 Pound takes for granted art's "wider circle of reference"—indeed, suggesting that more or less everything falls within that circle—and no longer seems interested in promoting the organization of that circle's clangorous noises, but rather in refining and paring its structure. Noise, Lewis contends, leads Pound to give Antheil's music the extramusical, programmatic reading of the musical factory, and even there noise is judged chiefly in terms of how it affects the nerves. Both for the impressionists (bad) and for Antheil (good), noise makes music *material*, giving it a bodily effect and registering a particular kind of relation to its social setting.

Pound's essays on Arnold Dolmetsch, whose *Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1915) Pound champions as the last great hope for "a reconciliation between musicians and 'the intelligent.'"<sup>37</sup> Dolmetsch, according to Pound, liberates music from excessive notation, returning to the more skeletal notations of early music, which requires and allows for greater "intelligence on the part of the interpreters" and which also keeps the "whole major structure of music" from being "obscured."<sup>38</sup> The performer must simultaneously interpret and create; the composer, no longer able to hide behind the "multitude of ornamental notes and trappings," must create "fixed lines" that nevertheless allow for melodic and contrapuntal invention. This invigorates both the music and the musician, preventing interpretive atrophy in the realization of a score.

In the midst of his neoclassical admiration of Dolmetsch, Pound takes a moment to chastise the enfeebling effects of reproducible music on the ear:

Our ears are passive before the onslaught of gramophones and pianolas. By persuading ourselves that we do not hear two-thirds of their abominable grind, we persuade ourselves that we take pleasure in the remainder of what they narrate. We feign a deafness which we have not, instead of developing our faculty for the finer perception of sound. (47)

The term "narrate" is an interesting one, suggesting that music ought to have a horizontal drive that predominates over the noise in the background. The neoclassical return to bare-bones notation is, in Pound's interpretation, a kind of noise reduction, an escape from the hyperstimulated and formless excesses of music, two-thirds of which is a "grind." Pound is almost certainly alluding in this passage to the impulses of late nineteenth-century impressionism, which he regards as an offshoot of Wagnerism, as evidenced by his discussion in a still-earlier piece on Dolmetsch written for *The New Age*:

Impressionism has reduced us to such a dough-like state of receptivity that we have ceased to like concentration. No, it has not; but it has set a fashion of

passivity that has held since the romantic movement. The old music went with the old instruments. That was natural. It is proper to play piano music on pianos. But in the end you find that it is no use, and that nothing less than a full orchestra is of any use.

That is the whole flaw of impressionist or "emotional" music as opposed to pattern music. It is like a drug; you must have more drug and more noise each time, or this effect, this impression which works from the outside, in from the nerves and sensorium upon the self—is no use, its effect and constantly weaker and weaker. I do not mean that Bach is not emotional, but the early music starts with the mystery of pattern; if you like, with the vortex of pattern; with something which is, first of all, music, and which is capable of being, after that, many things. What I call emotional, or impressionist music, starts with being emotion or impression and then becomes only approximately music.<sup>39</sup>

Pound associates this Romantic/impressionist "noise" with affective states rather than intellectual ones, with the degeneration of "receptivity," of "concentration," and even of "the self." This music's assault on the sensorium, which manifests itself in an expansion of the orchestra, makes the listener increasingly resistant to subtlety and unresponsive to anything but "more noise." In contrast to Russolo, who celebrates noise as the extension of musical experiments with dissonance and orchestration, Pound uses the term "noise" to disparage sounds that appeal to the nerves and not the intellect, an aural pyrotechnics that obscures the musical skeleton.

By the '20s, neither Pound nor Antheil wishes to recuperate impressionism: the term still seems to register the evils of mimesis and sentimentalism, rather than action, energy, and "plasticity." Antheil exposes a strong anti-impressionist bent in "Music Tomorrow," a 1927 article written for *transition*. Here he argues for an anti-impressionistic music that "will go far beyond 'formalism,'" and will strive for "plasticity" above all else. Antheil proposes to strip away the chordal and orchestral excesses of what Pound calls "the bloomin' era of harmony" and to develop a different tonal language in the process. Yet Antheil rejects atonality as the basis of musical progress, and accuses Schoenberg and his acolytes of offering merely another kind of impressionism. "The canvas of music is time," he reiterates, "but tone is the moving factor," and

thus a musical language must account for the "mathematics" of the relation between "time and tone." The element of "tone" (in the senses both of pitch and of timbre) was, as Antheil no doubt knows, given very careful consideration by Schoenberg and Webern, but Antheil finds twelve-tone music unequipped to "lock itself" with the temporal canvas. "Form is tonality gripped in a plastic of time, or vice-versa," and according to Antheil, atonality makes it impossible to attain this "grip." The constellational tonal relationships found in serial music fail to create a stable "contact 'point-in-space'" with which time can interact: instead this contact point runs between all twelve notes "like quicksilver." The result is "space-pointlessness."

Thus Antheil accuses Schoenberg and his students ("theory-loving Germans") of "muddy-sounding" and "impressionistic" music: "*Upon their music they habitually place an extra-musical literature or mystic idea...perhaps to make up for the lack of point.*"<sup>40</sup> If this language (let alone the weird programmatic elements of *Ballet Mécanique*) itself sounds a little mystical or impressionistic, Antheil cautions that his ambitions for "the plastic direction" of futuristic music have not been realized. The future of music will rely on "mechanical instruments," and not just "Mr. Puccini's music for orchestra [...] cut upon the pianola," but an authentically mechanical and "plastic" music of the *De Stijl* variety. The distinction between an authentically plastic "mechanical" music and a falsely (or parodically) mechanical music reflects on Antheil's attempted collaboration with Joyce, who delights in ridiculing cultural boilerplate (in "Circe," snippets of distinctively non-Irish folk music cut for the pianola).<sup>41</sup>

Like Antheil, Pound conceives of the link between medievalism and futurism in terms of "plastic": a term that indicates both the flexibility and the materiality of musical and poetic sound. He makes this particularly explicit in his essay on Cavalcanti, where he reads medieval Italian poetry in terms of its opposition both to asceticism and to "erotic sentimentality."<sup>42</sup> This

so-called "Tuscan aesthetic" argues for a "proportion between the fine thing held in the mind, and the inferior thing ready for instant consumption" (151). For Pound, the success of an aesthetic relies on its willingness to base the production of that "thing" on a "non-plastic idea" made possible by consciousness. Such a philosophy could be glossed as "the aesthetic or interactive vasomotor magnetism in relation to the consciousness," though to cultivate a "habit of mind" that would rely on such pedantic terminology "somewhat takes the bloom off the peach" (152). The "Tuscan aesthetic" succeeds because it establishes a relation between body and consciousness, physical and the metaphysical:

The Tuscan demands harmony in something more than the plastic. He declines to limit his aesthetic to the impact of light on the eye. It would be misleading to reduce his aesthetic to terms of music, or to distort the analysis of it by analogies to the art of sonority. Man shares plastic with the statue, sound does not require a human being to produce it. The bird, the phonograph, sing. Sound can be exteriorized as completely as plastic. There is the residue of perception, perception of something which requires a human being to produce it. Which even may require a certain individual to produce it. (151)

Margaret Fisher has argued that this dual emphasis on the "plastic" quality of sound and on the mechanisms of perception and consciousness resulted in the "palpable surface" of *The Cantos*, and also in *Cavalcanti* and *Le Testament du Villon*, each of which he originally wrote for stage performance before adapting them as "radio operas." This formal and aesthetic sense of materiality has thematic overtones as well, in a work such as *Le Testament* which is based on a tension between brothels and churches—between, as Fisher points out, sacred and secular varieties of "coition" (33). The music itself, Fisher argues, "admits the corporeal rhythms (human bones are called for in the percussion part)—scratches and hiccoughs, physical obsessions and physical limits—nothing that would be admissible to courtly etiquette," and suggests that this physicality is perceptible in Pound and Antheil's calculated "microrhythms" (33).

As R. Murray Schafer points out, Pound "felt at home" in the anti-impressionist and anti-Wagnerian milieu of 1920s Paris, led by Cocteau and Satie, and the same no doubt applies to Antheil, whose affinities with Satie are strong. For Pound, a 1921 performance of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* appears to have been the final straw. He writes to Agnes Bedford:

Sat through the *Pelléas* the other evening and am encouraged—encouraged to tear up the whole bloomin' era of harmony and do the thing if necessary on two tins and wash-board. Anything rather than that mush of hysteria, Scandinavia strained through Belgium plus French Schwärmerei. Probably just as well I have to make this first swash without any instruments at hand. Very much encouraged by the *Pelléas*, ignorance having no further terrors if that DAMN thing is the result of what is called musical knowledge.<sup>43</sup>

Having substituted a "mush of hysteria" for an essential appreciation of basic melody and rhythm, of what music narrates on an elemental level, the "era of harmony" has to be torn up. Exasperated (and thus "encouraged") by the failures of this "era," Pound began work on *Le Testament du Villon* in 1921. In earlier essays such as "A Retrospect" (1913), on "The Serious Artist" (1913) and one on "The Renaissance" (1914), Pound uses Villon constantly as a model for poetic clarity and expression, suggesting for example that "If a man knew Villon and the *Seafarer* and Dante [...], he would, I think, never be able to be content with a sort of pretentious and decorated verse which receives praise from those who have been instructed to like it."<sup>44</sup> The emotional and intellectual energy of a disorderly life such as Villon's (or Mauberley's) cannot be poetically manifested without an appeal to artistic "technique" that has musical origins:

You wish to communicate an idea and its concomitant emotions, or an emotion and its concomitant ideas, or a sensation and its derivative emotions, or an impression that is emotive, etc., etc., etc. You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into the dance and into music, and into music, and into music with words, and finally into words with music, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some accurate trait of the emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion. (51)

Pound insists that music should not *imitate* music but, rather, should "adumbrat[e]" music and preserve the "sheer character" of the emotion that prompted it. Pound's theory in this essay is not, and needn't be, entirely consistent with that in his later essay on Dolmetsch; roughly speaking, the job of a musical or poetic artwork is to crystallize emotion into something that is, "first of all, music, and which is capable of being, after that, many things." A work that appeals chiefly to the nerves, at the expense of formal unity, is consigned to the category of impressionism.

Debates over the relative musical value of form and "feeling" in music and poetry shaped much of the cultural climate in which Pound's and Antheil's contemporaries operated. Pound's references to "pauses and durées" and "intuition" in his essay on Antheil's *Ballet*, for example, mark his ambivalent interest in the philosophy of Henri Bergson, whose distinctions between clock-time and "durée," or the psychologically experienced flux of time, made him an important voice in the literary and musical scene of the 1910s (and the chief villain of Lewis's *Time and Western Man*).<sup>45</sup> As Carol Oja explains, responses to composers such as Leo Ornstein and Edgard Varèse in the 1910s and 1920s were often framed in terms of an opposition between "intuition" and "intellect" (also Bergsonian buzzwords), between the formal construction of music and its ability to tap into certain emotional states: what might in different terms be thought of as the tension between romanticism and classicism. Hence Bergson's equally pronounced importance in the realm of modernist poetry and literary criticism and poetry, where Pound and T.E. Hulme, among others, were questioning the value of traditional literary form in relation to the articulation of feeling. Hulme, as Levenson writes, embraced Bergson as an "ally in the contest between freedom and mechanistic determinism" until his neoclassical turn, when he came to reject Bergson's romantic and radically individualistic tendencies (81-6).



It is curious that Pound would describe the musical factory in terms of "durée," a cornerstone of Bergsonian philosophy. Bergson's emphasis on the need of visual images to be organized in a manner motivated by "the regular movement of [...] rhythm" would not disappear in Pound's poetic doctrines, but Pound would redirect it away from the impressionistic hypnotic states of Bergsonian intuition towards the experience of clarity and intensity, the presentation of "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." Music in general contributed greatly to Bergson's metaphysics and aesthetics; his attempts to rethink cognition and consciousness rely in large part on what Vincent Sherry terms "laws of musical empathy": music, the theory goes, enables an intuitive, empathetic relation between a subject (particularly an artistic "compositor") and the flux of time.<sup>46</sup> The job of a poet is to arrange images in accordance with the "regular rhythm by which one is lulled into self-forgetfulness," relying on the sound of poetry continually to recreate the poet's experience of "creative evolution."<sup>47</sup> In Pound's version, the attempts of a poet to express subjective conditions were to manifest themselves more objectively in principles of aesthetic form—namely, in the image.<sup>48</sup> Sherry persuasively outlines the political dimensions of Pound's and Lewis's preference of "visual discrimination" over "musical empathy": if aurality makes subjective empathy more possible, in Pound's model it makes intellectual discrimination more difficult, and results in what Pound sees as the mediocritizing impulses of democracy.

Antheil claims to build not on Bergsonian temporal flux but on temporal solidity, a fact that helps distinguish him from composers such as Ornstein, whose "Bergson-saturated," "improvisatory," and amorphous "compositional process" relied more on "interpretive flair" and personality than on traditional development, more on improvisation and performance than on composition and construction (Oja 21-2). Antheil's technique bears some superficial resemblance

to Ornstein's, relying on the incessant repetitions of tone clusters, and built on textural rather than melodic development—not to mention Antheil's own "interpretive flair" (he was known to perform with a loaded revolver on the piano). Yet in a 1925 article for *Der Querschnitt*, as he explains what his *Ballet* "means," Antheil emphasizes the rigid inflexibility of time:

My Ballet Mecanique is the new *fourth dimension of music*.

My Ballet Mecanique is the first piece of music on the earth that has been composed *out of and for machines, on earth*.

My Ballet Mecanique is the first piece of music that has found the best forms and materials lying inert in a medium that *as a medium* is mathematically certain of becoming the greatest moving factor of the music of future generations [...].

In music there is nothing else, except *time and sound*, and the physical and psychic *concept* of these vibrating the human organism.

Anything else is literary, and does not belong to pure music.[...]

*Time* is inflexible, rigid, beautiful! ("My Ballet Mecanique," 789-91, his italics)

"Composed *out of and for machines, on earth*," Antheil himself posits a kind of metallic chthonicism which builds on an organic relation among the medium, the idea, and the "earth" itself. It's not a far leap from this sort of organicism to the militant Bismarckian romanticism of "blood and iron," and in this respect Pound's celebration of Antheil seems out of step with the sentiments of *Mauberley*. Antheil also expounds upon teleological inevitability of his "medium of music," in which time has a specific material quality; but unlike Ornstein, Antheil emphasizes that the material bodily force of musical time must be calculated before it can be felt and that rhythm must drive poetic expression: "for our hearts do not feel. . . .they *beat*" (790).

#### Time Travel: Futurism, Primitivism, and *Ballet Mécanique*

Antheil had this manifesto published both in *Der Querschnitt*, a German modernist journal for which he acted as a contributing editor (soliciting contributions from Joyce and Hemingway); and in *De Stijl*, the flagship journal of Dutch "neoplasticism." Even as he

distinguished pure music from the "literary," then, Antheil saw himself and his music participating in a larger artistic conversation with the literary, visual, and plastic arts. This kinship with the visual arts squares with Antheil's emphasis on material and bodily force of the *Ballet*, which was to offer "*physical realization of the fourth dimension*," and this physicality should represent the main purpose of music and not a mere "byproduct" of tonal harmony (791, his italics). Antheil wishes to realize the physical dimensions of music through a simultaneous intensification and simplification of form. He asserts elsewhere that the form of the *Ballet* escaped the "well-known musical formula:—ABA," which would be marked by a shift (from "A" to "B") into a new stylistic idiom (e.g. "Minuet" versus "Trio") or key (tonic to dominant). Instead, Antheil claims, *Ballet Mécanique* uses "AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA" (hereafter, A<sup>25</sup>) as its formula, leaving the critic disoriented and unsure of his position relative to where the piece began. Hence the piece draws the listener into a new experience of musical form and of time itself.<sup>49</sup> Music can escape conventional forms (ABA) that rely on the less "raw," more conspicuously mediated canvases of style and tonality.

"A<sup>25</sup>" does not imply the exact same content repeated twenty-five times, but more that each "A" functions in a similar idiom, in the same key (whereas the "B" section of an ABA would represent a shift of key or idiom), to the extent that there are few if any actual cadences in *Ballet Mécanique*.<sup>50</sup> The A<sup>25</sup> of the *Ballet Mécanique* should not imply a lack of rhythmic sophistication or motivic development within those twenty-five sections. The "raw material" of the piece consists, essentially, of two (highly disjunctive) main themes, each consisting of four pitches repeated and permuted in various ways:

MAIN THEME (B-D-C#-A): B-D-C#-B-C#-A-B-D-C#-A...etc.

SECONDARY THEME (C-E<sup>b</sup>-F-G): G-F-E<sup>b</sup>-C-G-F-E<sup>b</sup>-F... etc.

These are the pitches at which the themes are introduced—they are often transposed and, true to the fashion, often played in multiple keys at the same time. The themes recur incessantly, in various rhythmic configurations, compressed into shorter units of time and protracted into longer ones. In melodic terms, the main theme is diatonic (built on the A-major scale), the secondary theme pentatonic (deriving from a five-note scale, commonly found in folk music and used to great effect by the impressionists). The piece is by no means amelodic, but in alternating between the two motifs, sounds strangely disjunctive. Late in the piece, for example, while the timpani and pianolas pound away at a tweaked version of the secondary theme, two xylophones play a significantly sped up version of the primary theme, in a weird crescendoing call-and-response lasting several minutes. Eventually, Antheil offers a pause; the timpani and pianos stop pounding and rumble innocently in the background for a while: in the image of Pound's factory, the workers get a break. Not insignificantly, the intense pulse of the piece's main section relies on a pentatonic motif, the pentatonic scale being frequently associated with racial otherness (which concords with Pound's association of Antheil's music with "the negroes of darkest Africa"). Though he makes the comparison on rhythmic grounds rather than melodic ones, Pound assumes that rhythm will shape the other elements of music: melodic invention, harmonic invention, and instrumentation.<sup>51</sup>

Pound also seeks a musical language that will appear less wedded to conventional form, but his preferred musical languages—described in imagery of the hyper-modern factory and the primitive—present their own highly ideological mediations. The central problem of Pound's *Treatise* is the tension between the "vertical" and the "horizontal," harmony and rhythm, motivating musical composition. The *Treatise* insists that counterpoint should always produce harmony, never the other way around; he further insists that harmony be determined by the

forward motion of the rhythms of speech. Asserting that the inability of the "modern musician" to "hear a melody till it's harmonized" is "utter atrophy," Pound ascribes a particular kind of vigor to the horizontal melodic line, a vigor he believes present in "negroes in darkest Africa" who "from simple beating of their drums [...] can imagine other instruments" (*Antheil* 26, 30). Pound also expresses succinct exasperation with the belief that harmonic rules can be articulated independent of their rhythmic context, and offers one central (and sufficiently vague) principle of harmony: "A SOUND OF ANY PITCH, OR ANY COMBINATION OF SUCH SOUNDS, MAY BE FOLLOWED BY A SOUND OF ANY OTHER PITCH, OR ANY COMBINATION OF SUCH SOUNDS, providing the time between them is properly gauged; and this is true for ANY SERIES OF SOUNDS, CHORDS, OR ARPEGGIOS" (10). For Pound the appropriateness of a harmonic progression depends not on a particular tonal relationship between or among chords but on the proper arrangement of those "pauses and durées." The most "interesting" progressions, therefore, will be the ones "that demand very set and definite intervals" (of time, not of pitch) between notes, compelling very specific methods of organization (14). Pound does not wish to obviate harmony itself, but to liberate it from rigid principles and allow for "interesting" harmonic inventiveness, which in turn will motivate the piece's temporal organization, which in turn will orchestrate everything else.

Antheil's importance lies in his conspicuous use of both ostensibly unmusical noises and "hard bits of rhythm," so that music effects its time-canvas, and appeals to the body, in a way that locates its specific cultural context. As Pound has already argued in "A Retrospect," it is rhythm that will enable to the poet to treat "things" with the utmost directness—the first of the three basic principles of Imagism:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome. ("A Retrospect," 3)

Pound's imagism gives a specific aesthetic context to Pound's theories of music, which as Bucknell argues, relies on a transcendent truth or "depth," while insisting that this truth must remain observable "through concrete action or style": "image, vortex, or ideogram" (52).

Bucknell connects Pound's musical aesthetics to Walter Pater's, and even to French Symbolism (though Pound would never admit it): these figures all aspire to a form of art that "forces a kind of immediate contact that traditional ways of knowing, those of 'civilization,' cannot do" (55).

Pound's affection for Villon, and ultimately his ambitions to set him to music, derive from these same principles. His "directness" and stylistic economy Pound sees as a realist, proto-Flaubertian impulse, to the extent that he situates Villon in the "cult of ugliness" (a term of approbation) whose job is to "diagnose" rather than cure social or personal ills. The third precept constitutes part of Pound's struggle with *vers libre*, which he sometimes resists and sometimes celebrates, and which he associates with Dolmetsch's writings. Pound's essay "Vers Libre and Arnold Dolmetsch" (1918) says little about Dolmetsch himself, and devotes itself much more to the improvement of free verse through repeated seventeenth-century axioms, "those things which all good artists at all times have tried (perhaps vainly) to hammer into insensitive heads." The essay seeks to "give us a clue to a wider unexpressed feeling for a fundamental irregularity which would have made eighteenth-century classicism, classicism of surface, tolerable to those who felt the underlying variety *as strongly as the first regularizers* may have felt it."<sup>52</sup> The need for *vers libre* derives not from anarchy but from a "fundamental irregularity": from rhythmic movement and phrasing that cannot be constrained to "the sequence of a metronome."

Wyndham Lewis's assertion—that Pound's obsession with the archaic is of a piece with his obsession with the "new"—seems borne out by Pound's and Antheil's doctrines, simultaneously wedded to the past (either classical or "primitive") and the "future." Time, for

Antheil, becomes a plastic and material object, a notion that speaks the language of *De Stijl*. As Hans Jaffé writes, one of the *De Stijl* school's main drives was "to reveal the laws which govern all visible reality but which are veiled and distorted by what is actually seen, "the laws which obtain everywhere in daily life" and "take shape in the scientific formula and in mechanized production alike."<sup>53</sup> Like Antheil, Pound was attracted to the "fourth dimension" of poetry; Ian Bell and Meriel Lland, focusing on Pound's relation to the visual and plastic arts, argue that the fourth dimension represented for Pound an "alternative, newly material discourse" for psychic, spiritual, and temporal phenomena, and a means to escape noise and effect silence through "vortical energy and fourth-dimensional penetration."<sup>54</sup> This fourth-dimensional noise-reduction is only part of the story: Pound's interactions with Antheil served not merely to escape the noises of culture but to reshape them and to reflect on their origins. The factory image, in particular, sheds considerable light on how *Ballet Mécanique* spoke to its moment: it cannot have escaped Pound that the form of the workshop day resembles something very much like A<sup>25</sup>. "Boilerplate," both verbal and metallic, relies on structural invariance, on repetition and even "mechanical" reproduction, though Pound aspires to a form of production that will contribute to the vitality of the producer. Antheil's emphasis on time for its own sake, as a "plastic" object with economic significance and potential, makes the musical "material" seem to be precisely that, leaving musical structure and form no more limited to the "concert hall" than the noises themselves.

Antheil was most conscious of the influence (pre- and postnatal) of his working-class roots on his music, as we have seen from *The Bad Boy of Music*. In *The Shape of War to Come*, he considers the relationship between labor politics and *global* politics, as in this evocative passage on the economic consequences of totalitarianism:

In the Totalitarian State, where a single will is imposed on the people of the nation, the subjects, whether they know it or not, are from the beginning groomed

for a war. One cannot fashion an "iron core" without causing economic and social dislocations which set up within the nation a pressure for expansion. For a time, exploitation of sources of wealth will keep the pressure down; but when there is no longer anything to be exploited, when the last Jew is driven into the ghetto, when the last work-hour the human body will stand has been squeezed out of a sweating population, when the productive plough-share has been beaten into the destructive sword, an explosion must follow. That explosion is war.<sup>55</sup>

Though this tract from 1940 cannot be read as a primer on *Ballet Mécanique*, it does suggest the aptness of Pound's interpretation: that Antheil was indeed thinking not only about "tuning up" cities, but about a drum-beat to war in a very literal sense. The imposition of a "single will" on its populace is, Antheil argues, inherently expansionist, destined to exhaust the bodies of its own oppressed subjects and resulting, therefore, in an "explosion." Antheil's argument that the war can be traced to these repressed (then unleashed) economic, psychic, physical, and sexual energies much resembles the ideological tendencies of cubist films such as Léger's *Ballet Mécanique*, L'Herbier's *L'Inhumaine*, and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). The last of these features workers who declare war on the factory machines—a war of much the same sort as that described by Antheil: the economic, physical, psychological, and sexual exhaustion of this immanently conflicted "iron core" results in an explosion. *Metropolis* establishes a series of audio-visual parallels, aided by Gottfried Huppertz's remarkable hyper-Romantic musical score, which (for example) accompanies the sight of a factory whistle with loud, dissonant blasts of a church organ, and the film associates the futuristic urban landscape with Babylonian decadence.

The relationship between modernity and the distant past is a foundational concern of modernism, and of *Ballet Mécanique*. Revising his argument about the musical factory for *The New Masses*, Pound discusses Antheil's music in decidedly primitivist language:

The savage has his tribal ceremonies, primitive people have their sea chanteys and labor songs. Modern man can live, and should live, and has a perfectly good right to live in his cities and in his machine shops with the same kind of swing and exuberance that the savage is supposed to have in his forest.



The tenement is no more uncomfortable than the cave, and no more verminous. Neither is there any reason why the city intuition should be any deader than that of the savage.

As for the machine shop, the boiler works, Antheil has opened the way with his *Ballet Mechanique*; for the first time we have a music, or the germ and start of a music that can be applied to sound regardless of its loudness. The aesthete goes to a factory, if he ever does so, and hears *noise*, and goes away horrified; the musician, the composer hears noise, but he tries to (?) "see" (no, no), he tries to *hear* what kind of noise it is.<sup>56</sup>

Romanticizing the ceremonies and songs of the "savage" and the "primitive," Pound strives to refine the "intuition" of the modern man. In the musician's ears there is nothing inherently pernicious about the "loudness" of "noise" as a separate sonic phenomenon, if one can stop playing the "aesthete" long enough to understand, measure, and rearrange it. Thus, in this version of Pound's argument, "the eight-hour day [shall] have its rhythm; so that the men at the machines shall be demechanized, and work not like robots, but like the members of an orchestra" (138).

In a histrionic 1928 article for the *transatlantic review*, Antheil decries the reflexive comparison of his music, or any other rhythmically experimental music, to that of Stravinsky:

Do we necessarily need to link all new rhythmic experimentation with Stravinsky's "Sacre," or Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Scheherezade"? At the least sign of a break from the four Gods of music, do we need to run to Stravinsky like little cry-babies, and call Father? [...] Aha! Igor Stravinsky, you Rimsky-Korsakoffist! Aha Rimsky-Korsakoff, you Moussorgskyist! Aha Moussorgsky, you swiper from the Russian peasants. What about the music from the campfires of a thousand, no! a million years [ago]! What about the tom-toms. What about the neggers [*sic*] down in Africa. What about the Mongols sweeping over Europe in the middle ages. Do we have to track everything back to the courts of Louis and Napoleon? Do you forever have to stilt about in court dress to 4/4 time, or waltz in the evenings to 3/4? Is there nothing else to your measly little European culture of the last few centuries?<sup>57</sup>

Antheil jeers at even the effort to draw out a tradition or lineage of his own musical experiments, and sweeps away all of the "measly little European culture" in one rhetorical swoop, paralleling the fairly big leap backward from Mussorgsky to a thousand or a million years ago. Antheil performs a kind of primitivist rhetoric proudly uninterested in historical nuance or fidelity.

Though Antheil seems to exemplify Adorno's skepticism about primitivism, on the basis that it represents a false search for origins, Antheil abstracts this search into grandiose, wide-spanning, performative rhetorical gestures. Those tom-toms and campfire songs from a "million" years ago, Antheil suggests, mark the essential rhythmic pulse that buttresses all of musical history, much as Antheil's appeals to *De Stijl* gestures at the rhythmic "laws" underpinning daily life, primitive and modern. Antheil often substituted mathematical imagery for racialist imagery, just as Pound has little interest in primitivism *per se* except as a rhetorical move: for both figures the African drummer represents a musical expression stripped of excess, boiled down to a rhythmic pulse.

#### Tricks of Time: A Brief Excursus on *Death in the Dark*

Time, both for its own sake and as a feature of modernist art cultures, is an *idée fixe* of *Death in the Dark*, Antheil's pseudonymously published and breathtakingly unconvincing detective novel. The novel is worth a brief discussion insofar as it recognizes the artistic *and* the social *and* the cultural value of "time": while detective Stephan Bayard investigates the murder of a concert promoter, and constantly obsesses over time management (of his own investigation and of the crime scene itself), the novel also discourses on the extent to which manipulation of "time" has taken over the modernist artistic, music, and literary scenes.

Bayard, like Mauberley, fears his own anachronicity. Notwithstanding his taste for modern art (Miró, Picasso, Satie, and Stravinsky), Bayard resents wading through details and minutiae better suited for late Victorian detective novels than for the fast-paced modern city:

Time is a very important, and a very much neglected quality. Modern civilization is building itself on Time. Einstein has rediscovered, and found all the physical holes in it. The artists of to-day are using Time, and so is industry, the infant, the universe. It is 1930...1970. And here I am a modern human being, pretending to be alive on this planet in this day of airplanes, and half-hour distances between continental cities, and I plough along with my little measurements, soundproof

rooms, smoking revolvers, and all the junk and bustles of an age just past. Really, is the world going too fast for me? Shall I in a few years sit back with my old Picassos, thump a little at my old yellow-keyed piano and brush back my white locks and a tear in remembrance of the days when Strawinsky was still considered a radical composer! (96)

Bayard frames his resistance to becoming an anachronism in terms of music—or at least in terms of musical culture, the *aesthetics* of music being a secondary concern:

'Shall I rage and rant, and curse the modern young composers who are now driving music to the dogs, forgetting that back in my day, we young men cursed the old men for senile old idiots and went ahead and blew up the works as we wished? "No! No!! Never!" as is the motto of present-day Hungary. I shall go down with flying colours. Until the end I will say with Satie... "When I was a young man, everyone told me that. . . 'when you are older you will see!' . . . and now I am sixty-five. . . and I don't see anything. Just before his death, Satie wrote a ballet called "Closed". His reason was: on the theatrical billboards on every street-corner in Paris, most of the theatres, of course, print the word "Closed" fairly often in the squares allotted to advertising the bill they are putting on that day. So old Satie could walk with his friends and his old umbrella and point to the billboards... "See! they are playing 'Closed'." This is also my principle: I must take advantage of the day, the tricks in time, the speed-limit, Time! Accordingly I bring you this—and he showed me his 'Chart'. (97)

Bayard then proceeds to lay out his timetables on which hinge the solution to the crime. The murder, a perfect gunshot through the head, appears to have been committed in pitch-darkness in the presence of several ear-witnesses, a fact which makes suicide a plausible explanation; hence much of the investigation focuses on attempting to discern when everyone was in the room, when exactly the light was shut off, when the shots were fired (one with a silencer, another with a blank), when the fire engines passed the window, and so forth. The art of detective work, like the art of the criminal, becomes a kind of temporal manipulation, of the sort being employed by "the artists of to-day." The manipulation of time in the Satie examples seems little more than simple wordplay and self-promotion. Bayard is referring to Satie's *Relâche* ("Closed"; 1924), the so-called "instanteneist" ballet produced in collaboration with Frances Picabia, instanteneism being characterized by a love of speed, and of the "tricks of time" made possible by the cinema.<sup>58</sup>

The narrator of the novel, George Stacey Bishop, is alarmed and impressed by the contrast between Stephan's immersion in culture, on one hand, and on the other hand his ability to obsess over the minutiae of a particularly complicated murder. Yet Bayard's "tricks in time," wielded against his own insecurities about becoming a dinosaur, get oddly entangled with the actual mechanics of solving the crime. Most of the scenes of Bayard's investigating are framed with discussions of art and culture such as the above, and the novel draws both connections and tensions between his love of art and his skills as a detective: a sensitive interpreter of things both objective and subjective, Bayard is disappointed at the end of the novel to find that what he insists is the "best" theory for the murder is, alas, not the *correct* theory. The correct theory involves the use of a rubber exercise band for the purposes of slinging the murder weapon into another room—certainly not the pretty aesthetic solution Bayard was hoping for (in fact it almost forecloses parody). Reality, however tenuous, can't quite match up to the music in his head.

George recounts that Bayard, after going through his chart in painstaking detail,

plunged into a long interminable account of how he had sought and found the remarkable Ezra in his native haunts of Rapallo, and brought up the names of Wyndham Lewis, Picabia, Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Milhaud, Krenek, Antheil, Schleezer, Jean Cocteau, Breton, Aragon, Soupault, Tscheliescheff, Man Ray, Kiki, Churico, Miro, Kurt Weill, and William Carlos Williams. What a remarkable man was Stephan Bayard: to see him talking with such animation about the complicated and difficult heroes of his new and modern world, one would never think that only a quarter of an hour ago, his mind had dealt with an entirely different world of difficulty and intrigue. . .the intrigue of a horrible crime behind which was an incredibly devilish, inhuman, fiendish, abnormal murder! (108)

George has a taste for the melodramatic, Stephan a taste for name-dropping his "complicated and difficult heroes": two drives constantly at play in the novel, which struggles mightily to reconcile its commentary on the art world with its ambitions toward the uncanniness and intrigue of a detective novel. As I have suggested, if Antheil is guilty of name-dropping, it is not entirely

without excuse; he took his own place in modernist culture seriously enough that Bravig Imbs would identify *him* as the star to which Ezra Pound hitched *his* wagon. It is important to note that Bayard considers himself a Satie epigone not because of the man's music, but because of his witty countercultural self-invention: as Bayard understands them, Satie's "tricks of time" lie not in the varied textures of his music, but in witticism and social self-promotion.

The noises of the street, the raw canvas of time, and the witty Dadaism that blurs the boundaries of the concert hall all exemplify what Antheil offered, and still offers, the narrative of modernism. As an anomaly within Pound's career, Antheil calls attention to the institutional, social, and economic basis of modernist culture and modernist doctrine—not despite but because of the "tricks" and rhetoric he learned from Futurism, Antheil reveals Pound to rely on the very "sensations" that he rebuffed. Antheil reveals music to be a medium with an ideological force, and with the potential for critical reflection on ideology: the integration of noise into music serves a potentially sinister but also invaluable critical function by enlarging music's circle of reference. Whatever the shortcomings of *Ballet Mécanique*, aesthetically or ideologically, it helped enable a rethinking of how that circle is drawn, who gets to draw it, and on what grounds. No longer could riots in the crowd be considered spontaneous Dionysian frenzy; and no longer could the "neutral" or "material" sphere of music be divorced from the "material" realities of social life. This effort to integrate noise into the so-called "neutral" realm of aesthetic form exposes aesthetic mediation to be anything but neutral.

Among Stephan Bayard's complicated heroes is James Joyce, whose work motivates Chapter Four. Though Antheil's collaboration with Joyce never materialized, Joyce's interest in such a project speaks to the significance of sound, musical sound in particular, in his work. As I will discuss, Joyce's writing not only attempts to sublimate social noises into music (or into

writing that aspires to music), but also reflects on that act of sublimation. The same ideologically suggestive features that characterize Antheil's music—noise, rhythm, repetition—stimulate Joyce's treatment of music as both a sublime expression and a mediating rhetorical artifice.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1954), 9. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>2</sup> See Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 151. Hereafter cited parenthetically

<sup>3</sup> One finds the title of the piece spelled, even by Antheil himself, as "Mécannique" and as "Méchanique," with and without the accents. For consistency's sake I shall prefer "Mécannique." The phrase "Ballet Méc[h]annique" has served, if nothing else, as a resonant metaphor for critics looking to connect modernist texts to industrialism or the cinema. See, for example, Peter R. Sattler, "Ballet Méchanique: the Art of George Herriman," *Word and Image* 8.2 (1992); Susan McCabe, "Marianne Moore: Film, Fetishism, and her Ballet Mécannique," *Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Paul D. Lehrman, *The Ballet Mécannique Page*, 16 June 2007 1999, Available: <http://antheil.org/>, 19 June 2008.

<sup>5</sup> On the (lack of) programmatic elements in *Ballet Mécannique*, see Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2000). Antheil "himself didn't consider [*Ballet Mécannique*] a disengaged aesthetic construct, but instead an expression of the mental condition of 1924 sealed in a spaceship or a time capsule" (237). The idea of a cultural "mental condition" frozen in time speaks to Antheil's interest in the rigidity and inflexibility of time, a theme of his writings for *De Stijl*.

<sup>6</sup> On Pound's anxieties about material production, and his "impassioned staging [...] of a struggle between mass-produced cultural forms and authentic art," see Douglas Mao, *Solid Objects: Modernism and the Test of Production* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Antheil's interest in "glandular criminology" identifies criminals by way of the operation of their glands, often manifested in the criminal's physical appearance. This highly inexact science motivates much of *Death in the Dark*, Antheil's detective novel. The intersections among criminology, study of the body, and early cinema may suggest an interpellative function of Antheil's music, akin to that argued in Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives, and Early Cinema," *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, eds. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwarz (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1995). Gunning interprets early cinema's relation to techniques of criminal identification and detective work.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Albright, *Quantum Poetics*; Albright, *Untwisting*; Mauro Piccinini, "'Non più andrai farfallone rumoroso' - 'You Will Go No More, Noisy Butterfly': Joyce and Antheil," *Journal of Modern Literature* 26.1 (2002); Suárez, *Pop Modernism: Noise and the Reinvention of Everyday Life*; Tim Armstrong, "Player Piano: Poetry and Sonic Modernity" *Modernism/Modernity* 14.1 (2007).

<sup>9</sup> "We are undergoing an Antheil revival," writes Mauro Piccinini, *American Music* 22.1 (2004): 197. Cf. also Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity*; Oja, *Making Music Modern*; Susan C. Cook, "George Antheil's *Transatlantic*: An American in the Weimar Republic," *The Journal of Musicology* 9.4 (1991). The realization of *Ballet Mécannique* using entirely automated instruments has been documented in the film *Bad Boy Made Good: The Revival of George Antheil's 1924 Ballet Mécannique*, dir. Ron Frank, Electronic Music Foundation, 2006. Elyse Singer has recently dramatized the Lamarr-Antheil "frequency hopping" technology in a play entitled *Frequency Hopping*, featuring a "25-piece robotic orchestra developed by the League of Electronic Musical Urban Robots." See Melinda Wenner, "Hedy Lamarr: Not Just a Pretty Face," *Scientific American* 3 June 2008.

<sup>10</sup> For extensively detailed examinations of Pound's musical aesthetics and technique, see Stephen J. Adams, "Are the *Cantos* a Fugue?," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 45 (1975); Stephen J. Adams, "The Soundscape of the *Cantos*: Some Ideas of Music in the Poetry of Ezra Pound," *Humanities Association Review* 28 (1977); Stephen J. Adams, "Musical Neofism: Pound's Theory of Harmony in Context," *Mosaic* 13.2 (1980); Archibald Henderson III, "Pound and Music: The Paris and Early Rapallo Years," Ph.D. Diss., UCLA, 1983; Brad Bucknell, *Literary*

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*Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002). On the emergence of Imagism and Vorticism themselves, see Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922*; Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1986). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Peter Yates' 1967 assessment: "The young American George Antheil [took] what then seemed the obvious course of using noise without exploring it. [...] In fact, Ballet Mécanique was most successful in its headlines. The sound lacks variety; the typewriters used for instruments do not compare effectively with the several pianos; the pianos are borrowed from Stravinsky's far more successful use of them in *The Wedding* [*Les Noces*; 1918]; the airplane propeller is no more than Strauss's wind machine from *Don Quixote* [1897]; and the rattling and banging of the percussive elements do not combine to produce musical substance." Qtd. in William Walter Hoffa, "Ezra Pound and George Antheil: Vorticist Music and the Cantos," *American Literature* 44.1 (1972): 59. Hoffa hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>12</sup> Neil Blackadder, *Performing Opposition: Modern Theater and the Scandalized Audience* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), xi. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>13</sup> Albright, *Quantum Poetics*; Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein*. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>14</sup> Bravig Imbs, *Confessions of Another Young Man* (New York: Henkle-Yewdale, 1936), 21. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>15</sup> On modernist celebrity, see Aaron Jaffe, *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> On Pound and Ruskin, see Michael Coyle, *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Genre* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1995). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>17</sup> Ezra Pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Contacts and Life)," *Personae: The Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound*, eds. Lea Baechler and A. Walton Litz, Rev. ed. (New York: New Directions, 1990), I.3. Hereafter cited by section and line number.

<sup>18</sup> Ezra Pound, "Antheil, 1924-1926," *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 315. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>19</sup> The passage's obverse relation to *Mauberley* is observed by Albright, as is its conspicuous debt to Russolo's Art of Noises. See *Quantum Poetics*, 214.

<sup>20</sup> Qtd. in Pound, *ABC of Reading*, 88.

<sup>21</sup> Rainey, *Institutions*, 11. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>22</sup> "Art and Practice of Noise: Hostile Reception of Signor Marinetti," *The Times*, 16 June 1914, qtd. in Rainey 35.

<sup>23</sup> Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), 41. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Coyle on Lewis: "In 'The Revolutionary Simpleton,' Lewis denounced the Bergsonian glamorization of sensation in an analysis not unlike Eliot's. In Lewis's account, the attempt to make sensation the 'exclusive fact' of our existence threatened to engulf 'western man' in the darkness of solipsism, to cut off one man's recognition of the reality of others and even to banish within that 'all individual continuity'" (160).

<sup>25</sup> Stendhal, *The Red and the Black: A Chronicle of 1830*, trans. Roger Gard (London: Penguin, 2002), 11-2.



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<sup>26</sup> Linda Whitesitt, *The Life and Music of George Antheil, 1900-1959* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1983), 4. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>27</sup> The question of *Ballet Mécanique's* origins is somewhat hopeless. According to Man Ray, the credit belongs to a third person, producer Dudley Murphy (who would go on to produce avant-garde jazz films such as *Black and Tan Fantasy* [1929], starring Duke Ellington). See Standish D. Lawder, *The Cubist Cinema* (New York: NYUP, 1975). Murphy was also taken with Pound's invention of the "vortoscope," which used a shaving mirror in order to take "Vorticist-style photographs." See Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (New York: Delta, 1988), 281-2. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 35.

<sup>29</sup> Donald Friede, *The Mechanical Angel: His Adventures and Enterprises in the Glittering 1920's* (New York: Knopf, 1948), 45.

<sup>30</sup> For more on Antheil's and Friede's reactions, see Whitesitt 29ff.

<sup>31</sup> I. [Isidore] Klein, untitled cartoon, *New Masses* (May 1927), reprinted in Piccinini, "'Non più andrai farfallone rumoroso' - 'You Will Go No More, Noisy Butterfly': Joyce and Antheil," 78.

<sup>32</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968), 24. See also Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*, 29ff. Perloff cites this passage, and the Marinetti, within the context of *avant-guerre* futurism; she grants Marinetti's fascism while contesting the assertion that futurism *per se* (let alone the aestheticization of politics in general) "inevitably pointed" towards fascism.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, "'New Masses' and John Reed Club Artists, 1926-1936: Evolution of Ideology, Subject Matter, and Style," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 12 (1989). Marquardt points out that at the time of Klein's cartoon, the magazine reserved its sharpest scorn for non-Marxist liberals who wanted to preserve the system of capital ownership.

<sup>34</sup> Margaret Fisher, *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas: The BBC Experiments, 1931-1933* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 34.

<sup>35</sup> See Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *Pianola: The History of the Self-Playing Piano* (London and Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1984). The pianola was often imagined in competition with technologies such as the gramophone, since piano rolls might have offered a more authentic "record" of a performance or interpretation (330).

<sup>36</sup> Pound meanwhile satirizes Stein and Virgil Thomson, saying that Antheil refuses the "gristly and undeformable 'monads', as definite as the 'All angels have big feet / Hump, diddywim tum. . . . Hump, bump, stunt'" (95).

<sup>37</sup> Ezra Pound, "Arnold Dolmetsch," *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 46. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>38</sup> Pound, "Arnold Dolmetsch" (1917), 47.

<sup>39</sup> Ezra Pound, "Arnold Dolmetsch," *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 38.

<sup>40</sup> George Antheil, "Music Tomorrow," *Transition* Dec. 1927: 123-6, his italics.

<sup>41</sup> The dystopian implications of the player-piano are taken up in Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952), a self-admitted rewriting of Huxley's *Brave New World* emphasizing the mechanization of American industry and society.

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<sup>42</sup> Ezra Pound, "Cavalcanti," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1954), 150. Hereafter cited parenthetically. Eliot dates the essay with a curious footnote: "As published in *Make it New* (1934), but the essay as whole must be dated 1910-1931."

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Agnes Bedford (April 1921), reprinted in Schaffer, *Ezra Pound and Music*, 243.

<sup>44</sup> Ezra Pound, "The Renaissance," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1954), 216.

<sup>45</sup> On Bergson's influence on modernism, see Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time, 1880-1918*, New ed. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003), 24ff.

<sup>46</sup> Vincent Sherry, *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Radical Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), 12-3.

<sup>47</sup> Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (1889), quoted in Sherry 13.

<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of Pound's, Frost's, and Hulme's debts to and departures from Bergsonian philosophy, see Robert Bernard Hass, "(Re)Reading Bergson: Frost, Pound, and the Legacy of Modern Poetry," *Journal of Modern Literature* 29.1 (2005). Hass usefully frames the discussion in terms of Pound's appeals to positivist discourses, e.g. of mathematics, even as Pound grapples with poetic representations of subjective states.

<sup>49</sup> Antheil, untitled manuscript, April 1927, quoted in Whitesitt 105.

<sup>50</sup> The letter A can indicate the first iteration of any structure—the first line of a rhyme scheme or the opening theme of a fugue. This latter use motivates the sixth section (1930) of Louis Zukofsky's *A*: "Can / The design / Of the fugue / Be transferred / To poetry?" Louis Zukofsky, "A-6," *A* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993), 38.

<sup>51</sup> Antheil attempted early in his career to draw on the racialized associations of jazz, as in the *Jazz Symphony* (1925) and the unfortunately titled *Sonata Sauvage* (1923), whose musical force Pound compares to the Vorticism of Wyndham Lewis' "Timon" drawings (*Antheil* 49). Antheil claims to have heard in jazz the "dynamic and mechanistic significance" that he wanted to give his own music. In Chapter One I discuss a pervasive cultural meme labeling jazz as a musical and social noise; if jazz is noise, Antheil seems to argue, it is noise with a progressive and embodied potential, the potential to remind the listener of "bodies which had not been exploded by shrapnel."

<sup>52</sup> Ezra Pound, "Vers Libre and Arnold Dolmetsch," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1954), 439, his italics.

<sup>53</sup> Hans L.C. Jaffé, *De Stijl*, trans. R.R. Symonds (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1971), 18-9.

<sup>54</sup> Ian F.A. Bell and Meriel Lland, "Silence and Solidity in Early Anglo-American Modernism: Nietzsche, the Fourth Dimension, and Ezra Pound, Part One," *Symbiosis* 10.1 (2006). Bell and Lland cite the penultimate line of Canto XLIX: "The fourth; the dimension of stillness." Part of the cultural "noise" from which the fourth dimension offered escape was the "neo-Nietzschean clatter" (Pound's phrase) of "cataclysmic" rhetoric.

<sup>55</sup> George Antheil, *The Shape of the War to Come* (New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1940), 32.

<sup>56</sup> Ezra Pound, untitled article, *New Masses* (March 1927), reprinted in Ezra Pound, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (New York: Da Capo, 1968), 139. The italics and the parenthetical remarks are his.

<sup>57</sup> George Antheil, "Mother of the Earth," *transatlantic review* (musical supplement), 2.1 (1927-8), 227.

<sup>58</sup> As an entr'acte to *Relâche*, Picabia produced a film (*Entracte*) featuring Satie himself, as well as a funeral procession led by a camel. Albright discusses the film in *Untwisting the Serpent*, 220ff. As an "entr'acte" to a ballet premised on a non-performance ("relâche"), the film bespeaks Satie's and Picabia's proto-Dadaist inclinations.

## CHAPTER IV

### JOYCE'S PHONEYGRAPHS: NOISE, MUSIC, AND NOISE-MUSIC FROM *CHAMBER MUSIC TO ULYSSES*

At the first private performance of *Ballet Mécanique*, James Joyce remarked that it sounded "like Mozart." What exactly he meant by this is hard to say. Perhaps Joyce, like Pound, heard neoclassical dimensions in Antheil's music. Perhaps Joyce's comment was based more on feeling or mood than on theory or technique, on a joy or wit in the music that he reflexively associated with Mozart. Joyce frequently quotes the libretti of Mozart's operas (usually by Lorenzo Da Ponte) in *Ulysses* (1922), and attributes to him a "grace and invention" superior to the "muscle-bound" Beethoven;<sup>1</sup> amidst all the noise of the *Ballet Mécanique*, Antheil's sense of humor might have made it through. And perhaps he was just being polite. Joyce knew Antheil personally, having visited his apartment above Sylvia Beach's bookstore and recruited him to attend (uninvited) a few private concerts.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the reason, Antheil was one of the very few contemporary composers whom Joyce found congenial. Joyce would propose two collaborations with Antheil, both eventually abandoned. One was an operatic reworking of *Cain*, Lord Byron's 1822 closet drama; the other a four-hour "electric opera" entitled "Mr. Bloom and the Cyclops," based on the "Cyclops" chapter from *Ulysses*.

Only a few sketches of "Mr. Bloom" remain, and though Mauro Piccinini and Paul Martin have attempted to excavate, reassemble, and record fragments from the opera, one can only speculate about how it would have worked.<sup>3</sup> But one can at least begin to understand the cultural logic of such a project as an effort to experiment with the material and bodily force of

sound in staging arguably the most explicitly political chapter of *Ulysses*. According to Richard Ellmann, "Mr Bloom" was intended

to have for orchestra twelve electric pianos hooked to a thirteenth which played the master roll; on this would be recorded also drums, steel xylophones, and various blare instruments. The score was to be run off at top speed, with crescendos and diminuendos achieved by switching pianos on and off. The singers, seated below the stage and out of sight, would sing into microphones attached to loud speakers on the stage, and a *corps de ballet* would present the action in pantomime. The idea fascinated Joyce, but Antheil disappointed him by turning to other work. (558)

The opera endeavors to abstract its physical and verbal artefacts from the singers themselves, emphasizing the disjunction of a character's body from his voice. Such gimmicks were not unique to Antheil, and as Piccinini observes, the design of "Mr. Bloom" seems to owe a great deal to the offstage gramophones and amplifiers of Cocteau's ballet productions (gimmicks that the Anglophile Cocteauvians, Edith and Osbert Sitwell, would imitate in *Façade* by way of a megaphone). Piccinini notes also that Antheil had planned to use jazz and what he called "Congo" idioms, which, as part of a technological spectacle of on-stage amplified gramophones, build on Antheil's drive to layer "primitive" and modern "noises" on top of one another.

A letter to Pound suggests that Antheil conceived this incongruity in terms of a debt to Picasso's blend of cubism and primitivism. Antheil wished to imitate "Picasso's technique of non-coincidence between outlines and colors," by having "Orchestras and hugely augmented phoney-graphs both play simultaneously THE SAME THING"—until the orchestra stops, and "one discovers that the phoneygraphs HAVE BEEN PLAYING SOMETHING ELSE. All the combinations to make your belly give up."<sup>4</sup> The design establishes a series of cognitive gaps, or "non-coincidences," among the utterances of the characters themselves, the reproductions of those utterances, and the bodies that are/aren't responsible for producing them: the effect of this is to disorient the audience. Antheil means to disorient his audience both by means of repetition

(THE SAME THING) and disjunction, but that disorientation would arise only once the orchestra has stopped and the audience "discovers" what "has been" going on. In effect, this discovery entails the recognition of what Attali calls the "silencing" effect of repetitive music: repetition and sheer volume cover over difference and "non-coincidence." Joyce and Antheil make the orchestra, not the "phoney-graph," the mechanism of repetition and drowning-out: music itself is exposed not just as the embodied drive and metaphysical aspiration of all other arts, but as a means of controlling, marginalizing, and drowning out dissonances and noises. Only once the music of the orchestra is silenced do the noises speak for themselves.

Joyce's interest in Antheil exemplifies a remarkable curiosity throughout his work about the cultural potential of noise, of music, and of noisy music. In this chapter I argue that the trajectory of Joyce's career can be understood in terms of an increased unleashing of noise. The quiet lyricism of his early poetry condenses noise into "chamber music"; the realism of *Dubliners* considers music a social and emplaced form of sound that triggers a psychological withdrawal into silence. In *Portrait*, Joyce broaches modernist form by dramatizing the relation between music and noise in both psychological terms and formal/generic terms; and Joyce's career culminates (or at least ends) in the ordered modernist noise-music of *Ulysses* and the maelstrom of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>5</sup> Whereas *Chamber Music* and *Dubliners* demonstrate the sublimation of noise into music, *Portrait* and *Ulysses* make more explicit their skepticism about the rhetorical and ideological purposes to which music can be put, and do so by treating music and noise as coextensive aural and conceptual presences. *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, in their dialogic and more recognizably modernist forms, question the aesthetic authenticity of music and musical language: music becomes one of many expressive and cultural technologies, a means of interpreting the world and also of manipulating it.

Joyce's interest in sound overlaps conceptually, if not ideologically, with that of Jacques Attali, who argues that music channels and to some extent ameliorates noise, making sound palatable to systems of power while giving music what prophetic power it has. Attali argues that music, through the bureaucratic and economic structures of repetition and mechanical reproduction, "silences" noise by drowning it out through bureaucratized repetition. *Ulysses*, especially, investigates how musical or rhetorical sound can attempt to placate or dilute subversive noises (or to marginalize outsiders) through mere repetition: of the various literary forms transformed into "clashing rocks," the disingenuous iterations of Irish folk music, and the empty rhetoric of "Cyclops." The distinctive structure of "Cyclops," its use of "interpolations" to address the events of the chapter in parodies of political, legal, and literary discourses, emphasize the extent to which the Citizen's nativist cant is just so much noise. Antheil's ingenious rhetorical gesture is to refer to the phonograph (sound-writing) as a "phoneygraph" (false writing), suggesting that the loudest sounds in *Ulysses* are often the most false. The seeds of this critique are planted within *Dubliners* and even *Chamber Music*. While these texts seem to offer music as a more intensely embodied, psychologically authentic mode of experience, they also explore music's material and social grounding in the noises of everyday life. Joyce shows increasing skepticism about musical purity after *Dubliners*, but that skepticism is certainly *present* in *Dubliners*, whose stories often entangle music with its material situation and with rhetorical performance. In "A Painful Case," the experience of music questions its corrupted material context, but the story also critiques the solipsistic abstraction prompted by musical "epiphanies."

Joyce's near-collaboration with Antheil throws into relief an important relation between two functions of noise in modernism: one, as the raw economic and institutional material on which music relies; and two, as the stuff of "noise-music," an immanent presence within musical

and literary form.<sup>6</sup> The explorations of musical awe and epiphany in *Dubliners* do not conflict with, but rather predict the noisy textures of *Ulysses*, in which dominant elements of culture attempt to "silence" radical or heterogeneous noises. With the increased unleashing of noise in Joyce's work arises an increasing skepticism about the authenticity of musical expression, and the extent to which music relates to ideology.<sup>7</sup>

Joyce's relation to music, particularly in *Ulysses*, has garnered a great deal of attention: with respect to his use of Irish folk song, to his citations of operatic literature, to the "musical" structure of *Ulysses*, to the various aesthetic theories articulated by Dedalus and Bloom.<sup>8</sup> Mack Smith has argued, for example, that the structure of *Ulysses* imitates a musical resolution from a dominant to a tonic chord, and in the process engenders his larger concerns about the coexistence of "idealism and realism," which exist not "independently but in a multitude of self-defining relationships."<sup>9</sup> The novel's multiplicity of relationships and methods of representation seems to represent one of its most "musical" qualities, largely because that multiplicity makes the novel difficult to read. Brad Bucknell, drawing on Barthes' notion of the "writerly" text, argues that Joyce's "writerly analogy with music is also part of an interrogation of musical and readerly understanding." The opacity of Joyce's writing, particularly in the ostensibly fugal "Sirens" chapter, foregrounds "the text as both sound and script," and "returns us to its phenomenality, to its presence as something seen and (if inwardly) heard, not something seen through and immediately interpreted and understood" (*LMMA* 139). Joyce's use of music thus takes part in his resistance to transparent representation and his desire for more active interpretive responses.

But Joyce's attention to music as a kind of rhetorical apparatus, grounded in specific material conditions, has not been sufficiently acknowledged. Even when the terms "dissonance" and "noise" have been fruitfully applied to Joyce's work, they have tended to reproduce notions

of the authentically autonomous musical object.<sup>10</sup> Daniel Melnick, for example, draws on Adornian notions of dissonance to argue that *Ulysses* enacts modes of interpretation akin to dissonant music by centering the novel on "ambiguities" that effect the reader's "creative engagement"; in the process, he criticizes Attali's technocratic obliviousness to the *immanent* properties of music that make it revolutionary or "prophetic."<sup>11</sup> Yet the concept of noise reflects on Joyce's work in ways that dissonance alone cannot. Like Attali, Joyce increasingly attends to the technological aspects of music: the extent to which music relies on certain institutions and power-structures, and to which music is *used* as a technology for asserting political positions and attempting to consolidate power. Michael McDonald has applied a political-rhetorical critique of dissonance and noise to *Portrait of the Artist*, interpreting "[consonant] harmony and dissonance as mutually informing, rather than antagonistic, categories," and arguing that Stephen's sublimation of noise into dissonance privileges the autonomy of art.<sup>12</sup> As I argue in Chapter One, noise, like dissonance, can draw out falsities in the seemingly coherent space of the text, while delimiting art's autonomy.

In theory, Joyce approached music and poetry as autonomous artifacts—capable of social commentary, certainly, but with their own aesthetic standards independent of the social, political, and economic marketplace. But in practice Joyce's use of music lays bare a fundamental ambivalence about whether this kind of autonomy is possible. *Ulysses* questions the authenticity of the musical production itself: in *Ulysses*, music becomes a kind of "phoney-graph," a disingenuous statement of insidious intent. *Portrait* indeed serves as an important hinge in this respect: Dedalus's final call on an artificer seems to call into question the efficacy of escaping noise by creating music.



*Portrait's* emphasis on rhythm is particularly important in this regard: for Dedalus rhythm is the "first formal esthetic relation of part to part in any esthetic whole or of an esthetic whole to its part or parts."<sup>13</sup> This immanent property of art "dissolve[s]" the Aristotelian "esthetic status" of pity and terror (173) and allows one to "apprehend" the "harmonious" "result of its parts" (178). Yet rhythm is revealed to be set by historical time, as in the movement of the night mail train, which becomes its own kind of music and "dissolves" Stephen's "strange dread" (73):

His prayer, addressed neither to God nor saint, began with a shiver, as the chilly morning breeze crept through the chink of the carriage door to his feet, and ended in a trail of foolish words which he made to fit the insistent rhythm of the train; and silently, at intervals of four seconds, the telegraphpoles held the galloping notes of the music between punctual bars. (73)

The passage can be understood in terms of Lukács's remark that the rhythms of art should be set by the rhythms of history. As an adventure in *bildungsroman*, the novel recapitulates these small-scale rhythms in constructing the overall arc of Stephen's life. Clearly Lukács would balk at Stephen's "epiphanies," focused on discrete moments of time: small-scale experiences of rhythm that act in a descriptive rather than a narrative manner.

In *Portrait*, rhythm makes the listener a creative agent in subjecting himself to history. While Joyce's use of rhythm gives the landscape agency in ordering time (the "telegraphpoles held the galloping notes"), it emphasizes Stephen's creative agency as both a listener and an utterer. After Stephen is beaten by a pandybat, his language becomes intensely rhythmical and repetitive, repeating the phrase "cruel and unfair," "unfair and cruel" six times in the span of a page, in a way that signals his turn inward rather than outward. Much as Joyce's poetry attempts, with questionable efficacy, to escape theological and rhetorical artifice by way of formal patterning, his rhythmic language seems to register and critique authority and discipline only by assimilating and reenacting it. A similar impulse is arguably at work in *The Waste Land*, whose

rhythms critique the violence to which a performing body is subjected, but whose final drum-strokes signify a need to submit.

Setting noises to rhythms within a musical/literary text entails an exploration of the social value of sound *per se*, and for Joyce as for Eliot, this exploration invokes the figure of Wagner. Joyce's qualified appreciation of Wagner contributes greatly to the universal or epic qualities of *Ulysses*—the novel's "mythic method." As has been noted, however, Joyce remains keenly aware of how the epic and mythic aspects of opera rely on local uses and abuses of music: both because every musical performance has an institutional history, and because music is used for specific rhetorical and ideological purposes.<sup>14</sup> If *Ulysses* aspires towards opera, it does so in a deeply historicized way. Sara Danius argues that Joyce represents the apotheosis of modernism because he manages to craft a Wagnerian total art-work, arguing for example that Fernand Léger's mechanization of the visual bears a "family resemblance" to Joyce's aesthetic.<sup>15</sup> There is as much Antheil in *Ulysses* as there is Léger, and one particularly strong reason for thinking of *Ulysses* as a total art-work is that the novel obsesses with the material force and social value of *sound*, investing sound both with representational qualities and with performative or transactional qualities. *Ulysses* emphasizes the social function of the compositions and performances themselves. The category of "noise" becomes internal to the category of music, the presence against which music expels and defines itself. Introducing noise into the space of a literary text, akin to the creation of noise-music, thus serves important, destabilizing paratextual functions, compelling the reader to sort out which sounds count as music, which count as noise, and which sounds blur that distinction into oblivion.<sup>16</sup>

While Joyce's work generally progresses from less noise to more, the tension between music and noise can be detected even in the more contemplative early works, in which noise is

channeled into a conventionally lyrical or musical language. In "The Home Rule Comet" (1910), an early essay on Irish Home Rule, Joyce uses music as a metaphor for the multivocal sounds of resistance. Addressing the failure of the "people's budget" and the dissolution of Parliament, Joyce writes that a "strident" and dissident kind of music could be heard beyond the "dense and impenetrable cloudiness" of British parliamentary rhetoric: "Beyond it the orchestral music of the contesting electoral elements could be heard: noble strings agitated and hysterical, the strident bugles of the people and, from time to time, a floating phrase on Irish flutes."<sup>17</sup> While music has the potential to sublimate noise into palatable expressions, it can also critique those expressions by piercing the cloudy Dickensian fog of imperial language. This power is attributable not just to the difference between Irish and British factions, but to the differences *among* the "contesting electoral elements" of Ireland, whose political expressions are by no means univocal. Moreover, Joyce suggests a dissonance embedded in the alliance between British and Irish cultures, and in Irish uses of the English language: the Irish, he argues, have assimilated the English language "without being able to assimilate its culture or to adapt itself to the mentality of which this language is the vehicle" (159). Joyce, it should be noted, writes the essay from Trieste, in Italian, from which these dissonances in Irish politics are easier to observe.

Joyce initially considers art a niche from which he can confront politics anew, by way of escaping repetitive and artificial modes of political rhetoric. A similar logic applies in Joyce's rejection of traditional "artifices" in Irish poetry: he resists the use of Celtic images fixated on a particular vision of history at the expense of a new, truly critical voice. These problems manifest the twin pressures of "realism" and "idealism" informing all of Joyce's work, particularly with respect to the body: a subject of literary representation and a mediator of noise into music.

## Outside the *Chamber*: Music and Politics

For Joyce, the process of digesting material naturalism into imaginative idealism entails the creation of shit. Though there seems to be little in common between *Chamber Music*, a cycle of meditative, quasi-Symbolist love poems, and "The Holy Office," a broad satirical paean to the cloacal, the two works address a similar matrix of problems: whether, how, and to what purpose the material of daily life can be channeled into a poetic idiom.

Joyce's dedication to "realism" causes him, early in his career, to cast music as a false artifice, a bag of tricks used to avoid directly treating the material world. Realism and idealism motivate an early pair of lectures on Daniel Defoe and William Blake (1912), in which Joyce contrasts Defoe with the musical arts, to the disadvantage of music, by asserting that "Modern musicians, literate or otherwise, would find very little" in Defoe's "realism" (*verismo*)<sup>18</sup> which "defies and transcends the magical cheats of music."<sup>19</sup> William Blake is the mystic to Defoe's realist: Blake "killed the dragon of natural experience and natural wisdom" by "annihilating space and time." Joyce celebrates Blake's willingness to collapse historical temporality into the moment of artistic creation—a moment that he associates with the pulsation of a heartbeat: "For him, every time less than the pulsation of an artery is equal in its period and value to six thousand years because in that infinitely brief time the poet's work is conceived and born" (181).<sup>20</sup> This process resembles the "epiphanies" of *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero*, and *Portrait*; but in these works epiphanies are spurred by material incidents. Joyce's dedication to realism does not contravene his aspirations to Blakean prophecy and mysticism but rather keeps them grounded in materiality and realism. For Joyce, attention to realism is more likely to result in a Blakean annihilation of space and time than are the artifices associated with fin-de-siècle Irish poetry.<sup>21</sup>

Joyce's ambivalence towards music in his early writings recognizes its potential for making one's heart beat faster, but considers it insufficiently grounded in the material world—an ambivalence driven by the resistance to poetic artifice. The quality on which Stephen calls at the end of *Portrait*, the question of artifice speaks to Joyce's simultaneous wish to change history and to escape it: certain historical images and tropes have, through repetition, become artificial, to the extent that they only reinscribe what they claim to protest (e.g. imperial subjugation). In a 1902 essay on James Clarence Mangan, an Irish poet whose verses Joyce had set to music, Joyce praises Mangan's poetry, and poetry in general, as the expression of "the rhythmic speech of an emotion otherwise incommunicable";<sup>22</sup> in a later revision of the essay (1907), he claims that Mangan's "extraordinary rhythms and unstudied beauty" are "unencountered elsewhere in English literature."<sup>23</sup> Mangan's reliance on the "magical cheats" of musical rhythm allow him to convey an otherwise "incommunicable" emotion, but not to ground that emotion in the "reality" of the present. Mangan is too much Blake and not enough Defoe. While poetry is "always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality" (1902; 59), Mangan's inability to extract himself from "the latest and worst part" of his poetic "tradition" results in a poetry consumed with artifice: "plaids" and "ornaments" which, as historically persistent emblems, paradoxically become an immaterial "denial of reality" (59). Joyce ascribes Mangan's lack of poetic staying power to an insufficiently agonistic relation to poetic influence: while Mangan's poetry expresses the "spirit of revenge," and while he has refused to "prostitute himself" to "English magazines or journals" (1907; 134), he derivatively reproduces the artifices of Irish poetry. Thus he fails to forge a unique poetic identity: "one who expressed the sacred indignation of his soul in a dignified form cannot have written his name in water" (1907; 136).

The speaker of "The Holy Office," "Katharsis-Purgative," writes his name in something that is definitively not water, and argues that a genuinely critical Irish poetry cannot emerge from an idiom that fears the body.<sup>24</sup> "The Holy Office" ridicules "plaids and ornaments," Celtic lyricism and prudery, in a stylistic parody of Yeats's "To Ireland in the Coming Times" (1893) ("Know, that I would accounted be / True brother of a company").<sup>25</sup> In Yeats's poem those very effects are encoded through "rhyme" and transmitted through rhythm; the poem celebrates the ability of poetic rhythm to effect a public emotional response:

When Time began to rant and rage  
The measure of her flying feet  
Made Ireland's heart begin to beat;  
\* \* \*  
Nor may I less be counted one  
With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson,  
Because, to him who ponders well,  
My rhymes more than their rhyming tell  
Of things discovered in the deep,  
Where only body's laid asleep. (lines 10-12, 17-22)

As Joyce sees it, however, the elemental force of these "things discovered" are embroidered with extraneous "Celtic fringes," as when Yeats celebrates the "faeries, dancing under the moon, / A Druid land, a Druid tune!" (lines 31-2).

Thus Joyce calls on a poetic material, excrement, that is what it is and obviates the problem of artificial ornament. Joyce aspires to a different kind of Irish "tune" that gives voice to those elements purged from the "brothers of a company":

But all these men of whom I speak  
Make me the sewer of their clique.  
That they may dream their dreamy dreams  
I carry off their filthy streams  
For I can do those things for them  
Through which I lost my diadem,  
Those things for which Grandmother Church  
Left me severely in the lurch.  
Thus I relieve their timid arses,

Perform my office of Katharsis. (47-56)

Joyce's speaker professes both the desire and the ability to deal with the naturalistic detail spurned by the so-called "Holy Office" of his contemporary poets, just as he claims to have been made an outsider to their "mumming company."<sup>26</sup> Drawing on the Aristotelian and Aquinistic languages that will later motivate Stephen Dedalus's aesthetic theories, the speaker suggests that real catharsis requires one to confront the material realities of sex and shit while subjecting them to poetic craft. Joyce makes a point of finding feminine rimes for the words "Katharsis," "Aristotle" ("brothel" [5]), and "Aquinas," making the assertion of a spiritual and poetic ego resonate in the form of the text, to the detriment of "Those souls that hate the strength that mine has / Steeled in the school of old Aquinas" (81-2). The forebearers of Joycean aesthetics are entangled with the speaker's willingness to "do a similar kind of service" "for each maiden, shy and nervous" (61, 60), by way of a steely will and not of Celtic "whinges" and "fringes." The formal and stylistic compression of "The Holy Office," in the service of a masculine sexual ego, develops into the unraveling of style or unleashing of feminine noise in Molly Bloom's monologue; as Christy Burns has argued, as Joyce begins to construct women with subjective agency, he increasingly refuses to resort to Symbolist "containments" of the feminine, preferring to "remak[e] language" in a way that parodies and critiques patriarchal codes.<sup>27</sup> And as Julia Kristeva has argued, this impulse confronts not just the filth and waste of the "abject," but the materiality of language itself, culminating in a "single catharsis: the rhetoric of the pure signifier, of music in letters—*Finnegans Wake*."<sup>28</sup>

The Symbolist containment of energy seems to vibrate throughout the whingy poems of *Chamber Music* (published with the help of Arthur Symons), which on first glance could not less

resemble the excremental "Holy Office." On an affective and sonic level, the poems of *Chamber Music* are simply much quieter than the strident voice of "Katharsis-Purgative":

Strings in the earth and air  
    Make music sweet;  
Strings by the river where  
    The willows meet.

There's music along the river  
    For Love wanders there.  
Pale flowers on his mantle,  
    Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,  
    With head to the music bent,  
And fingers straying  
    Upon an instrument.<sup>29</sup>

One can hear a lot of silences and gaps in this poem—metrical pauses, unnamed subjects, and un-verbed clauses—and the poem derives much of its power from those silences. The poem invites the question of agency of music's creation and of its effects: in the first stanza music functions as a direct object of the earth's "strings," in the second stanza as a simple existential fact ("There's music"); and in the third stanza (which does not actually *have* a verb, or a grammatical subject for that matter), the word "music" refers to a text being read so that sound can be produced. There might be something less innocent and more Leopold Bloom-like about the "fingers straying / Upon an instrument," but it resembles some kind of spiritual empathy more than it does the intensified naturalism of "The Holy Office" or *Ulysses*.

But *Chamber Music* doesn't ignore naturalistic detail; it encodes it. That is, the poems don't ignore noise, but channel it. Pound remarked after meeting Joyce that the "real man" was the author of *Chamber Music*—a "delicate temperament" whose capacity for the "registration of realities" would eventually enable him to write *Ulysses* (qtd. in Ellmann 479). Those "realities," expressed with proud indelicacy in "The Holy Office," lie underneath the surface of *Chamber*



*Music*. As Ellmann points out, the title of *Chamber Music* is recalled in the "Sirens" episode of *Ulysses*, when Bloom reflects on the acoustic potential of a pun on "chamber":

Chamber music. Could make a kind of pun on that. It is a kind of music I often thought when she. Acoustics that is. Tinkling. Empty vessels make most noise. Because the acoustics, the resonance changes according as the weight of the water is equal to the law of falling water. Like those rhapsodies of Liszt's, Hungarian, gipsyeyed. Pearls. Drops. Rain. Diddleiddle addleaddle ooddleooddle. (232, 11.979)

Similarly, Stephen Dedalus invokes the image of the toilet by way of the "queer word" "suck": the "queer" and "ugly" sound of the word mediates the sound of daily life: "the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder" (9; ch. 1). As Jeri Johnson notes, this passage leads Stephen into another rhythmically intense passage as he recalls the "cold and hot" water spigots in the lavatory, a recollection that makes Stephen's own body feel "cold and then hot" (9).<sup>30</sup> *Chamber Music* possesses the kind of sonic resonance that Bloom describes no doubt in part because, in terms of social and political content, the poems are themselves "empty vessels."

The poems of *Chamber Music* get increasingly noisy, even if only to resist noise. The speaker of one poem makes an appeal to his "sweetheart" by disclaiming the "lying clamour" of his rivals (XIX, line 2); another desires to escape from (Arnoldian) "alarms" (XXII, 9-10); one alludes to "the noise of waters / Making moan" (XXXV, 1-2). But only in the last poem does Joyce's speaker let loose, justifying Myra Russell's claim that it is the only truly twentieth-century poem of the cycle.<sup>31</sup>

I hear an army charging upon the land,  
And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees  
\*       \*       \*  
They cry unto the night their battle-name:  
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.  
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,  
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil. (lines 1-2, 5-8)

This poem fills in all the syntactic and metrical gaps and silences of the first poem. The noisy "clanging" figures an emotional/psychological response to the speaker's absence: the poem ends "My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?" The noise here is psychological rather than external: Joyce is still only vaguely gesturing at the parallels, emergent in *Dubliners* and conspicuous in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, between psychological noise and acoustic or social noise. Yet these lines are not far removed from the opening of "Sirens"—"Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steelyringing." "Sirens," which opens with an image of a metallic alloy and ends with a fart, not only illustrates music's social context but *uses* music to digest and disintegrate its material surroundings: the sound of music is processed through the body of its auditor.

These parallels are at least emergent in *Dubliners*, which reflects both on musical aesthetics *per se*, and on what Pound calls music's relation to a "wider circle of reference." Music in *Dubliners* speaks to its own material basis—the noises and sonic ruptures of everyday life—by prompting more active modes of interpretation.

### Musical Phrasemongering and Performance in *Dubliners*

*Dubliners* anticipates some of the thematic content in Joyce's later work, such as the rhetorical and political nature of musical performance, and the ideological functions of noise to silence dissent; and the stories are characterized by Joyce's simultaneous attention to music and noise, abstraction and materiality. The intense spiritual and philosophical dimensions of music and poetry in *Dubliners* often serve a particular social function akin to that argued by Attali: music and poetry obscure or silence the noises of their surroundings, but in such a way that those noises are still audible. Not least, *Dubliners* puts pressure on the question of music's and poetry's autonomy, suggesting that the aestheticized language of music and poetry distracts from political

problems even where it claims to correct them. "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," for example, consists in intense debates on the economic consequences of imperial subjection, on the need for working-class political representation, and on the failure of their boss to pay their wages; these debates are essentially silenced by the reading of a poem on Parnell, about which the only thing to be said is that "it was a very fine piece of writing" (148).

Yet *Dubliners* matches the distracting or narcotic cultural effects of aestheticized language with the *transformative* effects of sound: the imaginative potential of rupture or ellipsis in the sonic fabric of everyday life. Thus its stories climax in various forms, tackling different ways of managing the relationship between the transcendent and the everyday, and the ways in which narrative can effect a certain kind of "transformation." As musical or otherwise sonic phenomena, these epiphanies often call attention to their own embodiment and physical surroundings. Joyce wrote to his brother Stanislaus that he desired *Dubliners* to resemble the "mystery of the Mass" by offering "some kind of intellectual pleasure or spiritual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own" (Ellmann 163). This transformation is the function of what Joyce comes to call a literary "epiphany" and, like the Mass itself, is triggered by a performative expression: a speech-act or a musical performance that abstracts intellectual or spiritual qualities from the material.

The speech-acts, performances, and sonic ruptures that effect epiphany in *Dubliners* rely on specifically located interpretive acts. The sonic object itself (the "neutral"/"material" realm) is generally allusive, rather than elucidative, and the content to which it alludes is recognizably that of the mundane "everyday," transformed into something spiritual through the process of interpretation. "The Sisters," for example, begins with the narrator pausing to reflect on specific words in the Catechism, namely *paralysis* and *simony* (the function of which is the anti-

epiphany—the making of everyday material goods out of the sacred). The narrator's epiphany, in which the "grey face of the paralytic" attempts to confess itself, is driven by his desire to "extract meaning from the unfinished sentences" (21): his sisters' references to Flynn's corruption. The imaginative power of his sisters' language lies in their susceptibility of interpretation.

Yet the aesthetics of music and poetry bear a complex relation to the economics of daily life, and *Dubliners* questions whether an authentic "epiphanic" experience, consummated in silence, can be extracted from or made autonomous of social and political noises. "A Mother" depicts music as a means of circulating socially, both as an "accomplishmen[t]" that facilitates Mrs. Kearney's courtship (149) and as a contribution to larger social movements such as the Irish Revival. Mrs. Kearney's daughter Kathleen is invited to perform at a series of grand concerts largely because of the "little counter of gossip" causing her name to be "heard often on other people's lips" (150). The presence of "noise" in "A Mother" critiques both Mrs. Kearney and her audience: while Mrs. Kearney herself is satirized for her materialistic and shallow fixation on bourgeois drawing-room "accomplishments," the audience is accused of having "behaved indecorously as if the concert were an informal dress rehearsal" (153). When it comes to the performances themselves, Joyce's satire is diffusely directed: performers, organizers, audience members, and reviewers all come under attack for material obsession and for moral and financial corruption, which undercut any appreciable benefit that such a concert would offer Irish culture. Joyce centers his satire largely on the "meager body" onstage, which produces equally meager musical sounds, and which prompts bad behavior backstage and in the audience.

The word "noise" is a consistent presence in "A Mother," in ways that are by now familiar: murmurs of discontent and (less frequently) content in the audience that augment and (again, less frequently) counterbalance the mundane and practical matters of producing a

performance. Mrs. Kearney's attention to the practical "accomplishments" associated with music is echoed by her "tact" in "wording" the programme: "she knew what *artistes* should go into capitals and what *artistes* should go into small type. [...] To keep the audience continually diverted she slipped the doubtful items in between the old favourites" (150-51). While Mrs. Kearney is represented as shrill and obnoxious, her dilemma is understandable: she spends considerable amounts of money not only organizing the concert but filling the seats with "those friends who could not be trusted to come otherwise," in hopes that Kathleen's accomplishments, and her belief in the Irish language movement, will ultimately be its own kind of dowry (150).

Much of the audience's noise responds to absent or "meager" human bodies, as if the audience had to increase in volume to counteract the insufficient (and insufficiently embodied) sounds being projected from the stage. When Madam Glynn takes the stage, her "meagre body" and "bodiless gasping voice" produce mockery from the "cheaper parts of the hall" (160). And as Mrs. Kearney prevents her daughter from taking the stage, insisting on the full pay for all four performances: the "noise of the hall grew more audible" (156), "the noise in the hall grew louder," "the audience was clapping and stamping," the "noise in the auditorium had risen to a clamour" (159). Mrs. Kearney's insistence ultimately results in exactly the wrong kind of rumors being circulated about Kathleen, as the concert reviewer O'Madden Burke announces that her "musical career was ended in Dublin after that" (161-2). The charge against Mrs. Kearney is that she has acted without a "sense of decency," like a "nice lady" (162).

While Madam Glynn's "meagre body" registers the general inadequacy of the concerts, it also emphasizes the extent to which the narrative of a musical performance is ultimately underwritten by the shape and quality of the names and the bodies that produce—and review—the program. Bodies become both the object of scrutiny and a basis of cultural authority: an

object around which noises circulate, and a means of mediating those noises for one's own good. Mr. O'Madden Burke, who is to write the notice for the *Freeman*, possesses both an "imposing body," which he balances on an umbrella; similarly his "magniloquent western name was the moral umbrella upon which he balanced the problem of his finances. He was widely respected" (158). Much as his authority rests in the shape of his body, which rests on the "umbrella" of his name, Burke uses that authority in the service of promoting bodies he finds aesthetically appealing, particularly that of Miss Healy, the "warmth, fragrance, and colour" of whose body "appealed to his senses" (158). No surprise, then, when Burke ultimately announces that "Miss Kathleen Kearney's musical career was over in Dublin," in the wake of her mother's lack of "decency." The concert itself is organized in the name of crass material "accomplishments," including the cause of Irish revival (the language movement), and the news of the concert circulated under the influence of the reviewer's crass motives. Again, Joyce's critique seems as scattershot as the noises of the audience: "meager" bodies and "imposing" ones all become nodal points of ludicrousness within the event as a whole. Burke's imposing body, as much as those of the performers', mediates events in order to produce a buzz, to satisfy his bodily pleasures, and to reinforce the "widely respected" authority of his own "imposing body."

A chiasmic anticipation of "A Mother"'s warning against music wrapped up in base materialism and bodily obsession, "A Painful Case" warns against the solipsistic force of music isolated from performance. Readings of "A Painful Case" tend to focus on questions of blame and victimhood, a problem largely because much of the violence is self-inflicted: the story reflects on the effects of solipsism and psychological self-obsession, registered by the presence of music. Music is both the villain and the victim of the story, in the abstract and as performed sonic material. Put otherwise, the autonomy of music structurally parallels the autonomy of Jack

Duffy: among the emblems of his social withdrawal at the beginning of the story is his constant presence at his landlady's piano (120), and the domestic "orderliness" of Jack's mind before he learns of Emily's death is crystallized by the "new pieces of music" that "encumbered the music-stand" in his room (123). On the other hand, among the few "dissipations" of Duffy's life are his occasional visits to Mozart operas (120), and his almost-erotic encounter with Emily is fueled by a metaphorical musical resonance: "the music that still vibrated in their ears united them" (122). While music temporarily liberates Duffy from physical isolation, it does not liberate him from psychological isolation: he remains a solipsist and a narcissist, even while music (literal and metaphorical) gives him a language in which to channel these drives.

Duffy's psychological withdrawal is paralleled by the story's structural recursion. He is driven to reflect on his own complicity in her death first by the newspaper report of her death (more precisely, by the newspaper report of the inquest of her death), then by a goods train "winding [...] obstinately and laboriously" out of Kingsbridge Station (the same station that motivates Stephen's musical prayer in *Portrait*); he imagines the "laborious drone of the engine reiterating the syllables of her name." In another chiasmic trick, the noise of the train becomes solipsistic music ("the rhythm of the train pounding in his ears") while music, the shaping force of Jack and Emily's contact, is de-composed into the "laborious" material sounds of trade.

As music becomes increasingly material, Duffy's narcissism ceases to be merely an abstraction: Duffy stops simply *being* narcissistic and begins *performing* his narcissism. He reveals himself to be fixated on philosophical "exactitude" and on style, fixations with real social and political implications that are worsened rather than ameliorated by his charged interactions with Emily Sinico. He explains to Emily that he has ceased to affiliate with the Irish Socialist Party because "their discussions had grown too timorous," and that they "resented an exactitude

which was the product of a leisure not within their reach" (122): Duffy's copies of Hauptmann and Nietzsche, sharing office space with his sheet music, give him an (ostensible) intellectual refinement justifying, to his mind, his abandonment of a social cause. Duffy fancies himself a Nietzschean, with the minor difference that he refuses to write anything down.<sup>32</sup> His abandonment of socialism is not driven solely by "leisure": he refuses to write because, he explains with "careful scorn," he resents the "phrasemongers" of "an obtuse middle class that entrusted its morality to policemen and its fine arts to impresarios" (122). Yet as his explanations to Emily become part of the "vibrating music that united them" and "emotionalised his mental life" (122), he becomes fixated on his own language, both its matter and its manner:

Sometimes he caught himself listening to the sound of his own voice. He thought that in her eyes he would ascend to an angelical stature; and, as he attached the fervent nature of his companion more and more closely to him, he heard the strange impersonal voice which he recognized as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness. We cannot give ourselves, it said: we are our own. (122-3)

Duffy himself is not immune to phrasemongering, and he becomes so enamored with his own proclamations (the products of leisure and "exactitude") that he abstracts them into a "strange impersonal voice." At the same time, he projects his own supernatural ascension: the vibrating music of the scene reveals Duffy to be not just a connoisseur, but a diva.

Less cynically, perhaps, the story intertwines the acts of listening and of performing. When Duffy speaks, he listens; conversely, the act of listening is revealed as a creative one, as when Duffy hears the rhythms of the train producing Emily's name. It is in the nexus of poesis and thesis, articulation and interpretation, that the story most decisively distinguishes genuine, embodied musical experience from an abstract, pseudo-intellectual one. The "vibrating music" that Duffy hears in his own voice is revealed as a dangerous kind of interpretive act, which abstracts the sound of his own voice from the presence of his body, such that he reacts with



(psychological) violence when Emily touches him. But the musical language at the end of the story—particularly, the emphasis on rhythm—suggests a kind of ethesis grounded in an experience of the material world.

Whereas the poietic aspects of music can be recognized as an effort to cover over subversive noises, the act of ethesis extracts from music its immanent subversive "dissonances." Reading the eponymous newspaper account of Emily's death, Duffy vituperates against the newspaper column's "threadbare phrases" and "inane expressions of sympathy," which he reads as "the cautious words of a reporter won over to conceal the details of a commonplace vulgar death" (127), journalistic clichés that function to silence and cover over the naturalistic facts of the case. The act of reading the story draws Duffy himself out of his material setting, and as he forgets about the dinner, his cabbage begins to "deposit a cold white grease on his plate" (124); as the passage of time results in quasi-musical expression, it also produces deposits of excess material. In a way this report of the inquest seems to suggest a kind of abstracted music akin to Duffy's disembodied monologue: it ends, "No blame attached to anyone" (126), though any interpretation of the newspaper story (or of Joyce's) will solve that problem ethesically.

Duffy's final epiphany arises when he merges the noises of his material surroundings (a public bar, a tram, and a goods train) with the narratives that he produces as an interpreter: the repeated utterance of Emily Sinico's name are, just like the pompous philosophical aphorisms, very much the sound of his own voice, but they have been drawn out of an autonomous musical sphere and become a kind of noise-music. When the rhythms of Emily's name finally die out, Duffy "felt himself alone"—not that he *was* himself alone, but that he "felt" himself alone, awakened to the notion that being alone is not the only alternative. Duffy's encounter with Emily

awakens him to the musical properties of social life while, conversely, even the "inane" and "threadbare" experiences of public language give his "vibrating music" a more real significance.

"A Painful Case" prepares the dilemma of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which music both inspires and delimits Stephen's "silence, exile, and cunning" (208). In *Portrait*, aestheticized language becomes both a resistance to power and the privilege of power—Dedalus wishes to escape the artificial "nets" of Ireland, but he calls on an "artificer" in order to do so: "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (213). The dilemma of *Portrait* is that its closest analogue to music, musical language, constitutes both the means of Stephen's escape and the very noise that he wishes to silence.

#### No Noiseless Existence: Music and Musical Language in *Portrait*

In *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce seems to waver between a Paterian notion of music as the authentic, formally coherent aspiration of art, and the false "phoney-graphy" found in *Ulysses*. Joyce's gestures toward music alternate between the highly specific and the highly symbolic: between culturally recognizable songs and citations, on the one hand, and on the other hand a more abstracted or metaphorical recognition of the musical patterns of language. Thus while my discussion of "music" in *Portrait* encompasses rhetorical acts, the novel invites this conceptual abstraction: rhetoric and music become correlate expressions of the same personal and cultural impulses. Music becomes not just an art-form or genre but, more abstractly, a mode of communication and interpretation.

Joyce emphasizes the interlocked production and interpretation of musical language by way of the culturally emplaced body: that is, he emphasizes the bodily force of *producing* an utterance, at the same time that he emphasizes musical language's *effects* on a body. The sexual

act at the center of Stephen's narrative itself enables the mediation of noise, the transformation of "bursts of hoarse riot" in the street into an "unknown and timid pressure [...], softer than sound or odour" (85). Stephen frequently uses the term "music" with respect to Catholic iconography, for example, but that "music" is revealed to be channeled through Stephen's body. A Catholic lesson "lull[s] his conscience to its music," but only as mediated by Stephen's own post-coital body and lips:

If ever his soul, reentering her dwelling shyly after the frenzy of his body's lust had spent itself, was turned towards her whose emblem is the morning star, *bright and musical, telling of heaven and infusing peace*, it was when her names were murmured softly by lips whereon there still lingered foul and shameful words, the savour itself of a lewd kiss. (88, his italics)

Rather than lifting Stephen out of corporeal existence into a spiritual one, the "bright and musical" image of Mary takes Stephen back into his body's lust. Throughout *Portrait*, highly stylized and patterned kinds of speech—political, spiritual, and poetic expressions—attempt in different ways to "lull" Stephen's "conscience," in ways that Stephen both resists and reinscribes, because he both celebrates and repents of what his own lips have produced.

Among the speech-acts addressed towards Stephen's conscience is Arnall's sermon, intoned almost as if from a disembodied voice, and this sermon speaks to Stephen's ambivalent relation to his body. Arnall's sermon becomes attempts to emphasize the physical torments of hell by stressing both their "intensity" and their eternity. Hence his speech relies on devices of accretion (parataxis, anaphora), used to compile the various pains of hell, and of compression (alliteration, ellipsis), used to emphasize the intensity of each individual pain:

O, how terrible is the lot of those wretched beings! The blood seethes and boils in the veins, the brains are boiling in the skull, the heart in the breast glowing and bursting, the bowels a redhot mass of burning pulp, the tender eyes flaming like molten balls. (102)

Arnall's point is to emphasize the inwardness of physical pain, the extent to which it occurs internally within the body, hence the repetition of "in the veins," "in the skull," "in the breast"; and, as in the first poem of *Chamber Music*, this internalization manifests itself in the elision of verbs, as the emphasis shifts from action (blood seething and boiling) to experience. Those verbs give way to adjectives and participles ("redhot," "molten," "burning") which make the experience of pain an existential fact. The embodiment of this pain makes the musicality of Arnall's language all the more appropriate; it also enables the novel to enfold Stephen's past (where he visits a prostitute) with his future (where he receives the tortures that are, apparently, due to him).<sup>33</sup> By reminding Stephen of what ostensibly awaits him, Arnall's voice also reminds Stephen of what he and his body have already done.

Arnall thus rightly assesses that his musical language, part of an attempt at the "composition of place," will reinforce what he calls the "material character" of hell (127)—a material quality that sticks with Stephen throughout much of the rest of the novel. Arnall's sermon on physical hell turns the volume not down, but up: far from attempting to stifle the sensory experiences of hell (which include, in a synaesthetic pun, "noisome odours"), he attempts to emphasize the extent to which physical experience, even of pleasure, can be infinitely intensified. After a brief intermission he turns to the spiritual and intellectual torments of hell, a discussion in which he attempts not to threaten the congregation but to *persuade* them that the punishment is just. Though some of the rhetorical devices in this sermon are the same, their bodily force is mollified by the simple fact that he is no longer talking about bodies. This time the sermon makes its address to a *collective* body, as the priest and the schoolboys enter into a call-and-response (though only once "every least noise was still"):

--O my God!—  
--O my God!—

--I am heartily sorry—  
--I am heartily sorry—  
--for having offended Thee—  
--for having offended Thee— (114)

The sensory experiences described in Arnall's patterned musical language, and the choric call-and-response apology to God, contrast powerfully with the experience of eternity imagined by Stephen just before the sermon begins: "It would rain for ever, noiselessly. [...] All life would be choked off, noiselessly: birds, men, elephants, pigs, children: noiselessly floating corpses amid the litter of the wreckage of the world" (117). It is this "noiseless" existence of "silence" that appeals to Stephen at the end of the novel.

Ultimately, the novel reveals such an existence to be impossible, because it can only ultimately be realized through the creation of even more poetic language. Like Mangan, Stephen is too much wrapped up in history to escape it: his final rhetorical gesture, after all, is to call on his "Old father, old artificer." Through his villanelle, Stephen weaves himself into the same nets he desires to fly. The intensely musical qualities of the villanelle, and of Stephen's final self-aggrandizing perorations on his own desired self-exile, suggest that he is not resisting the "nets" of artificial rhetoric, but reinscribing them: much as Jack Duffy's critique of "phrasemongering" results in the production of self-contained, pseudo-Nietzschean aphorisms, Stephen's skepticism about political rhetoric results in aphoristic pronouncements about his desire to "forg[e] in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race." And, again like Duffy, Stephen's philosophical self-assuredness is reflected in his assertion to Cranly that he does "not fear to be alone" (208). Stephen links the creation of art, the forging of an individual and racial conscience, with the absence of noise: the desire to escape the noises around him prompts Stephen to compose the poem, but at the same time the experience of the poem has historical noises embedded within it.

"Are you not weary of ardent ways?", asks Stephen's speaker, suggesting poetry as an alternative to the forms of "ardent" rhetoric found in political debate and theological discourse:

Are you not weary of ardent ways,  
Lure of the fallen seraphim?  
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze  
And you have had your will of him.  
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

Above the flame the smoke of praise  
Goes up from ocean rim to rim.  
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Our broken cries and mournful lays  
Rise in one eucharistic hymn.  
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

While sacrificing hands upraise  
The chalice flowing to the brim,  
Tell no more of enchanted days.

And still you hold our longing gaze  
With languorous look and lavish limb!  
Are you not weary of ardent ways?  
Tell no more of enchanted days.

It is highly musical poetry at that, structured around complex end-rimes ("heart ablaze" [line 4] and "ardent ways" is very nearly a triple rime) and the rhyming beginnings of specific lines ("Lure," "Your"). While the poem seems nostalgic in temperament, it is in some respects anti-nostalgic in theme: the "ardent ways" of which the speaker is "weary" are associated with the "enchanted days" of the past. "Weariness" is both a thematic element of the poem and a response to an amateur villanelle; by the end of the poem one is inclined to be weary of the phrase "Are you not weary" (and equally inclined to say to Stephen, "Tell no more!"). Yet it also suggests that these "ardent ways" and "enchanted days" have become repetitive and wearying in public

speech. Yeats nearly echoes the phrase "tell no more" in "Her Praise" (1919): like the villanelle (and much of *Chamber Music*), a love poem that desires to still the wrong kind of speech:

I will talk no more of books or the long war  
But walk by the dry thorn until I have found  
Some beggar sheltering from the wind, and there  
Manage the talk until her name come round.<sup>34</sup>

Yeats's speaker is so tired of one kind of talk that he proposes to stitch and unstitch another. As in *Portrait of the Artist*, Yeats understands conversational intercourse very much as a poietic act of control and manipulation. This act of conversational poiesis requires a different audience, an abject figure of silence and perhaps even of exile, but this figure must himself be creatively imagined (a theme to which Yeats returns often).

Like Yeats's speaker, Stephen's weariness with ardent ways leads him to reflect imaginatively on the relation between poem and audience, a relation figured in terms of noise. The novel depicts Stephen intoning and composing the villanelle in real time, and both the composition of the poem and its language emphasizes poetry's Eucharistic, transformative quality. As a "priest of the eternal imagination," Stephen portends to "transmut[e] the daily bread of experience into the radiating body of everliving life" (186). The means of this is poetry—not only poetry but the act of composing poetry in real time, an act that affects Stephen as an experience of rhythm: "He spoke the verses aloud from the first lines till the music and rhythm suffused his mind" (186). When Stephen awakens the next morning, he experiences noises imagined rather than real: "No sound was to be heard: but he knew that all around him life was about to awaken in common noises, hoarse voices, sleepy prayers. [...] Weary! Weary! He too was weary of ardent ways" (186). In a simultaneous recollection and anticipation of noise, Stephen's poetic voice and real voice nearly merge ("He *too* was weary"), and the narrative voice itself begins to speak in rhymes ("common noises, hoarse voices"). The villanelle and the noises

that it sublimates are imaginatively fused into a kind of noise-music manifested psychologically for Stephen and stylistically for Joyce.

The scene that follows the full occurrence Stephen's villanelle—a swarm of birds flying overhead—results in an "inhuman clamour" of "shrill cries" that leads Stephen to reflect on the significance of his impending exile. He responds by reciting Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), the mythological Irish play whose title character sells her soul to the devil (a parallel to Stephen's Luciferian "Non serviam" [99]). As he recollects Yeats's language, a "soft liquid joy like the noise of many waters flowed over his memory," and a "soft liquid joy flowed through the words where the soft long vowels hurtled noiselessly and fell away" (190): Stephen experiences a kind of cleansing metaphorical noise sublimated through the operations of poetic language, whose long vowels produce "mute chime" and "mute peal" (190). The noises being silenced here are given an explicit historical resonance as Stephen recollects the performance of *Cathleen* at the Irish National Theater. Stephen's recollection of the noises of audience resistance—"A libel on Ireland!", "Made in Germany!", "Blasphemy!" (190)—are given historical specificity by the stylistic language in which he frames his memory. As in Arnall's sermon, the paratactic prepositional phrases in Stephen's language embed time, place, agency, and significance into Stephen's experience and memory of spectacle and sound: Stephen recalls "the scene *of* the hall *on* the night *of* the opening *of* the national theatre," "alone *at* the tawdry scenecloths and human dolls framed *by* the garish lamps of the stage," where "catcalls and hisses and mocking cries ran *in* rude gusts *round* the hall *from* his scattered fellowstudents" (190, my italics). The noises of this seminal event in Irish theater history (and in the history of the theatrical scandal) are both reflected in and shaped by the rhythmic language of Stephen himself.<sup>35</sup>



*Ulysses*—although not Stephen himself—seems to give up the fantasy of a "noiseless" existence, and to unleash noise in acts of reckless formal and generic abandon. One of Joyce's central ambitions in *Ulysses* is to explore rhetoric and language as technologies in themselves: as practical, material applications of knowledge for interpreting and manipulating the world. Joyce clearly believes in the potential of art to comment on and grapple with its context, but underscores the technological basis and applications of music and musical rhetoric.

### "Ready-Made Phrases" and Musical Rhetoric in *Ulysses*

In "Politics and the English Language" (1946), George Orwell critiques "ready-made" phrases as the last resort of those who prize euphony over precision: "If you use ready-made phrases, you not only don't have to hunt about for the words; you also don't have to bother with the rhythms of your sentences since these phrases are generally so arranged as to be more or less euphonious."<sup>36</sup> This is the argument of "Cyclops," in which the Citizen's easy rhetoric and dead metaphors, the empty verbiage of the interpolating voices, and the fatuous sentimentalism of "The Holy City" all become different kinds of "phoneygraph," more "phoney" yet for being distanced from the actors themselves. Similarly, "Circe" plays with the relationship between sound and nationalism: whereas the interpolations of "Cyclops" parody various kinds of narrative prose, "Circe" instead stages the climactic events of the chapter in a weirdly self-referential theatrical display, which recurrently invokes characters' disembodied voices ("The Voice of Kitty," "The Voice of Lynch," etc.). One can see the seeds of such a move in "A Painful Case," where Duffy acts as audience to his own almost-disembodied voice: here that disembodiment is made literal and "epiphany" exposed as a theatrical contrivance. "Circe" emphasizes the mechanical nature of these repetitive cultural sounds, using pianolas and gramophones as

background music for Stephen's and Bloom's encounters with Bella and Zoe, and then with the police. Antheil's "Mr. Bloom and the Cyclops" aims not only for confusion, synaesthesia, and pseudo-cubist "non-coincidence," but for sheer volume, managed by switching pianolas on and off. The multiple diegetic voices and extra-diegetic interpolations of "Cyclops," similarly, intensify both the noise and the volume, and Antheil's opera is designed to aid both the exegetic and the diegetic noises in Joyce's effort: it aims to comment on the action and to turn inside-out the mind of his characters; it means to realize thought and emotion as material entities, physically embodied in the "belly" of its audience. Aiming to hit its audience in the stomach, "Mr Bloom and the Cyclops" proposes to merge the forms of "Cyclops" and "Circe," not just emphasizing but staging the pervasiveness and instability of mechanically reproduced noise. "Cyclops" illustrates the ruptures between political rhetoric (the Citizen's) and literary style (the interpolations), revealing both of these to be, in Antheil's terms, "phoney-graphy." Much as "Circe" has been read as a case study in the failure or refusal of characters and readers to answer the disembodied interpellative hail of ideology, "Mr. Bloom and the Cyclops" explores the oppressive effects of musical rhetoric on its characters, even as it exposes the immanent "non-coincidences" within orderly and musical political rhetoric.<sup>37</sup>

As with Eliot, Joyce's ordering of sounds, images, and bodies into a (methodically mythic) structure invokes the figure of Wagner. As Timothy Martin has argued, Wagner's emphasis on "absorbing" an audience and his dislike for the practice of turning musical performances into social events, leads Joyce to ally him with "musical idealism" and the general principle of art's autonomy.<sup>38</sup> Joyce's interest, social or otherwise, with the music and person of George Antheil corresponds to a growing skepticism about the autonomy of art: a skepticism that emerges in "Circe," which refuses to grant Wagner his orotund idealism. In the Wagnerian

climax of "Circe," Stephen, threatens the emaciated ghost of his mother with an ashplant as he shouts "*Nothing!*" (475), naming the shattered sword that Siegfried extracts from a mythical ashplant, reforges, and uses to slay a giant dragon. A performance of the role of this giant dragon by a Swiss bass prompted the invention of the "Senger-phone," the megaphone-like object used by Edith Sitwell to project her voice for a performance of *Façade*. For Sitwell, as for Antheil, as for Eliot, the practice of actually staging a Wagner opera reveals the principles of aesthetic absorption and autonomy to embed principles of distantiation, alienation, and parody.<sup>39</sup>

Taken in earnest, Joyce's citation recalls Stephen's ambitions to "forge" an aesthetic and a racial consciousness (as well as Siegfried's surfeit of mother issues). These ambitions exist almost entirely in his head, where it is that he "must kill the priest and the king." Neither Bloom nor Dedalus is immune from opining about universal languages, and these languages, along with the entire bombastic mythical *Sturm und Drang* of Wagnerian opera, are brought swiftly back to earth: "Circe" degrades into a series of voices shouting "Dublin's burning! Dublin's burning! On fire, on fire!" (488).

Wagner is one of many participants in *Ulysses'* and Stephen's constant search for a universal language. Stephen suggests in "Circe" that such a language will seek a human origin by way of a "structural rhythm" made palpable by way of an "gesture": "gesture, not music, not odours, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm" (15.105-7). "Entelechy," or self-fulfillment, is for Stephen a dialectical process whose structure is rendered "visible" by embodied artistic expression. The so-called universal languages in *Ulysses*—mythology (Gaelic, Greek, Hebrew, and other), music, Latin, Esperanto, the universal "gestures" addressed by Stephen—emerge from local and contingent events, often the subject of farce, pantomime, and parody. Lynch notes

that Stephen "likes dialectic, the universal language" (15.4726), and that language too is put under strain in "Circe." Even Stephen's reflections on the entelechial significance of going "to the ends of the earth to traverse not itself" (15.2116-21) are interrupted by a "noise in the street"—a gramophone blaring "The Holy City." As Steven Connor neatly puts it, Stephen's synthetic vision of "entelechy through assimilation," of becoming by way of traversing one's antithesis, "depends on the assiduous exclusion of all the meaningless ambient noise that distracts him."<sup>40</sup>

The gramophone in "Circe," like the various noises in Antheil's music, comes to suggest the technological and material quality of sound: qualities that enable sound to be manipulated, while giving it potential for moving through history, backwards or forwards. If God is "a shout in the street" (2.386), it is also a "phoney-graph," whose voice is capable of being played backwards (or, in the case of "Aeolus," typeset backwards). The word "dog" and the noisy barking of a retriever are preceded by a call-and-response between the "voices of the blessed" singing "The Holy City," and the voices of the "damned" who are singing it backwards: "Htengier Tnetopinmo Dog Drol eht rof, Aiulella!" To this, Adonai (or, Joyce specifies, "the voice of Adonai") responds, "Dooooooooooooog!" (489). The emergence of a dog, a "sniffing terrier," as Mrs. Marion sings her part to "La ci darem la mano" from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (and Bloom has his own sniffing terrier moments) suggests that music, notwithstanding the Wagnerian or Schopenhauerian moments of "Circe," is essentially farcical, the realm not of the transcendent but of the comic domesticated animal.<sup>41</sup>

The dog, a participant in and diegetic commentator on the drama, vocally joins in as Private Carr pummels Stephen for (ostensibly) insulting Cissy Caffrey and/or the King (and/or for being pro-Boer):

MAJOR TWEEDY (*loudly*): Carbine in bucket! Cease fire! Salute!

THE RETRIEVER (*barking furiously*): Ute ute ute ute ute ute ute. [...]

A HAG: What call had the redcoat to strike the gentleman and he under the influence. Let them go fight the Boers!

THE BAWD: Listen to who's talking! Hasn't the soldier a right to go with his girl? He gave him the coward's blow.

(*They grab at each other's hair, claw at each other and spit.*)

THE RETRIEVER (*barking*): Wow wow wow. (491)

The retriever's "utes" echo Mrs. Breen's earlier enthusiastic utterances to Bloom—"Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes," a response which anticipates Molly's acquiescence to Bloom in "Penelope," but which also mimics (down to the number of *Yeses*) the already-parodic lock-step responses of the dragoon guards in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*:

COLONEL: If you want a receipt for that popular mystery,  
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon,

DRAGOONS: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!

COLONEL: Take all the remarkable people in history,  
Rattle them off to a popular tune.

DRAGOONS: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!<sup>42</sup>

Tarnished by the imperial crises of the Boer Wars, likened to the choric parodies of Gilbert and Sullivan's idiotic dragoon guards, the "redcoats" in "Circe" register a fraught relation between the crown and the Irish subject.<sup>43</sup> The allusion suggests that political authority, here asserted by the policeman's farcical but violent "coward's blow," comprises mere catalogues of "remarkable people" rattled off to popular tunes.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout *Ulysses*, catalogues, advertisements, and journalistic productions turn the reader's focus to the materiality of text, independent or even in spite of its semantic content. As Garry Leonard has argued, Joyce's use of commodity culture in *Ulysses* makes "ephemeral"

documents permanent and memorable: in *Ulysses* the "ephemeral language" of advertisement is "woven into the narrative," so that even the more transcendent language and imagery of Catholicism look like highly successful advertising campaigns.<sup>45</sup> Advertisements become memorable by virtue of memorable sonic jingling ("What is a home without Plumtree's Potted Meat? Incomplete"), but also by virtue of their material ubiquity throughout the text. Reading backwards, Duffy's phrasemongering and Stephen's famous promise to forge the "conscience of his race" serve a similar function as slogans whose easy memorability strikes a false note.

In *Ulysses*, Joyce approximates the material quality of language by exploring the technological grounds by which language is mediated and manipulated, down to letters and phonemes: that is, while Joyce reveals what Kristeva calls the "music of the pure signifier," he also reveals the noise with which that music is entangled. *Ulysses* associates the sonic and visual elements of discourse with the mediation and dissemination of noise. This mediation is evident in "Aeolus," which takes place in the offices of the *Evening Telegraph*. Structured around a series of bold headlines or picture-captions, "Aeolus" illustrates "HOW A GREAT DAILY ORGAN IS TURNED OUT!" In fact every chapter of *Ulysses*, each based on a different "organ" or function of the human body, asks this very same question. As it churns out the society pages, however, the *Telegraph* begins to resemble a different kind of "organ," a musical instrument (akin to the Pound/Antheil musical factory): "The machines clanked in threefour time. Thump, thump, thump. Now if he got paralysed there and no-one knew how to stop them they'd clank on and on the same, print it over and over and up and back" (98). "Aeolus" recalls "A Painful Case," where the rhythms of journalistic prose are both critiqued as "threadbare" and "inane," but also the basis for Duffy's recursive experience of the rhythms of Emily Sinico's name. In "Aeolus"

Joyce explores the noise-music of the factory itself, examining how musical time drives and is driven by the rhythms of journalism.

"Aeolus" illustrates how the musical machinery of journalism can appropriately translate events into an attractive journalistic style. Duffy's eye—and the reader's—is caught by the boldly typefaced "DEATH OF A LADY AT SYDNEY PARADE: A PAINFUL CASE," and Mrs. Kearney obsesses over the typefaces of her musical "programme": the visual elements of language catalyze Duffy's epiphany and sharpen the satire of Mrs. Kearney. The interest with typography and the visual aspects of language, with palindromes and words spelled backwards, corresponds with an interest in the sounds of language, and the novel's most auditory chapters call on the eccentric structure, typographical play, and terrible jokes of "Aeolus." The boldface type in "Aeolus," and its brief moments of farce, set up the staging of "Circe," and the unfortunate answer to Lenehan's new favorite joke ("What opera is like a railway?" *The Rose of Castile* ["rows of cast-steel"]) sets up "Sirens," where Bloom remembers hearing Molly perform from that same opera. The farts at the end of "Sirens," culminating in "Ppprrpffrrppffff," are a collapse simultaneously into pure sound and into pure typography.

The last interpolation of "Cyclops" follows a similar trend, taking a climactic event that pivots on highly rhythmical speech and dissolving it into meaningless typeface. Sebastian D.G. Knowles has read Bloom's responses to the Citizen's as musical utterances, suggesting that Bloom's speech—"Mendelssohn was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the Savior was a jew and his father was a jew. Your God"—follows waltz-like rhythmical patterns.<sup>46</sup> This language has an immediate physical effect, prompting the Citizen's attempt to "brain" Bloom with a biscuitbox. Yet here, rather than describing nonsense in puffed-up language, the interpolation describes an actual act of violence (compared to an earthquake) in dispassionate

journalistic prose, in what Jack Duffy might call the "threadbare" and "inane" expressions. As in "A Painful Case" the interpolation satirizes "eyewitness authority" by satirizing, as in "A Mother," the attribution of authority to names, titles, and attractive umbrellas:

From the reports of eyewitnesses it transpires that the seismic waves were accompanied by a violent atmospheric perturbation of cyclonic character. An article of headgear since ascertained to belong to the much respected clerk of the crown and peace Mr. George Fottrell and a silk umbrella with gold handle with the engraved initials, crest, coat of arms and house number of the erudite and worshipful chairman of quarter sessions sir Frederick Falkiner, recorder of Dublin, have been discovered by search parties in remote parts of the island respectively, the former on the third basaltic ridge of the giant's causeway [...] . The work of salvage, removal of *debris*, human remains etc has been entrusted to Messrs Michael Meade and Son, 159 Great Brunswick street, and Messrs T. and C. Martin, 77, 78, 79, and 80 North Wall, assisted by the men and officers of the Duke of Cornwall's light infantry under the general supervision of H.R.H., rear admiral, the right honorable sir Hercules Hannibal Habeas Corpus Anderson, K. G., K.P., K.T., P.C., K.C.B, M.P., J.P., M.B., D.S.O., S.O.D., M.F.H., M.R.I.A., B.L., Mus. Doc., P.L.G., F.T.C.D., F.R.U.I., F.R.C.P.I. and F.R.C.S.I. (282; 12.1869-77, 1888-96)

What begins as eloquent prose dissolves into meaningless typography: here the letters do not even form contiguous sounds, being utterable only as letters. Anderson is apparently a doctorate of music, and an M.P., but the actual terms of his authority become aurally inaccessible and basically unreadable. Fottrell's umbrella, similarly, is marked not only with a coat of arms and address, but with his initials: just as his heritage has been abstracted into a visual symbol, his actual identity has been congealed into discrete letters and a house number. Journalistic and literary interpretations come to mean no more, and look and sound no better, than the advertisements churned out in "Aeolus" or the "inane expressions" that cover over naturalistic detail in "A Painful Case." The appearance of language gives it an extra material force, but language's visual aspect is revealed to be as lazily ideological as its auditory qualities.

The palindromes and backwards language in "Aeolus" are paralleled in "Cyclops" and "Circe" by the sounds of "universal languages," which speak as through "phoneygraphs"



(culminating, in "Circe," with the voice of God Himself speaking backwards). Thus *Ulysses* exposes these universal languages as *ad hoc*, innately social, and always-already mediated. One of the central jokes of "Cyclops," for example, is the artificial puffery of ancient pseudo-Gaelic and theosophical mythology, language, and iconography, notwithstanding the citizen's complaints about the "shoneens that can't speak their own language." (255; lines 680-1). The mythical language in which the citizen is described starts to resemble Schopenhauer's rumblings about the bodily force of music (the "loud strong hale reverberations of his formidable heart thundered rumblingly") and Pound's rumblings about the Great Bass and "absolute rhythm." In this sense the opera's debts to the surrealistic and parodic dramatic techniques of Cocteau, the consummate anti-Wagnerian, puncture the idea of a musical total-art-work motivated by "strong hale reverberations." The "non-coincidences" between phoneygraph and orchestra mimic the "non-coincidences" between the Citizen's bloviations and the noumenal music of the orchestra.

Joyce appropriates Wagner not only because of his mythic or thematic content, but also because Wagner indexes the materiality of sound. He anticipates the argument made by Friedrich Kittler, "World-Breath: On Wagner's Media Technology" (1987), which addresses Wagner's departures from classical drama:

[C]lassical drama was little more than an exchange of verbal information between people who, it goes without saying, could talk and listen. They knew each other by name or, if they had not yet met, at least by sight. [...] The acoustic field as such, with its senseless noises and disembodied voices, had no place in drama. [...] No doubt, opera acted as an acoustic data-stream. But [...] when they sang arias and thus entered the acoustic field, they did so in order to express so-called affects, which for their part had but little repercussion on the dramatic interaction. It was only in exceptional instances that sounds (like signals or cries) transported information on the interpersonal level as well. Thus, opera was based upon a separation between verbal and acoustic data [...].<sup>47</sup>

Wagner's innovation, as Kittler sees it, is to bridge a series of gaps—between the acoustic and verbal "data-streams," between affect and information, between (most obviously) music and

drama—and to do so in a way that employs the physiology of the body itself. In Kittler's model it is "breath" that grounds the "materiality of musico-dramatic data-streams" in the "diaphragm, lung, throat, and mouth": a breath that operates both within the bodies of the singers and within the musico-dramatic text (219-21). Those in the orchestra pit serve the "function of an amplifier": they amplify the acoustics and dynamics of the music-drama without fundamentally altering the content of the "data-stream." This, Kittler suggests, is why Wagner frustrates Adorno's "musical logic," in its attention to formal immanence and its inattention to or scorn for things like *volume* or "acoustic illusions" (224), although as I point out in Chapter Two, Adorno is attentive to Wagner's dynamic excesses as moments of noise and rupture. For Joyce, too, allusions to Wagnerian opera functions quite differently from those to Mozartean or *bel canto* opera (subsets of opera characterized, in Kittler's understanding, by acoustic but not dramatic data).

Often discussed in terms of its internal order and its resemblance to a fugue, "Sirens" looks very much like an effort to negotiate among music (pure acoustics), drama (verbal representation, including interior monologue), and musical drama (acoustic data that communicates information, largely by virtue of its emplacement in the body): that episode even ends with a certain kind of "world-breath." What starts as music's material basis and liberation of noise is processed coextensively through: (1) the body, and (2) the repetition and development of the textual material through a passage of time (as in a fugue). Bloom's thoughts, in "Sirens," frequently digress into Antheilesque assertions on the mathematical and temporal basis of music, in language that can tend to resemble Stephen's attempts to solve *Hamlet* by means of algebra: "Numbers it is. All music when you come to think. Two multiplied by two divided by half is twice one. Vibrations: chords those are" (228, l. 830). Ultimately, Bloom decides, "Time makes

the tune": the art of music relies on the temporal organization of material as much as it relies on the content of the material itself. Depending on their organization, tunes and thematic subjects layered on top of each other can produce a fugue, or they can produce noise. The project of *Ulysses* is to interrogate both the noise and the music of Ireland: the rhetorical manipulation of musical and human subjects is revealed to be constituted in "non-coincidences" and ruptures.

Through *Dubliners* and *Portrait*, Joyce's career moves from a musical sublimation of noise (*Chamber Music*) to a musical liberation of noise: in the process, music is exposed as one of many kinds of rhetoric, whose social and artistic importance can never be extracted from its context. *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist* represent a search for the proper modes of musical expression: "A Mother" and "A Painful Case" query music's material roots, but also caution against abstracting music from performance. *Portrait*, which dramatizes the act of poetic composition, seeks rhythmic beauty that can offer the artist an escape from noise, but reveals those rhythms to register and reinscribe the "ardent ways" of culture. Notwithstanding this general shift in Joyce's emphasis, sound retains a highly material significance and presence, and this helps explain Antheil's appeal. If, as Kittler has it, Wagner was the forebearer of the amplifier and the gramophone, Antheil represented a contemporary fulfillment of that promise, minus the baggage of Wagnerian idealism or the factitious rhetoric of audience absorption. In the next chapter, I argue that the Sitwells, along with William Walton, draw on their contemporary musical scene—including the innovations of Cocteau and the modified total-art-works of the Ballets Russes—in order to defamiliarize the social role of music: the extent to which the rhythms of daily life are shaped by the aesthetics of musical culture.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1960), 182.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 558. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>3</sup> Martin performed his realization of the few existing fragments of the opera at the 1996 International James Joyce Symposium. Cf. Paul Martin, "'Mr. Bloom and the Cyclops': Joyce and Antheil's Unfinished 'Opera Mécanique,'" *Bronze By Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D.G. Knowles (New York and London: Garland, 1999). Knowles' volume includes several valuable essays on Joyce's knowledge and use of music, and on musical adaptations of Joyce, from Geoffrey Molineux Palmer's settings of *Chamber Music* to works by Peter Maxwell Davies, Luigi Dallapiccola, Luciano Berio, John Cage, and of course Antheil. Albright briefly mentions the "Mr. Bloom" project in *Untwisting the Serpent*, 148.

<sup>4</sup> Antheil, letter to Ezra Pound (April 1925), reprinted in Piccinini, "'Non più andrai farfallone rumoroso' - 'You Will Go No More, Noisy Butterfly': Joyce and Antheil," 79. Piccinini hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>5</sup> Though I will not pursue it here, a discussion of *Exiles* (1919) would be similarly useful, in terms of its juxtapositions between journalism and literature, or its attention to the embodiment of desire. In Act I, for example, Robert says to Bertha, "I think of you always—as something beautiful and distant—the moon or some deep music." (Bertha responds, "And last night which was I?") A review of *Exiles* from Munich remarked, "All that noise for an Irish stew?"

<sup>6</sup> For more on noise as a statement of "non-identity," see Chapter One.

<sup>7</sup> Hence I would suggest, *contra* Georg Lukács, that the intensification of noise through Joyce's work, far from capitulating to dominant ideologies, emphasizes the rhetorically constructed nature of ideology. That is, the more Joyce's writing abounds in naturalistic detail (and in noise), the more it parodies dominant political structures and makes apparent their historical contingency. On the political resonances of generic parody in Irish writing, see David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> In addition to those discussed here, see Vernon Hall Jr., "Joyce's Use of Da Ponte and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*," *PMLA* 66.2 (1951); Jackson I. Cope, "The Rhythmic Gesture: Image and Aesthetic in Joyce's *Ulysses*," *ELH* 29.1 (1962); Zack Bowen, *Musical Allusions in the Works of James Joyce: Early Poetry Through Ulysses* (Albany: SUNY P, 1974); Alistair Wightman, "Szymanowski and Joyce," *The Musical Times* 123.1676 (1982); Matthew Hodgart and Ruth Bauerle, *Joyce's Grand Operoar: Opera in Finnegans Wake* (Champaign: U of Illinois P, 1996); Jackson W. Weaver, *Joyce's Music and Noise: Theme and Variation in his Writings* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1998). The "fugue-like" structure of the "Sirens" episode in *Ulysses* has received particularly exhaustive attention. See Bucknell, *LMMA*, as well as David W. Cole, "Fugal Structure in the Sirens Episode of *Ulysses*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 19 (1973); Lawrence Levin, "The Sirens Episode as Music: Joyce's Experiment in Prose Polyphony," *James Joyce Quarterly* 3.1 (1965); Nadya Zimmerman, "Musical Form as Narrator: The Fugue of the Sirens in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 26.1 (2002). Hugh Kenner writes, "Joyce embalms in cadences what Dublin embalms in music." Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* (New York: Columbia UP, 1987), 12.

<sup>9</sup> Mack Smith, "The Structural Rhythm in *Ulysses*: Dominant to Love to Return," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 30.4 (1984): 417.

<sup>10</sup> I am drawing on the very simplest definition of "technology"—the practical application (*techne*) of knowledge (*logos*). I am also influenced by Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of "instrumental reason" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which criticizes technology (in this same, basic sense) as the instrument of ideology and power.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel C. Melnick, *Fullness of Dissonance: Modern Fiction and the Aesthetics of Music* (Rutherford, Penn.: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1994), 114, 24. Melnick draws on poststructuralist readings of *Ulysses* by Derrida and Fritz Senn, inter alia, while in earlier chapters he elaborates Adornian and Nietzschean notions of dissonance. Melnick

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draws on Adornian notions of dissonance emphasizing active, embodied musical interpretation (what Nattiez calls "ethesis") and a negative-dialectical resistance to abstraction and resolution.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Bruce McDonald, "The Strength and Sorrow of Young Stephen: Toward a Reading of the Dialectic of Harmony and Dissonance in Joyce's *Portrait*," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 37.4 (1991): 362-3. McDonald's nuanced dialectical reading of *Portrait* emphasizes, and suggests that for Stephen and for Joyce, the realm of art rather than politics represents the most genuine hope of properly confronting "the noise of [Ireland's] own politics" (381).

<sup>13</sup> James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 173. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>14</sup> Critics have usefully excavated the history of operatic performance, suggesting that the symbolic significance of opera in Joyce is local and specific, not just global and mythic. See Seamus Reilly, "Joyce and Dublin Opera, 1888-1904," *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D.G. Knowles (London: Taylor & Francis, 1999); John McCourt, "Joyce's Trieste: *Città Musicalissima*," *Bronze By Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D.G. Knowles (New York and London: Garland, 1999). Reilly has elaborates the history of opera in Dublin between 1888-1904, drawing on the work of Attali and Cheryl Herr to argue that "Joyce's use of opera draws attention to its sophisticated cultural codes" (14), while also recognizing the "institutional structure" of opera and theatre. Reilly argues Joyce's interest in the "local and symbolic connections" enacted by operatic performance *in Dublin*, often the less refined (and less well-funded) versions accessible to Joyce's lower-middle-class family. Similarly, John McCourt examines the politics of specific opera productions in Trieste during Joyce's stay there: for example, performances of Verdi in 1913 (the Verdi centenary) served as expressions of resistance against Austro-Hungarian authority. McCourt calls particular attention to Verdi's *Nabucco*, whose famous chorus of Hebrew slaves ("Va, pensiero") was sung by thirty thousand protesting Irredentists on the day of the Verdi centenary.

<sup>15</sup> Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics*, 167. Hereafter cited parenthetically. Danius suggests that Joyce's novel increasingly *differentiates* sight from sound, in such a way that abstracting sonic phenomena from visual phenomena ultimately emphasizes their interrelatedness. That is, paradoxically, it is by attempting to dissociate sight and sound that Joyce demonstrates that the two "have to operate in tandem." Hence she argues that Joyce aspires to a kind of modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk* which implicates "different forms of art, high and low, old and new"—a synaesthetic "literary encyclopedia" and history of the world (185).

<sup>16</sup> In this respect Melnick's model is fully apt: the simultaneous compulsion and inability to categorize sounds in particular ways is a dilemma to which the characters and the readers of *Ulysses* are simultaneously subjected; a dilemma which Antheil's operatic project apparently meant to exaggerate and dramatize.

<sup>17</sup> James Joyce, "The Home Rule Comet," *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 159. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>18</sup> The term translated as "realism" is *verismo*—a term also used with respect to naturalistic and often violent Italian literature and opera of the late nineteenth century. Though Joyce's essay does not discuss these trends in Italian culture, he acknowledges that "modern realism," particularly in France, is predicted by two centuries in Defoe's willingness to depict the "lowest dregs of the populace" (173). Marshall Brown cites *verismo* opera and Joyce's *Dubliners* in his Hegelian account of nineteenth and early twentieth-century "realism." Brown argues that realism comes to rely on a "silhouetting" effect, juxtaposing *coup de theatre* (foregrounded theatrical action) against "tableau" (visual and conceptual background). Marshall Brown, "The Logic of Realism: A Hegelian Approach," *PMLA* 96.2 (1981).

<sup>19</sup> James Joyce, "Realism and Idealism in English Literature," *Occasional, Critical and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 173.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Blake on Milton (1809): "Every time less than a pulsation of the artery / Is equal in its period & value to six thousand years" (Joyce [ed. Barry], *Occasional*, 300, n. 40).

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- <sup>21</sup> As S.L. Goldberg argues, it is too easy to distinguish between Naturalism and Symbolism in Joyce's work: "For Joyce the aesthetic symbol expresses both the 'natauralistic' world of external reality and the activity of the individual at the same time." S.L. Goldberg, *The Classical Temper: A Study of James Joyce's Ulysses* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), 216.
- <sup>22</sup> James Joyce, "James Clarence Mangan," *Occasional, Critical and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 54. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>23</sup> James Joyce, "James Clarence Mangan," *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 129.
- <sup>24</sup> James Joyce, "The Holy Office," *The Portable James Joyce*, ed. Harry Levin (New York and London: Penguin, 1976). Hereafter cited parenthetically by line.
- <sup>25</sup> W.B. Yeats, "To Ireland in the Coming Times," *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran, Rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), lines 1-2. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>26</sup> Both in the excremental imagery and in the poem's tetrameter suggest Joyce's debts to Swift, whose "excremental vision" would later be discussed in John Middleton Murry's *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography*. On the colonial/postcolonial implications of excrement, see Kelly Anspaugh, "Powers of Ordure: James Joyce and the Excremental Vision(s)," *Mosaic* 27.1 (1994); Joshua D. Esty, "Excremental Postcolonialism," *Contemporary Literature* 40.1 (1999). Esty argues that the scatological emphasis of Joyce both critiques imperialism and "deflates nationalism" (47), and reads Stephen's flight of the nets in *Portrait* as a "struggle to forge a workable personal identity in the face of a shit-tainted public sphere" (51).
- <sup>27</sup> Christy L. Burns, *Gestural Politics: Stereotype and Parody in Joyce* (Albany: SUNY P, 2000), 52-3. Kristevan readings of Joyce have been most productive in addressing the novel's formal and linguistic relation to authority. See also Clara D. McClean, "Wasted Words: The Body Language of Joyce's 'Nausicaa'," *Joycean Cultures, Culturing Joyces*, eds. Vincent John Cheng, Kimberly J. Devlin and Margot Norris (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1998); Johanna X. K. Garvey, "City Limits: Reading Gender and Urban Spaces in *Ulysses*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 41.1 (1995).
- <sup>28</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 23.
- <sup>29</sup> James Joyce, "Chamber Music," *The Portable James Joyce*, ed. Harry Levin, Rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1966), section I. Hereafter cited parenthetically by section and line.
- <sup>30</sup> Jeri Johnson, "Introduction," *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), xxviii-xxix. Johnson argues that these words resonate for Stephen, as a "somatic" response, even as he fails to understand their "reverberating effects and meaning" (including, for example, the queer implications of the words, "suck" and "cocks"). Johnson also cites Kristeva's associations of rhythmic language with the semiotic *chora* in *Revolutions in Poetic Language* (1984).
- <sup>31</sup> Myra T. Russell, "Chamber Music: Words and Music Lovingly Coupled," *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D.G. Knowles (New York: Garland, 1999), 86, n.3.
- <sup>32</sup> See C oil n Owens, *James Joyce's Painful Case* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2008). Owens argues Duffy as a Catholic apostate who rejected the priesthood and instead embraced, first, Schopenhauerian pessimism and, then, "Nietzschean nihilism and spiritual despair" (1).
- <sup>33</sup> On the specific historical role of prostitution in the development of Joyce's work, see Robert Scholes, "In the Brothel of Modernism," *In Search of James Joyce* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1992). Scholes argues that Joyce's and Picasso's uses of the brothel bespeak modernism's generally voyeuristic position towards women.

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<sup>34</sup> W.B. Yeats, "Her Praise," *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran, Rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 150, lines 11-14.

<sup>35</sup> On the Irish Literary Theatre and the premiere of *The Countess Cathleen*, see Don Gifford, *Joyce Annotated: Notes for Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1982), 269; John FitzPatrick Dean, *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth-century Ireland* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2004). On the founding of the Abbey Theatre and the premiere of Synge's *Playboy*, see Blackadder 69ff.

<sup>36</sup> George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," *In Front of Your Nose: 1945-1950*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Boston: David R. Godine, 2000), vol. 4 of *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters*, 134.

<sup>37</sup> See Mark Wollaeger, "Reading *Ulysses*: Agency, Ideology, and the Novel," *Joyce and the Subject of History*, eds. Mark A. Wollaeger, Victor Luftig and Robert E. Spoo (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996).

<sup>38</sup> Timothy Martin, *Joyce and Wagner: A Study of Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 22ff. See also Timothy P. Martin, "Joyce, Wagner, and the Wandering Jew," *Comparative Literature* 42.1 (1990). As Martin argues, Joyce was growing increasingly impatient with the "Wagner cult," which he thought decadent, dated, and "[eighteen-]ninetyish."

<sup>39</sup> This argument is indebted to Matthew Wilson Smith, *The Total Work of Art*, which demonstrates how Brechtian aesthetics emerged out of Wagnerian theatrical practice. Martin Puchner discusses Marjorie Barkentin's 1958 staging of "Circe," a dramatization that also included the opening scenes of "Telemachus" and "Hades," and notes Barkentin's desire to preserve the narrative effect of Joyce's stage directions by creating "the figure of a narrator who tries to keep the exploding theatricality under control" (98). Antheil anticipated Barkentin's ambitions by some thirty years, adding not just a narrator but a narrative *voice*. In both "Circe" and "Cyclops," the voices of characters are in tension with the disembodied voice of extradiegesis: either the set-piece interpolations of "Cyclops" or, in "Circe," the controlling hands of an extra-diegetic narrator.

<sup>40</sup> Steven Connor, "'Jigajiga...Yummyyum...Pfuuuuuuu!...Bbbbllllll blblblobschb!': 'Circe's' Ventriloquy," *Reading Joyce's "Circe"*, ed. Andrew Gibson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 139.

<sup>41</sup> There is a biographical element to the God/dog problem: Joyce was, to the point of phobia, afraid of thunder and of dogs. The former he associated with religious terror, the latter with a very worldly one (he was attacked by a dog as a child). Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 514.

<sup>42</sup> W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, "Patience; or, Bunthorne's Bride," *The Complete Plays of Gilbert and Sullivan* (New York and London: Norton, 1976), Act I, 161. Hereafter cited parenthetically by act and page.

<sup>43</sup> On *Ulysses* and the Boer Wars, see M. Keith Booker, *Ulysses, Capitalism and Colonialism: Reading Joyce After the Cold War* (Westport and London: Greenwood, 2000). Booker uses Joyce's engagement of the Boer Wars to differentiate him from other modernist writers critiqued by Georg Lukács.

<sup>44</sup> Gifford does not cite this particular passage as an allusion to *Patience*, he locates another such allusion in "Circe," when Virag echoes Bunthorne's jab against Archibald Grosvenor: "Jocular. With my eyeglass in the ocular" (420, 15.2441), an allusion to the visual arts (Bunthorne's monocle is modeled after that worn by James Whistler). Don Gifford and Robert J Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*, Rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1988), 495. The monocle indexes the problem of Joyce's own deteriorating eyesight and, thereby, the material qualities and visual appearance of the text itself. See Roy K Gottfried, *Joyce's Iritis and the Irritated Text: The Dis-lexic Ulysses* (Gainesville: U of Florida P, 1995).. That said, Joyce alludes here not to Whistler, but to Gilbert and Sullivan: rematerialized theatrical and musical embodiments of Joyce's ocular dilemma.

<sup>45</sup> Garry Leonard, "The History of Now: Commodity Culture and Everyday Life in Joyce," *Joyce and the Subject of History*, eds. Mark A. Wollaeger, Victor Luftig and Robert E. Spoo (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996), 15.

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<sup>46</sup> Sebastian D.G. Knowles, "Introduction," *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D.G. Knowles (New York and London: Garland, 1999), xxx.

<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Kittler, "World-Breath: On Wagner's Media Technology," trans. Friedrich Kittler and David J. Levin, *Opera Through Other Eyes*, ed. David J. Levin (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994), 217-8. Hereafter cited parenthetically. Kittler's title derives from the "Liebestod" from *Tristan und Isolde*—"in des Welt-Atems / wehendem All" ("in the universal stream of the World-Breath").



## CHAPTER V

### PERFORMING PUBLICITY: AUTHENTICITY, INFLUENCE, AND THE SITWELLIAN *COMMEDIA*

In February 1922, Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell Sitwell gave a private performance of *Façade*: an "entertainment" featuring Edith Sitwell's verse and music by the young British composer William Walton. In an L-shaped drawing room at her brothers' home at 2 Carlyle Square, Sitwell read her decidedly eccentric poems through a giant megaphone ("Sengerphone"), accompanied by decidedly eccentric music, from behind a painted screen (fig. 3). These private performances would be made increasingly public, starting with an ill-received debut at London's Aeolian Hall in June of the same year. Yet Edith Sitwell exaggerates when she writes, "Never was a larger and more imposing shower of brickbats hurled at any new work."<sup>1</sup> The premiere was met less with vitriol than with confusion and indifference, and the notion that *Façade* produced a massive *scandale* along the lines of *Parade* or *Le Sacre* is laced with a heavy dose of wishful thinking.<sup>2</sup>

Sitwell's "automythomania"<sup>3</sup> has been well-documented: like Antheil, Satie, and Stravinsky, Sitwell was a relentless self-explicator and very much invested in building up a public persona. For this reason, to write on Edith Sitwell is to contend in one way or another with F. R. Leavis's assertion that she belongs more to "the history of publicity than the history of poetry."<sup>4</sup> In this chapter I argue that *Façade* fosters a poetry of publicity, in which the two spheres dialectically enhance each other: while the noise of the social compels the Sitwells to seek new poetic rhythms, the pressures of aesthetic influence compel them to reorganize the rhythms of public life. My argument pivots on questions of mediation, citation, and influence as

issues constellating around publicity: as poetic techniques and as ways of circulating poetry—and poets.



Figure 3: Frank Dobson's curtain for *Façade*<sup>5</sup>

Parsing the specifics of *Façade*'s poetry of publicity is a complex matter largely because of its overdetermined obsession with aesthetic influence. Like many British and Anglo-American writers, the Sitwells came to appreciate modernist music through the notoriety of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, which constantly reexamined and reinvented various trends in the history of theater. Though Edith Sitwell denies, in her autobiography, that the Ballets Russes influenced her poetry, she concedes that every poet was influenced by it to some extent—the Sitwells to a greater extent than most. Sitwell herself wrote two articles on Stravinsky's *Petrushka* for *The New Age* and a book entitled *Children's Tales (From the Russian Ballet)* (1920); on Armistice Day 1918 the Sitwells gave a lavish dinner party in honor of Sergei Diaghilev and Léonide Massine, at which Augustus John, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Lady Ottoline,

Duncan Grant, Mark Gertler, Dora Carrington, David Garnett, St. John and Mary Hutchinson, Francis Birrell, Nina Hammett, D.H. Lawrence, John Maynard Keynes, and Lydia Lopokova (Keynes' future wife) "danced in the peace under Diaghilev's watchful eye" (Garafola 335). Thanks to this party, the Sitwells were now "in a tactical position to upstage Bloomsbury over their new-found admiration for the Ballets Russes," which had until then been relatively unfashionable among the London intelligentsia (Pearson 123-4). To be a figure of "publicity" in such a matter is no small accomplishment.

An important effect of a poetry of publicity, and the reason it would be anathema to Leavis, is a general ambivalence about poetic authenticity. Leavis's claim is anticipated by Sitwell's contemporaries, who saw her and her siblings as avant-garde *enfants terribles* whose main goal was, as Aldous Huxley put it (mockingly but sympathetically), "to REBEL" (qtd. in Pearson 116). For the Sitwells, as Huxley saw it, aesthetic "rebellion" was a form of publicity stunt. The claim is understandable, and useful: being well-familiar with the *scandales* produced by *Parade*, among others, the Sitwells understood musical-theatrical performance as an opportunity for publicity.

Both the sounds of the piece itself, and the noises behind and resulting from its production, circulate around the masked, hidden body; and it is partly for this reason that the appropriately titled *Façade* is criticized for its inauthenticity. The curtain-and-megaphone setup was designed to obscure the figure of the poet and focus the audience's attention on the sounds of the poetry. As Osbert Sitwell wrote five years later, this setup endeavored to correct the logistical and personal discomforts associated with poetry readings:

Our aim was to provide for the poems a suitable musical background, and thus to abolish the necessity for the reciter to indulge in gesture, over-abundant vocal accentuation, or to be seen at all. For the interpolation between the audience and the poem of an unwanted personality can be—and usually is—very trying, for the

reciter usually attempts to infuse into the poem his own idea of "charm." The difficulty, which was how to place the voice of the reciter, without compelling him to shout, on a level with the musical instruments employed, we solved by using a megaphone to magnify the voice. This megaphone—or "sengerphone," to use its technical name,—is made of compressed cotton, so that there is no metallic tone in it at all. Actually it beautifies rather than distorts the timbre of the human voice. The next question was how to abolish as far as possible the reciter, and the inevitable blush-rose shame which his presence entails on the audience.<sup>6</sup>

The Sitwells offer this explanation again and again throughout their work, and Osbert goes all out in defending it. That Sitwell would refer to the reciter as a "he," when Edith Sitwell was that person, seems calculated to aid the notion of an impersonal poetic voice unmediated by the vocal and physical gestures of an "unwanted personality."<sup>7</sup> Even instinctively, it seems difficult to believe that a reciter would be *more* likely to discomfit an audience than would the contrivances of the entire scene: a disembodied voice, intoning and pattering verse through a giant megaphone emerging from the mouth of a Greek mask painted on a curtain. All this is to say nothing of the nonsensical, stylized, generally meaningless verse and the sardonic, allusive, angular quality of the music.

*Façade's* increasingly public performances met with increasingly perplexed reviews. Despite the assertion that the sengerphone was intended to obscure the speaker and shift the audience's focus to the physical voice (and the poetic voice for which it stood), audiences tended to assume that the event was designed to draw *more* attention to the speaker (who was, at least in the earliest performances, Sitwell herself). And while the Sitwells continually assert that these responses miss the point, that misreading looks intrinsic to the entire setup. *Façade* replaces overidentification with alienation: instead of oppressing its audience with a domineering reciter *Façade* perplexes its audience with the overbearing *absence* of a speaker, hidden behind a layered synaesthetic spectacle of defamiliarizing mechanisms.

The effect of the nonsensical verse, confounded by the acoustic complications of a megaphone, was one of confused noise, which the audience was left to interpret in light of their feelings about the Sitwells generally. A common theme among these reviews is a tendency to accuse the piece of "*épatism*," or a mere desire to shock. One particularly caustic review refers to *Façade* as but another example of the Sitwells' rebelling for the sake of rebelling, though he at least seems to grant their explanation for the megaphone:

Miss Edith Sitwell and her brothers have always been apostles of *épatism* and on Tuesday afternoon at the Aeolian Hall they carried their assault on the accepted things a step farther. Their entertainment, entitled *Façade*, consisted of a repetition of her poems by Miss Sitwell to an accompaniment of four wind instruments, violoncello and percussion, devised by Mr W.T. Walton. The poems were read in monotone with great rhythmic emphasis through what was called in the programme a 'Sengerphone', which protruded through the mouth of a monstrous head painted on the curtain by Mr Frank Dobson. The object was, as Mr Osbert Sitwell explained, to prevent the personality of the reciter from getting between the poem and the audience. That much was achieved: but it is almost impossible to make words clearly audible through a megaphone unless they are spoken slowly and distinctly. Mr Walton's accompaniments obviously owe a great deal to Stravinsky and are for the most part too spasmodic. Here and there he succeeded in throwing a gleam of light on the words; and when he had definite dance-rhythms to build up he produced clever results.<sup>8</sup>

Virginia Woolf had been told that the Sitwells were reciting "sheer nonsense through megaphones";<sup>9</sup> upon hearing the poetry itself, she claimed (more tactfully) that she "could not judge" the poetry insofar as she couldn't actually hear it. Those who did manage to understand the poetry were not left much more impressed. One reviewer claims that in general Sitwell's poems worked only "on the overtones of words, and just as it is difficult to produce music with bells that are all overtones [...], so it is difficult to make poetry with overtones alone." The cycle's more successful poems, "Waltz" and "Daphne," added to those overtones some kind of organizing principle, either of theme ("Daphne's" "pastoral idea") or of a "rhythmic framework." Though decrying the use of the saxophone, which he calls an "abortion," the reviewer praises

Walton's "assurance and dissonance" as an amusing addition to Sitwell's "strain of nonsense." The music, often compared to Stravinsky's, was better received than the verse, though it did not always seem to rescue the poetry. One reviewer, Osbert's personal favorite, entitled his review "Drivel They Paid to Hear"; and Noël Coward was inspired enough by it to include a scathing send-up of the Sitwells, entitled "The Swiss Family Whittlebot," as part of his musical revue *London Calling!* (1923). Coward's contemporaries (including Walton himself, apparently) found it funny enough that Coward continued to publish several more parodies by the young Whittlebot daughter, causing a lengthy, public feud between Coward and Edith Sitwell (Pearson 186).

In effect, even if not by intention, the sengerphone personalized rather than depersonalized the piece. Whether *Façade* intended to inspire rather than forestall attention to the poet's "personality" has continued to influence debates over how best to perform *Façade*, and about Sitwell's general place in literary history. Paul Driver writes that an intelligent performance of *Façade* ought to "deprive 'the work of any personal quality (apart from the personality inherent in the poems and music)' (Edith Sitwell's words)."<sup>10</sup> Driver therefore likens the poem to other efforts at modernist impersonality, namely, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* and *The Waste Land*. Obviously I share Driver's inclination to place Sitwell in the same cultural context as Pound and Eliot; that said, if Sitwell intended the Sengerphone to "obtrude" her personality, she failed miserably. Sitwell's own acute awareness of her public persona leads me to discount her word in this respect. In the fifth volume of her periodical *Wheels*, she writes that "The publication of 'Wheels' is regarded by all right-minded people as more of a society event than a literary one," a passage which Aaron Jaffe reads as satirizing critical suspicion towards publicity and literary subcultures (Jaffe 159). Yet Sitwell's art rethinks the very concept of publicity by way of rethinking her relation to aesthetic influence—and vice-versa. Sitwell erects a "façade" of

modernist impersonality in order to critique the very divide between "society events" and "literary" ones. That is, aesthetic influence and innovation, performed to music, becomes both a means and a product of publicity. Cyrena Podrom has argued that Sitwell troubles the conventional study of poetic influence, excessively focused on "linear, single-source, and unidirectional relationships": Sitwell's multivalent and overdetermined adaptation and active transformation of Stein, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, and Cocteau results in a "distinctive voice" within the "polymorphous fabric of female modernism."<sup>11</sup> This polymorphousness of influence emerges not merely in a written text but within a performative spoken and musical one: *Façade* is not a written text but a performance document influenced not merely by poetic technique but, very much as Leavis argues, by techniques of publicity and self-promotion.<sup>12</sup>

*Façade* draws especially on Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1911), Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), and on *Parade* (1917): the collaboration among Jean Cocteau (scenario), Pablo Picasso (costumes and scenery), and Erik Satie (music). *Parade*'s fairground imagery and onstage representations of megaphones exemplify the Sitwells' appreciation for Cocteau's irreverence and willful childishness. I argue that many of the same qualities that made the Cocteau/Satie circle appealing to George Antheil—its inversion and subversion of boundaries among audience, stage, and orchestra—motivate *Façade*'s poetics of publicity, in a way that illuminates the Sitwells' cosmopolitanism.<sup>13</sup> Cocteau's classic statement against Wagnerism and Impressionism in *Le Coq et l'Harlequin* (1918) had been taken up by Osbert Sitwell in *Who Killed Cock Robin?* (1921), an attack on the provincialism and conservatism of English poetry (Sitwell is particularly rough on Alfred, Lord Tennyson, satirizing Enoch Arden as "Eunuch Arden"). Pearson calls *Parade* the "great precedent" for *Façade*, and writes that the "idea of creating a similar artistic triumph—and issuing an artistic challenge to the diehards and the Philistines in the midst of London—must

have been irresistible" (180). *Parade's* public scandal makes it a case study in the ability of music both to dramatize "publicity" and to effect it.

Aside from brief nods towards Cocteau's megaphones and a shared ambition to cause a ruckus, the specific cultural import of *Parade's* influence on *Façade* has gone generally undiscussed.<sup>14</sup> *Parade* comes to stand in for self-conscious theatricality as well as aesthetic cosmopolitanism and detachment, often with respect to representations of race and empire. The theatricality of *Façade* consists largely in the poems themselves, and the dance music to which they are set. Some of these poems offer a "parade" of performers and images, many of which are racialized in a similar fashion: "Polka" features Mr. Wagg dancing "like a bear" (line 3) with "whiskers that—/(Tra la la) trap the Fair" (5-6); "Venus' children" (9); "Wellington, Byron, the Marquis of Bristol" (13); "Nelson" (25); and "Robinson Crusoe" who "finds fresh isles in Negress' smiles" (27, 30). The childlike fairground imagery of "Polka" introduces a sea-journey, a military victory, and, ultimately, the settlement of an island.<sup>15</sup>

*Façade*, like its aesthetic ancestors, draws on a resurgent twentieth-century interest in pantomime, puppetry, the fairground, and the imagery and characterization of *commedia dell'arte*, a form of improvised theater that emerged in Renaissance Italy. A genre of farcical comedy in which actors improvised dialogue around stock characters and scenarios, *commedia dell'arte* required a mix of the familiar and the new: while the art of *commedia* lay in improvised verbal and physical comedy, the *commedia's* lasting appeal lay in its recognizable stock characters: Pulcinella, Colombine, Harlequin, and Pierrot. The last of these is perhaps the most recognizable, and the most ubiquitous in Sitwell's writing: the distant, lovelorn sad clown with a white powdered face and associated with moonstruck melancholia. Several critics have noted the ubiquity of *commedia dell'arte* in the twentieth-century, emphasizing their aesthetic,



tropological, and thematic resonances in modernist art, literature, film, and music.<sup>16</sup> *Commedia* has generally influenced and been linked with other varieties of lowbrow theater—circuses, puppetry, pantomime—which gave it an additional appeal to Diaghilev, Cocteau, and Picasso.

The poetry/publicity split is in some ways internal to these "lowbrow" forms of theater, at least as they were culturally imagined: all of them have been long associated with pure commercialism and obsequious audience appeal, as opposed to craft. Another work to which *Façade* is most often compared, Arnold Schoenberg's atonal melodrama *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), also takes its title figure from the *commedia dell'arte*. Critics have noted, for example, *Façade*'s structural and stylistic similarities to *Pierrot*: its chamber-music instrumentation and its arrangement of twenty-one songs into seven groups of three, as opposed to *Pierrot*'s three groups of seven, might have been "a Parthian shot" at Schoenberg's piece, which Walton had seen in score but had not yet heard.<sup>17</sup>

Drawing from the Russian Ballet (Satie and Stravinsky), from Austro-German modernism (Schoenberg), and from Walton's own training in England, *Façade* is a self-consciously cosmopolitan composition. Cosmopolitanism is a matter of great anxiety and debate in modernist musical culture, particularly in Britain, a problem that inheres in the very history of pantomime and *commedia dell'arte*. As John O'Brien writes, "By the early nineteenth century, pantomime's association with British nationalism had become strong, its long popularity with generations of theatergoers having accomplished the remarkable trick of making Continental *commedia dell'arte* characters seem always to have been British."<sup>18</sup> Problems of aesthetic influence motivate much of this chapter, again with a dialectical turn: the influences themselves are imbricated with matters of "publicity" and cultural politics; the differences among these forms register anxieties about, for example, the relative merits of French, British, Russian, and

German cultural production; and all of these influences together contribute to a larger cultural debate about the value of musical and social cosmopolitanism. Attempting to aestheticize social life, *Façade* suggests that this social aesthetic will be a cosmopolitan one.

The Sitwells' anxieties about national identity merge with their conscious self-representation, what one might call "dandyism." In her work on cosmopolitanism, Amanda Anderson argues that Oscar Wilde's dandy figures reflect an ambivalence about the "ethical limit" of critical detachment. The potency of an epigram—its "free-floating" "transferability" from one context to another—is also exposed as the "ethical limit" of the epigram; the dandy figure in Wilde's drama is compelled to suspend his ironic, paradoxical detachment and act constructively and pragmatically in a given circumstance.<sup>19</sup> This ambivalence, Anderson argues, represents one of many nineteenth-century responses to the "conditions of modernity" that "require certain practices of reflection able to repair the dislocations wrought by non-traditional or defamiliarizing forms of life" (13). The title character of *Pierrot Lunaire* is a dandy, and the Sitwells' appropriation of Pierrot marks them not only as cosmopolitan participants in the pan-European "commedia cult,"<sup>20</sup> but as part of a stylized, self-conscious poetics of publicity.

Much of the critical work on *Façade* has been directed at Sitwell's status in the canon, while more recent work has attempted to assess *Façade* in terms of its political work. Gyllian Phillips argues that *Façade* disrupts "the privilege and power of language and meaning in language and in the voice," associating its nonsense verse with the Kristevan semiotic; Marsha Bryant has recently convincingly argued that *Façade* both parodies certain kinds of propriety while reinscribing the racial stereotypes at the heart of the British empire.<sup>21</sup> I do not dispute that *Façade* reinscribes racial stereotypes; indeed, *Façade* draws on racialized poetic and musical clichés as part of the poems' and the poet's construction of a stylized and artificial aesthetic. As

Susan Gubar has written, Sitwell not only appropriated the "Boomlay BOOM tradition" of racialized music-hall performances, but emphasized racial performance in her poses for photographs and portraits; a painting by Stella Bowen shows Sitwell's "famously aristocratic hands" holding a black mask, much like the one on the curtain of *Façade* (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Stella Bowen, *Hands of Edith Sitwell, With Mask* (1934)

Similarly, the Sitwells' responses to the pressures of empire and nation are dialectically entwined with their hyperbolically stylized personas crafted in the name of Continental art and the *commedia dell'arte*. Wyndham Lewis' *Apes of God* would refer to the Sitwells (or at least their fictional analogues, the "Finnian-Shaws") as

a sort of ill-acted Commedia dell'Arte....A passion for the stilted miniature drama of average social life, as it immediately surrounded them, had assumed the proportions with this family of a startling self-abuse, incessantly indulged in. Their

theatre was always with them. Their enemies – Pantalones, public servants, detestable opponents (whose perfidy disrespect malice or cabal they would signally frustrate – unmask them, knaves and coxcombs to a man!) always this shadowy cast was present.<sup>22</sup>

Hence Lewis's anxiety about an entirely simulated reality produced by the disembodied voice. Lewis himself was not innocent of a tendency towards the dramatic; Augustus John wrote that Lewis's "view of life was based largely on the *commedia dell'Arte*"; only when faced with the characters of *commedia* could Lewis remove his mask and "laugh like a human being."<sup>23</sup> It was in this sort of "ill-acted" drama, an obsession with public feuds and noisy audience reactions, that the Sitwells' publicity lay, and their art as well.

The public personae of the Sitwells intersect in specific ways with the social and cultural presence of the Ballets Russes in Britain as well as on the continent. It was through Diaghilev, for example that Sacheverell met the English composer Lord Berners, with whom he collaborated on *The Triumph of Neptune*: a Victorian pantomime of children's toys (choreographed by George Balanchine) which "transposed" or at least "evoked" "details of modern life" (Garafola 42). It is because of this ballet and *Façade* itself that Martin Green associates the Sitwells with the *commedia dell'arte* in both artistic and social settings, claiming that they "dramatized their sense of being different (in matters of physical appearance, too) into challenging poses and costumes. Edith said, 'If one is a greyhound, why try to look like a Pekinese? I am as stylized as it is possible to be—as stylized as the music of Debussy or Ravel'" (qtd. in Green and Swan 42). The modernist appropriation of *commedia dell'arte* acts in part as a remove from modernity: a retreat into ironic detachment and self-referential artistry. At the same time, it enables works such as *Facade* to comment on the extent to which social life and "publicity" are already stylized, constructed, and politically inflected.

By way of forging a cosmopolitan aesthetic, one which avoids limiting itself to purely local and nationalistic modes of expression, *Façade* imbricates problems of aesthetics (visual, auditory, and poetic) with those of empire and acquisition. Though *Façade* falls victim to its own ambition, reinscribing stereotypes by way of citing them, it at least defamiliarizes these stereotypes by rendering them transparently inauthentic and performative. A "stereotype" is not merely an object but a technique of representation: a technique placed under significant pressure in *Parade*, the ballet on which *Façade* draws. Among the lowbrow forms of art integrated into *Parade* is the *image d'Epinal*, a brightly colored wood-cut broadside (later reproduced by way of lithograph) emerging from sixteenth-century France.<sup>24</sup> An *image d'Epinal* appropriates and reproduces a culturally shared image for the sake of commerce and publicity. To the extent that *Façade* subverts or reinscribes particular ideologies, it calls attention to its own means of doing so—and calls attention to the ways in which "publicity" and social life are themselves also the provenance of aesthetic construction. Attempting to awaken the audience to the music of everyday life, *Façade* also awakens the audience to the social element of music.

The question of cosmopolitanism in music is a loaded one, both before and after the First World War. Judging from Paul Driver's assertion that Walton's music is as "audaciously English as *Pierrot Lunaire* is audaciously Austro-German" (4), *Façade* was destined, wittingly or unwittingly, to be situated within a context of international competition. Anxieties about finding a suitable English or British musical idiom addressed the problem not just of cosmopolitanism, but of empire. Edward Elgar (the English composer whose music prompts the Schlegels to leave the concert hall in Forster's *Howards End*) is often made the villain here: in his 1924 *Survey of Contemporary Music*, Cecil Gray critiques Elgar's compositions as "perfect specimens of that exotic growth called Jingoism which flourished with such tropical luxuriance in this country a

quarter of a century ago, and is now, fortunately, almost extinct."<sup>25</sup> The overdetermined cosmopolitanism of *Façade* seeks an alternative to a simply "English" musical idiom, one that critiques, even if it also reinscribes, that aesthetic's complicity with imperial expansion.

### Walton, Modern Music, and English Cosmopolitanism

Even before his introduction to the Sitwell family Walton had demonstrated an original and modern sensibility that distinguished him from a generally conservative English musical scene. Walton was admitted to the choir at Christ Church College, Oxford, at ten years old—where, Stephen Lloyd explains, his "open-minded" tutors (Henry Ley, Basil Allchin, Hugh Allen, and Thomas Strong) allowed and encouraged him to pursue an already "unorthodox" compositional style, and where he had access to new music through the expansive Ellis Library.<sup>26</sup> In fact, he was exposed to several scores, including *Pierrot Lunaire*, that would not be performed in London for another decade, and whose techniques Walton tried to assimilate without having heard them. He did, apparently, hear or attempt to play the occasional Stravinsky or Bartók score played in piano reduction, but had no way of knowing how to write for a chamber ensemble until he began preparing for the premiere of *Façade*.<sup>27</sup> Walton made such an impression that Dean Strong admitted him to Oxford on scholarship as an undergraduate at the age of sixteen. Though he asserts that Strong considered it "unpatriotic of England to let slip such a musical brain,"<sup>28</sup> Walton was badly suited to the academic life and failed his matriculation exams several times over; luckily, before he was done failing, he had been introduced to Sacheverell Sitwell (a fellow undergraduate), and within a year was being referred to as the fourth Sitwell sibling. Through the Sitwells Walton was introduced to E.J. Dent, among the more cosmopolitan English musical figures, also a close friend and confidant of E.M. Forster, and the

putative character basis of Philip Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Forster's melodramatic testament to the attractions of Continental art (pivoting on a performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*). Through Dent, Walton benefited from brief interactions with Ferruccio Busoni, whose reaction to Walton was "kindly polite," and with the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet.<sup>29</sup>

In some ways, then, it is fortunate for Walton that he was not able to attend the Royal College of Music, founded by George Grove (of the *Grove's Dictionary*). As Glenn Watkins argues, the founding of the college in 1881 represented a British response to the perception that English music lagged behind its Continental competition.<sup>30</sup> As Walton's second wife Susana explains, the Sitwells "didn't want him to go to a music college; they didn't approve of that kind of training, because they thought it turned out composers of doubtful status."<sup>31</sup> Walton himself later expressed great relief that he had avoided becoming the likes of Charles Villiers Stanford, an important figure at the RCM and at Cambridge (Pearson 134)—indeed, perhaps the most important musical pedagogue in England, whose students included Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, Gustav Holst, and Herbert Howells.

Walton's relief likely owes less to Stanford's stylistic conservatism than to a constitutional impatience for academics. Stanford, a born Irishman, was a chief figure in promoting the development a British musical idiom before, during, and after the Great War.<sup>32</sup> Stanford's essay "Music and the War" (1916) offers a call to arms for British composers to produce better work, and criticizes the aggressive nationalism of his German contemporaries. Hence Stanford claims that Britain's "insular position has to some extent militated against foreign recognition of the enormous stride which this country has made in the last thirty-five years"

(which would take one back to the founding of the RCM).<sup>33</sup> Stanford attributes the perceived deficiencies of British music not to British provincialism but to German "aggression":

When the German Press brings its ammunition to bear upon foreign music—even such as is accepted and acclaimed by the public—it rarely fails to interlard its columns with political innuendoes, even to the point of rebuking for unpatriotic temerity, such promoters of performances as are broad-minded enough to look beyond their own frontier. Against this brick wall of insulated prejudice Art runs its head in vain. (108)

Stanford no doubt has in mind, among other things, Oskar Schmitz's notorious article "Das Land Ohne Musik" ("The Land Without Music"; 1914): a pointed and (if the British response is any sign) highly effective assault on British musical incompetence. Stanford has his gripes with British music, however, and chiefly with publishers who reinforce British musical insularity by publishing music that cannot be exported: English church music, "ephemeral pianoforte music," and "worthless ballads and part-songs." Stanford's proposed solution is not to give in to "Philistinism"; not (as he writes elsewhere) to give in to the "bizarre" experiments of music on the Continent; and not to follow Germany's suit by infecting music with nationalistic aggression. Rather, the English need to export "music of the highest class" and to match Germany's cultural output: "We must do better than they, and gain thereby the respect and confidence of the musical world" (123). Stanford's skepticism about the mass-distribution of "ephemeral" popular music is echoed by E.J. Dent, who resists the "intensive culture of folk-song" which, by 1919, "has become a lucrative musical industry."<sup>34</sup> Yet Stanford himself believed in the value of folk song for creating a British musical idiom and for instilling patriotic civic values.<sup>35</sup>

Dent's argument in favor of a cosmopolitan music, and Stanford's in favor of an "exportable" idiom, both conflict with the proud provincialism of Ralph Vaughan Williams, who asserts that the origins of music are always national, and that the hope of a country's "musical future" is "not the distinguished names which appear on the front page of the newspapers, but the



music that is going on at home, in the schools, and in the local choral societies." <sup>36</sup> Vaughan Williams rejects the idea of England as "land without music," dismissing it as the "cigar theory of music"—the misguided belief that England is as endemically unmusical as it is endemically incapable of producing good cigars—and suggests that the importation of foreign-born composers (such as Handel) has caused the English musical culture to atrophy. He argues, however, that the solution is to produce a more national idiom rather than a more cosmopolitan one: "It is surely as bad to be self-consciously cosmopolitan as self-consciously national" (3). Proud cosmopolitans, the Sitwells sided against the provincialism of Vaughan Williams, the imperialism of Elgar, and the moderate nationalism of C.V. Stanford, finding Dent's international (and modernist) sensibilities more to their liking.

The relationship between art and war was a familiar theme to the Sitwells, before and after the Armistice Day party with Diaghilev and the Bloomsburies. Edith Sitwell's *Wheels* volumes endeavored to publicize Wilfred Owen's most famous war poems, and along with a showing of French Modern Art in 1919 helped establish Edith Sitwell's avant-garde bonafides. "How Shall We Rise to Greet the Dawn?" (1918), composed by Osbert Sitwell after his experience in the trenches, offers creation as a replacement for warfare and as a possibility for the reconstruction of civilization:

Let us prune the tree of language  
 Of its dead fruit.  
 Let us melt up the clichés  
 Into molten metal  
 Fashion weapons that will scald and flay;  
 Let us curb this eternal humor  
 And become witty.  
 \*       \*       \*

We must create and fashion a new God—  
 A God of power, of beauty, and of strength;  
 Created painfully, cruelly,  
 Labouring from the revulsion of men's minds.

Cast down the idols of a thousand years,  
Crush them to dust  
Beneath the dancing rhythm of our feet.  
Oh! let us dance upon the weak and cruel:  
We must create and fashion a new God. (lines 39-45, 52-60; in *Laughter* 8-9)

Sitwell's verse offers recognizably modernist sentiments in its militaristic preference for the new over the old, in its citation of the materiality of language, and in its invocation of a "dancing rhythm" that buries old idols.<sup>37</sup> The materiality of music becomes a shared concern of Osbert Sitwell and William Walton in their collaboration on *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), an oratorio which matches descriptions of Babylonian decadence with literal musical accompaniments ("Praise ye, the god of brass" accompanied by brass fanfares, "the god of wood" accompanied by percussion, and so on). The most famous anecdote associated with *Belshazzar's Feast* is Sir Thomas Beecham's remark, leading up to the premiere, that Walton should feel free to add as many brass bands as he wanted because the piece would never be heard again. By this point, at least, Walton had the financial backing to match his artistic ambitions, even as his brash (though aggressively tonal) music puzzled the more conservative sensibilities in British music.

Fittingly, just as the Sitwells delighted in making themselves outsiders, Walton was an outsider to the musical scene of England, which, in turn, was an outsider to the European music scene. Plunged into the Sitwells' tempestuous social life, and unwittingly having been embroiled in their social antagonisms, Walton became the fourth "character" in the satirical pamphlet of Proustian and Pirandellan extraordinaire, C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, entitled *The Strange and Striking Adventures of Four Characters in Search of an Author* (1926).<sup>38</sup> To his credit, Walton did not share his new companions' thin skin, nor their impulse to perform in a real-world *commedia*, and stayed at work in his studio. Benefiting from the financial patronage of the Sitwells and their friends, Siegfried Sassoon and Lord Berners among them, Walton saw himself

liberated from academic life and moved from his rustic childhood home, outdoor toilet and all, to the drawing rooms of 2 Carlyle Square, where he produced an inventive, occasionally atonal string quartet, "the only English contribution to the International Festival of Music in 1923" (*Laughter* 202). He began work on an overture (no longer extant) to *Doctor Syntax*, a proposed collaboration with Wyndham Lewis, and wrote the incidental music to Lytton Strachey's "Chinese melodrama," set during the Boxer Rebellion, entitled *The Son of Heaven* (1925).

*Façade*, in spite of its ostensible lack of literary theme, seems anxious about the problem of what makes an authentic poetic voice, and also of what constitutes authentic Englishness (let alone Britishness), or even of whether there is such a thing. The Sitwells' incessant awareness about their own parents brings to bear a larger anxiety about patrilineage and blood-ties: Edith frequently cites not only own strained relations with her parents, but also her Plantagenet blood and appearance (and of an aristocratic sort of guilt about being a female first-born Sitwell). In *Left Hand, Right Hand*, Osbert imagines that his father had imagined his sons as future "colonial governors and proconsuls, supreme over the wastes and teeming cities of an empire, shining somewhere among his descendants" (*Left Hand* 4), an expression of both a familial and a racial burden. The pianistic title of that particular volume of Osbert's autobiography suggests a relationship between the marking of time in the "left hand"—often (though fortunately not always) a rhythmic bass-line—and the elaboration of an expressive melodic line or narrative in the "right hand." The ground-bass underlying the self-conscious aestheticism of *Façade*, marching along to the rhythms of "Rule, Britannia!", acknowledges a consciousness of the discourses of empire, the work of the colonial proconsul Osbert might have been.

### *Façade*: From Noise to Rhythm

Much as Osbert Sitwell's poem expresses the desire to crush ancient idols "beneath the dancing rhythm of our feet," rhythm is indisputably the major sonic feature of *Façade*; and Sitwell explicitly calls these rhythms a response to the mechanization of modernity:

The great architect, Monsieur Le Corbusier, said that, as the result of the Machine Age, 'new organs awake in us, another diapason, a new vision.' He said of persons listening to the sound of certain machinery that 'the noise was so round that one believed a change in the acoustic functions was taking place.' It was therefore necessary to find rhythmical expressions for the heightened speed of our time.<sup>39</sup>

*Façade* offers these new "rhythmical expressions," applying them to pastoral and domestic themes and idioms rather than urban ones. As several critics have recognized, Sitwell believed the formal principle of rhythm to be the poetic transcription and mediation of a "dream-like realm." Like Eliot's "auditory imagination" (see Chapter Two), Sitwell's invocation of rhythm is indebted to French Symbolism, and also to "virtuoso exercises" in musical expression:

a change in the direction, imagery, and rhythms in poetry had become necessary, owing to the rhythmical flaccidity, the verbal deadness, the dead and expected patterns, of some of the poetry immediately preceding us. Rhythm is one of the principal translators between dream and reality. Rhythm might be described as, to the world of sound, what light is to the world of sight. It shapes and gives new meaning. The poems in *Façade* are, in many cases, virtuoso exercises in technique of an extreme difficulty, in the same sense as that in which certain studies by Liszt are studies in transcendental technique in music. (*Taken Care Of* 140)

Sitwell cites a need for innovative poetic rhythms both to reawaken the "dead" and predictable poetic wasteland, and to translate, shape, and "give new meaning" to the world of sound.

"Rhythm," Sitwell suggests, shapes not only the sounds of poetry but the aural experience of "reality." In a similar passage elsewhere, Sitwell cites Schopenhauer's assertion that rhythm is merely pitchless melody, the purest method of communicating to the body ("Some Notes," xv). Sitwell's desire to use rhythm to "translate" between dream and reality is indebted to her

longstanding admiration for Verlaine and Rimbaud, whose ambitions toward synaesthetic irrationality she preferred to the florid archaisms of the Pre-Raphaelites and "Georgian poets," and to the value-laden stolidity of Victorians, parodied in *Façade* as "Lord Tennyson in laurels" ("Hornpipe," l. 3). Sitwell emphasizes the performative and transformative qualities of rhythm—its ability to shape experience rather than to represent it. The search for new rhythms motivates a need for a "transcendental technique," what Liszt had termed *execution transcendante*, to sharpen the skills of the performer and, in turn, to "transcend" the deadness of "reality."

An effect of a transcendental technique is to call attention to the technician: a technical study by definition recognizes the constructed nature of art, a need for specific tools that will appropriately "translate" the transcendent. Liszt's *Transcendental Etudes* (1851) privilege the trait of virtuosity, above all else, to such an extent that the pieces were all but unperformable until he rearranged them in 1852. Yet the aestheticization of the virtuoso performer is not entirely about technique, but also about fashioning a public personality. As such, Sacheverell Sitwell's book on Liszt notes the composer's extravagant, eccentric, and "magnetic" presence onstage and in person, suggesting that Liszt's prowess in social life matched or overshadowed his prowess at the piano: "So great were the effects of his personality," Sacheverell claims, "that it is more easy to find accounts of his personal appearance than of his actual playing."<sup>40</sup> While the speaker of *Façade* is given exact rhythms that attempt to mediate a "dreamlike" state, and while the curtain and mask ostensibly obscure the role of the performer, the virtuosity of speaking those rhythms—fast, syllabic, requiring impeccable diction—underscores the constructions of artistic form and production. As I will now discuss, the Sitwells extended these aesthetic constructions to the social space: the home of Osbert Sitwell where *Façade* enjoyed its first performance.

## Bernays, the Ballets Russes, and the Aesthetics of Publicity

Of the premiere at 2 Carlyle Square, Osbert Sitwell somewhat dramatically describes his drawing room:

The players sat at the wide end of the room, near the three windows. Through these poured the implacable whiteness derived from the snow-covered ground outside, from which beat up a pure and alpine vibration under a green-white sky. Inside, the room, with its tones of pink and blue and white and violet, seemed filled with polar lights from windows and tropic lights from fires: for all the glass objects, of which there were many, and the doors lined with mirror, glittered with redoubled vehemence. As the strange new sounds shaped themselves under the hands of the rather angry players, the evening outside began to envelop the world in a grape-bloom blue, the lights had to be turned on, and the pictures glowed from the white walls. [...] The music began. . . . Painters, musicians, and poets, of whom a large proportion of the audience consisted, were naturally enthusiastic in their reception of *Façade*, for it was essentially an entertainment for artists and people of imagination. The late Mrs. Robert Mathias, the patron of the Russian Ballet, found herself, for example, so please and stimulated by it that, in spite of the no doubt numerous remonstrances of her less enterprising friends and relations, she asked me to arrange another production of *Façade* at her house in Montague Square. (*Laughter* 188, 190)

Sitwell dramatizes not just the premiere but its surrounding aesthetic: an ethereal, multicolored, Symbolist landscape in which the drawing room and the outside landscape bleed into one another; the sounds and pictures are given agency, "shap[ing] themselves" and "glow[ing]," from the white walls. In Osbert's hands the piece actively aestheticizes its surroundings. He then moves into the piece's reception, suggesting that his educated artistic audience, "people of imagination," have appreciated *Façade* and even facilitated new performances. The final gesture—a new performance made possible by a patron of the Ballets Russes—clinches the piece's success, although even Mrs. Mathias is made something of an artistic radical, pursuing art against the remonstrances of her friends.

The passage exemplifies the extent to which the Ballets Russes stood not only for aesthetic developments but also for publicity and advertising. Edward Bernays, the paterfamilias

of institutionalized "public relations," attributes his success to the time he spent organizing the Ballets Russes' press operations. And, as with the Sitwells, the personal dramas and conflicts of the Ballets Russes personae contributed to the company's ability to create a buzz. Bernays writes,

I learned a lot working with the Metropolitan Musical Bureau; but never more than when I handled Diaghileff's Russian Ballet in 1915, 1916 and 1917. These three years taught me more about life than I have learned from politics, books, romance, marriage, and fatherhood in the years since. I had never imagined that the interpersonal relations of the members of a group could be so involved and complex, full of medieval intrigue, illicit love, misdirected passion and aggression. [...] Nevertheless, my experience had a life-long effect on me to understand and cope with the vagaries of men and women who lived in special worlds of their own.<sup>41</sup>

Much as the floating sounds in front of the *Façade* sate the Sitwells' unquenchable thirst for publicity, the advertising campaigns associated with the Ballets Russes conjoined their recognizable aesthetic trademarks with the personal dramas of their main stars and impresarios: Lopokova, Massine, Diaghilev, Nijinsky, and the Diaghilev/Nijinsky/Massine triangle.

Aided by his experience writing publicity memoranda for the Ballets Russes', Bernays offers an enviably compact yet detailed gloss on the Ballets Russes' aesthetics:

In 1909 [Diaghileff] assembled his own ballet company in Russia, taking the stylized ballet of the Czars based on old French and Italian ballet techniques, and Isadora Duncan's modern dance forms and blended them into something startlingly original. The company's debut was wildly applauded in Paris. Diaghileff then expanded his activities, drawing into his orbit the ablest and most talented contemporaries in varied art forms—Stravinsky, Ravel, Richard Strauss, Picasso, Benois, Bakst, and the great dancer Nijinsky. With their collaboration, he brought vividly to life Russian, European and Oriental folklore, combining dance, music, décor, color, costume, light and story in a dazzling creation that intoxicated his audiences and expressed the new aesthetic freedom of the twentieth century. (103)

Bernays's emphasis, discussing both Diaghilev's aesthetics and his own challenges in devising a PR campaign in America, falls on the "blending" and unification of heterogeneous elements into a cohesive product with aesthetic and conceptual appeal. As he had not yet come upon the more

advanced techniques of polling target audiences and labeling their pre-/misconceptions, Bernays had to resort to "hunch and "intuition," but even so he was "convinced [...] that the ballet should be projected through interdependent themes. [...] First, we decided to publicize the ballet as a novelty in art forms, a unifying of several arts; second, in terms of its appeal to special groups of the public; third, in terms of its direct impact on American life, on design and color in American products; and fourth, through its personalities" (105-6). In America, at least as Bernays puts it, this was partly the result of his own advertising push, in which his office "bombarded" American newspapers and magazines with "stories and photographs angled to their various reader groups—stories about composers and their compositions for music pages; costume, fabric and fashion design stories for women's pages, etc." (106).

The goal was not only to produce an image of cohesiveness within the Russian Ballet—no easy task, given its heterogeneous aesthetic elements *and* its clashing personalities—but to make the Russian Ballet consistent with the self-image of "American life." Bernays's campaign focused on the Ballets Russes' reception in America, not in England, but in both cases the aesthetic appeal of the ballet seems to have extended into social life and the world of fashion: "To relate the ballet directly to American life, I persuaded several manufactures to make products inspired by the color and design of the Bakst décors and costumes and arranged for their advertising and display in department and other retail stores through the country" (108). Transnationally, the aesthetics of the Ballets Russes dialectically implicate musical aesthetics with the aesthetics of social life: the aesthetic innovations of this synaesthetic "blend" of visual, auditory, and dramatic elements compelled a similar shift in the daily life of its patrons, and conversely, the demands of audiences necessitated that the constituents within the Ballets appear "cohesive." As Bernays writes,



To the public and critics, the most impressive fact about the ballet was its cohesiveness. This was actually an illusion, as I soon discovered. The ballet people were strong individualists who sought to destroy the person above and choke off the one below. Their relationships were based on intrigue, deviant and illicit love, hatred and jealousy—all taken for granted as part of normal existence. Sex melted lines of demarcation between the hierarchic layers of the organization—business managers loved dancers; men and women of all ranks consorted with men and women of varying degrees of masculinity and femininity; husbands fell in love with other husbands or their wives. (113)

The various divergent elements of the Ballets Russes produced an illusion of "cohesiveness": a requirement, and also a result, of the need to turn "The Ballets Russes" into a kind of trademark.

The Sitwells, by drawing on the aesthetic markers of the Ballets Russes, also drew on the look of their public relations campaigns, which required both a media push and a manufacturing push: the solution to making the ballet cohere with American life lay, at least in part, in aestheticizing life itself. Where T.S. Eliot saw the Russian Ballet lacking a "sense of the present" in everything but the music, he locates that sense of the present in the city ("the scream of the motor-car," etc.). In more literal respects, the Ballets Russes helped transform the visual aesthetic of the bourgeois drawing room. As Osbert Sitwell writes in *Sing High! Sing Low!* (1944), the Russian Ballet motivated an "exotic style" that would replace traditional Edwardian designs:

The ballet *Schéhérazade* alone was responsible for innumerable lampshades and cushions that blazed in barred and striped splendour from the shop windows; and a more exotic style began to banish the drawing-room wall-papers trellised with roses and water-lilies, and the early Edwardian wood-panelling, that had seemed created as a background for long cigars, or perhaps even fashioned out of the fabric of their boxes. For the rest, in the warm long summer evenings, dance music prospered in the golden air of the squares, and striped awnings rose like mushrooms in the night to shelter the international herds of the rich.<sup>42</sup>

Osbert Sitwell's emphasis on exoticism, with respect to the orientalist tinges of Leon Bakst's costume and set design, shares with Edith Sitwell's poetry an ambivalent awareness of the relationship between British and Eastern aesthetics. Both within and outside of the drawing room, society becomes a concert hall turned inside out, such that everything seems "fashioned

out of the fabric of their boxes." "The international herds of the rich"—not, it is safe to say, a term of flattery—were exposed to and "shelter[ed]" by a new kind of visual and musical aesthetic, suggesting a cosmopolitan sensibility that is at the same time cynical about aesthetics grounded in imperial acquisition. This passage exemplifies the kind of "witty bricolage" that Christopher Reed has observed of Osbert Sitwell's writing for the British *Vogue*, arguing that the Sitwells' appropriation of the so-called "Amusing Style," critically aware of the imperialistic undertones of fashion, "performs an identity antagonistic to the cultural and political markers of 'respectable' British identity." In a 1924 essay on the Empire Exhibition at Wembley, for example, Osbert presents what Reed interprets as a "jaundiced view of the 'grotesque romance' of a British imperialism that imposes its own customs on 'continent after continent' while making an exhibition of 'the people and customs that it smothers.'"<sup>43</sup>

This aesthetic, it should be clear, emerged at least in part out of the ballet genre, and the "jaundiced" quality of *Façade* is given an additional critical edge by the techniques of poetic and musical sound. The first two songs of the cycle, "Hornpipe" and "En Famille," draw on a stock of images and rhythms both exotic and recognizably British. "Hornpipe," which narrates the sea-journey of Queen Victoria and Lord Tennyson, exemplifies this tendency to cite and ironize the rhythms of nationalism. The words of "Hornpipe" more or less match the rhythmic pattern of the well-known "College Hornpipe," an association that is distinctly English but seemingly innocent enough. But the first two bars of "Hornpipe" comprise a snare drum beating the rhythm of "Rule, Britannia! / Britannia rules the waves," at which point the melody appears (saxophone and cello) underneath the "College Hornpipe" (in the piccolo). Upon hearing the first words of the poem, "Sailors come / To the drum / Out of Babylon," therefore, one has the rhythms both of the Hornpipe and of "Rule, Britannia!" on the brain: Britannia itself becomes Babylon, the "great

city" and materialistic evil empire of *Belshazzar's Feast*, whose goods are catalogued by a baritone soloist in what Walton self-deprecatingly termed a "grocery list": "Babylon was a great city, her merchandise was of gold and silver, of precious stones, of pearls, of fine linen, of purple, silk and scarlet, all manner vessels of ivory, all manner vessels of most precious wood, of brass, iron and marble, cinnamon, odours and ointments, of frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour, wheat and beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, and the souls of men."<sup>44</sup>

If the opening salvo of "Rule, Britannia!" reinscribes national discourses in its consciously imperial paradiddles, it does so with a smirk. Sitwell's use of Eastern and African imagery, Marsha Bryant argues, "unsettl[es] English propriety and imperial unity while simultaneously reinforcing racial stereotypes" (244). By virtue of drawing attention to the rhetorically and theatrically constructed nature of this "East," *Façade* awakens its audience to the imperial aesthetic of its own drawing rooms. The "sea," the site of naval power, is turned into "the settee of the horsehair sea / Where Lord Tennyson in laurels wrote a gloria free," the site of imperial and poetic authority, but also simply an object on which to sit. Victoria enters next:

In a borealic iceberg came Victoria, she  
Knew Prince Albert's tall memorial took the colours of the floreal  
And the borealic iceberg; floating on they see  
New-arisen Madame Venus for whose sake from far  
Came the fat and zebra'd emperor from Zanzibar  
Where like golden bouquets lay far Asia, Africa, Cathay,  
All laid before that shady lady by the fibroid Shah. (lines 7-16)

As Bryant notes, Zanzibar provides "more than just an end-rime": the Sultan of Zanzibar had been "made an Honorary Knight Commander for service during the Great War," and that "in the same month that *Façade* was performed privately in 1922, Zanzibar was invited to join the East Africa House for the British Empire Exhibition" (252). The Madam Venus passage (from "Madam Venus" to "Shah") is recited without musical accompaniment, emphasizing the

performative BOOMlay BOOM quality of the verse: the speaker's voice must both maintain tempo and draw out the appropriate character or tone color without help from the orchestra.

But that Zanzibar provides an end-rime is crucial: the aesthetics of *Façade* are political because and insofar as they are aesthetic, objects forced (in a poetic sense, *extremely* forced) to concord with a rhyme scheme and with the rhythms of the "College Hornpipe." The image of the Albert Memorial, at the center of the Frieze of Parnassus (with its 169 artists depicted in sculpture), identifies Britain as a site both of political authority and of aesthetic consolidation, both florid ("floreale") and frigid ("borealic"). The College Hornpipe may also stand in for a general reduction of local and regional traditions *within* England into one homogeneous form of dance. Margaret Dean-Smith remarks that the "College Hornpipe," based on a tune "firmly associated with a mimetic character dance far removed from the traditional hornpipe," attests to "the way in which the variety, rhythmic peculiarities, local characteristics and highly personal skill of the true hornpipe have, in popular ignorance, been submerged by one commonplace tune and commonplace, easy rhythms."<sup>45</sup> This reduction and condensation applies both to Britain and to her colonies: Asia, Africa, Cathay are reduced to "golden bouquets" laid before Madame Venus, the racialized and (in temperament and geography) anti-"borealic" counterpoint to Victoria, who at the end of the poem observes that Madame Venus and the "drinks" of the sea "are as hot as any hottentot and not the goods for me!" (line 30). To read the final line requires a slight slowing of pace, thanks to the velar consonant ("g") in the midst of an otherwise smoothly-flowing phrase: the word stands out both conceptually and aurally, making it difficult to produce but nevertheless the center of attention. In general, to produce the "goods" in *Façade* is to present an image, often an exotic one, by way of a difficult and virtuosic production of sound.

The poem that follows "Hornpipe," entitled "En Famille," similarly attenuates the boundaries between the nautical and the domestic. It depicts a conversation among "the admiral red" (Sir Joshua Jebb) and his four daughters, desperate for a sea-journey to the exotic, synaesthetic "flowerless rocks of Hell" (line 8). Whereas the music in "Hornpipe" is dance-driven, the musical accompaniment in "En Famille" is driven mostly by atmosphere, pentatonic and rhythmically and tonally vague, up until the dialogue between the daughters (collectively) and the admiral. The admiral's "only notion" is "of the peruked sea" (lines 5, 7), and his four daughters urge the admiral to cease comporting himself with naval rectitude:

They said, 'If the door you would only slam,  
Or if, Papa, you would once say "Damn"—  
Instead of merely roaring "Avast"  
Or boldly invoking the nautical "Blast"— (15-8)

Reaching a rhythmic and dynamic climax on the word "Blast" (likely to have perked the ears of Wyndham Lewis, who was at that point still a friend of the Sitwells'), the music again loses its rhythmic thrust, and becomes an exotic tableau:

We should now stand in the street of Hell  
Watching its siesta shutters that fell  
With a noise like amber softly sliding;  
Our moon-like glances through these gliding  
Would see at her table preened and set  
Myrrhina sitting at her toilette  
With eyelids closed as soft as the breeze  
That flows from gold flowers on the incense-trees. (19-26)

The daughters romanticize this Hell as visual spectators peering, moonlike, at Myrrhina, whose closed eyes confirm her status as an aesthetic object more or less frozen in time—a scenario reversed in the actual staging of *Façade*, where the poetic speaker seems to be peering through the eyeholes of a vaguely "moon-like" mask. The admiral, accompanied by an insistent, accelerating rhythmic pulse and occasional strokes of a "Chinese block," retorts that Hell is not

such an extravagant decadent experience but, in fact, "is just as properly proper / As Greenwich, or as Bath, or Joppa!" (lines 37-8) . He remarks that the "turbaned Chinoiserie, / With whom we should sip our Black Bohea" would, far from a passive aesthetic object, "stretch out her simian fingers thin / To scratch you, my dears, like a mandoline" (lines 33, 35-40). Here the Chinoiserie, is personified as feminine and racialized as "simian," in the name of a "properly proper" English ideal (that also extends to the Middle Eastern Joppa).<sup>46</sup> The figure of the chinoiserie later serves as the setting of Strachey's *Son of Heaven*, which Patricia Laurence terms a "literary 'chinoiserie' of empress, emperor, princes, eunuchs, generals, Manchus, ladies-in-waiting, and an executioner," suggesting Strachey's interest in the luxuriousness, spectacle, and "extravagant theatricality" of the Chinese court; and in the possible associations with Queen Victoria's "gender play" and performance (171-2). Similarly, "En Famille" mutually implicates the performance of race with the performance of gender: the reciter must play both British and oriental types, both male and female. The poem dialectically parodies both the staunch righteousness of the admiral and the easy romanticism with which the four daughters treat the East. The four young voyeuses imagining this decadent oriental aesthetic themselves become the "mandoline," and upon being touched by the Anglicized chinoiserie will themselves contribute to the soundscape of Hell.

As the poem undeniably reinforces racial tropes, it does so by way of its vaporous Symbolist synaesthesia and mixed metaphors, which transmute imperial conquest into something essentially harmless: the Admiral's "notion [...] of the peruked sea" becomes a "butterfly poised on a pigtailed ocean." Yet this problematically playful image serves a critical function. The exoticism of Hell and the voyeuserie of the four daughters are parodied as superficial, decadent, luxurious. Their hair is described as "finer / [...] Than the young leaves of the springing Bohea," their identity fashioned around an aesthetic of the chinoiserie, which in turn threatens to scratch

them back. The voice that projects this threat—that of the admiral—musically seems to collapse on itself, punctuated awkwardly with a single drum-stroke. The romantic perspective on the East is cast as frivolous, and the fear of the East as awkward, overbearing, and too "properly proper."

The Sitwells, whose relations with the Bloomsbury Group were never comfortable, thought Strachey himself "exotic" and hyper-stylized:

The tones [of Bloomsbury "citizens"] would convey with supreme efficacy the requisite degree of paradoxical interest, surprise, incredulity: in actual sound, analyzed, they were unemphatic, save when emphasis was not to be expected; then there would be a sudden sticky stress, high where you would have presumed low, and the whole spoken sentence would run, as it were, at different speeds and on different gears, and contain a deal of expert but apparently meaningless syncopation. [...] The Bloomsbury voice, too—that characteristic regional way of speaking, as rare and ritualistic outside the bounds of West Central London as the state voice of the Emperor of China beyond his pleasantries and palaces—originated, I believe, more in a family than in a flock. Experts maintain that it originated as an apanage of the Strachey family—of Lytton Strachey, that is to say, and of his brothers and sisters, in whom it was natural and delightful—and that from them it spread and took captive many [...]. The adoption by an individual of the correct tones was equivalent, I apprehend, to an outward sign of conversion, a public declaration of faith, like giving the Hitler salute or wearing a green turban. (*Laughter in the Next Room* 18)

At the illustrious Armistice Day dance, Osbert continues, a seven-year-old girl tried on an imitation of Strachey—a "precocious mimic" "of real virtuosity." (Strachey, performing as the anti-Victoria, is said to have found the imitation "amusing," though not at all "like.") What Osbert recognizes in *Left Hand*, and what Edith seems to enact in *Façade*, is the notion that the refined spoken tones of English intellectuals are themselves exotic, stylized, performative, and "ritualistic." Consisting in strange stresses, syncopations, and changes in gear, *Façade* conforms the patterns of English to the rhythms of dance: both the chinoiserie and the clichéd "rituals" of English life are made exotic and unfamiliar.

A pair of English collaborators to whom Sitwell and Walton are (somewhat surprisingly) rarely compared—Gilbert and Sullivan—specialize in "patter-song," a contortion of spoken text

into highly virtuosic rhythmic patterns. Like Sitwell and Walton, Gilbert and Sullivan associate the inauthenticity of this kind of speech with stylized, dandiacal self-representation and, at the same time, with an acquisitive and exotic aesthetic. In *Patience* (1881), the dandy-aesthete Bunthorne confesses that he is an "aesthetic sham" (Act I, 168); part of his shambolic fraudulence consists in his affected desire to acquire all things Japanese. A major craze in the late nineteenth century (due in part to the Meiji restoration in 1869), "japonisme," "chinoiserie," and other forms of orientalist appropriation persisted through twentieth-century musical and literary forms, and as Glenn Watkins writes, the "conflation" of *commedia dell'arte* theater and orientalist aesthetics "thrived openly from the time of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* to the Bauhaus productions of the twenties" (*Pyramids* 49).

The combination of an orientalist aesthetic with a self-conscious self-differentiation, the act of illustrating, exaggerating, stylizing, and performing one's own distinctness, is epitomized by the dandy figure: Edith Sitwell once complained that "the four Sitwells" were treated as the four arms of a Hindu goddess, undifferentiated from one another but marked as a foreign category of person. *Patience* as a whole equates inauthenticity with acquisition and appropriation, and satirically suggests that popular notoriety consists of rattling off catalogues: the Dragoon Guards recite the "receipt for that popular mystery / Known to the world as a heavy dragoon" which comprises the chemical residue of "all the remarkable people in history, / Rattle[d] [...] off to a popular tune" (Act I, 161). The trademark Gilbert and Sullivan "patter" presents these lists too quickly for their wit to be thoughtfully critiqued, but articulately enough to communicate that they are in fact witty: as Bunthorne says, "'The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a transcendental kind" (169). In fact the word "patter," deriving from the recitation of the Paternoster (OED), by definition consists of incanting someone else's



authoritative language. Similarly, when Edith Sitwell wishes to *épater* les bourgeois, she wishes to distance herself from (paternal) authority—as Sitwell's speaker puts it in "The Punch and Judy Show" (1921), from "the dictates of [one's] ancestors." Like Bunthorne, the Sitwells consciously aestheticize their own personalities, even in *Façade's* ostensible desire to depersonalize poetic voice. The original meaning of "personality," Raymond Williams explains, is that of "a mask used by a player, through a character in a play and a part that a man acts." "The implicit metaphor," he continues, "can still haunt us."<sup>47</sup>

Much as the Sitwells associate both the fairground and Eastern theatricality with a consciously crafted aesthetic of personality, Bertolt Brecht would sponsor Chinese theater as an extension of the "theatrical and pictorial displays at the old popular fairs."<sup>48</sup> In the "Alienation Effects of the Chinese Theater" (1935), Brecht praises the Chinese actor's consciousness of the act of representation: refusing Stanislavskian "conversion" into an emotive and "eruptive" character, the alienated actor's performance is "quite clearly someone else's repetition of the incident: a representation, even though an artistic one" (93). Brecht then narrates his own efforts to transport this reflective form of acting onto the German stage, where the "bourgeois theatre emphasized the timelessness of its objects," and where history therefore "applies to the environment, not to Man" (97). The political effect of the new Brechtian theater, which shuns the representation of individual emotion *for its own sake*, is to emphasize individual emotion as a historical artifact. As Brecht puts it, this newly historical theater will represent the "idea of man as a function of the environment and the environment as a function of man" (97).

Clearly I am not citing Brecht's 1935 essay as an aesthetic influence on Sitwell and Walton's 1923 "entertainment," but both draw on a similar set of aesthetic influences, and on a shared tendency to associate those influences with Eastern theatricality. In drawing on those

influences, and in creating different forms of musical drama, both Sitwell and Brecht explore the interrelationship of the social and the aesthetic, the public and the poetic, so as to entangle the problems of poetics and publicity. Publicity—social relations, advertising campaigns, public self-representation—is revealed to be constructed, aesthetically or otherwise: an artistic comedy, ill-acted or otherwise. The curtain and the megaphone and the clichéd music are as aggressively citational as the rhythmic patter of Sitwell's verse: the audience, as much as the reciter, are exposed as the inheritors of aesthetic influence and representation.

Specifically, the Sitwells inherit the curtain and the megaphone, and their associations with advertising, publicity, and stereotype, from *Parade*. In devising *Parade*, Cocteau meant to shift the direction of the Ballets Russes from its luxuriant Bakstian decadence toward a more critical, jagged, and recognizably "modern" aesthetic; while *Parade* blurs the boundaries between stage and audience, it attempts to do so not by "dazzling" or "intoxicating" its audiences, but by pestering, surprising, and annoying them. And, much as the Admiral's bloviating voice collapses at the end of "En Famille," the megaphone-brandishing Managers in *Parade* collapse under the weight of their own persistent salesmanship.

### The *Parade* Behind the *Façade*

Like the Futurist experiments with variety theater and the Arts of Noise, *Parade* seemed aimed at the destruction of the sublime in art. Francis Poulenc writes that with *Parade*, "For the first time...the music-hall invaded art-with-a-capital-A," though as we have seen, Marinetti had long since promoted such a thing, in exactly those terms.<sup>49</sup> Lynn Garafola notes *Parade*'s debts to the Futurist enterprise and attributes to Cocteau the creation of "lifestyle modernism," grounded in fashion, entertainment, and popular culture: "Cocteau's true genius lay not in his

ideas but in the ability to appropriate the ideas of the avant-garde for essentially conservative ends. Purged of radicalism, his sanitized art became the stuff of elite entertainment" (100). Much like the modifications of futurism that motivated Pound and Lewis, Cocteau's essentially conservative entertainment drew its energies from strident and highfalutin rhetorical posturing, and from a willful attempt to annoy his audiences: hence the scandal that ultimately made *Parade* attractive to the cosmopolitan Sitwells.

The "Managers" of *Parade*, the figures who introduce the sideshow acts (magicians, circus performers, etc.), in fact constitute the main action: much to the Managers' annoyance, the sideshow becomes the whole show. Instead of evaporating tensions among dancers, musicians, and managers, *Parade* illustrates and dramatizes them. As Daniel Albright argues, *Parade* is a spectacle of dissonance among art forms and between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" genres, in which "the component artistic media seem [...] bent on annihilating one another" (*Untwisting* 203). As different as *Parade* seems aesthetically from the rich, orientalist Bakstian spectacle of the exotic, it nonetheless encourages a stylized, aestheticized, cosmopolitan social identity—but one that is conscious of its own constructed aesthetic features. *Parade*'s influence on Sitwell and Walton is more visual than musical. Yet in citing the visual-aesthetic elements of *Parade*, *Facade* also cites its conceptual basis, ironizing the metaphysical significance that Sitwell ascribes to rhythm and dance. By citing *Parade*, Sitwell and Walton make publicity their subject matter; while the music of *Facade* is more innocent—and less noisy—than that of *Parade*, the music, poetry, and visual elements together constitute a spectacle that prompts the audience to reflect on the aesthetics of daily life.

In an essay on the Ballets Russes, Cocteau observes Nijinsky dancing *Spectre de la Rose* in 1910, suggesting that the real force of the ballet lay not in the "flower-Maidens" onstage but in the offstage physical presence of Vaslav Nijinsky:

Instead of going to see the piece, I went to wait for him in the wings. *There it was really very good.* After embracing the young girl the spectre of the rose hurls himself out of the window...and comes to earth amongst the stage-hands who throw water in his face and rub him down like a boxer. What a combination of grace and brutality! I shall always hear that thunder of applause; I shall always see that young man, smeared with grease-paint, gasping and sweating, pressing his heart with one hand and holding on with the other to the scenery, or else fainting on a chair. Afterwards, having been smacked and doused and shaken he would return to the stage, and smile his acknowledgments.<sup>50</sup>

The stylized flower-maidens of the Russian Ballet ("the most maidenly and the most flowery") fail to capture what is truly artistic about the event: the physical stress and strain of Nijinsky's exhausted body. In *Parade*, accordingly, the sideshow becomes the main event: the audience mistakes the advertising "parade" for the actual event and refuses to buy tickets for the circus, resulting in the physical and emotional collapse of the Managers and the departure of the troupe. *Parade* is a self-consciously erratic, incongruous, and disorienting ballet, struggling (or unwilling) to maintain an artistic balance of power among Cocteau's scenario, Satie's music, Picasso's set and costume design, and Massine's choreography. The ballet features a parade of characters: a Chinese prestidigitator; a "petite American girl," an amalgam of Mary Pickford and Pearl White; two acrobats; and three "Managers" who introduce the acts. The music features mechanical noises—typewriters, sirens, pistol shots—although not to the extent Cocteau had hoped: "Material difficulties, however (amongst others the suppression of the compressed air), deprived us of those 'ear-deceivers'—dynamo, Morse apparatus, sirens, express-train, aeroplane—which I employed with the same object as the 'eye-deceivers'—newspapers, cornices, imitation wood-work, which the painters use" ("Collaboration" 57). Still, as a ballet, the

action circulates around the rhythmic presence of the bodies onstage moving, as Albright writes, "entirely [to] the rhythms of advertising" (190).

Explaining how the scenario developed, Cocteau begins with a modernist imitation of classical theater (an equivalent to a theatrical mask in the form of a megaphone); moves to a modernist experiment with collage and noise, in which the most human-looking characters seem the most mechanical; and ends with pure, ferocious rhythmic movement:

In the first version the Managers did not exist. After each music-hall an anonymous voice, issuing from a kind of megaphone (a theatrical imitation of the showman's gramophone, a modern variant of the 'mask' of the ancients), sang a type-phrase, summing up the different aspects of the character, and opening a breach into the world of dreams. When Picasso showed us his sketches, we realized how interesting it would be to introduce, in contrast to the three chromos, unhuman or superhuman characters (a more serious transposition), who should finally assume a false reality on the stage and reduce the real dancers to the stature of puppets.

I then conceived the 'Managers,' wild, uncultured, vulgar, and noisy, who would injure whatever they praised and arouse (as actually happened) the hatred, laughter and scorn of the crowd by the strangeness of their looks and manners. During this phase of 'Parade' three actors, seated in the orchestra, announced through speaking-trumpets, as loudly as posters, the names of advertisements such as Pears Soap, etc., while the orchestra was settling down.

Subsequently [...], we substituted for the voices [of the Managers] the rhythm of footsteps in the silence. Nothing satisfied me so much as this silence and these stampings. Our manikins quickly resembled those insects whose ferocious habits are exposed upon the film. [...] The awkwardness of movement underneath those wooden frames, far from hampering the choreographer, obliged him to break with ancient formulae and to seek his inspiration, not in things that move, but in things round which we move, and which move according to the rhythm of the steppes.<sup>51</sup>

What begins as a stage device, combined with the visual language of advertising ("chromos" or chromolithographs) becomes, first, an experiment in paratextual noise—actors shouting advertisements from the orchestra pit—designed to incite the wrath of an audience." As loudly as posters" is a formulation Joyce could have been proud of, and as Albright suggests, much as Joyce believed that the secret to advertising was repetition, *Parade's* music has a frenetically

patterned, repetitive, and circular structure (194). The ultimate design of *Parade*, where the Managers' voices are replaced simply by the "rhythm of footsteps," exaggerates the brutal, awkward, "ferocious" quality of such repetitions, and emphasizes the obstacles to smooth movement as much as the movement itself.

The noise of the Managers' advertisements, sublimated into their awkward rhythms and physical presence, is matched by the visual presence of *images d'Epinal*. Kenneth Silver argues that Cocteau's use of *images d'Epinal* in *Parade* intended, on one hand, to "give meaning back to forms that had fallen into desuetude" while on the other hand "elevat[ing] the quotidian" (96). Yet it also turns the noises and representations of publicity into a farce: it gives "meaning back to forms" such as advertising chromolithographs and *images d'Epinal*, but then notes how these forms are mistaken for the products being advertised. Robert Pelfrey has termed *images d'Epinal* "the forerunners of today's comic strips and newspaper cartoons," "cheap, easy to distribute, and clear in their propaganda messages to anyone who could not read," and argues that in the nineteenth century they paralleled and pictured "the appeal of the modern technological state."<sup>52</sup> In their twentieth-century manifestations, *images d'Epinal* took on additional national and "exotic" imperial meanings, influencing the "flat," woodcut aesthetic of Paul Gauguin's painting at the turn of the century, and underwent a nationalistic renaissance during the First World War.<sup>53</sup> Arthur Rimbaud (whose poetry Sitwell knew intimately) is praising something like *imagerie d'Epinal* when he writes,

I liked stupid paintings, door panels, stage sets, back-drops for acrobats, signs, popular engravings, old-fashioned literature, church Latin, erotic books with bad spelling, novels of our grandmothers, fairy tales, little books from childhood, old operas, ridiculous refrains, naïve rhythms.

I dreamed of crusades, of unrecorded voyages of discovery, of republics with no history, of hushed-up religious wars, revolutions in customs, displacements of races and continents: I believed in every kind of witchcraft.<sup>54</sup>

And much as Sitwell later proclaims rhythm the translator of her own synaesthetic, dream-like poetic textures, Rimbaud continues, "I invented the color of the vowels!—*A* black, *E* white, *I* red, *O* blue, *U* green.—I regulated the form and movement of each consonant, and, with instinctive rhythms, I prided myself on inventing a poetic language accessible, some day, to all the senses. I reserved translation rights" (285).

While these tableaux seem like a mixture of the "naïve rhythms," "fairy tales," and flat, cartoonish stereotypes promoted by Rimbaud and exemplified by the *image d'Epinal*, they are also conscious of their own generic pressures. The tableau of Myrrhina, gazing "moon-like" and frozen in time, is one example; another is "The Man From a Far Countree," republished as part of the cycle *The Sleeping Beauty* (1924). In the published version, a "Soldan" sings this song imagining a "soldanesse" to "rule [his] far countree." In *Façade*, this much has not been established, and though the plot is gestured at, the poem-song is more picturesque than narrative:

Rose and Alice,  
Oh, the pretty lassies,

With their mouths like a calice,  
And their hair a golden palace—  
Through my heart like a lovely wind they blow.

At this point, in *Façade*, Walton introduces a repetitive seven-note motif, each appearance of which enters on a different beat. As such the musical accompaniment does little in the way of establishing a metrical orientation or rhythmic drive; its main (and highly effective) purpose seems to be to establish atmosphere. Rose and Alice themselves disappear, and the soldan is left talking about himself, the figure not just in a theatrical monologue, but in a tableau:

Though I am black and I am not comely  
Though I am black as the darkest trees  
I have swarms of gold that will fly like honey-bees,  
By the rivers of the sun I will feed my words  
Until they skip like those fleeced lambs

The waterfalls, and the rivers (horned rams);  
Then for all my darkness, I shall be  
The peacefulness of a lovely tree  
A tree wherein the golden birds  
Are singing in the darkest branches, O!

Tableaux such as this exhibit an aesthetic sharply different from the noisy cubist/surrealist edges of *Parade*, indebted more to the decadence of the earlier Ballets Russes that seem to shape Osbert's description of 2 Carlyle Square. In *Façade*, the exotic tableau is made theatrical and distanced from the audience by way of a masked curtain: its stylized performances of race lock in with the stylized aesthetic of the drawing room.

*Façade*'s citation of *Parade* indicates a sense of critical distance from this aesthetic as well, matching Bakstian decadence with ironic detachment. The two major aspects of *Parade* cited in *Façade*, the curtain and the megaphone, both instantiate and parody the anxieties associated with authority, artistic and otherwise. The angst associated with the megaphone, which seems to have motivated Lewis's anxiety about "broadcasting," raises more questions than answers about where the authority of a poetic voice is located. By gesturing at the *commedia dell'arte*, *Façade* seems to locate its authority in convention itself—a stock of conventional musical and poetic images—rather than in the message of a poetic speaker. As an influence of the Sitwells (and as an influence of the Sitwells' influences, an artistic "ancestor"), *commedia dell'arte* speaks to the interactions between poetry and social life: as a metaphor for how social life and "publicity" are themselves susceptible of aesthetic construction.

The salience of *commedia* in music, particularly theatrical music and in the visual arts, largely explains the Sitwells' admiring familiarity with the genre. Osbert himself praises the Ballets Russes' later *commedia*-inflected ballets for their wit, "darkness," and satiric edge; in fact, his description of ballerina Lydia Lopokova invokes a series of qualities equally characteristic of



his sister Edith: her "entrancing cleverness," "comic genius," and a "birdlike" face resembling "a mask of comedy" (*Laughter* 17).

The Profession of Personality: *Commedia Dell'Arte*

But this deceased marionette  
I rather liked: a common face,  
(The kind of face that we forget)  
Pinched in a comic, dull grimace;  
  
Half bullying, half imploring air,  
Mouth twisted to the latest tune;  
His who-the-devil-are-you stare;  
Translated, maybe, to the moon.

-- T.S. Eliot, "Humoresque" (1910)

*Commedia dell'arte's* appeal to modernists lies in what Joseph Kennard (1935) calls its "incongruous humanity,"<sup>55</sup> which derives from its odd mixture of a fixation on details of the body and the bawdy; of spectacle (or what Robert Storey calls "decadence"), in its intensely colored costumes and masks; for its associations with classical rhetoric and wit; and for the *commedia's* tendency to foreground its own conventions, as actors improvised within their fairly rigid character types. Stravinsky and Picasso, for example, who saw performances of *commedia dell'arte* while traveling through Naples, admired the professional competence of *commedia* actors, and used it to inform their neoclassical aesthetics. As Theodore Reff argues, "It was...as impersonal yet recognizable types, associated with the theatre and the history of art...that [Harlequin and Pierrot] appealed to the classical Cubists of 1917/21," who along with Picasso emphasized form and compositional technique (rather than "personality" or mood).<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Kennard cites an emphasis in pre-modern writings on the voice of the actor, not necessarily as a more "authentic" Romantic ideal, but as part of the actor's professional equipment.

As *commedia dell'arte* became more popular it came to require a troupe of actors trained in mime and oration, in some cases dance and music as well, and increasingly required some sort of patronage. Analogous to the evolution of other art forms, audiences of *commedia* ceased to be impressed by mere spectacle and began to formulate new aesthetic codes: in *commedia dell'arte*, "People were weary of plots contrived by crafty servants against stupid masters, the amours of vainglorious soldiers and the boastings of parasites" (Kennard 10). Hence *commedia* became less and less a spontaneous expression of subversion, and more and more an entertainment of the professional and aristocratic classes. *Commedia* theater is an important birthplace of acting as a profession, as it ceased to be mere "pantomime," an occasional pastime (often of the laboring classes) and became *dell'arte*. Although the form maintained the subversive quality of its early stages, it began to be refined and assimilated into aristocratic tastes—assimilated to such an extent, in fact, in the seventeenth century it was "moving into a kind of decadence" (Storey 4), a fact that would by no means discourage the Sitwells (of all people) from being attracted to it.

Actors and poetic/musical/dramatic interpreters of Pierrot came to see him as the *commedia dell'arte's* sole claim to personal authenticity or psychological development, because of his thematic alienation and because he was the sole figure who wore makeup rather than a mask. Thus as John Anderson contends, "Pierrot's isolation from other *commedia* masks stemmed in part from a unity (or sincerity) of actor and type."<sup>57</sup> Pierrot's angst is not only psychological but social, especially as figured in the late nineteenth century: Théophile Gautier reads Pierrot as "the ancient slave, the modern proletarian, the pariah, the passive and disinherited being" (qtd. in Storey 109). At least in theory, *Façade* depersonalizes the voice, even the ostensibly sincere voice of Pierrot, by hiding the body not simply behind a screen but

behind a screen bearing masks. (In effect, of course, this theory did not pan out and was interpreted as a ploy for attention.)

Mask in the *commedia dell'arte* gave both the actor's voice and his body a distinctive expressive quality. Kennard cites a writer on Roman masks in theater under the Emperor Adrian praising the use of mask: "The whole head and face of the actor was enclosed within the mask in such a manner that the voice could escape through only one part which rendered the voice stronger and more distinct" (4). In the drawing-room of the Sitwells this masked face, with only one small aperture, would become the screen behind which the poet would recite her verse, a device intended to strengthen the voice (with some help from the Sengerphone), but also to obscure the origin of the voice in the poet's face and body. Yet in *commedia dell'arte*, as Eleonora Luciano explains, the mask intensified the attention paid to an actor's body: "The individuality and expressive powers of the actors' faces are thus hidden by a permanent, exaggerated disguise [...]. Thus any reaction, or emotion, must be shown not through the face but through gesture."<sup>58</sup> *Façade* tweaks this tradition by using the mask to obscure rather than emphasize the body of the performer; and by using intensely rhythmic music and verse to appeal instead to the bodies in the audience.

The Sitwells' fondness for the ballet is shared by their good friend Cyril Beaumont, whose *Diaghilev's Ballet in London* (1940) valuably renders the author's experiences at the Russian Ballet from as early as 1911, while remaining cognizant of its various European influences. Among Beaumont's most interesting contributions to art history, however, is his 1922 article on Harlequin, which he expanded in 1926 into *A History of Harlequin*, with the addition of a preface by Sacheverell Sitwell. *A History of Harlequin* reveals the attractions of *commedia dell'arte* when modernism was at its peak, and Sacheverell's preface asserts that the purest,

"truest atmosphere ever invented" for Harlequin is Picasso's setting for *Parade* (xvi) (Harlequin is of course the main figure of Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Harlequin*). An insistently metatheatrical work, *Parade*'s derivation from the *commedia* tradition draws parallels between the embodiment of the dancer and the physical experience of daily life. The other modernist whose Harlequin Sacheverell praises is Gino Severini, who painted the screen for some of *Façade*'s later performances, and whom Sir George Sitwell commissioned (upon Sacheverell's recommendation) for a fresco at his enormous Montegufoni estate (Pearson 157).<sup>59</sup>

The imagery of *commedia* is more gestured at than explicit in the musico-poetic *Façade*, introduced mostly in gestures to the "moon-like" gazes and glances of its characters. Yet poems later published as part of *Façade* in book form make the *commedia*'s relevance more explicit. In the charmingly entitled "Ass-Face," the "milky spirals" of the stars "Made a gown / For Columbine" (lines 5-6). "Clowns' Houses," originally published in 1918 and republished as part of the poetic *Façade* in 1930, anticipates how *Façade* would appear in public:

Beneath the flat and paper sky  
The sun, a demon's eye,  
Glowed through the air, that mask of glass;  
All wand'ring sounds that pass

Seemed out of tune, as if the light  
Were fiddle-strings pulled tight.  
The market-square with spire and bell  
Clanged out the hour in Hell. (lines 1-8)

The poem performs a characteristically Symbolist move by taking ethereal qualities—the "sky" and the "air," and sound itself—and making them material. In the "flat and paper sky" and the "mask of glass" the poem draws on theatrical figures of speech and as such, calls attention not to the ways in which the landscape inspires poetry, but to the ways in which landscape is a construction or an artifact of poetry. Later in the poem, Sitwell offers Pierrot, who tends to

symbolize angst, internal anguish, and psychological alienation, as a response to the external soundscape, not unlike the speaker of Eliot's "Portrait" whose intense mental orchestra marks a response to a specific social setting. That social setting is represented by the marking of public time: the "public clocks" in "Portrait" or the dead-sounding bell of Eliot's hellish London Bridge. In both Sitwell and Eliot, this dissonant and "out of tune" landscape signifies a social context in which everything and everyone is pulled a little too tightly. Sitwell's Pierrot, however, both exemplifies and pacifies the noise of modernity, though the end result is a move from the noisy outdoor landscape to the not-entirely-comforting silence of indoor rooms:

Till Pierrot moon steals slyly in,  
His face more white than sin,  
Black-masked, and with cool touch lays bare  
Each cherry, plum, and pear.  
\*       \*       \*  
Blind are those houses, paper-thin  
Old shadows hid therein  
With sly and crazy movements creep  
Like marionettes, and weep. (lines 29-32, 37-40)

The *Façade* curtain shows both the (black) mask and the (white) face behind the mask, adjacent to one another, a move which in many different respects calls attention to the cultural work of an "entertainment" such as *Façade*. If Pierrot's "cool touch" allows the landscape to bear aesthetic fruit, as it were, it does so by way of citing (and anticipating) various theatrical traditions, from the *commedia dell'arte* to what Brecht would later read as the alienation effects of non-Western theater; and it does so in order to call attention to the aesthetic and performative dimensions of the social and the political. The Sitwells saw the operations of social life to be shaped rhythmically by aesthetic citation and performance. Historicizing their musical-literary text, one recognizes these aesthetic practices as artefacts of the politics of empire and nation.

Picasso's stage-curtain for *Parade* (fig. 5) features two Harlequins, a guitarist, and a muscular, bare-chested Moorish boxer, all sharing the stage with, yet staring at, a strange circus act featuring a unicorn and what appears to be a ballerina dancing with a monkey. The curtain draws less on the primitivism—that is to say, the conscious and (inconsistently) critical use of aesthetic codes for the "primitive" found in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907), among other places—than on the theatrical imagery of *commedia* and of the circus, found in Picasso's Harlequin paintings (cf. *At the Lapin Agile* [1906]). But the image of the Moorish boxer introduces a racial element that produces racial "otherness" as one of many varieties of theatrical spectacle, in the same way that the first movement of *Parade* itself, "Le prestadigitateur chinois," associates Asia with theatricality and illusion. As Martin Green explains, the stage curtain features performers staring at performers: "The theme is theatricality, the pathos of the artist, who can only speak out indirectly, in performance, and whose best work [...] will always be neglected for the external and superficial" (*Triumph* 7). The curtain of *Façade*, much less elaborate in design, deflects that pathos into the social setting of the audience: a social setting whose rich decoration exemplifies what Green calls the "dandy-aesthetic culture" of which the Sitwells were a part, defined by "the young man" who "loves his own beauty and makes that love insolently manifest in his clothes, posture, manners, conversation, judgments, imposing on everything a style that defies the 'mature' values of his father and mother."<sup>60</sup>



Figure 5: Picasso's curtain for *Parade* (1917)

Inspired by the stage-curtain of *Parade*, Sitwell wanted Picasso to paint the curtain of *Façade*, much as her brother Sacheverell was inspired by Picasso's interest in *commedia dell'arte*. The Sitwells' fondness for the stock images of the genre was noted by T.S. Eliot, who (faintly) praised a volume of Sitwell's *Wheels* for looking beyond English traditions of poetry and appropriating Continental ones as well: "Instead of rainbows, cuckoos, daffodils, and timid hares," the stock imagery of Georgian poetry, "they give us garden gods, guitars, and mandolines."<sup>61</sup> The curtain of *Façade* occludes the poet-speaker while making transparent her artistic influences; the mask through which Sitwell's poetry is spoken both disembodies the voice and, by virtue of its associations with Pierrot, intensifies its psychological and aesthetic effects.

*Façade's* play with influence and genre, made material on the surface of the curtain, draws its political and social significance from a self-conscious engagement with the aesthetics of publicity, enacting a dialogue among aesthetic and social modes of representation. The

curtain, that is, engages explicitly in dialogue with its musical and poetic contemporaries, forcing the audience to see its relation to the stage as artificial, constructed, beautiful, and emplaced in a broader aesthetic conversation. Critics of *Façade* have understandably found the curtain intriguing. Gyllian Phillips reads it as a metaphor for the Kristevan pre-symbolic, arguing that the performative nature of *Facade* destabilizes language and critiques the concretion of "imperialist and patriarchal discourses" (123). Lynnette Gottlieb's discussion of *Facade* draws on Carolyn Abbate's distinction between phenomenal music (heard *as* music by both character and audience) and noumenal music (which exists in a separate and disinterested aesthetic realm): the curtain acts as a reminder of the phenomenality of experience. At the same time, *Façade*'s use of phenomenal music (dance music, in particular) takes on a defamiliarizing function, attempting to awaken its audience to the music of its social surroundings:

WHEN

Don

Pasquito arrived at the seaside

Where the donkey's hide tide brayed, he

Saw the bandito Jo in a black cape

Whose slack shape waved like the sea—

Thetis wrote a treatise noting wheat is silver like the sea; the lovely cheat is sweet  
as foam; Erotis notices that she

Will

Steal

The

Wheat-king's luggage, like Babel

Before the League of Nations grew ("Tango-Pasodoblé," lines 1-12)

"Tango-Pasodoblé" demonstrates Sitwell's resistance to rhythmic and sonoric "flaccidity," particularly in the digressive patter on Thetis' treatise and Erotis' notices—introduced by a dash, running through a series of internal rhymes, and closed off by three one-word lines that reestablish the tempo. The bandito Jo tricks Don Pasquito into abandoning his wife, who ends up "plucking a white satin bouquet / Of foam, while the sand's brassy band / Blared in the wind"



(lines 33-5), apparently entranced by the dance song of which she is a part. An Anglicized version of tango and pasodoble (not really faithful to either), the poem's revised title, "I do like to be beside the Seaside," pays homage to a popular music hall song, and, appropriately, gestures at both union and disorder among national idioms in its references to Babel and the League of Nations.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Sitwell is self-consciously aware of the racialized context of poetry in the music hall.<sup>63</sup> The strange mix of racialized discourse and Symbolist synaesthesia occurs, for example, in "Four in the Morning," which describes "the navy-blue ghost of Mister Belaker / The allegro-negro cocktail-shaker," who cries, "Why did the cock crow, Why am I lost? / Down the endless road to Infinity toss'd?" (lines 4-6).

Sitwell's poetry often borders on camp in its racial imagery, and for that reason Gubar's acknowledgment of the racialized music-hall rings true. Yet it also seems to bifurcate racial identities in ways that one has to think ironic. The "allegro negro cocktail-shaker" has a "navy-blue ghost," and the poem ends in much the same fashion as "Clown's Houses": with a "flattened face like the moon" that is also "rhinoceros black," both Africanized and Anglicized. The façade of *Façade* merges the Greek mask with Pierrot (white), the African mask with Harlequin (black). While the poem may construct race in stock, stereotypical fashion, it nevertheless treats all varieties of racial and national identification—British, French, European, Eastern, African—as performative. The piece "Black Mrs. Behemoth" begins "In a room of the palace," drawing on a recurring concern about racialized musical performance in private domestic spaces, much as Eliot critiques the bizarre kitsch of performances by Native Americans, in full native garb, in middle-class English drawing-rooms. The opening bars and lines of "Black Mrs. Behemoth" seems to draw on conventions of primitivism, attempting to imitate primal rhythms by means of

an exaggerated ground-bass (here I use vertical lines to indicate measure breaks, and all-caps to indicate accented beats):

In a | ROOM of the | PALace |  
BLACK Mrs. | BEhemoth |  
GAVE way to | WROTH  
and the | WILDest | MALice. |  
CRIED Mrs. Behemoth, |

I break here because once Mrs. Behemoth is actually given voice, and that voice leaves the room from which it emerges, primitivism halts and gives way to what sounds (and reads) more like Debussyian Impressionism-cum-Symbolism: the ground-beat disappears entirely and the voice is associated with treble pitches rather than bass ones. The poem still gestures at race, comparing the wind to a "bud-furred papoose"—and in any event, the racial politics of Symbolism are not innocent. In fact, "Black Mrs. Behemoth" exemplifies *Façade's* tendency to bifurcate treatments of race so as to reveal representations of the "primitive" as European constructions, reminding us that the abstract arcania of Symbolist poetry are underwritten by discourses of race and empire.

#### "Punch and Judy Show": Sitwell on Puppetry and the *Commedia*

Sitwell's appropriation of *commedia dell'arte* imagery often invokes the tropes of mask puppetry. Her use of the puppet image is particularly illuminating, emphasizing both the authenticity of childhood experience and the simultaneous inauthenticity or simulated nature of social life. These concerns merge in Sitwell's personal, "automythomaniacal" anxieties about her own ancestry. *Commedia's* puppets (Pulcinella being the ancestor of Punch) proved a decisive influence on Jules Laforgue, the philosopher and Symbolist poet, who in turn influenced the early poems of T.S. Eliot: early poems such as "Humoresque," the dancing bear and puppet in "Portrait of a Lady," and the Pierrot-esque spirit of alienation in "The Love Song of J. Alfred

Prufrock."<sup>64</sup> In Sitwell's line "sinking about us till we drown," one can detect her interest in the Laforguian Eliot of "Prufrock": "Till human voices wake us, and we drown." Arthur Symons praises the combination of metaphysical clarity and emotional pathos in Laforgue's "fantastic puppets," "invented [...] with an almost Japanese art of spiritual dislocation. They are, in part, a way of taking one's revenge upon science, by an ironical borrowing of its very terms, which dance in his prose and verse, derisively, at the end of a string."<sup>65</sup>

The imagery of puppetry and mask in Sitwell's "The Punch and Judy Show" (1921), published in A.R. Orage's socialist paper *The New Age*, expresses both hope and uncertainty about authentic poetic self-representation. An exercise in simile, the poem creates a hazy relationship between the real and the simulated, establishing the speaker's childlike experience of the world while attenuating descriptive realism:

A child with black-fringed hair, I creep  
Through sharp-edged crazy noon.

Through slits of windows, and I find  
The house flaps like a tall wet wind

At the little people of the earth  
Who, whispering, speak but of the birth

Of plums and pears upon the trees.  
When the Moon's hurdy-gurdy wheeze

Grinds out her slow mummy dust,  
Their whispers tear like a knife thrust

Holes in that canvas, painted smooth,  
My face. My eyes seem slits in the booth

Of life—strange Fair with peepshows. I  
Through the hoarse shades of noon creep by

To where the beguines walk the plain  
And forget the old world's bane

While they enjoy the grassy smells  
In their gowns like large slow bells,

Whose cold sound brings the darkness down  
Sinking about us till we drown. (lines 7-26)

The "whispering" of the "little people of the earth" enable this ambiguity: the whispers motivate the shift from the "slits of windows" to the "slits in the booth / Of life," the eyes themselves. Inversely, the physical presence and motion of the beguines interact synaesthetically with the "cold sound" which darkens the scene.<sup>66</sup> The beguines, who forget "the old world's bane," introduce a strange gesture to Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "Let none admire / That riches grow in hell; that soil may best / Deserve the precious bane" (l. 690-92)—echoes confirmed by the fructiferous Miltonic enjambment of "the birth / Of plums and pears upon the trees." In "The Punch and Judy Show," the lost paradise is not Eden but Pandæmonium (or, perhaps, Babel). As the scene is reawakened by "fruit which shrills like a Punch and Judy" (l. 29), the child's black hair becomes

like the frondage  
Feathered life grew when the bondage  
  
Of earth-sense broke and music shrilled  
Into new sense that thrilled and killed. (lines 35-8)

Enabling a return to both the individual and the historical past, the puppet show results in a "shrill" disruption of "sense," "shrill" being the Sitwell's favorite term for an intensified experience of sound (as in the "voices thin and shrill" of *Façade's* "Trio for Two Cats and a Trombone"). In the final lines, the speaker finds that her "green blood"

Mimics each puppet's leap and cry,  
Shrills to the Void, hung up on high,  
  
Limp in bright crackling rags of laughter--  
Ventriloquism following after

Dictates of strings my ancestors  
Jerk from my memory's corridors. (lines 45-50)

Sitwell's poetry offers a shrill cry to the "void," where experience becomes unrepresentable in literal or realistic terms; yet it leaves room for real-world associations by virtue of memory.

The metaphor of memory as a form of ventriloquism is partially illuminated by Sitwell's biographical obsession with the "dictates" of her "ancestors," the (perceived) tyrannies of her father and unhappiness of her mother, detailed at dramatic length in her autobiography *Taken Care Of*. "Ventriloquism" literally derives from the body (the prefix "ventri-" referring to the abdomen), establishing a direct, dictatorial connection between the body of the puppet and that of its ventriloquist. An element of autobiography also lingers in the child-as-puppet metaphor, given the back-brace Edith Sitwell wore throughout much of her childhood and referred to as her "bastille," and the facial brace designed to correct her nose (Pearson 35). Sitwell's childhood is filled with anxieties about her own appearance, the most infamous being John Singer Sargent's painting of the Sitwell family: Sir George Sitwell having viciously requested that Sargent faithfully render the crook in Edith's nose, Sargent responded by straightening her nose and crooking Sir George's (Pearson 5-6). Sargent was irritated not simply out of chivalrous protection of Edith, but at Sir George's overly proprietary attitudes about artistic patronage: at the notion that the painter "ought [...] to occupy the same position" to the patron as "a bone to a dog."<sup>67</sup> The three Sitwell siblings were more kind to their own commissions. While it may be too much to suggest that *Façade* is "about" Edith's facial profile, the aesthetics of Edith's face and body are the focus of many of her contemporaries (Osbert Sitwell comments that William Walton shared her sharp nose and odd profile),<sup>68</sup> and her distinctive appearance was part of her public persona: posed, manipulated, and masked for public photographs. *Façade's* purported attempts to depersonalize poetic voice would, as she saw it, necessitate masking her face and

body. Hence Lewis' concern about *Façade* as an act of broadcasting that hides the authoritative voice—a concern illuminated by the metaphor of "ventriloquism," which impedes the location of one authoritative source for a poetic voice. The metaphor invokes a relationship to Sitwell's *artistic* "ancestors," a relationship that re-emerges in the intensely citational structure of *Facade*.

### The Sitwells, the Mask, and the Russian Ballet

In addition to the poetic ancestors jerking Sitwell's poetic strings are a number of poetic contemporaries using *commedia*, puppetry, stage comedy, and the various techniques of Symbolism to explore and question the merits of literary realism in poetry and narrative. Among these contemporaries are the figures of the Russian Ballet, with whom the Sitwells associated socially as well as aesthetically. The images of puppetry and the mask, shaped by *commedia dell'arte*, take part in a broader cultural conversation about the merits of non-realist musical theater: the extent to which theater should lift an audience beyond reality or, conversely, should defamiliarize its own modes of representation. The same theatrical influences indirectly responsible for *Façade*, the writings of Edward Gordon Craig and Vsevolod Meyerhold, are in equal part responsible for the innovations of Bertolt Brecht.

The place of puppetry (and theatricality in general) in the Victorian realist novel had emphasized the performative dimension of social life, while foregrounding the epistemological and political authority of a narrative voice. Turn-of-the-century figures such as Edward Gordon Craig used puppetry to set aside the realistic dimension of the theater and instead emphasize its artificial and presentational dimensions. Craig's *The Mask*, an experimental and highly influential illustrated periodical running from 1908 to 1929, drew from late nineteenth-century Decadence and Arts and Crafts movements, and a resurgence of interest in Blake, in response to the success

of Diaghilev's *Mir Iskusstva* (The World of Art). Olga Taxidou terms *Mir Iskusstva* a "one-man periodical promoting the unification of the arts,"<sup>69</sup> and Craig competitively assails it as a reactionary "recycling" of "the old, moribund pre-reform theatre."<sup>70</sup>

Among Craig's most influential innovations is the "übermarionette," whose Nietzschean implications derive from *The Mask's* (and *Mir Isskustva's*) aspirations towards the Wagnerian total-art-work. Wagner himself briefly glorifies the puppet-theater in an essay "On Actors and Singers" (1872), praising the puppet-master as the consummate amalgamation of "the improviser poet, manager, and actor all in one," and expressing one "last ray of hope for the German Folk's productive spirit."<sup>71</sup> Wagner wishes to argue against a naturalist emphasis on the person of the actor him- or herself, preferring a model of acting in which the actor's own personality is concealed. The sublimity of a dramatic performance, Wagner suggests, lies in its ability to "exer[t] a power over the spectator's phantasy coequal with that he exercises as by magic on himself, his outmost person and his inmost feeling" (161). Although Wagner claims his music-drama to be a mimetic form of art (one which mimes the deep chthonic truths of "Nature"), he does so at the expense of what he sees as the pseudo-mimesis of French and Italian drama, whose pretenses to naturalism merely disguise an obsession with the conventions and norms of polite society. Intriguingly, he locates these modes of false mimesis in audience response: a true drama will transport its audience into awed silence, while a false one will result in the "noisy, hollow tokens of applause on the part of the public," a sign that the audience has remained "conscious of its private self, as the actor stays preoccupied with the sense of his own personality" (164).

For the Sitwells, those "noisy, hollow tokens of applause"—what Leavis refers to as "publicity"—offer an implicit response to the Wagnerian dichotomy between Romantic idealism ("true" mimesis) and what he saw as academic formalism ("false mimesis"). *Façade* refuses the

dichotomy, locating the imitation of the real world not only in the chthonic or in the dreamlike, but in the very conventions that Wagner deems false. Sitwell draws from influences that acknowledge the potential of Wagnerian music-drama to aestheticize and transform the consciousness of its audience, and that do so by underscoring the very forms and conventions responsible for that transformation.

Craig's "übermarionette," for example, gives acting not only a Romantic but a neoclassical dimension, promoting an impersonal style of acting that attempts not to get "under the skin of the part" but to get "out of the skin of the part altogether."<sup>72</sup> For Craig the vitality of a theatrical model lies in its ability not to "compete with [the] strenuous photographer" in reproducing the materiality of life, but to offer something "warmer and more living than that which parades as life" (74). Craig cites one Arthur Symons, whose *Plays, Acting, and Music* (1903) also promotes the use of marionettes: they "can be trained to perfection" to convey, through physical gesture, the "inner meaning" in things (which Symons also sees as the function of a "perfect rhythm in verse").<sup>73</sup> Craig's model attempts to remove audiences from their material surroundings (what figures such as Brecht would later strive *against*), and to draw them into a more abstract realm; no doubt he also has in mind Plato's cave, seeing puppetry as an approximation of divine or timeless forms reachable only through abstract philosophical reflection, a higher order of Platonic response than emotion or even perception. In rejecting photograph-like theatrical representation, Craig associates mechanical reproduction with the "debased stage-realism" that infects the stage with all of the "weakness and tremors of the flesh" (81). Inverting Conrad's (novelistic) anxiety that mechanical reproduction attenuates literary realism, Craig's (theatrical) anxiety figures realism itself as a debasement of art, better-



represented by the "noble artificiality" of the "über-marionette," which will not "compete with life—rather will it go beyond it" (397).<sup>74</sup>

Puppetry began to permeate theatrical performances in Britain and in Europe; even when Craig himself was not responsible, British critics would make that association. A 1912 review by Georges Banks in John Middleton Murry's journal *Rhythm* claims that Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, "Conveyed by puppets and visualized by the forms of the finest human material [namely, Nijinsky] in the theatre today, [...] suggests to one that the idea of Mr Gordon Craig's Über-marionette is not a dream but a possibility of great meaning." Banks claims that the puppet is given life by virtue of "his embodiment in the very music itself," and awes at the possibility that such successful drama could be "produced by movement and sound alone, without consciousness of the elimination of dialogue."<sup>75</sup>

The Sitwells were influenced by Ballets Russes productions such as *Petrushka*, which inherited the aesthetics of puppetry and *commedia dell'arte* largely through the person of Vsevolod Meyerhold. Like Craig, Meyerhold resisted the emotional identification of Stanislavskian method acting. This resistance culminated in a "biomechanical" and "constructivist" aesthetics, insisting on the importance of the physical apparatuses of the stage and the body. Meyerhold's "biomechanics" emphasize, in Konstantin Rudnitsky's words, the extent to which emotional expression comes "not 'from within', but from without, from movement."<sup>76</sup> Offering an alternative to Stanislavski's "psychological realism" and its emphasis on the actor's emotional state, Meyerhold's appropriation of *commedia dell'arte* decisively emphasized physical gesture and the need for a presentational rather than representational theater;<sup>77</sup> in turn, he rejected naturalistic theater in favor of the fanciful or "make-believe." Himself a Chekhovian naturalist actor in the 1890s, Meyerhold began experimenting with

*commedia*, cabaret, and circus acts (namely, the clown figure) in the 1900s.<sup>78</sup> In Meyerhold's "puppet theater," the puppet's "expressive gestures achieved by some magic known to it alone, its angularity which reaches the heights of true plasticity"<sup>79</sup> participates in a "fairground theater" whose "heroes do not die" but "simply change their aspects and assume new forms" (134), and whose physical technique both captivates the audience and disciplines the actor himself. Rejecting the expressive "inspirational [read: Stanislaviskian] actor" who draws on feeling rather than technique, Meyerhold argues that even the Dionysian ritual comprised "predetermined rhythms, steps and gestures" and "a series of traditional rules" that enabled individual "invention" and improvisation (129-30).

As attested to by Sitwell's anxieties about the "dictates" of her puppeteering "ancestors," puppetry also calls into question the power-relations of artistic production: Martin Green points out the tendency of Stravinsky and Nijinsky to poke fun at Diaghilev's "dictatorial" tendencies as a stage manager (a sort of half-joke which, in Nijinsky's case, had a personal and erotic element as well) (*Triumph* 68). Meyerhold's vision of the theater emphasized what Rudnitsky calls a "fixed rhythm governed by the director" (23), capable of leaving space for individual emotion and bodily gesture, but disciplining that gesture and separating it from the raw, real-world "inspirations" of the actor. Thus his 1906 direction of Alexander Blok's *The Fairground Booth*, based explicitly on a *commedia* scenario, emphasized repetitive, stylized, angular physical gestures that removed the audience from the "familiar, falsely sugary, whiny Pierrots."<sup>80</sup> Donald Mcmanus convincingly reads *The Fairground Booth* as a parody of Symbolism: in the Clown's death-by-cranberry-juice, and in the flat cardboard cutout used to represent Death—who, it turns out, is also the double of the (dramatically very flat) character of Columbine. The flat surface and arcane symbolist language of *Façade* works in this same vein: appropriating poetic, musical, and

dramatic traditions, but replacing their pompous and somber excesses with childish, sardonic, self-evidently performative excesses.

Such performance, *Façade* suggests, is as much a spectatorial concern as a poetic one, and that attitude too is discernible in the theatrical traditions of the Ballets Russes. As Meyerhold writes in an earlier essay directed frankly at the Moscow Art Theatre, dramatic naturalism impedes the "spectator's capacity to fill in the details with his imagination the way one does when listening to music."<sup>81</sup> The mask of Harlequin, according to Meyerhold, calls attention to a particular character type both on the stage and in the spectator's imagination. "Enchanting" the spectator while enacting a process of association, the mask allows the spectator "to see not only the actual Arlecchino before him but all the Arlecchinos who live in his memory. Through the mask the spectator sees every person who bears the merest resemblance to the character" ("Fairground Booth" 131). In the fairground theater, verisimilitude and mimesis are demoted in favor of the "grotesque," which has "no apparent logic" and "borrow[s] from every source anything which satisfies its joie de vivre and its capricious, mocking attitude to life" (137).

A love for the childlike motivates Sitwell's fondness for *Petrushka*. A sardonic fairground ballet whose main character is a Pierrotesque puppet, *Petrushka* filters the playful energy of *commedia* through Stravinsky's dissonant harmonic and uneven rhythmic sensibilities. Ultimately it was with Fokine's successor, Massine, that the Ballets applied the neoclassical dimensions of puppetry, eschewing character psychology in deference to "new body movements" that he claimed to have "created ... in [his] imagination, profiting largely by the effect of rhythmic forces" (qtd. in Garafola 86-7). Hence *Petrushka* struck Edith Sitwell as an expression of Lafourgian philosophy, of a dreamlike realm clarified in musical expression. Such an interpretation benefits from her interpretation of rhythm as the "translator between dream and

reality": at the end of *Petrushka* this translation, this mediation, between the natural and the supernatural, manifests itself quite literally, both in the plot (as Petrushka's ghost looks over his own carcass, and then the Wizard, his puppetmaster), and in Stravinsky's infamous bitonal excursions where two trumpets play the same melodic line in two different keys, to the same irregular, jeering rhythm. Unlike Theodor Adorno, who hears in the rhythmic pulse of *Petrushka* a cynical distanciation from subjective experience and critique of modernity, Sitwell appreciates them as an imaginative metatheatrical experiment, and in Petrushka's screech hears "a child-like soul crying in a withered hell."<sup>82</sup> Contemporaneous, mostly incomparable travelers in modernist musical culture, Sitwell and Adorno both acknowledge the retroactive (or, in Adorno's version, reactionary) tendencies of Stravinsky's music, a tendency towards retrospection and even "retrogression" that Sitwell believes a characteristic feature of "modern heart-break" and "disillusionment":

ONE of the characters in Mr. Shaw's "Heart-break House," fumbling, as it were, amid the dusty lumber of years, cries suddenly: "I have a terrible fear that my heart is broken, and that heart-break is not like what I thought it was."—This cry, so piercing and revealing in its disillusionment, sounds over and over again in this music, which is the epitome and revelation of the modern world. . . . This slow withdrawal will change the tragic mask through which strange gods have cried, until, seen through the death-cold rents in the saturnine leaves it seems, almost, to echo in its form the cold laughter of the water. And this, too, is the fate of the comedy masks, smiling and clear as vermillion fruits. Modern heart-break is merely a dulling and a retrogression, a travelling backward: till man is no longer the bastard of beasts and of gods, but is blind, eyeless, shapeless as the eternal stones, or exists with the half-sentience of the vegetable world—a sentience that is *so* intensely concerned with the material world (as apart from the visual) that it is like the sentience of the blind.<sup>83</sup>

Sitwell tellingly invokes the "tragic" and "comedic" masks, as in the first line of her autobiography: "I am a Janus bifrons: I laugh with one face, I weep with the other" (*Taken Care Of* 3). An expression of emotional contradiction and affective performance, the mask locates

those contradictions and ambivalences on the human body itself, and therefore rematerializes modernist anxiety as a physical phenomenon.

While one can see why the Sitwells would have been drawn to Meyerhold's aesthetics, by way of the Ballets Russes, in their desire to experiment with spectatorship in public social settings, one can also see why pro-realists and antimodernists such as Lukács (and, later, the Zhdanovites) would have found those aesthetics wanting. One finds well after *Façade* a formidable objection to Lukács's anti-modernism in Brecht's essay "Against Georg Lukács" (1939; pub. [posth.] 1967), in which he outlines the shortcomings of a "formalistic" criticism that (1) obsesses over the novel at the expense of poetry and theater; and (2) "capitulat[es]" to the "Old Masters" at the expense of a new art, which would be better served to illustrate not "the good old days but the bad new ones," to enable a dialectical struggle in which "the masses shed their dehumanization and thereby men become men again—but not the same men as before."<sup>84</sup> It's hard to imagine Brecht having much sympathy for the Sitwells, who wished to scandalize the bourgeoisie and not to unravel it; and yet both are engaged in a similar investigation of the social potential of non-realist art.

The tension between realism and non-realism, melodrama and ironic detachment, compels the entry of the dandy figure, which motivates the final section of this chapter. Drawing on Schoenberg as well as Cocteau (anti-Teuton extraordinaire), the Sitwells advertise their work as cosmopolitan in its very aesthetic lineage. In fact, by drawing on *Pierrot Lunaire* before it had ever been performed in Britain, the Sitwells advertise *themselves* as cosmopolitan.

The influence of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* on Walton and Sitwell has essentially two components: its imagery of the *commedia* and its use of *Sprechstimme*, a vocal technique that hovers between song and speech. Like *Façade*, *Pierrot* resists easy classification: ironic and

authentic, expressionistic and Symbolist, a revolt against convention and a return to common tropes of the *commedia dell'arte*. The title character of *Pierrot* embodies this tension: the moonstruck, heartbroken Pierrot is simultaneously a dandy, a detached and ironic figure of stylized self-representation.

A setting of twenty-one poems by the French Symbolist poet Albert Giraud (translated into German by Otto Erich Hartleben), *Pierrot* draws on a genre of drama frequently associated with realism and naturalism—the melodrama, or (simply speaking) words spoken over musical accompaniment—and transmutes it into what Schoenberg terms "an almost too animal and immediate expression of spiritual emotions."<sup>85</sup> *Sprechstimme*, Schoenberg writes in his stage directions for *Pierrot*, must avoid either a "singsong speech pattern" or a kind of "realistic, natural speech," but must occupy rather a curious middle ground: a spoken melody (*Sprechmelodie*), a musical kind of speech that is recognizably different from song. Similarly, in an essay entitled "The Relation to the Text" (1912), Schoenberg claims to have composed his piece "intoxicated by the initial sound of the first words of the text without bothering myself at all about the further course of what happens in the poem." The Symbolist aesthetic of Giraud's poems seems to invite this kind of attitude, the Symbolist attitude being that a text should create its own, hyperreal, musical experience by virtue of association and poetic sound.

*Pierrot's* appeal to the Sitwells makes sense: beyond the simple fact of its notoriety, *Pierrot* resists naturalistic/realistic modes of authenticity and transparent representation—and explanation. One finds the piece described either as "artificial" or as expressionistic, detached from the emotional demands of music or deeply embedded in them. As Daniel Albright writes, the *Sprechstimme*, combined with the equally unfamiliar atonal idiom, manages to "simulate speech—not for the sake of simplicity or any naturalistic effect, but in order to heighten the

artificiality, the eeriness of the music."<sup>86</sup> And Stravinsky, who attended an early performance of the piece, much admired the instrumental music but found the *Sprechstimme* intolerable, too much the product of the ornamental, decorative, decadent German art nouveau (*Jugendstil*):

Albertine Zehme, the *Sprechstimme* artist, wore a Pierrot costume and accompanied her epiglottal sounds with a small amount of pantomime. I remember that and the fact that the musicians were seated behind a curtain, but I was too occupied with the copy of the score Schoenberg had given me to notice anything else. I also remember that the audience was quiet and attentive and that I wanted Frau Zehme to be quiet too, so that I could hear the *music*. Diaghilev and I were equally impressed with Pierrot, though he dubbed it a product of the *Jugendstil* movement, aesthetically. (qtd. in Green and Swan 201)

No small fans of the *commedia*, Stravinsky and Diaghilev found the pantomime distractingly ornamented, an unsatisfactory match for the prowess of the music.

Schoenberg derives from the *Jugendstil* aesthetic but also departs from it, and it is the figure of the dandy (Pierrot himself) who maneuvers between sympathy and irony, detachment and engagement. Adorno contests that *Pierrot Lunaire* and Schoenberg's *Herzgewächse* "transcend the *Jugendstil* out of which they arise. For the musical expression assumes an immediacy that no longer requires any metaphor: the music consumes the images and speaks directly from within."<sup>87</sup> The piece's expressive power, its ability to "consume" its own *commedic* imagery, certainly derives in part from the raw emotional immediacy of the music, but also from a sense of generic irony. As Alan Lessem writes, with *Pierrot's* introduction of "the pathetic (and again nocturnal) clown who is the alter ego of the Romantic hero," "the artistic conventions of the past, rejected by Expressionism as being no longer authentic, are momentarily restored and vindicated through the spirit of irony."<sup>88</sup> The third song of the cycle, *Der Dandy*, depicts Pierrot, "the silent dandy of Bergamo," contemplating how best to paint his "waxen" face. In the midst of the decadent multicolored landscape, a refraction of moonlight through the "crystal flacons" on

his "black, sacrosanct washstand," Pierrot passes on the colors of the East and settles instead on the ethereal, dreamlike makeup of a "fantastic moonbeam":

Pierrot with his waxen face  
Stands meditatively and thinks: how shall he make up today?  
He shoves aside the red, and the green of the Orient,  
And paints his face in a noble style  
With a fantastic moonbeam.<sup>89</sup>

A transcendence of the orientalist aesthetic that preceded it, this fantastic moonbeam is still a "style," wrapped up in the aesthetic self-presentation of dandyism and in the linguistic artifice of Symbolism. In fact the music emphasizes and ironizes this noble style—the piano ascends to the word "style" [*stil*], treating it as a mini-climax.

There is no sense in which *Façade* is expressionistic, though it dabbles heavily in a Symbolist style similar to Giraud's, bedaubing its own poetic face with makeup. Indeed, the landscape of *Der Dandy* resembles not just the synaesthetic reveries of the *Façade* poems, but Osbert Sitwell's recollection of the *Façade* performance itself: reveling in a kind of transcendent, spiritual imagery, the "doors lined with mirror, glitter[ing] with redoubled vehemence," while also reveling in the social spectacle of aesthetic patronage and publicity. The generic ambiguity and overdetermined citationality of *Façade* enables a critical ambivalence about empire, but also about the experience of poetic authenticity itself. It attempts to navigate between the psychological surrealities offered (at least ostensibly) by Symbolism and by the metaphorical experience of childhood, and on the other hand a self-consciously presentational attitude towards art which confesses to its own social situation and attempts to turn that situation into its own form of theater. By the standards of modernist interiority, organicism, and seriousness, the lukewarm reception of *Façade* by cultural Leavisites is less than surprising. But as a "poetry of



publicity," *Façade* offers a cosmopolitan and self-conscious rhythmic *commedia* both deriving from and contributing to the social experience of aesthetics.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Edith Sitwell, *Taken Care of* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), 122. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>2</sup> John Pearson, *Façades: Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell Sitwell* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 184-5. Hereafter cited parenthetically. *Façade's* debts to *Parade* have been noted, usually in passing, but rarely have they probed the cultural significance of those debts. Cf. Gyllian Phillips, "'The rhythm of the visible world': Music, Text, and Performance in Selected Writings of Edith Sitwell, Gertrude Stein, and Virginia Woolf," Ph.D. Diss, U of Western Ontario, 1996. Phillips writes, "the title *Façade* deliberately invokes the French ballet, *Parade*, as an intertext or at least as a shadow reference" (152). Phillips makes several useful connections to Sitwells' musical contemporaries than I do here, suggesting that *Façade* cites the Spanish musical influences of Maurice Ravel and Georges Bizet on the dance music of *Façade* (127) and that *Façade* poems "make a tenuous ironic alliance between racial 'otherness,' darkness, and eroticism or desire" (119). Whereas her emphasis and endpoint is on the fluidity and ambiguity of Sitwell's text and performance, mine is on the cultural work performed by the poems and their influences.

<sup>3</sup> G.A. Cevasco, *The Sitwells: Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), 5.

<sup>4</sup> F.R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1960), 73.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Bradford, Honor Clerk, Jonathan Fryer and Robin Gibson, *The Sitwells and the Arts of the 1920s and 1930s* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1996), 92.

<sup>6</sup> Sitwell, "A Few Days in an Author's Life," 31.

<sup>7</sup> For the sake of convenience and clarity I will refer to the siblings by first name.

<sup>8</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette* 13 June 1923, qtd. in Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Victoria Glendinning, *Edith Sitwell: A Unicorn Among Lions* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), 77. The relations between the Sitwells and the Bloomsburys were always tenuous; Osbert Sitwell termed the Bloomsbury group a "Junta." Osbert Sitwell, *Left Hand, Right Hand!* (London: Macmillan, 1949), 19. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Driver, "'Façade' Revisited," *Tempo* 133/134 (1980): 8.

<sup>11</sup> Cyrena N. Podrom, "Influence? Or Intertextuality? The Complicated Connection of Edith Sitwell with Gertrude Stein," *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, eds. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1991), 205-16.

<sup>12</sup> The performative aspects of Sitwell's text, although not its relation to publicity, motivates much of Phillips's argument in "'The rhythm of the visible world'" (see n. 2).

<sup>13</sup> See Lynette Gottlieb, "Images, Technology, and Music: The Ballets Suédois and *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*," *The Musical Quarterly* 88.4 (2005). Gottlieb suggests that the real influence on *Façade* is Cocteau's *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, a collaboration among Cocteau, the tandem of "Les Six" (Honegger, Auric, Dufay, Tailleferre, Poulenc, and Milhaud), and the Ballet Suédois. Her reasons are much the same as mine, and in some respects *Les mariés* actualizes what *Parade* merely gestures at—the use of gramophones and megaphones, for example. That said, the Sitwells are engaged not only with Cocteau's technologies, but with the cultural resonances of the Ballets Russes.

<sup>14</sup> For an important exception, see Lynette Gottlieb, "Narrating Modernism: Technology and the Changing Voice of Musical Collaboration, 1909-1959," Ph.D. Diss., SUNY Buffalo, 2002. Gottlieb reads *Façade* in the context of a variety of literary-musical collaborators (Cocteau, Schoenberg, Satie, Stravinsky, *Les Six*, Poulenc, Arthur Bliss) both fascinated by and skeptical towards technological innovation—particularly with respect to technological

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mediations of the voice. Gottlieb argues that Bliss's compositions proved a particular influence on Walton, a genealogy which I won't pursue here.

<sup>15</sup> Edith Sitwell, "Façade," *Collected Poems* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2006). All references hereafter are to this edition, by individual poem and line number.

<sup>16</sup> See Robert David Madden, *Harlequin's Stick, Charlie's Cane: A Comparative Study of Commedia Dell'arte and Silent Slapstick Comedy* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green U Popular Press, 1975); Robert Storey, *Pierrot: A Critical History of a Mask* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978); Martin Green and John Swan, *The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia Dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination* (New York: Macmillan, 1986); Glenn Watkins, *Pyramids at the Louvre: Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>17</sup> The British premiere of *Pierrot* would not occur until 1923, eleven years after its debut performance. See Jennifer Ruth Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-modern Music, 1922-1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999). Doctor discusses the efforts of the BBC to bring "high culture" to a larger audience, including but not limited to that of the Second Viennese School.

<sup>18</sup> John O'Brien, "Pantomime," *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830*, eds. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 113. Hereafter cited parenthetically. O'Brien suggestively argues that "pantomime" can be understood through Adorno and Horkheimer's model of the culture industry, acknowledging that it emerged from a dissimilar economic framework.

<sup>19</sup> Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Dunsby, *Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Gyllian Phillips, "'Something Lies Beyond the Scene [seen]' of *Façade*: Sitwell, Walton, and Kristeva's Semiotic " *Literature and Musical Adaptation*, ed. Michael J. Meyer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 71. Marsha Bryant, "Sitwell Beyond the Semiotic: Gender, Race, and Empire in *Façade*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 26.2 (2007). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>22</sup> Wyndham Lewis, *The Apes of God* (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow, 1981), 354.

<sup>23</sup> Augustus John, *Finishing Touches* (1964), qtd. in Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1976), 8.

<sup>24</sup> See Kenneth E. Silver, "Jean Cocteau and the *Image d'Epinal*: An Essay on Realism and Naiveté," *Jean Cocteau and the French Scene*, ed. Arthur King Peters (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>25</sup> Qtd in Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2001), 73. (The etymology of the term "Jingoism" is G.W. Hunt's "Macdermott's War Song" [1878]: "We don't want to fight but by jingo if we do / We've got the ships, we've got the men, and got the money too!")

<sup>26</sup> Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> "Hugh Allen, the organist of New College, had played a piano reduction of *Petrushka* to the young chorister and [...] when on holiday in Oldham Walton had [...] made a 'horrible din' by playing through *Le Sacre du Printemps* and Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*." John Coggrave, "Sacred Music," *William Walton: Music and Literature*, ed. Stewart R. Craggs (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 23.

<sup>28</sup> Letter to Louisa Walton, 8 Oct. 1916, in Malcolm Hayes, ed., *The Selected Letters of William Walton* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002) 11.

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- <sup>29</sup> Osbert Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room* (London: Macmillan, 1949), 171. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>30</sup> Glenn Watkins, *Proof through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2003), 42-3.
- <sup>31</sup> Susana Walton, *Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), 50.
- <sup>32</sup> On the relationship between the Great War and national musical styles (in England and on the Continent), see Watkins, *Proof through the Night*.
- <sup>33</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford, "Music and the War," *Interludes: Records and Reflections* (London: John Murray, 1922), 106.
- <sup>34</sup> Dent, "Landscape with Figures," 1041.
- <sup>35</sup> See Gordon Cox, "Towards the National Song Book: The History of an Idea," *British Journal of Music Education* 9.3 (1992). According to Cox, the late nineteenth century's "growing feeling of imperial nationalism" culminated in the 1906 publication of C.V. Stanford's *National Song Book*, which served largely to bolster Stanford's own ideological civic values and to "tame and refine the working class" (251).
- <sup>36</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Should Music Be National?," *National Music and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987), 6. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>37</sup> Pearson cites Paul Fussell's *Great War and Modern Memory* in arguing that Sitwell's experience in the trenches led to his predilection for defensiveness and feuding, in that he was always inclined to wonder "'what 'the other side' is up to'" (145).
- <sup>38</sup> See Sitwell, "A Few Days in an Author's Life," 21-3. Sitwell offers a brief account of his personal conflict with Scott Moncrieff, presented as "Mr. X." Mr. X is depicted as mocking the Sitwells' ancestry and personal appearance in "a queer-bastard Catholic-Socialist-ultra-Conservative paper." That Mr. X is Scott Moncrieff is owed to Pearson, 210.
- <sup>39</sup> Edith Sitwell, "Some Notes on my Own Poetry," *Collected Poems* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2006), xv. Hereafter cited parenthetically.
- <sup>40</sup> Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 112.
- <sup>41</sup> Edward L. Bernays, *Biography of an Idea: Memoirs of Public Relations Counsel Edward L. Bernays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 102. Hereafter cited parenthetically. For an additional discussion of the Ballets Russes' publicity campaigns, see Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 203-4.
- <sup>42</sup> Osbert Sitwell, *Sing High! Sing Low!* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 170.
- <sup>43</sup> Christopher Reed, "Design for (Queer) Living: Sexual Identity, Performance, and Decor in British Vogue, 1922-1926," *GLQ* 12.3 (2006): 389-90.
- <sup>44</sup> From *Belshazzar's Feast*, adapted by Osbert Sitwell from Revelation 18.12.
- <sup>45</sup> Margaret Dean-Smith, "Hornpipe (ii)," *Grove Music Online* (2008), 25 June 2008 <<http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/shared/views/article.html?section=music.13367>>.
- <sup>46</sup> As Patricia Laurence suggest, the concerns of the Frankfurt School over consumerism and "kitsch" bear certain kinds of relevance to the problem of chinoiserie, claiming that while Adorno (among the rest) would see chinoiserie as a commodity fetish, certain Bloomsbury aesthetes such as Roger Fry saw it as "training for the eye." *Patricia*

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Laurence, *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism, and China* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2003), 344. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>47</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Rev. Sub. ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985), 232-3.

<sup>48</sup> Bertolt Brecht, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. John Willett (London: Methuen, 1974), 91. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>49</sup> Albright claims that "the Managers are *intonarumori* [Russolo's noisemakers] outfitted with arms and legs" (*Untwisting* 212).

<sup>50</sup> Jean Cocteau, "Fragments from 'Igor Stravinsky and the Russian Ballet'," trans. Rollo H. Myers, *The Cock and the Harlequin* (London: Egoist Press, 1921), 42, his italics.

<sup>51</sup> Jean Cocteau, "The Collaboration of 'Parade'," trans. Rollo H. Myers, *The Cock and the Harlequin* (London: Egoist Press, 1921), 140.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Pelfrey and Mary Hall-Pelfrey, *Art and Mass Media* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 109.

<sup>53</sup> "'Still another effect of the war,'" wrote the critic Clément Janin in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in 1917, 'the renaissance of the *image d'Epinal!*' Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 127.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur Rimbaud, "Alchemy of the Word," trans. Wallace Fowlie, *Complete Works, Selected Letters: A Bilingual Edition*, eds. Wallace Fowlie and Seth Whidden, Rev. ed. (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2005), 285.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Spencer Kennard, *Masks and Marionettes* (New York: Macmillan, 1935). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>56</sup> Theodore Reff, "On Harlequin and Pierrot in Picasso's Work after 1917," *Canto d'Amore: Classicism in Modern Art and Music, 1914-1935*, eds. Gottfried Boehm, Ulrich Mosch and Katharina Schmidt (London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1996), 140.

<sup>57</sup> John D. Anderson, "Pierrot: Dramatic and Literary Mask," *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. Vicki K. Janik (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 338.

<sup>58</sup> Eleonora Luciano, *The Mask of Comedy: The Art of Italian Commedia* (Louisville: JB Speed Art Museum, 1990), 3. On masks in modernist musical theater see Anthony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2001).

<sup>59</sup> Apparently, as with the first *Façade* curtain, Picasso was the first choice, but Sir George thought the expense unreasonable.

<sup>60</sup> Martin Green, *Children of the Sun: A Narrative of "Decadence" in England after 1918* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 7.

<sup>61</sup> Glendinning, *Edith Sitwell: A Unicorn Among Lions*, 60. See also George H Gilpin, "1898-1945: Hardy to Auden," *The Columbia History of British Poetry*, eds. Carl Woodring and James S. Shapiro (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), 541; Green and Swan, *Triumph*, 246.

<sup>62</sup> Walton's naïveté as a composer revealed itself when his use of the music-hall number "I do like to be beside the Seaside" infringed on the copyright of the original composer (John Glover-Kind). See Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire*, 57-8.

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<sup>63</sup> Susan Gubar, *Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), 139. Gubar continues, "Attraction to a sang-froid shaped by the drumming chants, incomprehensible incantations, and ersatz murmurs of countless stage endmen and screen cannibals catapulted writers from Lindsay to Corso into displaying the centrality of modernist minstrelsy in the evolution of twentieth-century poetry, clarifying the uses served by a nonwhite, Africanlike presence in the white imagination" (139). Walton cites a stylistic debt to Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*, the odd ragtime-inflected chamber piece criticized for, among other things, its "inauthenticity" (a critique due in part to its neoclassical citational tendencies).

<sup>64</sup> On the influence of Pierrot on Eliot's early poetry, see Green and Swan, *Triumph*, 245-48. On Laforgue's influence on Eliot, see Green and Swan 25-28, and John J. Soldo, "T. S. Eliot and Jules LaForgue," *American Literature* 55.2 (1983).

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, rev. ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1919), 301-2.

<sup>66</sup> According to the OED, the word "beguine" did not describe a form of dance until Cole Porter began it in 1935.

<sup>67</sup> Qtd. in John Lehmann, *A Nest of Tigers: The Sitwells in Their Times* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 60.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf's Nose: Essays on Biography* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005). Lee uses Woolf's nose to exemplify the problems of literary biography.

<sup>69</sup> Olga Taxidou, *The Mask: A Periodical Performance by Edward Gordon Craig* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998), 12.

<sup>70</sup> André Levinson, *Ballet Old and New* (1917), qtd. in Garafola 47.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Wagner, "On Actors and Singers," *Actors and Singers*, ed. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1995), 182. Hereafter cited parenthetically. Thomas Mann cites this passage approvingly in "The Sorrows and Grandeurs of Richard Wagner" (1933), citing also Nietzsche's assertion that Wagner was "God's ventriloquist." Thomas Mann, *Pro and Contra Wagner*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 131.

<sup>72</sup> Edward Gordon Craig, "The Actor and the Über-Marionette," *On the Art of the Theatre*, ed. Edward Gordon Craig (London: Browne's Bookstore, 1912), 74. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>73</sup> Arthur Symons, *Plays, Acting, and Music* (London: Duckworth, 1903), 193. Qtd. in *The Mask* 5.2 (1912), 103.

<sup>74</sup> Among the modernist figures to celebrate the "superhuman" and "immortal" quality of marionettes is Joseph Conrad. In a letter to Cunninghame Graham (1897), which Craig quotes eagerly in *The Mask* (vol. 14, 1928), Conrad writes, "Their [marionettes'] impassibility in love, in crime, in mirth, in sorrow,—is heroic, superhuman, fascinating. Their rigid violence when they fall upon one another to embrace or to fight is simply a joy to behold. [...] I love the marionettes that are without life, that come so near to being immortal!" Noting Craig's citation of Conrad, Taxidou argues that while Craig idealized the Eastern/Oriental resonances of puppet theater, he was more generally indebted to a "Romantic tradition which in essence did not need the Orient but was happy to appropriate it" (87-8).

<sup>75</sup> Georges Banks, "Petrouchka (Produced by the Russian Ballet)," *Rhythm* 2.6 (1912): 58.

<sup>76</sup> Konstantin Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932*, trans. Roxanne Permar, ed. Lesley Milne (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 93.

<sup>77</sup> See C. Moody, "Vsevolod Meyerhold and the 'Commedia dell'arte'," *The Modern Language Review* 73.4 (1978). As Moody explains, Meyerhold interpreted the *commedia* spirit as "the opportunity [...] to have his actors *show*, not *be*" (861, Moody's emphasis).

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<sup>78</sup> See Donald Mcmanus, *No Kidding! Clown as Protagonist in Twentieth-Century Theater* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2003), 39-40. Mcmanus valuably notes the political undertones of Meyerhold's use of the clown, claiming that it developed from an anti-authoritarian gesture (the clown as a mockery or subversion of authority) into an authoritarian one, in which the clown operated as a "utilitarian" laborer "subdued and controlled by a concert-master."

<sup>79</sup> Vsevolod Meyerhold, "The Fairground Booth," *Meyerhold on Theatre*, ed. Edward Braun (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), 128. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>80</sup> Edward Braun, *The Theatre of Meyerhold: Revolution on the Modern Stage*, qtd. in Garafola 30.

<sup>81</sup> Vsevolod Meyerhold, "The Naturalistic Theatre and the Theatre of Moods," *Meyerhold on Theatre*, ed. Edward Braun (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), 26.

<sup>82</sup> Edith Sitwell, "Igor Stravinski and the Modern World," *The New Age* 23 June 1921: 92.

<sup>83</sup> Edith Sitwell, "Igor Stravinski and the Modern World (cont.)," *The New Age* 7 July 1921: 118.

<sup>84</sup> Bertolt Brecht, "Against Georg Lukács," trans. Stuart Hood, *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Ronald Taylor (London: NLB, 1977), 69.

<sup>85</sup> Schoenberg, diary entry, quoted in Swan and Green 201. On the relationship between music and text in Schoenberg, and the influence of melodrama, see Thomas Jensen Hines, *Collaborative Form: Studies in the Relations of the Arts* (Kent: Kent State UP, 1991); Dunsby, *Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire*. For a useful discussion of the performance difficulties posed by *Sprechstimme*, see Peter Stadlen, "Schoenberg's Speech-Song," *Music & Letters* 62.1 (1981).

<sup>86</sup> Albright, ed., *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* 37.

<sup>87</sup> Adorno, "Über einige Arbeiten Arnold Schonbergs," quoted in Walter Frisch, "Music and Jugendstil," *Critical Inquiry* 17.1 (1990): 160.

<sup>88</sup> Alan Lessem, "Schönberg and the Crisis of Expressionism," *Music & Letters* 55.4 (1974): 436.

<sup>89</sup> Albert Giraud, "Pierrot Lunaire: Three Times Seven Poems by Albert Giraud," trans. Otto Erich Hartleben and Stanley Applebaum, *Verklärte Nacht and Pierrot Lunaire* (New York: Dover, 1994), 56.

## CHAPTER VI

### ARISTOCRACY OF THE DISSONANT: THE "SUBLIME NOISE" IN FORSTER AND BRITTEN

Even before Russolo's "Arts of Noise" and the onset of World War I, the narrator of E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910) describes Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as "the most sublime noise ever to penetrate the ear of man."<sup>1</sup> And even before Russolo had declared his intentions to "conquer the infinite world of noise-sounds," Helen Schlegel imagines Beethoven conquering the noises within his own music in a hypermasculine, synaesthetic battle scene: "Gusts of splendor, gods and demi-gods contending with vast swords, colour and fragrance broadcast on the field of battle, magnificent victory, magnificent victory!" (33; ch. 5). For the most part, until his collaboration with Eric Crozier on the libretto of Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* (1951), Forster seemed to involve himself only cursorily with the "new music"; but even before then he had an acutely modernist sense of the pressures that music exerted on literary form.

*Billy Budd* employs *consonance*, as much as *dissonance*, to call into question the very values traditionally accorded consonant harmony: stability, solidarity, identity. That is, while Jacques Attali's *Noise* describes the "power of dissonance to destroy the faith of those who believe in harmony" (43), Britten's use of consonance reflects a similar unease about the value and the consensual nature of "harmony." Britten's music shows the other, less-recognized side of the emancipated dissonance: the musical drive towards consonance begins to look not natural but arbitrary.<sup>2</sup> Articulating questions of national identity with those of sexual identity, *Billy Budd* explores the extent to which national solidarity relies on the scapegoating and suppression of homoerotic desire. Although *Billy Budd* may offer a predictably Forsterian defense of personal



relationships and general lack of enthusiasm for national solidarity, it refuses to separate the two entirely. As the opera finally resolves into consonance, it refuses to forget the auspices under which Billy and Vere were introduced in the first place, the regimes of violence and impressment that underpin the workings, and the consonant choral expressions, of the *Indomitable*.

The relationship between national and sexual identity in the opera has been insufficiently acknowledged, even as the correlate relationship in Melville's novella has received comment.<sup>3</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's analysis of Melville's story argues that the "contagion" (Melville's word) of mutiny corresponds to a "surplus of male-male attachment," and observes that while Billy's respect for military hierarchies always remains intact, "it remains for the very last moments of the novella to show whether his ultimate effect on the personnel [...] will be to trigger actual revolt, or [...] to reconsolidate the more inescapably the hierarchies of discipline and national defense."<sup>4</sup> The same is true in the opera, but the emphasis on consolidation and hierarchy takes on a new thrust in the period of Britain's imperial decline. Jed Esty has argued that British late modernism represents an inward, anthropological turn, a drive towards consolidation and cultural repair, rather than expansion and fragmentation: Britain contracts from an expanding global empire to a "shrinking island." Similarly, Lloyd Whitesell observes that Britten's explorations of queer partnerships lead him to seek settings

at a remove from familiar surroundings. Whether adrift on a "tiny, floating fragment of earth," installed in a house in the country, interred in battle trenches, or sightseeing in an ancient urban archipelago, the protagonists find themselves away from home and thrown together with unfamiliar company. In each case, geographic isolation creates the crucible-like conditions of a contained culture in which social bonds can be reforged and unidentified agents have a catalytic potency.<sup>5</sup>

Forster's collaboration with Britten offers him a new opportunity to explore homoerotic relations in a "contained" and self-enclosed environment, so as to articulate (in both senses of the word)

the tensions between personal erotics and national definition.<sup>6</sup> In the cultural imaginary, the Britain of 1951 was itself a "tiny floating fragment of earth," the phrase uttered by John Claggart as he promises to kill the "handsome sailor" (I.iii., 137).<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, in the universes of Forster's *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, linguistic and epistemological ruptures and anxieties about the failure to "connect" speak to the expansion and fragmentation of empire: concerns registered in Forster's texts as dissonance and noise. This chapter will investigate *Billy Budd* both on its own terms and as a reflection on Britten's and Forster's earlier works. In *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, music is characterized by both expressive potential and semantic indeterminacy. In the case of *Howards End*, the instability of musical interpretation impedes its value for cultural or social reform; in the case of *Passage*, that instability disturbs the colonial order of the British Empire. In both cases the cultural weight of music has an imperial subtext. Forster's use of music in *Howards End* uneasily imbricates his liberal project with his distaste for empire: Helen's celebration of the "magnificent victory" of Beethoven's Fifth is troubled by Forster's anxieties about "broadcast[ing]" this victory onto a transnational "field of battle." Britten's *Peter Grimes* (1945), on the other hand, draws on the longstanding literary villain, rumor, to effect what Philip Brett and Elizabeth Wood have called an "allegory of homosexual oppression."<sup>8</sup> In *Grimes* Britten uses forms of dissonance (mild, by modernist standards) to signify the need for social collectives to be able to accommodate marginal voices.

Written in the 1880s but not published until 1924, Melville's *Billy Budd* was still relatively fresh when Britten, Forster, and Crozier set out to adapt it. In *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), Forster identifies Melville as a "prophetic" novelist and *Billy Budd* a "song not without words." The novel looks like a logical next step from *Grimes*: self-consciously allegorical,

anxious about the force of rumor, and skeptical about the transparency of political and narrative authority. Accordingly, the opera exemplifies Forster's skepticism about political stridency and his refusal to "believe in belief,"<sup>9</sup> expressed in his collection (also from 1951) *Two Cheers for Democracy*. This skepticism, with Britten's pacifism and, finally, both writers' anxieties about the "open secret" of homosexual affection, manifest themselves in the musical elements that I have addressed throughout this dissertation: consonance and dissonance, rhythm, and noise. Rumor and gossip, which features heavily in Melville's novella, has little place in the opera; the villain of Britten's *Billy Budd* is not "the community," as it is in *Grimes*, but rather the top-down manipulation of sentiment. Just as Forster describes Claggart's otherwise inexplicable hatred of Billy as a "sexual discharge gone evil,"<sup>10</sup> the execution of Billy represents sexual paranoia redirected in the name of national solidarity.

If the muddle and the noise of music registers Forster's anxiety about the results of imperial expansion, at the same time, it can be read as the result of having to write and speak one's way around the unnameable "open secret" of the homoerotic. Philip Brett's groundbreaking work on Britten draws on the concepts of the "closet" and the "open secret," also key figures in the work of Sedgwick and D.A. Miller, to articulate what was already more or less self-evident: Britten's operas are driven by the very sexuality that they are forbidden to name.<sup>11</sup> In his essay "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," Brett demonstrates the extent to which Britten's sexuality *enabled* his creative production and "allowed him to maneuver effectively in British society": "to live openly with Peter Pears," his partner<sup>12</sup> and the tenor for whom Britten wrote many of his lead roles, to return insistently to the themes of "homosexual oppression" and "bonding," to collaborate with W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, and E.M. Forster ("Musicality" 18-9). All this in addition to Britten's musical attraction to a canon of writers

including Arthur Rimbaud (*Illuminations*; 1939), Henry James (*Turn of the Screw*; 1954), Wilfred Owen (*War Requiem*; 1961), Thomas Mann (*Death in Venice*; 1973), and, some would add, William Shakespeare (*Midsummer Night's Dream*; 1960).

The "open secret" of Forster's career, his unpublished but privately circulated gay bildungsroman *Maurice* (1914; pub. 1971), uses music to invoke the personal and cultural significance of homosexuality: Maurice's psychological "muddle" is marked by music with specifically homosexual resonances. I address *Maurice* only briefly and tactically, but will make two points here. First, the novel pivots on a somewhat schematic pair of scenes: two performances of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony Pathétique* (1893). The first is a pianola record of the 5/4 "waltz" of the second movement, an embodied dance that is at the same time a little off-kilter. Forster later claims that the image of the pianola record "dates" the novel, but this is to the point: Tchaikovsky's music has a significance in the time and place of its performance, as transitory as Clive Durham's sexuality (he apparently, though not unambiguously, loses his attraction to males). This scene is matched by Maurice's later attendance of a Tchaikovsky concert; when Maurice learns that the composer had fallen in love with his nephew, a Tchaikovsky biography becomes his most prized possession.<sup>13</sup> Tchaikovsky (posthumously) serves as a gay icon, a cultural signifier musically and biographically.

Second, and more importantly for my purposes, the novel associates homophobia with English norms of masculinity, and homosexuality with cosmopolitanism. Maurice refers to himself as "an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort,"<sup>14</sup> linking himself to a cosmopolitan gay Irish Anglican-turned-Catholic, but daring not to speak the name of his predicament. When hypnosis fails to "cure" Maurice he is encouraged to move to France, which has adopted the Code Napoléon.<sup>15</sup> So when the lieutenants of Britten's *Billy Budd* attribute to the French "a word

which we scarcely dare speak,"<sup>16</sup> they may not be referring only to "mutiny." Francophobia and homophobia have a deeply interconnected relation in Britain, after the French Revolution (when Melville's novella takes place), throughout the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth. As Louis Crompton writes in his study of homophobia in nineteenth-century Britain, "Nowhere did English Francophobia find more impassioned expression than in attitudes towards sex."<sup>17</sup> As Brett notes, musicality in Britain has long been associated with effeminacy and homosexuality, to the extent that the word "musical" has served as a euphemism for "gay" ("Musicality" 11). And as Humphrey Carpenter notes, a 1954 review of Britten's *Turn of the Screw* in the Paris *L'Express* noting Britten's "'intense preoccupation with homosexual love'" marks the "first time that homosexuality was mentioned in print with connection with Britten." Maurice's and Budd's musicality makes them outsiders within a matrix of national definition and sexuality: despite their thoroughgoing Englishness, both characters are on some level accused of being French.<sup>18</sup>

The "open secret" creates a formal and stylistic problem as well, one that gives Britten's music and drama its much-vaunted ambiguity and ingenuity within a generally tonal and diatonic idiom: Britten and his librettists are forced to compose around the "unspeakable" love at their center. As Whitesell succinctly puts it, "One way to gauge the oddity of Benjamin Britten's operatic output is to scour it for love scenes" (637). The "open secret" exerts productive formal and structural pressures on the output of Forster and Britten, with respect both to sexual identity and to national politics. If the muddle and the noise of music registers Forster's anxiety about the results of imperial expansion, at the same time, it can be read as the result of having to write and speak one's way around the unnameable open secret of the homoerotic.

*Billy Budd* explores "homosexual oppression," and the opacity of homoerotic representations, by way of questioning the foundations of national solidarity and the significance

of musical harmony. The difficulty of articulating a homosexual identity, or of understanding one's relation to a colonial space, motivates Britten's and Forster's search for a kind of expression with no pretense to linguistic transparency: a sublime noise. Throughout much of this chapter, I examine the individual careers of Forster and Britten, with a view towards understanding how each figure develops an artistic idiom capable of expressing the inexpressible.

### "A Muddle and a Noise": "Broadcasting" Music in Forster

The title of *Two Cheers for Democracy* is taken from its still-resonant central essay, which could easily serve as a gloss on *Billy Budd*: "What I Believe," originally published in 1939 (in the *New York Nation*). Most famous for its statements on the need for personal loyalty, the essay asserts, "if I had to choose between betraying my friend and betraying my country, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country" (70). The essay claims that democracy deserves two cheers—one for its tendency toward diversity, a second for its willingness to permit criticism—but refuses to offer a third cheer: "Only Love the Beloved Republic deserves that" (70). *Billy Budd*'s final resolution into B-flat major, as Vere pronounces himself redeemed, seems to illustrate his entry into this beloved republic, as opposed to the republic that has already compelled him to "betra[y] his friend." Vere's earlier entry into "Love the Beloved Republic"—his interview with Billy—occurs only offstage, accompanied by a tonally incomprehensible sequence of thirty-four consonant triads; Vere's epilogue seems to suggest a dramatic imperative to make this "open secret" cease to be a secret, and to interpret its significance.

Although Forster had written the essay twelve years earlier, its place in *Two Cheers for Democracy* is important, not least because the book and the opera appeared in such close proximity. Forster calls "What I Believe" the "key" to *Two Cheers*, largely because the essay

introduces a section of the book devoted to criticism of the arts. "I have," he writes, "found that the arts act as an antidote against our present troubles and also as a support to our common humanity, and I am glad to emphasise this at a time when they are being belittled and starved" ("Preface" xi). Hence while *Two Cheers* resists strong political solidarity, it claims a "common humanity" legible in the sphere of art; as such it represents a clear and coherent defense of what we now often term the New Criticism. The essay that follows "What I Believe," entitled "Anonymity: An Enquiry" (1925), brushes aside the importance of authorial intention and couches this argument in the language of Pater's paean to music: "all literature tends towards a condition of anonymity, and [...] so far as words are creative, a signature merely detracts us from their true significance" (82). True to form, the next essay is entitled "Art for Art's Sake" (1939). In promoting the musical arts, Forster desires to escape from politics and find an antidote for what an earlier essay calls "the noise of the conflict" ahead ("Gerald Heard" [1939], 25). The book's brief entry into music criticism is central to Forster's efforts to situate the aesthetic with respect to other manifestations of culture, and grants music a space independent of politics and society. Yet within that space, Forster admits the difficulty and instability of musical interpretation. As a "sublime noise," music troubles the very autonomy and aesthetic rarefaction that Forster is himself inclined to grant it. After a strange tribute to the key of C minor ("The C Minor of that Life" [1941]), Forster's essay entitled "Not Listening to Music" offers a frank admission: "Listening to music is such a muddle that one scarcely knows how to start describing it" (127). As I have argued, the difficulty of describing music in language is largely what makes it appealing to the modernist writer, particularly insofar as that difficulty compels more intensely embodied modes of experience and interpretation. For Forster, music was both a muddle and a noise: its resistance to being described makes it an unstable conveyor of multiple meanings.

Forster's use of the term "noise" marks a concern about music's lack of determinate meaning, and therefore, its limitations for performing the desired kinds of political work.

The Beethoven's Fifth passage from *Howards End* merits attention both because of what it suggests about musical interpretation and because of its careful stylistic manipulations. Though Forster's essay on "Art for Art's Sake" proclaims "works of art to be the only objects in the material universe to possess internal order" (95), *Howards End* reveals what Forster calls the "true significance" of artwork, and the value of its "internal order," to lie in modes of reception and interpretation. Beethoven's Fifth is not just "sublime" in the aesthetic sense, but a "sublime noise": a cultural production whose susceptibility of being interpreted, and whose ability to "satisf[y] all sorts and conditions," relies on economically emplaced and conscious interpretants:

It will be generally admitted that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man. All sorts and conditions are satisfied by it. Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tunes come—of course, not so as to disturb the others; or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music's flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music; or like Tibby, who is profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee; or like their cousin, Fräulein Mosebach, who remembers all the time that Beethoven is "echt Deutsch"; or like Fräulein Mosebach's young man, who can remember nothing but Fräulein Mosebach; in any case, the passion of your life becomes more vivid, and you are bound to admit that such a noise is cheap at two shillings. (31; ch. 5)

Peter Kivy uses the passage as an organizing principle for his philosophical inquiry into the "purely musical experience," using Margaret, Helen, and Tibby to signpost his hypotheses as to how we interpret and experience music. Ultimately he concludes that Margaret's experience best explains the force of music: the purely cognitive experience of "music alone" independent of the narratives and programs that a Helen might attach to it.

Forster seems less sure; his treatment of Helen in Chapter Five is arch, but it is not dismissive. While certain of Helen's interpretations seem ludicrous, they also seem driven by real



psychological imperatives and political and cultural anxieties. Helen mixes imagery of the gothic (goblins), of imperial fantasy ("a trio of elephants dancing"), and, finally, the reappearance of the composer himself: having let the goblins run amok, Beethoven "appeared in person" and "made them do what he wanted." With "colour and fragrance broadcast on the field of battle," Beethoven achieves his "magnificent victory, magnificent victory!" over the seeds of doubt that he himself has broadcast in the music: both the noises and the sublime are his.

Though Forster and Helen seem to aspire to the creative interpretations enabled by music, they also seem concerned about how music speaks to narratives of expansion. Fredric Jameson's essay "Modernism and Imperialism" (1990) uses *Howards End* to exemplify the modernist drive to aestheticize and contain the economies of empire through style.<sup>19</sup> Noting Forster's own anti-imperial inclinations, he correlates Forster's "stylistic [and] linguistic peculiarities" (45) with a fractured understanding of place and time within metropolitan England. The disorientation and fragmentation associated with modernist writing, Jameson argues, can be traced to the displacement of economic production "beyond the metropolis" and "outside of daily life" (50). Can the same be said of Forster's description of Beethoven's Fifth? What Kivy describes as the "purely musical experience," the experience of Margaret, is underwritten by the narrative offered by Helen: the ability of Beethoven to "broadcast" meanings, in a figurative or meditational sense, derives from the ability to "broadcast" (i.e. disseminate) the seeds of colonial power.

While Helen's use of the term "broadcast" is imperially suggestive, the repetitive phrase, "magnificent victory, magnificent victory!", seems to protest too much. As Helen imagines it, Beethoven attenuates this "magnificent victory" by planting seeds of doubt within the music:

And the goblins—they had not really been there at all? They were only the phantoms of cowardice and unbelief? One healthy human impulse would dispel them? Men like the Wilcoxes, or President Roosevelt, would say yes. Beethoven knew better. The goblins really had been there. They might return—and they did.

[...] Beethoven chose to make all right in the end. [...] But the goblins were there. They could return. He said so bravely, and that is why one can trust Beethoven when he says other things. (34; ch. 5)

Ultimately, when Helen hears the "sublime noise" of the Fifth she hears an act of suasion: an attempt to win over his audience's trust. It is not the symphony's argument, but its willingness to *qualify* that argument, that makes it persuasive, "a tangible statement, which could never be superseded" (34). She recognizes that the symphony's resolution of doubt is tentative and that it is not a requirement but a poetic alternative ("Beethoven chose to make it all right in the end"). Helen is *actively* willing and eager to be persuaded, an eagerness that requires her to supply her own interpretations; where Leonard Bast suffers from the lack of a musical "programme," Helen creates her own. The imaginative act of interpretation so moves and distracts her that she runs off with Bast's umbrella. Conversely, Bast is so distracted by the loss of his umbrella that he finds himself unable to make sense of the proper names of culture: "he might even have heard of Monet and Debussy; the trouble was that he could not string them into a sentence, he could not make them 'tell,' he could not quite forget about his stolen umbrella" (40). Bast's anxiety about his own material circumstances and his insecurity about conversing on culture (or pronouncing the word *Tannhäuser*) make him unable to string names together into a sentence (38).

According to the OED, the word *broadcast* was not used to refer to radio transmissions until the early 1920s. It thus may be a mere coincidence that 1910, the year of *Howards End's* publication, also marked the first daily radio broadcasts and the first wireless radio broadcast of opera (Enrico Caruso). Before 1910, the term "broadcast" widely referred to the dissemination of knowledge and "national culture" in other media, while retaining the agricultural overtones endemic to the word "culture." An essay by J.A. Hobson for *The English Review* (Nov. 1909) suggests that the promise of liberalism lies in "sowing knowledge broadcast in the common

mind, to ripen afterwards in industrial efficiency. And this is but the lowest plea for national culture" (684).<sup>20</sup> The ambivalence in *Howards End* with respect to "sowing knowledge broadcast" in many respects begins and ends with Beethoven: with Helen's worries about Bast, Helen's and Margaret's misfiring encounters with Bast, and with Bast's final reflections on music before books are broadcast over and onto his head. In that final scene, Bast dies not only from a shower of books, but from a sword being brandished at him, an image that, while doubling Bast's umbrella with something edgier, recapitulates the warlike contest between Beethoven and the goblins. Thus, finally, the word "broadcast"—with respect to a German composer engaged in battle with Gothic imagery—recalls anxieties about national expansion: about who shall inherit the earth. In Chapter Four, Margaret's father expounds pessimistically on the fate of Germany:

Your poets too are dying, your philosophers, your musicians, to whom Europe has listened for two hundred years. Gone. Gone with the little courts that nurtured them—gone with Esterhaz and Weimar. What? What's that? Your Universities? Oh, yes, you have learned men, who collect more facts than do the learned men of England. They collect facts, and facts, and empires of facts. But which of them will rekindle the light within? (30; ch. 4)<sup>21</sup>

He attributes this "dying" to the celebration of "bigness," to a "Pan-Germanism" no better than the "Imperialism" practiced in Britain" (29), part of the "xenophobia turned inward" that Jameson ascribes to Forster's liberal critique. Though Helen's reflections on Beethoven suggest meanings that might be spread or broadcast, the characters "rose to their feet and fled" at the sound of Elgar: the dead German composer better rekindles "the light within" than the "learned" English composer. As I discuss in Chapter Five, the ambivalence about the direction of British music—owing to a perceived British musical-cultural deficit and an intensifying anxiety about the state of the Empire—compelled some to embrace pastoralism, some cosmopolitanism. In *Howards End* Elgar seems to be associated with a provincial taste, incapable of matching

Beethoven's musically rhetorical energies, although Mrs. Munt briefly chastises Margaret: "you mustn't run down our English composers" (36; ch. 5).<sup>22</sup>

The Beethoven set-piece exemplifies a modernist focus on literary style, and about the tropes and rhetorical expressions that might evoke or "broadcast" musical meanings. The passage begins roughly in the rhythm of Beethoven's Fifth (with three short notes and a long elaboration—"It will be generally admitted that..."), a pattern that introduces a sequence of stylistic and rhetorical gestures. Moreover, like the novel as a whole, Chapter Five begins with an impersonal assertion that speedily moves into a personal one. The opening phrase, "It will be generally admitted," predicts a modest claim but introduces a grandiloquent one instead; no such thing would ever be "generally admitted," even were it true. The movement from this impersonal expression to more personal ones, the specific tactics of interpretation associated with Helen and Margaret and Tibby, is couched in a sneaky rhetorical shift into the generic second-person voice ("Whether you are like Mrs. Munt"). The second-person voice offers an affectation of personal contact, but its function is to abstract readers and interpretants rather than to humanize them. The shift turns the Schlegels into more general case studies in "all sorts and conditions" of musical interpretation and aesthetic, just as the Wilcoxes eventually become a synecdoche for those who will "inherit the earth" (185; ch. 21). Margaret, for example, reveals herself as a Lessingite and anti-Wagnerian, scornful of the "muddling of arts" (39; ch. 5):

Every now and then in history there do come these terrible geniuses, like Wagner, who stir up all the wells of thought at once. For a moment it's splendid. Such a splash as never was. But afterwards—such a lot of mud; and the wells—as it were, they communicate with each other too easily now, and not one of them will run quite clear. That's what Wagner's done. (39-40)

Margaret describes Wagner as a sort of interference among signals: his attempt to make the languages of "painting" and "music" "interchangeable" (39) results not in a universal musical

language but in "mud." By the end of the novel the problem of abstraction takes on a political and economic resonance as well as a personal one: in Helen's confrontation with Henry Wilcox she assails, with the narrator's help, his "complacent" emphasis on the "great impersonal forces" responsible for shaping civilization, at the expense of the individual (Bast). Noting that Wilcox's "voice grew complacent; it always did when he eliminated the personal" (192; ch. 22), the narrator casts doubt on the tendency to abstract the forces of history from their specific participants. No doubt this has an aesthetic impact on the novelistic form: what Forster identifies as "rhythm," or the immanent emergence of motifs, offers the novel a musical quality to forestall the abstracting and rigid principles of "pattern."

The fragmented, disjunctive treatment of major characters' deaths in *Howards End* and *Passage* coextend the novels' reliance on noise: on sonic presences, such as the "sublime noise" and the echoes of the Marabar caves, that oscillate between the material and abstract.<sup>23</sup> In "The Raison d'Être of Criticism in the Arts" (1947), Forster admits his own difficulties with modern music, but acknowledges that what he personally experiences as "defects" in a composition are integral to the work as a whole:

A piece of contemporary music, to my ear, has a good many sudden deaths in it; the phrases expire as rapidly as the characters in my novel, the chords cut each other's throats, the arpeggio has a heart attack, the fugue gets into a nose-dive. But these defects—if defects they be—are vital to the general conception. They are not to be remedied by substituting sweetness. And the musician would do well to ignore the critic when he admits the justice of a particular criticism. (*Two Cheers* 121)

Forster's self-deprecating reference to the "sudden deaths" in his early novels signify with respect to his intriguing abandonment of novel-writing after *A Passage to India*: as P.N. Furbank explains, Forster, "being a homosexual, [...] grew bored with writing about marriage and the relations of men and women."<sup>24</sup> The seeds of this boredom may be detectable in his insouciant

willingness to kill off characters in his earlier, James-inflected marriage plots:<sup>25</sup> early novels, such as *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Room with a View*, associate these deaths with the experience of "romantic" Europe, and of European music (Beethoven in particular). The treatment of Leonard Bast's bookshelf-induced heart attack, which recaps the Beethoven passage in Chapter Five, recalls the "defects"—the goblins—that Beethoven stills without forestalling their return. At the same time it seems to illustrate the costs of noises, sublime (Beethoven) or mundane (telegrams, letters, bad investment advice), that are broadcast too profusely.

Setting him apart from other literary figures studied here, Forster shows little appreciable interest in modernist music up until his encounters with Britten, whose pacifism, Englishness, mildly dissonant diatonic idiom, and openly secret sexuality may have offered him a personal and aesthetic point of entry into the modernist musical scene.<sup>26</sup> That said, Forster offers an almost Adornian understanding of the "defects" and ruptures that assert themselves as "vital" to the structure of modern music; and, like Adorno, acknowledges the body as the site of this response. In "What I Believe," Forster posits an "aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky" (his version of the ASCAP) to counterbalance the noxious influence of "Great Men," suggesting that such an aristocracy should make itself immune to political organization, and moreover arguing that a "real" aristocrat will appreciate his or her body:

I am against asceticism myself. I am with the old Scotsman who wanted less chastity and more delicacy. I do not feel that my aristocrats are a real aristocracy if they thwart their bodies, since bodies are the instruments through which we register and enjoy the world. Still, I do not insist. This is not a major point. It is clearly possible to be sensitive, considerate, and plucky and yet be an ascetic too, if anyone possesses the first three qualities, I will let him in! On they go—an invincible army, yet not a victorious one. The aristocrats, the chosen, the elect, the Best People—all the words that describe them are false, and all attempts to organize them fail. (73-4)

Ultimately Forster emphasizes his own body, which facilitates his sympathies with fellow sensitive aristocrats: "Naked I came into the world, naked I shall go out of it! And a very good thing too, for it reminds me that I am naked under my shirt, whatever its colour" (76). Siding with the "invincible" but not "victorious" army, Forster sympathizes as much with the goblins as with the composer, at least insofar as the goblins evade attempts at simple categorization, political organization, or shirt-color.

It is perhaps unfortunate for *Howards End* that the Ballets Russes did not make its splash in England until 1911. In Chapter Five, I detail the influences of the Russian Ballet—Wagner, Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold—arguing that they offered the Sitwells a perceived opportunity to refashion the aesthetics of social life. And although Forster had not seen the Russian Ballet by the time he wrote *Howards End*, it seems in some ways to enact what Helen wants from a musical experience, a synaesthetic consummation of mythic and aesthetic struggle: "gods and demi-gods contending with vast swords, colour and fragrance broadcast on the field of battle." In a diary entry marking his attendance of the Ballets Russes' 1913 visit to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (a visit that included Diaghilev productions of both ballet and opera), Forster recounts his awe at Leon Bakst's set designs and, not least, at the sight of Vaslav Nijinsky's body, but says little about the music itself:

Ballet—Nijinsky naked in *L'apres-midi d'un Faune*—a humorous and alarming animal, free from the sentimentality of my stories. 'Ah that's my style' said my fat neighbour in pink when a nymph appeared.—That, *Le sacre du Printemps* and *Prince Igor* threw me into an intoxication greater than my youth's, so that I wanted to miss my train and have adventures all night. Yet at the back of it I watched myself which I did not [illegible]. There was a great deal to watch—mind on fire and body tinder—but the unwinking eye remained. I'm as emotional as ever, evidently.<sup>27</sup>

Diaghilev's productions in London in the early 1910s shook up the British art scene.

Performances of Debussy's *L'apres-midi*, featuring Nijinsky's leotarded (not naked) on-stage

simulations of masturbation, elicited understandable shock. (His performances of Debussy's *Jeux*, based on a tennis match observed while visiting Bloomsbury, elicited a different but no less widespread kind of puzzlement). As Modris Eksteins explains, the 1911 Ballets Russes performance at George V's coronation, "amidst 100,000 roses used as decoration and before an audience that included ambassadors and ministers, African kings, Indian chiefs, maharajahs and mandarins, and the cream of British society," led to the installation of a dance company in London.<sup>28</sup> Diaghilev proclaimed, after his successes in London, that the Russian Ballet had "conquered the whole world" (26-7).

Like Diaghilev *avant la lettre*, *Howards End* contemplates what sort of music will "take over the world," while at the same time thinking about "another type" of person, "whom Nature favours—the Imperial. Healthy, ever in motion, it hopes to inherit the earth" (ch. 41). The "Imperial" type, ever in motion, is able to "broadcast" itself in a more literal sense: to spread its own seed and inherit the earth. This type, as Jameson argues, accounts for the stylistic ruptures and innovations of *Howards End*, insofar as empire exceeds the characters' immediate purview and can be treated only symbolically and allusively. Conversely, the echoes at the heart of *A Passage to India* reflect the "muddle" at the heart of the metropole. The "sudden" casualty in *Passage* is Mrs. Moore, who has been driven out of India by the echoes of the Marabar Caves and by her disgust with Adela's false accusation against Aziz. This death, too, derives from both highly symbolic and highly practical pressures of noise: her perception that the caves have condensed Western experience into an echo, and the incessant demands on her to support Adela's false testimony against Aziz. Mrs. Moore's silencing is effected by an obvious plot contrivance: she dies on the High Seas, on her way back to England, and is buried in the Indian Ocean.<sup>29</sup>



The Indians *within the novel* recognize it as a plot contrivance, a too-easy willingness to reduce characters who might unsettle the narrative: they resent Mrs. Moore's absence at Aziz's trial, claiming that the one Englishperson sympathetic to the Oriental plight has been silenced and shipped away. *Passage* suggests a dialectical, mutually constitutive relation between noise, on one hand, and on the other hand the interpretation of noise through the construction of narrative. Mrs. Moore's name comes to stand in for the kinds of noise that Aziz's accusers can't live with and the subaltern can't live without: Mrs. Moore's symbolic force lies in her willingness to identify with specific Indian human beings and with the general "muddle" of India. But this, too, is an enabling fiction, despite Aziz's assertion that Mrs. Moore is an "Oriental" (21). Mrs. Moore has struggled with the echoes as much as anyone and, conversely, the colonized subjects in the novel are driven to rewrite and imaginatively reinterpret events beyond their purview.

"Muddle" is among Forster's favorite words: a key term of *Maurice*, where it registers the title character's sexual confusion, and an even greater presence in *A Passage to India*, where it seems the only term capable of describing colonized India. The major existential crises of *Passage* are characterized by sonic confusion: Professor Godbole's simple, charming, and utterly confounding song to the gods, a "maze of noises" (77); Mrs. Moore's transmutation into an Indian goddess ("Esmiss esmoor"; 251); the Hindu festival in the novel's final section; and the acoustic and psychological resonances of the Marabar Caves, the echoes that addle Adela Quested and kill off Mrs. Moore (enabling her deification). Adela experiences these echoes as a form of sonic violation of her body, causing her to reinscribe stereotypes of the native by falsely accusing Aziz of rape, and then is awoken from her stupor by the repeated "travestied" repetition of Mrs. Moore's name (250). In his essay "London is a Muddle" (1932), Forster cites a passage from *The Waste Land* ("O city, city, I can sometimes hear") as evidence that "the muddle of

London [...] need not be unpleasant" (*Two Cheers* 357). Where the modernism of *The Waste Land* tackles the sonic muddle of London, *Passage* rewrites an experience of India—and just as Eliot offers the King James Bible as a gloss on the Upanishads, Mrs. Moore imagines that the Marabar Caves have collapsed all of Western experience into the "ou-boum" of an echo.

It appears that Forster did not find the "muddle" of Indian music entirely "unpleasant." In a 1921 letter written during his second visit to Dewas, Forster recounts an experience of Indian music during the "birth of a little baby" (a passage that much resembles his descriptions of Hindu festival in *A Passage to India*):

The birth of a Little Baby has turned everything upside down, so far as it wasn't already in that position. [...] The unfortunate pair have to listen to music outside their door for nearly 15 days. It began with fireworks and a discharge of rifles from the entire army in batches: then drums, trumpets, stringed instruments and singing. [...] Yesterday being the fifth day the music did go on all night. Nautch girls and boys dressed as girls howled, there were farces, dialogues, dances, the military band moaned western melodies. I went to bed at midnight, but at 3 a.m. something unusual aroused me—the music became beautiful; so I fitted on my turban and rejoined the company. H.H. was asleep on his bed, the townsfolk had gone off to their homes, and only a few experts survived. Why save your best singers until 3 a.m.? "Ask India another" is the only answer to such a question! I am as far as ever from understanding Indian singing, but I have no doubt that I was listening to great art, it was so complicated and yet so passionate. The singer (man) and the drummer were of almost equal importance and wove round the chord of C Major elaborate patterns that came to an end at the same moment—at least that's as near as I can explain it: it was like Western music reflected in trembling water, and it continued in a single burst for half an hour. The words are unimportant, mere excuses for the voice to function.<sup>30</sup>

Forster seems to license this "fanciful" turn, in which he hears in the music of colonized India an uneasy "reflection" of Western music (which, to Forster, is already erotically indeterminate).

Forster adds, "If it had been a boy baby the noises would have been doubled and the bill for festivities have reached £2,000 instead of the modest £1,000 that is anticipated at present" (118); noise, Forster recognizes, is expensive, however ephemeral or opaque it may appear. Forster reiterates this experience in the last section of *Passage*, which depicts the celebration of a Hindu

god being born. The scene, in India, parallels Helen's imagined "colour and fragrance"—and sound—"broadcast" over the landscape of India. The scene is a synaesthetic noise, confused not only sonically but visually: the pillars of the temple "could scarcely be seen behind colored rags, iridescent balls, chandeliers of opaque pink glass, and murky photographs framed crookedly" (318). The noise itself is a syncretic Indo-European noise: "Noise, noise, the Europeanized band louder, incense on the altar, sweat, the blaze of lights" (319), and in a curious parenthetical side note, the narrator reveals the concept of "muddle" as a Western frame of reference: "they did not one thing which the non-Hindu would feel dramatically correct; this approaching triumph of India was a muddle (*as we call it*), a frustration of reason and form" (319, emphasis added).

Sonically and etymologically linked to "mud," the repetition of the term "muddle" seems to underscore the narrator's thesis that "there is something hostile" in the "soil" of India. Its hostility, of course, is a dialectical response to the hostility of an imperial incursion. Similarly, just as Beethoven's "sublime noise" is dialectically entwined with the anxious, culturally inflected interpretations of its audience, the noises of India are inextricable from the efforts to interpret them. These noises are heard as parodies, "travestie[s]," and "Indianize[d] versions of Western words, names, and expressions; and Godbole's song, a "maze of noises," is interpreted as a tension between colonizer and colonized, made immanent in the song's refusal to resolve:

His thin voice rose, and gave out one sound after another. At times there seemed rhythm, at time there was the illusion of a Western melody. But the ear, baffled repeatedly, soon lost any clue, and wandered in a maze of noises, none harsh or unpleasant, none intelligible. It was the song of an unknown bird. Only the servants understood it. They began to whisper to one another. The man who was gathering water chestnuts came naked out of the tank, his lips parted with delight, disclosing his scarlet tongue. The sounds continued and ceased after a few moments as casually as they had begun—apparently half through a bar, and upon the subdominant. (85)

The servants and locals clearly identify with the song. While on the one hand Forster's narrator seems to sentimentalize and essentialize the Hindu song, to the extent that it produces a naked colonized body emerging out of the water, the passage is more notable for its ability to destabilize the "baffled" imperial ear. Part of this derives from the seeming independence of Godbole's voice from his body, a feature of many of the works discussed in this dissertation; the attention is displaced from the body producing the utterance to the bodies of its auditors. Godbole's explains his own song as an invitation to Sri Krishna, in which he "take[s] the position of a milkmaid" and says to the god, "Come, come, come, come, come, come." As Ronald Moran argues, the phrase "come, come" becomes motivic within the novel, exemplary of what *Aspects of the Novel* calls "easy rhythm": a motive that recurs without "harden[ing] into a symbol."<sup>31</sup> Yet to the British characters within the novel, this rhythm confuses rather than transmits its messages, seeming purposelessly to stop and start. The song is a "maze of noises" not because of its own immanent properties but because of an interpretive gap: Godbole's explanation reveals this purposeful irregularity to communicate a halting and perhaps impossible desire between earthly and divine. The passage offers an "illusion of Western melody" but refuses to resolve, rhythmically or harmonically. Settling upon the subdominant (very often the "A" of "A-men"), the unease and ambiguity of Godbole's song—like that of the novel as a whole—introduces a resolution only to forestall it.

Similarly, the novel's last sentences both suggest and defer a possible resolution, displacing the basic structure of Godbole's song onto the choric landscape of India, whose constituents "said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there'" (*PI* 362). The politics of *Passage to India* with respect to empire have been thoroughly debated, and Edward Said has called the novel's ending a concession to despair, part of a longstanding

invention of Eastern alterity.<sup>32</sup> Yet whatever the precise nature of Forster's orientalism, his descriptions of the mud and the muddle can also be seen to reflect back on the disorientation of Western identity. As Homi Bhabha has argued, colonial mimicry—what Forster refers to as "travesties" or "Indianized" versions of English words and names—destabilizes the ground on which the colonizer's identity rests, revealing that identity, like language itself, to be constituted in difference.<sup>33</sup> Forster, well-versed in the discovery/invention of the "splitting" of the subject, offers an important clarification in "What I Believe": that while "personal relationships" may be the only thing "comparatively solid in a world full of violence and cruelty," "Psychology has split and shattered the idea of a 'Person,' and has shown that there is something incalculable in each of us, which may at any moment rise to the surface and destroy our normal balance" (68-9).

*Howards End*, *Passage to India*, and *Billy Budd* all seem to query different manifestations of this hidden and "incalculable" inner person, and locate music's power in its ability to access that person by way of the body.<sup>34</sup> Yet the presence of that "incalculable" subconscious manifests itself as noise. The Professor Godbole scene, menacing to the British within it, is rehearsed when the colonists reach the Marabar Caves, where we learn that "Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested had felt nothing acutely for a fortnight" after hearing Godbole's "queer little song": "they had lived more or less inside cocoons, and the difference between them was that the elderly lady accepted her own apathy, while the younger resented hers" (*PI* 146). The exhausted Mrs. Moore embraces "apathy," and withdraws into her cocoon away from a colony that persistently requests her gregariousness. Her recession is sealed when she finally enters the Cave. The caves themselves, when discovered by the penetrating English, turn out to be a form of nothing. Though the narrator asserts that "the caves are readily described" (136), the description itself does not live up to that promise. For although one wall of the cave has "been

most marvellously polished" (137), reflecting the lit flame of the tourist, their appearance beyond that is, indeed, inscrutable:

But elsewhere, deeper in the granite, are there certain chambers that have no entrances? Chambers never unsealed since the arrival of the gods. Local report declares that these exceed in number those that can be visited—four hundred of them, four thousand or million. Nothing is inside them, they were sealed up before the creation of pestilence or treasure; if mankind grew curious and excavated, nothing, nothing would be added to the sum of good or evil. (*PI* 138)

"Local report" of the inaccessible caves constitutes another form of noise, another song to "the gods"—the meaning of which has less significance than the fact of its being reported. If this noise reveals anything, it reveals Nothing, only the enclosure of emptiness, a vacuum, that exists even despite the caves' overwhelming excess in number. Similarly, while the Caves reveal Mrs. Moore and the narrative of Western Christianity to be hollow at the core, the "local report" of Mrs. Moore makes her as good as the honorary "Oriental" that Aziz insistently calls her.

In *Peter Grimes*, the pervasiveness of "local report" becomes difficult to extract from the "mud" of the setting itself. Though Forster writes in *Two Cheers* that the opera *Peter Grimes* lacked the "horizontal" and the "mud" of George Crabbe's original poem, a mud grounded in the soil of Aldeburgh where the poem is set, the domestic and natural settings of the opera seem to be constructed from rumor and gossip.<sup>35</sup> In the hands of Britten and the leftist playwright Montagu Slater, the title character of *Peter Grimes* is always homesick (even while living at home), a fact registered by the mild dissonances signifying his inability to assimilate. As Forster puts it in his later essay comparing Crabbe's and Britten's *Grimeses*, the opera drives towards the conclusion that "the community is to blame": Peter's dissonances, contrasted with the ineluctable noise of rumor and gossip, leave him without any stable ground in which to stake his identity. The opera offers Ellen Orford (a transplant from another Crabbe poem) as perhaps Grimes' best hope, but is thematically and structurally driven by the implausibility of this union.

Britten's training and musical experience prior to *Grimes* in fact involved musical experiments with noise. Even while *Grimes* and *Budd* employ no such techniques, Britten's collaborations with W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, and Montagu Slater on leftist dramas and documentary films offered him much in the way of developing a politically and materially engaged musical language.

### Who Shall Inherit Britten?

A few brief points about Britten's early life and career are therefore in order. A student of Frank Bridge and John Ireland, Britten had a considerable distaste for much of English music. About William Walton he was ambivalent at best, finding *Façade* amusing and inventive but Walton's later works conservative and shoddy. A devotee of Alban Berg, with whom he wanted (but was forbidden) to pursue private studies, Britten was equally frustrated by the conservative Englishness of the RCM, which even by 1933 did not possess a copy of *Pierrot Lunaire* (despite Britten's pleas) (Carpenter 53). Britten's frustrations with the English musical scene correspond to a general distaste for the British Empire. A pacifist throughout much of his life, his encounters with W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, and Montagu Slater at the G.P.O. Film Unit in London amplified his left-leaning tendencies. Britten's sexuality played a significant role in his private life, the formative relationship being that with Peter Pears. For a brief period in 1939, Britten and Pears moved to New York, where he lived with Auden, Isherwood, Carson McCullers, and Golo Mann (Thomas's son), in what Carpenter calls "an experiment in communal living set up by a bisexual New York littérateur, George Davis," in Brooklyn Heights (144). In an article entitled "England and the Folk-Art Problem," Britten rejected the "attempt to create a national music" as "tribal nationalism" (153), and Britten found himself being criticized by

British musicians for living abroad during wartime: as George Baker put it, "the Battle of Britain" was "a program in which Mr. Britten has no part" (qtd. in Carpenter 151). It was while in New York that the text of an E.M. Forster broadcast on George Crabbe, published by the *Listener*, made it into Britten's hands.

By the mid-1930s Britten had already written several successful works, but his career was in many respects launched by his work for the G.P.O. Under the auspices of the General Post Office, the G.P.O. Film Unit produced "educational films," temperately critical of social and economic injustices. As Humphrey Carpenter explains, Britten was in desperate need of a job and "altogether appalled by the English musical scene" when he was hired to write the music for *The King's Stamp*, "a short film about the design and manufacture of a postage stamp commemorating George V's Jubilee" (Carpenter 64-5). *The King's Stamp*, directed by Alberto Cavalcanti and John Grierson, struck Britten as "rubbish," but the act of working on the film taught him to compose quickly and adapt to less-than-ideal circumstances and resources (Carpenter 65-6). Thus Britten continued on his work for the G.P.O. by writing the music and overseeing the soundtrack to *Coal Face* (1935), Basil Wright's documentary on the coal-mining industry, and *Night Mail* (1936), on the British postal service.

In this brief but formative moment of his career Britten developed a politically conscious musical-dramatic technique. He worked with Randall Swingler, editor of the *Left Review*, and Montagu Slater, the playwright for the Left Theatre. He would collaborate with Auden and Isherwood on productions for the Group Theatre, including *The Ascent of F6* (1937; the source of Auden's "Funeral Blues") and *On the Frontier* (1938). Paul Rotha's *Peace of Britain* (1936), temporarily stalled by the British Board of Film Censors for its opposition to publicly funded military spending, exemplifies the one political cause—pacifism—with which Britten remained



consistently affiliated. While Britten was generally not much engaged with noise-music of the sort Varèse or Antheil composed, his experimental work for the G.P.O. films did help him develop a musical technique for linking word, sound, image, and idea in a politically engaged way. In both *Night Mail* and *Coal Face*, Britten's music draws on onomatopoetic musical material, or what one might call "noise": hammers, metal, sandpaper, wind machine, metal chains, "drain pipes with coal slipping down them," as well as technological manipulation (playing a tape backwards).<sup>36</sup> Donald Mitchell suggests that at first glance Britten's orchestra looks "closer to, say, the sound-world of Varèse than Britten; and [...] here we find our youthful composer in 1936 imagining a kind of *musique concrète* [...]. But what Britten was after was a kind of documentary realism, a musical factuality to accompany the images of the train departing" (83). The music of *Coal Face* includes a "male chorus reciting from technical journals, reports of mining disasters, and lists of the various jobs and crafts in the mining industry,"<sup>37</sup> and Philip Reed explains that "every single noise heard on the soundtrack—while apparently 'natural' in origin—is, in fact, the product of Britten's detailed instrumentation."<sup>38</sup>

Both *Night Mail* and *Coal Face* feature Auden's verse, and an entry from Britten's diary describes the difficulties posed by Auden's verse for composing and recording the music. Britten describes the verse as a "kind of patter" which required separate recording sessions, and which required a strict metronomic tempo (to aid his conducting Britten fashioned an "improvised visual metronome—flashes on the screen"). Indeed, the patter reads almost like an updated, grittier version of a Sitwell poem:

Letters of thanks, letters from banks,  
Letters of joy from the girl and the boy,  
Receipted bills and invitations  
To inspect new stock or visit relations,  
And applications for situations  
And timid lovers' declarations

And gossip, gossip from all the nations,  
 News circumstantial, news financial,  
 Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,  
 Letters with faces scrawled in the margin,  
 \*        \*        \*  
 The chatty, the catty, the boring, adoring,  
 The cold and official and the heart's outpouring,  
 Clever, stupid, short and long,  
 The typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong.

*Night Mail* and *Façade* are an improbable pair, but a word of comparison is in order: although one is a (whimsical) documentary and the other a (socially emplaced) fantasy, both use the rhythms of patter-song to defamiliarize the noises of social life. The difference lies in their degree of willingness to defamiliarize artistic technique itself: where Walton and Sitwell amplify (and muddle) the poet's voice by way of a painted curtain and a Sengerphone, Britten and Auden do so via behind-the-scenes technological means of splicing and recording.

A more likely partner to *Night Mail*, thematically if not stylistically, is *Howards End*.

That is to say, the message of *Night Mail* is "Only connect!," the argument of Margaret's sermon to Henry Wilcox:

Mature as [Wilcox] was, she might yet be able to help him to the building of the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion. Without it we are meaningless fragments, half monks, half beasts, unconnected arches that have never joined into a man. [...] Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. (186-7; ch. 22)

Margaret draws on a Wagnerian image, the "rainbow bridge" recalling Wotan's entry into Valhalla at the end of *Das Rheingold*, to suggest a passage between the material and the divine.<sup>39</sup> Bast's initial refusal to discuss *Tannhäuser* because he is unsure how to pronounce it suggests other gaps in need of bridging: gaps of cultural knowledge and class. These gaps are metaphorized spatially by the bridge (Westminster) and tunnel (Vauxhall) that Leonard traverses on his way home from the Schlegels. As in *Night Mail*, the project of *Howards End* is to question

those technologies' institutional basis and cultural potential, the bridges that must be built for gossip, news, information, and official communications to be "broadcast" locally and globally.

If *Night Mail* and *Coal Face* accompany these bridged gaps with onomatopoetic noise-music, they prepare the less conspicuously noisy music of *Peter Grimes* and *Billy Budd*: operas that require a musical language able to account for the muddle of an "unspeakable" eroticism and the noise of rumor.<sup>40</sup> While the music of Britten's later work sublimates noise (in particular, the noise of rumor) into more recognizably "musical" expression, those noises still make themselves known. Similarly, much as Attali argues that music performs a sacrificial function, Britten's operas tend to identify an outsider and narrate his expulsion, scapegoating, and death.

#### Britten's Nincths: *Peter Grimes*, Dissonance, and the Art of Rumor

Arguing that "the community is to blame" for Peter Grimes' death in the opera, Forster attributes that intervention to Montagu Slater, the librettist who rewrote George Crabbe's poem with the aid of Britten and Pears. Slater would have been inclined to focus on the element of class, which is certainly present in the opera: Grimes refuses to marry Ellen until he has secured an income (also the reason he needs to keep acquiring boy apprentices), ensuring that she is marrying him for a reason other than "pity." Stephen Arthur Allen suggests that Slater also wished to cast Grimes as a neurotic sadomasochist, but that Britten and Pears moderated this instinct in refocusing and intensifying Peter's affection for Ellen. With this in mind, the introduction of Ellen into *Grimes* allows the audience to side *neither* with Peter *nor* with the drunk, womanizing, laudanum-addicted hypocrites of the Borough. As such, Allen points out, every "supposed 'confrontation' between Grimes and the Borough-as-protagonist, *never actually takes place*—interesting non-occurrences, given the customary reading of the opera as an

individual against society!"<sup>41</sup> It is Ellen who undergoes this confrontation, as the victim of the Borough's hypocrisy and of Peter's violence, and though Britten has been critiqued for his unsatisfactory treatment of women (not a problem in *Billy Budd*), Ellen is arguably the boldest, most sympathetic character in *Grimes*—to the extent that Edmund Wilson (1947) identifies her as the opera's resident pacifist.<sup>42</sup> Yet I share Brett's inclination that *Grimes* is "modern" in its ability to promote audience identification with the "unheroic" title-character, whom the audience has "been socially conditioned to spurn."<sup>43</sup>

The choice between Peter and Ellen is ultimately unnecessary: the hero and the victim of the opera is the impossible *union* between Peter and Ellen, one of whom offers affection that is not returned and the other of whom cannot return the affection offered him. Read backward from the more recent influx of queer criticism on the opera, Edmund Wilson's assertion holds up well: Grimes "is always under the impression, poor fellow, that what he really wants for himself is to marry Ellen Orford and to live in a nice little garden with children and fruit in the garden 'and whitened doorstep and a woman's care" (162). Wilson suggests that what Grimes really want is to convince the Borough that he is capable of elevating himself morally and economically, yet this amounts to roughly the same thing: incapable of marrying Ellen Orford, Grimes is constitutionally incapable of according with community standards (as the chorus reiterates in Act II, "The Borough keeps its standards up" [222]).

The first scene of the opera resolves into the closest thing *Grimes* comes to a love duet, a duet that also attempts to interpret social gossip and sublimate it into a kind of music, rooted in an impossible domestic union. As the one woman willing and able to contravene the Borough, Ellen Orford resists the generally feminized presence of rumor and gossip. After being acquitted for the death of his second boy apprentice, Peter insists that he be allowed to testify: "Stand

down, you say, you wash your hands. The case goes on in people's minds. The charges that no court has made will be shouted at my head" (Prologue, 25). In a section marked "Crowd hubbub," the chorus responds, "When women gossip the result is someone doesn't sleep at night!" (21). Just as Peter is an outsider by virtue of his ill-fated encounters with boy apprentices, Ellen Orford is isolated by her affiliation with Peter. As Philip Rupprecht argues, drawing on theoretical notions of "hate speech" and illocutionary speech-acts, the chorus in *Peter Grimes* cites and reinscribes the title character's social subordination, "manag[ing] its isolation of the protagonist in a display of intersecting legal and linguistic forces."<sup>44</sup> He notes that the choric repetitions of Peter's name, the first words of the opera (uttered in a legal inquest), reveal the very act of naming to be a social one. Peter himself has internalized this notion, warning Ellen (correctly) that she will "share the name of outlaw":

PETER: Where the walls themselves gossip of inquest!

ELLEN: But we'll gossip too, and talk and rest.

PETER: While Peeping Toms nod as you go, you'll share the name of outlaw too!

ELLEN: Peter, we shall restore your name, warmed by the new esteem that you will find...

PETER: Until the Borough hate poisons your mind! (Prologue, 25-6)

Ellen's line "We'll gossip too" is ambiguous: while on one level promising an assimilation into the community, once Peter's "name" is "restore[d]," it also suggests a private space in which Ellen and Peter can gossip together, independent of the noise of the Borough. Peter seems savvy, or a better harbinger of self-fulfilling prophecy, noting that such a space is impossible "where the walls themselves gossip of inquest." The very material of the home, and in some respects the very material of the opera, is built on *rumore*.

In their duet, Peter and Ellen both acknowledge that she might be the one woman with whom he can associate: "My/Your voice out of the pain is like a hand that I can feel and know: Here is a friend, here is a friend" (26). Yet this union seems vaguely impossible, an impossibility driven home by Britten's musical language. This duet is driven by two commonly noted structural features, each of which registers the ambiguity of Peter and Ellen's affection. The first notable feature of the duet is its bitonality. Ellen sings in E major, Peter in F minor: two keys that have little to do with each other functionally, but which are linked enharmonically at the third (G#/A<sup>b</sup>), where both Ellen's and Peter's melodies tend to linger. Even in the unison passage, notated in Ellen's key of E, the melody shifts into f minor ("My voice") and back again, thanks to the intervention of the passage's second structural quirk: the use of minor ninths (the melodic interval one half-step greater than an octave).<sup>45</sup> The passage resolves in E, suggesting a potential union anchored in Ellen's key, but the passage as a whole creates more tension than it resolves.

The interval of the minor ninth pervades *Peter Grimes*; Brett calls it "the interval most associated with Peter's loneliness and his private fantasies, of which [Ellen] is the unrealistic focus" ("Britten and Grimes" 996). The major ninth is equally conspicuous. Grimes' aria "What harbour shelters peace" features a series of major ninths (E-F#), framed by an ambiguous, strangely spaced orchestral chord (E – G – C# – F# – A). This chord, which contains an inversion of the tonic chord (E-C#-A), also seems to function as a diminished seventh chord (E-G-[B<sup>b</sup>]-D<sup>b</sup>, with the B<sup>b</sup> omitted and the D<sup>b</sup> spelled enharmonically as C#). The diminished seventh tends to be ambiguous as a rule, an ambiguity that makes it an easy way to modulate, and Britten's use of it both suggests and problematizes Peter's resolution to marry Ellen. The text suggests that "Ellen" is his "harbour"—"her breast is harbour too / When night is turned to day"—but the fuzzy tonal resolution suggests that this harbour is not at all capable of sheltering

peace. Stacked on the dominant (E), the chord suggests a possible resolution to the home base of A major; but a dominant chord would normally possess a G#, in A major the leading tone that (to anthropomorphize for a moment) desires to resolve to the tonic. While Grimes' text expresses a desire to consummate a union with Ellen, it is as if Britten's musical language were a material force holding it back.<sup>46</sup>

The ambiguous dissonances and rhythmic quirks of *Peter Grimes* internalize and respond to the noise of a community: while on the one hand they illustrate Peter's and Ellen's internalizations of forbidden and impossible affection (respectively), on the other hand they suggest the need for communities to accommodate marginal or subversive personalities and drives. Grimes' aria transitions into the storm at the center of the second scene, in which the characters consolidate into "Auntie's" pub. This scene features an outpouring of forced spontaneity: the sea chanty "Old Joe has gone fishing," which Balstrode starts up to prevent the company from swarming on Grimes. The shanty is in 7/4—like Tchaikovsky's "waltz," containing one beat too many—suggesting, first, that the collective should be able to accommodate its "sensitive" character (as Forster calls Grimes), even if it is uneasy to do so. Both Grimes' obsessions and the chorus's invigilance make this impossible: as Grimes takes his third apprentice "home," the chorus sings, "Home! You call that home?"

Grimes' "home" and his "harbour" lie at the bottom of the ocean. In his final "mad scene," Grimes tracks back through the "homes" that have been ineffectually offered him, repeating both the ninths of "What harbour shelters peace" and the shanty "Old Joe has gone fishing." As Brett points out, whereas Grimes' "What harbour" passage is left unresolved in its first iteration, Grimes completes the phrase in the mad scene. And the rhythms of "Old Joe" are smoothed out as Grimes acknowledges that his apprentice is dead at the bottom of the ocean: "You'll know

who's gone fishing, when you bring in the shoal." The key of A-flat gives Grimes' final resolution a savage irony: the consummations that Grimes sought but couldn't quite realize in his love duet with Ellen and his "What harbour" aria in Act I are finally materialized: as the ocean in which Peter's apprentice and Peter himself are ultimately drowned. A-flat represents a half-step drop from Grimes' A-major "What harbour" aria, predicting in a broadly symbolic way Grimes' descent into madness and his impending drop to his "home" and "harbour." Finally, the A-flat enharmonically matches the leading tone that should have—but didn't—drive home the key of Grimes' aria; and it matches the pitch shared enharmonically by Peter and Ellen in their "love duet." Peter's common bond with Ellen ( $A\flat$ ), and the absent drive of the leading tone in the "What harbour" aria ( $G\# = A\flat$ ), finally materialize as Grimes' descent into madness, and his impending descent to the bottom of the ocean. Ellen herself is silenced at the end of the opera, after she offers one word of feeble resistance to Balstrode's recommendation to Grimes. In this respect she is the hero and victim of the opera, the one figure who finds no resolution at all.

Whomever one identifies as the victim at the end of the opera, the community has clearly won out: the individuals are killed off, silenced, or assimilated. Yet the end of the opera questions whether and how the community will reconsolidate. The last word in the opera to be spoken by an individual (Auntie) is "rumour," dismissing a (correct) report that Grimes' boat is "sinking out at sea." Once dismissed, this rumor gives way to the daily patterns of daily life, the chorus singing what Forster called the "work-a-day music" of the borough: a final chorus whose A major key (the tonic key of "What harbour shelter's peace") is underwritten by the orchestra playing in C major. The overlaying of A major and C major relies on many of the same pitches introduced in the "What harbour" chord (E, G,  $C\#$ , A), gesturing at what the borough will do



with the next Grimes figure: the chorus will find a way to accommodate difference or, just as likely, it will have to find a new scapegoat.

*Billy Budd* dramatizes the scapegoating of a simultaneously musical and beautiful character, not so much by a community as in the name of martial authority. In reworking the novel, Forster, Britten, and Eric Crozier smooth over some of the novel's emphasis on rumor, gossip, and epistemological uncertainty. But in the process of sublimating the novel's most distinctive diegetic and metageneric noises, the opera explores the ideological functions of music: its ability to "spellbind" communities and still their noise. This function is explored through some of the opera's most sublime music: music that seems to lift the characters and audience out of immediately accessible onstage events.

#### The Spellbinding Music of *Billy Budd*

Britten's *Billy Budd*, I argue, illustrates and critiques what Melville's Vere describes as the "spellbinding" function of music: its ability to create order and fashion bonds of solidarity. As in *Grimes*, the (relatively) consonant choral music scenes reveal communal and musical order to rely not just on a heroic presence but on a scapegoat: the French, the mutinous, Billy Budd himself. Whereas in *Grimes*, according to Forster, "the community is to blame," in *Budd* the community is "spellbound": that spellbinding is temporarily disturbed but ultimately restored when its strong figure is scapegoated. In *Billy Budd*, the most consonant music is often the most ambiguous and unsettling: chords with no vertical dissonances but no clear syntagmatic function, suggest the ambiguities, ruptures, and scapegoats at the heart of "sublime" music.

Forster's interpretation of Melville's *Billy Budd* in *Aspects of the Novel* strongly emphasizes its musical qualities, thereby elevating the story's significance from a local parable to

what Forster calls "transcendence" and "the universal."<sup>47</sup> As Irene Morra argues, "it is the overall effect of Melville's tale rather than the individual fate of Billy which inspires transcendence, and this transcendence is achieved by the reader in his recognition of an implicitly higher state, rather than by the characters in the tale who are exposed to [...] Billy's Christ-like apotheosis" (8-9). That is, Melville's story acquires aesthetic, musical resonances in excess of its schematic allegories, making the novella a "prophetic" "song not without words." Additionally, Morra writes, *Billy Budd's* explicit and schematic allegories make it less innately musical than Melville's more "difficult" books, tying it to what Forster terms "pattern" rather than to "rhythm." Whereas a "patterned" novel derives its strength from the shape of the plot, externally imposed, a "rhythmic" novel appears to generate organically from the inside-out, motivated by a motivic presence capable of taking on a "life of its own." *Billy Budd* is more rhythmic than most, according to Forster, but whereas *Moby-Dick* is a "song," *Budd* is a "song not without words."

As a way of understanding the structure of a novel on its own terms, this enabling critical fiction (all novels are externally constructed) provides a useful and conspicuously modernist perspective. Moreover, the problems of form, organic and "externally constructed," are immanent concerns of *Billy Budd*—and are inextricable from Melville's representations of the body. In the first chapter of the novel Melville's narrator explicitly acknowledges the importance of bodily appearance, detailing the genre of person known as the "Handsome Sailor" whose "moral nature was seldom out of keeping with the physical make" (292; ch. 1). Billy's "moral nature" is guaranteed both by his "rustic beauty" (299) and by the "certain musical chime in his voice," the "veritable unobstructed outcome of the innermost man" (294). Melville's description of Billy's moral nature is thus tied to his "physical make" and to an inherent musical tendency,

emerging from the inside out. His characteristic flaw, the "one thing amiss in him," is an "occasional liability to a vocal defect," what Forster's Vere will call a "stammer" in the divine:

Though in the hour of elemental uproar or peril he was everything that a sailor should be, yet under sudden provocation of strong heart-feeling his voice, otherwise singularly musical, as if expressive of the harmony within, was apt to develop an organic hesitancy, in fact more or less a stutter or even worse. (302; ch. 2)

Billy Budd the character, like *Billy Budd* the novel, is a rhythmic construction, whose external shape and vocal utterances are all organic manifestations of an inner life—quite literally, it seems, from his heartbeat. Vere's final words in the novel, "Billy Budd, Billy Budd," are compared to the effect of a drug "which, soothing the physical frame, mysteriously operates on the subtler element in man" (382; ch. 28); the physical frame seems the one thing capable of producing genuine, spontaneous utterances.

The novel recognizes and develops the parallel between the shape of its characters' bodies and the shape of the novel itself. Billy's "organic hesitancy" is marshaled as evidence that he is not a "conventional hero" and that the story itself is "no romance" (302); and at Billy's hanging, Melville imbricates the "form" of his body, the "forms" of military ritual, and the "form" of the novel itself. Seeing Billy's "form suspended in air," the sailors briefly threaten an "uncertain movement," in response to which Vere orders a beat-to-quarters an hour earlier than usual (379; ch. 27). He justifies this, as he justifies Billy's death, by disavowing the French Revolution:

"With mankind," he would say, "forms, measured forms, are everything; and this is the import couched in the story of Orpheus, with his lyre spellbinding the wild denizens of the wood." And this he once applied to the disruption of forms going on across the Channel and the consequences thereof. (380)

The beat to quarters, marked by a drum beat and by the sacred music played by "a band on the quarter-deck," attempts to "spellbind" the "forms" of the sailors: not an organic hesitancy but a disciplinary measure intended to implement order. A different kind of narcotic from the one that

produces Vere's final repetition of Billy's name, this one disciplines rather than liberates expressive bodily response.

Melville attempts to account for both the music generated by individual bodies, and the music that controls those bodies, within the "form" of the novel itself—and reveals novelistic form ultimately to rely on the art of rumor. Put another way, the novel itself explores the relation between Forsterian rhythm (a pulse that emerges immanently from the text) and Forsterian pattern (a constructed frame delimiting interpretations of its content): the narrator and the force of rumor are both at odds and in collusion. Rumor in the novel contributes to the construction of the narrative and emphasizes its irregularities: it allows for the circulation of unreliable knowledge. The narrator finally asserts that the symmetry of forms enabled by the beat-to-quarters does not hold up in historical narrative:

The symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction cannot so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact. Truth uncompromisingly told will always have its ragged edges; hence the conclusion of such a narration is apt to be less finished than an architectural final. (380-1; ch. 28)

The narrator justifies his peremptory treatment of Vere at the end of the novel, attributing it to an uncompromising realism which the "architectural" "symmetry" of fiction attempts to cover over. The meaning of Vere's final utterance is conveyed by the medical attendant to the senior officer of the drumhead court "who, as the most reluctant to condemn, "kept the knowledge to himself" (382; ch. 28). The ironic thrust of the narrator's statement is that the official accounts of this mutiny and execution, of Billy's suspended "form" and Vere's dying body, are in many ways "pure fiction." The narrator explains earlier in the novel that Vere has "nothing of that literary taste which less heeds the thing conveyed than the vehicle" (311; ch. 7), and his readings of history and philosophy serve merely as a "confirmation of his own reserved thoughts—

confirmation which he had vainly thought in social converse" (311). Unable to find his views confirmed in social discourse, he finds them in the histories and philosophies, which he uses as a "dike in the torrent of novel opinion" (312). Vere associates the "novel opinions" responsible for the French disruption of forms with "novel opinion" and, I would suggest, with the novel generally—in some ways better able than history to account for the "ragged edges" of the truth. The contrast between fiction and history seems also to undercut Claggart's accusation against Billy, which no one on board believes: in a way it looks too symmetrical and "finished" to be true. Whereas an actual mutiny resembles an organic "distempering irruption of contagious fever in a frame constitutionally sound" (304; ch. 3), Claggart constructs a patterned plot of intellectual evil. Though rumor is by no means reliable, it can serve the valuable function of fraying the edges of a too-coherent narrative such as Claggart's.

In adapting *Budd* for the stage, Forster and Crozier erase Melville's narrator and smooth over the book's emphasis on the "ragged edges" of events, silencing the novel's intriguing metageneric commentary. By replacing Melville's narrator with Vere himself, whom they give a framing solo epilogue and prologue, Forster and Crozier attempt to rescue Vere by illustrating his redemption, giving him a "roundness" and a more sympathetic tenor (so to speak) than he possesses in Melville's novel.

For Forster, the notion that music could "spellbind" was not entirely conspiratorial, just as his notion of music's sublimity was not entirely cynical. As a "searcher" for the Wounded and Missing Department in Alexandria, Forster organized concerts and recitals for patients, performing both at the piano and as a Master of Ceremonies. Having successfully emceed the Montazah Convalescent Hospital in 1917, Forster wrote to Edward Carpenter,

It was great fun quieting [the troops] down, and trying to talk sense about music instead of that damned superior art patronage; and I believe I was able to talk

sense and quiet them because I loved them. They behaved perfectly throughout the programme and most of them stopped to the end. We had violins, tenor and solo-piano: executants all first class. I can't help swanking over this concert. I felt that I had been burrowing under rubbish and touched something that was alive and had been trying to touch me. It is useless trying to touch something you don't want to touch: that is why all attempts to 'improve' people are vain. (Qtd. in Furbank 34)

It is likely that in a letter to Edward Carpenter, Forster's philosophical idol and gay icon, Forster was aware of the homoerotic echoes of his desire to "touch" the soldiers whom he loved.<sup>48</sup> Yet Forster's emphasis is on the extent to which the concert touched *him*; the slight paternalism and vague eroticism of his efforts seem to comment retroactively on the crux of *Howards End* and proleptically on the "aristocracy of the sensitive." On one hand the genuinely sensitive effort to communicate about art offers a genuine intellectual and emotional thrill; on the other hand it is futile to "improve" people whom *you* don't really want to "improve." Education, for Forster, requires some kind of affection for those being educated. In the opera, Vere's need to spellbind his soldiers is interlocked dramatically with his affection for those soldiers, much as his affection for Billy and his complicity with Billy's death are difficult to disentangle. As both the frame and the center of the opera, Vere embodies this ambiguity: he both acts and comments upon his own actions, produces music and listens to it.

The opera centers on the difficulty of interpreting musical drama, dramatizing two scenes in which music and action are separated onstage. These "sublime" musical moments also signify acts of sublimation: of the noises of labor, or of unnameable desire. In these scenes, Britten's uses of consonance do more than the dissonances to call into question Vere's authority (both military and narrative). In the first of these scenes (I.ii), Vere puts his ear to the floor to hear his sailors singing, demonstrating his genuine sympathy for his crew and his sympathetic nature in general ("Starry Vere"). This scene follows directly from Vere's conversation with his

lieutenants, which references the "Frenchified notions," "ideas," "bowing and scraping," "lingo," and "hoppity-skippty ways" (87-8) of the enemy. When a Lieutenant asks Vere if there is any "danger of French notions spreading this side," Vere responds, "Great danger, great danger. There is a word which we scarcely dare speak." This word is identified as "Mutiny" in a B-minor triad: consonant order consolidates around the fear of "Frenchified notions."

Ultimately, Billy himself is identified as a possible disruption of this order—a threat that Vere dismisses as he turns his ear to the crew singing below the decks ("Blow her away! Blow her to hi-lo"). Whereas in the novel Vere's bookish "starriness" tends to distance him from his crew, in the opera it connects him to the crew: he uses his historical authority to *defend* Billy from a suspicion of mutiny, after which he puts his ear to the floor to listen to his crew, asserting, "Where there is happiness, there cannot be harm" (98). The lieutenants are not persuaded.

As such, when Billy is sentenced to die, this first scene is narratively and thematically articulated with the second: the so-called "interview scene" (II.ii) in which Vere informs Billy of his verdict and sentence—offstage, behind a closed door. Much of the critical attention with respect to *Billy Budd* has been directed to this interview scene, accompanied by the opera's most striking and most consonant music: a series of thirty-four major and minor triads (the "interview chords"), with no dissonances, no melodic content, and no clear harmonic direction. The interview chords gesture towards the possibility of a redemptive rather than evil erotic encounter, and yet without any dissonances to resolve, the chords are decentered and tonally adrift. Their functional ambiguity matches their dramatic ambiguity.

Having no clear "horizontal" progression, and accompanying no onstage bodies, these chords temporarily halt narrative progress: though they assert the presence of symbolic meaning, they interrupt the production of syntactic meaning. By alternating among various groups of

instruments (strings, woodwinds, brass), Britten obviates even the need for voice-leading from chord to chord. *Pace* the anti-modernist operagoer, this is an aggressively amelodic passage of music—even the possibility of melody is intentionally obstructed, such that the drama derives from juxtapositions of dynamics and orchestration.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, many of the chords have no clear function in what appears to be the overarching key of F major (even that much is disputed), although each of the thirty-four chords contains an F, an A, or a C.<sup>50</sup> This ambiguity leads Arnold Whittall to argue that the passage effects dialectical tensions between "chromatic" and "diatonic" harmonizations of the F, A, and C, and that the "individual identities" of each triad destabilize the overall tonal "environment" of F major (159). Britten's "technical dialectics," Whittall claims, enact a tension between love and war. Despite Brett's claim that the chords represent the "unalloyed optimism" and Platonic beauty associated with Vere's and Billy's offstage interaction, this optimism is very much alloyed: as Whittall suggests, it is alloyed with the famous dilemma at the heart of Forster's politics, "the compulsion to betray one's friend in order to save one's country" (Whittall 152).

At one level, the uneasily F-major interview passage seems to prepare Vere's own resolution (so to speak) of his personal psycho-drama. Vere announces that he has found "the love that passeth understanding": the same Biblical language that Eliot uses to resolve *The Waste Land* marks the opera's final resolution into B-flat major (of which F is the dominant). Britten gestures at the interview chords a final time as Vere announces, to the melody of "Billy in the Darbies," that he has found his own "anchor"—again, much like Grimes' search for his "harbour," except more tonally determinate: "I was lost on the infinite sea, but I've sighted a sail in the storm, the far-shining sail, and I'm content, I've seen where she's bound for, there's a land



where she'll anchor forever, where she'll anchor forever." She is bound for B-flat, where the opera tentatively begins and confidently ends.

Yet just as Vere's Burkean devotion to order and tradition is troubled by erotics and personal affection, the seemingly pure music of love is tintured by the social: by the sailors' collective chants in unison. Billy's beautiful final scene with the Dansker ("Dansker, goodbye!") echoes the ship's earlier unsuccessful pursuit of the French ("This is our moment!") (fig. 6).



Figure 6: Sailors (Act II) vs. Billy (Act III), from Britten, *Billy Budd*

The scene approaches the Forster dilemma in a fashion simultaneously sentimental and satirical. On one level, it becomes clear that Billy has not betrayed his country and the Dansker has not betrayed his friend. At the same time, by melodically echoing a scene of *failed* aggression, Billy parodies the need to impress persons into collectives, revealing it to result in both the death of individuals and the failure of the collective. The betrayal of one's friends, the opera suggests, *is* the betrayal of one's country.

In this scene, the Dansker informs Billy that the sailors, in contrast to Billy's obviously non-mutinous farewell to the *Rights o' Man*, are considering an actual mutiny in order to rescue Billy from his sentence. The sailors register their resistance wordlessly to the same melody as

Billy's farewell: a perfect fifth followed by a minor second, what Mervyn Cooke calls the "repression theme." Yet this same melodic line characterizes their chant from the first act—"O heave away, heave"—and true to form, their wordless mutiny is put down and order restored. Vere's and the lieutenants' reference to the "Nore, the Floating Republic," in the "Don't like the French" scene, as well as the individual declamations of Billy ("Farewell, *Rights o' Man!*") and, with modifications, Vere ("Oh, what have I done?") follow the same repression theme (Fig. 7).

Figure 7 consists of four musical staves, labeled a, b, c, and d, each showing a different instance of the 'repression theme' in bass clef (except for d, which is in treble clef).  
 (a) Chorus (I.i., rehearsal number 5, p.8): Bass clef, 4/4 time. The melody starts with a half note G2, followed by a dotted half note G2, then a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note C3, and a quarter note D3. A slur covers the last four notes, with a '3' above it indicating a triplet. The lyrics are: "O heave!— O heave a - way, heave! O heave!"  
 (b) Billy (I.i., rehearsal 33, p.46): Bass clef, 2/2 time. The melody starts with a half note G2, followed by a dotted half note G2, then a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note C3, and a quarter note D3. A slur covers the last four notes, with a '3' above it indicating a triplet. The lyrics are: "Fare - well— old Ri-ights o' man! Fare-well..."  
 (c) First Lieutenant (I.ii., rehearsal 7, p.92): Bass clef, 3/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note C3. A slur covers the last three notes, with a '3' above it indicating a triplet. The lyrics are: "The floa-ting Re-pub-lic!"  
 (d) Vere (Epilogue, rehearsal 39, p.332): Treble clef, 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. A slur covers the last three notes, with a '3' above it indicating a triplet. The lyrics are: "O what have I done? O what, what— have I done?"

Figure 7: Repression theme: (a.) Chorus (I.i., rehearsal number 5, p.8); (b.) Billy (I.i., rehearsal 33, p.46); (c.) First Lieutenant (I.ii., rehearsal 7, p.92); (d.) Vere (Epilogue, rehearsal 39, p.332).

Vere's question, offered in the Prologue as well, suggests that his own memory is reshaping the sailors' chant, and that the "repression theme" produced by the sailors is the product of his *own* repression. Its melodic parallels with the chant "O heave away" moreover recall that Vere and Billy have been brought together only under the regime of impressment and the threat of an enemy "floating republic."

Billy's final words reach back to Melville's novel in a way that rematerializes the importance of his own body. His final encounter with the Dansker is preceded by his final aria, adapted from the "Billy at the Darbies" ballad that ends Melville's novel. Melville's narrator notes that this poem is passed down among the sailors themselves, thus granting it both the authenticity and the dubiousness associated with non-official discourse. In a display of dark humor, this poetic version of Billy exclaims, "'Tis me, and not the sentence they'll suspend!"—speaking to the fatal "suspended sentence" of Billy's stammer and Vere's refusal to commute his death sentence. These two linguistic failures, the clash of Britain with "Love the Beloved Republic," results in the "form suspended in air": the body of the handsome sailor, the hero and the sacrificial lamb of both the novella and the opera bearing his name.

Recall the last sentence of Forster's "What I Believe": "Naked I came into the world, naked I shall go out of it! And a very good thing too, for it reminds me that I am naked under my shirt, whatever its colour." The end of *Billy Budd* reinforces the spellbound community of the *Indomitable*, all wearing the same color, but also dramatizes the scapegoated body at its center. Throughout the careers of Forster and Britten—as throughout the trajectory of modernism—the body moves and is moved by the sublimating powers of music, its ability to mediate and critique the ideological noises of culture. Motivated by the pressures of imperial expansion and cultural consolidation, by the need to communicate unnameable erotic drives "when the walls themselves gossip of inquest," Forster and Britten channel the desires and the ruptures of modernity into sublime noise: forms of music and writing whose aspirations toward formal unity remain conscious and critical of their own incoherencies and fractures. The end of *Billy Budd*, at the end of what we now call "modernism," reveals the resolution of fragmentation into unity, dissonance into consonance, to be no resolution at all.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> E.M. Forster, *Howards End* (New York: Vintage, 1921), 31, ch. 5. Hereafter cited parenthetically, by chapter and page, as *HE*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Schoenberg's wry (but ingenuous) assertion that consonances could be introduced into atonal music only if they were treated carefully. Britten was ambivalent about Schoenberg's music, though an impassioned acolyte of Alban Berg, who influenced Britten both musically and dramatically. Adorno proclaims Britten an "incompetent," third-stream composer who lacks the technical genius of Schoenberg (progressive) and Stravinsky (regressive). A defense of Britten's musical technique is beyond the scope of my argument, but I do not share Adorno's assessment.

<sup>3</sup> On the national resonances of Britten's opera, see Nathaniel Geoffrey Lew, "A New and Glorious Age: Constructions of National Opera in Britain, 1945-1951," Ph.D. Diss., U of California, 2001. Lew excavates the cultural history of post-war British music, for example with respect to the BBC's efforts to elevate the tastes of its audiences. Lew tends to deemphasize the role of erotics in Britten's operas, focusing rather on their constructions of nation.

<sup>4</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1990), 93.

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd Whitesell, "Britten's Dubious Trysts," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56.3 (2003): 653. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>6</sup> Britten's interest in the East has been well-documented and conceptually linked with his representations of eros. See Philip Brett, "Eros and Orientalism in Britten's Operas," *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, eds. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994); Mervyn Cooke, *Britten and the Far East: Asian Influences in the Music of Benjamin Britten* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001); Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*. Britten's *Curlew River* (1964) is based on Japanese Noh drama, a standby of British modernists looking Eastward.

<sup>7</sup> As Nathaniel Lew demonstrates, 1951 was a banner year for British opera—the year in which the British Arts Council organized the Festival of Britain as an "ambitious attempt to celebrate a new vision of a classless society, linked by geography and industrial and artistic achievement" (1).

<sup>8</sup> Philip Brett and Elizabeth Wood, "Lesbian and Gay Music," *Electronic Musicological Review* 7 (2002), 24 May 2008 <[http://www.rem.ufpr.br/REMr7/Brett\\_Wood/Brett\\_and\\_Wood.html](http://www.rem.ufpr.br/REMr7/Brett_Wood/Brett_and_Wood.html)>. The article is the "unexpurgated full-length original" of an entry written for the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2001).

<sup>9</sup> E.M. Forster, "What I Believe," *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York: Harvest, 1951), 67. All passages from *Two Cheers* hereafter cited parenthetically, by essay title and page.

<sup>10</sup> Thus Forster predicts and predates queer readings of Melville's novella by some forty years. Forster's frank acknowledgment of the novella's homoeroticism would thus seem to confirm Sedgwick's assessment that homosexuality operates as an "open secret" within and without the novel.

<sup>11</sup> See also John Gill, *Queer Noises: Male and Female Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Music* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995). Although Gill's account is more narrative and biographical than analytical, it offers a useful account of queer contributions to modern music, including Britten's and Pears', and critiques the willful blindness and/or hostility towards their homosexuality during and after their lifetimes. Gill also links queer sexualities and noise in the work of John Cage and the industrial music group Test Dept.

<sup>12</sup> I will adopt the convention of using this term even though I find it somewhat tone-deaf. My resistance is perhaps best summarized by Kate Charlesworth's cartoon illustrating what appears to be a blushing music appreciation instructor. The instructor says, "Well, Benjamin *Britten* and Peter *Pears* first *met* when they were quite *young*... & as they *got on* quite *well*, they decided to go into *partnership & work* together. This lasted *quite a long time*. When

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Lord Britten *died*, the *Queen* sent Sir Peter a *telegram of sympathy*." Quoted in Philip Brett, "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, eds. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 20, Charlesworth's emphasis.

<sup>13</sup> On the homoerotics of Tchaikovsky's music see McClary, *Feminine Endings*.

<sup>14</sup> E.M. Forster, *Maurice* (New York: Norton, 1981), 195.

<sup>15</sup> On homosexuality and national identity in *Maurice*, see Bailey, "Heroes and Homosexuals"; Anne Hartree, "'A passion that few English minds have admitted': Homosexuality and Englishness in E. M. Forster's *Maurice*," *Paragraph* 19.2.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Britten, *Billy Budd: Vocal Score*, ed. Erwin Stein (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1961), I.ii., p.90. References are to this edition, hereafter cited parenthetically by act, scene, and page. Specific musical examples referenced also by rehearsal number.

<sup>17</sup> Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in Nineteenth-Century England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1985), 4.

<sup>18</sup> See Gill: Britten's obituary in *The Times* "carried no hint, reference or sly allusion" to Britten's sexuality and only barely mentioned Peter Pears; moreover, this obituary was run adjacent to an editorial on "'the Christian dilemma over homosexuality'" (20).

<sup>19</sup> Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, eds. Fredric Jameson, Edward Said and Terry Eagleton (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990). Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>20</sup> Hobson's 1902 text *Imperialism* critiques imperial expansion and conquest in the "libidinal" language of psychoanalysis: while an "'individual may expend all his energy in acquiring external possessions [...], may 'spread himself over the widest area of property,'" he does so "'at the cost of neglecting the cultivation of the higher qualities. . .of his nature'" (qtd. in Esty, *Shrinking*, 25). Raymond Williams's discussion of the word "culture" in *Keywords* points out its etymological link to the word "cultivation."

<sup>21</sup> Though beyond the scope of my current discussion, the relative merits of English and German culture here resonate with Klesmer's speech to Gwendolen Harleth in George Eliot's *Gesamtkunstwerk*ian last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1872): "You sing in tune, and you have a pretty fair organ. But you produce your notes badly, and that music which you sing is beneath you. It is a form of melody which expresses a puerile state of culture [...] – the passion and thought of a people without any breadth of horizon." George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, ed. Terence Cave (London: Penguin, 1995), 49; ch. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Of Elgar's First Symphony, Britten would later say, "only in Imperialistic England could such a work be tolerated" (Carpenter 70). Carpenter suggests that only after meeting W.H. Auden did Britten start criticizing music on political rather than aesthetic grounds.

<sup>23</sup> This formulation is indebted to Douglas Kahn's work on noise, which I discuss in Chapter One.

<sup>24</sup> P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1978), 132. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text. See also Jesse Matz, "'You Must Join My Dead': E. M. Forster and the Death of the Novel," *Modernism/Modernity* 9.2 (2002). Matz links Forster's abandonment of novel-writing to a memoir written in honor of Mohammed el Adl, Forster's lover during his time in Egypt.

<sup>25</sup> There are, for example, no sudden deaths in *Maurice*—except, perhaps, insofar as they are packed abstrusely into the reference to Tchaikovsky (the circumstances of his death being somewhat controversial).

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<sup>26</sup> Forster's indifferent writings on Mozart and more impassioned writings on Wagner focus little on the music, more on the literary-thematic, symbolic, and mythical content: "What I Believe" interprets modern politics in terms of the Nibelunglied. Forster's friend and mentor Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, as well as E.J. Dent, were both Mozart devotees; Dent's translations of the libretti to Mozart's operas were particularly important in the establishment of opera in England.

<sup>27</sup> E.M. Forster, *Locked Journal*, Forster Collection, Modern Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge. Entry dated 24 July 1913. I am grateful to Patricia Maguire for helping me decipher Forster's handwriting.

<sup>28</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 26. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>29</sup> E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (London: Harcourt, 1984). Hereafter cited parenthetically as *PI*. Forster referred to the Middle East as a "pseudo-East," in contrast to India, but Furbank suggests that Forster's representations of India are much informed by his experiences in Egypt.

<sup>30</sup> E.M. Forster, *The Hill of Devi* (Orlando: Harvest, 1953), 118.

<sup>31</sup> Ronald Moran, "'Come, come,' 'Boum, boum': 'Easy' Rhythm in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*," *Ball State University Forum* 9 (1968).

<sup>32</sup> Edward Said refers to the "disappointing conclusion" of *Passage*, remarking on "the pathetic distance still separating 'us' from an Orient destined to bear its foreignness as a mark of its permanent estrangement from the West." Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1994), 244.

<sup>33</sup> See the section entitled "On Mimicry and Man" in Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1982), 85ff.

<sup>34</sup> *Howards End* pokes some fun at Helen's willingness to make human behavior a Punch doll for the puppet-master of the subconscious, claiming this to be no less cold and abstract than Henry Wilcox's sermons on the "great impersonal forces of history" (ch. 23).

<sup>35</sup> Though acknowledging that Crabbe is not the equal of Wordsworth, Forster admires Crabbe as a "Tory" satirist, capable of detailing and critiquing local injustices but not of identifying solutions.

<sup>36</sup> See Carpenter 67, and Donald Mitchell, *Britten and Auden in the Thirties: The Year 1936* (London: Faber, 1981), 83-6. Both hereafter cited parenthetically. Much of the discussion to follow leans heavily on Mitchell's account of the Britten/Auden collaborations in the '30s.

<sup>37</sup> Basil Wright, "Britten and Documentary," *The Musical Times* 104.1449 (1963): 779.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Reed, "Britten in the Cinema: *Coal Face*," *The Cambridge Companion to Britten*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 76.

<sup>39</sup> See Peter E. Firchow, "Germany and Germanic Mythology in *Howards End*," *Comparative Literature* 33.1 (1981). Drawing on a richly associative knowledge of Wagner and of Germanic mythology, Firchow claims that, "Though ostensibly about Beethoven, this famous description is really based on Wagner's Ring cycle" (66).

<sup>40</sup> In 1981 Donald Mitchell wrote that Britten's work for the GPO was an understudied aspect of his career, and twenty-seven years later that is still very much the case. For two notable exceptions, see Reed, "Britten in the Cinema: *Coal Face*" and Philip Reed, "The Incidental Music of Benjamin Britten: A Study and Catalogue Raisonné of His Music for Film, Theatre and Radio," Ph.D. dissertation, University of East Anglia, 1987.

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<sup>41</sup> Stephen Arthur Allen, "'He Descended Into Hell': Peter Grimes, Ellen Orford, and Salvation Denied," *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 91, his emphasis.

<sup>42</sup> Edmund Wilson, "An Account of 'Peter Grimes' from 'London in Midsummer'," *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes*, ed. Philip Brett (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983). On Britten's treatment of women, see Ellen McDonald, "Women in Benjamin Britten's Operas," *Opera Quarterly* 4.3 (1986).

<sup>43</sup> Philip Brett, "Britten's Dream," *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1993), 263.

<sup>44</sup> Philip Rupprecht, *Britten's Musical Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 74.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Brett, "Britten and Grimes," 183-4 and Allen 85.

<sup>46</sup> Brett argues that this passage "juxtaposes Grimes' grandest sweep of melody [the major ninth], signifying his visionary side, with an inversion of a motive associated with the Borough at the inquest scene at the beginning, hinting again at the process of 'internalization' and the seeds of destruction that it inevitably sows" (*Music and Sexuality in Britten* 61). I am grateful to Joy Calico for assisting me in navigating this passage.

<sup>47</sup> Irene Morra, "'A Song Not Without Words': Singing Billy Budd," *Literature and Musical Adaptation*, ed. Michael J. Meyer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

<sup>48</sup> These echoes were more conspicuous than Forster himself may have imagined. While in Alexandria, Forster had experienced several official difficulties with his desire to "touch" younger men—one of which the result of a letter intercepted by a Bombay postal censor. The letter eventually reached its target, but not before Forster had (unbeknownst to him) been labeled a "decadent" and "sexual pervert" by the authorities. See Furbank, 27-9.

<sup>49</sup> "There is [...] nothing that comes within any text-book definition, however broad, of melody. The shattering effect is created through changes of harmony, and tone colour in terms of instrumentation, and dynamic." John Culshaw, qtd. in Arnold Whittall, "'Twisted Relations': Method and Meaning in Britten's *Billy Budd*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2.2 (1990): 155.

<sup>50</sup> On the formal and thematic characteristics of the interview passage, see Whittall, "'Twisted Relations,'" as well as Philip Brett, "Salvation at Sea: *Billy Budd*," *The Britten Companion*, ed. Christopher Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984); Clifford Hindley, "Love and Salvation in Britten's 'Billy Budd,'" *Music & Letters* 70.3 (1989); Clifford Hindley, "Britten's 'Billy Budd': The 'Interview Chords' Again," *The Musical Quarterly* 78.1 (1994). Hindley (1994) argues that the passage moves from F major into C major, that the movement between F and C major represents a plagal cadence (F-C) rather than an authentic cadence (C-F), and finds the plagal cadence being given "equal prominence" in Vere's epilogue (119).

## AFTERWORD

"There is no leaving when a noise is heard."  
—Gertrude Stein, *A Play Called Not and Now*<sup>1</sup>

My focus in this dissertation is on figures who confront noise, and the qualities it symbolizes (mechanization, rumor, publicity, ephemerality, materiality, marginality), as part of a personal and cultural aspiration towards music (order, immanence, formal unity). I have argued that the dissonances and jagged rhythms of modernist fiction, poetry, and criticism represent a search for aesthetic means through which to mediate the noises of one's historical moment; and I have contended that the introduction of noise into the musical/literary/musico-literary text speaks to the impossibility of keeping modernist art autonomous from social life.

This topic speaks widely to the cultural landscape of modernism, particularly as contemporary critics reflect back on the twentieth century. The past year has seen the publication of, for example, Alex Ross's *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (2007), an encyclopedic account of developments in music from Bartók and Britten to Björk and Radiohead that speaks also to the larger cultural movements and historical tragedies of the twentieth century; Juan Suárez's *Pop Modernism: Noise and the Reinvention of the Everyday* (2007), which addresses the use of everyday objects and noises by modernist figures in order to continue unsettling the divide between modernism and popular culture; and Michael Golston's *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science* (2008), which examines the study of rhythm in musicology, literature, biology, and racial science from 1890-1950. Music's attempt to engage, imitate, and alter the social and political landscape is invoked constantly in the literary texts of modernism, to an extent which is only now being fully excavated.



Some omissions in this project have been inevitable. I have not, for example, devoted much space to the visual arts, or to Eliot's and Pound's readings of their poems over the radio, nor have I attended in detail to the pivotal role played by the BBC played in promoting musical and literary culture.<sup>2</sup> The BBC's Third Programme, for example, was developed after World War II as a conscious effort to elevate British tastes: an effort that also produced Henry Reed's brilliant *Hilda Tablet* radio broadcasts, satires of musicians and musical trends from serialism to *musique concrète* to Britten and Pears. I have addressed jazz, but not in particular detail, despite important recent accounts of "jazz modernism."<sup>3</sup> Nor have I focused on developments in film music as they may have influenced modernist writing. I have focused, instead, on the extent to which music is itself a medium, an ideologically laden mediation of social experiences and material relations. This focus is conceived as a response to literary-critical tendencies to treat music solely in terms of aesthetic doctrine, or to read literary treatments of music in an insufficiently specific way, whereas music calls for both at once: an exploration of the traces of cultural history in literary and musical form. That said, the intersections among these various kinds of mediation will certainly bear future attention.

If this dissertation focuses largely on canonical modernist writers, it is because I have concentrated on—and attempted to problematize—a canonical notion of modernist aesthetics: one which attempts to order and sublimate noise rather than reveling in "undecidability." Though Marjorie Perloff's *Poetics of Indeterminacy* (1981) did not dictate my choice of writers and texts, in retrospect it is not a coincidence that her main figures—Gertrude Stein, John Cage, Samuel Beckett, the Pound of the late *Cantos* (as opposed to *Mauberley*)—have been excluded from this dissertation. I have instead attended to writings that address and employ music and noise without abandoning a drive (even if a hopeless one) towards "organic unity, coherence, indirection,

multiplicity of meaning" (*Poetics of Indeterminacy* 27). So, when Perloff argues Edith Sitwell's inability to match Stein's indeterminate poetic language, I more or less agree, but offer that *Façade's* determinate sphere of reference is what gives it a specific cultural thrust.

Stein, Cage, Beckett, and the late Pound all share a modernist lineage, however, and as Perloff has argued in *The Futurist Moment*, the poststructuralisms of Barthes and Derrida are to a great extent underwritten by the innovative ruptures of Pound's imagism, Marinetti's *parole in libertà*, and the arts of noise. One might also add negative dialectics, a philosophical concept that has frequently been linked to deconstruction. While I have not relied heavily on poststructuralist theory in this project, its main premise has a deconstructive logic to it: noise, as the conceptual and actual presence excluded from music, becomes internal to the very category of music, and the play between the two vibrates throughout the form of a modernist text. In emphasizing modernist texts that strive for determinacy and coherence, then, I should clarify that by "determinate" or "coherent" I do not mean "unambiguous," a clarification required by the ethesic element of music—the reliance of musical meaning on the embodied experience of a listener.

Adorno's interpretations of music, as well as those depicted in and offered by the fiction and poetry of Eliot, (early) Pound, Joyce, Sitwell, and Forster, speak to the ambiguities and ruptures in the coherence of daily life; they question the agency by which interpretations of poetry and music are produced; and they question the coherence of overarching narratives of cultural authority (arguing them to be incoherent, or else to be the *wrong* or unjust coherent narratives). They question, moreover, the extent to which the standards of art can be divorced from the economic and social spheres of "publicity." But they by no means abandon the drive towards coherence and the need to sublimate disorder into order. If these modernists critique the universalism and idealism of Wagner, Mallarmé, Hulme, Mondrian, and Kandinsky—the notion

of an objective classical ideal, or of an all-encompassing aesthetic monochord—they do so in the process of searching for new or better modes of literary representation, which can accommodate dissonance rather than marginalize it, account for noise rather than silence it.

The relation between noise and modernist visual arts will certainly deserve further exploration, especially inasmuch as practitioners of modern art, particularly those celebrated by modernist writers, tend to emphasize abstraction, formalism, and objectivity; Antheil's interactions with the *De Stijl* school suggest a way in which these emphases might be further problematized.<sup>4</sup> In particular, an understanding of Gertrude Stein's visually influenced contributions to modernism has much to gain from the model employed in this project.

One of the early innovators of modernist poetics, whose operatic collaborations with Virgil Thomson keep her in the narrative of modernism well into the 1940s, Stein's absence in this dissertation is conspicuous. Stein's and Thompson's *The Mother of us All* (1947), for example, offers an operatic portrait of Susan B. Anthony that reflects on the value of musical language, consonant and dissonant, for women. While psychoanalytic and feminist readings have recognized Stein's use of music as a subversive exploration of the limits of language,<sup>5</sup> those readings have not fully accounted for the relation of music to the historical, social, and cultural networks from which it emerges. Recent criticism on Stein's attitudes towards the sounds of speech—Michael North's work on highly problematic modernist appropriations of African and African-American dialect, Emily Bilski's and Emily Braun's work on the heuristic, unstable character of speech in the modernist salon—are further illuminated by studies of how sound and media technologies reshaped the social space.<sup>6</sup> Stein's and Thompson's 1928 opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*, generally performed by all-black casts, raises familiar questions about Stein's imbrication of European modernist art with racial dialect and performance, but also conjoin these

questions with the changing resonances of speech and music (hard to distinguish in Stein's work) in the social space. Stein's interest in music is largely social: it may now be no surprise that the description of the *Rite of Spring* premiere in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) focuses exclusively on the noises in the crowd and not at all on the music.

Stein's interest not just in musical aesthetics, but in a musical social experience, surely speaks to the radically unstable and experimental quality of her literary language. While Stein's debts to the visual arts have, deservedly, sustained a rich critical discussion, those debts have not been sufficiently articulated with her interest in music. Mediating her experience of Matisse and Picasso through the sonic and visual patterns of language, Stein draws on the sonic patterns of the salon and of music: perhaps from the very musician for whom Picasso produced the curtain of *Parade*. Erik Satie's "furniture music" (*musique d'ameublement*)—a form of music "not meant to be listened to"—serves as background for social interaction in art museums, suggesting that visual modernism comes to the viewer mediated by auditory experience.

That musician was also the seminal influence on John Cage, whose *Furniture Music Etcetera* (1980) directs the performer to play selections taken (at her own discretion) from Satie's *Furniture Music* and Cage's own *Etcetera* (1973). While I have excluded Cage by virtue of his emphasis on indeterminacy, his ideas evolve decisively from modernist aesthetics. A pupil of Schoenberg and of Cowell, Cage composed several relatively conventional serial pieces before the late 1930s, when he began to "equat[e] the arbitrary distinction between noise and 'musical' sounds in the same light as the historical distinction between consonance and dissonance."<sup>7</sup> Noise-music pieces such as *First Construction (in Metal)* (1939) and the early *Imaginary Landscape* pieces (the first three dating from 1939-1942) involve electronic instruments and noise composed, for live performance, in intricate tonal and rhythmic structures. Cage's later

interest in chance and indeterminacy intersects provocatively with literary postmodernism: his most infamous experiment with ethesic noise (*4'33"*; 1952) was produced during his tenure at Black Mountain College. Cage's career and influence overlap with many literary figures of the twentieth century (Charles Olson, Denise Levertov, Robert Creeley) who, while outside the scope of this project, may bear marks of the noise/music interactions of modernism.

Better-suited to this project than Cage, perhaps, would have been Milton Babbitt, whose piece *Philomel* (1964; text by John Hollander) depicts the raped title character singing doubtfully about how to reconstituting her identity in a sonic realm:

What is that sound?  
A voice found;  
Broken, the bound  
Of silence, beyond  
Violence of human sound,  
As if a new self  
Could be founded on sound.  
The trees are astounded!  
What is this humming?  
I am becoming  
My own song...<sup>8</sup>

Like Eliot, Babbitt and Hollander question the material power of sound—the very power on which their arts rely—linking it to the unfathomable yet very real experience of sexual violence. And like many of the figures in this project (and in my view unfairly), Babbitt is often characterized as an elitist "mandarin modernist," disavowing his audience and attempting to inhabit an autonomous, rarefied aesthetic universe.<sup>9</sup> This project has attempted to illustrate the tendency of modernist writing to recognize the fractures in its own autonomous principles: the extent to which the "sound" of modernist art recognizes its own predication on the "violence of human sound." Embracing music's power to shock or appeal to the body, modernism constantly recalls the material pressures of modernity—and in so doing, aspires to the condition of noise.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Stein, *Last Operas and Plays*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Random House, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> On this last, see Nathaniel Lew, Jennifer Doctor, and Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Alfred Appel, *Jazz Modernism: From Ellington and Armstrong to Matisse and Joyce* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Douglas Kahn's reading of Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* (1943) in *Noise, Water, Meat*.

<sup>5</sup> See Phillips, "'Rhythm of the visible world,'" as well as Lisa Ruddick, *Reading Gertrude Stein: Body, Text, Gnosis* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990). With respect to Stein's *GMP* (1912; pub. 1933), Ruddick argues that the shift from music to language "is linked to the transition from mother to father," and to the repression of the "physical pleasure in making and hearing sound" (168).

<sup>6</sup> Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997); Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun, *Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation*. (New York: Jewish Museum, 2005). Bilski and Braun write that "Stein considered 'talking and listening' to be the essence of the human enterprise, and the volatility of salon conversation inspired her radical experiments with language" (117). On modern(ist) transformations of the social space, see Emily Thompson, *op. cit.*; Virginia Rosner, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (New York: Columbia UP, 2004); Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> David W. Bernstein, "Music I: To the Late 1940s," *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage*, ed. David Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 69.

<sup>8</sup> Milton Babbitt, *Philomel, for Soprano, Recorded Soprano, and Synthesized Sound*, New World Records, New York, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> The accusation often reaches back to an article in *High Fidelity* to which the editors appended the title, "Who Cares if You Listen?" (Babbitt's preferred title was "The Composer as Specialist"). Babbitt's argument is that composers should be most concerned with the aesthetic judgments of other composers, inasmuch as non-specialist responses take the form of what Eliot might have called "impressionistic criticism" (comments such as "this music lacks drama"). Babbitt labels electronic media as one form that this specialization might take. Yet, Babbitt points out, music considered hermetic or self-referential in its moment can gain appeal over time: Babbitt cites the fact that Anton Webern's ostensibly inaccessible catalogue has since been recorded and rerecorded, in full, by major record labels. Milton Babbitt, "The Composer as Specialist," *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt*, eds. Stephen Peles, Stephen Dembski and Joseph N. Straus (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003).

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