

ABSTRACT

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LITERARY CONSTRUCTIONS OF
ALTERITY THROUGH MUSIC

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The late twentieth century has seen a significant increase in the number of literary texts turning to music for thematic content and structural form. I read musical forms as structuring or articulating new forms of nationalism, identity formation, community, memory, and exile. Using vocabulary from postcolonial theory, I argue that sites of alterity identifiable in music challenge existing, dominant cultural formations, promote ethical orientation towards others, and suggest openness to human interrelations. The texts that anchor my study articulate an aesthetic humanism that proposes the musical arts as non-confrontational conceptions of self and other, of the individual and society.

In the introduction to their provocatively entitled anthology, *Dangerous Liaisons*, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat insist on the value of a “contrapuntal juxtaposition” of multiculturalism in the U.S. context and postcolonialism in the international sphere. This phrase – contrapuntal juxtaposition – encapsulates the motivation for my dissertation. On the one hand, my work is contrapuntal in its interdisciplinarity. Revising the critical successes of musicologists, such as Susan McClary and Jeffrey Kallberg, who use feminist and genre theories to interrogate the

gender politics readable in musical structures, harmonic progressions, and tonal qualities, I employ theories and practices of Western music to read the cultural, social, and political strategies for subject positioning and human interrelations employed by late-twentieth century novels and poetry. On the other hand, my study juxtaposes American ethnic and postcolonial writings. I use a contested scope for postcolonial literatures in order to focus on sites that might be considered “mature” in their postcoloniality and to find conditions of entrenched and deeply conflicting ideological positions. I contend that musical elements provide a means to critique dominant cultural ideologies and social constructions from within European Enlightenment, of which Western music is a product.

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By

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Dedication

To my mother, JoAn Bushnell, who set me on my way.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Alterity & Musicality

The impetus for my study comes from a reflection by critic Gerry Smyth, who, in writing a review of Bernard MacLaverty's novel, *Grace Notes*, observes that "the last decade of the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of novels dealing with the subject of music" (5). Furthermore, Smyth notes that the most prominent examples by Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, and Jackie Kay,¹

are by non-white artists writing from perspectives that might be defined as 'oppositional' in outlook and tenor. [...] This alerts us to the possibility of a connection between the politics of resistance (including quite centrally postcolonialism) and the systematic utilization of music as an alternative mode of expression within novelistic discourse. (5, 11)

Smyth's observation raises several questions which will serve to guide our discussion. Before entertaining them, however, and because establishment of the conditions of the argument involves a detour, I want to state the argument baldly and without preamble, with the promise of contextualization to come. My study identifies specific works of late twentieth-century literature (specifically, 1989-2002), which by employing representations of Western music, thematically and/or structurally, help broaden the field of literary postcoloniality. I argue that critical representations of Western music can be read as aesthetic devices that expand the scope of postcolonial theory, disclosing possibilities for transforming entrenched and settled political conditions through a commitment to alterity and social justice made possible by a receptive and supple humanistic paradigm.² Western music imports into literature an epistemology that both rivals discursive reason and expands it through a process of

overdetermination. The hegemonic system of Western music, comprising theory, performance conventions, and daily practices is deployed in literature as a universalizing force, often unmarked, against which individualistic manipulations of the system occur. Within texts what is produced is an aesthetic object depicting a manageable, perceptible totalizing schema that varies according to circumstances of play and the literary consciousness(es) that resist, revise, alter, and use it.

At the heart of my argument is an analogy. Representations of music function aesthetically in roughly the same way as postcolonialism functions critically: they are both modes of viewing the world which simultaneously hold conceptions of universalizing systems and of individual and/or group responses to it. I suggest that postcolonialism is to imperialism, and by extension to globalization in the field of criticism, as musicianship is to the Western musical system in aesthetic arenas. The trajectory of my study follows a set of musical orthodoxies interrupted by modes of particular performance, composition, or musical relation that reflect the perspectives of literary protagonists on national, racial, and gender identities, on the powers of audition and silence, and on imperialist disciplinary practices. In short, I argue that Western music in literature displays a flexible humanism constructed on principles of alterity based in conditions of perpetual musical relationality.

Reflecting again on Smyth's instigational insight, we might break down the considerations he raises into the following sets of questions: 1) What comprises the link, if indeed there is one, between representations of music and a politics of resistance posited by postcolonialism? What are the formal structures that support defining an association between music and politics? 2) In positing a cumulative relation that holds

through analogy that Western music marks a resistance to globalization by way of its connections to postcoloniality, how does the controversy over the disciplinary terms, (i.e., postcolonialism, postcoloniality, postcolonial) figure in? 3) What might be the need for and purpose of an “alternate mode of expression” for literary discourse and/or for postcolonialism? 4) Why has the need for such a mode grown to noticeable proportions in the millennial decade of the twentieth century?

Finding that an understanding of the terms “postcolonialism” and “postcoloniality” is instructive for the discussion of connecting structures, I begin with the contentious field of postcolonial studies and wrap its development into what I see as the development of structural connections between literature, postcolonialism, and global conditions. Mishra and Hodge offer a useful definition of “postcolonialism” with which we might begin: a “neologism that grew out of older elements to capture a seemingly unique moment in world history, a configuration of experiences and insights, hopes and dreams arising from a hitherto silenced part of the world, taking advantage of new conditions to ‘search for alternatives to the discourses of the colonial era,’ creating an altogether different vantage point from which to review the past and the future” (378).³ These critics trace the development of a postcolonial “ism” through key texts whose materialist orientation produces an archive for postcolonialism that is neither marginalized nor haunted by textualism, but rather that recovers “postcolonial subjectivity” (Gayatri Spivak), takes up the imperative of Marxism (Neil Lazarus), engages postmodernism (Gauri Viswanathan), and/or proposes a contramodernity (Dipesh Chakrabarty). These positive developments within the discipline are valorized; however, Mishra and Hodge find that postcolonialism’s disciplinary structures and

terminology are floundering under pressure to be that “inexhaustibly open and rich set of possible actions and states that can flourish in the shadow of (after) colonialism,” and in the process of trying to keep up with the times have fallen into a “militant tendency stemming from ‘postcolonial (theory),’ [...which they see as] a rhetoric calling for action (real or imagined) on behalf of a cause whose tenets are not to be questioned” (380). These critics conclude that “postcolonialism” is a “system,” which has become “too rigid, too burdened by its immediate histories and compromises, to remain afloat” (398).⁴

Mishra and Hodge are not alone in finding that the term “postcolonialism” suffers from overdetermination and is compromised by an overreaching scope. Benita Parry criticizes the “plenitude” of signification of the term, which has resulted in the “unsustainable contemporary use” of “postcolonial” to mean “a historical transition, an achieved epoch, a cultural location, a theoretical stance – indeed, in the spirit of mastery favored by Humpty Dumpty in his dealings with language, whatever an author chooses it to mean” (66).⁵ Timothy Brennan locates difficulty with postcolonialism not only in the definition of terms, but more importantly in the scope of the discipline itself. He suggests that postcolonial studies displays a tendency to operate like globalization, meaning that it is in “a dubious relationship to the power it purportedly questions” (134).⁶ Brennan characterizes the field as a generalizing system that advocates vagueness and ambiguity – “the striving for ambivalence as a matter of principle, the ardent belief that answering a question ‘forecloses’ it; the elision of meaning in pursuit of epistemological doubt; and, most of all, the deployment of a variety of tropes such as ‘migrancy,’ ‘nomadism,’ ‘hybridity,’ and ‘decentering’ which are marshaled in order to make the case that mobility and mixedness – not as contingent historical experiences but as modes of being

– are states of virtue” (133). Even critics, such as Deepika Bahri, favorably disposed to the term “postcolonial” to describe a sophisticated theory, take exception to its “‘practical’ version,” which she suggests “succumb[s] to the same logic of the Enlightenment project of modernity” (22),⁷ citing its disciplinarity as preclusive of “conceptual space [for] precolonial histories, internal colonialism, or local anticolonial struggles” (22). The damaging outcome of “its sui generis aura and its construction by restrictively presentist, globalist, and political stipulations” has been missed opportunities for “potentially valuable comparisons with fields such as American literature, feminist studies, and African American literature” (Bahri 23). In Bahri’s phrase, the disciplinary field has become “a poco postcolonial, to borrow from the language of music, that is, a little, a somewhat, a sort of postcolonialism that has been manufactured in response to various needs in First World academic coordinates” (23).

This study takes particular note of postcolonialism’s failures and disappointments to its materialist critics. I agree with Benita Parry,⁸ Ella Shohat,⁹ Arif Dirlik,¹⁰ and Edward Said,¹¹ among many others, who rightly demand that attention be paid to the real, historical cruelty, torture, and force applied without compunction that were effects of colonialism and its aftermath in neo-colonialism, fervent nationalisms, and various other postcolonial political and cultural formulations. However, in focusing on the 1990s as the period of writing for a set of selected texts engaging Western music, I want to argue that the historical and socio-political forces that are important to these texts are those that are usefully circulating in the millennial decade because postcolonialism has launched them. This study, then, wants to acknowledge an accumulation of postcolonial thought and discourse, while avoiding Deepika Bahri’s legitimate charge that postcolonial theory –

because of its extremely attractive terminology of resistance – has been applied willy-nilly as “cookie cutter formulae,”¹² ignorant of the history of European cultural domination of peoples forced to accede to disrupting pedagogical and political impositions. Instead, I argue that the particular decade of the 1990s becomes a period in which a constellation¹³ of humanistic ideologies, spawned in colonial and postcolonial conditions, produces a field of theoretical concepts and practical strategies for educating imaginations in the cultural responses of individuals hoping to effect political change. Further, I want to suggest that postcolonialism’s obscurity of language,¹⁴ the very breadth of its field, and the generality of its scope that have been points of criticism also become a strength in creating an alternate hegemonic system. Following David Chioni Moore in thinking that postcolonial studies reveals colonial relations “at the turn of the millennium” equally “fundamental to world identities as other ‘universal’ categories, such as race, and class, and caste, and age, and gender” (124),¹⁵ I argue that there is value in the critical recognition of a “postcolonial hermeneutics.”

A particularly strong case for my argument is made inadvertently by Tim Brennan. Damning jointly the fields of postcolonial studies and globalization theory, Brennan masterfully outlines the parallels between the two. The congruencies, I suggest, might be read, not as complicities, but rather as an enabling capacity for postcolonialism. Brennan insists, in a reading of key texts from 1896 through the 1900s, that both postcolonialism, which considers cultural developments of colonialism and resistances to it and globalization, which considers historical and sociological developments have long traditions in academic discourse, and that, indeed, “these now separate foci were in earlier periods conjoined.”¹⁶ Simplifying his complex and specific arguments, I sum up

his major assertions of ambiguity in both fields: 1) they both promise avenues of collectivity, connectivity, and community, while “euphemiz[ing]” consolidating, corporatist, and imperialist tendencies; 2) they both purport to describe “processes” that broker shifts in the current ordering of systems, while also establishing “policy” that protects the world order for a few selected adherents, and 3) they both signal openness to foreignness, while promoting what amounts to an Americanization of positions. In the end, Brennan pronounces their ambiguity “structurally identical.”¹⁷ While this might mean, as Brennan and others assert, that postcolonialism’s battle against Eurocentrism might result in “a rendering of earlier radical positions of dissent in a form more accommodating to power by a professional diaspora to the imperial centers” (123), it might also mean that postcolonial studies is one of the few disciplines which has both the necessary origins and structures to mount a challenge to globalization, whether it be a material reality or perceived force whose effect in the world is nonetheless felt.

This is, despite the seeming death knell they chime, the conclusion that Mishra and Hodge come to concerning the postcolonial archive: although, they would confine its vocabulary to use in the “incomplete project of modernism” (i.e., investigation of European colonization and its ‘other’), they find that postcolonialism will be energized when it is “used as a platform from which to understand other scenes, in other times, in other paradigms.”¹⁸ Their notion of a “postcolonial archive” further supports my idea that the 1990s becomes a moment in which a complex of concepts coalesces under the umbrella term “postcolonial,” drawing on an amalgamation of texts and ideas that Mishra and Hodge, Brennan, and Neil Lazarus,¹⁹ among others document. Whether or not globalization theory and postcolonial studies did or did not “present[] themselves as

iconoclastic departures from older modes of studying their fields of interest” (Brennan 131), that is, stem from a unitary epistemology, at the end of the twentieth century two fields emerged. Globalization was by far and away the greater of the two forces; it occupied the center of international media attention, while postcolonialism was mainly confined to the academy. For better or for worse – and for the most part it has been much worse for the discipline – postcolonialism’s past tangles with an imperialism that had at one time controlled 85 percent of the world land mass²⁰ – particularly its ability to detect what Edward Said identifies as the “pattern of dominions or possessions [under imperialism that] laid the groundwork for what is in effect now a fully global world”²¹ – made it one of the few languages of resistance against globalization’s homogenizing dynamics. The editors of *Postcolonial Text* assert that “postcolonialism remains [...] a vital area of academic study [...] because it is still arguable the only methodological framework strongly committed to a critique of the global conditions of domination and oppression to which the ‘civilizing mission’ has given rise.”²²

Thus, postcolonialism, by the 1990s agglomerates a cluster of non-integratable concepts, which although frustrating to its critics, comprises postcolonialism’s strength and capacity to fashion a future in its contradictions and complexities, its vast scope, and, more recently, its largely literary forms where transformations of life-worlds are imagined. For example, Shohat, who has been a vocal critic of postcolonialism’s tendency to deconstructionist textuality, recognizes postcolonial studies as a “very complex and multifaceted field [...] which explores such varied issues as the intersection of race and gender in anti-colonial thought, the narrated and constructed nature of the nation, the imperial substratum of texts and institutions, the tropes of orientalist

discourse, the role of the diasporic intellectual in the Metropole” (36).²³ Given that globalization has created a distinctly hegemonic regime, in which experience and daily practice are saturated with superpower politics and the commodification of culture, I argue that postcolonialism provides a means to an alternative hegemony that seeks to place the planet at its core. Whether active habit or archival source of anti-, neo-, and post-colonial experience and ideas, postcolonialism and its condition, postcoloniality, do not deny the reality of globalization’s expanding network of capital, information flows, and trade in goods, but rather attempts to theorize a site disentangled from capitalism and power, enjoined in the project of social justice based on human concerns, such as mutual human interrelations, ecology, and peace.²⁴ Postcoloniality does not shy away from claims to a certain universalism recognizable in the human calculations of sameness and difference whereby “the strangeness of strangers goes out of focus and other dimensions of a basic sameness can be acknowledged and made significant” (Gilroy *PM* 4) and in the imaginative conceptualizations of the “planet,” that “we inhabit [...], on loan”²⁵ and of the literature that might be “the collective life of the planet” when read “[a]s a global process of extension, elaboration, and randomization” (178).²⁶ Postcolonial universality, since Foucault, has no illusions about the imperviousness or monolithicity of power. “Universal” no longer means “an already-existing foundation that all reasonable men and women must naturally agree on, but [must instead be conceived] “as a risky, uncertain balancing of the different values, vocabularies, and priorities that reasonably emerge from different circumstances” (567).²⁷ Any “universal” is a non-fixed, porous construction of humanism that acknowledges its individual human constituency. My dissertation outlines how Western music might model this new humanistic paradigm.

In his essay, "Toward a New Humanistic Paradigm," Bruce Robbins develops a universalism based on antihumanist forms, i.e., race, gender, class, noting that these anti-humanist terms are being used to refer to "something bigger than they are, yet also not quite nameable" so that "universalism returns by the back door (561). This return is not detrimental, he suggests, if it is tempered in two critical ways: the universal must be appropriate to the situation, and it must be actively political. He cites the positive developments: 1) "[Ernest] Laclau's critical embrace of universalism, holding onto it as 'horizon' even while continually seeking to loosen its attachment to 'any particular content'" (562); 2) Aijaz Ahmad's protest against Jameson's label for all minority literature as 'national allegory' in favor of "a better, more accurate universalism [...] founded on struggle not against colonialism, but against capitalism," and 3) Kwame Anthony Appiah's arguments supporting an "ethical universal." The problem for postcolonialism, Robbins asserts and as discussed above, is that in becoming "[u]nmoored from the moment of national liberation struggle, it drifts in both space and time" (564), susceptible to dilution by overapplication. However, this does not boil down to a problem in universalization, but in losing sight of humanistic universals in the service of social justice. For example, Robbins suggests that cosmopolitanism might steer clear from "dangerously elevat[ing] diaspora and hybridity" as superior social virtues and rather concentrate on strategies that "link up all those 'persons and groups disempowered by globalization, whatever their ethnic or national affiliations'" (565).²⁸ In short, I argue with Robbins that maintaining a "planetary-scale humanism," that is, despite its scope, politically accountable and thus relevant becomes possible with focus on the "anti-humanist" generalizing categories.

In its endeavor to find a basis for a planetary humanism, postcoloniality can find no better aesthetic and expressive model and process than the literary representations of Western music. I argue that representations of music in literature are simultaneously macroscopic and microscopic. Within the themes and structures of literary works are direct indications of Western music's systemic organizing principles, such as symphonic form, musical genres, intonation, instrumentation, and canon; however, secondary and tertiary layers of musical reference might be read through a process similar to Rachel Blau DuPlessis' methodology for reading poetry, "social philology." She draws on a central tenet in Bakhtin/Medvedev that states: "Every concrete utterance is a social act" and, further, writers' chosen words carry "the [social] evaluations lodged in them as well" (qtd in DuPlessis 13, brackets in orig.).²⁹ In social philology, DuPlessis employs the tools of close reading to detect in the dense, crosscutting welter of associations that accompany each and every word hidden ideologies, subjectivities, and social contexts. Music, I argue, not only introduces hermeneutic depth, but also allows for an internal dialectic between lingual and non-lingual realms, revealing veiled references to listening, ornamentation, modulation and other theories, conventions, practices, which become site of individual agency within and against the totality of the Western musical system. These two registers (macro and micro) allow representations of music to be read contrapuntally, in two distinct ways. First, following Edward Said's formulation, we might see that Western music's systematicity introduces a set of orthodox practices, culturally derived, that represent the dominant ideologies of music-making at a particular historical moment. These might be discerned and read in conjunction with the depictions of individual conceptions of music and notions about performance to produce a contrapuntal reading of

the universalistic against the particularist modes of Western music. Secondly and metatextually, Western music might be read as a foil to the literary structures of attitudes and references. That is, musical and literary referentiality differ. Thus, music in literature depicts the inter-spatial domains (intra-literary) of systematicity and particularity and the extra-spatial domains (extra-literary) of textuality and musicality in ways useful to conceiving how personal imagination and action might engage a universalizing, globalized system.

In spite of the many disputes and contentions surrounding postcolonial studies, it is not in doubt that postcolonial theory has been developed specifically to contend with the cultural dominant. Postcolonial theory describes a body of thought in which imperialist attitudes and institutions are the structures against which individuals deploy strategies of resistance, elision, and elaboration. Speaking of a single discipline, Spivak argues that it is necessary to “learn[] the protocol of those [existent and dominant] disciplines” (11)³⁰ in order to transform the discipline and to intervene in the social systems that inform it. It is the goal of this study to examine the literary treatment of one disciplinary system, i.e., Western music, and the ways in which it is engaged and transformed in literature in order to locate clues to enjoining and modifying a larger disciplinary system, i.e., Western culture. In this study, I argue that elements of Western music employed in late twentieth-century literature situate both dominant ideologies and individual difference; they etch a grid of aestheticism within textuality that might be conceived as related to the efforts of postcolonialism and might become an impetus to imagining political action.³¹ I contend that twentieth-century literatures employ Western music purposefully to map a limited system of European culture and social norms, and

that the literary representations of musical elements, even as they participate in a represented, bounded universalism, inform individual imagination and action that critique totalizing conceptions of Enlightenment culture that Western music emblemizes.

Toward a Counter-Periodization: A Brief History of the 1990s

Consider now the pressures of globalization on the millennial decade, which, I suggest, constitute the historical reference for writers of the 1990s and provoke the emergence of Western music as a critical anti-hegemonic discourse within literature. What I want to identify is a model in literary representations of Western musical form that iterates both the presence and pressures of a totalizing system, while recognizing as Parry does that “the exercise of power is heterogeneous and never total” (62). I contend that use of musical representations is a purposeful ploy by authors to recognize individuals’ necessary compliance with the rigors of an ordering system, but to insist upon the means to elide, stretch, subvert, or contest the conventions and rules of systemic deployments. Given that music is a cultural form and inextricably involved with its societies whose developments are indicative of the possible social relations in a particular time and place, musical forms might be construed as a material basis for examining the relation between dominant ideologies and individual subject positions and options for action.

The 1990s might be seen as the decade in which world economic, political, and military conditions shifted, creating, according to theorists of new empire, “the globalization of capitalist production and its market,” thereby replacing “what used to be conflict or competition among several imperialist powers [...] by the idea of a single power that overdetermines them all, structures them in a unitary way, and treats them

under one common notion of right that is decidedly postcolonial and postimperialist” (8-9).³² The perceived emergence of a unipolar geo-politics created a surge of discourse around the term “globalization,” with usage rapidly expanding throughout the millennial decade, so much so that it was and continues to be employed “to describe almost any and every aspect of contemporary life, from the complicated machinations of contemporary capitalism, to the erosion of the nation-state system and the rise of transnational organizations and corporations, to the threat posed by global culture to local cultures and traditions, to the communications revolution introduced by new technologies like the Internet.”³³ Given the magnitude of the world conditions it describes and the widespread usage of the term itself, globalization’s effects have come to be felt as an amorphous, uncontrollable, indivisible force at work in the world, giving rise to rhetoric of fear and inevitability, like that identified by Neil Lazarus, depicting globalization as “an unstable, unsteerable, rampaging juggernaut [... which has meant that] ‘[i]n the late twentieth century there is no shelter – for corporations or for governments – from the global gale of creative destruction’” (26-27).³⁴

Although there were critics who rightly pointed out that power, after Foucault, could not be unmitigatedly total, the fear of intolerance for dissent and disagreement grew. The 1990s were inscribed with political and symbolic significance of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, events critical to the shift in thinking of the world as socio-politically singular. As several critics have noted, Francis Fukuyama’s book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), and various misreadings of it, contributed to the growing anxiety of the age.³⁵ Positing a “final victory of the forces of capitalism, with the USA and the West emerging as the

dominant ideological forces in the new world order” (2),³⁶ the book raised “fears amongst left-wing intellectuals concerning the end of an adequate political resistance to the global advance of Western capitalism” (2). Equally significant was the move to the center among many democratic national governments. Chantal Mouffe identifies the new “‘common-sense’ in liberal-democratic societies” (6)³⁷ as quashing democracy’s goal of equality and government by the people in favor of liberalism’s focus on individual liberty, human rights, and rule of law. Mouffe suggests the social-left has abandoned “the terrain of contestation” and has occupied a center of consensus, allowing the ascendancy of “neo-liberal dogmas about the unviolable rights of property, the all-encompassing virtues of the market and the dangers of interfering with its logics” (6), all of which exclude popular demands. The result has been the emergence of a “‘one-dimensional’ world, in which any possibility of transformation of the relations of power has been erased” (7). A concomitant loss of control over the democratic vocabulary in which neoliberal discourse usurps the rhetoric of resistance, such as “sovereign subject,” “evils of the state,” “cultural pluralism,”³⁸ contributes to the perception of discursive powerlessness under conditions of globalization. Finally, the U.S. public’s largely positive acceptance of globalization as a means by which the rest of the world could get to know us better, also frustrated dissent by forming a body of ignorance and indifference regarding American military interventions and the capitalist extractions of natural resources³⁹ that accompanied what was seen as a benign spread of American image by cultural means.

The ambiguity surrounding “globalization” – the multitude of factors captured in its reach, the myriad applications of the term, and the mixed responses to the

phenomenon as a cultural effect – is responsible for its perception as an un-opposable, unappeasable force in the last decade of the twentieth century. Szeman sums it best in his observation of academia’s complicity, which has tended to reinforce “globalization’s empirical reality (as in claims that the decline of the nation-state means that it no longer has the power to intervene in economic decisions) and its historical inevitability, in ways that have legitimated the use of the concept in international business, global politics and the popular press.”

In the midst of this sense of an overwhelming consolidation of power, the critical tools to help make sense of the condition of globalization exist in the critical discourses of postcolonialism. Providing ways of thinking beyond the nation and its cultural products, “the postcolonial often seems to be the name for the critical practice that precedes and provides the foundations for global or transnational cultural studies”(605).⁴⁰ Despite criticisms that postcolonialism has valorized the “margin as a spatial category where the (always as yet) exotic, unassimilated authentic Other exists,”⁴¹ and, further, that it has yet to recognize its debt to globalization,⁴² thus constraining its ability to define the current condition in other than the imperialist terms of its earlier critical stances, it is impossible to deny that postcolonial theory has provided a vocabulary of infusive resistance (working from within imperial categories) and oppositional integration (inserting “newness” into imperial structures)⁴³ that challenges the notion that postcoloniality must be confined to the margins. Postcolonial theory proposes change through transformations of certain societal hierarchies, of conceptions of individual behavior, of official histories, and of existing canons. Building upon its successful opposition to earlier renditions of global power, i.e., imperialism, these conceptions

might be activated to speak to the perception of omnipresent power in its new form, globalization.

* * *

In retrospect, the decade is marked by a certain anxiety of the unknown, a sort of collective waiting for the other shoe to drop, as multiple civil and relatively limited military confrontations add to the general sense of unease, stimulating increased demand for political and other forms of consensus. The efforts of consolidation induced by globalization make it difficult to find a stance from which to level dissent. I want to end this section with an illustration of one way representations of music might be read as intervening to break the logjam of discursive stasis. I read a short section of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* to suggest that *musical form* articulates a banner of difference permitting 1) the enunciation of resistance to an inexorable trajectory from the past, 2) the pronouncement of a present in transition, and 3) a change in perspective about possibilities for the future. The use of music contributes to a sense that the 1990s are not historically bound, but rather provide a millennial break with the past; this idea is reiterated in the texts anchoring this study.

Although Hardt and Negri describe the current world system as beyond the purview of postcolonial discourse,⁴⁴ it is postcolonial theory that provides the language by which they parse the phenomenon of globalization: Empire, nomadism, migration, hybridization. Globalization, according to the authors, defines a coincidence of economic and political power, arriving at "a properly capitalist order" (E 9). They establish globalization's coincidence with the elevation of the United States as a monolithic power noting that the "contemporary idea of Empire is born through the global expansion of the

internal U.S. constitutional project” (E 182). They see the U.S. Constitution licensing a “model of rearticulating an open space and reinventing incessantly diverse and singular relations in networks across an unbounded terrain” (E 182).⁴⁵ Hardt and Negri suggest that this discursive source document licenses a notion of infinite possibilities for territorial expansion, including concurrent cultural and political extension, and can only be successfully neutralized by a counter-force structured as an equally wide-ranging and general conception of non-territorial, or virtual, expansion.

I focus on the section of the Hardt and Negri volume identified as an “Intermezzo” and entitled “Counter-Empire,” not only because I understand it as an encapsulation of a millennial moment of writing, but also because it claims a musical form in the midst of a political text. The purpose of reading the Intermezzo as both content and form is to demonstrate Said’s claim that *how* something is said is as important as, and also undergirds, *what* is said. Musical form is not neutral, but structures certain conceptions that affect the reception of the piece. The Intermezzo as specifically musical contributes to the formation of non-literary, non-lingual thought processes and can be conceived as a way of introducing or making room for “foreign” ideas. I read five statements in this section with an eye to understanding how meaning is enhanced by the contextual musical frame. It is useful to know, before beginning, that an Intermezzo, musically speaking, is an eighteenth-century invention, “literally, an entr’acte [...] a miniature comic opera” involving two or three stock characters, one often mute, “performed in segments between the acts of a larger work.”⁴⁶ It was a unified piece unto itself, often unrelated to the plot of the opera that became host to entertaining, diversionary routines that served to attract audiences. They became highly popular and

their use spread throughout Europe as playhouses and opera companies learned to benefit commercially from them. Their history is brief; they were common only in the first half of the eighteenth century, and then other forms expanded (Opera buffa) or succeeded (ballet) them.

Except for in the Preface, another paratextual site, the thesis of *Empire* is stated first in the Intermezzo: “Globalization must be met with a counter-globalization, Empire with a counter-Empire” (*E* 207). The introduction of the thesis in this late dimension of the time and space of the book, under the title of “Intermezzo,” suggests that in the space of difference, the argument might be launched. That is, whereas the opening chapters in Parts 1 and 2 might be seen to “clear space” in current world conditions, and the final chapters in Parts 3 and 4 present a projection of the decline and fall of this world, the Intermezzo represents a present-moment hinge where another future, one working from a different premises than those that result in civilizational fall, is already in the process of developing. The Intermezzo presents a change in course, a moment of disjunction in the trajectory of historical inevitability, a site where the subject shifts from the main event – the rise and decline of the known imperial world – to the comic. Hardt and Negri’s Intermezzo creates another dimension of existence, (i.e., the “counter-Empire”) where the stock “characters” of socio-political development (i.e., the individual, philosophy, nature, economics, and so on) are given new roles. Having discerned a cultural system of universal proportions and extensive range in the present unipolar, globalistic world, the Intermezzo poses an equally universal system to contest it. By posing this moment as a musical form that steps outside of literarity and textuality, while remaining firmly within the book, the text calls attention to the simultaneity of divergent epistemologies. In short,

the material basis whereby individuals might imagine extricating themselves from Empire, all the while the imperial corporeality constitutes an unavoidable systemic expanse.

Hardt and Negri argue that an inescapable Empire, realized in an exchange network, becomes moot when counter-Empire, conceived as global abstracted labor power, becomes a virtuality from which to think outside Empire's purview. They write: "The universality of human creativity, the synthesis of freedom, desire, and living labor is what takes place in the non-place of the postmodern relations of production" (*E* 210). The formalism of this "non-place" obtains a "general power" as universal, "de-localized" productive forces connected by "rich and powerful social relationships" (*E* 210). Hardt and Negri envision a space that "encompasses" a power that cannot actually be confined to physical parameters: the physical and mental powers of all the labor in the world cannot be measured. In its abstraction from the real, this power is everywhere and nowhere. The musical frame of the *Intermezzo* emphasizes Hardt and Negri's point in two ways: metatextually, music exists as a non-specifiable, non-quantifiable realm within the written work that is *Empire*; thematically, the *dramatis personae* of the *Intermezzo*, that is, its stock characters (e.g., "old man," "braggart captain," "cunning servant girl") give graspable form to the mode of conceptualization necessary to envision mankind dehumanized, while remaining a powerful force. That is, allegory and stereotype provide the formal models of a grander theorization of mass labor power that Hardt and Negri envision as the basis of a non-situated form of "modern republicanism" (*E* 210).

The critics recognize the power of mobility as a political force. They cite the mass migrations from socialist countries as largely responsible for the collapse of the Berlin

Wall and the Soviet Union. They argue that “miserable cultural and material conditions of imperial reproduction” (*E* 213) in certain locales coupled with desire for better conditions elsewhere establishes conditions ripe for desertion and evacuation from the unsatisfactory and migration towards the promising. The mobility of the workforce is facilitated by the insubstantiality and virtuality of the counter-Empire. The musicality of the Intermezzo invites conceptualizing deterritorialized movement. That migration also intimates movement toward an alternative, we see that representations of music implied in the Intermezzo exemplify not only movement, but also, metatextually, an alternate, non-lingual epistemology and, thematically, a different sort of movement than is proceeding in the dominant sphere (i.e., the action of the Intermezzo is contrasts the Opera). Finally, the development of the Intermezzo form – away from the Opera proper and toward the new form of Opera buffa – nicely concretizes Hardt and Negri’s notion that various forms of movement – negatively away, positively toward; real and virtual nomadism – intertwine to become “an active politics [that] established a political position” (*E* 214).

Empire suggests that counter-Empire and nomadism require, literally, new bodies, shrugging off the idea of immutable, defined humanness in favor of “posthuman bodies,” fashioned as if a work of art in imagination. They assert that “Nature itself is an artificial terrain open to ever new mutations, mixtures, and hybridizations” (*E* 215) and suggest that bodies be rethought and reorganized in a manner ready to meet the conditions of counter-Empire, which subvert traditional demands of family, of factory, of traditional sex life (*E* 216). This reconstitution of the body, according to the authors, can happen only through the process of “poietic prostheses, liberating us from the conditions of

modern humanity” (*E* 217) by making what is natural a process of art. The Intermezzo alludes to the artistic and artificial composition of the future present Hardt and Negri theorize. Through musical form the text alludes to the process of art-making, which calls for the representations in art to become not only imitations of the real, but also replacements for the real. Intermezzo’s musical frame places the anthropological processes of mutation and hybridization within the realm of art.

Finally, Hardt and Negri contend that the mastery in imagination of formal strategies result in the practical realization of a counter-Empire, aptly political: “[t]he new politics is given real substance only when we shift our focus from the question of form and order to the regimes and practice of production” (*E* 217). *Empire* continues in its final sections to lay out plans for “production” whereby new selves, new collectivities, new processes become realities. This is the process prefigured in the musical form of Intermezzo. Music transforms form (e.g. score, genre, tonality) into performance; the aesthetic emerges from its ideal to a lived experience in performance. Hardt and Negri’s Intermezzo, then, becomes a written product born of mental conceptions, but also through social philology might be seen to enact the process of making experience from formal conceptions. I detect this pedagogical strategy in the texts anchoring this study.

From Postcoloniality to Alterity

Postcoloniality has always been concerned with finding voice for those previously silenced, for viewing the world from the perspective of the other, for rescuing from anonymity those that made the definition of “First World” and the designation of “dominant culture” possible. As such, it has stimulated a counterdiscourse (in Terdiman’s sense⁴⁷) built on a conception of alterity that recognized the internal dissent that remained

within conquering and overwhelming colonizing forces. Although struggles of liberation continue in the 1990s,⁴⁸ the violent anti-*colonial* conflicts in the nation-states featured in the literature of this study – Northern Ireland, South Africa, Burma, New Zealand, and the United States⁴⁹ – are long over. What remains in these nations and becomes incorporated within the national boundaries of England is what Edward Said terms the “residues of imperialism.”⁵⁰ National and racial conflicts that previously played out in the colonies have moved to metropolitan centers where their imperial origins are being forgotten or mystified.⁵¹ It is the internally fractious nature of the cultural and political fault lines within larger systems of government and culture – comprised of individual non-compliance, alternate histories, different visions of the future – to which postcolonial studies alerts us.

Finding ways to break free of non-democratic consensus thinking and to elide the continuing effects of imperialism informed by a particular mode of discursive rationality remains crucial. As I have been arguing, representations of music provide texts a thematic and structural “technology” for fabricating and integrating sites and politics of alterity in literature through references to other systems, other worlds, and other persons. Western music might be conceived as a program and process for achieving alterity. It has the following operational modes. First, representations of music expand the spatial and temporal dimensions of literature by referring to performed and scored music in ways that challenge, enhance, enrich references available solely in the realm of the lingual. Second, and related to the first point, the alterity of music, cultivated in theme or structure, intimates an entire operating system that supplements, without necessarily replacing, schemas of the literary world. What I mean by this can be illustrated with a

brief analysis of one term that comes up later in the dissertation: “grace notes.” In reading the two words together without a musical frame, one understands the connections to structures of religion in the word “grace,” which are exploited in Bernard MacLaverty’s *Grace Notes* discussed in chapter two, and to the structures of music with the word “note.” However, beyond the denotations and connotations of the words, a new sphere of referentiality is opened when the phrase is read as music. A whole system of ornamentation governs grace notes, with professional rules and social conventions for their performance, placement, and relations to other notes; ornamentalism endows grace notes with understandings of enhancement, interruption, decorativeness, and superfluity. These references, based on compositional theory, performance possibilities, and changing social taste, not only offer a broadening of lingual reference, but also suggest competing cultural references, since Irish grace notes, for example, are played differently than the same signs in Bach. In other words, representations of music import their own set of cultural norms, social conventions, and music theories. A musical representation can never be reduced to its lingual meaning. With their own system in tow, representations of music are a source of an alternate “universal” that can be conceived as a model for smaller collectivities as a counterweight against the much larger ones, like globalism.

Third, representations of music have the ability to invoke worlds just beyond our knowledge or phenomenological grasp. In film, music stands in for or augments the inexpressible sublime, i.e., moments of sex or horror that cannot conveyed strictly lingually. In literature, music operates similarly. In Salman Rushdie’s *Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Ardaviraf (nicknamed Virus), the son of an English-educated, imperialist Bombayite, is struck in the forehead by a cricket ball batted by his father. We might

interpret this scene as signifying the overwhelming power of British imperialism, imbibed by the Indian father, Sir Darius Cama, and consolidated into the reality and symbol of the cricket ball that strikes the son. The blow of full force Englishness leaves the upcoming (i.e., postcolonial) generation without a language of expression, except as it turns out, in non-denotative music. Virus insulates himself in silence, but eventually turns to the flute as an instrument of communication unsullied by the educative and disciplinary rationale of the English language. Music becomes the medium that can “say” what cannot quite be otherwise said.

Further, music is an art whose collective performance demonstrates an undeniable code of ethics. To play in ensemble requires an attitude of attention to the other in an act of close listening verging on the obsessive. The adjustment of tonal output to the other is part of the process in an ongoing interchange and relation that defines an ethical encounter. Spivak defines this tending toward an other as what it means to be human.⁵² Thus, music in literature carries the freight of an ethics and of humanism. In literature, the presence of song lyrics calls the ear into play and though it does not always activate a song in the imagination – the lyrics at times ring no bells, so to speak – the silence encountered in the lyric is different than the silence of the narrative and resembles the interruptions of poetry that interpellate the reader, calling him or her from the fictive dream, calling attention to presence of otherness in the text.

Finally, and related to the two previous points, music invests literature with a sense of foreignness – as an alternate language, as another subject, as a formal structure unknown to narrative, full of possibilities for simultaneity and equality unknown to text. These active qualities – rich reference, universality, individualism, other worldliness,

ethicality, and foreignness, and likely more – literature obtains when investing music within its borders.

* * *

In literature, Western music produces historical, political, and/or aesthetic difference. Music's representations become a) aesthetic objects socially contextualized, but critically distant; b) modes of performance inherently ethical in orientation, and c) pluralities of reference which refuse the singular purposes of instrumental reasoning or the co-optation by administered realities (in Frankfurt School terms). As we learn from Theodor Adorno, music is simultaneously autonomous from its social situation, while sedimented within the sociohistorical conditions of its production.⁵³ Bahri makes clear in her exposition of the aesthetic dimension of postcolonial literature, by way of The Frankfurt School, that Adorno's principles of non-identity and social mediation and Walter Benjamin's notion of the ambiguity of language support a conceptualization of art, which simultaneously poses a grid of social signification along with an alternate view of an unthought future, that is, of utopia. Specifically, Bahri finds that the "extraordinary efforts [of Adorno, Marcuse, and Benjamin] to conceptualize art as a privileged arena of alterity offer an undeniably potent means of recuperating postcolonial literature as recalcitrant even when administered" (93).

What I want to argue is that the aesthetic dimension embedded, i.e., music within literature or art within art, makes explicit Bahri's "arena of alterity." Musical themes and structures *within* literature mesh artistic expression with sociopolitical conditions in a way that is arguably postcolonial; the aesthetic forms call into intimate view postcolonial engagements with global, historical, and political concerns, *writ* small. Texts embedding

music pose sites of alterity because they not only depend on depictions of individuals operating in the larger universal of Western music's systematics, but also because they stage relations between music and word, comprising interactions that might be seen variously as oppositional, supplemental, and transitional.

The implication of a global Culture Industry does not detract, Bahri asserts, from the ability of art to be read as insubordinate, even in the "counter-canon" of postcolonial texts she reads (Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie, and Arundhati Roy). I want to extend her assertion of the power of the aesthetic to exert the effects of difference and to suggest that art (specifically, music) provides the means for postcolonial theory to exceed confinements to Third World geographies and racial categories. In asserting ideas from a "Third World" perspective, postcolonial literature creates an opening for expression of otherness within a realm of continuities, of history, of tradition, of cultural practice. I argue that the interior aesthetic (the art within art that describes representations of music) underscores otherness and inscribes alterity without the necessity of traditional national, racial, and gender hierarchies. That is, music marks contradictions within literature that do not depend on conventional binaries of power.

Thus, while representations of music can never stand in for the immediacy of postcolonial historical experience, it might obtain by way of the various modes of relation it articulates in literature, correlations with postcolonial relations. Mishra and Hodge assert, "The seeds of postcolonialism were sown in the project of modernity itself. It was always locked into that premise, and globalization does not resolve its contradictions" (399). Thus, postcolonialism must be understood as a phenomenon as widespread as colonialism, whose spatial and temporal categories, once opened, becomes inhabitable by

all comers. It is not surprising that the postcolonial vocabulary becomes accessible in the late twentieth century after two decades of its development in the academy. The store of witnesses from a postcolonial past has provided an archive that records the sedimentations of suffering, the historical memories of imperial oppression, and the multiple “sly” responses crafted by colonized peoples to undermine colonial and imperial authority that could not be confronted with like force. Therefore, in the spirit of Said, who asserts that “notions of insider privilege” must be “rejected out of hand as perpetuations of the exclusions one should always oppose, a sort of racism or nationalism by imitation” (xxxix),⁵⁴ I believe the postcolonial archive is available to all those who would use it accountably. And in response to the more pointed directive from Gilroy, who insists that the “history of suffering, rebellion, and dissidence is not our [the imperially and racially oppressed] intellectual property, and we are not defenders of cultural and experiential copyright,” but rather that history’s lessons “should be available to anybody who dares, in good faith, to try and set them to work in pursuit of justice,”⁵⁵ I use postcolonial critique, accumulated and available in the 1990s, to discern alterity in texts using representations of Western music against systematicity, orthodoxy, and globalist order.

Alterity as Musicality

It is a primary aim of my dissertation to contribute to the discourses that follow Spivak’s exhortation to “re-imagine the planet.”⁵⁶ If the planet is conceived as that place adjunct to the globe, she argues, we might create in imagination a site where “the lineaments of a social practice of responsibility based on an imperative *grounded* on alterity” (73). And in fact, without a change in the epistemic foundations of our thinking

(i.e., planet, not globe), we have no basis by which to check what is by definitional necessity a socially-irresponsible capital and no means to turn it around “to the interest of the social” (74). However, responsibility grounded in planetarity, the condition of tolerant mutual existence, which “assume[es] and thus effac[es] an absolute and discontinuous alterity and thus [is] comfortable with an inexhaustible diversity of epistemes” holds promise as a basis for a politics of social justice.

Paul Gilroy identifies “planetary humanism” as agonistic (specifically, not antagonistic) in its containment of disputes and differences of opinion, but nonetheless “capable of comprehending the universality of our elemental vulnerability to the wrongs we visit upon each other” (4).⁵⁷ He describes it as an “open stance toward otherness” (4) motivated by “the desire to dwell convivially with difference” (5). The value of such a vision of the world comes in its ability to “answer to imperialism, racism, and narcissism of minor differences [by] mobiliz[ing] the invaluable solidarity of the slightly different. [... Planetary humanism, then,] is a translocal commitment to the alleviation of suffering and to the practical transfiguration of democracy which is incompatible with racism and ethnic absolutism” (79). Gilroy’s theory envisions a system of relations actively created by individual effort against suffering, injustice, and inequality, often socially, culturally, and institutionally imposed. In a more textual vein, Edward Said couples humanism with philology to describe the task of the literary interpreter as “actively mak[ing] a place in [one’s mind] for a foreign Other” (xxv).⁵⁸ In his insistence on humanism as a critical methodology, Said is acutely aware of the danger of consolidating identities that have the force to suppress difference; he mentions such terms as “America,” “the West,” and “Islam” (xxviii). And yet, Said avows that humanism conceptualizes a worldliness that

maintains “the agency of human individuality and subjective intuition” that becomes “the final resistance [...] against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history” (xxix). All three writers are concerned with an individual’s place in the social and cultural sphere of norms, rules, and daily practices. They examine the dimensions from local to global, marking the extremes of space open for cultivation of neighborliness (Spivak), diaspora (Gilroy), and contrapuntal interrelations (Said). The humanism these theorists locate, I find in music, specifically its radical, even obsessive, orientation toward the other. Literary representations of Western music intimate systematic relationality; refer to a practice of close listening with implications for ethics; encode inexpressible worlds, emotions, ideas beyond the text, and evoke desire through a staging of absence. In all cases – relations, ethics, other worldliness, desire – music’s presence in literature implies an “other”: the inclusion of music in literature has the power to call into being a sense of alterity.

Both Said and Gilroy read music as aesthetic experience – aesthetic in cultural form and experiential in performance – that is intimately related to community, history, culture, and society. Discussing composers and compositions, performances and lyrics, technique and communities of performance, these critics employ music as a mode of direct, even authentic, experience whose formal properties register the exigencies of the social conditions from which the music arises. For example, Gilroy suggests that the black musical form of call and response provides the best illustration of the particular sense of tradition he advances, one concerned less with origins and pasts and more with the “processes of connectedness” (199)⁵⁹ among present-day, far-flung diasporic black populations. He avers that black Atlantic cultures are not fully specifiable by content or

by the black community's widespread use of music and music-making, but rather are best seen in "the ubiquity of antiphonal, social forms that underpin and enclose the plurality of black cultures in the western hemisphere. A relationship of identity is enacted in the way that the performer dissolves into the crowd"(200). Gilroy links the importance of this musical form to the creation of critical reciprocal relationships between individual and community and the establishment of a site where "performance of racial identity is possible" (202). On the other hand, for Said, pianist, musicologist, and music critic, the aesthetic experience of Western classical music functions as one of multiple sites of reference and discipline.⁶⁰ Musical form asserts itself in his thinking on important issues of social justice, such as in his reading of Beethoven's opera, *Fidelio*, in which the hero, Florestan, is imprisoned and released on the weakest of logics.⁶¹ Florestan's silence, Said suggests, is staged within a European understanding of silence, where socially it is associated with absence and with judgments of wrongdoing, and where musically it relies on an historical relationship between sound and silence that presupposes, and provides for, the existence of the other. Thus, when Florestan is imprisoned for speaking an "unacceptable truth, we are to suppose [...] that he was once able to speak the truth, and then he was buried in a silent dungeon for having done so" (521). Given this understanding, Said asks, what are we to make of other notions of silence: "the case of someone already invisible and unable to speak at all for political reasons, someone who has been silenced because what he or she might represent is a scandal that undermines existing institutions?" (521).

My work complements this earlier work with a large and important difference: my focus is on literary representations of music; thus where Said and Gilroy read music

directly, I read textual transcriptions to argue that texts employ music with the hope of gaining the full force of its relationality, its oppositionality, its systemacity, its disciplinarity, and its social and cultural effects. In fact, there is a distinct advantage to be gained in reading representations: it is the ability to see conscious response to the effects of musical form, a response that is not an interpretation, but is instead the effects of music as they play out on the physical body, as they are intellectualized, as they provoke imagination, feelings and attitudes. It is a remove that literature always offers, but in the case of music in literature, its study allows music to be perceived as a pedagogical tool – an instrument by which attitudes are changed, politics are strategized, and society is, perhaps, transformed. Literature is not usually the instrument of direct social change, but by reading art within art, we might see how literature stages various *mises-en-scenes*, that is, possible enactments or negotiations of national politics, identities, genders, and disciplinary practices.

From the scholars mentioned above, I have come to believe humanism is the necessary antidote to both fracturing particularist antagonisms and totalizing universalisms that reduce individualism to national stereotypes and ethnic branding. My study locates a humanism that is critically aware of individualism and yet works to elucidate the socially connecting forces – those tactically forged and those hegemonically imposed. I identify what might be called an “aesthetic humanism” that envisions individuals in active interrelation with the universals that contain them; imagines universality as a structure licensing variation in substantive social and cultural content. I develop this notion of humanism by means of a critical reading strategy focusing on representations of music as they are or become part of lived experience in literary worlds.

In particular, I examine how individual responses to and engagements with artistic works and practices locate instances that provide “itineraries”⁶² for embarking on individualist strategies. I use the notion of itineraries⁶³ instead of map-making to avoid a sense that the strategies presented to mind in music are static or fixed and to preserve the idea that options for future activity are suggested, but not set in stone. These strategies have their basis in postcolonial theory, deployed as cultural translation, migrancy, exile, and middle-positioning in the service of planetary humanist aims.

* * *

Focusing on the formal aspects of Western music, we find it comprises a system of persistent relationality. Music, in its every expression, from pre-performance tuning to post-performance reproduction in recordings, stands in and describes relations: between notes, between performer and medium, between performers, between score and performance, between performance and audience, or performance and its preservation medium. Music cannot exist without describing a relation – a single tone does not make music. As I’ve mentioned, the presence of representations of music in literature creates a juxtaposition of art forms that establishes musico-literary relations: between referents, between codes, between concrete real-world experiences, and textual forms. These relations can be read hierarchically, with the text holding dominant positions compared to music’s relatively more submissive (that is, incorporated) and subversive positions.

Music, as an art of relations governed by social standards requiring coordination between musical parts is the basis of Edward Said’s contrapuntal reading strategy. Said sees in contrapuntalism a way to “think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal

formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them co-existing and interacting with others.”⁶⁴ According to Said, contrapuntalism offers a model of communication and understanding in which “various themes play off one another with only provisional privilege being given to any particular one (51).” Said’s concept offers a method of reading and interpreting Eurocentric discourses to elicit “alternate or new narratives” by recognizing the “suppressed” histories and narrative presence of colonized peoples. (51). Music models relations in time and space; interjected thematically and structurally into texts, it enacts relationality in multiple registers of the text.

Music’s physicality suggests a relation between the ephemeral and the body that contributes to music’s suggestive representations of a non-present other. Roland Barthes reminds us, it is the physicality of music that suggests its re-presentation in text: “aside from the voice, in instrumental music, the ‘grain’ or its lack persists; for if there is no longer a language here to afford *signifying* [as in vocal music] in its extreme form and scope, there is at least the artist’s body which once again compels me to an evaluation” (276).⁶⁵ In other words, the “grain of the voice,” its physicality and “friction,” elides denotation by suggesting instead of meaning, a “space” of materiality in which an auditor may “germinate” his/her own interpretation. Literary representations of music connect discourse and physical experience; they convey kinesthetic energy in the idea of movement and a sense of muscular effort.

Music’s evocation of physicality, paradoxically, associates it with non-present otherworldliness. According to Adorno, “Music is the (concrete) voice of yearning for happiness, which cannot otherwise be directly annunciated, let alone realized” (86).⁶⁶ Although musical codes do not usually appear in the text (as written notation or sound

itself, for example),⁶⁷ music's literary representations still conjure tangible images and forms suggestive of political realities. Edward Said's exposition on Thomas Mann's novel, Doktor Faustus notes the well-known use in this text of Schoenberg's twelve-tone system of music. This tonal system, Said remarks, becomes the basis for the protagonist's, Adrian Leverkühn's, *Lamentations* in twelve syllables, "For I die as a good and as a bad Christian," resulting in music that "has withdrawn from the social dialectic that produced it in the first place."⁶⁸ According to Said, "Mann's elaborate fable compresses the decline of sound into the decline of Germany itself" (515). The political dimensions of musical form illustrate Smyth's observation that music can indicate "truth beyond the ability to represent" (9). Not only live music, but also representations of music, contain more (often feeling or emotion) than can be contained on the page. Or to think about it in a slightly different way, music's "primary language" (that is, sound) lies dormant within the text. Although the possibility of enlivening it lies with the reader, should s/he happen to know from memory the melody evoked by textual reference, it is music's dormancy or latency that is suggestive of the inadequacy of language to fully express experience.

The signal to otherworldliness is heightened in music's literary form. Musical representations in literature unsettle a text by signifying an absence, yet participate in a text as a presence. On the one hand, references to music, its instruments, performances, and processes alert us to sounds and codes not representable in the text. They appear as so much text to be read on its surface, along with the rest of the words in the narrative, yet they intimate other histories, traditions, and social practices that must be dug out separately as distinct veins in the rich lode of the narrative. Embedded in the strata

underlying the textual surface, they array in a range of musical references from physics, the written score, and performances of music. Representations of music, then, necessarily identify absences (missing acoustics, notation, and sounds) that are marked only by textual traces. As such, they are available as proxies for other phenomena non-representable in text, such as double consciousness or simultaneous dimensions of experience. On the other hand, representations of music work against anonymity, symbolizing not only absence, but also an insistent difference. Musical representations are subject to a reader's "will to know" (in Etienne Balibar's sense of the term).⁶⁹ This would seem to imply that representations of music become a metaphor for victimization or violence toward a subject. However, music's expression in sound, more universal than linguistic discourse,⁷⁰ argues against its complete subsumption by literature (though partial domination is unavoidable given that words are the medium of literary expression) and for its recovery as an alternate or counter discourse.

* * *

Because this study may be misunderstood as strictly formalist in its endeavor to read musical form in a project of close reading, I want to take a moment to distinguish my work from the formalist methodologies that consider the intersections of word and music. I consider briefly two texts that judge, as I do, music as a social phenomenon indicative of the human order from which it emerges; however, in both cases, the link between form and content seems tenuous. In *Turning Points*, Marshall Brown compares musical structures and narrative forms to argue that musical form persists in a way that makes it useful to literary analysis, while Werner Wolf and others writing in a definitive volume on word and music studies⁷¹ present typological and functional applications of

music's formalistic structures to bridge the two media. Brown examines parallels between nineteenth-century music and literature with the intention of "show[ing] how the patterns of music history can help to organize our understanding of the more fluid patterns of literary history" (223).⁷² He recommends formal analysis of music to literary scholars because "the 'laws' of musical structure offer firmer guidelines to interpretation than the more approximate principles of verbal expression" (233). Perhaps most importantly, Brown argues with Charles Rosen that music is "the essential or inescapable carrier of our cultural determinants, precisely because it is free of the corrupting – or deconstructive – entanglements of words" (235). Brown's exemplars rely on binaries, either as evidence of "polarized form" or of its fragmentation in the twentieth century. For example, in the nineteenth century dissonance invokes consonance and developmental complications invoke resolution, while in the modernist period, a division emerges between internal and external sites, where "anything goes" inside a work, including dissonance, irresolution, atonality, and so on, while externally, the formal orthodoxy of the past persists as a foil to the experimentation within. Brown's main point is that musical form, being more governed and persistent than literary form, becomes indicative of "cultural code" (233), irrespective of the "message" or content of a work of art. Brown validates his formalist approach by citing the benefits to materialist critics, such as, Frederic Jameson of formalist arguments.⁷³ Form, and especially musical form, is according to Brown, a clean, pure measure, free of "influence," "common heritage," "shared problematic," or even a "same public" (233). However, in denying common social and cultural substance, Brown appears to undermine the further development of his argument; that is, formal analysis "unveils the birth of ideology out of the spirit of music"

(235). If we understand with Marx (which Brown invokes with Jameson) that ideology comprises “ruling ideas,” of the ruling class which “are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships” (172),⁷⁴ then ideology is, by definition, materially intertwined. A clue to the purity and insubstantiality that Brown wants to retain in his dialectic between the formal and the social resides in the word “spirit.” Brown acknowledges earlier in his text that spirit lives in the concrete embodiments of form (i.e., it is substance), and he ends with a dialectical reading of musical form: “form give[s] life and meaning to content, and content give[s] substance and expression to form” (267). However, the lightness of content in his interpretation might be seen as a clear bias towards musical form as a nearly untainted mode of social and cultural matter.

Conceptions of word and music studies seem to exacerbate the distance between form and content, between the social and the musical. There has been a tendency among these trans-disciplinary critics to get stalled at the point of technical categorization. Werner Wolf sums it well when he points to the further work to be done in identifying the social significance of a typology of musicalized literature and fiction: “important as the question is, **how** musico-literary intermediality is carried out and how its different forms can typologically be represented, the question **why** attempts at such an intermediality have been and are being made is no less important and merits our attention even in cases where not all technical aspects can be convincingly illuminated” (56, bold in original).⁷⁵ In the same volume, William E. Grim examines three forms – sonata form, leitmotif, and counterpoint – and concludes that certain critical claims about correspondence between musical and literary form must be treated skeptically, while

others have merit, depending upon “the intentions of the author, the musical referentiality of the content of the work of literature being examined, and the musical knowledge of the reader” (247).⁷⁶ Therefore, a connection between Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and the sonata form of the first movement of Beethoven’s *Pathétique Symphony* represents a strain on credibility, while James Joyce’s “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses* might more easily be understood as the implied counterpoint of a solo player shifting between high and low registers in a monovocal line, which is similar to the monologic of reading. In both illustrations – the nonworkable and workable – Grim studies, as Brown does, the connections between word and music at the level of the text (i.e. the link between writer/reader and text). My project does something different.

My study focuses on intertextual relations between music and its social milieu. I read musical form and its accompanying system of theories and practices as they are narrativized or structured *within* a literary work to examine the responses of literary consciousnesses to musical elements and forms, and I argue that these forms are suggestive to the imaginations of the literary subjects and influence their decisions in self-positioning and identity, in human interrelations and ethical stances, in political strategizing for community and national action. Even when music informs the construction of the literary work, it is in support of the conscious interaction between minds influenced by an ir- or new or rationality suggested by musical form or by bodies employed in the performance possibilities of musical practice.

In the introduction to the essays representing a life’s work, Edward Said criticizes the formalist approach of scholarship for its lack of engagement with lived realities and for its valorization of critical distance allied under the banner of “a general consensus

against historical experience” (xix).⁷⁷ In the same introduction, in an odd juxtaposition, Said also regrets the isolation of Western music from other cultural knowledge, noting his appreciation of music’s suggestiveness in terms of its “extraordinary disciplinary rigor, its performative possibilities, for a fascinating though sometimes arcane capacity to internalize, refer to, and go beyond its own history” (xxxii). This juxtaposition leads me to believe that it is not so much to the use of forms that Said objects, but to the distancing from historical experience that formalist approaches allow. Neither is it, I would argue, that he finds forms worn out or irrelevant, because he states his admiration for the way in which Toni Morrison takes on the project to “re-include, re-inscribe, re-define” the missing “Africanist persona” while making “no sentimental appeal to another perhaps more accurately representative literature, and no appeal either to a folk, or popular, or sub-literary nativist genre” (xxiii). Rather, Said takes issue with the underlying senses of entitlement, of tradition, and of freedom to ignore disruptions of war, racism, migration, dislocation (xxi) that formalist approaches intimate and allow. In conjunction with his acknowledgement of Western music’s positive influence, Said seems to be making a claim against critical formalism and *for* aesthetic forms *as experience*. This is the distinction I want to make in my work. It examines musical theories and forms – ornamentation, equal temperament tuning, jazz, fugues – but my focus is on how literary characters respond to and use these musical elements. In other words, I am studying the effects on individuals of aesthetic experience and I make generalizations about these observations in order to develop a critical approach that might be termed aesthetic humanism.

Do the universal principles of music theory, the physical demands of practicing an instrument, or the interactions among musicians and listeners stand on equal footing with the dislocation, oppression, and violence of imperial regimes? The answer is obviously no. However, I believe it is legitimate to consider experiences in the realm of Western musical practice and theory as evidence of residues of imperialism. Said makes the claim that “To speak of the canon [in literature] is to understand this process of cultural centralization, a direct consequence of imperialism and the globalism we still live with today.”⁷⁸ In other words, the dominance of Western music and its musical canon (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and the German “classical” composers) marks a privileging of a particular system that has had an impact on the cultural understandings of what constitutes “high” culture, what constitutes the proper venue for art, who gets included in its class of experts, and so on.

In some ways, musical ideologies are more insidious than other imperialist forms. Whereas literature in English, for example has varied immensely in style and genre, has become a discourse open to women and minority authors, and has been translated into multiple other languages, Western music has been less flexible. The foundational laws of tonality, operating as an “established generality” (629),⁷⁹ continue today to govern musical composition, despite their ostensible overthrow in the mid-twentieth century by Schoenberg’s twelve-tone technique. Even in this supposed coup, Adorno tells us, “Schoenberg displayed particular sensitivity in his relation to tonality” (636). Additionally, although there is some cross-fertilization among non-Western and Western music, resulting in hybrid genres of various sorts and “experimentations” with “orientalism” in Western music, the dominant paradigms for musical sound remain

Western. John Corbett cites an example in which Chinese composer, Tan Dun, scores his *Ghost Opera* (1994) for string quartet and nature sounds. The inter-cultural piece “interweaves a Chinese folk song and a Bach prelude, as well as text and live sound-effects created on the objects and instruments,” such as “bowed gongs and stones, water bowls, metal cymbals, a paper whistle, and a large paper installation” (180).⁸⁰ A Beijing audience heard the nature sounds as “exotic items much the way the pipa and folk melody function in a Western setting” (180). Corbett concludes that this example demonstrates “the dominance of Western classical norms – ‘proper’ materials for a string quartet to use, namely their violins, viola and cello – [...] at the same time as it slyly mocks the supposed Asianness of Tan Dun’s elemental objects; [...] Fragments of imperialist (exporting Western musical values through conservatory education) and colonialist (importing non-Western musical materials for use in Western art-music settings) ideologies are both found here” (180). Western musical norms, durable in part because of the orientalist tradition Said reveals and Corbett documents, are strongly residual into the 1990s. The very inescapability of these standards, however, makes possible their textual transcription into literary representations as orthodoxies against which individuals might respond.⁸¹

Western Music’s Literary History

The basis for Western music’s universalizing tendencies is both formal and historical. It not only conveys to its literary setting the conventional European forms and genres, such as fugue, sonata form, and tonality; but it also has a history of service to imperial powers. Britain, for example, has commissioned musical compositions for Empire Day celebrations, has exported “national” hymns for its colonial governments,

and has sent musical groups on tour to provide cohesion among the far points of the empire.⁸²

Literature has appealed to music for themes and structure earlier than the last decade of the twentieth century, and Western music has certainly been more than an interpreter of systems, whether it is of globalism or of imperialism. However, in considering two texts written earlier in the century, George DuMaurier's *Trilby* (actually written in 1898), Aldous Huxley's *Point Counterpoint* (1928), I want to suggest that Western music highlights the conditions of an imperial world in theme and in structure while remaining that element that sets individuals apart from society.

Trilby: Visuality Trumps Musicality

In *Trilby*, music-making is transgressive and subversive, but remains a privilege of definition and recognition by the upper classes. Trilby, an Irish girl, working as a figure model crosses paths with three young Englishmen spending a year beyond the bounds of English social convention in Parisian bohemia. She is of mixed class – her father is titled, but ruined by drink; her mother is a working class woman – and only one of many socially-suspect characters that drift through the flat. Another is the musician, Svengali, and his Gypsy violinist sidekick, Gecko.

Despite having titular recognition, Trilby is not the narrator of her story; rather the novel takes its perspective from the Englishmen, all painters, who are sympathetic and attracted to Trilby's beauty, especially as exemplified in her lovely-shaped ankle. Being visual artists, they are amused (not offended) by Trilby's tone-deaf singing (though they are certainly aware of her deficit) because her voice is encased in a lovely statuesque body. They also see deficiencies in Svengali's character in his shabbiness, unkempt and

dirty hair, ill-fitting clothes, and visible Jewishness, but he is tolerated because he plays piano exquisitely. Therefore, appearance secures for Trilby what musicality secures for Svengali, a place in a “bohemian” English society. Any possibility that either Trilby or Svengali might attain a more substantial rank is demonstrated clearly when the budding romance between the youngest of the three Englishmen, Little Billee, and Trilby is absolutely quashed by his mother, who rushes to the Paris studio expressly to intervene. Trilby leaves the relationship and Paris, understanding perfectly (even before mother arrives) her inadequacy for the young British gentlemen. While a half-caste heritage indicates the intangible insufficiencies of her class, her tuneless, grating voice evinces the same lack physically. However, when Trilby obtains, under the influence of Svengali’s mesmerism, (which submits to as salve for neuralgia in her eyes) a singing voice equal to her beauty and when Svengali retires from the performance stage, becoming simply her voice teacher, they are both viewed entirely differently in British society. When mesmerized, Trilby’s capacious, natural voice becomes the instrument of Svengali’s musical mind. Although his talents are considered “limited” (he plays Chopin, not Beethoven), his capabilities, relayed sweetly by Trilby, are highly appreciated as the songs of innocence by their audiences. All over Europe, audiences go crazy for her *Au Claire de la Lune* and her vocalizations of Chopin’s *Impromptu in A*. Trilby becomes a spectacular sensation, and although her followers often find her dumb and unresponsive (because mesmerized), she is a sought-after performer.

Under cover of a cult of celebrity, the novel stages an incorporation of class and racial difference into the heart of the bourgeois society via the mechanism of Western music. The beautiful, though fallen, Irish woman becomes the vehicle – literally –

through which a denigrated Jewishness enters British society. Trilby becomes the medium by which the suspect, irrational, non-visible musical mind (i.e., Svengali's) is communicated into the midst of English bourgeoisie by means of a specular, inspectable, beautiful body, verified by appearance to be good. Western music provides the means by which lower-class alien producers might transcend class barriers. The outward beauty and appeal of the harmonious, well-known melodies infiltrate the upper class consciousness, like the visible portion of Trilby's body (the ankle) hangs, as a painting, in the studio of *les trois Anglais*. Trilby's beauty and her musical façade hide from audiences the disciplinary scaffolding – the hours of exacting practice each day under the auspices of an entrancing mesmerism to produce the public diva, “La Svengali.” Her appearance also conceals a surreptitious permeation of foreign elements into high society.

In a novel of the late nineteenth century, this duplicity cannot hold. Svengali dies mid-concert, his gripping spell is broken, and Trilby becomes the object of ridicule when she squawks through a song, unable to remember any of her disciplined performance techniques, or even that she had learned how to sing. Unlike late twentieth-century literature, where Western music becomes the forum in which society and individuals commingle, in *Trilby*, Western music remains representative of differences that might penetrate, but which can never be permanently incorporated into, the dominant social sphere where high culture reigns. In this late Victorian, early modernist text, music marks its practitioners as foreign, alien, and other.

Point Counterpoint: Musical Enlightenment Humanism

Aldous Huxley's novel *Point, Counterpoint* both thematizes music and uses it to define the novel's narrative structures. Like musical counterpoint, the novel is an

interweaving of multiple, independent voices in varying registers, including first-person and third-person narratives, free indirect discourse, epistolary forms, foreign languages, poetry, notebook entries, and, very specifically, marked periodic silences. Huxley develops a complex of binary relationships existing simultaneously and multiply – in English society (upper and lower classes, science and art, gender differences, colonial and local experiences) and in the realm of ideas (aristocracy and Communism, moral absolutism and immorality, naturalism and cultured society) — resulting in an ultimate violent clash among them. The evidence in support of a reading of the structure as music lies in the novel itself. Philip Quarles sketches in his notebook an outline for a musical novel, specifically *not* the symbolist “musicalization of fiction” which “subordinate[es] sense to sound,” but rather what he calls “Another way:”

The novelist can assume the god-like creative privilege and simply elect to consider the events of the story in their various aspects – emotional, scientific, economic, religious, metaphysical, etc. He will modulate from one to the other – as, from the aesthetic to the physico-chemical aspect of things, from the religious to the physiological or financial. But perhaps this is a too tyrannical imposition of the author’s will. Some people would think so. But need the author be so retiring? I think we’re a bit too squeamish about these personal appearances nowadays. (350)⁸³

Through the figure of Quarles, Huxley describes his compositional process. In the mind of the character, whose notebook we are reading, Huxley writes that Quarles imagines not only “one novelist inside [his] novel” but also “a second inside his [...] a third inside the novel of the second” (*PC* 351). What we, as readers, are to understand is that the novel we are reading, with its interweaving storylines in different registers of discourse is the musical novel Quarles describes. The novel expresses its array of class divisions, political positions, philosophies, gendered attitudes, and lifestyle choices contrapuntally.

The novel uses Western music to mediate these complexities through a structuring principle of counterpoint, which in Huxley's formulation, given the title *Point Counterpoint*, identifies a necessary preconditional "point." If musical counterpoint is seen as the "art of combining [two] or more independent melodic lines,"⁸⁴ which oftentimes develops its second, third, and fourth lines all revolving around a "pre-existing monophonic line" called the *cantus firma* (505),⁸⁵ the novel might be seen to pose universal humanism as its "cantus firma." The central "point" of the novel holds that the earth is composed of a "complex and multitudinous [...] human fugue" whose "eighteen hundred million parts" form a world, which has "beauty (in spite of squalor and stupidity), [...] profound goodness (in spite of all the evil), [...] *oneness* (in spite of such bewildering diversity) [...] a beauty, a goodness, a unity that no analysis dispels, but of whose reality the spirit is from time to time suddenly and overwhelmingly convinced" (*PC* 27-8, italics added). That is, the novel conceives the world in terms of a single organizing principle, despite its multiple binaries and its array in the form of musical polyphony.

Even when the novel strays into wildly divergent and contradictory social, political, and even cultural perspectives, it insists humans must be true to their natures. A series of interdependent plot lines culminates in a final act of violence and irony. The disillusioned English aristocrat, Spandrell, murders Webley, the head of a reactionary movement that aims to restore the aristocracy. Spandrell coerces the lab technician, Illidge, a socially inept, politically marginalized Communist, into assisting him with the murder. Several socially laden plot lines conspire to produce the conditions for murder: 1) the immorality of Webley's affair with Philip Quarles' wife that unexpectedly provides

opportunity for the murder (ironically, an upperclassman against one of his own); 2) the economic demands that mean Spandrell's mother must remarry after Spandrell's father dies in order to maintain her social status (instigating Spandrell's "self" hatred), and 3) the political and class discontent that Spandrell exploits in bullying Illidge. All are reconciled in Spandrell's consciousness. The bizarre, spontaneous, and random act of murder invokes a return to a "universal" sense of honor and integrity. Although the two murderers seem to get away with it, the "essential horror" of the act besets Spandrell's mind. He ensures his own death sentence by "leaking" to the police the whereabouts of the murderer (and then he plants himself at that location). Before he is shot, he seeks solace in a Beethoven Quartet, which he wants to see as "proof [that...] God existed," (*PC* 507); however, the novel insists on another truth. Through the artistic-philosopher, Rampion, the spokesman for naturalistic, humanistic reason throughout, the text suggests that the music which Spandrell becomes desperate to believe in is an integral part of human bodily form, and like God, it is "a quality of actions and relations – a felt, experienced quality" (*PC* 502). Thus, the novel asserts the theoretical nature of both music and God, rendering neither suitable as blueprints for practical lived experience.

The character most reliant on music in its theoretical form, Philip Quarles, the plotter of the musical novel, is the most emotionally and intellectually detached character, often disappearing from the social milieu (and withdrawing from the text of the novel) into the (sub) text of his notebooks. Therefore, unlike the late twentieth-century novels, Western music in this modern text is not a paradigm for movement, performance, or plan for eventual political action, but rather it is the spirit of an omnipresent humanism, which multiple discourses intertwine to define.

Trajectory of the Text

The literary texts I read have no a priori claims to the label of postcolonial. *An Equal Music* by Indian author, Vikram Seth and *Disgrace* by South African, J.M. Coetzee might be considered postcolonial by way of the authors' country of origin, but in both cases, the novels' characterizations and settings are national. The Seth novel is a portrait of Europeans in Europe, while *Disgrace*, which features other (racial and gender) tyrannies, does not thematize historical imperial and colonial subjugation. Jane Campion's film and screenplay, *The Piano*, strikes a mid-position between the Seth and Coetzee novels: the film features European colonizers, rather than the Maori colonized, but in the colonial space of a mid-1800's New Zealand. Daniel Mason's *The Piano Tuner*, set in British-occupied Burma of the 1880s, might be considered postcolonial in its geography and temporality, but the author's American nationality queers the claim. The remainder of the texts I select to study can rightly claim ethnic minority status. Bernard MacLaverty's *Grace Notes* features a Catholic protagonist in Northern Ireland; Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* relates the black Scottish experience that is her own racial and national heritage. Toni Morrison and Rita Dove write from and of American ethnic experience. Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam* seems perhaps the most far a field from any petition to be read for postcolonial insubordination, given its discussion of firmly British music, media, and politics. Yet, I assert that novels and poems encompassing Western music as theme or structure might be read for their character of resistance, a resistance that specifically works from within dominant systems. As aesthetic elements, representations of music explicitly deploy "itineraries" of potential individual performance, social existence, and political action against the implicit "map" of the

Western musical system that functions as a parallel universal order to the discursive rationality of the literary realm. Music describes a dimension of aesthetic autonomy within the texts that propose to literary and reader consciousness intimations of other worlds, founded in reference to the physical and mental worlds of music (performance, scripted scores, musical convention, daily practice, aural conception).

The works that I study do not address histories from a traditionally postcolonial perspective, by which I mean, from the standpoint of the colonized. And yet, music might be seen as a “revolutionary” incursion on the part of literature, in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari propose in their description of “minor literature.” These critics propose reading the three typical forms in which Kafka wrote – letters, short stories, and novels – as “deterritorializing”⁸⁶ not just literary forms, but also the represented human states. Deterritorializing destabilizes dominant categories of knowledge and the process of acquiring knowledge. As such, Deleuze and Guattari’s strategy for reading literature as minor or revolutionary has much in common with the reading of postcoloniality into literature by way of its representations in music. My point is that a text incorporating representations of music is an expression that shatters [narrative and lingual] forms, and like minor literatures, must break with “the order of things” (591), thus demanding and permitting a new and restructured content.

Deleuze and Guattari read Kafka’s writings as expressions of desire that both escape the social milieu of their writing and participate in it. For example, Kafka’s letters are read by these critics as sites of duality (the speaker and the spoken to) that inscribe couples in dialogue, who avoid legal bonds of marriage by endlessly displacing binding marital pacts with writing. His short stories are cited as expressions of “animal-

becoming,” which delineate a process of identity formation that is always an escape from subjectivity and an alternative state beyond even humanness. His novels are seen as depictions of “machinelike organizations” that transform into socio-political formations, such as bureaucracies, describing ever-changing movements and interactions that become in the process “unfinishable” texts. In short, Deleuze and Guattari read the typical forms in atypical modes, suggesting that, unlike major literatures whose forms are predetermined and thus vulnerable to certain expectations for content, Kafka’s “expression precedes the contents and is their precondition” (605).

I argue that each chapter of the following chapters presents literatures that in their engagement with music provide a means to unsettle dominant forms and conventional reading strategies. Music licenses the reading of the anchoring texts for their revolutionary and innovative perspectives; inscriptions of Western music open a text in a way akin to the world-shattering views made possible by postcolonial theory and study. By analogy, this study keeps at heart the lived experience of postcolonial histories that inform and underlie the texts considered here.

* * *

The study progresses in two parts from political strategies of engagement to those of disengagement. The texts in Part One demonstrate how representations of music are taken up by protagonists for the explicit purpose of expressing national, religious, gender, and racial identities. Part Two addresses ways in which representations of music become tools of resistance, demarcating the powers of audition and canonicity to contest culturally dominant aspects of society. The trajectory of this dissertation reads less like a murder mystery with plot, climax, and resolution and more like a travelogue, depicting a

series of encounters, each a self-contained episode that contributes to the arc of adventure. Each chapter formulates a unique reading of the musical traces in the texts to extend the postcolonial theories suggested in the particular deployment of music readable in the juxtaposed works.

National formations of various styles of government and with various levels of success have been primary and critical tools against imperialism. By the 1990s, the efforts of the national movements of the 1960s and 70s, though successful in overthrowing the colonial powers, have been castigated for their failures to re-establish new, viable national entities. The rehearsal of the failures, which includes the inability to provide basic necessities of security and food, oppression of certain genders, religions, and classes, and the lack of participation in political processes,⁸⁷ misses the point, according to critics, such as Tamara Sivanandan, Neil Lazarus, and Edward Said. The responsibility of global corporations must be taken into account, according the Lazarus. These critics point to the disruption of indiscriminate colonial geographies,⁸⁸ U.S. political intervention and the grab of resources by global corporations,⁸⁹ and the difficult, slow process of re-envisioning histories and communities in terms of a resistance that carries within it the scars of the “culture of empire.”⁹⁰ Chapter two, “Inventions on a Theme: Noise and Ornamentation in (De) Structuring a Nation” considers novels which examine two modes of national formation – one isolationist, one expansive. Ian McEwan’s *Amsterdam* considers the neglected site of English nationalism, denuded by decolonization, where imperial attitudes persist. The novel depicts the mutual destruction of the old-guard in music and media, composer Clive Linley and news editor, Vernon Haliday after they become pawns of commodity culture. I argue that *Amsterdam* presents

an allegory of British imperialism taken to an extreme solipsism, isolated from cross-cultural exchange, and enervated by capital interests. I juxtapose this portrait of an enervated metropolitan center with Bernard MacLaverty's *Grace Notes*, which develops a new cosmopolitan nationalism. I contend that the novel's poetics of ornamentation deploys practices of relation, elaboration, and middle-positioning suggested in the compositions of protagonist, Catherine Anne McKenna. The novel sees women as agents for change as Catherine throws off her father's blind religious faith and her boyfriend's destabilizing Englishness to create new internationally-inflected bodies (her daughter and her composition) that become forces for peace in Northern Ireland.

Chapter three, "Inventing Identity: Improvising Subjectivity" explores the processes of establishing personal sites of alterity and challenging imperial definitions of identity that restrict categories of personal expression. I argue that Rita Dove's volume of poetry, *Grace Notes* and Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet* contest singular and imposed identities through diasporic subjectivities, read through a typology of jazz improvisation as developing progressively. Dove contests any designation as "minority" or "other" through the European and African-American conceptions of grace notes and blue notes. Reading selected poems, including "Silos," "Ars Poetica," "The Island Women of Paris" and the construction of the volume itself, I locate identities that refuse, like blue notes and blues progressions, closure or foreclosure, whether by family, by profession, by nationalism, or by genre. Kay's novel also examines constraints on identity not only by national heritage, but also by socially constructed categories of race and of gender. For one generation, jazz becomes a means of expressing covert realities of a transgendered, bi-racial, dual-national body suppressed by dominant binary constructions of gender,

race, and nation; for the next, the musical strategies of improvisation learned by even the non-musical reveal a basis for diasporic identity that crosses socially defined categories.

Chapter four, “Jazz in Translation: Developing a Racial Politics” examines the necessary processes for emancipating memory from historical suppression. I argue that Toni Morrison’s *Jazz* translates jazz-style and culture into an “anti-narrative” novel, interrupted by the “musical” intrusions of repetition, counterpoint, and modulation. The result is a text that persistently refuses closure, continuing through a series of episodic variations that subvert an imperialist novel form. Morrison’s *Jazz* presents alternate histories through the recovery of lost memories that seek to undo the dominant narratives of the past, thus providing discourses from black culture supporting hybrid identities within black community.

Notions of suppressed histories continue in the novels that anchor Chapter five, “Defying Disciplinarity: The Socio-Economy of Listening.” In texts that grapple with contending conceptions of imperialism, music-making both sharpens the view of universalizing disciplinary practices and proposes models of individual resistance. Jane Campion’s *The Piano* argues that the piano itself summons systems of socially-informed disciplinary practices that govern schemas of piano-playing and listening; further, these schema differ markedly between imperial metropolitan centers and the colonies. When Ada McGrath is sent with her daughter and piano from Scotland to New Zealand, the social and personal use values associated with the piano are disrupted, I argue, by unexpected entry in the rough and ruthless market economy of an on-going colonial land grab. Only by establishing intensely ethical auditory practices are imperial value systems overthrown and “postcolonial” systems of value instituted. In a reverse trajectory, Daniel

Mason's *The Piano Tuner* traces the declining market value of the instrument as it travels into colonial Burma. Dedicated to the technical discipline of the piano's equal temperament tuning system, Edgar Drake learns the weakness of a system that insists on inflexible rule. I argue that, unlike in *The Piano* where Ada transforms the scenario of listening, Edgar is unable to retain control over the ways the piano, and even himself, are heard and interpreted. Stripped of value by the manipulations of the British commander and the British military, Edgar abandons his attachments to Britain to remain in the colony.

Chapter six, "Defusing the Canon: Developing an Ethics of the Ridiculous," argues for the formation of a counter-canon through music that informs literary consciousnesses in ways that contest the binaries of a Romanticist canon with its particular hierarchies of power and ethical suppositions. Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music* instructs in temporary states of deafness employed by violinist Michael Holmes that that permit the incorporation of new strategies of performance, while insisting upon the primacy of dominant systems for the majority of circumstances. In contrast, *Disgrace* refuses the option of continuing to work within canonic parameters and, instead, offers options for exiting the systematicity of canonic influence. I argue that the protagonist, David Lurie, comes to the painful knowledge that a life long pursuit of cultural borrowing from English Romanticism becomes a debilitating weakness incapable of sustaining the ego in the seismic political paradigm shift that has occurred in contemporary, anti-apartheid South Africa.

Conclusion

In the introduction to their provocatively entitled anthology, *Dangerous Liaisons*, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat⁹¹ insist on the value of a “contrapuntal juxtaposition” of multiculturalism in the U.S. context and postcolonialism in the international sphere. This phrase – contrapuntal juxtaposition – encapsulates in two words the motivation for my dissertation. On the one hand, my work is contrapuntal in its interdisciplinarity. Revising the critical successes of musicologists, such as Susan McClary and Jeffrey Kallberg, who use feminist and genre theories to interrogate the gender politics readable in musical structures, harmonic progressions, and tonal qualities,⁹² I employ theories and practices of Western music to read the cultural, social, and political strategies for subject positioning and human interrelations employed by late-twentieth century novels, film, and poetry. Insisting on charting its own referentiality separate and distinct from language-based allusions, music in literature multiplies and intensifies the hermeneutic possibilities for literary texts. On the other hand, my study juxtaposes American ethnic and postcolonial writings. I use a contested scope for postcolonial literatures in order to focus on sites that might be considered “mature” in their postcoloniality and to find conditions of entrenched and deeply conflicting ideological positions. I contend that the elements of Western music theory and practice become thematic, structural, and analytical tools in minority literatures (and in my own critique) by offering a guide to non-antagonistic forms of resistance because they have the advantage of being viewed simultaneously as ideologically dominant and hermeneutically subversive. Musical elements provide a means to critique dominant cultural ideologies and social constructions from within European Enlightenment, of which it is a product.

Finally, I also find an imperative to juxtapose U.S. ethnic and postcolonial writings in the current world situation where discovering connections to combat the intolerance and entrenched oppositional attitudes of our world today prompts my study in the vein of *Dangerous Liaisons*: to provide a “conceptual framework that refuses to separate the linked histories of race as well as the contemporary coimplication of communities within and across the borders of nation-states” (2). Continuing, the editors illustrate the necessity for intellectual exchange on concerns within national boundaries and beyond them: “In a world where Third World immigrants to the United States can participate in racist discourses and practices toward U.S. Native American and African-American communities, where U.S. racial ‘minorities’ might join U.S. imperial wars, and where Third World national elites become complicit with the new world order being created by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, it is impossible to discuss issues of nation and gender in national isolation” (2-3). It is my contention that an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural dissertation contributes to the discourses entreating social justice and to the practices that locate the necessary, tactical universals necessary to its accomplishment.

My dissertation argues that musical elements act as guides to individual subject formation in socially interactive situations of the most entrenched and orthodox conditions. I use the term “guide” purposefully to suggest that the musical elements are active, pedagogical tools, used by late twentieth-century postcolonial and American ethnic authors as instructional models of human processes and of human states of being. Musical elements from the categories of ornamentation, improvisation, intonation, counterpoint, compositional style, and musical genre, work as cultural indicators of both

conventional and radical behaviors and relations. They participate in the literary works examined in this study as independent elements of thought, accommodating of, yet separable from the organic thought of the human actors (characters and readers) involved in these texts. Their social histories confirm culturally derived conventions, while their social development and non-literary references refute or challenge the very expectations they establish; the authors identified in this dissertation use musical elements alternately as modes of hegemonic dominance and of resistance to power.

PART ONE:
CONSTRUCTIONS OF ALTERITY

Chapter 2: **Inventions on a Theme: Noise and Ornamentation in (De) Structuring a Nation**

Introduction

Theodor Adorno asserts that twentieth-century (indeed all) music reflects the society of which it is a product; this remains true, he suggests, even as its entanglement with the “Culture Industry” alienates it from humanity. According to Adorno, the contradictory impulse means, on the one hand, that “No matter where music is heard today, it sketches in the clearest possible lines the contradictions and flaws which cut through present-day society” (391).¹ On the other hand, even though “the total absorption of both musical production and consumption by the capitalistic process” conceals human labor and cloaks hegemonic conventions, the resulting “alientation [...] is itself a matter of social fact and socially produced” (392). Adorno insists music has an ability to obtain some measure of distance from capitalistic influence by asserting its autonomy, specifically by refusing to disguise its subsumption as commodity, and rather, owning its complicity with an “administered world,” and thus gaining a right to social critique. He asserts that “music is able to do nothing but portray within its own structure the social antinomies which are also responsible for its own isolation” (393), but he also holds that “the antinomies of its own formal language” offer means for expressing “the exigency of the social condition” and for summoning “change through the coded language of suffering” (393). In other words, by producing in its content and formal structures the socioeconomic realities of the world and by reflecting the influences of ideology, music obtains capacity for response to these conditions.

Pursuing Adorno's notions to an extreme, Jacques Attali asserts that music "reflects the manufacture of society. It constitutes the audible waveband of the vibrations and signs that make up society. *An instrument of understanding, it prompts us to decipher a sound form of knowledge*" (4, italics in the original).² Moreover, Attali suggests that in reading music, one can know the *future* of socio-economic developments: "In the codes that structure noise and its mutations we glimpse a new theoretical practice and reading: *establishing relations between the history of people and the dynamics of the economy on the one hand, and this history of the ordering of noise in codes on the others; predicting the evolution of one by the forms of the other; combining economics and aesthetics; demonstrating that music is prophetic and that social organization echoes it*" (5, italics in the original). In short, Attali promotes music as a medium of speculative theory. In a foreword to Attali's essay, Frederic Jameson outlines the value of Attali's insights for students of a global world: Attali identifies a "systematic interrelationship" of politics, economics, technology, and culture producing an instrument of analysis that usefully "stimulates us to search out the future in the present itself and to see the current situation not merely as a bundle of static and agonizing contradictions, but also as the place of emergence of new realities of which we are as yet only dimly aware" (xiii-xiv).³ In this chapter, I argue that two twentieth-century novels, Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam* and Bernard MacLaverly's *Grace Notes*, produce in their representations of music means to reflect the socio-economic conditions from which music emerges and to predict the kind of world that is to come. Although both manifestation and forecast take place within in the worlds of the novels, the literary realms are strongly associated with real world conditions. Thus we as readers are able to see the continuing effects of colonialism in

depicted nations, England and Northern Ireland, respectively, and to surmise potential outcomes in postcolonial conditions on the national configurations of a region still grappling with racial and intercultural relations today.

Putting these two novels into conversation allows us to examine two possible developments in national psyches: one narcissistic and the other humane. These novels identify real choices for postcolonial nations, and further, describe in the characterizations and actions of literary figures the processes for elaborating a national identity, effective at individual and collective levels. Specifically, I argue that each novel presents a poetics, of sorts, which sets out a systematic theory of musical composition that might be read as a set of guidelines for constructing a national emblem. I insist on “poetics-of-sorts” since, as we shall see, McEwan’s musical protagonist, Clive Linley, despite every effort at composition, follows a model that can only, in the end, be labeled an “a-poetics”⁴ whose end-product is noise, while MacLaverty’s protagonist, Catherine Anne McKenna, composes according to theories that might be conceived as a “poetics” of ornamentation which produces an innovative composition. The (a)poetics in both its negative and positive formulations might be analyzed according to a similar set of principles:⁵ 1) nature of the artistic works, including kinds and forms, 2) governing principles of the artistic devices and structures, 3) its distinctive functions, 4) the conditions of existence, and 4) its effects on readers/listeners. This poetics as it relates to the protagonist’s compositional processes and musical works will include an investigation of specifics, such as musical inspiration and influence, music philosophy and theory, purposes to which the composition will be put, and the inflections of the composer’s personality.⁶ Analysis by this poetics will help us see that creative processes

absorb, consciously and unconsciously, the material resources and social conditions of the composing environment, which in turn fashion subject positions, reflect the social conceptions of late twentieth-century postcolonial nations, and offer insights into futures for England and Northern Ireland, dystopic and utopic, respectively.

Reading the representations of music in these two novels discloses strategies – and the failure or success of their implementation – that predict the cultural health of England and Northern Ireland, as these nations are represented in the novels. On one hand, *Amsterdam* relegates creativity to essential genius, appropriates difference in the service of convention, and denies women a role in developing a national culture. On the other, *Grace Notes* sees even the natural as artistic, employs difference in the service of hybridity, and puts women in the forefront of cultural cultivation. To look at it in a slightly different way, McEwan’s novel examines an England that in fostering interior colonial conditions fails to recognize the opportunity for making something new from what Rushdie identifies as the “[m]élange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that” (394),⁷ the “mongrelization” that is England in its postcolonial formation. Having become a place of hybridity in which minority culture might interrupt “nationalism’s imagined community,” which by necessity “stretches back to antiquity” (186),⁸ England and its inhabitants in the novel nonetheless attempt to stitch together a seamless narrative of English greatness, self-sufficiency, and power. The novel’s protagonists, composer Clive Linley and editor, Vernon Halliday, though of liberal political persuasions, haunt the old, familiar places (i.e., the natural landscape and the family scandal) and thus fail to generate anything fresh musically or journalistically. In contrast, MacLaverty’s novel unlocks decades-long political violence and sectarian antagonisms by deploying a series

of postcolonial strategies, including recontextualizing an emblem of “the Troubles,” the Lambeg drum; emphasizing international relations, thus denying the primacy of British-leaning Protestantism over an Irish-leaning Catholicism. Musically, *Amsterdam* describes the outcome of a masculinist, insular, traditional composition process that defines a failing British nationalism, while *Grace Notes* demonstrates the success of a feminist elaboration, inflected by difference from Irish national culture that suggests a new political scenario for Northern Ireland.

The Social Milieu of Millennial Britain

Postcolonial studies have largely focused on former colonies; however, we might understand the postcolonial condition as one that equally affects the metropolitan centers of imperialism’s genesis. Ruth Frankenberg and Lata Mani define Britain as a site where postcolonialism “signals [the] loss of most, though not all, former colonies” (293).⁹ They note that “N. Ireland [and] the appearance on British landscapes of a significant number of people from the former colonies”¹⁰ complicates any sense of a complete disruption of colonialism given that the “‘Other’ [is] no longer geographically distanced, but within, and over time significantly shaping [the] landscape and culture.” Frankenberg’s and Mani’s citing of a postcolonial Britain establishes a framework for examining the continuing effects of colonial discourses and practices in millennial England and Northern Ireland.

In a 1985 essay for British radio, Salman Rushdie interrogates the basis of an assumed superiority by nationalist, white Britons over dark immigrant populations within Britain herself. As if to compensate the failures and loss of empires elsewhere, Rushdie suggests, British authorities had, “import[ed] a new Empire, a new community of subject

peoples of whom they think, and with whom they can deal, in very much the same way as their predecessors' thought of and dealt with 'the fluttered folk and wild', the 'new-caught, sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child', who made up, for Rudyard Kipling, the White Man's Burden,¹¹ and creating in England proper what E.P. Thompson (as Rushdie notes) identifies as "the last colony."

This "last colony," now thoroughly multicultural, has its echo in the real colonial polity of Northern Ireland. There, according to Declan Kiberd, a majority Protestant population, still supported by England, "consider this [the mid-1990s] a time less for self-scrutiny than for self-assertion" (647).¹² Feeling under siege, Kiberd suggests, Northern Ireland's republicans fear that to reform Northern Ireland "would be in effect to destroy it" given that it is "constructed on ritual discrimination" and thus "unsalvageable" (648). Violence, based on sectarian dynamics of the early twentieth century when "constituencies were gerrymandered to copper-fashion Protestant supremacy [and] discrimination in the allocation of jobs and homes kept Catholics in the position of second-class citizens" (415) persisted into the 1990s. John Brannigan suggests the country has come to signify "sectarian murder, urban terror, an atrophied politics in which divided communities locked together in hatred wage violence upon one another for the sake of stale national allegiances, and latterly, a long precarious 'peace process,' of stops and starts, threats and quibbles, demands and suspensions" (141).¹³ The divisions between white and dark races, heritage and assimilation, a "people" and the diasporas, majority and minority populations produce struggle from below for space and voice against the assumptions of power and privilege from above.

As a last colony, Britain (in both English and Northern Irish variations) is haunted by past imperialisms. That is, media, literature, public institutions, education, memories, immersed in imperial experience, inform current attitudes, opinions, and actions of Britain's citizens. Frankenburg notes, in the autobiographical section of her essay with Mani that "in my own and most likely, my white compatriots' subject formation, a tangle of images and practices, colonial and 'postcolonial', from the relatively benign to the brutal, are jostling for position. [...] The white subject, in short, remains enamoured of colonial imagery long after the heyday of direct rule." Moreover, "white, Western 'postcolonial' subjects are still interpellated by classical colonialism itself" (298-9). Identification, even subconsciously, with the imperial greatness of a past British Empire licenses the acceptance, or simply ignorance, of social inequalities and injustices.

Entrenched attitudes of supremacy among whites and Protestants foster the institution of "subcolonies" within Britain's borders. Paul Gilroy observes that the capitulation to societal division occurs, simultaneously with a "mysterious evacuation of Britain's postcolonial conflicts from national consciousness" (89).¹⁴ Military interventions from the Suez to the Falklands are forgotten, he suggests, in favor of a national image built on the victories of World War II: The unity of anti-Nazism replaces in British imagination the brutalities of colonial aggression and the more recent fears of being overrun by immigrants. The height of colonial expansion and imperial greatness combine with the morality of an anti-Hitler righteousness to form a seductive national conception difficult to dismiss though its historical basis is more than a half-century in the past. Gilroy warns that England continues to inhabit this imperial imaginary at a significant cost: "Repressed and buried knowledge of the cruelty and injustice that recur

in diverse accounts of imperial administration [...] creates a discomfiting complicity. Both are active in shaping the hostile responses to strangers and settlers and in constructing the intractable political problems that flow from understanding immigration as being akin to war and invasion” (94). Gilroy understands England as caught between a past of colonial brutality visited on its current immigrants and a yet-undetermined future in which (he envisions) England might embrace a national ethos of multiculturalism. Gilroy identifies England’s state as one of “postcolonial melancholia” – “dominated by an inability even to face, never mind actually mourn, the profound change in circumstances and moods that followed the end of the empire and consequent loss of imperial prestige” (90). Somewhat surprisingly, he finds in postcolonial inheritance an avenue out of the self-centered melancholia, self-conscious defensiveness, and narcissistic fantasies of omnipotence (99). He calls upon England to make use of its familiarity with, if not acceptance of, its hybrid culture and its “postcolonial counterhistory” (147) to establish a nation focused on the live-and-let-live attitudes marking what he wants to call “conviviality” and on a “planetarity” of multicultural interactions, and to establish these attitudes and interactions as the norm for society at local and worldly levels.

England’s melancholic national consciousness has resonances with Brannigan’s description of Northern Ireland as in the “condition of the interregnum” (142).¹⁵ The term “interregnum,” borrowed from Gramsci, describes the state of suspension in Northern Ireland creating a crisis which “consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born” [Gramsci qtd. in Brannigan, 142]. However, since as Brannigan notes, no resolution either in favor of aligning with Britain or in joining a United Ireland

is forthcoming, not deciding and permanent suspension become options for continuation. Rather than allying territorially with one larger land mass or another, Northern Ireland's political conferences, such as the North-South Ministerial Council or the British-Irish Council might lay the groundwork for a new model of fluid modernity. Like Gilroy, Brannigan suggests making the most of existing national conditions; that is, he sees "the exemplary 'bad' modernity of Northern Ireland's sectarian conflict may yet be instrumental in ushering in a new age of plural and hybrid identifications which have ramifications far beyond" its borders (143). Brannigan proposes seizing the opportunity laid out in the Belfast agreement of 1998, which offers "an invitation to imagine new cultural narratives of Northern Irish society" (144). In turn, he says, this new capacity in literature might prompt a rethinking of a political environment "in which the Northern Irish imaginary is no longer locked in the agon of empire" (English 10).¹⁶ In other words, the peace process while negotiating the binaries of imperial politics, nonetheless, provides space for invention of new modes of inter-relationship. Both Gilroy and Brannigan allude to opportunities within Britain's current postcolonial condition, despite past and ongoing violence and injustice. Both critics advocate a political *carpe diem* to transform the cultural multitude into a fully functional multiculturalism.

In what follows, I identify in *Amsterdam* and in *Grace Notes* the various components of an a-poetics of noise and a poetics of ornamentation employed as compositional processes, which produce artworks comprising both intentional and unintentional reflections of national social conditions of the protagonists' respective nations. I argue that the novels' poetics instruct – one by negative example and the other by positive – literary and real consciousnesses in the methods of constructing a vibrant

national identity. The components of such a construction are summed up in what Paul Gilroy terms “conviviality”¹⁷: a site of emancipatory interruptions and possibilities (146) where “translation, principled internationalism” (8) and cosmopolitanism are strategies employed in support of “agonistic, planetary humanism capable of comprehending the universality of our elemental vulnerability to the wrongs we visit upon each other” (4), where “a counterhistory of cultural relations and influences” might produce “a new understanding of multicultural Europe” (146), and where “‘race’ is stripped of meaning and racism, as it fades, becomes only an aftereffect of long-gone imperial history” (150). Given that in both England and Northern Ireland, legacies of colonialism unexpectedly provide material conditions for a new internationalism, these countries might develop postcolonial solutions for a new ethics of multiculturalism. I argue that representations of musical practices investigated by these novels suggest a poetics of composition suitable for inventing the outlines of such a national identity and its ethic.

The Novels as Allegories

Colonial logic, as identified above, informs the novels’ engagement with changing constructions of national identity in its cultural aspects. McEwan’s *Amsterdam* identifies Englishness with a culture of death. The label, “Amsterdam,” for his novel about England becomes a shorthand for the mutual suicide pact toward which editor and composer inexorably move, resulting vicariously in the ruin of a conservative politician, and by implication, in the decay of the nation. In contrast, MacLaverty’s *Grace Notes* curbs English culture by recontextualizing it within a matrix of secular and international influences. I argue that *Amsterdam* depicts the enervation of English national culture brought on by an increasingly concentric isolation; *Grace Notes* insists upon the

invigoration of British culture as part of a multiplicity of cultures existing in productive tension within Northern Ireland. In short, I am suggesting these novels be read allegorically.

According to his editors, Frederic Jameson's examinations of allegory are part of his schema for cognitive mapping. The allegorical structures of a work, that is its one-on-one correspondences between its literary elements and its abstractions, are present to some extent in all works, though complicated beyond simple association in others.¹⁸

Although Jameson famously declared allegory as an inescapable, patent feature of Third-World literature (320),¹⁹ he also comments on first-world literature in the same essay,²⁰ specifically noting the unconscious and aesthetic effects that produce what is more overtly allegorical in third-world texts. For example, Jameson notes, the cry from Conrad's Kurtz ("The Horror! the horror!") "recontains precisely that horror by transforming it into a rigorously private and subjective 'mood,' which can only be designated by recourse to an aesthetic of *expression* – the unspeakable, unnamable inner feeling, whose external formulation can only designate it from without, like a symptom" (321). His formulations of private expression converted to aesthetic expression support my own readings of representations of music as mappings of literary and national consciousness.

Amsterdam particularly lends itself to allegorical reading. It might be subtitled *Death of an Imperial City*, detailing as it does the decline of London's cultural and political institutions through capitalist corruption. The novel begins with one death and ends with three others. Molly Lane, reluctant wife of media mogul, George Lane, dies suddenly, her funeral attended by three previous lovers, composer, Clive Linley, editor,

Vernon Halliday, and politician, Julian Garmony. As a “restaurant critic, gorgeous wit, and photographer, the daring gardener, who had been loved by the foreign secretary and could still turn a perfect cartwheel at the age of forty-six” (4),²¹ Molly had independence and power; she was sexy, fit, and reflected (in photos, in conversation, and in taste) the men she courted. The novel evokes images of national decline in its cultural and political registers brought on by reliance on, and excesses of, what Jameson calls late capitalism. With no aspect of society free of manipulation by the labor-capitalist system, aspects of culture previously defined by use value are absorbed into unrelenting capitalist exchange. In the novel, such a transformation is signaled by Molly’s degeneration after she marries and moves into the mansion of the capitalist. Additionally, recalling Gilroy’s descriptions of postcolonial England as a “baffled” nation dealing with “intrusion by immigrants, incompatible blacks, and fascinating, threatening strangers” (*PM* 119), Molly loses not only facility with the English language, but more seriously “the loss of control of bodily function and with it all sense of humor, and then the tailing off into vagueness interspersed with episodes of ineffectual violence and muffled shrieking” (*A* 4). In both fiction and history, a core Englishness disintegrates in the face of (multi-) lingual incompetence, racial violence; noisy remonstrations against national fragmentation simply worsen national divisions, widening the gap between unrepentant ultra-nationalism and remorse over “feelings of hostility and hatred” (*PM* 105).

Clive’s response to the death of his muse is a concerted withdrawal from society that reflects Britain’s national insularity and anti-immigrant positions. Clive’s body becomes increasingly numb to external sensations. He further numbs his body with sleeping pills, his determined isolation is “his hemlock” (*A* 28). Clive’s inherited

Victorian house in London contains “a history of an adult life, of changing tastes, fading passions, and growing wealth” (A 50), but nothing of youth. It is a silent place, since two failed, childless marriages and a New York girlfriend means it is occupied only by his “narrowed” life, whittled as it is to “its higher purpose” (A 51) of musical composition. After the funeral, his friend and editor, Vernon, visits and senses a “closeted atmosphere” with “air [that] felt close and damp, as though it had been breathed many times” (A 52). Clive has shut himself up in this overstuffed museum; nothing except some old mattresses had ever been carried out. Not even the housekeeper has been around. Like the immigrant-wary nation that Gilroy documents, Clive’s once “open house was no more” (A 51).

Clive receives a commission for a Millennial Symphony, which even in the commission committee’s conception, is to be an elegy for the dead century (A 22). It also becomes a dirge for a nation, commemorating Clive’s fall from eminence, his amorality, and his refusal of outside cultural influence that might possibly infuse the composition, and the nation he represents, with the difference, the newness, the heterogeneity that would divert the “living organism” – the nation – from what Freud identifies as the propensity to return to “earlier states of things,”²² that is, to death. Closing himself into his house and a lifestyle that admitted no intimates, seeking no other sources of inspiration for his stalled composition than his imagination and the partially-complete composition itself, refusing all but the most trivial connections with the society in London, and consciously choosing paths in the Lakeland that would avoid people, Clive is alone in life in all its aspects. He lives a solitary and insular existence, unmoved by

peripheral stimuli; all experience is recycled through imagination; instant revisions of reality replace real life.

On the other hand, the aesthetic traces in *Grace Notes* provide a cognitive map for Gilroyan “convivial planetarity.” Unlike *Amsterdam*, whose title signals the mutually assured death to which all the characters are bound, the title *Grace Notes* symbolizes individual elaboration, embellishment, and growth. The protagonist, Catherine Anne McKenna, is pregnant at the inception of the plot. Pedagogies in musical beginnings, in substantive developments, in close listening abound in the text. The novel opens with Catherine’s return home for her father’s funeral, and it seems momentarily, that the novel might take the same track towards death as *Amsterdam*. But in reaching the end of the novel, we learn that death is simply wrapped in the midst of a novel about life. The opening scenes are the chronological middle of the plot, which actually begins at the start of Part Two, just prior to the birth of Catherine’s daughter, Anna. The novel ends with the composition that Catherine writes to celebrate Anna’s birth. Realizing that the book’s final pages are the plot’s chronological middle, readers are propelled to the beginning to re-read to the middle of the book in order to arrive at the true end of events, with the reunion of mother and daughter in a clear indication of the expectation of life after death. In other words, the novel’s structure itself insists upon continuation.

In this novel, allegory is submerged in the psychological, where Jameson suggests we look, but the connections to nation cannot be missed. Liam Harte and Michael Park note that the Northern Ireland Peace Process of the 1990s inspired writers to participate in the political conversations of the time, specifically to “claim a transformative role for the aesthetic in relation to political and cultural processes” (232). That MacLaverty intends

Grace Notes to participate in this conversation is not in doubt. In Catherine we find a protagonist who dives into a conversation concerning disagreements between Britain and Ireland with her “political sleeves rolled up” (GN 222), only to be disappointed – even though she is a pianist and composer herself – that the argument is about disagreements between composers Benjamin Britten and John Ireland. Additionally, Catherine’s entry into a competition for new compositions that must feature “ethnic” instruments pays homage to her Catholic identity in its title, *Vernicle*, a term for a religious badge that recognizes the individual achievement of a personal pilgrimage of faith. Moreover, complicating in her self-defining composition any singular notion of identity, she chooses the most potent and controversial musical symbol of Protestant domination: the Lambeg drums. The over-large, over-loud drums, resembling giant bass drums, are emblematic of the Protestant Orange Order (Hastings). Catherine, a Catholic, remembers the drums from her childhood as having a “scary sound – like thunder.” Her father insists that drumming is a racist practice. The Orangemen, he asserts, “practice out here above the town to let the Catholics know they’re in charge. This is their way of saying the Prods rule the roost” (GN 7-8). By employing the Lambegs, Catherine “confronts” the fear and resentment that her Catholic family has always felt in the face of the religious, political, and racial solidarity that coalesced around the aggressive masculinity of the Protestant drums.²³ Her strategy, as we see below, is not oppositional, but re-contextual. Catherine’s composition consolidates her identity after separation from her father over religious observance, destructive relations with an English boyfriend, and postpartum depression had threatened to overwhelm her sense of self. Her personal struggle with religion, with an Englishman, and with depression parallels the struggles of Northern Ireland with

sectarianism, colonial oppression, and national melancholy over lack of progress in the Peace Process.

Amsterdam: Constructing an Apoetics of Noise

In the following section, I trace what I am calling an “apoetics” of noise in McEwan’s novel. I believe designating the action an apoetics is appropriate because the novel portrays in its themes the construction of a composition. Therefore, even though the protagonist’s production results in degeneration, ultimately into noise, the deliberative nature of the action is best conveyed through a term that includes reference to a structured process (i.e., “poetics”), even one with reverse outcome (i.e., *apoetics*).

In his volume *Noise*, Attali never precisely defines the titular term. His aim is music, i.e., “the organization of noise [...] that reflects the manufacture of society [...] the audible waveband of the vibrations and signs that make up society.”²⁴ However, his volume gives us clues: noise is disorder, containing the “relations among men [expressed as] Clamor, Melody, Dissonance, Harmony” (Attali 6). As a network of human relations, Clive’s *Millennial Symphony* is infected with the worst the end-of-century has to offer – neglect of and outright antagonism toward others, willed ignorance of human misery, danger, and hurt; self-centeredness and conceit, and elitism. The social relations that inhere in this particular musical composition sunder it, transforming it into noise and then quiescence.

Below, I begin with a discussion of the composer and the social environment in which he works, examine his inspirations, principles, and the composition’s purpose, and end with a description of the (de)composition itself. My aim here is to illustrate the insidious ways in which a cascade of insularity, beginning with individual withdrawal

into sameness and familiarity results in banal cultural production and eventually a deadened national spirit.

Nature of the Composition & the Composer.

Clive Linley experiences the world as, and through, sounds. To perceive the world primarily in sound is to establish a personal sphere of negative dialectics, given the propensity of modern thought toward privileging sight as the sense of reason and cognition.²⁵ In contrast, perceiving a world in sound focuses on the imperceptible and the imaginary. Michael Bull and Les Back note that in opposition to the “visually based epistemologies ranging from Plato to Descartes” (and including present-day theorists Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze and Guattari), a sounded grasp of reality produces a more subjective perspective. Although listening need not close distance between perceiver and object (unlike touch), the perception once it arrives enters the body in a way that vision denies. Sound is more akin to thought²⁶ and inner speech,²⁷ allowing for the possibility of “perceiv[ing] the relationship between subject and object, inside and outside, and the public and private altogether differently” (Bull and Back 5). Thus sound, the raw material of musical composition, might be conceived as interrupting what Adorno identifies as a totalizing vision of the world, providing a model for countering positivist thinking, and exploiting a fracture in the “power of the status quo [that] puts up the facades into which our consciousness crashes [...and] must seek to crash through” (Adorno 17).²⁸

In the novel, Clive fails to realize the potential of music’s contradictions to social conformity. Further, he has come in middle age to suffer a fatal psychological inclination to turn inward. Despite his musical training, Clive never seems concerned about others or even to really pay attention to anyone but himself. His instrument (the piano) and his

profession (composing) are soloistic occupations that contribute to his tendency towards self-absorption. His personal relationships, like with Molly are always about him. The extent of Clive's insularity is evident in his claim to perfect pitch. When his mind conjures the ten tones at Molly's funeral: "There was no need to write them down" (A 5). He knows their names and pitches are among the set of archetypes stored in his head.²⁹ He need not refer to exterior technical or social standards; their measure of musical perfection is set in his brain.³⁰

Clive's preoccupation in the novel is with a commissioned symphony. Its form is *the* standard of classical music composition; for him, it is also a product (as opposed to a work of art). He works at the pleasure of a bureaucracy that not only funds his project, but also hopes to make money from it. The symphonic form is huge; a score regularly involves writing music for over twenty separate parts. Like the novel, the form emerges at the height of imperial expansion in the eighteenth century: symphonic form gains stature with Beethoven, and continues as a genre without major formal variation into the twentieth century. Its structure is most often in four movements and calls for a large, diverse group of instruments.³¹ I mention the size and scope of symphonic works to indicate the vast intellectual exercise and intense labor required in writing a symphony. In addition, Clive's project is a commission³² from the British government: Julian Garmony, one of Clive's rival for Molly's affections, has been instrumental in his receiving the contract. Clive feels the pressure of the commissioning committee, which not only envisions it as "The Millennial Symphony," (i.e., the name is not one he chose), but also has distinct ideas about its form and content. The committee wants a piece that sounds solid, conservative, and familiar; for example, a rising passage might be conceived "in

terms of steps that were ancient and made of stone,” (A 22). Thought by the musical elites of the city as distinctly “middlebrow,” the commission is interested in melody, ala Schubert or McCartney that might be commercially exploited from the moment it is finished until well past the actual millennium celebrations. Their hopes are for “a noisy, urgent brass passage [from the symphony that] might be used as a signature for the main evening television news” or for a tune “that could be incorporated into the official proceedings, much as ‘Nessun dorma’ had been into a football tournament” (A 22).³³

The novel is clear about just how laborious is the writing of the symphony: “Every second of playing time involved writing out, note by note, the part of up to two dozen instruments, playing them back, making adjustments to the score, playing again, rewriting, then sitting in silence, listening to the inner ear synthesize and orchestrate the vertical array of scribbles and deletions; amending again until the bar was right, and playing it once more on the piano” (A 25). Although an artist, even one with somewhat suspect credentials,³⁴ Clive becomes a cog in the capitalist machinery. He realizes the commission is a “bureaucratic intrusion on his creative independence” (A 19), but he has agreed to finish the piece years before the millennium, so that the commissioning committee might get the most bang for its buck by having the piece become part of the national consciousness, presumably so that lots of copies will be made and sold, boosting the prestige of the committee and the national treasury. The plans to reduce and fragment the symphony until it becomes what Adorno calls a musical “fetish” (that is, a familiar piece or melody selected because it is known by audiences and then “played again and again and made still more familiar” (294))³⁵ ensure the piece will become, like the composer, a commodity.

Resources, Inspirations & Influences

The novel criticizes Clive for lack of substance, originality, and for a regressive compositional career through ironic references to Górecki and Vaughan Williams. Although Clive understands that when critics call him a “thinking man’s Górecki” (A 15) they likely mean that he is “domesticated and tame,” the implications of this association are both more severe and predictive of the sorry outcome of his efforts toward composing a symbol for the twentieth century. Henryk Mikołaj Górecki made a name for himself among the avant-garde in Poland in the post-WWII period. However, his experimentalist tendencies soon dissipated, and he turned from serialism, dissonance, and indeterminate pitches to a more consonant sound in works like his commission for the “Second Symphony, written to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of the Polish astronomer Copernicus.”³⁶ Moreover, Górecki began employing compositional strategies that involved the “reworking” of pre-existing music, such as folk tunes and Renaissance hymns, and “iconic references to Beethoven and Chopin.” The rehashing of existing melodies was particularly condemned in his “Symphony of Sorrowful Songs,” which was dismissed in large part “as lacking in musical and intellectual substance, too reliant on sentiment, both personal and religious.”³⁷ As predicted in the Górecki epithet, Clive is similarly accused of excessive “borrowing” and lack of innovation in his Millennial Symphony: the musicians assigned to play the inaugural performance think it is “a dud” with “a tune at the end, [which is] a shameless copy of Beethoven’s Ode to Joy, give or take a note or two” (A 190-1). Clive’s symphony contains an even more fatal flaw, discussed below.

With greater pride, Clive sees himself as an heir to English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams. However, this association also has its drawbacks. First and foremost, Vaughan Williams' reputation is inextricable from his work with "English concerns and influences,"³⁸ having drawn his own influences from pre-existing church and folk music. Additionally, his music has often been perceived as appropriate for, or at least taken up in performance often by, "amateur, semi-professional and provincial groups [rather] than by first-rank ensembles." Vaughan Williams also developed close ties with commercial institutions, including particularly the BBC, Oxford University Press, and the cinema. Associations with Górecki and Vaughan Williams, then, identify Clive as a composer whose compositions are derivative, imitative, simple, amateurish, traditional, and commercial. Although, he would likely refuse at least some of these labels, he is not afraid to embrace the description by which his supporters tag him, i.e., "archconservative." Even his critics' designation of "throwback" (A 22) does not seem to unduly upset him. In fact, Clive considers these titles appropriate particularly as they might apply to the treatise of music philosophy that he writes to accompany his first big success.

Governing Principles

Edward Said writes in his seminal text, *Orientalism* that "the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5).³⁹ Its representations in Europe, Said suggests, emerge as illustrations "of what the Orient can or ought to be" (273) according to the particular perspective of the Orientalist. Although Clive could not in any sense be considered a student of the East, he does appropriate, with the confidence of being a white man and a

member of majority culture, scenes and images from the exotic Orient into his music. Muslim mystical and ascetic orders seem to provide a major source of inspiration for his most important piece, *Symphonic Dervishes for Virtuoso Strings*. Although we know nothing about the content of these “dervishes,” we can see from the title that he presumes the right to use images from minority dance, if not the actual musical modes, without a second thought about the ethical ramifications or possible cultural violence of such a move. The *Symphonic Dervishes* put his name on the map – “loathed and loved in equal measure, thereby securing his reputation and the currency of his book” (A 25) – taking up what Said designates “an imperialist world view” (15) with complete obliviousness. Leading a solipsistic existence, Clive considers every element of his environmental surround as simply an extension of himself. For this composition, we speculate that he considers Eastern influences simply among the multitude of resources to which he felt he had every right. In a self-aggrandizing reflection on his career, Clive recalls that he “had imagined everything here [in his living room], *he had willed it all to be here*, without anyone’s help” (A 150, emphasis added). His narrow existence and self-orientation informs a positivist musical philosophy.

Calling the musical *avant garde* the “old guard of modernism” and naming atonal and aleatoric music *de rigueur* and orthodox, Clive purposely stakes a reactionary position. Writing an anti-modernist manifesto entitled *Recalling Beauty*, Clive argues that the human ear is “hardwired” for harmony, that melody is privileged, that music is a “secular communication” (A 24-5). He identifies a *Homo musicus*, calls for a “contemporary definition of beauty,” and insists upon a “fundamental truth” that will “defin[e] human nature” (A 24-5). The presumption in all of these terms is a European

qualifier. “Harmony,” “melody” “beauty” are humanist “universals,” ones, of course, cast in a European mold. Thus, even Asian dervishes become “European” in his composition; Clive uses the Orient and its allusions to exoticism and mysticism giving them value solely as part of a European socio-economy.

Conditions of and Functions of Composition

Paul Gilroy, in a review of several historians writing to “diagnose the national pathology” resulting from the “cultural disorientation that accompanies the collapse of imperial certainties into postcolonial nihilism” (*PM* 113-14), points to one author’s⁴⁰ identification of “the unique English affinity for [...] the ‘natural’ landscape,” which along with “reverence for the past” is supposed to “guarantee an inexhaustible current of ethnically characteristic imaginative cultural work” (115). This landscape, Gilroy notes with concern, specifically “excludes all urban and metropolitan spaces from the forms of moral and aesthetic rearmament that are necessary if the country is to be reinvigorated and restored” (115). The unspoiled “natural” landscape is supposed to be the palliative influence on the English imagination, a resource that along with the crown and the church form “the treasure trove of Englishness” (*PM* 115). In the novel, Clive credits his landscape – the Lake District – with restorative and inspirational powers. He plans a trip there after days of attempting to will into existence the last theme for the final movement of his symphony have not yielded results, even though he is sure that the three-note motif is already in his mind, waiting to be heard.

The Lake District is, for Clive, a place of great comfort and no surprises; he knows it so well he can enumerate the names of the various crags, valleys, and hills in the order that he usually treks them. When Clive starts out on the first day he feels sure “his

favorite landscape” (A 81) will reveal the theme that “lay in fragments and hints in what he had already written. He would recognize the right thing as soon as it occurred to him” (A 81-2). Instead, the landscape offers no relief or revelation whatsoever, but rather keeps him in the same anxious state that he experiences everyday in the daily grind in the studio, where he is “crouching over that piano for hours every day,” reduced to “a cringing state” (A 83). The countryside lodge that is supposed to be the site of relaxation and regeneration instead presents him a reminder of his cowering form: “a stuffed fox mounted in a glass case [...stands] frozen in a predatory crouch” (A 72). And even when he is out on the trail, the open air oppresses him with “the unease of outdoor solitude” (A 83). The blankness that fills Clive’s mind in the studio looms as an insistent and threatening part of the landscape: “a colossal emptiness [; t]he mass of rock rising above the valley [...] one long frown set in stone[; t]he hiss and thunder of the stream [...] the very language of threat” (A 83). Despite his efforts to think rationally about the trail he has taken dozens of times before, he cannot shake the idea that he will be killed by “someone hiding behind a rock” (A 83). In the end, what he cannot quite imagine materializes into real violence; contrary to his fears, he is not the victim, but the perpetrator.

Clive sees a solitary female hiker in the woods in the distance just as he finally feels himself on the verge of hearing the motif he has been seeking. Even though he sees that she is soon confronted by a man down by the lake at the bottom of the hill where he is stopped, he turns from them to sketch out the budding theme. It is, he can tell, going to be totally familiar – “the inversion of a line he had already scored for a piccolo” (A 90), a repetition of earlier material, a motif in the form of the ancient steps. Before he can write

it down the woman shouts. He ducks, making himself invisible, but knows immediately that he is making a mistake – but he fails to diagnose properly the mistake he is making. What he thinks is not that he should run to the woman’s aid, but rather, incredibly, that “he should have kept writing” (A 92). Even when the woman’s voice gets more urgent and the murmurings of the man’s voice become more insistent, Clive does nothing. Instead, he runs away, trying to keep “the jewel, the melody” in his grasp.

The English landscape and the Victorian townhouse are symbols of an enduring and great Britain. They might be considered perfect sites for composing a symphony commemorating the British national psyche. However, Clive’s isolation at the off-season lodge and in his solo existence in London, his insistence on nothing but the same tired haunts for holiday, coupled with the death of Molly, his muse and confidante, and his increasing distance from his one friend in London, Vernon Halliday, editor of *The Judge*, ensure that Clive remains cut off from all sources of insight and innovation, except one: the rape he does not stop that day in the Lake District fatally infects his music.

The Composition

Clive’s end-of-century anthem encompasses the rape, amorality, citations of previous greatness (but not his own); it lacks originality, difference, and variation. Just before flying to Amsterdam, where the piece will be premiered, Clive luxuriates in the glow of being finished; he allows himself to believe that the symphony is a work of transcendent genius. He has, he thinks, worked a near miracle: “translat[ing] into vibrating air this nonlanguage whose meanings were forever just beyond reach, suspended tantalizingly at a point where emotion and intellect fused” (A 172). And in a way, his delusion is absolutely right – that which is “just beyond reach” emerges in the

increasingly thinning texture of the music; it is, however, not the ethereality he believes he has created. The unspeakable and ineffable appear in an awful chorus of repeating “As” that evaporates into absolute silence: the sound of the rape and the horror of the man’s droning voice enunciate finally not music, but noise:

The theme was disintegrating into a tidal wave of dissonance and was gathering in volume, but it sounded quite absurd, like twenty orchestras tuning to an A. It was not dissonant at all. Practically every instrument was playing the same note. *It was a drone.* It was a giant bagpipe in need of repair. He could only hear the A, tossed from one instrument, one section, to another. [...] He had just experienced an auditory hallucination, an illusion – or a disillusion. (A 173-4, emphasis added).

The masculine, murmuring, threatening voice commandeers the symphony as totally as the Lakeland rapist has overpowered the woman. Clive is unable to prevent the insufferable failure of the symphony, having been unwilling to prevent the horrific attack on the woman. Suffering the acute embarrassment of the symphonic fiasco, Clive is confirmed in his desire to kill off the person that he holds responsible for his inability to properly finish the piece: his friend and editor, Vernon.

Vernon, appalled that Clive had not reported the rape, turned him into the police when Clive refused to report to them on his own. In the last hours the symphony was in his hands, Clive was at the London metropolitan police station. When the police interrogated him, they treated him as a gentleman, professing to understand “how hard it must have been to write a symphony to order with a looming deadline, and what a dilemma he had been in when he was crouching behind that rock” (A 164). But in claiming the crouch and the rock of his hero-narrative, Clive also must admit that he has done nothing to prevent the attack; he is, as Vernon says, nearly as responsible for the

rape as the rapist, especially when the rapist goes on to commit another crime. While with the police, Clive hears the shrieks of a drug-addled mother, abandoned and abused children, violent teenagers, harried social workers, attacks on police officers, as if “[i]t was one huge unhappy family with domestic problems that were of their nature insoluble” (A 166). Clive thinks of himself above the fray, possessed of “a level manner, quiet charm, authority” (A 167). But for all the calm rationality he claims, he is completely ineffectual in addressing the one social problem that he is forced to confront: he fails to identify the Lakeland rapist from a line-up. Although he is sure that he has pointed out culprit, he has instead fingered a policeman who later drives him back to his home. Clive is unable to identify the perpetrator of violence because he has, as usual, not really paid attention to anyone but himself even when he is (or could be) witness to a crime. Further, his inattention means that he has been unable to prevent the effects of violence from seeping into his creative work; the violence slips in through his unconscious where it inadvertently informs his music. The murmuring, threatening drone of the rapist infects his work just as surely as the social ills (i.e., the poverty, drugs, violence, discrimination, and other domestic problems) infect the nation. In short, Clive’s millennial symphony reproduces the social relations of the productive milieu in which he works.

The novel ends in the mutual euthanization of Clive and Vernon and with the ruination of the political career of the foreign secretary, Julian Garmony. Both the editor and the composer see unforgivable moral lapses in the other, but are blind to their own. While Clive has struggled to compose a commemorative symphony and has failed, Vernon has tried to ruin conservative politician, Garmony, by exposing his proclivities

for cross-dressing as sexual deviance, but his plan backfires. The last man standing is the orchestrator of the downfalls, i.e., capitalist, George Lane, Molly's husband. Not only is he the money behind the commission, but he also feeds Vernon the risqué photos of Garmony, and then works behind the scenes to make sure the exposé bombs.

The novel comes to (at least) two conclusions from these developments. First, it insists that Britain suffers gross and unbearable acts of injustice due to the willed ignorance, self-absorption, and determined neglect of real social ills and violent behaviors stemming from class inequalities, anti-immigrant antagonisms, and a lack of general good will and human concern for others afflicting high culture, media, and political class categories⁴¹ throughout the metropole and the nation. Secondly, it suggests that the infiltration of England's arts, news, and politics by capital can come to no good end, except for more wealth and prosperity for the capitalists. The other institutional sectors suffer at the demands and manipulations of a self-interested moneyed class. In the musical theme, specifically, the novel contends that England must find ways to creatively incorporate difference and to continually transform itself as it develops, or face in invariant traditionalism the high likelihood of lethal deterioration to national structures and psyche. *Amsterdam* is a cautionary tale in line with Gilroy's theory of postcolonial melancholia: Britain must lose no time in identifying and using its multicultural resources – people, ideas, practices – toward the composition of a vibrant English nationalism.

Grace Notes: *Constructing a Poetics of Ornamentation*

A poetics of ornamentation is built upon the aesthetic and functional qualities of grace notes. The *OED* defines grace notes as “an embellishment consisting of additional notes introduced in the vocal or instrumental music, not essential to the harmony or

melody.”⁴² I re-orient this definition in what follows to highlight qualities that might otherwise be overlooked in this definition that implies a frivolity and superfluity in ornamentation. First, because grace notes are always “additional,” they increase musical texture and density, literally adding notes that in turn include more relations between notes. Second, in embellishing, grace notes transform the external configuration of a note, that is, its context, without marring the integrity of individual, principal notes themselves. Finally, grace notes are always positioned between two principal notes, tending toward one note more than the other, but nonetheless, intruding upon the space (and time) between two existing notes.

The grace note, then, is a figure suggestive to imagination regarding various modes of subject positioning and human interaction. It offers a fresh depiction of the idea of relation, suggesting human relations, which Gilroy, among others,⁴³ suggests are the means to dismantling binaries underlying sectarianism, racism, gender bias, and postcolonial suppression like those in MacLaverty’s Northern Ireland. Additionally, grace notes are elaborative;⁴⁴ they augment, enhance, and in other ways transform not the object of enhancement, but its context. Finally, grace notes map a specific subject positioning, one valorizing serially mediate positions,⁴⁵ the movement from one middle position to the next and so on until positioning in the middle becomes a way of being, transition becomes a state of mind, and hearing and seeing in a way that produces multiple simultaneous meanings becomes second nature. MacLaverty’s novel articulates these practices – relation, elaboration, middle positionality – as strategies that might be employed in the pursuit of social justice and political change. Musical ornamentation, operating both as an aesthetic entity and as a site of performance within a system of

Western music is employed as a mode by which human subjects imagine new possibilities for being and acting in the world, suggesting what I want to call a poetics of ornamentation. Such a poetics provides literature with ideal positions and practices that might be used to strategically rethink conventions and standards while remaining within society's normative cultural, social, and political systems.

In the following paragraphs I sketch a poetics of ornamentation based on the characteristics outlined above. My aim is to distinguish the compositional process deployed in *Amsterdam*'s apoetics of noise, finding in MacLaverty's novel practices that translate into promising, if somewhat utopic, strategic models of nation-building.

The Composer & Compositions

Like Clive, Catherine is exceedingly conscious of the sounds around her: she experiences her mother's house as a whistling of the tea kettle and a hissing of the steam iron, her family church as the clipping of shoes on hardwood floors and as the clinking of coins in the offering plate; the taxi ride home as a splutter of rain under tires. She recalls as a child being connected every night to a wide world of sounds and stories coming by radio through which she hears "a kind of aural atlas" (MacLaverty 36).⁴⁶ The inspiration for Catherine's symphony, detailing a pilgrimage (which is the meaning of Vernicle) through sorrow to joy, comes from the sea, the wind, laughing on the beach with her daughter. Importantly, her musical idea comes while she sits near the crashing ocean on the shoreline of Islay, from which she can see both Northern Ireland and Scotland. Hers is an existence of surround-sound. Though she is encouraged by her mother, her musical career puts her at odds with her devout father when she decides to compose a mass, but one that is devoid of religious content.

Unlike Clive, Catherine composes in a variety of genres, none of which are the traditional symphonic form. In addition to the mass she is working on, she is also in the midst of composing a set of “haiku” for piano based on five Vermeer miniatures. She wins an award with her piano trio; an early composition is an ekphrastic setting of James Stephens’ “The Shell,” and her large contest-winning piece, *Vernicle*, is a symphony of sorts, but only in two movements. Music is a means to non-conformity for Catherine. She embraces it as a negative dialectic that suggests a mindset and practice in opposition to her father’s homeland beset by tradition and entrenched Catholic attitudes centuries old.

Influence and Inspiration

Salman Rushdie writes of a benevolent and helpful “influence” that “suggests something fluid, something ‘flowing in’” (62),⁴⁷ like “certain sinuous thicknesses, like ropes [in an ocean], the work of earlier weavers, of sorcerers who swam this way before him” (63). Influence, Rushdie notes, can come from any part of the globe: he notes the influence of Bangladeshi poet Tagore on Latin American writers and of American novelist Faulkner on Indian, African, and Latin writers. In the best of circumstances, then, influences provide the author “ground beneath her feet.”⁴⁸ As Gayatri Spivak suggests, the work of teaching is explicitly to find those threads from the past that might inform (cross-cultural – Spivak’s specific concern) understandings in the present to support efforts to strategize new ways of thinking and acting.⁴⁹

Pedagogy mediates influence in *Grace Notes*. Music teachers, official and informal, assist Catherine in making sense of the music she learns to play and to compose. When Catherine visits her very first teacher from Derry County, Miss Bingham, they rehearse in conversation music’s importance: music is like breathing, a

source of life and creation; instrumental music connects God and humankind; music is life's substance, like potatoes. All of Catherine's teachers thereafter merely expand on these principles. A visiting music conductor from China, Huang Xiaogang, teaches Catherine how to begin composing from "breath sentences." In Kiev, Alexander Melnichuk suggests that the tone and texture of music are merely the "salt" to the form of music, which is its "potatoes" (GN 224-5). He introduces her to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, with its sung prayers and grace-note glissandos and its huge tower bells. Melnichuk's wife instructs Catherine in listening: stand "stock still, as if any movement of her body, however slight, would affect her hearing" (GN 227). Catherine's music choices (Stravinsky, Bach, Purcell, Irish and Scottish folk music, not Stockhausen) reflect her instruction in tonality. The eclectic internationalism of Olivier Messiaen is perhaps emblematic of her influences: he finds "a modal system that has a completely individual sound"; his music reflects a "joyously held Catholic faith" even as "he c[o]me[s] to value non-European cultures, especially Indian and Japanese."⁵⁰ For Catherine, music is an experience in the lived realities of sound that overcome silence. It is an experience central to cultivating her voice – as a female composer among the majority who are men, as a dissident member of her family, and as a Catholic in Northern Ireland.

Relations

MacLaverty's novel proposes, in the terms used by Glissant, a new community based in a network of relations, inclusive of all political and cultural ideas, protective and respectful toward each individual. The text builds such a network in the medium of music. The *Credo* of a mass that Catherine envisions materializes for her in seven

syllables, *Crē Dō In Ūn Ūm Dé Ūm*. These seven phonemes recall not only the sacred Latin liturgy, but also the seven syllables of her full name. In her dream-work, grace notes are the engine of her composition, spanning genre, time periods, and geographical spaces in a relentless transitoriness that defies normal time and space and bridges diachronic and synchronic dimensions of history. In her mind, the grace notes erase the social and historical constraints of gender roles, religious dogma, and national geopolitical realities.

Th[e grace notes are] decoration becoming substance. Like a round in Granny Boyd's kitchen. Or Purcell's Songs of the Tavern. [...] Joining folk music and art music. East and West. Male and female. A female precentor is a precentatrix, God help her. [...] The thread of the single voice meshes with the next voice and its neighbours to become a skein which weaves with other skeins of basses and tenors and altos and sopranos to make a rope of sound, a cincture which will girdle the earth so that there is neither East nor West. (*GN* 133)

The grace-note motion comprising Catherine's composition models trans-national, trans-gender, and trans-genre concepts. Grace notes close geographical distances in the score and by implication between nationalities, blurring cultural differences, eliding the boundaries of East and West until there are no longer extremes. Without outer limits, the only remaining possibility for situatedness is in a series of mediate positions. The site composed in Catherine's imagination is a network of inter-connectedness between genders and geographies and promises radical changes in religious practices. In short, it is a site that engenders thoughts of peace.

Serial Mediation

Sound furnishes Catherine the coordinates for self-positioning within the contested cultural spaces of her life in Northern Ireland. The site of subjectivity she

constructs in sound is both fleeting and radically oriented toward a series of ever-shifting middles.⁵¹ First, she hears di-directionally, in a way that develops into a perpetual search for duplicate meanings from the same sound. Thus, she hears homophonically: bar talk is also Bartók; linseed oil is also Lynn C. Doyle. This type of hearing allows Catherine a hinged view of the world in which she, as listener, occupies a variable crux; meaning for her is always simultaneously dual. Her auditory acuity produces a sounded unity with a semantic split. Even as a child, the frightening “dark noise” of the drums also thrills her; she hears the drums as simultaneously daunting and awesome. Harte and Parker call this her “dialectical” vision, which leads to an “individuating vision that has synthesis and polyvalence” (247). Catherine’s listening proclivities preclude the domination of a particular linguistic meaning in her perceptive space. Like the fore/ground silhouettes of vase / two faces, where both images are present at once, Catherine sustains simultaneous non-aligned, even contradictory meanings; just as in the psychological images there are no unitary images, only transitory ones. This duality of sight/mind vacates centered knowledge, all while not eliminating the viewer/auditor as individualized receptor-processor. In the novel’s conception, individuality is preserved though it is as unstable as the flickering image, as transitory as a grace note.

Secondly, Catherine’s homophonic acuity identifies her attraction to middle positions; she gravitates towards them, though no one middle site or condition holds her. Thus, at the opening of the novel, Catherine is in transit from Glasgow to Belfast for her father’s funeral, having been absent for five years due to an insurmountable misunderstanding over Catholicism with her father. She is also in the midst of post-natal depression, which bedevils her thoughts about her infant daughter, Anna, about whom

she has not told her family. Although Catherine is in middle positions at several levels – geographically, psychically, and generationally – it is important to note that none of these particular middles persists. For Catherine, there will always be other uneasy, but necessary, middle positions. Catherine’s anxious thoughts about Anna make her think “[s]he was like a juggler on a small board balanced on a fulcrum. The slightest carelessness could bring her down on one side or the other” (*GN* 121). Though the fulcrum is a tough place to stand, for Catherine, it is definitely worse to fall off, to be more decidedly on one side over another. MacLaverty ends the novel in the middle space he valorizes. It is by Western musical standards governing the emblematic grace notes an impossible ending, i.e., there is always a resolution after a grace note. The novel, nonetheless, insists upon striving for the impossible middle stance.

I read this serialized movement as a continual taking up of positions “between” that allows for di- and multi-directional perspectives without permanent attachment to any one middle position. Serial mediation is a process of relating that locates middle positioning without valorizing any one in-between site. To think of it another way: the performance of relations proposes mediate *subjectivities* without suggesting any one as a permanent *identity*.

Elaborating the Composition

In a volume, entitled *Musical Elaborations*, Edward Said describes elaboration as a process of extending knowledge through expanding circles of cultural influence. Elaboration is a practice that draws on “outside” material from, on one hand, a thorough grounding in the tradition of a disciplinary knowledge, and on another, a different, often personal, “foreign” experience and perspective. In MacLaverty’s novel, Catherine draws

upon her encounters with foreignness – not only through Chinese conductor, Gang, but also through Ukrainian composer, Melnichuck – to come to terms with the violence of her Northern Ireland home. In her composition, *Vernicle*, Catherine deploys representations of international culture against the Lambeg drums, recontextualizing them in order to divorce them from their association with violence in the Northern Ireland context. In part one of *Vernicle*, Catherine sets the drums in their familiar context – the music is full of Irish inflections: Celtic grace notes, contrapuntal lines intertwined like “Plaiting bread. Her mother’s hands, three pallid strands, pale fingers over and under, in and out. Weaving. Like ornament in the Book of Kells. Under and over, out and in. Like pale fingers interlocked in prayer” (GN 270). These symbols of national culture – Irish traditionalism and myth, Catholicism, maternalism -- have in the past proved ineffectual against the insistence of the Unionist-Protestantism represented by the Lambeg drums; here, they are equally ineffectual in musical containment as well. The drums batter the orchestra into a whimpering retreat; the Lambegs decisively overpower the other instruments, in the mode of Fascism, Catherine thinks, like the brutalizing vulgarity which Shostakovich captures in his Seventh Symphony. All this changes in the second movement. Catherine begins with near-silent “breath sentences” learned from her Chinese teacher, undercutting the traditional musical platform over which the drums might expect to enter. More significantly, Catherine counters the thunderous drums with bells that resound like Ukrainian Orthodox church bells. Their “clarion” ring matches the drums in intensity and volume. Importantly, it is the transposition of the bells from their original religious setting that gives them the power to de-sacralize the drums. When the bells are joined by brass and other sections of the orchestra in a “global” effort, the drums

are de-ideologized; they become simply part of the music: “The Lambegs have been stripped of their bigotry and have become pure sound. The black sea withdraws. So too the trappings of the church – they have nothing to do with belief and exist as colour and form” (*GN* 276). Catherine establishes a new relation between the drums and their context; amidst Celtic sounds, the Lambegs can only sound Protestant, bombastic, and triumphalist. Extending the music to include international influences, the Lambegs can be heard differently, even though their sound remains from part one to part two equally intense, complex, and loud.

* * *

The novel understands Northern Ireland’s peace process as dependent on the ability of citizens and cosmopolitans to elaborate the existing situation, to thicken the number of ideas surrounding intransigent problems of sectarian violence and remnants of colonial divisiveness in a way that recontextualizes them. This process of simultaneity, the novel insists, will not occur naturally, but must be created artistically. In a seemingly traditional metaphorical move, the novel presents a pregnant protagonist. The birth of Catherine’s child equals the “birth” of the composition, which in turn might be read allegorically as the “birth” of a new unitary Northern Ireland. This might seem a regressive move, but I suggest the novel does something more complicated in its equation of reproduction and composition. Rather than basing the compositional process in the organic (composing is like giving birth), the novel reverses this traditional reading. Catherine remarks, time and again, giving birth is like musical processes. As she is being wheeled into the delivery room, she thinks: “it was a bit like composing music, really parading the personal as they all stood at the bottom looking at the pain which was now

cracking her open” (GN 161). The head nurse “is orchestrating the whole thing” (GN 162). This first birth experience is for Catherine like “attending musical theory classes all her life, learning to sight-read, being shown the instruments [...] Then on a particular day, at a particular time, after all the preparation, after all the theory and the rules and the speculation, she is led blindfolded into a hall and an orchestra explodes into [] celebratory sounds” (GN 171). Taken together, these examples suggest not that art is natural, but that what is natural (birthing) is artistic (music). In reversing the Romantic notion that art springs from nature and in insisting instead that nature is art, the novel places the responsibility for producing unity (i.e., child, composition, country) from radical duality or multiplicity (i.e., parents, ideas, religious sectarianism) in the hands of men and women. The relations that will knit a cohesive nationality from the Protestant-Unionist and Catholic-National oppositions *can be created*. In fact, the novel insists, peace is only possible if fabricated, literally, composed.

Creating national unity, therefore, is a compositional and artistic process; its impetus is human. The novel throws down a gauntlet. But it also provides an instruction manual. First, you listen to music – Irish traditional is good, and so is English Baroque. They both employ grace notes. The Celtic graces are particularly instructive about transitory middle positionality. Their “cuts” interrupt repetition,⁵² disrupt a continuation of the same. Second, like Catherine, you listen. When there is monotony – the repetition of liturgy, the routine of childcare, even the chirp of birds – you listen past it. You notice instead that the white translucent soap dispensed in public bathrooms reminds you of ejaculatory sperm; you read “*Comfortable Sex Positions in Late Pregnancy*. With .. drawings” (GN 147) as masculine “withdrawings.” You think its funny that “magnify” in

My soul doth magnify the Lord means to praise and to enlarge. And finally from this flexibility of thinking in a series of situations in which you see and hear di-directionally, you begin to imagine how two images, two auditions, two meanings can exist in simultaneity, making from duality unity, though not a unity that is permanent, but one that is reconstituted daily in thought, in performance, in practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined musical culture in McEwan's *Amsterdam* and MacLaverly's *Grace Notes* to argue that the fate of musical culture predicts the welfare of the postcolonial nation more generally. This is the general argument made by Jacques Attali in *Noise*. However, I would make an important distinction that Frederic Jameson points to in his introduction to Attali's volume: the indicators are never singular. Therefore, noise socially controlled and ordered into music through ritual (the Church), representation (the Rational Authority of imperial and universal standards), and repetition (the Culture Industry, to use Adorno's term) is just one system intertwined at "various levels of economics, technology, political forms, and culture proper" (xiii).⁵³ *Amsterdam* is particularly astute in its interlacing of capital into the narratives of music, media, and politics. Rot, decay, and fissures of all kinds in the novel contaminate all aspects of the men's lives. (The protagonists are all men; the demise of multi-talented beauty, Molly, speeds a decline already begun, her own involvement with the media magnate being a case in point.) For example, after Molly's funeral, both Clive and Vernon experience increasing blankness and vacuity. Clive becomes numb: starting with his feet at the gravesite, the numbness spreads until it becomes a chill that "envelop[s] his core" (A 16), that maps the void in his symphony – a large section for which "[h]e had no preliminary

sketch of an idea, not a scrap, not even a hunch” (A 26). Vernon is already known as a “nonentity” at his paper, since his elevation to the position of editor (even this dying one) came as a result of a news scoop he fell into by accident. A growing sense of absence spreads into his brain, as if the “right hemisphere had died” (A 34). Conditions around both men worsen as the novel persists: Clive’s house is beset with an “opulent emptiness” (A 55) and a “workmanlike” silence (A 50), silence falls between the two friends (A 52, 78), Vernon’s newspaper is ruled by “the dead hand of the grammarians [the old guard]” (A 115). The pervasive senses of deterioration, of which these listed above are but a small fraction, suggest that the entire novel, in all registers, teems with an undercurrent of disorder and dissonance of noise. In contrast, *Grace Notes* moves in the opposite direction – ending on the two words “She rose” (GN 277), signaling not only the culmination of a successful premiere of her work, but also the rising above the traditional symbolism of Protestant and Catholic strife, and as we come to realize, the launch into a re-reading of the novel to reach the end (situated in the book’s middle). In both cases, however, representations of music attempt to locate what Jameson identifies “the future in the present itself” (xiv). A future-orientation and predictive tendency is perceptible in many of the representations of music found in subsequent chapters; for protagonists and readers, music often stimulates and invites utopian conjecture.

Chapter 3: **Inventing Identity: Improvising Subjectivity**

Two black women writers from different continents extend the category of black female identity by appealing to internationalism in music, specifically through appeals to the music of the other's continent. African-American poet Rita Dove expands notions of black identity in her volume, *Grace Notes*, by making reference to the structure and performance in Western classical music of the titular musical element (i.e., grace notes). Dove extends the basis of her self-identification in African-American heritage, consolidated in her previous volume *Thomas and Beulah* to a basis in a European-inflected space. Black Scottish poet and novelist Jackie Kay employs African-American jazz structurally and thematically in her novel *Trumpet*, thereby finding cultural expression to enlarge Scottish identity by an intercontinental sense of blackness. In both cases, the formal characteristics of self-generating musical improvisation are central to what might be conceived as space-making gestures in each literary text. Thus, I begin my argument with the suggestion that music in these two literary works seeks sites within, yet separate from, literary sites in which identity might be developed into subjectivity. Additionally, I claim that *Grace Notes* and *Trumpet* construct, through the cross-national, cross-cultural reach of musical gestures, a sense of diasporic consciousness, a consciousness that stems from a form of cultural alienation that resonates with historical instances of not belonging to any singular national identity. Finally, I argue that this diasporic consciousness appropriates exilic sensibility, not only for its insights through a double consciousness of sorts, but also, when combined with the space-making strategies

of improvisation, for its openness that licenses construction of non-normative subject spaces.

Paul Gilroy's conceptions of identity and subjectivity are useful in this chapter.¹ By "identity," I am speaking of a particular sense of self bounded by body, by community, by nation, one that emphasizes exclusion, closure, and fixity, and that includes a sense of identity as a possession to be protected against contamination and infiltration. Identity marks difference, formulating self-consciousness against an idea of otherness, often for the political purposes of claiming power and privilege. By "subjectivity," I refer to what Gilroy identifies as "processes of identification" (132), which include affiliations and associations that transcend national and cultural boundaries: recognition of difference within as well as between social entities, connections based in shared humanity and openness to otherness. Subjectivity is a self-reflective consciousness of identity in which an individual understands herself not as isolated and singular, but as connected to others through relations of various types. In short, subjectivity is in this reading always already cosmopolitan.

This chapter, then, will examine the ways in which Dove's volume makes use of the play of associations in both Western classical and blues music around the signature "grace note" to construct a complex subjectivity that includes a sense of African-American history, an embrace of international experience and observation, a sense of continuing, non-fixed notions of identity unbounded by body or geography. Additionally, the chapter will take up the thematic and formal qualities of the narrative in *Trumpet* that demonstrate traces of jazz structures, including its mélange of European and African-American elements untraceable to exact origins, jazz's non-ending chorus form with its

inherent instability, and its soloistic conventions. In some sense each text relies on concurrent conceptions of Western music, in its European and African-American forms, and works towards a heterotopic space² in which the development of subjectivity might occur.

Both of the texts anchoring this chapter take up the familiar territory of identity and home, but we might explore new ways of thinking about expanding the territory of both by readings that employ processes of musical improvisation. It is a form requiring balance between known paths and spontaneous detours, involving “both the danger of loss of control and the opportunity for creativity of a high order; [...it demands] reference to the familiar, without which, paradoxically, creativity cannot be truly valued.”³ Improvisation retains a connection to home even as it dares extreme distances. In comparable ways, these texts use improvisation to underwrite thematic and structural expansions of gender and racial categories and to identify what might be called diasporas of choice. Both texts insist on expansive imaginaries that refuse confinement by normalized constructions of identity categories or by bounded descriptions of diaspora.

* * *

Although it is impossible to summarize a volume of poems in the manner of narrative summary, we can clearly see in Rita Dove’s *Grace Notes* that home and departure from it are thematic preoccupations. The first epilogue from Toni Morrison speaks of a hunger for home that never abates: “All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was” (*DGN* 5).⁴ The final epigraph, fronting section five, records what might be seen as the epitome of diasporic regret: the impossibility of return to home as once known. Cavafy writes: “Don’t hope for things elsewhere. Now

that you've wasted your life here, in this small corner, you've destroyed it everywhere in this world" (*DGN* 57). In between, her poems locate home in Ohio and Mississippi, Bellagio and Damascus, and many other places. Like the epigraphs, Dove's poems often capture a sense of home and a desire from afar for it. We see this tendency in the title of the final poem "Old Folk's Home, Jerusalem," which evokes a home that is not really home, and then, for some readers at least, further emphasizes the alienation with geographical distance.

The summary of Kay's *Trumpet* is easier to delineate, but an examination of the structure around concepts of home makes clear the purpose of putting these two works in conversation. *Trumpet* opens with a monologue by newly-widowed Millicent Moody. Her husband, jazz trumpeter Joss Moody, has died and the reports that he is biologically female has become news. A tabloid reporter, Sophie Stones, is pursuing Colman Moody, their adopted son, for a tell-all, hoping to capitalize on Cole's rage and hurt at being excluded from this seemingly essential fact about his father. As Millie remembers her life with Joss and as Cole seeks explanations for what he perceives as betrayal, Joss haunts their lives, not only in spirit, but in the form of news reports, official records, obituaries, letters, and interviews about him, all of which have voice in the text. In two of the most important and striking scenes in the novel, Joss, though dead, speaks from an uneasy limbo, (in a chapter entitled "Music") and from a letter to Cole (Millie mails it after Joss's death). Thus, the dead and the living intertwine; Joss's music becomes the mediating force between worlds. The novel is structured upon a repeating theme: "House & Home" titles six chapters; its kin "Good Hotels" tops another three; other chapters

speak of television, interiors, and in other ways reference home. Like Dove's volume, the novel is obsessed with places of belonging.

Improvisation

Musical improvisation is poesis in motion; it is a process of "imaginative-making" that becomes a strategy for manufacturing the space of self-expression and self-identification. We might begin with an examination of the space-making capabilities of music, which are well-documented. Robert P. Morgan notes that the words we use to refer to music are all terms of spatiality: we speak of "high and low" notes, "small and large" intervals, and of moving "up and down" the scale (259).⁵ In addition to the terminology, our perceptions of music, according to Morgan, are also spatial. Listeners perceive "texture" in music comprised of density and volume; they also identify "'locations' within the available tonal range" (260). Music, in general, Morgan asserts, is spatial. At the heart of a capacity for spatialization is musical ornamentation, which might be thought of as improvisation in brief. Morgan observes that musical ornamentation, of which grace notes are one example, underpins a conception of music as spatial as well as temporal. For example, he notes that famed musicologist, Heinrich Schenker, takes his inspiration from ornamentation to develop a structuralist analysis in which Schenker conceives of *all* music as an "unfolding" (263). Elaboration in several registers produces the composition itself. In other words, music, whether ornamental or a basic theme, might be conceived as demarcating through notation "a space of relationships"(261). Whereas grace notes make a slight, momentary intervention, augmenting a piece through elaboration one note at a time, jazz improvisation often unfurls in a long string of notes into new directions for minutes at a time, screaming up to

those fabled “high Cs” or rumbling into the bass. In either case, improvisation spatializes along its temporal and qualitative parameters – materially, as an accumulation of notes on a page of musical score or as sound waves into the atmosphere, and metaphorically as “density” of sound and “range” of pitch. Music, then, especially improvisation, provides a model of self-generative space-production in both physical and psychological dimensions. That is, as music progresses, it makes space in notes, in sound, and in the imagination.

Barry Kernfeld defines improvisation as “the spontaneous creation of music” (119),⁶ which might occur either collectively or soloistically. Solo improvisation comprises “freedom of invention,” “virtuosity, and “ornamental elaboration” (Kernfeld 120), while collective improvisation normally refers to a musical dialogue between two soloists. In either formulation, improvisation – which might seem completely random and unstructured – might be categorized, per Kernfeld, according to its development along one of three general methodologies: paraphrase (ornamentation of a theme), formulaic (interspersing continuing lines with a diverse range of fragmentary ideas), or motivic (applying a variety of musical development techniques to a few fragmentary ideas).⁷ I mention these forms of improvisation to underscore the pedagogical aspects of musical practice; that is, something as unique and spontaneous as improvisation begins from basic theories and strategies that might be learned. Moreover, I suggest that the structure and technical features of the improvisational styles – paraphrase, formulaic, motivic – provide a useful organizing principle for reading Dove’s volume and Kay’s novel. Specifically, each style of improvisation depicts a relationship to an idea of “home” – whether that basis is a given theme or an invented fragment. Therefore, I contend that we might track

in improvisational styles various types of movement away from, interlinking with, and inventing upon an idea of “home,” and further, that these styles are instructive for the development of various manifestations of diasporic consciousness. That is, improvisational technique provides a pedagogical frame both for understanding the transformation of literary consciousnesses in the texts, and for recognizing symptomatic expressions of, and suggesting strategies for, developing self-conscious awareness of self beyond a given identity. Building upon ideas of space, creativity, and relation to home, I examine below how methodologies of improvisation might be used to organize, both metaphorically and structurally, conceptions of diasporic consciousness.

Diasporic Consciousness

Before delving further into musical technique, it will be useful to understand the outlines of its aim: an expanded sense of community and identification associated with diaspora that improvisation both develops and contests. This discussion will support the final contention in this chapter that subjectivities developed through music might offer a redefinition of the concept of diaspora, licensing the broader uses to which the term already lends its name.

Diaspora challenges the notion that identity might be consolidated around conceptions of nation or, to a lesser extent, around autochthonist histories.⁸ In its strictest formulation, it describes the lived experiences of a people bound by the suffering associated with dispersal to multiple, peripheral locations, with alienation in new “home” lands, and with yearning for eventual return.⁹ As James Clifford notes, it is important to recognize the Jewish antecedents to the formulations deployed in the changing world conditions; however, diaspora should not be limited to some ideal type. Clifford

encourages an extension of the term “diaspora,” based on: “decolonization, increased immigration, global communications, and transport – a whole range of phenomena that encourage multilocal attachments, dwelling, and traveling within and across nations” (249). Paul Gilroy suggests that “diaspora” escapes more conventionalized categories of identity:

As an alternative to the metaphysics of ‘race,’ nation, and bounded culture coded into the body, diaspora is a concept that problematizes the cultural and historical mechanics of belonging. It disrupts the fundamental power of territory to determine identity by breaking the simple sequence of explanatory links between place, location, and consciousness. It destroys the naïve invocation of common memory as the basis of particularity in a similar fashion by drawing attention to the contingent political dynamics of commemoration.¹⁰

In other words, diaspora is a useful concept for disrupting established cultural traditions or power hierarchies based on land and bloodlines. The application of the term to increasing numbers of populations has produced a discourse signifying “dwelling-in-displacement” (to use Clifford’s term) where the living here is always in tension with a homeland elsewhere. Therefore, we might see diaspora as a term that captures a sense of internal tensions and competing demands between some sense of home, real or imagined, and separation from that home, resistant or reconciled. Paul Gilroy identifies a “consciousness of diaspora affiliation” that exists outside given cultural, political, and national forms of belonging. I want to focus on this sense of consciousness, what we might think of as diaspora internalized.

If we understand, with Gilroy, that diasporic consciousness contains the “idea of movement [that] can provide an alternative to the sedentary poetics of either soil or blood,”¹¹ then we might begin to see a connection between a conception of diaspora and

the imaginary strategizing preceding acts of improvisation. The particular senses of movement inherent in both diaspora and improvisation suggest departures from existing territories, even while recognizing those territories as necessary to the signification of the new expression in identity or in art. Additionally, as demonstrated above, improvisational structures and techniques might be useful metaphors for features of diaspora identified by James Clifford: the ideas of decentering, lateral connection, shared senses of displacement, and resistance might be perceived as features of musical improvisation. Improvisation models trans-spatial connections between pieces in the jazz repertoire, which enacts a similar diasporic longing that “need not be articulated primarily through a real or symbolic homeland” (Clifford 249). In other words, I suggest that musical improvisation has the ability to capture a sense of the emotional and psychological disjunction of alienation, involuntary or willed, associated with not belonging to the community, nation, or professional milieu of one’s current situation. As we have seen, Edward Said speaks to the ways in which musical improvisation actually seizes disjunction, cultivating it as its material of production. As a form of musical elaboration, improvisation involves a process of extending present knowledge through a refinement of musical discipline (i.e., mastering instrument and notes) and an incorporation of “foreign” experience (i.e., bending new sounds, rhythms, and musical ideas to one’s own ideas.) As such, the process of improvisation always involves the development of something without precedent from a basis in the materials at hand. It is a vehicle of cultural mediation, extending material from its existence in traditional and standard forms to its development into new and innovative forms that still resonate with the original’s aura.

I argue that the musical elements in both literary pieces anchoring this chapter draw on the musical idea of improvisation and its various strategies of invention in order to enact the production of what might be conceived as a sense of an internalized diaspora. That is, the literary works not only refer to the far-flung world of the black diaspora, and particularly the connections that Paul Gilroy calls the “Black Atlantic,” but they also constitute, between the covers of the texts and in the personalities of the protagonists, diasporic conditions, including most specifically separation and distance from a home that cannot be recovered.

Dove’s poems in *Grace Notes* and Kay’s *Trumpet*, in their formal and thematic representations of improvisational acts, create the terms and conditions whereby a sense of diaspora might be internalized, meaning specifically a sense in which identifications with blackness cross national and cultural borders and inform the identities of black women. While the author-affiliated narrators in Dove’s poems and *Trumpet*’s Joss Moody experience no easy reconciliations with origins or with their current situations,¹² they nonetheless embrace experiences of exile as “processes of identification” that might result in subject positions inflected by difference, inter-cultural borrowings, and personal reflection. Specifically, the texts insist upon certain expressions of non-belonging and certain performances of exile, thus drawing upon the elaborately contrapuntal,¹³ dissonant, and estranging encounter with alterity (which includes becoming the “other” of a relation). What these texts conjure, then, is constitution of subjectivity¹⁴ around processes of identification that I want to collectivize loosely around the three styles of improvisation, paraphrase, formulaic, and motivic. Although these styles are not progressive, in the sense that one succeeds the next in terms of technical know how or

virtuosity, they do mark a trajectory in terms of relative distance from home. Using improvisation as a hermeneutic tool, we might craft an arc of diasporic consciousness based on the immediacy (or lack thereof) of notions of home. It is sense of diaspora that begins with a natal alignment,¹⁵ always singularly elaborated, moves to identity based in notions of homeland interwoven with associations beyond it, and finally poses an invention of self that relies on an idea of home only at a remove.

Paraphrase: Home In Other Words

Paraphrase improvisation involves the “recognizable ornamentation of an existing theme” (Kernfeld 131).¹⁶ This improvisation starts with a given musical idea, and then manipulates it, maintaining the idea patently and in tact. Possible manipulations include “microscopic rhythmic nuances” that permit the melody to “float” over a steady beat, placing beats slightly off center, playing with the tempo or the time signature.¹⁷ Ornamentation might transform the style of, for example, a popular song, adding chromatics or counterpoint at various points; it might discard all but the chorus and make a new piece of the chorus, or it might translate melody into drum beats that retain a sense of the original. We see that this style keeps home close to the breast, that is, it retains a sense of some “real” home (theme) that existed prior to the improvisation. The paraphrase can be conceived as a replay of the theme “in other terms.” It is thus useful metaphor for an expression home “in other words.” Diaspora, thought paraphrastically, describes a community with direct lived experience in a homeland, carries memories of buildings, roads, churches, shops, and people, as well as habits of daily life from physical encounters of a place known as home. This lived experience is modified in memories, in stories, and by experiences of a new site, but the notion of home remains firmly

ingrained. This improvisational strategy is at heart in Dove's opening poems, "Summit Beach 1921" and "Silos." It also informs the repetition of "Heart & Home" chapters in *Trumpet*, focusing on Millie at the family cabin, Torr, a home that is not quite home.

Rita Dove's poems move away from and deeply into senses of home, rewriting "home" in various discourses and perspectives, all the while maintaining the concept of native place at core. As such, the volume might be read as a grand paraphrase of "home" or an improvisation upon the theme of a homeland. Dove begins her volume with an overture that conjures African-American ties, before launching into the body proper of the volume, *Grace Notes*. The first poem, "Summit Beach, 1921," lies outside the framing epigraphs of five sections that follow, but inside the system of the book. It is the only poem in which she makes specific assertion of race (i.e., "Negro Beach" and "brown shoulders"), though there are other allusions throughout the collection. This poem simultaneously claims an in-between status, resisting containment, and grounds the collection. It remains outside the formal and thematic structures that delimit all the other poems, and yet it is positioned within the schema of the collection. As a result, the poem not only fabricates part of the texture of the volume, but also insists upon its separation from it. Pereira makes a convincing argument that "Summit Beach, 1921" is really a "Beulah poem that did not find its way into *Thomas and Beulah*" (121).¹⁸ She argues that this initial poem enacts Beulah's "spreading her nomadic wings" in a way that surpasses all the mere talk about it in *Thomas and Beulah* (121). Such positioning invites the reading of "Summit Beach, 1921" not only as a transition between *Thomas and Beulah* and *Grace Notes*, but also as a tether for the volume. In its positionality, the poem initiates the transition from the past and begins to venture into new territory.¹⁹

The Negro Beach, Papa, and a broken leg exert restraints upon the young woman, who would rather be free to dance. She is determined comply with Papa's admonition not to be "fast," but just as determined to take steps into the world. She is full of a daring on this particular evening; it reminds her of the fearlessness of childhood when she tried to fly from her father's shed, relying on nothing but "her parasol and invisible wings" (line 24). She relives the danger in an imagined erotic encounter triggered by the "right man" smiling, sending "music skittering up her calf/like a chuckle" (lines 18-20). Just as her previous leap took her a step beyond her father's caution, so tonight, as she contemplates again a leap "into blue" (line 24), strategizes a move away from the Negro Beach. The poem paraphrases home not only in word, as in "Negro Beach" and "Papa," but also in "moored" and "drank it down" and "itched in the cast." All these terms refer to pressures or binds upon her. Despite these ties, the status quo seems unsteady: "skittering" and "chuckling" unsettle it, presaging the unknowable future.

Contrary to the flight of "Summit Beach," "Silos" feels more like an excavation. It mines the material properties of white privilege, gained through racial and economic inequality, using an unlikely tool of discovery: a child's guessing game. A pair of agro-industrial silos, standing at city's edge, has attracted the inventive powers of a group that we might surmise to be black citizens. The game proceeds as if guessing the shapes in clouds. The narrator recounts various impressions, most in keeping with childhood themes:

They were never fingers, never xylophones, although once
a stranger said they put him in mind of Pan's pipes
and all the lost songs of Greece. But to the townspeople
they were like cigarettes, the smell chewy and bitter
[. . .]
No, no, exclaimed the children. They're a fresh packet of chalk,

dreading math work. (*DGN* 7; lines 4-7, 10-11)

The narrator, herself, is more cynical, thinking the silos look “Like martial swans in spring paraded against the city sky’s / shabby blue, they were always too white and / suddenly there” (lines 1-3). The image is of militant whiteness, a whiteness that contains an expectation of privilege.²⁰ The silos dominate the cityscape and have the ability to be “suddenly there” as if everywhere.

Although most of the voices disagree with the narrator’s pessimism, the poem cannot quite escape the impression of overbearing whiteness. The masculinity becomes not only “martial,” but also is confirmed as phallic: “They were masculine toys. They were tall wishes”(line 12). However, the secret of the silos is buried in what is never guessed or said. The final line announces the silos as “the ribs of the modern world” (line 16); the whiteness of the silos is no longer simply superficial. It is now also embodied, as ribs. The silos can no longer simply be thought of as patent emblems of white industrial wealth, power, and dominance; they must also be thought the latent white ribs of a dark body, inferred from the poem’s coloration of smells from the stacks. Not only are the odors “chewy and bitter,” they are also “like a field shorn of milkweed, or beer brewing, or / a fingernail scorched over a flame” (lines 8-9). These are the smells of labor: the products – tobacco, beer, and the shorn field – are as brown as the bodies that produce them. Alarmingly, the smells also conjure torture. The burnt fingernail is an extraordinary image, especially juxtaposed next to the children’s chalk. The unexpected appearance of pain intimates slavery. But the poem, in the end, claims a positive image for the brown working body. By transposing the whiteness from its visible prominence over-lording the

community to the interior space of a body, where the white spires become white ribs, readers might understand the white hollow silos as struts of the brown body.

The musical references in this poem are important not primarily for their thematic content, but rather for their part in the guessing game that structures the poem's improvisatory moves. The speculations might be conceived as paraphrases of the massive white towers at the heart of the town – a xylophone, panpipes, sticks of chalk, phallus, ribs. These imaginative constructions occupying and dominating the town, and by extension the American heartland, are enveloped in the earthy brown smells of production, labor, and something more ominous. The poem's extemporization on "silos" and their context begs a rereading of these structures standing at the center of community, town, and nation. Its imaginative elaboration invites theories and makes possible the perception of the spires as monuments to unseen brown bodies. In the spinning of possibilities, the silos become visible emblems of an invisible slave population that has made possible the city's (and the nation's) wealth.

Homi Bhabha's notion of mimicry with its emphasis on repetition with a difference identifies a theoretical basis for musical paraphrase. That is, improvisational paraphrase interrogates concepts of singularity and normativity by presenting a series of alternative versions of that concept. Mimicry, in Bhabha's reading, becomes "the sign of a double articulation" (122),²¹ which appears at first blush to credit power to the imitable, but which results in a crippling ambiguity when the colonial power is mocked by a proliferation of menacing partial and incomplete versions of the figure of colonial power. Thus, repetition with a difference becomes the basis for an interrogation of disciplinary

authority. Jackie Kay's novel also, like Bhabha, questions the normative demand for singular and integrated identity categories. However, rather than identifying as Bhabha does, an exploitable gap that emerges between a colonial or dominant ideal and an inadequate "other" (i.e., the *almost the same but not quite* (127), the novel asserts a right to describe a wholeness of identity that is expressively and irrevocably dual. That is, the novel insists that "Joss" – however elaborated, ornamented, or improvised through chest bindings, suit coats, hairstyle, renaming, and trumpet playing – is simply a series of paraphrases of a personality. All the elements constitute the whole, and if it is not integrated, then it is an agglomerated identity. All the articulations in appearance, mannerisms, and preoccupations are merely explanatory aspects of the man (girl).

An insistent duality permeates Kay's novel. Not only do two genders exist simultaneously within Joss, but also a sense of the home that Joss and Millie create together definitely takes two of them. Joss and Millie retain a type of newlywed love that makes Cole feel like an orphan; additionally Joss needs Millie to help him dress and represent the masculine role he adopts. In addition to transgender identity and amorous relationship, the sense of twoness is taken up in chapter headings that announce "House and Home," the architectural and psychological dimensions of dwelling. This split is underwritten by the fact that Millie is away from their primary home, having retreated to Torr, the cabin on the Scottish coast that remains unknown to Joss's public, to escape the paparazzi. Further, Torr, the second home, contains, as far as Millie is concerned, both material and non-material bodies. Memories of Joss come to Millie so vividly at Torr that she is convinced the living and the dead coexist there; she feels his ghostly presence.

The novel also insists that dual identities, produced in acts of adoption and immigration are also moments of simultaneity, indicated in the narrative through double- and nick- names. Cole's girlfriend, Melanie, is known by her dead sister's name (Melanie's real name is Ruth), when her unreconciled family is unable to come to terms with the first infant's death. Joss's drummer is now "Big Red," but he has had many nicknames over the years, and Josephine's (i.e., Joss's) best friend in elementary school remembers that "half the people in her class were not known by those names [on the register]. [...] They all had two personalities" (*T* 249). More significantly, Joss's adopted son, Colman, used to be William Dunsmore, someone Cole imagines who would be completely different than Cole himself. The name, "Colman" itself contains a dual reference; its spelling is Irish in recognition of his mother's heritage, while it conjures African-American jazz saxophonist, Coleman Hawkins (*T* 5) and the black music important to his father. Joss's own father, born in Africa (or perhaps West Indies: the novel is deliberately ambiguous on this point), never uses his given name, but rather goes by "John Moore," assigned to him upon his arrival. Joss comments on the re-naming in their family that has obscured second selves: "That's the thing with us: we keep changing names. We've all got that in common. We've all changed names, you, me, my father. All for different reasons. Maybe one day you'll understand mine" (*T* 276). In oversubscribing instances of dual and multiple naming, the novel normalizes the simultaneous existence of two-ness in the constitution of identity. In equating the processes of re- and double-naming that occur in adoption, immigration, and more informal acts, the novel conventionalizes aspects of transgendering and thus works to extend the category of heteronormativity. We might understand the novel's self-conscious moves to name and

re-name as a form of paraphrasing identity; that is, finding another way to refer to a person beyond their “given” name, participates in the same sort of de-essentialization necessary to achieve the indivi-duality of a transgendered subjectivity.

In addition to the patent markers of structures of duality, the novel resonates with a “crypt” reference, particularly suitable to a plot whose main character speaks from the dead. Similar to the way in which the title instrument, “trumpet,” is the remainder of the hovering spirit of the man, “Joss,” so, in even more veiled reference, is the novel itself the embodiment of the hit tune “Body & Soul.” This song is never mentioned explicitly; however, Cole’s namesake, the jazzman Coleman Hawkins²² became famous for his rendition of this song. The allusion is part of the novel’s project of naming to demonstrate double identities, particularly the way in which one identity might substitute another even as both identities persist. To this end, “Body & Soul” is an unseen undercurrent, a jazz formbook²³ if you will, summoning patterns reciprocity and conjunction between the physical (body) and the imagination (soul) underwriting jazz improvisatory performance. It also alludes to the divide Joss bridges between genders in music: the female body and Joss’s attendant and necessary conceptualization of maleness are embraced and transcended in musical invention and performance. Additionally, Hawkins’s rendition of “Body & Soul” calls into question the notion of origins: it is famous specifically for the fact that he plays it as a series of improvisations *without any* direct statement of the composed musical subject. That is, Hawkins begins with “a spontaneous paraphrase of [the theme]” (Brown 117).²⁴ Thus, this elliptical reference points to *restatement* rather than a statement, underscoring the novel’s interrogation of notions of authenticity. Hawkins’s performance suggests that even foundations might be imagined. Finally,

technically, Hawkins' rendition is particularly important for its complicated harmonic substitutions,²⁵ which further highlight the supplementation (in the Derridian double sense of addition and substitution) of the girl, Josephine in the man, Joss that Joss negotiates through music.

Simultaneity has long been the province of music, remaining largely inarticulatable in literature. However, Stephen Benson cites the efforts of Bakhtin to theorize multiplicity in literary narrative through the metaphor of musical polyphony. Bakhtin, as Benson reminds us, "employs musical terms as organizing concepts" (296).²⁶ Of particular relevance to our discussion is Benson's explication of the musical to the literary in Bakhtin's work: "polyphony offers a concept of singularity *constituted* from a plurality of possible liminal meetings" (299) That is, polyphony names, in effect, a "plural singularity" (300), a singularity that is decidedly not a combination of intertwining separate parts, but rather one that is inextricably a "plural wholeness," a "constitutive simultaneity" (300). Kay's novel exploits this unreachable simultaneity in literature, noting also its impossibility in lived experience, That is, the projection of gender to the public is necessarily singular. However, in performance, particularly in its depiction of improvisation, the novel creates a place where gender might be expressed plurally: with "music [as] his blood" (*T* 135), Joss can be, at the same time, a girl and a man. This is exactly Judith Butler's point when she suggests simultaneity is part of the transgendered body.²⁷ In performing a subject position contrary to or in conflict with one's sexuality, the subject is "constituted in and through the iterability of its performance, a repetition which works at once to legitimate and delegitimate the realness norms by which it is produced" (131).²⁸ That is, the actuality of female bodily

organization undergirds, like a palimpsest, each feat of masculinity. In producing maleness, then, norms of masculinity are internalized and normalized in the everyday production of them: the “realness norms” “compel belief,” and “produce the normalized effect [...that is] the result of an embodiment of norms, a reiteration of norms” (Butler 129). In the everyday repetition of characteristics of masculinity – wrapping her chest, bulking up body weight with layers of clothing, leading a jazz band, signing adoption papers as Cole’s father, walking with a certain “masculine” gait, and trumpet-playing – Joss becomes a “believable” male.

The novel suggests that various instantiations of the self co-exist simultaneously and multiply. Each variation might be read as a paraphrase, with no one version, following the model of Hawkins’s “Body & Soul” being an original. In this reading, we see paraphrase less in the Bhabhian sense of mimicry, with its implications of insufficiency and recovery through mockery, and more in Gilroy’s notion of “changing same,” in which reiteration “is not some invariant essence that gets enclosed subsequently in a shape-shifting exterior [nor is it ...] the sign of an unbroken, integral inside protected by a camouflaged husk.”²⁹ Repetition in the paraphrastic vein is conducive to the dynamic, complex movement that Gilroy deems essential for formation of diaspora.

Formulaic Improvisation: Home Extending Toward Cosmopolitanism

Formulaic improvisation employs many different formulas [also called “ideas,” “figures,” “gestures,” “motives,” and in jazz vernacular, “licks”]³⁰ in combination with continuing musical lines. This improvisational style starts with a theme, but unlike the paraphrase, it maintains no fidelity to it. Improvisation by formula responds to other

elements in the music, such as tempo, moment-to-moment harmonic progression, and so on and can be thought of as “the delivery of a concise, eloquent answer to a question in conversation [...that] requires knowledge of the issue at hand, a powerful vocabulary, and a quick mind.”³¹ Formulaic improvisation, contrary to the implications of its name (i.e., that it will be mechanistic, standardized, rigid) assembles a constantly responsive, frequently changing, and ever-expanding mode of interaction and participation, a music-making in the moment. A formulaic style may be, of the three, the most easily allied to the concept of diaspora. The intertwining of new invention with old material basic to formulaic technique conjures the processes described by Gilroy: “diaspora identities [as...] creolized, syncretized, hybridized, and chronically impure cultural forms.”³² Formulaic improvisation not only retains notions of home in the “mind’s ear as a reference point” (Demsey 791), but also implies movement that extends fearlessly far a field from this home base. Thus formulaic style might enrich a sense of diasporic consciousness by permitting a conceptualization of it as a mindset always complicated in its lived forms here and now by recalled forms there and then, and by interactions with others who know/knew that home. This improvisational interweaving is useful in analyzing Dove’s self-definitive “Ars Poetica” and in her perspective on postcolonial Paris in “The Island Women of Paris.” Formulaic improvisation sheds light on the intertwining of elements in Joss’s identity.

Dove’s “Ars Poetica” and “Island Women of Paris” feature homes – Wyoming and the Caribbean Islands – and enact disassociations from them in a move toward cosmopolitanism. Critic Malin Pereira has written extensively on Dove as a cosmopolitan: she cites Dove’s influences from the “black intellectual tradition” of

W.E.B. DuBois and Alain Locke that “affirm[s] the original cosmopolitan ideal (from the Greco-Roman Stoics) of a ‘world citizen’ who draws freely upon cultural materials” (199).³³ Pereira notes the tension between Dove’s embrace of this worldly ideal and the Black Nationalist public (forming her early audiences), which expected her “to follow racial protocols, writing within the protest theme or on overtly black American subject matter” (199). However, in writing *Grace Notes* Dove insists upon the right to draw materials from all the cultures of her experience. Dove writes of comfort with home and of a simultaneous desire to detach from it in “Ars Poetica.” The speaker positions herself in the open expanse of Wyoming: “Thirty miles to the only decent restaurant / was nothing, a blink / in the long dull stare of Wyoming” (lines 1-3). Unlike the self-important essayist she drives cross-country, the speaker knows and is at home in the great vastness of the state. “Halfway there” (line 4), she stops so he can be “*in this*” (line 6), but he is immediately terrified, getting only ‘fifteen yards onto the land / before sky bore down and he came running, / crying Jesus – there’s nothing out there!’” (lines 7-9). Although Wyoming is her territory, the speaker seizes a more “unhomely” midpoint as a space for herself: she sees not only herself mid-state, but her writing between the egoist’s essays and the arrogant novels of Australian she knows (presented in verse 2). The narrator wants “this poem to be small, / a ghost town / on the larger map of wills” (lines 16-18). She is satisfied that her poem makes a small intercession that frames space, but also leaves it vacant, as if it were a “ghost-town,” ready for speculation in the imagination of readers. Moreover, the middle ground she claims is also transient: her readers, she says, should “pencil [her] in as a hawk: / a traveling x-marks-the-spot” (lines 19-20). Like grace notes – diminutive notational gestures of momentary agency and the

ornamentation of improvisation – the narrator-poet envisions for herself a place detached from the world, but connected to it, at least by sight.

The poem poses the terrors of what Bhabha identifies as the “unhomely” in literature – the recognition of the unfamiliar within the spaces defined as home. Bhabha locates the problematic of unhomeliness in the figure of the woman. That is, women like James’ Isabel Archer or Gordimer’s Aila³⁴ suddenly find the “recesses of the domestic space” (Bhabha 13) rife with worldly intrusions (‘incredulous terror,’ and illegal gun-running, respectively). Similarly, Dove’s speaker discovers the same unhomeliness in her home state of Wyoming, but the poem reverses Bhabha’s formulation. In the “Ars Poetica,” it is the men who are terrorized. Not only is the essayist frightened by the outdoors, but also the Australian novelist finds the domestic sphere disagreeable. He “never learned to cook/because it robbed creative energy” (lines 11-12), and he acted the executioner in his study, taking “an ax” to the pages he had written the day before. Further, and in contrast to the essayist who fled the outdoors, the woman speaker knows the pleasure of unhomeliness, even though her sense of the “unhomely” is not confined to interiors. Indeed, the vast outdoors of Wyoming and the entire sky above it are home. She allows the emptiness of these spaces to enter her poems, making them, on one hand, “ghost towns” and “small,” while on the other hand, expanding her idea of home. Although “home” might be mapped onto the plains of Wyoming as an “x,” it also extends skyward with the speaker-as-hawk. This poem on artistic method surprisingly, given its claim of belonging to a landlocked state, articulates a process of situating in unstable, even unfamiliar locations; the poem might be taken as Dove’s manifesto of cosmopolitanism, applicable to the volume and possibly to her entire artistic oeuvre.

Ideas of home and unhomeliness are further complicated in the “Island Women of Paris.” Here the women not only discover what is alien and embrace it as in the “Ars Poetica,” but more radically, they also create foreignness within new home territories. The women from the Caribbean, now in Paris, transform their exile from a potentially debilitating condition to one determinedly spectacular. They take pride in their difference from their surroundings and flaunt it; they assert rights to a center that they insist on defining. Their middle-of-the-road positions, but those having nothing to do with mediocrity, ordinariness, or compromise; instead they inhabit the metropole, making their extraordinary, non-normative performances central to the city. From the opening line, the island women occupy the city aggressively, insisting that their home of the present (Paris) accommodate the home of their pasts. They traverse the streets of the city, inscribing a woof and warp in the wake of their movements:

The Island Women of Paris
skim from curb to curb like regatta
from Pont Neuf to the Quai de la Rappe
in cool negotiation with traffic (*DGN* 65, title, lines 1-3)

The women will always be suspended between the islands that they left behind and the capital that they inhabit. Their negotiation of traffic repeats their negotiation of Caribbean and Parisian societies. They occupy their middle roles fully and with gusto: “each a country to herself” (line 4). The city is simply the “sea” of their spectacle. The poem views their aesthetic presence, but denies aesthetics the power to define their appearance as homogenous. The individualistic style of each one’s hairdo attests to the uniqueness of her place of origin. These women are a “regatta,” not cohesive, but competitive, as much “islands” in Paris as they were separate islanders in the Caribbean. The etymology of

regatta also suggests women “striving for mastery” of their space and of the culture they find themselves in. They triumph by introducing the unfamiliar of the islands to Paris, insisting the unhomey (i.e., island culture) is home, and alternatively making “home” of the unhomey (i.e., inflecting Paris). Their cultural in-betweenness ensures repeated rehearsal of middle positioning. Their everyday experience is *praxis* in mediation.

The poem presents the island women as subjects whose dress and movements are an improvisation on the cityscape. The women have no interest in blending with grays and browns of the bridges and piers; instead they are in conversation with Paris. The poem deploys their eccentric, unexpected response to Pont Neuf and Quai de la Rappe:

The island women glide past held aloft
by a wire running straight to heaven.
Who can ignore their ornamental bearing,
turbans haughty as parrots,
or deft braids carved into airy cages
transfixed on their manifest brows? (lines 7-12)

The island women, possessed of “ornamental bearing,” both enhance the streets and embellish the dull greyness of Paris; while in Paris, they are also outside its normal parameters. They are idiosyncratic, as different from one other as from the local residents. The island women are neither of Paris, nor any longer of the Caribbean; they are in-between, a status heightened by their middle positions between earth and heaven (“held aloft/by a wire running straight to heaven” (line 8)). And yet, they provide the connective tissue as much between viewers and themselves (“Who can ignore their ornamental bearing” (line 9)), as between earth and sky. The women are adornments, but also necessary, to complete the full sense of the colonial city.

The poem underscores the women's persistent in-between positioning by formally locating the body of the poem in a middle. The extremes of the poem – its title and last line – gesture both into and away from the poem proper. This double open-endedness structures a perpetual relationality, a continual exchange, between the interior and exterior of the poem. The title is not only the poem's introduction and face to the world; it also functions as the poem's first line. The opening of the poem proper, "skim from curb to curb like regatta," makes no sense without the nominative of the title, "The Island Women of Paris." Therefore, the title retains its traditional role of naming the poem for the outside world, but it also maintains an irrevocable link to the inside of the poem. The poem executes a similar move at the end. The last verse of the poem addresses the reader:

The island women move through Paris
as if they had just finished inventing
their destinations. It's better
not to get in their way. And better
not look an island woman in the eye --
unless you like feeling unnecessary. (lines 13-18)

The double dash of the last line graphically inscribes a definitive break and a shift in perspective. The poem turns suddenly outward to hail the reader with "you." Therefore, rather than closing the poem, the last line casts its voice beyond the poem, establishing an exterior relation in the interpellation. The poem remains in its form perpetually open, defining a continuing relation between the inside "they" to the outside "you." The space of the poem depicts Paris, but remains open to that which is beyond its geographical borders. The poem poses the middle as a position of power. The women are not just the object of the spectator-poet's gaze, but each woman has eyes with the capacity to reduce "you" to "unnecessary." In this optic agency, each island woman is confirmed in her

individuation. Not only costume (headgear), but customs (parading) repulse collectivization by the “imperial” gaze of the poet and the reader. The women’s ornamentalism singles them out, recognizing their non-normative individualism as they claim the power to intersperse Parisian streets, and to call the interpolated city home.

Rejecting fixed belonging to ordinary places, these two poems make no claims to rootlessness. Instead, they document experiences of the type Edward Said calls “contrapuntal” – “juxtapositions [of cultures] that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy [producing ...] a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be” (186).³⁵ These poems locate cosmopolitanism as a state of mind, a construction of the imagination that might be emulated, adopted, and practiced.

* * *

Wai Chee Dimock offers us an example from fractal geometry of the serrated intersections of two systems meeting.³⁶ She focuses on the relations that might be plotted as a set of points (fractals) according to a geometry of “non-integers,” that is, “of what loops around, what breaks off, what is jagged, what comes only in percentages” (88);³⁷ fractals mark the relation at the irregular join. Dimock applies this formula of relations to literary studies to suggest a model of extended kinship within genre categories continually in motion, able to deal with a “volatile body of material [such as literature], still developing, still in transit, and always on the verge of taking flight, in some unknown and unpredictable direction” (86). We might use the model of fractals to augment our idea of improvisation by formulas, which as we remember, anticipates interjections of figures of response into fluid lines of music. Thus, superficial fluidity does not preclude,

at finer levels of focus, breaks that provide opportunities for entry. Fractals allow recognition of the hesitation within brilliant discourse or prose, the fractional moment in conversation that invites a response from the listener, which has the potential for establishing new and unanticipated relations. Jazz formulaically improvised is something like the annotated text that is itself and more than itself, multiplying with figures between the lines and at the margins.

With such images we might imagine the ways in which an elaborative improvisation expands boundaries, becoming a medium of translation between worlds. Specifically, in Kay's novel, soloistic improvisation is the material of the spirit of death, which is felt by the living, and of limbo that extends life into death. When Joss dies, he does not exit life abruptly, but rather transitions from life to limbo through music. Importantly, even before Joss succumbs to death, he has had something like practice for it in music. When he plays, he feels himself "going down [...] all the way to the bottomless ground. There's the sensation of falling without ever stopping. Each time like dying" (*T* 134). Millie believes Joss's funeral has not provided Joss "a good send-off" and that he is, she is sure, "still hanging around in limbo" (*T* 155), his thoughts becoming hers.

That jazz has the capacity for joining irreconcilable realms is Édouard Glissant's thesis. He identifies jazz as a mode of expression springing from the otherwise untranslatable distance between cultures of plantation life. Incorporating rudimentary, work-needed words from European languages, silence from ignorance and illiteracy, and coded forms of communication, "the Creole language integrated these three modes and made them jazz" (73).³⁸ Jazz is a mode of expression that becomes, according to Glissant, "the speech of the world" (73), incorporating all forms of speech into a "Baroque" –

“irregularly shaped,” “odd,” and “grotesque.”³⁹ Musically, the term “baroque,” refers to a florid and ornamental style and evokes the realm of improvisation. In this convolution, jazz, Creole, and improvisation emerge as interwoven forms of an unwieldy, *bricolage* style, aggregating word-by-word, bit-by-bit, into new constructions in music and speech. For Gayatri Spivak, creolity based in Glissant’s concept of “Relation [that] is open totality; [in which] totality would be relation at rest [and t]otality is virtual” (109)⁴⁰ summons the notion of “imperfection, even as it assures the survival of a rough future” (110). Spivak’s response of creolity to Dimock’s idea of the fractal edges of relations recognizes a whole, but refuses Dimock’s idea of a self-contained totality. For Spivak, creolity promises processes of “‘invagination,’ whereby a part insistently becomes bigger than the whole” (107). In creolity, Spivak finds space from which to access the nonsystematic and otherwise unaccommodated.

Improvisation by formula comes close to describing a process of creolity. Both are performances that describe a space of relations; both are engines of innovation, driven by imagination in rough and irregular encounter with foreignness; both work *with* (not *within*) a totality, while remaining fearless in the face of boundedness that the totality implies. The novel asserts through jazz improvisation a refusal of normative boundaries; it asserts a demarginalization as if a process of everyday occurrence, and not simply a move toward transcendence. For example, jazz takes Millie to an “‘in’ world [...] somewhere out of [her]self” (*T* 16); she loses Joss altogether to some other world of music when he plays. Joss himself robs the listening minds and souls from the bodies of his audience members: “They will follow the sax down to the deep dark place” (*T* 17).

Joss and Millie rehearse this easy disconnection from the realm of the real in their home and marriage. Particularly, the activities associated with Joss's gender transformation are interwoven into routine in ways that suggest interaction between heteronormative and non-normative versions of domesticity. Two of Joss's record albums speak to this dialectic tension. The first, *Millie's Song* from 1958, is a tribute to his wife; the third, *Fantasy Africa*, (T 208)⁴¹ half a dozen years later, encapsulates a sense of Africa, that is, the "strong imaginary landscape within himself" (T 34), which he believes every black person carries inside. The first album credits Millie for establishing a sense of home. In agreeing to become his wife, she also agrees to provide the material façade that allows him to become "husband," "father," and "male lover." Millie consolidates the heterosexuality of their relationship by naming it as such, despite same-sex coupling in the bedroom. (Millie insists she has no lesbian attachments to Joss; he is her man.) The second album, *Fantasy Africa*, recognizes Africa, not as lived experience, but as Joss knows it through jazz. This album demarcates the imaginative non-Scottish dimensions of their home together. It is important to note, and recordings (as opposed to live performances) help to underscore the point, that both Millie's and Joss's ideas of home are equally constructed. While she provides a unified façade, he provides multiple versions of his background, claiming preference or allegiance to none.

Underwriting these loose attachments to identity and to the world is Joss's (and the novel's) theory of familial relations: "you make up your own bloodline, Colman. Make it up and trace it back. Design your own family tree" (T 58). As if to underscore the ease with which blood might be made and given, at will, Millie and Joss meet at a blood donor's station (T 11). Joss spins alternate histories about himself for Cole, off the top of

his head: he tells his son that his father might have come from Africa or America or the Caribbean (*T* 59). Eventually he claims “[t]he music is his blood. His cells,” but even at that “the blood doesn’t matter after all” (*T* 135). At end, the novel insists that origins and bloodlines should be simply the subject of poesis, of improvisation. In the final section of this chapter, we return to the importance of the invented figures of identity and home, and particularly the ways jazz invention is a necessary imperative for expression of hybrid experience.

Motivic Improvisation: Invention of An Idea of Identity and Home

Finally, motivic improvisation settles on one (or a few) motives (again, ideas, gestures, formulas, licks) that “form the basis for a section of a piece” (Kernfeld 143). This style of improvisation relies on technical variation of the motive, which remains recognizable and highlighted throughout the section. Motives in variation create coherence in the absence of theme or chordal progressions (Kernfeld 145). This improvisatory style involves technical virtuosity in the deployment of an original idea, which is changed in a multitude of ways, including by adding notes, by transposition to a higher or lower pitch, by stretching or compressing the contour of the idea, by increasing or decreasing the tempo, by starting the idea in a different place, or by turning the idea on its head.⁴² Whereas in a formulaic method, new notions are interwoven with existing, continuous lines, in motivic style, new ideas are themselves strung together to make the music. Motivic improvisation is most disconnected from an idea of home and presents new designs devised from imagination. Given that this imagination is not created from whole cloth, we might understand that diasporic consciousness, unfolding motivically, embodies the echo or shadow of home. Given that motivic improvisation usually spans

only a section, we might conceive this style as interspersed with other sections in which improvisatory methods are more closely tied with a starting point. Thus, motivic improvisation implies the furthest detour or extension from home, but one that is perhaps not permanent. The idea of improvisatory variation on an idea informs the structures of Dove's volume and Kay's novel, working specifically to expand the conceptions of diaspora itself.

Dove once commented in an interview⁴³ that she thought her poems resolved in ways similar to music. However, the structure of *Grace Notes* itself and several of its poems specifically counteract the idea of resolution. The volume produces, instead, five segments which might be read as motivistic. Each segment contains a series of new inventions on a theme. None of the sections resolve in any sort of neat circularity, but rather each ends in a poem distinctly off topic, veering into new subjects, tones, or attitudes. For example, section one headed by Morrison's epigraph on the intense magnetism of origins contains a series of poems on childhood activities and memories: eating "Quaker Oats," shooting "The Buckeye," singing "Hully Gully." The series is capped by a final poem that explicit refuses to contemplate a tragedy involving a childhood friend. The thematic continuance is thus disrupted by a sharp twist at the end; the section proceeds as if it were a twelve-bar blues.⁴⁴ Susan McClary likens the harmonic suspension at the end of every twelve-bar blues verse to Scheherazade's storytelling: "the ending is never really an ending, but rather a "'turnaround' that pushes forward into the next cycle" (41).⁴⁵ I claim a sense of this twelve-bar blues structure for the volume; in this first section the inventions on figures from childhood turn sharply at the idea of grief in "Poem in Which I Refuse Contemplation." The narrator learns, in a

postcard from her mother, that her cousin has been “strangled at some chili joint,” (DGN 19, line 16). The gruesome detail is presented off-hand, followed immediately by news of her mother’s garden. The poem’s speaker also leaps from thought to thought, erratically concerned about her family’s arrival at her German mother-in-law’s house, her period, the worrisome struggle with language (for conversing in German or for writing poetry in English). Reading the odd neologistic misspellings that conjure her mother’s voice, the speaker cuts and skips as much as the postcard, both attempting to avoid dwelling on the horrible death, the tragic end of a certain youth. The poem unsettles the previous childhood reverie that has been unfolding in other poems. In its formal order, it doesn’t follow or fit with the childhood poems; it resists resolution.⁴⁶ The final poems of other sections end similarly: the section beginning with a longing for innocence ends with two poems on death; the section that opens with a plea to receive the gift of words ends with a poem about vulnerability to fate; the section that begins with a desire to belong concludes with the too-close intimacy of old age, and the final section, which begins with an insistent here and now, leaves us suspended in the heterotopia of a nursing home, waiting without end. Each final poem works to complicate notions of coherence of its section; each of the five subdivisions builds on a theme, and then denies its resolution by switching subjects, themes, or tone.

Motivic structure – the string of new presentations of a theme – *sans* resolution is well summed in the poem “Particulars.” The poem itself appears within a section focused on interiors. The motive for the specific poem emerges only in the final words, “eternal *dénouement*.” We learn that the idea creating anxiety for the speaker is the endlessness of things; there is, she comes to realize, only a perpetual unraveling, an infinity that

threatens the meaningfulness of the present. The speaker's insight is like Levinasian philosophy: there is, he suggests, a "fundamental anxiety"⁴⁷ to a sense of being extending with end. Dove's speaker attempts to trap this proliferating eternity in an "agenda" (line 3), in a routine of muffins and jam followed by "crying every morning ten sharp" (line 7), by tracking patterns of behavior and pre-empting them. She finds the cure for interminable being in an otherness; however, this otherness is apparent only through a small textual marker. A sentence in italics, begun with the inclusive pronoun, divulges the presence of a confidante: "*We never learn a secret until/it's useless*" (DGN 31, lines 18-19). The other that comprises a "we" promises the speaker the possibility of being known, of interrupting the tragedy of infinity (Alford 39).⁴⁸

I return in the conclusion to the final poem in Dove's volume, which takes up the dual and conflicting interplay between home and the tragedy of eternity in a site decidedly not home. "Old Folk's Home, Jerusalem," contains the barest echoes of childhood in reference to a "Law of Innocents" and home is conjured as the site where "Everyone waiting here was once in love."

Kay's novel unfolds contrapuntally, not only in the marriage, but also between father and son. Where Joss continuously resists the confines of identity, Cole desperately seeks it, especially in light of the disruption visited upon him by his father's secret and the ensuing destruction of all parameters by which he knew the world. The novel exceeds the boundaries of the real to accommodate Joss's ability to speak for himself after death. Speaking from the limbo of an unquiet death, Joss recalls the improvisatory solos that simultaneously make the space and gather the components of a multi-faceted subjectivity,

and then he sweeps them all away, as literally, im-material, both in the sense of being disembodied and being of no consequence whatsoever. In the chapter, "Music," Joss imagines that "[w]hen he gets down [...], he loses his sex, his race, his memory" (T 131). Remembering a world of sound that is as separate as his current indeterminate state, he fearlessly detaches from everything that connects him to the world: "The horn ruthlessly strips him bare till he ends up with no body, no past, nothing" (T 135). Reduced to the ephemera of music, Joss can reconnect, reaffiliate at will, choosing from inventions he creates, the expression in jazz that makes him who he is: "Scotland. Africa. Slavery. Freedom. He is a girl, A man. Everything, nothing. He is sickness, health. The sun. The moon. Black, white. Nothing weighs him down. Not the past of the future. He hangs on to the high C and then he lets go" (T 136). Between life and death, there is limbo; between body and soul, there is music. Music is the limbo Joss has lived his entire adult life.

For his son, things are not so easy. Cole is admittedly nonmusical and cosmopolitan only unwillingly (traveling as a child without choice); he has received almost no benefit from his father's jazz career. Unlike Joss, who avoids at least some of the most egregious racial discrimination because he has found a profession and genre in which blacks are accorded status, Colman faces daily racial bigotry of London's anti-immigrant population. Therefore, whereas Joss can insist that the past is of no consequence to the person that he might become, Cole feels betrayed by a denial of the only past as he has known. Significantly, he decides to narrate his own version of his life, given what he thinks of as his father's hypocrisy. In this move, which ostensibly will become the official version of the family's homelife, Cole participates in the very process

his father urges, that is, fabricating home and lineage for himself. Importantly, his narration occurs in chapters entitled “Good Hotels.” Sophie Stones has arranged for them to stay in fancy digs as she conducts the investigation and the interviews. What it means for Cole is that the “home” in which narrates homelife is a false home. It is no more real than the multiple possible realities Joss spins for him.

In these inverted aims, towards self-definition and away, lies the motive inspiring the series of fragments that comprise the novel. The novel’s characters are loosely and tangentially connected by the project of discovery: who was Joss Moody? The chapters work as a network of affiliations among individuals, some more permanent and stronger than others. The novel strings together fragmented ideas all rehearsing conceptions of perceptions of the man, once a jazz player. We might conceive a pedagogy in this process. The concatenation of chapters produces in the novel its thematic instruction: a methodology for construction one’s own genealogy. The novel assembles the materials necessary by which Cole can accomplish the task his father sets him: to make up his own bloodline. The resources assembled (of which readers have more than Cole) extend from the trivial (journalistic speculations) to the profound (the funeral director’s disclosure of the biological “truth” in fleshly detail). They are presented in forms ranging from letters to the editor to a letter in Joss’s hand to Cole. The novel provides Cole a range of authorities (the public record, Edith Moore (Joss’s mother)), confidantes (Sophie Stones, the father he still hears in his head), and sources of knowledge (newspaper accounts, personal testimonies). The accumulation of detail about Joss is the text from which Cole might design his own family tree.

The aim of the novel then is the formulation in fragments of a world of resources from which Cole and might construct own diasporic imaginary. It proposes a process, but significantly leaves the crucial moment of transformation opaque to readers. When Sophie discovers Joss's mother, Edith, a white Scotswoman, whom Joss has kept even from Millie; she arranges for Cole to meet her. This meeting completely transforms his attitudes towards his parents' deception, his father's lie, and himself as a black man. Readers learn nothing of this encounter, seeing only the outcome: Cole cancels his contract with the tabloid; he can no longer betray his father. Although the moment is undisclosed, we might speculate on the conversation. Indeed, we might read the silence and the absence as the novel's encouragement of readerly response; the novel makes space and time for our own improvisation.

We might speculate that Cole is convinced by Edith of the value of family cohesion, given Edith's earlier thoughts to herself: "if nobody knows you how can you be yourself?" (*T* 221). Cole's unwilling adrift-ness matches Edith's having no earthly soul to visit once Joss stops visiting. We might also speculate that Edith activates Cole's imagination. Just standing at her door waiting to be let into her house, his mind spins with scenarios as fantastic as any his father ever created. He imagines Edith is hiding inside in fear that Cole, a big, black man will harm her. He envisages himself fleeing the porch at an Olympian pace equaling Sebastian Coe in speed, "mak[ing] history at this very moment" (*T* 228). And indeed we recognizing his visualizations are the very process of inventing "history" that his father has been urging. Finally, we might speculate that the photos Edith gives him of Josephine, age 7, and of her black husband, John, or all the family addresses she reels off proudly, fill him with images and ideas, so that he

understands rootedness as harder to bear than he had imagined. After his call on her, [h]is whole body is heavy with [...] thick sadness” (T 242). Whatever actually transpires in the nine hours of that visit, we can conclude at least that he has the material of a past to contest the singularity of life as he has always known it. In seeing other versions of the past, Cole is more easily able to venture into the contrapuntal existence of an exile, in which the known co-exists with the unknown, in which the habitual permits the possibility of something new.

These improvisational styles of musical thinking and creativity enact strategies of elaboration, invention, and variation to emphasize generational, generic, and stylistic intermixtures in self- and subject-formation. As a final thought, I also want to suggest that improvisational space and time being outside of “normal” dimensions might be conceived as akin to Michel Foucault’s notion of heterotopias. Foucault posits heterotopias as places existing in the world that have the capacity simultaneously to reflect and to deny social norms. Their position outside normative spaces rehearses, while critiquing, accepted cultural practice. My reading of Dove’s *Grace Notes* and Kay’s *Trumpet* suggests that the improvisational characteristics of music represented in the texts introduce notions of contradiction and complexity. These authors draw on features of Western music, primarily related to individualistic improvisation, to portray the ambiguity of non-belonging, creating heterotopias where subject positions might skirt fixed identities and recommending structural counter-sites for self-fashioning.

Conclusion: Heterotopias

The act of improvisation in the formation of consciousness, then, is what licenses its diasporic character for those unconnected by lived experience to exile, dislocation, and

disorientation. As a poiesis in motion, improvisation is not so much a process of self-invention, as it is a process of contextual elaboration. That is, improvisation unfurls the materials of self-reflexivity disclosing the space for development of subjectivity. The site of the process of invention is, even when fully present in the world, always heterotopic.

Foucault identifies heterotopias as sites existing simultaneously among, but outside real places, “counter-sites” that contest the sites in which we live.⁴⁹ Heterotopias exist within and stand outside of everyday existence; they are related to, but contradict all other sites; they remain divided from the real by an invisible of “membrane” constructed of prohibition, sacredness, deviation. They juxtapose real sites, but break with traditional temporalities. They are other worlds, illusory or compensatory. Foucault cites cemeteries, nursing homes, brothels, colonies, as examples. I would like to conclude with the idea that music functions not as a space of otherworldliness in these two works, rather as the membrane between worlds, the medium through which the processes of identification might accrue to the individual, creating the space and context of subject formation and the sense of home in motion.

Dove’s *Grace Notes* progresses through a series of resistances to situatedness, as if the aim of serial irresolution is access to space and time operating outside the normal parameters of everyday chronology and presence. The last poem in Dove’s collection, “Old Folks Home, Jerusalem” is set in an emblematic heterotopia: a nursing home for the senile and the elderly. Places in the poems are incongruent and incompatible: kibbutz gardens, Jewish “Valley” settlements, sickrooms, the desert. Every day expands endlessly so that there is only the here and now; time is no longer governed by natural law, but the a-temporality of the “Law of Innocents: What doesn’t end sloshes over . . . / even here

where destiny girds the cucumber” (*DGN* 73, line 3-4). The patients are without memory of the past and without hope for a future: the present does not disappear, but simply “sloshes over” to become more present; nor does it materialize into a future, even though future in the form of destiny weighs heavily on the city, Jerusalem. This heterotopia, like the space of response in the blues (i.e., the fill) presents a permanent deferral of any sort of normative resolution. Just as the final epigraph resists a sense of home “elsewhere” that is better than the one you have made for yourself and carry with you, the patients of the Home recognize that home is simply the conglomeration of simultaneous incongruities that make the present moment. The poem does not deny the existence of home or relations to the past. It reinforces the idea of “home” by its setting, but it denies a sense of return to some previous time and place of origin. Home is rather that which comes with you.

“The Old Folks Home, Jerusalem” provides space at the end of the volume for reflection and commentary on the previous poems, and on the larger world they represent. It is a space ornamental in relation to “normal” life: in describing time beyond normal chronological time, the poem confirms the present as infinite and self-generating; in its spatial amalgamation, the poem iterates the odd juxtapositions of improvisation, suggesting extra-ordinary elaborative and relational possibilities.

Similarly, Kay’s *Trumpet* explicitly claims the spaces of improvisation as heterotopic. The most direct example, we have examined: Joss’s musical improvisation is projected into the real world of the novel from a space beyond death; his music, like the act of improvisation itself, defers return, in this case to either life or to death. Improvisation becomes the space of limbo and the language of mediation between

worlds. The letter Joss writes for Cole to be opened after his death serves almost the same purpose. Here, Joss narrates a discursive history not unlike the one articulated in music, pulling together the bits and pieces not of Joss's history, which has already been told in the language of jazz, but of his father's (Cole's grandfather) history: West Africa, Scotland, ships, white folk, jobs, education, and songs. The letter functions as a site outside of time, a discursive site that relates a collection of memories designed in the end to spur further recollections. Like jazz, the letter is a model for improvising; Joss passes responsibility for inventiveness to Cole, claiming to have told him everything: "I'm being silly: remember what you like" (*T* 277). The letter replaces his father's shoulders; it becomes the perch from which Cole might elaborate new histories.

Surprisingly, the most solid of sites is made heterotopic in Joss's retrospective: the Scotland to which his father disembarks is "Ghost country" filled with "Shadow people" who seem "insubstantial" and without color (*T* 271). While some critics have depicted this Scotland as the land of the dead,⁵⁰ we might see instead the time and space as separated from reality: "those people [...] were the last century" (*T* 273), the ship which he left "an enormous fiction" (*T* 272). In such a space, John too felt "disembodied. His own body became broken up by the fog" (*T* 273). His own country in Africa slips into his memory, returning only in the percussiveness of the horse and carriage of the new place that reminded him of the "music he already knew" (*T* 274). Thus the insubstantiality of a grey and foggy Scotland, while filled with fixed and stony people, remains indefinite enough to invite John's invention of a life for himself from the "bits and pieces."

It might be said that all poiesis occurs in the space beyond the immediacy of the present and reaches towards a promised future. Improvisation underwriting the ornamentalism of *Grace Notes* and the jazz of *Trumpet* is a methodology for imaginative making that refers to the material of its initiation, without naming an origin. The movement of the mind becomes the fashioning of the context for subjectivity – a move which identifies a diaspora in consciousness.

INTERMEZZO

Chapter 4: **Jazz in Translation: Developing a Racial Politics**

Despite titular indications to the contrary, Toni Morrison's novel *Jazz* does not engage music directly in its themes. Jürgen Grandt writes that Morrison's novel "is not, strictly speaking, about jazz at all."¹ Instead, the novel takes up a search for individual and cultural origins. It unfolds the secrets of individual lives that are released in death – secrets that are the key to discoveries about family origins that impact the identities of those living. The repository for these secrets is jazz. Music is a sediment² of social relations. Society provides: the labor of musicians; the material of music-making (including instrumentation, score, venue, pay, and the whole commercial apparatus); the inspiration for its style, and the (black) cultural framework for its interpretation. In this sediment resides unseen, unspoken, and, at times, misunderstood stories and histories of African Americans making the music and living the sung lives.³ Grandt, in comparing Morrison's *Jazz* to a modernist Czech novel of the same name by Hans Janowitz, argues that "both employ virtually identical techniques to achieve 'the translation of the world into jazz music,' as Janowitz puts it." Grandt does not take up this idea of translation in the remainder of his article, although he suggests that a "firm sense of the history of both the music and the people who have been creating it" is as necessary as a sense of "music's technical aspects" to the understanding of an "aesthetic of literary jazz." In this chapter, I take up the suggestion of translation raised by Grandt through Janowitz, to propose a new way to read Morrison's novel. I suggest that the "world" that is translated into music is the world of the novel: the text rewrites jazz music and culture, revealing a

culture encoded in music, and makes it available to a reading public. Using the broad notions of translation theorized by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, I offer a postcolonial reading of Morrison's novel to argue that the novel presents more than textual representations of music. Rather, it presents a translation of jazz culture that overcomes an insufficiency in language to bring forth political positions on race, gender, and identity already extant in music. Through literary formulations that accommodate the musical forms of repetition, modulation, and counterpoint, *Jazz* presents music not as metaphor, but as a transmuted structure in whose aesthetic form might be read political content. The dynamism of music, its spirit, directly infuses the text with music's qualities, including durational temporality, relationality, performativity, and a cultural saturation⁴ in coded lyrics. The result is a literary construction of a musical archive, elaborated in a present time, that simultaneously supplements and includes an unfolding past, creating community and tradition in the Gilroyan sense of a "living memory of the changing same" (198).⁵ Jazz reinterpreted in novel form preserves black musical culture by recreating it, but in doing so, the process of translation refuses the notion that this culture is unaffected by the flows of history or fixed in its authenticity.

Jazz never purports to *be* music; it is committedly textual in its depictions. Neither is it a translation in the traditional sense; there is no original text or score from which to render a translation, no notation to transform into text. Rather the novel refigures the form and content of certain jazz styles into text. I argue that it demands to be read as a palimpsest⁶ whose musical forms lie audibly and visibly within and beneath the textual skin. Like most translations, it ensures a wider audience than the one garnered by an original alone. More importantly, as translation, the novel uncovers histories that are

available, not in written language, but in music, being otherwise unspoken, unwritten, unrecorded, unsaid. Translations represent a will to know and a will to communicate an otherwise coded knowledge, and in the case of *Jazz*, the mode of translation is necessary to decode threads of cultural traditions, family origins, and social histories enciphered in the language of music in conditions of repressive social conditions, migration, slavery and violence. The “time lag”⁷ between the expression of the original (culture) and the preparation of the translation (text) creates space between two semiotic systems, which becomes a site of dialectical exchange without synthesis, allowing for the development of suppressed histories and for the emergence of proscribed subject positions.

The type of translation that the novel embodies falls between two current dominant categorizations of approach which Lawrence Venuti describes as incommensurable: “one informed by linguistic studies, the other informed by literary and cultural theory” (247).⁸ I suggest that the Morrison text turns to jazz and its cultural milieu for source material and then translates this cultural sourcebook into a linguistic product. The result is a hybrid form, which we might see as belonging to a category of sociolinguistic investigations into a particular language – music – and its culturally-derived meanings. The novel might be seen as a metonymic reduction of the jazz culture it translates – a fraction that, in its explication of the relations existing in the whole, illustrates both the whole and the individuality of culture at once.⁹ Jazz is the world that the novel compresses into the linguistic approximations that I argue we might read as translation.

Venuti advocates a translational practice proposed by Philip Lewis to ensure that the complexity of the original comes through in the translation. This methodology, called

“abusive fidelity,” actively distends in syntax, lexicon, and usage the target language in order to accommodate the full sense of an original. I suggest abusive fidelity might be used, but reverse engineered (that is, the translation is read for its textual traces), as a tool for close reading to determine the extent to which a translation captures the difficulties, ambiguities, complications of a multifarious original. Venuti rightly suggests that translations should resist institutional demands that might encourage minimization of the foreignness of an original. In applying this strategy, cultural studies theorists would, he suggests, work to illuminate the “materiality of translation,” and, on the other hand, linguistic studies scholars and translators would attend to the “philosophical implications and social effects” (241) that always affect translations. Venuti’s particular concern is with texts having “substantial conceptual density or complex literary effects, namely poetry and philosophy” (252) whose translations warrant retention of their difficulty in the original language and of their unfamiliarity to other languages and disciplines. Venuti’s use of the mode of abusive fidelity in his translation of Derrida, for example, insists that he “invent comparable textual effects even when they threatened to twist English into strange forms” (253).

I introduce the term “abusive fidelity” here as a way to think about not only the English language diction and phrasing in the Morrison novel, but also what might be construed as a justifiable violence to its narrative form. Cultural translation does not deal primarily with the materialities of a written language of a text, as Venuti regrets in pointing to Bhabha’s lack of detail in describing the “English Book” (the Bible) in his essay “Signs Taken for Wonders.” And yet, Bhabha finds discursive examples of non-translatable expressions in others texts. For example, he cites E.M. Forster’s

approximation of an echo in the Marabar Caves (“Boum ouboum”) in *A Passage to India* and Kurtz’s ambiguous “The horror! The horror!” in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* – as representations of the inexpressibility of foreign cultures in the English language.¹⁰

In both these cases, though in different ways, English is manipulated to depict the bewilderment and inarticulateness of English (people and language) in foreign settings. My study hopes to apply Bhabha’s strategy, that is, a reading of textual effects notable for the way they imply an abusive fidelity to an original, in order to find, not only moments of non-translatability, but also those places where translation has been successful in the portrayal of jazz structures and jazz culture in linguistic terms.

Cultural translation is, according to Bhabha, a “complex process of signification,” (47)¹¹ seeking its “right to signify” and challenging “the great continuities of a post tradition, the seamless narratives of progress, the vanity of humanist wishes” (49). He suggests postcolonial writings and rewritings must establish their own cultural moorings to compensate a lack of foundation elsewhere (in official histories or canonic literatures); that is, postcolonial texts must iterate their own historical narratives, national symbols, folk traditions as part of their efforts to signify when translated into dominant social discourses. Gayatri Spivak makes clear the indebtedness to culture of a successful translation. It is only a culturally embedded mother tongue that gives meaning to the idioms of a language. While a standardized version of a language is often a more generalizable semiotic system, cultural idioms require an intimate knowledge of a society to be understood. Translation, then, is “the most intimate act of reading” (20).¹² It involves an intense “relating to the other as the source of one’s utterance” (21); as such, this reading of idioms is an ethical act and forms an ethical relation between the reader

and speaker. Spivak calls translation “necessary,” “unavoidable,” and yet “impossible,” at least in full. That is, even though idioms may remain as nuggets of intranslatability, translations between peoples must be attempted with all good faith and energy. The effort to translate communicates the “act of hearing-to-respond” (22), the notion of the other’s worthiness and the worth of the other’s culture that spans the idiomatic indicator of difference. We conclude in reading Spivak that it is absolutely crucial to transmit the cultural underpinnings of any semiotic system in a translation into another system.

Jazz makes a sociolinguistic translation that straddles cultural milieu and textual production. The narrative structures and language reflecting the formal aspects of jazz have been the focus of much critical attention for this novel, aligning jazz form with the novel’s form. Some critics equate the narrative with the “call-and-response” constructions of black spirituals;¹³ others see in the novel the jazz practice of improvisation;¹⁴ still others focus on the ways the novel’s word choice has the diction of jazz music.¹⁵ The sheer number of critics who have located musical elements in the novel speaks to the fruitfulness of the endeavor. While I sympathize with the impulse, my approach to the configuration of narrative elements in light of musical form works to strengthen the novel’s association with jazz, even while weakening the straightforward correspondence between narrative structure and music suggested by many critics.

Thinking of *Jazz* as a translation of music into text rather than as a text that employs specific music forms directly might seem an equivocation in terms of actual textual effect; however, considering the text a translation opens it to critical insights unavailable in the discussion of narrative structure and language alone. A translation, according to Walter Benjamin, participates in the afterlife of an original, not replacing it,

but supplementing it. The translation “gives voice to the *intentio* of the original not as reproduction, but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself” (79).¹⁶ In Benjamin’s formulation, translations double an original in a non-violent, complementary way that adds to the original, changing it by transforming and renewing the language of its expression, intensifying the meaning residing in the original. In the best of circumstances, the original is all the more fully explicated because of the existence of the translation; its “translatability,” which Benjamin suggests resides in its interlinear density (82), can be discovered in translations that read between the lines.

Subsequent translation theorists posit a more violent appropriation inherent in the process of translation, especially translations which use “Western theoretical frameworks and contexts and whose target is a non-Western cultural-literary text” (208).¹⁷ In such cases, the demands of the target audience for fluency may result in what Venuti, through Derrida, identifies as the “ethnocentric violence” of translation.¹⁸ That is, the traditional goal of “faithfulness” in translation means that the contextual lenses of the target audience is given priority. “Faithful” translation strategies, especially those that convey a minor-language text into English and “produce a fluent, idiomatic text that erases every trace of foreignness,” might be conceived as “act[s] of violence, namely ‘the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that preexist it in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality’” between the two languages and cultures.¹⁹ However, Morrison’s novel sets a different goal since her novel-in-translation takes place *within* a Western cultural framework and within American national discourse. Her novel seeks to expand U.S. national discourse through an intersemiotic translation from music to literature by

demonstrating 1) differences within U.S. culture, 2) the obscurity of musical codes when subsumed within a dominant discourse, (i.e., novel form), and 3) the invisibility of certain cultural “bodies” of knowledge, where bodies refers not only to black racial realities, but also to the dissident epistemologies informing minority ethnic cultures in the United States.

The process of translation -- the tracking of allusion and unrevealed secrets of the original, the exposition and clarification of a full range of meanings (lingual, social, cultural, political) – is the action comprising Morrison’s novels. The novel and its characters present/conduct journeys of discovery that expose what was never really clear, but was somehow always present, about their origin[al]s. It is a passage, the novel intimates, which can be undertaken or fully realized only with edification into the music of the time period in which it is set, the 1920s. Popularly, the era becomes known as the “Jazz Age”²⁰: emerging from black American culture, jazz develops as “an art music with its own rules and aesthetic, and [...] even those rules are meant to be challenged, and often broken, rather than reverently adhered to. [...] It is a music of healthy defiance” (5).²¹ But African Americans of previous generations, born during reconstruction or the era of the “great northern drive” (Sudhalter 151), had to learn the modes of defiance available in music before hidden pasts became knowable.

In *Jazz*, the past the remains “unspeakable,” and thus unknowable to the current (i.e., 1920s) generation, concerns not only the degradation of slavery and its presumptions that black bodies might be appropriated at (white) will for labor, beatings, rape, but also less-visible shame, insecurity, insanity, a psychological sense of incompleteness. The novel charts the paths of discovery for various characters. Their

searches are for answers to events, ideas, people who remain beyond comprehension, for meaning in the signs and stories that they have lived with for their whole lives and that have resulted in the profoundest literal and physical effects on their personalities. Their search for signification is embodied in the processes of cultural translation. Both literary consciousness and narratorial (authorial) consciousness seek keys to the past in the currency and complexities of contemporary urban jazz culture. *Jazz*, as a translation, highlights its mediating role between the jazz culture²² of social production and the narrative form of its articulation. Textual traces that reflect musical practices result in elaborative processes of self-fashioning. Thus, multiple iterations of scenes from various perspectives both extra- and intra-diegetic, hinged transitions between temporalities and sites, and intertwinement of independent stories suggest modes of supplementation, transcoding, and relation that provide the textual fabric that repairs the gaping “inside nothing” that infects Joe and his lover, Dorcas.

Jazz (music) impinges upon the text, affecting not only its textual surface, but also its politics, enunciating suppressed ideas of unrecognized black military service in WWI, the growing need for black women to arm themselves in self-protection, the white hysteria inflaming race riots of the early twentieth century. Jazz has long been a forum for interracial performance, a cultural melting pot of genres. But I suggest that in Morrison’s text, jazz is not simply interested in being understood as cross-cultural, but rather, jazz, translated, exposes a mechanism for transcoding sexual energy, urbanity, other-worldliness, lawlessness, and inspiration from music to provide discursive patterns for a new society and individuality.

I begin this chapter with an examination of the intra-textual aspects, investigating both the themes and the formal methods of presenting those themes. I describe those aspects that interrupt and distort narrative in ways that beg consideration of the text as translation. In line with the notion of abusive fidelity, I argue that a palimpsest of musical culture asserts itself throughout the novel producing a sense of a musical original in its textual effects, such as repetition, contrapuntal voicing, modulatory shifts in meaning on a word or phrase, and simultaneities in doublings of character, space, and time. The sum of these textual effects in each case is a non-narrativity, even anti-narrativity, that manipulates words, scenes, voices, and textual mediations in the production of literary inventions of musicality. I turn next to the meta-textual aspects of the novel to argue that conceiving the work as a translation provides readers new perspectives of the politics of race and gender. First, as translation, the novel *supplements* original, non-discursive and expressive forms of music and culture, while working within the parameters of discourse, thus suggesting a means to achieve alterity through dominant modes of rational communication (i.e., narrative). Second, the novel *decodes and transcodes*, meaning that it works between differing semiotic systems, introducing conceptions of transitionality that thwart fixed notions of identity categories, gender, race, and nationality. Third, the novel creates *relations* between an original culture and a translated text, thereby constructing a site of mediation that provides space for cultural interchange suitable for the development of culturally dense and mixed products, whether they are discursive (i.e., textual), as in translations, or praxical (i.e., experiential), as in subjectivities or communities. Taken together these translation processes might be conceived as pedagogical tools instructing readers in the necessary practices of reading culture for its

stor[i]e[s] – that is, as demonstrated in the bracketed orthography of this word: the imperceptible aspects residing within the visible – of family genealogy, community formation, and political activism.

We might begin discussion of *Jazz* with attention to its non-narrative impulses, evident in the opening sequences. Thereafter, I turn to the way these impulses to unnarrativity are repeated in the overarching structures of the novel itself. In traditional novels, Miller suggests, narratives are elaborated in response to “instances of disequilibrium, suspense, and general insufficiency” which give rise to a storyline (ix).²³ Yet Morrison’s *Jazz* seems to defuse suspense through premature revelation of the climax of the plotlines. The narrator reveals in the first few pages the death of a main character, which might seem to set the stage for a good mystery or detective novel, but which comes to naught with the disclosure of the mystery (i.e., the identity of the murderer). The revelation seems, at first, to eliminate the suspense that provides the pleasure in conventional narrations, especially when reprisals of the opening scene provide more detail, but expose no more skeletons-in-the-closet than those unhoused in the first chapter. Despite a murder, Morrison’s narrator solves no crimes. In fact, for all she gives away, and for all she claims to know the dead intimately, the narrator is strangely limited in her knowledge. At the outset, Morrison’s narrator professes to “know that woman,” Violet, her husband (Joe), and the girl he murders (Dorcas), but in the end, the narrator must admit that she “missed the people altogether,” misunderstood them to an extent that she must confess they “contradicted [her] at every turn” (*J* 220).²⁴ Despite the fact that the narrator claims both homodiegetic and heterodiegetic perspectives; that is, while thoroughly involved within the development of the narrative, she also claims omniscience

concerning her characters, and even admits to being the author, she also consistently appears to lack the necessary requisite information for telling the story. Paradoxically, her lack of knowledge does not make her incompetent or unreliable, though she claims, at one point, to be so.²⁵ The narrator's misreadings might be explained through a consideration of the disjunct between jazz source and translated narrative.

Robyn Warhol usefully categorizes the unnarratable into a typology that provides the social motivations for the conditions of impossibility concerning discursive expression.²⁶ Relevant for our discussion is the category of the supranarratable, those “events that defy narrative, foregrounding the inadequacy of language or of visual image to achieve full representation, even of fictitious events” (223). The supranarratable in Victorian fiction, according to Warhol, is indicated by textual markers of incapacity, such as Louisa May Alcott's “the shock she received can better be imagined than described” (qtd. in Warhol 223). In contemporary film, the supranarratable is that which is intimated in allusions, effects, or references to taboo subjects, such as the unseen terror in *Blair Witch Project*. In its coded lyrics,²⁷ “blue” notes, syncopated rhythms, “crushed” tones, the whole of jazz composition and performance might be conceived as a realm of the supranarratable. If this is the case, and I argue that this is at least part of the premise motivating *Jazz*, the task of translation becomes the recuperation of that which has heretofore been unnarratable. With music as license and model, *Jazz* enacts the processes of opening and rendering the living archive that is the music. The novel attests to the motivational power of jazz: Dorcas's Aunt Alice, “swore she heard a complicated anger in [jazz]; something hostile that disguised itself as flourish and roaring seduction” (*J* 59). Alice, the overprotective guardian, who restricts Dorcas to long dresses and no make-up

and who avoids confrontation with whites at all costs, credits jazz with making black people “do unwise disorderly things [...since j]ust hearing it was like violating the law” (*J* 58). Given the narrator-author’s ambition to depict the interiority of characters from what is discernable in the general contours of the non-denotative and oblique languages of jazz, it is unsurprising that she has been, in her own estimation, less than successful.

Returning now to the narrator’s seemingly hasty disclosure of plot in light of the unnarratable nature of its source material, we might understand the novel’s project not as progressive, but as regressive, an excavation of sorts for a means to overcome the barrier to, the very possibility of, narration. If the novel is translating the music of jazz, as I am arguing it does, this mode of original expression contains no exigency for teleological movement toward climax and resolution. Instead, jazz endings are often ambiguous because its choruses are designed to repeat time and again; however, its beginnings are equally ambiguous. In the plantation system dependent on the isolation of individuals through fear and humility, overcoming the immense silences imposed by lack of common language, illiteracy, and suppression of interpersonal communication meant that “every cry was an event.”²⁸ In such conditions of “painfully stifled” speech, “music, inescapable, a murmur at first, finally burst out into this long shout – a music of reserved spirituality through which the body suddenly expresses itself” (Glissant 73). Jazz becomes one of the “musical expressions born of silence” (73). The aim of a novel emerging from this cultural milieu is not the reproduction of a novelistic master plot designed to build toward a moral or intellectual turning point, but instead the project becomes the accomplishment of “narratability” itself and once in motion, its continuation. The translation sets out to transform inarticulate and veiled cultural

references into “that which is worthy of being told; that which is susceptible of or calls for narration.”²⁹ The novel is a journey to internal territories opened in the void created by the death of the central character. As long as the character lived, as long as the personality occupied a space in life and lived that life in a certain way, there were questions about the person that either could not be asked, or simply did not even arise. But where an occupying personality resists exploration (because the bodily presence presumes at least some certainty and knowledge), death begs investigation; the ghost of the persona leaves a void on earth, having taken the answers to multiple questions to the grave. From the initial scene, the novel spirals around a known climax, the movement revealing earlier conceptions of the characters and earlier time periods of the narrative. This non-progressive “travel” in the text – represented by repetition, modulation, and counterpoint as active movements without particular direction – is spurred by the deaths they stage. In the motion, often dialectical between the present of the storytelling and the past of memory, emerge genealogies of narrative and personal origins. The complexity of making a beginning at all that the novel achieves might be understood by examination of its initial syllable “Sth.”

The Intra-text: Translational Politics Thematized

Jazz's opening word signals simultaneously the text's form as translation and its resistance to the most narrativizing of literary forms, the novel. Gilroy identifies Morrison among those African-American writers whose works “deal explicitly with history, historiography, slavery, and remembrance [and] exhibit an intense and ambivalent negotiation of the novel form that is associated with their various critiques of modernity and enlightenment.”³⁰ Although Gilroy discusses Morrison's *Beloved*, *Jazz*

might be seen equally to “reveal a common degree of discomfort with the novel and a shared anxiety about its utility as a resource in the social processes that govern the remaking and conservation of historical memory” (218-9). Gilroy continues in this section, quoting Morrison at length in a somewhat contradictory passage, about the necessity of returning to the novel form as an expressive art form, given that “the art form that was healing for black people [...] music [...] is no longer exclusively ours; we don’t have exclusive rights to it. [...] So another form has to take its place” (219). However, in 1992, five years after *Beloved*, Morrison writes *Jazz*, obviously not ready to cede music’s potential for healing and expressiveness for black Americans. We might surmise that *Jazz*, in fact, represents an effort to garner the forces of both forms. Not willing to completely relinquish claims for the African-American novel to influence “organiz[ation of] reality and knowledge by “bodying forth” a world, Morrison employs novel form to capture what Said identifies as its “self-confirmatory” power (45).³¹ However, Morrison remains aware of the novel’s ties to its sociocultural environment and its potential “complicities with power” (Said 175).³² Thus, Morrison becomes one of the willing who “return to slavery [...] in imaginative writing [...] to restage confrontations between rational, scientific, and enlightened Euro-American thought and the supposedly primitive outlook of prehistorical, cultureless, and bestial African slaves” (Gilroy 220); she seizes upon jazz as an African-American cultural product that might counter Western rational thought. More particularly, in using jazz as a source “document,” Morrison interrupts the whole notion of a genealogy of texts, and the idea of “a first text, a sacred prototype, a scripture” from which subsequent texts derive “displacing power” traceable for Western literature, back to the Bible and its “centrality, potency, and dominating anteriority.”³³ By

turning not only to music, but to jazz – a recalcitrant, incorrigible version of Western music – Morrison questions narrative, along with its underlying cultural framework in Western thought, as the only homage to the Bible as *a* (not *the*) source text by delineating an alternate non-narrative, non-lingual path to the development of cultural good(s).

Many critics have identified music as a non-narrative form,³⁴ thus in reading this text as literary inventions of music, readers should expect to be able to detect resistances to narrativizing. In other words, because Western music, of which jazz is one (though complex) example, progresses according to rules and conventions that do not rely on narrative form, *Jazz*'s reluctance to narrate in conventional ways might be seen as proof of its mode of translation. I argue that Morrison's novel overcomes the unspeakability of its origins in the single, harsh syllable of its opening syllable "Sth." I read the syllable simultaneously as music and text, as admonition and gossip, as a reference to history and a promise of words to come to argue that the novel transitions from the supranarratability of its subject, through doubt of music's ability to become narratable,³⁵ and into narration, which while refusing to comply with traditional narrative principles, erupting with symptoms of its musical underlayers, nonetheless becomes the novel. Therefore, "sth" might first be read as an approximation of the sound of sucking teeth³⁶ -- an alert to listeners/readers to pay attention, an admonition to watch yourself, an indication of the narrator's "displeasure, contempt, or annoyance"³⁷ with herself, with the subject, or perhaps even with the circumstances of reading. Related, and in addition, the fragment might be a variation of the oral, attention-getting syllable "psst," a whispered signal to us as listeners/readers that we are going to be let in on a secret. Although the narrator knows "that woman," the story must be told *sotto voce*. It is not news, but rather good gossip.

According to D.A. Miller, gossip is nonnarratable;³⁸ it works against the continuing narrative by being not one's own story, but someone else's. As such, there is an end implied in the very limitation of knowledge that the gossip has about the subject. "Sth" alerts us that someone else's story, not the narrator's, is coming, and that we will soon be privy to juicy detail.

Further, the particular combination of letters cannot be ignored; the phonemic spelling evokes the character of Sethe from Morrison's previous novel, *Beloved*. She is the mother who murders her daughter to keep the infant from the worse-than-death brutalities of slavery. Sethe is troubled by dreams and memories of the child who can neither be exorcised nor banished from her imagination or the narrative. The vowel-less syllable suggests the outlines of this remembered maternal figure, a ghost of the murderer-protector now haunts *Jazz* in its incomplete, not fully materialized name-form: like the sound "sth," the ethereal presence is discernable only through the movement of air. The breathiness intimates a musicality compelling the text.

Finally, "sth" might be read as a nonsense syllable, an indication of jazz's "scat" singing. Made famous by Louis Armstrong in the 1920s, scat syllables replace lyrics; their easy substitution in song as a "private language"³⁹ and their imitation of instrumental sounds question the very value and necessity of words. The beginning nonsensical syllable might be seen as a representation of what Homi Bhabha calls a moment non-translatability. However, I argue that we might read "Sth" as a dislocated phoneme from the original "language," overdetermined by musico-historical contexts including stifled, coded language and impossible scenes of horror that gave impetus to jazz. It makes what Catherine Romagnolo calls a "discursive beginning," distinguished

by its determination of “*how* the story is presented as opposed to being a part of *the story itself*.”⁴⁰ Thus the combination of letters in “sth” that might be read as either text or scat is a clue to the dual nature of the text: it will have musical underpinnings and textual overlay. At the same time, the unreadable syllable promises a literary rendition of what would be in other circumstances, and indeed, that which has been supranarratable: it will be – not only the implied musical elements of jazz culture, but the socio-cultural forms encrypted within the jazz sourcebook and their accompanying politics of terror born of incomprehensible acts of racial violence, lynching, slavery, the middle passage that cannot be directly spoken or narrated. Thus, intimations of gossip, ghosts, and jazz are better understood, not as failures of, but as successes in translation. In short, “sth” enacts a code-switching from music into narrative, signaling an emergence from, and transition into, a lingual mode of discourse.

Literary Inventions of Musicality: Repetition, Modulation, Counterpoint

The suggestions of translation embedded in the opening syllable of *Jazz* continue in the materiality of the novel. The most prevalent and noticeable aspect is repetition, a device common to poetics and music, and which is seen by some critics as a constitutive element of narrative.⁴¹ Additionally, the novel creates literary forms of modulation, which might be understood as a specific type of transition that relies on a pivot point to accomplish a shift from one tonal and subject field to another. Finally, the novel produces scenes, interwoven in counterpoint, in a method of textual composition that fosters the non-hierarchical independence of the separate, but integrated sites and events.⁴² For all three devices – repetition, modulation, and counterpoint – I argue that the formal manifestations in the literature indicate a musical basis through their difference from

traditional narrative forms of repetition, transition, and interplay of voices. For each of these three textual constructions, I first discuss briefly the literary norms and follow these introductions with demonstrations of the divergent forms found in *Jazz*. In each instance, I am interested in pointing to the space opened by translation for the reshaping of the cultural and social categories of genealogy and race.

Strategies of Repetition in Narrative

In his definitional essay on narrative, J. Hillis Miller identifies repetition as one of three groups of elements that define all narratives. Miller's three groups include the categories of "beginning, sequence, reversal; personification, or more accurately and technically stated, *prosopopoeia*, bringing protagonist, antagonist, and witness 'to life'; some patterning or repetition of elements surrounding a nuclear figure or complex word" (75).⁴³ Each of these categories – order, personification, and repetition – might be analyzed in the consideration of *Jazz* as musically informed. This section will concentrate on the final element of repetition, given that the novel's propensity to repeat that allows it to be read as a translation of music. Before turning to it, I consider briefly Miller's other categories to underscore various ways in which *Jazz* fails as a traditional narrative and to point to the novel's musical basis and its status as translation.

The previous section discussed at length the novel's ambiguous, three-letter beginning that challenges narrative form, and I will return to it here. However, it is interesting to note that personification, particularly the necessary figure of antagonist is difficult to pinpoint in *Jazz*. The likely character for the role is one that has no direct presence in the text at all – whites. The racist white population can only be intimated, for example, from the news stories of discrimination that put Dorcas's best friend's (Felice)

father in a rage; from references to the whites who died in the East St. Louis riots (“So many [...] the papers would not print the number”⁴⁴); from hints of the officials of PS-89, where Dorcas knows the teachers, even though she has to “trudg[e] way over to Wadleigh, since there were no high schools in her district a colored girl could attend” (*J* 6), and particularly from Joe’s mother, Wild, raped by an anonymous white man, who is never so much as mentioned in passing, but who is “known” from Joe’s light color and two-tone eyes. The antagonist is not personified, but rather exists as a vague and nebulous shadow that haunts the literary figures without confronting them. The novel seems to reject a Hegelian system of identity formation; black identity will not be determined in contradistinction to white self-determinations. Rather, it will emerge from the cultural milieu of its own making, that is, from jazz, whose material conditions are “light” on substance, being almost entirely oral (i.e., sheet music and musical parts are rarely used, repertory is memorized, chord progressions are learned and used like the alphabet). Where written music is used, it is often unreliable and encoded in ways available only to those already in the know.⁴⁵ Therefore, jazz might be conceived as materializing from non-specified surroundings and practices. The text follows suit: intra-textually, literary identities form in processes other than confrontation and opposition, while meta-textually, the novel emerges as a translation of materially diffuse signifiers, representing the practices of an oral culture.

Turning now to repetition in the novel, its presence might seem to argue against my earlier assertion for the non-narrativity of *Jazz*. That is, repetition is frequently asserted as a component of traditional narrative, and this novel employs repetition lavishly. However, I want to distinguish between types of repetition that we find in

narrative and in music. *Jazz* contains a category of repetition that is, I suggest, best classified as musical, not narrative. Miller defines the type of repetition he speaks about as a “patterning” that is necessary for the illumination of the “complex word” that sums the narrative’s epistemological or performative purpose. In other words, the narrative gives new knowledge, makes something happen, offers a lesson learned, or arrives at the illusory absence of these purposes. In any case, narratives involve movement by a persona through a series of events devolving around a theme to arrive transformed, or not, at the end of the narrative, which provides closure, or not. The concept of narrative involves a series of events carved out of the long history of human endeavor. This schema describes a mold that readers (or listeners) want to hear over and over in its multitudinous variations, in order, Miller suggests, to make sense of our world, to receive pleasure in the new that develops from the known and expected forms that comprise story form. Whether the growth of the protagonist or the closure of the sequential events is ever achieved is immaterial because literary narratives work within or against these expectations. Therefore, whether the repetition occurs inside a single text or within a broad expanse from text-to-text – the “patterning” is teleological. An expectation of how things should develop exists for narrative form in general and in particular, even for plots that cannot be squared with the normative formulas.

Repetitions in *Jazz* thwart expectations for narrative development. Multiplications of scenes, of characters, of events are not advancements. Here, repetitions are non-teleological, innocent of the type of narrative ordering that makes assumptions about “the whole course of human life.”⁴⁶ Neither does this novel inscribe in repetition the large cycles of human history identified by Edward Said (via Vico), which follow a “certain

fixed course of events” (112)⁴⁷ that serve as evidence of the cyclical power to demonstrate that “history and actuality are all about human persistence, and not about divine originality” (113). Rather, repetition in the novel works specifically to unsettle notions of history and of identity by questioning single socially-agreed narratives of history and identity formed in opposition to (an)other. Through processes of repetition that speculate multiple versions of a single event and provide duplicate versions of single personalities, the novel challenges the validity of master narratives that affirm and reinforce expected sequences of events and model personas. The goal of repetition in *Jazz* is, like the role of repetition in music, the manufacture of material substance; repetition produces living material from which the individual (person or piece) and collective (society or composition) are made. In comparing European and black music, James A. Snead nicely draws the distinction in types of repetition between the European “progressive enterprise” and black repetitive patterning that makes room for accidents, surprises, and ruptures, satisfied with play in variation. He asserts that in European culture “the ‘goal’ is always clear; it is a point being worked towards, reached when culture ‘plays out’ its history. Such a culture is never ‘immediate,’ but ‘mediated’ and separated from the present tense by its own future-orientation”(150).⁴⁸ In contrast, black culture, as represented particularly in its musical forms, is undermined by “[p]rogress in the sense of ‘avoidance of repetition’ [given that it] would at once sabotage” the beat that “is there to pick up.” Repetition that takes its cue from African-American jazz revels in the joy of the process of return, revision, and replay, eschewing the need for a particular ending or a moral. Repetition that diverts development for the simple pleasure of making

more material disrupts narrative's power to order, to claim authenticity, or to establish itself as the sole source of credibility.

Further, *Jazz* does not employ repetition for purposes of unification.⁴⁹ Unlike poetic repetition, which sets up expectations for a continuance of patterns in syntax, diction, meter, etc. that is assembled into unified form which is the poem, musical repetition aims for material production and fashioning that elaborates the work. Richard Middleton writes that “manifestations of repetition-practice in popular music can be located as manifestations of a complex cultural game, into which play a variety of social and psychic forces” (266).⁵⁰ In other words, musical repetition takes pleasure in the process of fabricating its materiality. It is the type of repetition we see in Morrison's novel, underscoring its musical sources.

Jazz constructs models of musical repetition different in character and quality from narrative repetition; the goal of the repetition is not conceptual elucidation, nor advancement of protagonist's knowledge, nor the unification of the text. In this novel, repetition challenges “the teleological thinking and logics of Western rationalism.”⁵¹ Ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes suggests that “Musical knowledge [...] is made up of the routines and itineraries of everyday life,”⁵² that is, it is built on a conception of repetition that never repeats exactly, but rather, invites variation based firmly in the familiar.⁵³ Repetition, in its musical formulation (i.e., non-teleological), “makes up” its own materiality, in both the sense of invention and fabrication.⁵⁴ In the novel- as-translation we find non-directed, proliferating play in the repetition. In short, the novel deploys repetition as performance; in the process it develops textual substance which thematically speculates on history as it might have happened, retells the same histories

from different perspectives, and mines the musical record for clues to translation of 1920s Harlem and jazz culture.

Repetition: Self-Identity in Form

Before venturing into the specific incidences of repetition in Morrison's text, it will be useful to give a brief overview of the main events. I hesitate to call the synopsis a plot summary since the episodes in *Jazz* resist efforts to summarize. The unmarked mixing of time periods, unexpected changes in voice, and multiple repetitions of scenes from differing perspectives frustrate the idea of plot and the effort to write its précis. In its barest outlines, *Jazz* presents Joe and Violet Trace, who have migrated from the Virginia countryside to Harlem at the turn of the twentieth century. Their long marriage has slipped into an arrangement of silence when Joe begins an affair with eighteen-year-old Dorcas Manfred, niece of Alice Manfred, who is raising her after Dorcas's parents are killed in the East St. Louis riots of 1917. When the novel opens, Joe has already shot Dorcas and Violet has already tried to slash her face, nicking only her ear, while Dorcas lies in her casket. The present is extended in duration through its inextricable intertwinement with memories and stories from multiple pasts: Joe's memories of searching for his mother, Wild; Violet's memories of her grandmother, True Belle and her stories of the "white" boy, Golden Gray that she raised; Alice's memories of the death of Dorcas's parents and of her husband's desertion; Felice's memories of her best friend, Dorcas, on the night she died. These memories and the narrator's memories of it all are presented as if they were happening in 1926 rather than months or decades earlier. Particularly vivid are the recollections about Joe's mother, Wild, who prefers the forest to the community, and those about Golden Gray, the bastard son of Henry, a black slave,

and Vera Louise, a plantation belle, who disowned, moves to Baltimore taking her nurse, True Belle.

A full sense of what the novel wants to say emerges in its repetitions. *Jazz* begins with an anti-narrative impulse, which continues through a series of repetitions and doublings that inform the smallest detail, such as Joe's two-colored eyes (*J* 105) that result in his double vision (*J* 206), and the largest textual frame, such as the way in which the narrator urges readers, in the last lines of the novel, to re-read *Jazz* or to repeat a reading of another book. Repetitions proliferate. There are the twinned characters: Dorcas, who is light-skinned and who causes Joe's downfall, is paired with her best friend and opposite, Felice, who is dark-skinned and who gives Joe and Violet their second chance at marriage; Dorcas, fiery and fierce, is also compared to Joe's mother, Wild, who is equally free and fearsome; Violet, who at the time of the slashing thinks of herself as hopelessly divided within herself, both Violet and *that* Violet, Violet and Violent. There are repeated symbols, such as Tree, including the one from which Joe fell into Violet's life (*J* 103), the white oak tree which stood by the place to which Joe tracked his mother (*J* 178), the trees that are jazz ("men playing out their maple-sugar hearts, tapping it from four-hundred-year-old trees and letting it run down the trunk" (*J* 197)), and the tree that Violet notices is almost human in appearance; (Felice agrees it could be a man, woman, or child (*J* 216)). There are actions duplicated, like the choosing of lovers: Violet chooses Joe; Joe chooses Dorcas; Dorcas chooses Acton, and the narrator chooses us, the readers. Other actions, like killings, also repeat: Joe kills Dorcas; Alice kills⁵⁵ her husband; whites kill blacks in East St. Louis. And there are more repetitions, too numerous to mention. It's like a rehearsal of "Two is the loveliest number

you'll ever do”⁵⁶ without ever thinking of a final performance. The repetitions are the performance; they are the substance of everyday life.

One particular scene is worth going into in greater detail because it is not a simple repetition of trait, symbol, or event, but instead is a series of scenes, repeated and overlapping, each providing an elliptical orbit that crosses the previous, but enlarges the overall scope of the territory imagined. The process scopes out a past which cannot be known, but which can be thoroughly imagined in a strategy of repetitive conditionality; that is, the novel stages a chain of could-have-beens that interlink on character and detail, but vary significantly in attitude and tone. The multiple repetitions of this singular scene, what Genette calls “narrative frequency,”⁵⁷ are not mimetic in their replication of an exact reality, but are, as he suggests, “a series of several similar events *considered only in terms of their resemblance* (113), and in this case, told from various points of view. Likewise, these are not, as Bhabha would have it, repetition with a difference that implies a mocking or subverting of the original telling of the scene. Rather, the repetitions suggest not only other ways to think about the character, Golden Gray and other trains of thought Golden Gray might have followed during a specific traumatic scene, but also, non-traditional modes of emplotment that emphasize identity development over story development and non-fixed ideologies of “race”⁵⁸ that pose it as a choice rather than as a given biological fact.

The extended series centers on Golden Gray’s search for his father, the former slave, Henry, (now known by all as Hunter’s Hunter), and Golden’s accidental discovery of Wild, the black woman living in the forest, beyond, but near, the community. The several scenes span two chapters, each following the next in an exploration of possible

perspectives, each deploying a distinct attitude that is the narrator's speculation on Golden's various states of mind. At the outset of the chapter, the narrator submits credentials for the right and ability to make conjectures, asserting that she is "curious, inventive and well-informed" (*J* 138). She has no trouble imagining the state of mind of True Belle (Golden's "other mother"⁵⁹). But even for True Belle, the narrator must admit later to not "know[ing] how hard it was for a slave woman to leave a husband whose work and distance kept her from seeing much of anyhow, and to leave two daughters behind with an old aunt to take care of them" (*J* 141). From this comparatively straightforward speculation, the narrator launches into the more complicated suppositions about the motivations for Golden Gray's thoughts and actions.

In the long discursive rehearsal of this scene, explored in different temporalities and timbres, the novel presents layers of perspectives from and about Golden Gray. Each version tends to focus on a particular slant towards reason or emotion that comprise Golden's biracial subjectivity, dissecting it in a loose system of structural analysis, considering how each side of the personality might respond given a particular set of circumstances. The narrator first envisions Golden's internal response to the people and events he encounters as if he is the white man he considers himself to be. He has been raised under the illusion of white privilege by his mother who has refused to talk to Golden about his father or even to confirm whether she is "his owner, his mother or a kindly neighbor" (*J* 143). His mother's lack of truthfulness (ironic, given the etymology of her name, Vera) has caused him to live a lie to date, and yet, when she finally tells him the truth at age eighteen, he is furious *with his father* and sets out to find him, bent on revenge, full of self-righteousness. The narrator "see[s] him in a two-seat phaeton" (*J*

143) – a position of power and wealth – inconvenienced by the distance and the rain. Arrogant, he tries passing off as a figment of his imagination the “berry-black woman” whom he so terrifies by simply and accidentally catching her eye that she knocks herself unconscious on a low-hanging tree limb trying to flee. He cannot, so the narrator’s speculation goes, quite reconcile the meanness that he would be guilty of should he put his horse in higher esteem than a woman (seeing the black, rain-wet skin of his horse reminds him that he is about to do so). Therefore, rather than leaving the woman to die in the woods, he bundles her in his coat and loads her into the seat next to his making sure that no part of her touches him, except her foot on his boot, which he cannot avoid. Arriving at a cabin at which he determines to stay the night, he puts her third in his unpacking priorities, watering and combing the horse and unloading his trunk before he carries her into the cabin – all this despite the fact that it is immediately apparent to him when he first walks back to get her that she is quite pregnant.

This first depiction of the scene ends in ellipsis and leaves Golden drunk on corn liquor. The narrator immediately launches into a repeat of the scene, during which she digresses into thoughts about Golden Gray’s emerging black consciousness and the way it might impinge on the previous version of events. The narrator wonders whether the “figure” – the black woman with terrified eyes – has not already “touched him before its fall” (*J* 149), whether Golden might have seen something that “looked also like home comfortable enough to wallow in” (*J* 150) – something that reminded him mightily of True Belle, “his first love.” This conception of Golden softens the narrator’s attitude toward him. Golden’s moral lapses disconcert the narrator, but his small considerations, such as wiping his feet before entering a dirt-floor cabin and not staring at the naked

woman's private parts, mean the narrator cannot hate him outright. But the narrator also fears that the small bit of kindness he does come to show the pregnant woman is staged; he is behaving, the narrator thinks, as if he is the hero of a future story that he will devise for his father, a tale of heroism and selflessness, about how he has done the best he could by her. The narrator's attitude judges him a hypocrite, but partially forgives him because of his youth.

The third review provides the scene from the perspective of Honor, a youngster Henry has hired to look after his place in his absence – for unbeknownst to Golden, he has stumbled upon his father's hunting cabin. Honor thinks Golden is a white man and typically drunk. He also expects Golden to be impatient, is not surprised that he is ignorant about whether the woman he has found is alive or dead, and figures out quickly Golden doesn't know the man he is seeking. In Honor's mind, Golden adds up to the nothingness that the boy expects from white men. But when, in the fourth rendition, the narrator cedes the scene to Golden himself, a non-racialized, psychological portrayal emerges. Golden is neither a white man nor a black man, but rather he is a son whose sorrow about growing up without a father suddenly overtakes him: "Only now, he [Golden] thought, now that I know I have a father, do I feel his absence: the place where he should have been and was not" (*J* 158). He realizes the loss as a "singing pain" of a lost arm and vows to "freshen the pain" to understand its purpose in reminding him of a father he never had, but that he may be able to have in the future. In a fifth response to Golden, the narrator realizes the faultiness of her speculations: "How could I have imagined him so poorly? Not noticed the hurt that was not linked to the color of his skin, or the blood that beat beneath it. But to some other thing that longed for authenticity, for

a right to be in this place, effortlessly without needing to acquire a false face, a laughless grin, a talking posture. I have been careless and stupid and it infuriates me to discover (again) how unreliable I am” (*J* 160). She realizes that hating or even loving are insufficient responses; what is needed is a change to his environment that alters the way in which he comes to know things. She, as narrator, will become the “language that wishes him well, speaks his name, wakes him when his eyes need to be open” (*J* 161), and the language *of* the well, symbol of water and life and promise of death for suicides (which Violet’s mother becomes). In knowing the possibilities for life and death at the well, Golden will attain, the narrator believes, a “serene power that flicks like a razor and then hides” (*J* 161); he will have the gift of knowing and feeling that he can remember and recall.⁶⁰

Finally, the scene is reviewed and expanded in dialogue. The narrator steps out and Henry, the black father Golden seeks, surveys the scene: in Golden’s rudeness in drinking without invitation, his meddling in Henry’s belongings, his soft hands and improbable clothing, Henry judges him a white man. But in the end, the novel leaves the choice of which race to live as a choice for Golden. The multiple repetitions end with Golden Gray at the threshold: “Golden Gray started to follow [Honor] but stood in the doorway unable to go forward or back” (*J* 162). The novel does not disclose Golden’s future beyond Henry’s biting command to “draw your manhood up – quicklike, and don’t bring me no whiteboy sass” (*J* 173) if Golden chooses to be a black man. The novel intimates that Golden stays in the area and even becomes the berry-black woman’s lover: Joe finds his trousers and shirt in a cave he believes to be his mother’s, but whether Golden lived there or whether the woman, whom Henry named Wild, came by the

clothing of the man she “set so much store by” (*J* 168) in some other way is never answered. The novel presents the Golden Gray scene as open-ended, digressive, and multi-perspectived, and in the end, it refuses to resolve the mystery of Golden Gray, or for that matter and just as importantly, of Wild.

The physical space which the scene occupies in the text argues for the scene to be read as evidence of a process of working through material and gives clues to its jazz source. The scene’s spatiality interrupts the linearity of time. We can understand this scene to have the structure of musical repetition; its spatiality is that of the refrain or chorus in jazz.⁶¹ It is not sufficient to understand the music as a metaphor for what is happening in the replications of this scene. In addition to the physicality of repetition, jazz makes itself felt in the uncertain conclusion. The scene doesn’t so much end as change direction in a new timeframe: the repetitions end with Golden Gray’s thought of Wild, “the girl who changed his mind” (*J* 173) and move to Joe’s thoughts of Violet, the girl that was equally influential in changing the course of events in Joe’s life, saving him from overwhelming grief because “she got him to go through it again” (*J* 119) – to revisit the whole story of Dorcas through Felice. On “girl,” the scene pivots and continues in a different mode, which we will come to see as a modulation, below.

Repetition: Tradition in Form

Before closing the discussion of repetition in Morrison’s novel, it is important to examine the theme of cultural history, which is only fully understandable as a repetition and its inversion. Family and community histories, according to the novel, are passed down either as inheritance or tradition – the former is passive, the latter is performative. The novel suggests that only active and ongoing construction of tradition, as opposed to

passive acceptance of one's inheritance, results in the health of African-American individuals and community. Inheritance, masquerading as good tradition, contains a trick. It comes without questions, actions, or right of refusal, and thus, by definition, it comes with psychological baggage. On the other hand, tradition, if thought of as open-ended, as in Paul Gilroy's formulation of a practice of tradition whereby a Black diaspora illuminates Africa and Africa informs the diaspora in a perpetually revolving system of exchange,⁶² then inquiries are raised, modifications made, re-readings of histories are encouraged. Traditions become the belongings of those that hold them and change becomes part of the tradition of passing down traditions. Axiomatically, the trick and its antidote might be summed up this way: inheritance is passed along as an object without choice, while choice is passed along as tradition without object. In the former, the recipient receives what is conferred; in the latter, the process itself (choice) allows the recipient an active role in developing the tradition.

The novel illustrates this theme in an incident involving a Tiffany ring. Dorcas's best friend, Felice, is given a ring from her mother; she tells Felice that it is a gift from her white employer. Felice knows her mother stole it, but surmises she did it out of spite, when the manager in his beautiful suit deters her from looking at the rings on display, murmuring "It's just policy. We have to be careful" (*J* 203). Felice loves the ring because it is from her mother, but realizes that it harbors a trick that messes with self-esteem, her mother's, for sure, but passed along to Felice with the ring: stealing the ring "to get back at whitepeople" involves lying, saying "it was a present from them" (*J* 210). The ring is an object that comes with invisible strings attached.

The ring is the microcosmic version of slant inheritance, but the passing of dubious legacies repeats, in a more encompassing way, in the lives of Violet and Joe. Violet's inheritance is the stories that True Belle tells her about Golden Gray. She missed the subtlety of True Belle's joy in the blackness of the golden-haired boy; instead, the stories came to contain the trick of inferiority: "He lived inside my mind. Quiet as a mole. [...] Had to get rid of it" (*J* 209). The stories posed an ideal to which Violet could never, in her mind, achieve. Joe's inheritance is the rumors circulating in the community about his mother – her craziness, her wildness bringing harm to the pregnant girls and old men of the community, her terribleness that mothers invoke to deter children from wandering too far. Joe could never quite discount these stories for what they were – rumors – because his mother failed to show herself to him; instead, the rumors tricked him. He begins to think of his mother as less than human ("Too brain-blasted to do what the meanest sow managed: nurse what she birthed" (*J* 179)), especially when he tracks her down, but she still refuses to give him a sign that she claims him. These inheritances came in the form of family souvenirs, community myths, and family stories, passed down as part of the normal course of events, accepted because a part of one's personal history. For Joe and Violet, detrimental states of mind result from acquiescence to them.

The antidote to the trick is choice. Actively choosing one's genealogy, one's history, one's traditions produces a fit foundation for constructing identity and society. Once Felice learns that the ring has been buried with Dorcas (who borrowed it the night she was shot), she decides to tell her mother that she knows the ring is stolen ("it's what she did, not the ring, that I really love" (*J* 215)). The novel suggests that while the stealing might be admired as an act of retribution, the object itself contains a secret lie and false

obligation (as a “gift”) that demeans its owner. For her part, Violet chooses to get rid of the “mole” and to become her real self, “the woman my mother didn’t stay around long enough to see. [...] The one she would have liked” (*J* 208). She acted out the killing in slashing Dorcas; after that craziness, she was able to get better. Joe was perhaps not so lucky since his choice to find Dorcas that fateful New Year’s Eve, a parallel to his tracking his mother, results in Dorcas’s death. The woman that he could not live without (Dorcas/Wild) was the woman that he also could not live with: Dorcas dies because Joe cannot live with the misery and hurt of that long-ago maternal denial. Choice also means that the creation of identity is in the hands of the individual. Joe chooses Dorcas as his lover; he also chooses his name, “Joe Trace” – in his mind, the two acts are inseparable (30). In choosing “Trace,” Joe acknowledges that he is the only visible remainder of his unseen mother; he also, perhaps unwittingly, describes his life’s occupation; his alertness allows him to “see” in Dorcas traces of Wild. The novel promotes the idea that action and choice, and proactive hearing, development, and creation of stories, histories, and memories guide and inform imagination and determine the person it is possible become. In all the cases above, choices result in sanity and well-being.

Choice is an action without need for reciprocity; its lesson and benefit may be passed along to others; it is transferable. Therefore, choice is a way to gather recognition for one’s self as a person, without requiring recognition from others to formulate a notion of identity and selfhood. Violet chooses Joe, and although Joe eventually concurs, Violet makes her choice irrespective of Joe’s agreement to marry. Joe chooses Dorcas, and although Dorcas takes advantage of his love, his finding her, presenting her with gifts, making love, restores him to himself and replaces for him Violet’s increasing silence that

reminds him of his mother's abandonment. Dorcas loves Acton, a young fellow full of himself, a "sweetback," and even though Acton cares little for Dorcas except that she can look pretty on his arm, the fact that he is the envy of all the girls makes Dorcas exceedingly happy in her choice to pursue and win his attentions. Choosing, as a good, gets passed along. It does not require reciprocation to be beneficial.

Choosing one's genealogical heritage is a theme embedded in the process of composition, arrangement, and performance of jazz. Stated most baldly, jazz musicians choose not only the music they perform, but also more importantly, they choose the style in which they perform. Certainly they are influenced by commercial record-label demands driven by audience desire; they are also restricted by instruments at hand, the talent of composers, their own mastery of an instrument or voice, and other social opportunities and constraints. However, the most common training for fledgling black musicians of the early part of this century is in the incubator of the dance or club hall under the tutelage of master players. Particularly in the early part of the twentieth century, when *Jazz* is set, new players played by ear in jam sessions, where they learned to "re-create and embellish the tradition interactively in a long game of jazz Chinese Whispers" (Beale 757).⁶³ Additionally, recordings and transcriptions⁶⁴ of the great solos provided material for imitation. Recordings were especially valuable because they provided information on un-note-able jazz elements, including "feel, phrasing, internal dynamics, and sound" (759). By imitating others' styles, a young musician came to decisions about his own style. The interchange between arrangement, composition, and improvisation worked the same way, with frequent and untraceable borrowings; compositions are often not fully composed, but relied on improvisation to complete them;

so-called “head arrangements” were “organize[d] orally (and aurally) and memorize[d]” (Kernfeld 90),⁶⁵ avoiding notation and maximizing freedom for improvisation. Even today, jazz as a medium is more performance-oriented than composition-oriented; it is this idea which bubbles up from the jazz source that informs the major theme of choice in Morrison’s text. The repeated and inversed theme of accepting one’s inheritance and choosing one’s genealogy reiterates the process of jazz-making contained in the jazz culture Morrison’s text translates.

Strategies of Modulation in Literary Narrative

In the construction of novels, generally, chapters serve as signals of discontinuity and transition. If a new chapter begins in a different place from where the previous one leaves off, features a different speaker, or hurls headlong centuries into the future, readers come to greet the new information with equanimity. A break with the previous chapter is expected, and even though we readers need to know eventually why we are in this new location with the new person, we are not averse to going the distance with a stranger for a little time, at least. These breaks, marked by numbers or titles or set off by blank space, accommodate leaps of various spatial and temporal size from one scene to another. These spatial and temporal obstacles differ vastly from what readers expect within a single chapter, where readers count on transitions of the logical sort, signaled often by words of logical relations, such as consequence (e.g., thus, therefore), contrast or opposition (e.g., on the other hand), equivalence (e.g., similarly) or explanation (e.g., in this case). Even in the case of exact equivalence (i.e., and), the terms imply a sequential logic. Therefore, when we speak of narrative transitions, normally we are talking about allowable disjunction at the end of a chapter and expected conjunction within one. Transitions

potentially affect all categories of narrative analysis proposed by Genette, including narrative order, its duration, frequency, mood, and voice. That is, transitions opening the possibility of disordering chronologies,⁶⁶ leaping or compressing time, introducing pauses or repetitions, shifting narrative focalizations and perspectives. Transitions are moments of instability, that nonetheless, are usually paid little mind. (There are exceptions: for example, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* depicts the passage of several days filled with intimate and lovely conversation between Orlando and Shel (Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esq.) as blank space in order to indicate the insufficiency of language.)⁶⁷

Transitions in *Jazz* become particularly important for their betrayal of musical origins. Disjunctions and logical transitions remain part of the novel, but here transitions register an unexpected element of repetition in bridging one chapter to another. This moment of sameness acts as a hinge between sections and introduces modulation, a kind of transition seen in music. Modulation in Western tonal music involves a change without break or without sequential progression. The musical line moves from one key to another in such a way that the listener perceives a shift to a new tonal center. The shift is perceptually ambiguous: "the sensation of a change of key is a psychological phenomenon experienced differently by different listeners"⁶⁸ even though the techniques employed by the composer (or performer, in improvisation) may be deliberate. The most common technique relies on "pivot chords, that is, chords common to the original key and the new key which can provide a transition between the two"⁶⁹ (Saslaw). Pivot chords are moments of stasis. Sounding the same tones, they function in both the old and the new keys, but differently, with different labels for each role.⁶⁹

Therefore, the pivot is a moment of repetition, though it might be fleeting, where one note functions in two modes simultaneously, but differently. Modulation results in a change in tonal context (i.e., key).

Modulation as a term of narrative theory is not common, but there is precedent for such a description. Louis-René des Forêt's autobiographical narrative, *Ostinato*, has been characterized as expressing "une modulation secrète" in the form of an "'ostinato-like' narrative, where similar events recur, but in a form that is altered by their recurring in another temporal and spatial sequence in the text" (Pettersen 748).⁷⁰ This "narrative modulation" contains an element of sameness (i.e., ostinato, in music, a persistent element), which is nonetheless changed by new context. Transitions in the literary realm of the type that might be classified narrative modulations retain that element of repetition at core, that moment that might be seen as a pivot point that transitions without benefit of logical relations or without taking advantage of blank space. As we will see in what follows, modulation is a mode of transcoding.

Modulation in Morrison

Each of the non-numbered chapters in *Jazz* has no particular sense of progression, and yet, paradoxically, the connections between chapters are overdetermined. This is not to say that the novel has no order; it most certainly does, but it cannot be said to advance according to the rules of conventional narrative. Nor does the novel rely on the musical model of theme and variations as some critics have suggested, seeing in the first pages of the novel – which discloses Joe's murder of and Violet's slashing of Dorcas – themes that get developed throughout the novel. In fact, the text devotes very little time to the violence discussed here. As we have shown, the motivating force is not the solving of a

violent crime (the murder is known), nor is it the retribution or revenge that might follow such a crime. Rather, the novel is episodic, linked together in progressions I want to call modulation.

The sections in Morrison's novel transition by modulation on a specific word or phrase: this means that the linguistic hinge appears at the end of one chapter or one section and at the beginning of the next. The new part changes direction, era, location, speaker, circumstance, etc. all in pivotal movement on the hinge. For example, the first chapter ends with Violet's caged birds and the second chapter begins with them. In the first instance, the birds and their cages are brimful of secrets: the defacing knife is under the papers of the bird's cage, and the parrot is the recipient of Violet's only dialogue at home. In the second instance, the bird cages are empty. Violet evicts the birds, and she loses part of the routine that keeps her sane and sleeping well; the cages remain as "noisy silences" that remind her of her loss of Joe (to his betrayal with Dorcas) and of herself (to the becoming of someone she does not recognize). The modulation on birds and cages suggests movement in themes from presence, routine, secrecy, and interiority to absence, abandonment, evacuation, and loss of self. The modulation not only moves the action from one geography (the city that makes Violet crazy), to another (the city that provides hope for Joe to escape the craziness that he flees), but also invests the pivotal objects (birds and cages) with clues to the themes of the previous and subsequent chapters.

In another chapter ending, Joe has been searching for Dorcas while rehearsing in his mind the last time he actively sought his mother. Search-for-Wild and search-for-Dorcas proceed simultaneously; he hunts for his mother in his overheated head, while he tramps the cold, snowy streets looking for his lover. The similarities in the two scenes

turn on room color and on a single pronoun, moving from illicit domesticity to domestic bliss, interrupted. The chapter ends when Joe locates the cave that he believes is his mother's home. He hangs around in it all day until the stone walls turn "fish-gill blue" in the evening light. Joe takes note of the signs of domesticity: the pot, jars, basket, spindle, and a rocking chair without an arm. But he also sees silver brushes, trousers, and a silk shirt that could have only belonged to Golden Gray.⁷¹ There are other items that refer to Golden: a green dress that belonged to his mother that he'd found at Henry's cabin, which he'd used to cover Wild when his father arrived. Further, the cave appears to Joe to be a place where things might be "rummage[d], touch[ed] and move[d]" (*J* 184), that is, they are actions indicative of Golden Gray, since these are the very disruptions he made when he first arrived in Henry's cabin. Despite all the things, no one returns to it while Joe waits. The novel asks: "But where is *she*?" (*J* 184). The modulation occurs on the pronoun "she." At the end of the chapter, "she" refers perhaps primarily to Wild, given that the final setting of the chapter is in the cave with all of the things that comprised her home. But "she" also refers to Dorcas for whom Joe is hunting. The next chapter begins with an answer to the question just asked: "There she is" (*J* 187). This "she" refers primarily to Dorcas, whom the novel has just located at a party with her snazzy partner, Acton. But the "she" also recalls Wild's home Joe has just revisited in his mind. The place to which Joe tracks Dorcas is holding a "rent party."⁷² The party is decidedly "straight": no "breathless girls [are] waiting for the white bulb to be exchanged for the blue [...] what goes on goes on in bright light. The illegal liquor is not secret and the secrets are not forbidden" (*J* 187). The white light means there will be no illicit love, or at least none prohibited, at this party that Dorcas attends with Action. It contrasts with

Wild's cave, bathed in blue, where a type of forbidden love (might have) occurred; that is, the love between a "white" man and a black woman.

While modulations are most noticeable from chapter-to-chapter, they also occur more subtly within chapters, for example, in the gradual transformation of personalities. Music need not transition on pivot chords, but might modulate directly and sequentially.⁷³ This more understated modulatory tactic is the kind Genette seems to see in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, where Proust exploits "with great harmonic subtlety the capacities for *modulation* which the ambiguity of the French imperfect tense admits"⁷⁴ effecting almost unconsciously, Genette believes, a desire "to liberate the forms of narrative temporality from their dramatic function [...] *to treat them in terms of music*" (155). This disruption of narrative form is in keeping with the observations I have been making regarding Morrison's text: the textual effects divulge its musical influences. An example of this gradual, continuous modulation occurs in the description of Alice. In the chapter which focalizes her view, Alice compounds fear, with hurt, and then anger, admitting to no one, until Violet, the terrible urge to violence that she has suppressed. Alice spends most of her time inside, afraid of confrontation with whites, sure that jazz is responsible for the immorality that affects the black community, practicing an extreme morality which she thinks will protect her from discrimination and resulting intra-racial intemperance. She begins to change when Dorcas's parents are killed and the heavy drumbeats that accompany the 1917 parades of returning black veterans extend a mode of disciplined and vicarious political action that contains the hurt she feels. When Dorcas is killed, godliness and discipline finally fail her. Her rage spills over with Violet, who is someone to whom Alice owes no explanation for herself (as she did to her parents), no

protection (as she did for Dorcas), and no pretense that she is other than exactly who she is (as she did for her neighbors). With Violet, Alice admits to the viciousness she has harbored for her cheating husband and his lover, all these years. The novel summarizes the modulatory process as a series of subtle changes until Alice transforms from fearsome to fearless: “Seeded in childhood, watered every day since, fear had sprouted through her [Alice’s] veins all her life. Thinking war thoughts it had gathered, blossomed into another thing. Now, as she looked at this woman, Alice heard her question like the pop of a toy gun” (*J* 86). The changes are internal until they suddenly find their equal in Violet. Violence is modulated and restated in a new context. The repressive measures that Alice has employed against herself to keep passions in check become the violence of confession, discourse, and action. Violet’s seemingly deranged and fruitless knifing of the dead permits Alice a way to move towards acting out the same sort of ferocity against years of suppressed terror, distress, suffering at the hands of discriminatory society. In short, Violet becomes the new social context into which Alice’s self-directed violence might flow and be perceived differently.

Homi Bhabha calls cultural translation a “borderline negotiation” (319).⁷⁵ The migrant experience itself sits on this border and is both “transitional” and “translational” (321). But whereas Bhabha sees migrant culture as “untranslatable,” containing [t]he indeterminacy of diasporic identity” that he describes as an heretical hybridity and blasphemy (322), I want to suggest that the musical concept of modulation allows us to conceive the borderline as a constellation of identities and cultures, each not losing its individuality in hybridity, but maintaining its uniqueness to function in varying environments. Modulation allows a conceptualization of pivotal, interacting personalities

that act from the unity of one body. I am not claiming that the different roles do not affect the body and its outward actions and mannerisms, but rather that hinge personalities provide connections between generations without the need for linearity. They are relational figures with the ability to speak in the language of the past, or of the city, or of music, or of this world and with the ability to act in the present, in the country, in silence, in another world. The goal of modulation is transition, and equally, translation.

Strategies of Counterpoint in Fictional & Critical Literature

Counterpoint has been a mode of literary composition and a mode of literary criticism in the twentieth century. The latter is most famously advocated by Edward Said. He exhorts critics to read contrapuntally, as opposed to univocally, thus equating contrapuntalism with polyvocality and linking his discussion to the previous theories of Mikhail Bakhtin. Both critics see counterpoint not only as an aesthetic structure for analysis, but also as content-driven form; counterpoint arises, whether in its reading or its composition, from the interior (i.e., themes and voices) of the text. Said's reading practice is grounded explicitly in music:

In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege begin given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from the rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagements (usually suppressed for the most part) with West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities. (51)⁷⁶

Said's purpose in contrapuntal reading is to break the logjam of British, French, and American hegemony in the production and maintenance of Western cultural forms that

advance the notion of empire and the idea of “Western ascendancy over non-Western natives” (51). Contrapuntal analysis, according to Said, moves beyond the European grounding of comparative literature to “acknowledge the massively knotted and complex histories of special but nevertheless overlapping and interconnected experiences” (32). That is, contrapuntalism is a way to “think and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formation, its internal coherence, and system of external relationships, all of them *coexisting* and *interacting* with others (32, italics added). For Said, contrapuntal thinking, reading, analysis, and interpretation is a way of considering both experiential and aesthetic representations from multiple perspectives, via sociology, history, literature, and political science, among others, in order to consider the disjunctive voices in the human making of history, culture, and ethnic identity.

The language Said uses to describe contrapuntal analysis is the same that Bakhtin employed a decade earlier to describe the multi-voicedness of Dostoevsky’s novels. Bakhtin identifies the spatial quality in Dostoevsky’s placement of characters’ voices alongside the authorial voice, extending the aesthetic vision as a series of “coexistence[s] and interaction[s]” that are never dialectical, but rather “spread out in the plane, as hopelessly contradictory, as an eternal harmony of unmerged voices or as their unceasing and irreconcilable quarrel” (92).⁷⁷ Bakhtin suggests that Dostoevsky’s belief in the coexistence and interaction of experience leads him “to dramatize, in space, even internal contradictions and internal stages in the development of a single person – forcing a character to converse with his own double, with the devil, with his alter ego, with his own caricature. [...] This characteristic explains the frequent occurrence of paired characters

in Dostoevsky's work. One could say, in fact, that out of every contradiction within a single person Dostoevsky tries to create two persons, in order to dramatize the contradiction and develop it extensively" (90-1). For Bakhtin, polyphony describes Dostoevsky's novels which conceive the world through individual consciousnesses, which are, nonetheless, enriched by the simultaneity of their constitution in dialogue. Three elements of musical counterpoint are important to the narrative analysis of Bakhtin (and Said): the relative independence of individual voices, the equality of these voices, which nonetheless recognize a unity in the higher concepts of theme or humanity (Benson 301).

Jazz uses counterpoint differently from Said and Bakhtin, though the principles of musical formation remain the largely the same. Music is the basis for the development of reading and analytical practices, in Said's case, and in Bakhtin's case, for the development of a critical vocabulary and stylistics for the description of a new genre of novel. These critics employ variously tactics of close reading, philology, historical analysis, and socio-linguistics to discern the coexistence and integration of voices in the texts they analyze. In contrast, *Jazz* employs counterpoint as a means to composition: underpinnings in the polyvocality of jazz guide the development of certain passages. The strict rules that governed counterpoint from the thirteenth century forward became less strict over time. Nonetheless, there some governing principles that distinguish counterpoint from the great harmonic compositions of Romanticism. The most necessary condition is the necessity for independent lines. In counterpoint, any one line might be played singly and sound perfectly complete unto itself. It needs no support from other lines to make a whole and pleasing sound. The other necessary characteristic is its ability

to be combined with other independent lines. Therefore, contrapuntal lines might be integrated with a musical result, though it does not necessarily mean that the counterpoint will be governed by the rules of Western tonality. Indications of contrapuntal composition occur not only in the multi-voicedness present in both novels, but also in the spatiality of the descriptions of scenes that are to be read as happening at the same time, in different registers.

Counterpoint in Morrison

Jazz deploys multiple independent voices that are intertwined with one another in several different scenes for the purposes of creating distances between characters that also span distances. Thus, the novel deploys voices that are independent, but that work together towards the purpose of constructing a work of art. Whereas in jazz music, the intertwined, individual voices in counterpoint create collective improvisation, call and response, or simply the composition as a whole; in the novel, the separate voices combine to recover and to create (i.e., to fabricate artistically) the texture of suppressed identities and lost histories. The city setting is itself a counterpoint and provides the structural interplay of color and light that occurs in the thematic interweaving of voices. Thus, the city is demarcated and divided by “Daylight [that] slants like a razor cutting the buildings in half” (*J* 7) Above, there is “bright steel rocking” (*J* 7), below, the shade hides “clarinets and lovemaking, fists and the voices of sorrowful women” (*J* 7). Manhattan is a doubly bifurcated grid: not only two separate neighborhoods, uptown (Harlem) and downtown, but also the sunlit and the shadowy. The independent quarters – north, south, upper, lower -- establish a contrapuntal pattern reiterated in the novel’s characterizations. Thus, in the manner of Dostoevsky, Violet struggles with her alter ego; *that* Violet had to

be manhandled out of Dorcas's funeral, "kicking, growling, [...] while [the real Violet] looked on in amazement" (*J* 92). Similarly, the narrator crosses in and out of the diegesis, often above the fray of the plot, but in one place simply taking over what had been Violet's narration of the affair between Dorcas and Joe, mid-sentence.⁷⁸

Counterpoint also functions to span distances, providing the artistic structure for recovering lost voices of the past. Through the elaboration of Joe's search for his mother, though Dorcas, and finally in the reliving of the whole experience through Felice, the novel weaves scenes from the past into the present by creating the past from the experiences of the present. Thus, in a complicated interleaving of voices, Felice speaks for Dorcas (after she dies) who stands in for Wild (who is unavailable) so that Joe might understand and know a sense of unconditional belonging and love. While Felice is the calm and practical voice, Dorcas was always pushing others into lawlessness to resist racism: "to do something scary all the time. Steal things, or go back in the store and slap the face of a white salesgirl who wouldn't wait on her, or cuss out somebody who had snubbed her" (*J* 202). In Dorcas's refusal to conform, she enacts a version of Joe's mother's refusal to participate in society, especially one that would allow the rape of a young black woman by a white man.

Just how much the lives of Dorcas and Wild are intertwined is enacted in the scene reviewed above in which Joe's search for his lover, Dorcas, whom he kills rather than lose to a rival, works itself out in counterpoint to his remembered search for his mother, Wild. In tracking Dorcas, Joe remembers the tracking of his mother. The narrative strands are interwoven; each sentence relating the details of one hunt adds something to the depiction of the other. Just as Golden Gray is changed by the girl, Wild,

so, the novel asserts, is Joe changed by the girl, Dorcas. Joe is determined to win back Dorcas after she breaks off their three-month affair in order to get her to admit her love for him because he has never been able to cajole such an admission from his mother.

The contrapuntal movements and mindsets, separate but interwoven, demonstrate the extent to which Joe's present determination to obtain recognition from someone he loves is a substitute for the failed efforts of yesteryear. The narrative shifts back and forth, from Joe's looking for Wild to his looking for the wild girl: "He stalks through the City" (*J* 180) as he remembers that "he had searched the hillside for the tree – the one whose roots grew backward" (*J* 182) into the trunk (because like Wild herself, it finds the soil of the plantation non-sustaining). He convinces himself that Dorcas will never go for the "rooster," Acton, because such a young guy, full of himself, would never treat her like he does. His comment sheds light on what he imagines Golden, and white society more generally, has done to his mother: "Never would make a woman live like a dog in a cave" (*J* 182). While walking through the snow, taking the trolley, talking to the women who will know where Dorcas will be, Joe remembers sliding into the cave that is his mother's, squeezing through a hidden opening: "He had come through a few body-lengths of darkness and was looking out the south side of the rock face" (*J* 183). Arriving in her living space, it is like being born into sunlight, like coming home, like being loved by Dorcas. The interweaving sections are independent, could stand alone, but enrich each the other in the use of similar diction (for example, the "treachery" of the surrounds of Wild's home resonates with the "torture" of Dorcas's too-tight braids), the striking of similar themes (e.g., "being holed up" and hiding from him), and the intensity of Joe's desires to find these women and have them want him in return. Even as Joe refuses to

believe that Dorcas will abandon him like his mother has done, he calls her “Wild” as if he knows they are like spirits – hovering at the margins of society, driven there by harm imposed by white aggressors: in Wild’s case, a white rapist (evidenced in Joe’s light skin) who made it impossible to her live within white-dominated society, even in a black community, and in Dorcas’s case, white arsonists who destroyed her childhood home and security.

Brought into a single temporality of the present, memory and lived experience interact, one influencing the other so that the ending of Joe’s possibility of a love relationship with Dorcas finally puts to rest the possibility of return love from his mother. Additionally, the tradition of the Wild woman continues unhindered and untamed by domesticity. Her presence touches, but does not assimilate into, society. Wild and Dorcas are tangential to the community: considered brazen, independent, crazy, they are feared. Where Wild is a “woman who frightened children, made men sharpen knives, for whom brides left food out (might as well – otherwise she stole it)” (*J* 179), Dorcas is equally demanding of friends (wanting them to make retribution for perceived slights) and disquieting (pushing them to do things verging on illegality). Of these independent, socially distant, non-conforming women, each equally important to Joe, the novel creates a literary counterpoint in a composition comprising two domestic spaces in two different times related in two different voices. The contrapuntal composition links past and present, country and city, mother and the girl who could be Joe’s daughter; it lays out corresponding vignettes that proceed as independent narratives that run parallel, meeting only through their critical impression on Joe. These two narrative events, more than other

incidences of doubling, play out as translations – as equal, independent, and yet inter-related lines of an underlying jazz counterpoint.

Milan Kundera observes that narrative might be considered to be contrapuntal and polyphonic in compositional form when none of the “elements can exist without the others [and] they illuminate and explain one another as they explore a single theme” (76).⁷⁹ Furthermore, he suggests that each of the different novelistic threads should develop (or have potential for development) into independent stories; should be equal in length, weight, and quality, and no one should dominate or relegate the others to “mere ‘accompaniment.’” The “[p]olyphony in the novel is more poetry,” he suggests, “than it is technique” (77). In this way, a text obtains a poetics of simultaneity, that is, obtains for itself the allusion to music’s polyphony that “is the *simultaneous* presentation of two or more voices (melodic lines) that are perfectly bound together but still keep their relative independence” (73-4). This contrapuntal poetics is the basis for the establishment of equal and interdependent relations between characters, between their histories, between episodes of events. This particular compositional arrangement is critical to the novel: it allows equal footing, not only among characters, but also in temporal and spatial dimensions. A cave dwelling is as rich in domestic comfort as a Harlem brownstone; a Wild woman mythologized in the community has no more power than an 18-year-old high school girl.

Novelistic counterpoint sets up a system of equal exchange within the simultaneity of the novel. In an oscillation that occurs in the present between that present and events which happened in the past, the novel creates the conditions necessary for “asserting the irreducible priority of the present” (Gilroy 202), critical to a “non-

traditional tradition” that conserves community, particularly the black cultural community, but retains its ability to stimulate its members to fresh perspectives.

The Meta-text: Politics of Translation Structured

Amy Kaplan, writing in response to George Lipsitz’s essay calling on scholars to find theory for American Studies in the cultural practices of everyday life, observes that “Lipsitz treats the writing of history itself as a vibrant form of listening, not only of the present listening to the past, but of the past listening to the needs, concerns and crises of the present. This is less an imposition of contemporary categories on the past than a dialogue in which urgent questions posed to the past elicit new historical responses”(333-4).⁸⁰ I see this “dialogue” with the past taken up in *Jazz*. The media of dialogue is translation, which becomes a particular type of attuned writing of history.

Translation is itself musical in function and performs acts of counterpoint, modulation and repetition. Translation is contrapuntal: it deploys in parallel relation to another text, in the case of this novel, a cultural one. Translation is both an independent creation and a work dependent upon the original. It defines the tangle that is culture by creating a unity that is the translation itself. Translation both portrays and participates in the sediment of culture from which it arises, identifying interweaving streams of thought, sets of associations, and interrelated characters and events and thus affirming a relation between the aesthetic representation and the episodic curvature of lived experience. The interrelationship between the translation and its cultural text is inextricable: both are incomplete in the global marketplace of languages that defines our twenty-first-century situation. Translation is a hinge between its text and its cultural subject and modulates an original so that it may function within a new context. Changing signifiers in an act that

might be seen as an elaborate renaming, the translation acts as the pivotal point of transcoding between the two interpretive systems. Modulations are noticeable in moments of non-translatability, such as Morrison's initial "Sth" which is matched at the very end of the novel with "aw." Not simply a colloquialism, as in "aw shucks," the latter non-translatable moment, like the former, burgeons with possible meanings in its syntactical context: "I envy them their public love. I myself have only known it in secret, shared it in secret and longed, aw longed to show it – to be able to say out loud what they have no need to say at all" (*J* 229). Is the phoneme a stand-in for the subject "I" or an expression of her desire, just admitted, to express love publicly? Homi Bhabha suggests the untranslatable in one culture become moments of newness in the translating (i.e., dominant, in this case, literary) culture and language. Untranslatable elements mark the space where there is "*movement in meaning*" (326, emphasis in original).⁸¹ They are the pivot points of modulation. Finally, translation doubles and supplements an original. We see the process in *Jazz* working in the way Paul Gilroy suggests that diaspora supplements the ideas of Africa, and vice versa. Translation operates in relation to its source materials like the dynamic "apparently magical processes of connectedness" (199)⁸² between a past in Africa and a present in the Americas and in Europe, redefining "tradition" in the process of an enriching repetition.

Reading the novel as a translation of jazz means seeing its pedagogical merit: understanding its efforts to effect methods that it, in turn, reads in musical performance practices. The result is an experience in collectively "working through" struggles staged in the novel, imaginatively in conjunction with characters, and possibly with other readers, to conceptualize multiple and speculative histories, of multi-faceted racial

subjectivities. Translation as a reading strategy recognizes the text as performing social relations, sees the writing as relating in its deployment to culture in existence and in imagination. The social relations perceptible in translation are not then simply formal categories, but are engaged with the content and context of the cultural sediment that gives rise to the aesthetic aspects of the novels.

In this study I demonstrate Morrison's novel is not only based in music, but also that it might be read as translating jazz into a textual expression. The non-narrative structural elements intimate their status as translations and their lack of goal-orientation and purpose evinced in the novel's dalliances in textual elaborations, their particular border-devising, pivot-point transitions, and the interconnectedness of quite independent tales foil a climactic instant, expected in traditional narratives, after which the protagonists are more knowledgeable, socially improved, or changed in the sense of having made progress. This is not to say that the characters are static, but indeed radically opposite, these characters remain poised for action in perpetuity. The novel offers no solutions, only possibilities. Golden Gray, for example, as far as readers know his story, remains at the threshold with a decision to make about which race he will adopt. Joe repeats, in conversations with Felice, his involvement with Dorcas, which in turn is a repeat of his attachment to his mother, Wild, and the narrator leaves open the option for, even demands, further repetitions of his story from readers. The novel does not ascend to one great moral crisis, nor descend to some perfect solution; rather it resolves by offering patterns for working through, for continuing, for living; it provides guidance in how to weigh decisions, to spin out options, to become individuals with self-selected and imagined histories and communities of belonging. Rather than resolutions, the novel

renders jazz form and content into literary practice, thus suggesting a base of resistance to capitalist goals.⁸³ This translation of jazz culture – with its forms of repetition, transition, and interrelation, and its thematic expressions of loss, pain, and family histories – focuses on processes: how to create the formal strategies and how to imagine substantial options.

Jazz is, as Gilroy and others recognize, a quintessential African-American musical form, first among components that comprise black culture. It carries the idea of tradition, redefined by Gilroy, as “the living memory of the changing same” (198)⁸⁴ and based on an “irreducible present” that connects the past and present, recognizes the history of slavery, and emphasizes black expressive culture, particularly in music in its sacred (church) and secular (blues-jazz) forms. Gilroy asserts that jazz and blues bear “witness,”⁸⁵ creating in their love stories “place[s] in which the black vernacular has been able to preserve and cultivate both the distinctive rapport with the presence of death which derives from slavery and a related ontological state [...] the condition of being in pain” (203). This “rapport with the presence of death and suffering” that jazz harbors in the lyrics of lost love and the lure of suicide⁸⁶ is the subject of Morrison’s novel. Skeptical of novel form,⁸⁷ *Jazz* becomes for Morrison a non-textual aesthetic form suitable for expression and translation.

As a rewriting, translation unsettles an original⁸⁸ and is the intermediary process necessary to producing a new understanding of tradition, in the re-defined sense Gilroy assigns it. Tradition does not, according to Gilroy, rely on hegemonic histories of heroism as recorded by a dominant culture, nor does it set its sights on finding an authentic version of historic events, but rather re-makes the past in light of a continually expanding body of knowledge in the present. In Gilroy’s opinion, “music supplies the best

illustrations of these complex dynamics because, in this vernacular, listening to music is not associated with passivity. The most enduring Africanism of all is not therefore specifiable as the content of black Atlantic cultures. It can be seen [...] in the ubiquity of antiphonal social forms that underpin and enclose the plurality of black cultures in the western hemisphere” (200). Thus, diasporic culture becomes a mediating agent between far-flung geographies and disjunctive temporalities with its connective network built, in part, on formal aspects that have persisted in music. This novel might be conceived as a translation of those musical forms that are the backbone of black culture and tradition in which the transformations are transparent.

The imperative to understand Morrison’s *Jazz* as translation of jazz music and culture might be seen in terms of the novel’s imperative to redefine tradition, history, and lineage for communities and for individuals. The novel turns to jazz as a dynamic art form in itself. In its barely 100-year existence, styles, compositional methods, purposes, inspirations, instrumentation, and alliances with other musics have changed radically every decade. It is a music dependent for definition on personal genius and innovation. It is undeniably a black cultural phenomenon. Translation capitalizes on jazz’s appeal to individual agency. It insists on its own identity connected to but apart from the object of translation. As such, a translation both departs from but works simultaneously with original subject matter. In particular, the interdisciplinary and intersemiotic nature of these translations highlights the relation between *two* entities. Translation is not a performance of hybridity and of intermixing, but rather it is a process for obtaining for an original the possibility of inhabiting two or more contexts simultaneously. Traditional translations have been judged according to its faithfulness to the original. *Jazz*, like its

original cultural structures in jazz, seeks translations that explore the “ample folds of the royal robe”⁸⁹ that is the breadth of meaning that might be wrapped into a particular cultural expression.

Reading the novel as an example of the in-between state of translation from music into text underscores the inter-spatial and inter-generational communication thematized in the text. Unlike most texts in translation where both the translator and his/her activity go unremarked, *Jazz* pronounces the necessity of translation. As translation, it suggests an encoded original not understood by the audience; even those sophisticated in listening to jazz, blues, and other black musical idioms and the language of the original is in some senses unintelligible. The cultural texts and subtexts of jazz and blues as well as their formal elements engage themes of love and loss and require translation into the language of the dominant culture. If the novel is read as translation from music, the temporalities, repetitions, variations, and elaborations make sense as modes of manipulating measured time. Conjunctions of present and past and distant locations’ hinged transitions and developments in repetition can be understood as non-narrative, musical arrangements that struggle against the novel form into which they are being translated. Finally, the process of translation proceeds in a space between the original and the resultant new-language version. This in-between space of translation becomes a site of emergence for cultural difference, for non-translatable elements to enter dominant discourse as new thoughts and ideas. The novel-as-translation becomes performance space for cultural relations, codes, and practices.

PART TWO:
DESTRUCTIONS OF SINGULARITY

Chapter 5: **Defying Disciplinarity: The Socio-Economy of Listening**

In Victorian England, the piano represented both domesticity and discipline; however, turn-of-the-twenty-first century interpretations of the piano in colonial settings highlight the instrument's disruptive potential. The piano conveys disciplinarity through Western social conventions and musical intonation standards, particularly when the piano is located in the British bourgeois home. However, in the colonies, established conventions for social interaction, as well as personal and social economies of value, change vis-à-vis the piano. Different market conditions and new circumstances of performance and listening affect the piano and its players. Although the piano is shipped with household goods with the idea of transplanting European domestic frames of reference abroad, in the two texts I read here, it proves unsuitable to the task. Paradoxically, the piano sparks alternate, non-conventional modes of thought and conduct for disoriented European protagonists displaced to English colonies. In this chapter, I identify in Jane Campion's film and screenplay, *The Piano*, along with Daniel Mason's *The Piano Tuner* the social orders governing the piano, its ownership, performance, display, and maintenance in Europe and in the colonies. I argue that the relocation of the piano from imperial center to colonial margin in the time frame of these texts (mid to late 1800s) disturbs an array of social values adhering to the instrument, which directly affects the ways in which the piano can be handled, heard, and played, as well as the ways in which people in its "circle" might act and interact. In New Zealand

and Burma, the sites of relocation in these texts, the piano furnishes unexpected insight into the possibilities for expression and communication in the new world. Shifts in its value are instructive for colonial cross-cultural exchange; mechanical and acoustic capacities are suggestive of possibilities for multi-vocality. I focus on the ways these texts use the piano to recommend to literary consciousnesses strategies of close listening and conceptions of value, which undermine the musical and social order of British imperial authority.

In significant ways, these two texts have multiple commonalities in their plot elements. Both protagonists, Ada McGrath of *The Piano* and Edgar Drake in *The Piano Tuner*, travel far from the British Isles, Scotland and England, respectively, to rugged outposts of the colonial frontier. Ada, who is (significantly) mute, is sent by her father to New Zealand in the 1850s to marry a man she has never met. The journey out takes three to five months by ship in the most unsanitary and brutish conditions, ending with passengers being rowed ashore in long boats launched from the anchored ships and deposited, with belongings, on unsettled shores.¹ Ada's exact arrival location is not specified, but the film points out that the nearest community of Nelson² in the northern part of New Zealand's southern island is reached only by travel overseas. Similarly, in *The Piano Tuner*, Edgar receives an unexpected summons from the British military for a tuning assignment in an outpost on the Burmese-Siam border. Even after arriving at Mandalay, Edgar journeys days by pony and by foot through the jungles of eastern Burma to arrive in the Shan Territories. While Ada travels with her daughter, Flora, and the piano, Edgar follows the piano he will tune, traversing the same rough path some months after the instrument. Additionally, both instruments are damaged by violence

inflicted by colonial authorities: Ada's piano is axed by her husband, Stewart; Edgar repairs a hole in the piano's underbelly sounding board made by a musket ball shot by an unknown assailant using a European weapon. Both pianos end in watery graves, sent to the deep by those that cherish the instruments most (i.e., Ada and Edgar). Although the outcomes for the protagonists differ significantly – Ada lives to become the wife of Stewart's land manager, George Baines, while Edgar attempts to remain in Burma, but dies in the effort – their central achievements are much the same. Each comes to value a realm of sound unavailable and unheard prior to experiences abroad; each cultivates strategies for listening that vary radically from those they valorized as imperial subjects.

In what follows, I argue that representations of the piano provide the aesthetic means to challenge notions of an absolute Western cultural system or a singular musical identity operating within the system. Western instrumentation becomes a cultural site of interchange between universal norms and individual resistances. The texts present Western cultural orthodoxy challenged by personal and native cultural difference in ways that might be conceived as configuring postcolonial conditions; that is, they stage resistances to seemingly totalizing systems. The categorization of these texts as “postcolonial” by the accepted measures of authorship and non-Western settings³ is complicated by these authors' focus on European travelers rather than on native inhabitants: Jane Campion's film, according to some critics,⁴ demeans native Maori by relegating them to stereotypical roles and dialogue; Mason's novel has been admired as a descendant of such Western literary classics as Homer's *Odyssey*,⁵ Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*,⁶ and Kipling's *Kim*.⁷ In other words, reviewers place it easily into a literary genealogy of white-man's adventure tales into foreign lands, where the protagonist is

fascinated by the beauty of an exotic dark people and the possibility of power over them. And yet, I argue that it is the representations of music that allow a Pākehā (white, nonindigenous) New Zealander and a white American to write texts of postcolonial resistance set in colonial times, which insist upon postcolonial reinterpretations of power structures within European cultural arenas.

The Piano: Site of Domesticity & Discipline

In Britain, the piano becomes symbolic of socially positive developments (e.g., upwardly mobile family, leisure, wealth, education in art, etc.). However, there are unseen constraints to self-expression, to genre, and to technical expertise for women with the introduction of a piano into the home. The piano came to symbolize what Victorian society felt were women's best qualities – gentility, grace, and moderation; however, these qualities came at a hidden cost. The piano represented not only “the middle-class girl's ‘armoury’ of feminine accomplishments” (Knight 24), but also a weapon of male mastery over the female pupil. It was not only “a pursuit requiring a great deal of time in order to achieve a high level of proficiency [and thus...] the leisured hours of the genteel woman,” (24), but also it was an instrument requiring hours of disciplined practice.

The piano is an instrument that has orchestral capabilities, “able to produce an approximation of any work in the entire literature of Western music.”⁸ Although the early pianos had as few as four octaves instead of today's seven octaves, the instrument had from the beginning the “capability of playing notes at widely varying degrees of loudness in response to changes in the force with which the keys are struck, permitting crescendos and decrescendos and a natural dynamic shaping of a musical phrase” (*GPI.1*), hence its full name, *pianoforte*, literally meaning soft-loud. Later, pedals that sustained notes⁹

added to the piano's dynamic resounding strength. Given this immense capability, it might be natural to assume that the piano would become an instrument of free expression for its performers; however, in Britain and its colonies, the piano became a woman's instrument: "used primarily for music making in the home, [...it] bec[ame] a symbol of domestic harmony, an ideal equated with femininity in Victorian gender ideology" (24).¹⁰ As such, it was subject to the same disciplinary constraints of the domestic sphere.

According to Phyllis Weliver, "[p]ossessing a piano was a mark of respectability in Victorian England, and semi-public musical performances helped to display the refinement of women and their families"(1).¹¹ The piano was often the center of the musical training afforded a young, unmarried woman to ensure that she was suitably prepared to make the best marriage possible. The semi-public "parlor performances" became an accepted site of evaluation, where potential suitors had "opportunity to watch a young lady's graceful and beautiful movements, to read the signs of her class suitability (she knows how to behave socially), and/or to note her father's social status which allows her enough leisure to practice music" (*WM* 33). Although a woman often became an accomplished player, perhaps even spending years at conservatory, she was expected to play uncomplicated, sweet melodies.¹² James Joyce gives a perfect example of a bourgeois male wincing at conservatory music in his short story, "The Dead." Gabriel Conroy expresses aversion to his cousin's performance at the annual Christmas party:

Gabriel could not listen while Mary Jane was playing her Academy piece, full of runs and difficult passages, to the hushed drawing-room. He liked music but the piece she was playing had no melody for him and he doubted whether it had any melody for the other listeners, though they had begged Mary Jane to play something. Four young men, who had come from the refreshment-room to stand in the door-way at the sound of the piano, had gone away quietly in couples after a few minutes. The only persons who seemed to follow the music were Mary Jane herself, her

hands racing along the key-board or lifted from it at the pauses *like those of a priestess in momentary imprecation*, and Aunt Kate standing at her elbow to turn the page. (2246, italics added)¹³

In Joyce's account, Gabriel, ignorant about the music, fears that the piano might convey some unknowable, mystical power to the player. Thus, according to Weliver, "drawing-room performances [were often kept] simple" given that "most male audience members were musically illiterate" (37). Weliver notes that fiction (often Victorian-era sensation fiction) "acts as stage upon which fears regarding powerful women can be explored before being contained and then eradicated" (115). Readers see the containment here: any "curse" in Mary Ann's "imprecations" is immediately defused in the "blushing" sensibility of the pianist and the "vigorous clapping" of the four men who came back at the end of the piece, restoring the proper gender dynamic immediately following the performance by the female virtuoso's expected humility.

The artificially suppressed skill level deemed suitable for women served to further elevate men's position in social hierarchies, especially given the rise of virtuosity among men (often Europeans and other "foreigners") who were musicians during this same period. *Grove* documents the professionalization of the concert pianist: "The dawn of Romanticism in the 1830s brought with it the specialization that produced a breed of pianist who were (*sic*) to dominate the salons and concert halls of Europe for the next 80 years. Although the number of amateur pianists continued to grow, the keyboard became increasingly the realm of the virtuoso who performed music written by and for other virtuosos."¹⁴ Thus, at the moment when Poland's Chopin, for example, was writing exercises designed to increase the male pianist's hand span and strengthen the entire arm,¹⁵ young ladies were being taught by music teachers to narrow the space of

performance: to “keep the ‘elbow level with the white keys. Hand neither towards the right nor the left,’” and “to play entirely from the wrist.”¹⁶ Additionally, women were instructed in musical propriety by magazines;¹⁷ suggestions often included polkas, waltzes and marches.¹⁸ Women pianists, of necessity, balanced restrictions on style, physical training, and repertoire with demands for highly accomplished public performances that demonstrated smooth implementation, light touch, and all-around pleasant performance.

The piano not only provided women an opportunity to cultivate and demonstrate their training in “feminine virtue,” but also it solidified the Victorian notion that men and women occupied separate spheres: “women were expected to (and generally did) restrict their musical activity to the home, as amateurs [...displaying] a slightly less than perfect technique [...] considered proper” for women and restricting their performances to genres of “showy salon and parlour music” (24). Victorian society came to expect that (especially young) women would learn piano to a degree necessary for public performance, which even with allowable mistakes, would demand concerted effort. The disciplinary demands of performance-level preparedness, requiring hours of repetition and study, would be nearly undetectable in social settings given audiences’ sole concern with immediate performance.¹⁹

After marriage, the necessity for skill on piano diminished greatly; “household and mothering duties took precedence” (*WM* 33). Wives’ improving musical talents could provide the fuel for social suspicion that she neglected her other responsibilities. Weliver writes that “particularly in the second half of the century [...] there was widespread worry that middle-class women had forsaken the art of housekeeping” (33). Ironically, in

the mid-to-late nineteenth century, music represented one of the few areas of education in which a woman might excel. However, her musical competence was always less important than her ability to demonstrate social status, during courtship, through graceful performance and in marriage, through ownership of the instrument.

Despite the fine line women negotiated between the competences of music-making and house-keeping, women performers commanded a certain power at the piano within the gendered dynamic of the home. The piano becomes a site of listening by pianist and by audience alike, standing at the intersection of feminine physicality and masculine judgment, female touch and male gaze, women's production of sound and men's assumption of silence. Although listening and silence are the proper attitudes for women (and children) in polite society, the piano provides opportunity for women, if not to fully inhabit the enunciative role, to demand of men their silence, a situation to which I return below.

The Piano: Site of Technical Discipline and Standards

Even more invisible in English middle and upper-class homes than the disciplines of performance and social ideologies that categorize the piano as a site of femininity are the piano's tuning standards. Tuning as a practice of intense close listening takes place prior to performance, establishing a common denominator of intonation, and is considered a positive good. In Western music, tuning standards are taken as givens and rarely questioned. When the need arises for other ideas of intonation, such as in non-Western or in early Baroque music, Western-trained musicians must take determined steps to avoid the normalizing effects of the habitual standards. Mason's *The Piano Tuner* thematizes a version of tuning known as "equal temperament," which calls for

equidistance between all tones in a scale. Equal temperament not only systematically determines the exact pitch of each key on a piano, but also chooses this pitch from a spectrum of non-named micro-tones representing infinite possibilities residing within the range of the canonically-tuned notes. Piano tuning thus comes to suggest to Edgar, as an expert in this tuning methodology, internal fractures representing potential for alternatives within dominant structures; however, while he remains in London, these “alternatives” are merely tones to bypass in favor of the “correct” notes.

Tuning is a process, determined not solely by physical laws, but also, and even largely, by social and cultural taste. Given the seemingly absolute nature of tuning (a note is either in tune or out of tune), it is perhaps surprising to learn that intonation has often been a contested and negotiated site, subject to historical development and social exigencies and preferences. In spite of musical tones’ appearance as unquestionably mathematic and acoustically fixed, the physical laws that underwrite their intervallic²⁰ ratios have been manipulated throughout time to meet expectations of balance and symmetry. Rudolph Rasch observes: “It is a commonplace – although no less true for that – to say each period in the history of music has had its own theory of tuning in order to meet its own musical needs” (193).²¹ Good intonation begins from a common standard and is perfected through adjustments made in performance between members of a group at the particular moment of play.

Tuning can be conceived as a search for concordance between simultaneously sounded tones selected from among a theoretically endless array of tonal possibilities. The undisputed frontrunner of tuning systems – equal temperament – is the result of hundreds of years of dispute about what constitutes the “right” ratio between notes.²²

Greek philosopher Pythagoras pronounced the first culturally determined definition of concordance for Western music, suggesting “those few musical intervals which affect our ear in a sweet and pleasing manner [...] correspond to the ratios of the first few integers.”²³ The most important intervals are the octave (2:1) and the fifth (3:2). Early efforts to maintain the desired pure fifths simultaneously with the essential pure octaves quickly produced a conundrum for musical theorists. The two intervals were found to be irreconcilable in the same way that powers of prime numbers 2 and 3 can never be coincidental.²⁴ Intervals of octaves and fifths endlessly diverge. Thus, a keyboard that combines these intervals can never be tuned absolutely purely.

The tuning for today’s pianos, equal temperament, reconciles fifths with octaves by splitting the difference between the two intervallic cycles and spreading it equally among the twelve half steps of the Western scale. Simply, “all twelve semitones in the octave are made equal”²⁵ producing intervals which are no longer in simple ratios of 3:2 and the like, but instead comprise fractional numerators and/or denominators. Equal temperament unsettles all intervals except the octave. Its aim is not pure consonance, but rather compromise. Equal temperament abandons fealty to simple whole note ratios in favor of those tones that are close enough for the human ear to perceive as harmonious when sounded together. Tempering, according to Cohen, “comes down to [...] making concessions to purity, fortunately made possible by the willingness of our ear to put up with minor impurities in the consonances” (474). Equal temperament must be circularly referential; that is, a tuned piano is autonomous in its systematicity, since it must be tuned to the registers suitable for that particular instrument.²⁶ In the end, however, to temper is to purposely mis-tune – two notes sounded together are tuned away from pure or perfect

relations between the two. Equal temperament confers on selected intervals canonical status even though they are defined by complex ratios and non-synchronic sound waves. It obtains stasis through concession and compromise; each note locates space for an off-center, impure identity.

Despite its contested history, tuning functions as orthodoxy, a cornerstone of Western epistemology. Tuning is omnipresent in performance, considered in composition, and evaluated by audiences: intonation is so expected by listeners that an out-of-tune note may be the only one noticed in the background music at a social gathering.²⁷ Given the epistemological and ideological power tuning wields, it is a force that is nearly impossible to overcome.

In both *The Piano* and *The Piano Tuner*, the protagonists must make determined efforts to escape the purview of social and technical standards. The texts suggest that contingencies in the colonial systems of value separate the piano from European conventions, though the protagonists have contrary experiences. While in Scotland, Ada's piano has been an instrument of personal use; arriving in New Zealand in the midst of a great land-grab, she and the piano are swept into a skewed and ruthless system of exchange, marked by a feverish environment of callous and greedy acquisition by English colonials seeking to "purchase" vast quantities of property quickly.²⁸ In contrast, though not the mirror opposite of Ada's situation, while in London Edgar sells his piano-tuning services to rich clientele who own pianos, while purchasing for repairs the necessary parts in ivory, wood, metal, and felt from working class craftsmen. In other words, his involvement with pianos is commercial in nature; however, his love for the French-designed Erard pianos that he works on makes any comparison to the frenzied

commercial environment of colonial New Zealand inappropriate. An interesting point of comparison arises in the two texts concerning the change and development of the piano's value in the movement from the Center to the colony. While the value Ada places on her piano transforms from the strictly personal to an escalating worth stirred up in a heated market system, the value Edgar places on pianos moves in the opposite trajectory, from the commercial to the personal. In London, he is an expert in Erards, a make of fine French instruments, but also tunes Broadwoods, an English instrument, and other makes; in Burma, Edgar is responsible for a single Erard piano, which in its singularity loses its mercantilist associations and becomes an aesthetic object, whose value we come to see becomes particularly utilitarian.

The Art of Listening

Listening is a mode of recognition of alterity that does not result in a Hegelian self-confirmation. It is, according to one interpretation of Levinas, a mode of making space for the other, a "dwelling place" (to use Levinas's term), "separate from the I of the listener" (137).²⁹ Listening means listening without judgment, without making your words and meanings, mine" (137-8). It is the situation which Levinas calls being "disinter-ested," that is, "stand[ing] close but at a distance, receptive but unattached" (138). Listening, in this formulation is the opposite of hearing, which occurs with the full framework of judgment and evaluation in place and operational. While hearing filters the other's language through one's own schemas and understandings, listening is a mode of self-formation that is not, as Spivak terms it, "self-confirming." It is not in the Hegelian or Cartesian mode, but rather seeks to make the self small and/or still in order to accord space to alterity, to the person or object of perception. Listening involves a contraction of

the I, that is, self-diminishment of the type we saw earlier in Dove's poem, "Ars Poetica," where she seeks not only smallness, but also the silence of a "ghost town."³⁰

Listening implies access to others. Roland Barthes' describes listening as the basis of human relations; it "inaugurates the relation to the Other" and "indicates to us their way of being" (254-5).³¹ Therefore, listening implies a site of selfhood and identity from which one might interpellate another. At the same time, listening intimates opacity of that very self. If individuals are listening, then they are not speaking or in any way disclosing the information that Barthes suggests conveys in the speaking voice: "their joy or their pain, their condition; it bears an image of their body and, beyond, a whole psychology (as when we speak of a warm voice, a white voice, etc.)." Therefore, listening might be conceived as imposing silence. That is, while listening, an individual is receptive, not only receiving information from the interlocutor, but also acknowledging the social norms that govern the interchange between listener and speaker. Simultaneously, and somewhat paradoxically, a listener, I claim, is freed from the social constraints transferred in interlocution. The listener's silence, whether momentary or long-lived, creates a condition of unknowability for the one speaking. For at least a brief moment, the speaker has little idea of the mind of the listener. Thus, surprisingly, listening that is often a position of acquiescence can be conceived as a position of freedom from expectations; silence might be seized as an opportunity for ungoverned expression.

With the involvement of the piano in the sphere of listening, the situation becomes more complicated. In Victorian England, women performed and men listened. However, the men listened in ways heavy with expectations for a performance that complies with certain pre-determined and circumscribed social and sound possibilities;

that is, performing in a socially acceptable manner meant women must meet ideals for feminine behavior. Jeffrey Kallberg explains one such mode of listening as it relates to the performance of piano nocturnes. Given nocturnes' association with night and the moon, and the further identification of nocturne style as sentimental, gentle, quietly rapturous, that is, feminine, the genre is thoroughly identified with women. Additionally, the style became aligned with the serenade, the "song without words" sung by a man to a woman for purposes of expressing love. That said, the typical scenario of performance for nocturnes reversed both the direction and the agency of the serenade. A female pianist would perform "in a house in front of men; the nocturne was probably written by a man; its expressive message was determined by men, and the ultimate point of the message was the satisfaction to be gained in being wooed by a man" (47).³² This particular scene of performance captures the complicated arrangements of power around the piano: men composed for the purpose of providing women the opportunity to perform works designed to retain for men their agency in courtship. Given that women are at the piano, it is no wonder there were patriarchal standards regarding tolerable levels of perfectability and suitable genres for performance. That is, women performing clearly had access to power. Only social limitations, strictly enforced through shunning (of the type exercised by Gabriel Conroy and his cohorts) could control women with musical training. For the most part, clearly defined purposes for the piano's presence in the Victorian home made it difficult for women to evade the hegemonic order.³³ Possibilities for evading social norms for women did exist; Kallberg documents them in the composing practices of Clara Wieck Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel. Additionally, as we see below,

the non-lingual, non-verbal expression of piano-playing did suggest ways for women to disturb social, often institutionalized, expectations.

The texts anchoring this chapter describe instrumentalists who immerse themselves in conventions of musical listening, voluntarily, customarily, and necessarily, and are highly attuned to Western musical standards. This engagement with music requires entry, if not total immersion, into a world of sound, that is, a certain absorption into non-linguistic rationality. However, at various times, the protagonists willingly withdraw from Western music's mandatory norms for the ear, resulting in a retreat from a specific set of music-related norms into the larger social world. Thus, music in these works describes a complicated set of relations between normative spheres. On the one hand, listening and performing require Ada and Edgar to fully engage socially-derived, musical standards; such an engagement simultaneously allows a withdrawal into a separate, non-social realm of self-absorption. On the other hand, composing and tuning also demand that Ada and Edgar withdraw from standards; such a withdrawal permits, for Ada, the full range of personal expression that might ignore sonata and other traditional forms and rules of composition and, for Edgar, the ability to hear the full chromatic range of sound in tuning and not just those tones deemed canonical and labeled "notes." What I am suggesting here is that these protagonist-musicians already have experiences in non-normative listening in the activities they already do (compose, tune); Ada and Edgar already hear the unfamiliar as agreeable, even beautiful. The texts insist not only on the ability to hear differently, though that capacity is necessary, but also on the ability to hear what cannot be heard; that is, that which is socially incomprehensible, that which falls below the level of consciousness, and that which is imperceptible except through

intuition, imagination, insight. This hyper-alertness is one of the qualities required of the individuals engaged in the transaction that Spivak calls “ethical singularity”³⁴: only by close listening, hyper-listening, listening beyond what can actually be heard can an individual enter the realm of ethical singularity which requires utmost good faith and superhuman efforts towards an encounter which at the outset is known to be impossible.

The film and novel both start from the idea that close listening, a process essential to music is a skill honed through years of mental concentration and physical practice. They also maintain that close listening might be learned and perfected, but that certain thresholds of acuity are achievable only in conditions of new social and aural possibilities, that is, in conditions of alterity. Ada and Edgar become more and more disoriented as they travel farther from the customary sounds of home,³⁵ but they also discover that this separation from everyday sounds, and particularly from the ideologically saturated system of Western music, allows them access to new (social and aural) territories. Ultimately, only through the severance from old orders through experiences with death and with silence, do the characters come to know the full promise of sound.

* * *

The Piano inscribes the parallel between gendered and colonial relations. In the forefront of the film are the stories of the Europeans: Opening in Scotland, the film quickly moves to the desolate shores of New Zealand where Ada’s husband has been attempting to hack out an English-style farm from the wild, hilly land. Stewart, generally oblivious to being a colonial interloper orders Maori tribesmen, rounded up by Baines, to haul all of Ada’s trunks and furniture over the rough terrain to his house. Judging Ada’s

piano too heavy and an unnecessary luxury, he leaves it behind. Bereft physically and psychologically without the piano, Ada convinces Baines, several days later, to take her and Flora back to the piano on the beach. Entranced by Ada's transformation from glumness to exuberance when she is playing, Baines recognizes an opportunity to win the affections of the woman who has already charmed him. A love affair develops that precipitously excludes Flora from her mother's attentions. Jealous, Flora betrays her mother, which provokes violence from Stewart that eventually ends the marriage and makes way for her to join Baines.

The Piano Tuner, set in 1880s London and Burma, depicts not only the gendered dynamics of colonial contact, but also details an encounter between competing aesthetic sensibilities. Protagonist Edgar Drake is a London piano tuner chosen by British authorities to travel to Burma to tune a grand piano sent out previously under unusual circumstances. Surgeon-Major Anthony Carroll, having single-handedly established relations with local Shan tribes to the benefit of British colonization efforts, requests and is granted his requisition of an Erard grand piano. From Mandalay, Carroll oversees the piano's transport. Some months later, Carroll requests the services of a tuner and Edgar is contacted. In accepting the assignment to go to Burma, Edgar fulfills what his wife recognizes as an inexpressible personal longing, but the price he pays is the loss of his previous sense of self. Already occupying a tentative class position, Edgar is further separated from a sense of social stability when, in Burma, he loses confidence in the orienting principle of his life, the piano's tuning system. Edgar becomes increasingly detached from the sustaining centrality of London and tempered tuning and increasingly attracted to Burma through Carroll's female companion, and perhaps lover, Khin Myo.

Personal and Market Economies in *The Piano*

Personal Economy: Aurality vs Orality

The Piano opens with words that convey the major imperative of the film: listen for that which cannot be heard. These lines are delivered in voice over a blurred image of light and dark stripes that fill the screen – like vague black and white piano keys – that turn out to be Ada’s view, to which we are privy, through her fingers. We are inside her head; we see *as if* from her eyes. We are presented no other images or landscape before this one; we are meant to occupy her mind, even before we even know it is Ada’s. The camera places us in this position so that we might understand the idea of hearing what has not been spoken aloud. Before we are instructed in how-to, the camera and the film want viewers to have the experience transmissions from mind-to-mind. We hear: “The voice you hear is not my speaking voice, but my mind’s voice” (PS 9).³⁶ From the first lines, the film demonstrates the possibility of hearing even that which has no material sound. *The Piano* ends with a similar voice over, but by this time we have learned the methodology for listening to the mind and the imagination. There is no body that intrudes on vision, like fingers do in the opening scene; nor is there need for one. Ada’s final statement contains the outlines of a methodology of close listening, which enacts an ethics attuned not only to an “other,” but also to the intimation of the other. That is, the value in listening for the other is in perceiving a self without reference to one’s self, and thus, further to move toward selflessness, which paradoxically, is that which might be claimed as one’s own: “At night I think of my piano in its ocean grave, and sometimes of myself floating above it. Down there everything is so still and silent that it lulls me to sleep. It is a weird lullaby and so it is; it is mine” (PS 122). The film urges us to cultivate

an unimaginable or only imaginable power to listen, from a place of utter silence and inner stillness. From such listening comes the possibility of imagining alterity, even when that otherness involves “the different, the different, the radically strange” (Lipari 138).

Between these bookends, which point us towards increasingly more radical listening, the film stages an interplay, in multiple registers, between sound and silence. At times, sound – in speech or in music – constructs the silence of a listening subject. For example, both Stewart and the piano are able to reduce their interlocutors to silence. At other times, speech is treated as if it is a function of silence rather than sound, for example in land negotiations where Maori speech is overridden by Stewart (and overwritten in subtitles). The film intimates two separate worlds in New Zealand that are divided according to their association with sound or silence. In ways that challenge the expected gendered, hegemonic binary in which men have a right to speech, meaning, and command, while women occupy an emotional, non-representational realm, the film uses the piano and music to identify a site where non-signifying “speech” commands rights to be heard. In one sense, Stewart and the piano seem to occupy one side of this binary, while Ada and the Maori occupy the other; however, the piano identifies a site of ambiguity. Obliging both silence from listeners (a right normally reserved for men only) and expressing primarily emotional content (the purview of women), the piano straddles the gendered domestic spheres that social norms in the bourgeois household attempt to keep separate.

In the paradigm of the film, Ada inhabits both spheres devoted equally to piano and to muteness. Although her voicelessness seems to relegate her to the permanent condition of listener, especially since her alternate communications (signing and writing)

are equally silent, she refuses that role, though I contend not necessarily for the reasons often cited by the film critics. It is true that Ada's muteness aligns with the expected silence and reply (as opposed to initiating conversation) expected of children and young women of her era. Therefore, critical speculation suggests that Ada's silence is due to childhood trauma³⁷ or is a calculated withdrawal from the patriarchal order of language.³⁸ However, I want to suggest a different motivation that seems more compatible with the age at which she chose silence (six) and with the passion (not fear) expressed for her music teacher, Flora's father. Considering the latter first, it seems at least questionable that Ada would have entered an illicit love affair if sexual trauma had marked her past. Additionally, a conscious withdrawal from patriarchy seems unlikely at such a young age. Therefore, I propose that Ada found in the piano a voice allowing her greater complexity of expression than possible in the simple speech of children. Ada begins piano at age five or six, likely before (but perhaps simultaneously) she exercises at six what her father calls "a dark talent" (*PS 9*) and becomes mute; experimenting in the full range of sounds possible on the piano seems a particularly child-like venture. What I am arguing is that Ada is fully conversant in the effects of masculine discourse, and discovers its pleasures via piano. After following the nursery admonitions to be seen, but not heard, Ada ascertains in the piano a method of gaining attention and refusing the necessity to listen herself. She claims, "The strange thing is I don't think myself silent, that is because of my piano" (*PS 9*). Although the piano is relegated to female performance in Britain; nonetheless, in its capacity for dominating (and dominant) "discourse," it becomes for Ada a source of masculine power. Contrary to many critics, I contend that Ada's muteness is the price of access to a commanding (masculine-

inflected) voice in the piano and that this discovery, as opposed to any outright defiance of language, of the psychic Father, or of social patriarchy, might be seen to motivate Ada's continued muteness, despite its seeming to confirm the expected behavior for women and children (i.e., silence).

Throughout the film, those that listen to Ada's playing – from the Scottish housekeeper to Aunt Morag, from Stewart to Baines – are struck dumb. In one striking scene, Stewart watches Ada "play" the piano keys that she has carved into a tabletop before she has access to her piano; Stewart observes that "There is something to be said for silence . . ." (*PS* 40), and then lapses into it himself, *even though he is the presence of only unsounded music from an imaginary piano*. Only Flora, who knows both piano and sign, and who is often called upon to interpret her mother's signals, talks over Ada's piano playing.³⁹ Piano-playing, in addition to her right to speak for herself through her own compositions,⁴⁰ becomes for Ada a means of expression that has the same masculine power of Stewart's: to be listened to. The piano provides Ada the presumption and superiority of undeniable audition belonging to European male voices. The claim of masculine privilege means that when Ada arrives in New Zealand, she is only marginally more open to the *te reo Maori* (the Maori language) than Stewart.

Ada's muteness is unsettling, unfamiliar, asocial behavior; as Barthes' observations about the silent interlocutor suggest, Ada seems to protect a private world inaccessible through normal avenues of language and language effects, including tone, familiar idioms, and so forth. However, language does not ensure intelligibility. Both Ada's signing and the Maori's native language (*te roa*) is also inaccessible. Subtext underwrites those voices (i.e., Ada's signing and the Maori's native tongue), whose

meaning remains indiscernible in any other way by English language viewers and unattainable by monolingual colonizers in the film. Therefore, we understand in the subtitles that *The Piano* takes the perspective of European patriarchy, depicting female gestures and non-Western voices as unintelligible without translation. The Maori voices, as well as the hand signs, are literally unheard by Stewart, as we will see below. The film provides translation for all communications except Ada's piano playing, which resolutely resists denotative interpretation, though Ada often communicates through its voice.

In addition to muteness, chosen or imposed, which affects the conditions of aurality, that is, whether one is heard (i.e., co-opted into the listener's frame of reference) or listened to (i.e., perceived as an individual agent of one's communication), *The Piano* also investigates the colony as a site where patriarchal listening practices are challenged. The central protagonist, Stewart, has little training in listening. As a male in his household, though very likely not the first son who stood to inherit the family estate in England, Stewart would nonetheless be someone listened to – his mother, his sisters, his female acquaintances, the estate staff would have been recipients of his words. We might speculate that Stewart had little guidance in what to listen for or how to listen, since it undoubtedly was in his family and social milieu quite unnecessary. It is not that Stewart is an overbearing man; it is simply that as a young man he would not have been instructed in silence, beyond (perhaps) childhood. In New Zealand his ignorance in listening arts would have only worsened: he spoke no native languages, he had few neighbors, his natural surroundings were his constant foe as he slashed back the overgrowth and erected fences and buildings. The listening Stewart does engage in, might according to the distinctions I make here, be best described as “hearing.” He misses

opportunities to communicate by assuming that Ada, Flora, and others are operating within his schema of colonial domestic and trading regimes, (i.e., that he knows what is best for them). His strategies for listening “do violence to the otherness of the other,” as Lipari writes, by making the “stranger a familiar.”⁴¹ The work of listening is made particularly difficult because of Ada’s minimal disclosure of herself in language, but Stewart invites and exacerbates this difficulty by resisting the presence of the unfamiliar piano, or any others beyond the Europeans, Aunt Morag and Nessie, into his house.

Market Economies: Land, Bodies, and Buttons

Before continuing the discussion of aurality and orality, it is necessary to take a detour into the discussion of value in terms of personal and market economies, given that the film intertwines the capacities to assign value to sound and to products in the market. It argues that avoiding the worst effects of market commercialization requires an increase in the valuation of human relations exemplified in processes of listening.

Personal economies, according to Barbara Hernstein Smith, are automatically interlaced with market economies. Intersections exist at least at the level of material objects that are needed by individual subjects and available in the environment under certain conditions governing acquisition and use.⁴² In addition, one’s personal economy includes a whole range of physical and psychological wants and desires, including the need to communicate, both to speak and to listen. All of the constituent parts of a personal economy, Smith reminds us, are as contingent as any aspect of a market economy, but when they are influenced by communities of value, certain tastes and preferences come to be thought non-contingent, that is they become societal norms.

I rehearse Smith's argument so that it becomes clear that multiple sets of personal economies come into conflict in the colonial sphere. In the film, the conflict comes to a head over the conflicting personal and commercial values assigned the piano. In the foreground of the film, deploying at the level of theme, is the contest between Stewart's personal ambitions heavily informed by the heated market forces of land acquisition in colonial New Zealand that assign no value whatsoever to the piano and Ada's physical and psychological need for the instrument. Ironically, Ada also assigns no value to the instrument, but in the opposite sense and at the other end of the scale: the piano is invaluable to her. Stewart abandons the piano on the New Zealand shore, even though his wife is desperate for it, because it is no longer needed as an instrument of courtship in the household (a primary use in England); the cost of moving the piano outweighs the benefit of carting it (he would pay the Maori if only in buttons); the piano is "foreign" to him (he is not alone among men illiterate in music), and as we have noted, Stewart does not willingly entertain strangers in his house. Later, when Baines returns the piano to Ada, Stewart is quite unsure that he wants it.

When Baines realizes that the piano has value, the piano becomes an unexpected economic asset for Stewart. Baines translates its personal value to Ada into economic value for Stewart. He offers a swap to Stewart: 80 acres for the piano. Stewart, desperate for land, given that his negotiations with the Maori for additional acres have been unsuccessful, agrees. That he does not perceive Baines' motives attests to the influence of the commercial land market on his thinking. Indeed, he thinks only in the frames of the market: his first thought is that Baines' munificent offer means that there is something wrong with the property. He asks: "It's not marshy is it?" (*PS* 41). Further, he is so

singular in his focus, and thinking that he is getting the much better part of the bargain, he plays into Baines' hand, offering into the deal lessons from Ada. He gives Ada's thoughts on the matter no more consideration than he does to the Maoris who claim ownership of land he appropriates against their evocation of death taboos and ancestral rights (more on this below). He is genuinely shocked when Ada insists on ownership rights, writing in capitals that "THE PIANO IS MINE!" (*PS* 42). He reminds her in no uncertain terms that it is her wifely duty to sacrifice on behalf of the family, including giving up the (what he sees as worthless) piano.

When the piano, which functions as if part of her body, is sold, Ada enters the colonial market economy against her will. However, when Baines suggests that she "repurchase" her piano, key-by-key, she rises to the challenge of the negotiation. What he wants is for her to allow him to do certain "things" while she plays; unspecified, these "things" are nonetheless intimated to be sexual; however, it is possible that Ada (and maybe even Baines) believes these "things" will remain specular, involving looking and listening from a distance. Baines' offers to credit her one key for each time she visits his house for a lesson; Ada succeeds in reducing the price to the number of black keys, less than one-half the offering price. The bargain is struck; the exchange of goods begins. This deal looks to have all the trappings of a capitalist exchange. Ada is purchasing a product (the piano) with a monetary instrument (the keys of the piano). But the exchange is complicated by the split in the personal and commercial values of the piano itself. Given that Baines would have absolutely no interest in the "money" being paid, he must be satisfied with the personal use value the piano offers, that is, its sound. However, the sound is really of no interest to Baines either; it is clear that he knows little about the

piano music though he is sensitive enough to arrest his “impertinent gesture” when Ada “shifts into a loud and mechanical rendition of a Chopin waltz” (43).⁴³ Therefore, what exactly is the nature of Baines’ interest? Although initially unclear, we soon learn that he wants Ada’s body and more, her unconditional love. Given his lack of interest in the commercial swap he has made with Stewart, we might understand Baines and Ada as entering a traditional Maori marriage arrangement. According to tribal practices, Maori couples seeking to marry needed the permission of the community. However, an alternative method was available to the bride and groom: “If opposition was feared, a couple frequently forced the issue by allowing themselves to be discovered sleeping together.”⁴⁴ Indeed, the two did little to hide their affair. Certainly Flora knew and acted out, while playing with the Maori children, the act of copulation, “rubb[ing] up and down against the tree trunks, hugging and kissing them” (*PS* 72). The Maoris undoubtedly catch on, watching the children, and even Stewart finds out (more on this below).

Baines’ alertness to the subtleties and repercussions of his transaction with Ada stem in part from his, at least partial, entry into the Maori culture. He has learned the language of *te roa*, he obtains a partial tattoo (Moko) on his forehead, a signal of tribal membership among the Maori,⁴⁵ and he has a friendly interchange with the Maori people – they joke with him, tease him about the wife that has never joined him in New Zealand; they come and go in his household.

Without doubt, Baines and Stewart hold diametrically opposed understandings of the transaction over the piano. Baines likely believes that it licenses certain access that verges into the terrain of marital, though lacking in the European legal framework for validity in the eyes of English/Scottish Common Law. Conversely Stewart understands

the transaction as a sale; he has purchased property with a swap of goods and services provided by his wife. Ironically, this basic misunderstanding iterates the misconceptions that underwrite the British purchases of land in New Zealand. In 1840, after a rapid escalation of British settlers from the 1820s forward, the Treaty of Waitanga was negotiated and signed by Maori Chiefs and the British Crown. It spelled out not only the terms of government, but made recommendations for the buying and selling of land. The treaty was vexed almost from the beginning of its existence because signed in two language versions. The terms of translation into English are in dispute. Whereas the British believed they were signing a document that gave sovereignty over New Zealand to the Crown, the Maori believed that the chiefs retained the power of governmental authority.⁴⁶ Although contentions continue over the interpretation of this treaty, it is generally agreed today that land transactions before 1865 saw “more than half of the New Zealand land mass [...] legally alienated to the Crown.”⁴⁷ Further, inducements, often in forms other than money (e.g., building hospitals, schools, providing military protection, etc.) encouraged these sales (O’Malley). Further complicating the governmental relations were so-called “land sale deeds,” quasi-legal documents that led to settler expectation of land cessation and Maori chiefs understanding that their governorship would prevail over settler use rights (O’Malley). None of this detail is, of course, spelled out in the film or the screenplay. However, there is a scene in the film indicative of the basic misunderstandings related to the land, which importantly for my argument highlights differing values regarding the necessity of listening as part of the negotiating process.

Stewart’s determination to acquire and settle land in New Zealand, despite the fact that he has no money to speak of, is clear in his bargaining with Baines over the

piano (i.e., when Baines first offers 80 acres, Stewart says he has no money to make the purchase). Lack of capital does not prevent his entry into negotiations with the Maori chiefs directly (although he is likely breaking the terms of the Treaty which provide for sale only to the British government to protect the Maori from ruthless speculators). His desires for land run afoul of an egregious lack of attention in negotiations. Stewart talks and gestures all during the Maori's explanation of why the land he desires is not for sale: "Nga awa kau kau, nga ana koiwi o matou matua tuupuna; kei runga katoa I te whenua nei kororongia atu kit e tangata na e Peini. [Subtitled: The bathing waters, the caves, that house, the remains of our ancestors are all part of this land. Explain it to the man, Baines.]" (PS 68-9). Rather than waiting for a translation of the Maori chief's words, Stewart "mutter[s] to Baines across the previous speech: 'What do they say? Are they selling? Offer the blankets for half the land'" (69). His response is not to listen, but to hold up ten fingers plus two, answering what he assumes is the only question on the table, i.e., price. The fact that the Maori place monetary value well below use value does not enter Stewart's consciousness. He never hears, and likely would not even if he had waited for the translation, the Maori concerns regarding the ancestral, burial, and daily-life uses for the land he wants. Emphasizing Stewart's unwillingness to hear what the Maori say, Baines, who is fluent in *te reo* and English, translates only Stewart's words. The Maori speech is subtitled so readers/viewers know it, but Stewart never learns their argument at all. Finally, the Maori speech becomes, literally, a mute point: walking home from the negotiation, Baines learns that Stewart has already begun to stake out the land, even though thwarted in his efforts to acquire it. Stewart's willed ignorance, which he defends, though a bit sheepishly, to Baines, meets no outside demand for correction. No authority

challenges his actions; his desires become, in a feint of circular logic, the license for land theft.

In a moment of intense irony, the film mocks not only Stewart's unwillingness to listen and his insistence upon claims of entitlement to Maori property, but also the entire system of market exchange in the colony. Stewart discovers that Baines and Ada have become lovers (Flora betrays them). He comes one afternoon and rather than break down the door and interrupt their coupling, he peers in on them, eventually crawling under the floorboards of Baines' house to get close to the lovemaking. In this position, he is an invisible party to the "transaction" ensuing over his head. His view is all but obstructed, but, significantly, he can hear. He lies completely still, listening to every rustle, groan, slap, and clasp of flesh. He is a vicarious participant: he sweats from anger and from arousal. Afterwards, as Ada dresses, the lovers "pay" Stewart for his attention (of which they are unaware). A single button pops from her dress, drops through a crack in the boards, and plops Stewart in the face. In a direct mockery of the daily transactions Stewart conducts with Maori laborers, Stewart has now been paid in the same "coin" with which Stewart "pays" the Maori for their labor (i.e., in buttons). Equally, the "work" that Stewart does is as useless to the business at hand above him as the Maori "work" is to Stewart's fence-building efforts (i.e., the Maori are shot lounging in the field next to him as he digs holes and hammers in fence posts). Moreover, in a final ironic thrust, Stewart is paid for the privilege of witnessing the fulfillment of a contract, the likes of which has been unable to transact for himself (i.e. his marriage to Ada remains unconsummated).

The Return to Use Value

The extensive critical focus on Ada, and on the power she claims and wields in piano-playing, occludes the lesson in listening learned by the most unmusical character, Stewart. He discounts the importance of the piano, not only to Ada, but even to his household; he does not listen, nor does he even know he is not listening. He regularly ignores questions from others, talks over others, or treats others' queries as if they do not warrant response. We have seen his incompetence in listening during business negotiations, but given the consequences for inattention are practically nil, he has no incentive to improve. Even with his friend Baines, he is unresponsive. On the way down to meet Ada, Baines asks whether he should halt the Maori moving crew, and Stewart replies with a *non sequitur*: "Just as the party returns and settles [Stewart] strides on ahead, possessed and determined," saying only, "We must get on" (*PS* 19).

This all changes after he maims Ada. Stewart has locked Ada and Flora in the house in an attempt to keep Ada and Baines apart. Indeed the plan seems to succeed; Baines announces plans to leave the island. Desperate to get a message to Baines before he leaves, Ada dismembers the piano. She removes a key and engraves it with a statement of her commitment to him. The removal of the piano key from its hinges is the signal of the piano's removal from the commercial market. It is no longer an instrument over which exchanges are made;⁴⁸ rather it resumes its function as a tool of use. Ada reduces the value of the piano to absolute personal use – disabled, the piano has neither commercial value, nor even social value. Although the piano will continue to sound, its tone will be distorted by the lack of resonance of those strings which that key activates. Additionally, the key she chooses is not one on either end of the range of keys that would have small impact on her playing. Rather, she takes a key from the middle of the soprano

range, one sure to affect the majority of music that she plays. She cripples the piano, but it retains a particular use to her. The ivory and wood key carries a non-lingual message to Baines. Although she enscripts the key, she also knows that for Baines who is illiterate the key itself will immediately convey the sense that she is giving part of herself to him.

Stewart discovers Ada's plan. Receiving the key that she prepares from Flora who delivers it to him rather than giving it to Baines as her mother has demanded, Stewart rushes down the mountain, with ax in hand, and chops Ada's finger in retribution for what he sees is an act of betrayal. In that instant, when his wife is gravely injured, Stewart's attention is directed, at least temporarily, towards another. The exigency of the situation affects his auditory inclination. His transformation is signaled by his small effort to sing to her, "two lines of an English love ballad" (PS 112). Even Stewart realizes that music is the only possible mode of communication that will reach Ada while she lies in a comatose state. He hovers over her bed, where she is fitful with fever. Removing the quilt, he sees her bare leg and is moved to consider taking advantage of her semi-conscious state to consummate the marriage. She comes round at that moment, and Stewart is deterred, first by her eyes, and then by her mind's voice. What develops could not have happened at any prior moment: this unembodied voice penetrates his consciousness. As Stewart describes the experience to Baines, we understand that Stewart believes he has inhabited, albeit briefly, a reality other than his own in which the unspoken can be heard, where silence has meaning:

Stewart (*Slowly*): She has spoken to me. I heard her voice. There was no sound, but I heard it here. (*He presses his forehead with the palm of his hand.*) Her voice was there in my head. I watched her lips, they did not make the words, yet the harder I listened the clearer I heard her, as clear as I hear you, as clear as I hear my own voice. (PS 114)

Ironically or regrettably, depending on your perspective, Stewart attains the capacity to listen closely at the moment when he loses all hope of attaining Ada's affections. He becomes attuned to music's demand too late, only after he has disabled the link to music, and thus to Ada. He wishes to return to the man he was before, "the one I knew" (115); for the first time, perhaps, his mantra of progress and forward motion – "We must get on" – fails him.⁴⁹

The trauma necessary to override both social and market conventions is iterated in the final scene. Although we do not know what actually transpires in Ada's mind as she leaves Stewart, the island, and the colonial economy that has enveloped their lives, we see the result: Ada insists that the piano, precariously strapped to the Maori canoe, be thrown overboard. Whether her own ability to hear what was silent to her before (e.g. the Maori concern that the boat will overturn) or whether she intuits the whole imbalance of the British colonial pressures on Maori culture and land, we do not know. However, when the piano is shoved off its moorings, there is a dramatic instant when the uncoiling takes Ada into the water, too. She is surrounded by the silence of the sea. Although she kicks free and lives, the sensation of death remains with her. It becomes a reminder, like the fragment of British poetry⁵⁰ that fills her head when she thinks about the moment, of the intensity of separation necessary for freedom from British imperial influence.

The Piano Tuner

We might describe the trajectory of value in *The Piano*, traced through social conventions of listening, as beginning with the use value expressed in British bourgeois homes, moving toward the disorderly market economy of the colony, and ending with a reinvestment in personal use economy. Somewhat surprisingly from a novel equally

involved with the piano and its music, *The Piano Tuner* takes nearly the opposite tack. From the metropolitan center where Edgar Drake runs a business involved in the technicalities of tuning, Edgar and the Erard he tunes are displaced Burma, separated completely from the commercial market. Both the instrument and Edgar become valueless in the colonial economy, except perhaps in their value as objects for interpretation; they are removed from their primary expertise in music-making. The French Erard grand becomes an object of colonial gaze. It is aestheticized in ways that leave it vulnerable to manipulation by Surgeon-Major Anthony Carroll, the British commander and medical doctor posted in the far eastern Shan territories of Burma. Carroll is the only British officer (or rank-and-file) at the post, Mae Lwin, and he comes to view not only the piano, but also Edgar as equally exploitable in the accomplishment of his agenda for the territories, ostensibly the seeking of peace between the warring tribal chieftains and the obtaining of their cooperation for the British colonial efforts.

As in the film, the personal value that Edgar places on listening highlights the level of co-optation by economic forces, but in the situation of this novel, the inability to hear marks levels of exclusion for Edgar not only from European technical standards, but also from trust in British authority. What I mean by this is that Edgar loses his faith not only in the orthodoxy of equal temperament tuning, but also in colonial narratives of power. Although the first has been the system of governance to which he has devoted his life, he comes to suspect that it occludes sounds that he should have been hearing all his life. Although even before he leaves London he is a skeptic about the British military, he comes to learn that it controls, spins, and interprets information that potentially obfuscates the truth.

The Commercial Center: Center of Specialized Listening

London of the late 1880s is one Edgar knows through distinct schemas of listening – professional, disciplinary, and technical – with overlap between them. Listening is the means to his livelihood as a piano tuner; to hear is to live as far as he is concerned, not only because his work of tuning depends on it, but also because he cannot, for example, imagine “living for eight years in the jungle without Bach’s music” (*PT* 18) as Surgeon-Major Anthony Carroll has done. All of the designs for listening in London involve the market economy. As noted above, Edgar’s professional work places him as a middle man of sorts between owners and craftsmen, earning from the bourgeois homes and paying the working class men. At both ends of the spectrum of his work, he must assign values to his labor and negotiate rates for others’ work-products. As someone more interested in the “‘Physics, Philosophy, and Poetics,’” (*PT* 77) of piano tuning that his own teacher emphasized, Edgar would just as soon not worry about the awkwardness of negotiating between upper-class homes and workshops. However, the technical aspect of his work compensates somewhat for this burden, given that Edgar thinks of the system of equal temperament as an art. It is, in his opinion, a cross between the mysticism of a tonal maze and the mechanics of working parts. Tuning draws him in, hypnotizes him with its rhythm, tones, timbres, vibrations. To the system of equal temperament, he is utterly devoted for its complexity, yet universality. He thinks of it as opening endless possibilities for music. The system is difficult to understand; it is even more difficult to master, which involves the cultivation of the capacity to hear that “synchrony of slightly discordant sounds [...] that only a well-trained ear could discern [...] as] slightly, if necessarily, out of tune” (*PT* 214). But at end, he loves the discipline of this micronic

listening. In contrast, the military assignment demands a different type of listening – the kind that keeps one waiting, commands attention, holds the floor, controls the subject. The Colonel that explains the assignment to Edgar is seeking his agreement, and yet seems unconcerned about being overbearing in a manner that leaves Edgar “feeling intimidated” and confirmed his thinking that “[h]e had always disliked military men” (*PT* 16). For Edgar, London is a place of disciplinary listening; his sense of this quality deepens in contacts with arrogance in the imperial military. While Edgar is a willing and astute listener, the discipline of listening takes on new character; listening is not simply an aspiration to excellence judged by certain socially agreed standards, rather listening to military orders involves punishment for non-compliance.

London’s elite households where performances and social exchange are the order of the day, tuning is an invisible activity. Indeed, the tuner’s activity is unlistenable. Only those trained in the fragmented ratios of equal temperament tuning would be interested in listening for the right interval among the consistently discordant sound produced in striking two tones together. Ironically, for all its unpleasantness, piano tuning requires acute listening, beyond ordinary capacity. Unlike every other instrument where tuning is a public, pre-performance activity, piano-tuning is completely private, done days or weeks before a performance. No one hears it, and yet for those engaged in it, piano tuning is completely absorbing. For Edgar, listening is an isolating preoccupation, one which takes him to a separate sphere of tonal ratios and sound. He works alone and has little opportunity to attract the attention of others, that is, to be listened to.

The disciplinarity of listening during piano tuning combined with its almost complete invisibility alludes to an imperceptibility of the market associated with his

work. The novel itself pays little heed to the commercial forces in which Edgar works. However, a brief reference in the novel belies a seeming absence. The novel notes fourteen different guilds, associations, and manufacturers, spanning “Pianoforte makers” to “ivory bleachers” and “string makers,” which form an “array of Those Associated with Pianos” (PT 40); thousands in London alone are employed in the field. This network of professionals that dispels the solitude of the occupation diminishes as Edgar moves further from London. As he travels east, his work is decreasingly market-driven or effected by exchange values.

Aesthetic Distance

In *The Piano Tuner*, Edgar’s mindset is reproduced and reinforced through identification with the Erard grand. His and the piano’s parallel journeys into the jungles of Burma exile each from the standards of Western civilization, which for both Edgar and the Erard reside in the rule-governed system of intonation, equal temperament. Given that Edgar’s thinking is duplicated and intensified in the intimacy with the Erard, when he finally comes to understand the shortcomings of equal temperament, he suffers a doubly forceful alienation: his own conscious realization of the failure of equal temperament as a system is deepened by its manifestation in the piano’s inability to reproduce quarter- and micro-tonal Burmese music.

The Piano Tuner defines the relationship between the man and his instrument through uncanny parallels in their travel experiences. The narrative doubly inscribes the route to the East; the travels are laid out side-by-side, as twin experiences. The piano travels by ship to Rangoon and by steamer to Mandalay; from there to Mae Lwin, the piano is hauled first on an elephant-drawn cart and then is hoisted onto a palanquin and

heaved through the jungle by the intense labor of six men on foot. Edgar, too, travels by sea, river, pack animal, and foot. Each parallels the other's journey to Burma.

The paired travel is reinforced in inverse vocal/aural experiences; the greatest strengths of the piano and the piano tuner, vocalizing and listening, gradually decline with the increase in distance from London. Starting out, the piano sounds: first, autonomously as its hammers hit strings when it sways and then, musically when Sergeant-Major Carroll (who actually travels with the instrument) plays it in impromptu concerts and explains it to the locals. However, before the trip concludes, Carroll silences the piano in mythology. In order to put an end to numerous delays along the way, involving giving concerts and answering questions, Carroll instructs his team to tell the natives that the piano is a “terrible weapon” and dangerous to disturb. At the beginning of his separate and subsequent journey, Edgar is also aurally attuned, listening closely to the stories of former subordinates of Carroll who extol his reputation for beneficence and greatness and to an old Arab, who recounts a story about becoming deaf when exiled by shipwreck and assailed by the exquisite beauty of other-worldly song. But eventually, Edgar loses his extraordinary listening capabilities; pressed into service by Carroll at treaty negotiations with Shan tribal leaders, he hears sounds, but can distinguish nothing. Finally, the most concrete similarity in travel experiences is simply that both the Erard and Edgar survive attacks en route. The piano’s sounding board is pierced by a musket ball; Edgar is shot at and hit with a pistol butt.

These experiential parallels do not tell the whole story. The piano and piano tuner are further linked in the realm of the aesthetic; they both become exoticized and defamiliarized in ways that distance them from lived experience. Both the Erard and

Edgar traverse not only territory, but also levels of aesthetic distance. In London, both work in the immediacy of producing music and the tones on which music depends. However, the journey is an experience in separation from that immediacy. The piano becomes less an agent of sound than a subject of others' gaze and of narrative. For example, even before the Erard is placed in the room at Mae Lwin where it is framed by window and room, it appears as an object of sublime beauty. While still at the river dock, the piano, straddling two lashed-together dugouts and handled by men sweating with exertion and humidity, is seen by Carroll as an illuminated museum piece hung in the darkness of the jungle. Lit from underneath by a lantern strapped to bindings that secured the dead man (killed by snakebite in hauling the piano), the Erard created "a strange sight indeed [with] the piano floating in mid-stream, [...] two men squatting below it, and the body of a third stretched out above. As they lowered the piano onto the beach, the lines of the body reminded me [Carroll] of van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*, an image which will be permanently fixed in my memory" (PT 211).⁵¹ Carroll's later narration of these visions further attenuates the piano's connections to its own reality.

Similarly, Edgar's intimate work inside pianos and inside sound is steadily replaced by a view of himself from the outside. Ultimately, he fails even to distinguish between his dreams and reality. In reading Carroll's recollection of the Erard's journey, Edgar comes to know the piano as if it were the "hero" (PT 77) of an illustrated adventure tale. The unfamiliarity of the piano in these stories informs his perspective on himself; in his imagination, he stands alongside himself until, like the Erard, he becomes as if a subject of art. In Mandalay, Edgar reluctantly joins a hunting party comprised of military officers from the British Pegu Club. Almost immediately, one hunter shoots a

monkey, portending ill luck. A little boy is killed when, in hopes of getting another *anna*, he rustles the bushes too near one of the over-eager hunters, who shoots at the movement without seeing the target. Edgar (having thrown the first enticing coin) suffers extreme guilt over the boy's death. After days of feeling as if he is "drowning, choking," he stumbles "vomiting into the roses [...] sobbing, shaking, a grief beyond all proportion, so that later he will think back and wonder for what else he mourned" (*PT* 101). Despite the intense physical response to the boy's death, Edgar imagines the scene in aesthetic fragments. The boy's mother holding her son becomes, in Edgar's view, the *pieta*. Life itself seems to tear irreparably, "like bits of paint lost as dust to the wind in the ripping canvas" (*PT* 102). The more his life becomes an exoticized image, the less he owns it as his lived experience. Although both the piano and Edgar reconnect with the immediacy of producing sound while in Burma (Edgar does tune the Erard and performs on it at Carroll's request), in the end, neither the piano nor Edgar are able to return to the unquestioned routine of everyday life they lived in London.

The duplicating of travel experiences and of aesthetic distancing intensifies the connection between piano and man that has its origin in the piano's equal temperament. The tuning operates as ideology for both of them, saturating Edgar's mind as much as it "spread over the piano like ink spilled on paper" (*PT* 215). Edgar experiences life through the Erard, as a system of rules and order; they are both accepted as valued constituents of London society. As long as the equal temperament system remains functional and necessary to the piano, and as long as Edgar is engaged in the task of tuning, Edgar's value to the British military and to Carroll is unquestioned. However, British military authorities can make neither heads nor tails of Edgar's extended stay in

Burma. The longer he is removed from his professional purview and the society in which his work is marketable, the less he is understood. His pursuits become unhinged from the social paradigms of music- and sense-making. He, like Carroll, becomes tagged as a rogue, without social value.

Separation from the System

The aestheticizing experiences place Edgar in a vulnerable position; a fish out of water, he is unable to explain himself fully or to act in his own behalf. That is, his lack of facility in the native language, his unfamiliarity with local customs, his lack of knowledge of the geography become liabilities. Unlike the expert he is in his field in London, Edgar is in Burma an immigrant, a minority, an exile. As such, Edgar becomes subject to manipulation and to questions of representation. Edward Said notes the near impossibility of thinking a subject from dominant culture as “the other,” given a framework of imperialism.⁵² However, Edgar’s position as a character on the margins of respectability in London, his suspicions rather than deference to military authority, and the invisibility of his work underwrite his separation from the colonizing class and slippage to a category of the colonized.

The extent of Edgar’s vulnerability is underscored by several occurrences in which he loses his auditory acuity, thus making him more at risk for exploitation. Upon arrival in Mandalay, Edgar is unable to identify the governing system that might render the street music sensible. The unfamiliar sounds, sights, and lack of definition of time combine to disorient him. Soon after his arrival, he falls seriously ill with malaria. He descends into a state of unconsciousness; his delirious imagination conjures erotic scenes of lovers, angry bites of black ants, mousy smells of a dog’s muzzle on his lips, and

sounds of Khin Myo's voice at his side. However, it is all an illusion; his senses have failed him. Much later, he is rendered similarly sensory deficient when drafted by Carroll to attend a meeting of Shan tribal leaders: at that time, Edgar's lack of facility in the local Shan language leaves him metaphorically deaf. Carroll coerces Edgar into impersonating his second-in-command at these treaty negotiations, purely for purposes of show; Edgar's incommunicability subjects him to manipulation by Carroll's narrative. When interrogated by British officers as to the purpose of this meeting (the military understands it as an act of treason), Edgar is unable to definitively assert the content of discussions. He only knows what Carroll has told him: the negotiations achieved a peace treaty.

The piano is equally subject to Carroll's interpretation. While Edgar chooses to perform Bach's preludes and fugues from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (WTC) as a "testament to the art of tuning" (PT 248), including its flexibility of transposition and movement between keys, Sergeant-Major Carroll puts a political spin on this "master" system. As Edgar sees it, equal temperament is a concept suggesting strategies of peace: negotiation and compromise underlie its propensity to totalize. But Carroll has been stationed in Burma for nearly twenty years and has become conversant in the complexities and subtleties of Burmese geography, history, and culture and particularly in the fragmentation that marks the Shan States where his fort is located. Edgar suspects Carroll interprets the Bach fugues for the Shan tribal chieftain in ways that exploit that tribal rivalries and underscore his own power and indispensability to the achievement of peace. Although we never learn Carroll's precise strategies, it seems certain that the Bach becomes unhinged from its meaning in Western music when it is translated by Carroll, not only into words, but particularly into Shan dialect. Music's lack of semantic reference

means that Carroll's interpretation need have little relation to an original sense or purpose. The infinity of tonal possibilities first reduced by Edgar to the identities of 88 keys on the piano is now further reduced by Carroll's narration. Edgar's notion of a universally accessible mathematical complexity in the *WTC* is diminished to a particularity: Carroll "could explain what it meant, or what he needed it to mean" (*PT* 248).

The stories and histories Carroll constructs and elaborates regarding both Edgar and the Erard serve to disrupt their values cultivated within the system of Western music. Carroll's evaluations sustain Edgar's growing realization that his beloved piano and its system of equal temperament are deficient. While in Burma, he writes his wife: "there is a particular laughter like none I have ever heard. These are sounds forbidden to a piano, to bars and notations" (*PT* 252). Although there is potential for expansiveness in the tuning process, equal temperament settles upon fixed identities for notes on the piano. Tuning might be read as an opportunity lost in this novel. The promise of infinity vanishes in the necessity of identity. However, Edgar's encounter with other tonal choices besides those canonized in tempered tuning facilitates his eventual ability to hear other sounds as music. His conception of music expands beyond Western melodies to include not only Burmese songs like the *ngo-gyin*, a lament, but also to the sounds of laughter and insects chirping, sounds he berates himself for not recognizing as music long ago. His familiarity with equal temperament's spectrum of tonal fractionalities translates into a realization of an array of identity choices only when he separates himself from the ruling order that determines proper pitch.

With both negative and positive consequences, Edgar lives while in the Shan territories increasingly outside the social norms governing his former, pre-travel life. No one else, except Carroll, listens with Western ears. At Carroll's Shan fort, Mae Lwin, Eurocentric norms do not have the same force of authority for either of the Westerners. The lack of direct bureaucratic authority allows Carroll to claim imperial prerogative for himself. Like Conrad's Kurtz, Carroll becomes the nearly superhuman healer of the sick among the local population. Additionally, he claims discovery and naming rights for vegetation and plant life, which he sends to the British Royal Society for recordation. Above all, he negotiates on behalf of the British government, deputizes Edgar without official authority, and declares peace between the Shan tribes without any collaborating witness who might verify the facts of the transaction (Edgar is there, but ignorance of the local language means he has no means to validate Carroll's claims). Autonomy contributes to the seductions of the East for Carroll, and eventually, for Edgar. Neither is willing to return to the constraints of Western conventions, though for different reasons. While Carroll seeks the power of personal (aggrandized) reputation, Edgar finds Burma itself (in Carroll's mistress, Khin Myo; in the temples; in the *thanaka*-painted women; in the rice fields, etc.) a culturally rich country and people that have no need of British "improvements." For Edgar, however, the consequences of freedom from social constraints are counterbalanced by the loss of meaning of the structural supports underpinning his life. The tuning system, the Erard grand piano, his wife – the things that made sense of and gave value to his life in London – cannot be translated to accommodate life in Burma.

When Edgar loses his ability to hear, he loses a critical component of identity. The bout of malaria that renders him senseless and complete incomprehension as part of Carroll's treaty delegation with Shan-speaking tribal leaders alert him to the possibility of disconnection from a grounded reality. However, early on, listening to the Man with One Story, Edgar finds a model for perception of extraordinary and other-worldly sounds that licenses his reassertion of personal use value. In other words, rather than remaining subject to representation and interpretation by others, Edgar finds in auditory acuity a method for re-establishing his right to evaluation and to value. From the old Arab, a perpetual fixture on the ship from Alexandria to Aden, Edgar learns that listening and deafness work together in ways that might be adopted in varying circumstances. The Arab's story recounts a time when he was shipwrecked; finding himself among a congress of Arabians and Africans waiting for the rare appearance of the goddess, She, he unexpectedly meets her when he crosses a line in the sand, entering the forbidden territory of the desert from the protected zone of the oasis. Sand swirls around them, but she stills it, and he glimpses her inhuman deer face, and is immediately swept into the song of a woman "low and sweet, a song like wine, forbidden and intoxicating" (*PT* 65). He understands no words, finds its melody "utterly foreign," and yet hears "something so intimate in it that I felt naked, ashamed" (65). However, even though the Arab perceives that this song is his alone, singularly "intimate" and otherworldly, he also perceives it as containing the multiplicities of this world. It conjures images of a thousand stories swirling a thousand experiences of snakes, faces, drumming, instruments, girls, fires, scars, lizards, children, dances. When the whirling images end, the Arab tells Edgar, he is deaf. And yet, we learn later his assertion is not true; the Arab has greeted other travelers

and his “one story” seems to vary accordingly. The tale Carroll hears from him on his first journey East relates a time when the Arab “and his brother were just boys [...] and worked as spies during the [Greek] War for Independence” (PT 260-1). The implications are two-fold: first, we might conclude a perceptive listener might control the story that the auditor needs to hear. The Arab varies his story according to his ability to sense the hopes and desires of his interlocutor. Coupled with the tendency of a listener to hear what s/he needs to hear, the attentive listener might exercise power over others. Secondly, we may understand that any “one” story contains all others. Listening is always a palimpsestic activity; it proceeds in multiple registers and summons other ideas and texts. In this multi-level process, listening precludes singularity. Listening for the multiplicity means becoming deaf to ideal Truth, whether in history, literature, music, or art. Carroll’s parting gift to Edgar is a page torn from his copy of *The Odyssey*, with annotations he’d made in Shan script, about the seduction of the Lotus-Eaters. The novel suggests that in Homer’s epic are all subsequent stories, including the one Edgar is currently living. In becoming willing to hear as musical the sounds within tempered tuning, the stories within the stories, and the alternate histories, Edgar adopts an acute, but encompassing method of listening that precludes imposition of what might otherwise be called common knowledge, common sense, reason, or rationality. Just as Edgar comes to suspect the claims of equal temperament’s universality and the claims of singularity by the One-story Man, he comes to doubt the “official” accounts of British authorities.

Edgar counters the “Truth” conveyed by British military authorities about Sergeant-Major Carroll with alternative interpretations of the same material facts. What the British see as “covert communication” in the unintelligible notes of “numerous music

sheets” sent by Carroll to HQ, Edgar knows as Carroll’s efforts to translate Shan microtonalities into a Western notational system. What the British see as a traitorous selection of a French-made Erard piano – “the same French who are building forts in Indo-China” (*PT* 297) and making alliances with the Shan against the British – Edgar knows as a matter of Carroll’s exceptional taste in instrumentation. After Edgar is unsuccessful in getting the British to hear his account of the doctor’s activities at Mae Lwin, and especially after he learns it is the British themselves who have destroyed the fort, he comes to discredit the substance of British authority. He is visited that night after the interrogation by a captain he knows, but refuses to name; he reduces the military man to a “shadow,” denying his avowed search for “truth” and even the reality of his existence: “You aren’t here, I hear nothing, you are only the crickets’ shrill, you are my imagination” (*PT* 303). For Edgar, the British captain becomes no more than one possibility of existence; the official accounts become just one version of the story about Carroll, about Burma, even about Britain, no more credible than any other.

Edgar’s distrust of imperial systems of knowledge is far removed from his previous dependence on the order of Western language and music with which he first tries to make sense of things in Burma. Although he desires the freedom and newness that the East seems to offer, he cannot, at first, fully function without the Western principles that have always guided his conduct. In the end, however, although he continues to admire the symmetry, universality, and structural possibilities of tempered tuning, he comes to understand that he cannot consign himself, or the piano, to live within the narrow constrictions of Western social convention. Edgar can neither stay at Mae Lwin, nor return to London. Fleeing the British post, he heads back to Shan territory. Before

leaving, he untethers the raft-poised Erard from the dock. Despite a short-lived moment of freedom – “the piano sang, [and] the keys were slung forward with the energy of the release” (*PT* 307), the Erard is sucked under the water’s current, soon to disappear into the Salween. Edgar makes a day’s headway back to Mae Lwin before he is shot in the back.

Conclusion

Through representations of the processes of listening, these novels offer insights into colonial economies and systems of value. Champion’s *The Piano* and Mason’s *The Piano Tuner* advocate intentional periods of in-audibility, in order to provide time, space, and practice for un-learning and re-thinking, suggesting more generally, that a quieting of social conventions allows individual adaptation to new, non-normal schemas. In focusing on established social and tuning systems that are unquestioned in the minds of their characters, the novels reproduce an established aesthetic code of Western civilization and demonstrate the purposeful unsettling of its conventions by willful, or accepted, deafness counteracting the imperative of its norms. Demonstrating for readers ways to challenge cultural authority through a willing suspension of customary thinking and practice, the texts examine consciousnesses open to influence, able to critique power through distortions of the structures of power itself.

Ada McGrath employs the European voice of the piano until it becomes a liability to listening beyond the parameters of its musical and social systems. Through her, readers come to understand the danger of masculine power and its potential for imbalance in the colonial arena. Through Edgar Drake, readers come to reconsider complicated and established systems, such as equal temperament, not only as processes that reinforce a

canon, but also as standards that are fractional and exploitable in the aporia that comprise its parts. The texts demonstrate ways to dull deep investments in conventional principles and practices to produce, in effect, exile that permits consideration of other theoretical possibilities and alters expectations for everyday activity. In the ramifications of withdrawal from imposed cultural orthodoxy and tradition, sensory experiences might be interpreted to provide, as Said suggests, alternatives to the institutions governing lives.

Listening, as most broadly defined, is simply a matter of exploring a range of possibilities from which to select an identity; identity-selection is itself always a matter of deadening some options. The texts recommend attending to the impulse towards self-fashioning, acknowledging the role of listening and silence in cultural self-selection in order to detour from habitual order, and practicing the incorporation of new identity elements. Western musical systems and their refusal – concentrated immersions into the work of perfecting standards and the experience of preventing or evading their persistent presence – operate as instruments of instruction into postcoloniality. Both systems – musical and social – require practitioners to educate themselves in the impact of omnipresent, institutionalized cultural pressures, to master the demands of orthodoxy through rehearsal of its tenets, and to learn to dampen their influence sufficiently for the dismantlement of entrenched cultural practices, licensing change.

Chapter 6: Defusing the Canon: Developing an Ethics of the Ridiculous

Introduction

Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music* and J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* depict particular postcolonial situations in which Western literary and musical canons are the defining, disciplinary structures of the protagonists' professional lives and avocational pursuits. These novels examine various means, both voluntary and unconscious, for opening these canons to new forms of creative production, in turn establishing ground for new strategies of self-fashioning, not limited to the binary framework of a colonial ethics based in the duality of Self and Other.¹ In both novels, European works of art directly affect the institutional and social lives, in material and imaginative dimensions, of the lead characters. The conscious intellectual orientation of the protagonists relies upon and asserts the principles of a largely Romantic canon in terms of re-productions in rehearsal, on stage, in the classroom, and in the imagination. In Seth's novel, Michael Holme, a second violinist, plays in the London-based Maggiore Quartet that performs the "standard repertoire": Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert. Even a composer as "traditional" as Brahms, who writes towards the end of the Romantic era gives the quartet some trouble. The group plays nothing modern, and at least two of the members (not Michael), shrink from the possibility that they might have to perform a composition by one of their own. Similarly, in Coetzee's novel, David Lurie, a professor of the Romantics and amateur composer of opera, has long taught the Romantic poets at Cape Town University, but his course load has recently been shifted by the administration to offerings consisting mainly of basic Communication classes as the university re-engineers itself, as Cape Town

Technical, to meet the more practical demands of new students in a post-apartheid South Africa. The official mission statement, which David considers preposterous, holds that the purpose of language is for communication of “thoughts, feelings, and intentions to each other” (*D 4*),² but in the new, rationalized university, it has been given precedence over David’s conception that language is not practical, but spiritual. He believes that, as speech, language emerges from music to fill the “overlarge and rather empty human soul” (*D 4*).

Given the privileging of the Western canon in Michael’s and David’s disciplinary pursuits, each fails to recognize the ways in which the realities of their lives already argue against canonic governance. In other words, beyond the conscious recognition of either man, the novels portray the disjunctions between the quests of intellect and imagination, on one hand, and on the other, the realities of the lives these men lead. For example, Michael finds authority hateful in all situations other than those that involve music. Additionally, he fashions his life around open-ended, incomplete fragments of literary and musical works that represent the opposite impulse of the closed canon within which he works. Seth’s novel not only depicts a strategy of temporary deafness that Michael voluntarily employs in order to elide standard tuning practices and that allow him to perform a repertoire beyond the canon, but it also intimates that other involuntary moments of deafness are critical to evading constraints of canonic authority. Moments of performative haziness, in which Michael loses his focus, are recast as moments of potential separation from ideal conditions of centrality, wholeness, stability, and arrogance, all of which are necessary for Michael to develop a capacity for pleasure in marginality, fragmentation, instability, and open-endedness. Similarly, David lives a life

that, without his cognizance, denies and exceeds the discipline and principles of the Romantic canon he teaches. Coetzee's novel portrays a bleaker scenario than Seth's: while music composition seems to provide David a creative outlet that evades the intellectual distance of vision in Wordsworth, one in which he might fashion non-conventional operatic scenarios, he finds at the end that canonic genres, even the promising comedic opera, prove insufficient as bases around which David might consolidate an identity that will function in the new South Africa. Unable to escape the constraints of the European canon in music, and having already been forcibly separated from its securities in literature, David abandons it and realizes what his daughter already knows: only from a state of nothingness can cultural rebuilding begin.

In this chapter, I identify three interrelated functions of the European literary and musical canons: 1) the canon as discipline, 2) the canon as a system of ethics, and 3) the canon as a failed, but perhaps promising, institution. I argue that, within each of these three functions, the canon operates in two modalities: on the one hand, the canon provides a means to identity, which in turn, determines the possibilities for relations with others; and, on the other, the canon disrupts meaningful human relations, especially love, by mediating those relations in ways that obstruct intimacy and immediacy. I argue that the protagonists must recognize what they already know subconsciously, as evidenced in their habits and behaviors: they must find ways to engage the canon, while distancing themselves from its effects, to conceive of the canon beyond its formulations as a construct of Romanticism, and ultimately to undo the ethical suppositions underwriting the canon in order to elide the binaries iterated in its hierarchies of power. In discussing a conception of "field" that appears closely related to the idea of canon, Bourdieu notes

that “newcomers” attempting to break from an existing field and its principles of formal order often do so “not by explicitly denouncing it but by repeating and reproducing it in a sociologically non-congruent context, which has the effect of rendering it incongruous or even *absurd*, simply by making it perceptible as the arbitrary convention it is” (31, emphasis added). Thus, an escape from canonic influences might be mounted, first, by recognition of orthodox methodologies, including hermeneutic processes, compositional structures, and training in technique and, then, by counteraction of these modes of canonic persistence. Reformulation of the canon has significant consequences for the establishment of ethical relations in postcolonial situations. If the canon, even those of established past works, is no longer thought of as closed, whole, or impenetrable, then its inherent binaries (male/female, master/student, canonic author/newcomer, colonial/postcolonial) might be dismantled, and it might be conceived as a site supporting not only new artistic creations, but also new identities. In short, the ability to articulate the Romantic canon’s imperfections and absurdities becomes key to a reformulation of ethical relations communicated through culturally dominant canonic discipline within the postcolonial conditions depicted in these two novels.

The Canon as Discipline

A canon, whether in literary or musical form, acts upon its recipients as a discipline to thought and imagination. This disciplinarity lacks the same kind of singular, stable core exerted by the physical presence of the piano, as discussed in the previous chapter. Nonetheless, the canon’s basis in a set of texts or a set of compositions, often solidified by public adulation for the writer/composer (as in the case of Shakespeare or of

Beethoven, for example) allows the canon to wield power acquired from the collective judgment initiated and confirmed by a critical elite over time.

The literary and musical canons claim authority both as a body of existing, aesthetic texts and as a curriculum of methodology and technique. As a body of texts, the canon might be considered a totality, even as we recognize John Guillory's warning that this totality is always imaginary and is never constituted as a fixed entity in a single location. Nevertheless, its force might be conceived as unitary, unifying, and normative; its power is particularly apparent when considering works of a bygone era are introduced to a postcolonial population. The designation of "canonicity" confers upon individual works the full normative force of the whole. As a curriculum, the canon becomes known in its subparts as models of process and practice. Singular works engage individuals not only at the level of intellect, but also at the level of practical technique. In this register, an individual reader/performer directly interacts with the canonical work and the work becomes the medium of an intersubjective ethics (in pedagogy, collaboration, dialogue, etc.).

In considering the canon as a totality, Adorno's concept of "structural listening" is useful in understanding how it works at both the metatextual and textual levels. Adorno asserts that a musical composition conceived as a single entity through a practice of concentrated and informed listening might reveal universal truths.³ As a whole, the artwork can be seen to have autonomy sufficient for critical distance, permitting critique of the social and material world that occasions its production. That is, as a whole, an artwork comprises a system of standards and norms by which both components of the work and outliers to it might be judged. Adorno also comes to recognize the value of

music's parts, which in going "beyond the whole," recognize an idea of music that is "more than culture, order, [or] synthesis" (322, brackets in original). In its fragments are traces of the processes and materials by which the musical whole is made. Adorno acknowledges an artwork's constituent parts – in referring to a work's origins, its production processes, and the human labor expended in creation – returns to a musical work its "dignity and authenticity." While authenticity intimates attributes of uniqueness and aura posed by Walter Benjamin,⁴ the identification of parts and processes also points to a need for common elements in a pedagogy designed to develop know-how (in the processes of composition, writing, criticism, performance) that will eventually license creativity.

Pierre Bourdieu suggests that inculcation into artistic forms and their processes occurs as a dialectic between knowledge (*connaissance*) and recognition (*reconnaissance*), providing "symbolic capital" in the form of prestige and honor to those educated into the dominant cultural codes. The resultant "cultural capital" "equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artefacts" (7).⁵ The attainment of symbolic capital and the investment in cultural capital prompts the continuation of formal artistic structures through a pedagogy that values the ability to recognize and reproduce them. The forms, thus, are internalized "[l]ike rules of grammar [...] acquired by slow familiarization" (227-28),⁶ often unconsciously, but then emphasized in the process of formal education. The "grammar" of a musical education involves not only instruction in mental processes, but also training in physical practices inculcated through hours, months, years of

rehearsal. The music room, practice cell, and recital hall are sites where the disciplinarity of the canon is highly visible.

The Discipline of the Musical Canon in *An Equal Music*

The musical canon, unlike its literary counterpart, directly asserts a discipline upon the body. Valorized in Roland Barthes' admiration for the "'grain' of the voice" as "the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs" (188)⁷ is the musician's labor during hours of practice and repetition needed to perfect a passage. What is perceptible as "friction" is the work of a body disciplined by music. According to Katherine Bergeron, the etymology of the word "canon" as a reed or rod points to a root disciplinarity: a canon is "a sort of measuring stick, a physical model that both embodies a standard of measure and makes possible its reproduction. The canon is, in this sense, an ideal of order made material, physical, visible"(2).⁸ Thomas Christensen writes that Western music theory, which in other disciplines might be simply the conjectural body behind the texts, is "a discipline that seems to stand apart from practice yet is inextricably tied to that practice"; it is simultaneously "a discipline that claims to transcend history yet is through and through historical" (14).⁹ More than other speculative areas of study, music theory was and is involved in day-to-day practicum, addressing obstacles to play, such as mensuration, notation, intonation. In other words, the musical canon comprises in equal measure theory and practice. Bergeron attributes this close tie to scales: "For the performer, certainly, practicing scales is the first (and last) measure of instrumental discipline, the source of 'technique,' the training of the body into an orderly relation with itself in the production of music."¹⁰ The very ability to participate as one of the coterie of individuals making music requires submitting to the demands of a specialized physical

training. Bergeron notes: “Such training involves a physical partitioning: the hand, the arm, the fingers, the spine are all marked, positioned, according to separate functions. The Suzuki class (perfect model of discipline) playing in unison demonstrates the eerie power of the ordered body” (2).

As Bergeron acknowledges, her notion of musical training is informed by Foucault’s formulation of discipline as a type of power that “‘makes’ individuals” by differentiating subjects as to their strengths and weaknesses all the while homogenizing their behaviors in alignment with institutional or societal norms. Although Foucault’s most well-known discussion of systemic discipline centers on a panoptical system of surveillance, it is his theory of the normalizing functions of discipline that calls into play canons and the behaviors required to meet canonic standards. The system of exacting “micropenalties” that Foucault catalogs as part of the experience of school, military, and factory life have a close parallel in the musical training of the ear where the slightest misplacement of fingerpad or mispositioning of the embouchure results in out-of-tune notes, an infringement of the standards of musicality that result in self-realized embarrassment or humiliations by the conductor or others.¹¹ On one hand, the musical canon exists, like its literary counterpart, as a body of texts backed by the full force of elite critical opinion and thus able to command its position as touchstone for any future works, which asserts standards of excellence against which individual performance is judged. On the other hand, the musical canon plies another more insidious and subtle normative power: the command of physical and ear training. The musical canon demands compliance not only generally in the arenas of genre, style, and textual structure, but also

more personally in terms of, for example, position of the hand on the bow, placement of the finger on the string, breath control, and shape of the mouth around vowels or reeds.

The domain brooking the least tolerance is the purview of the ear. The canon sets the criteria for excellence in sound in a system of twenty four scales, arrayed in a particular half- and whole-step arrangement of tones that define the tonal frameworks for Western music.¹² Playing in tune is critical for music-making; no other standard has more authority; tuning is the most important plank in the system of the musical canon.

Bergeron describes the this way: “It matters little whether we conceive of this canon as a scale [the basic disciplinary structure of music], a body of law, or a pantheon of great authors and their works’ the effect in every case is the same. The canon, always in view, promotes decorum, ensures proper conduct. The individual within a field learns, by internalizing such standards [of excellence], how not to transgress.”¹³ The canon exerts control on future musical production through its manipulation of the musician’s imagination and its demands on the physical body.

* * *

An Equal Music depicts the canon and its physical demands as the source of both pain and pleasure for ensemble violinist, Michael Holme, who has recently joined the London-based quartet, the Maggiore, as second violinist. The Quartet is in the midst of preparing for a concert tour of European cities, including Vienna, where Michael studied with master violinist, Carl Käll, and where he performed with and fell in love with pianist, Julia McNichol, for whom he still carries a torch ten years after his departure from the conservatory. Michael left under ignominious circumstances, having experienced a breakdown mid-concert, departing hastily thereafter, despite Julia’s

protestations. In a state of depression for months afterwards, he fails to contact Julia. When he comes to his senses, his efforts to resume their relationship come to naught. Now a decade later, he spots her on a bus in his neighborhood and tracks her down only to discover she is married, has a child, and is going deaf. Although he arranges for her to join their group for one piece (Schubert's Trout Quintet) on their European tour, and although they briefly resume their love affair while away from London, she leaves their planned vacation in Venice early to return to her family and to embark on a solo career, possible because she plays piano, an instrument which she need not tune either before or during performance (tuning is done by professional tuners). She can "listen" through the muscles in her arms and fingers.

For Michael, the canon is a basic source of his identity as a classical musician. It is also a source of unconscious antagonism and his seemingly unexplained failures at solo performance. Eventually the music's exhilaration outweighs its associations with the grief of his own failure and the demise of his relationship with Julia, but happiness comes only after he realizes that the canon might be read as an open system, accommodating collaboration over genius and potentiality over unity, qualities he has always unconsciously sought.

Michael has chosen a life in music that involves the performance of a Western canon whose hold on him is both psychological and deeply muscular. Three facets of the canon – its texts and composers, its standard tuning, and his eighteenth-century instrument – are sources of strength and comfort. His quartet's standard repertoire (i.e., Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and other "great" composers from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe), the quartet's rehearsals, and his violin provide him stability

and ease of mind. All three aspects are underwritten by a necessary practice of intense close listening based on Western standards of intonation. These standards of the ear are reinforced among the members before every rehearsal when the quartet plays, very slowly, a plain three-octave scale with all four instruments in unison. The goal is a serene unity, manifest in pure and beat-less¹⁴ tones; Michael describes the experience as: “releas[ing] myself into the spirit of the quartet. I become the music of the scale. I mute my will, I free myself” (*EM* 10).¹⁵ All differences of politics, social lives, and varying interpretations of the music disappear into a single accord. Michael’s sense of oneness extends to his conception of the relation with his violin. The “Tononi,” which was built circa 1727 and associated with the famous Italian composer, Antonio Vivaldi,¹⁶ is on loan from his childhood teacher, Mrs. Formby. Since high school, Michael has likely spent more time with the instrument than with any person. For Michael, “being alone” does not exclude his music or his instrument, which is even more than an *alter ego*. It is, simply, part of him; together they are “half flesh, half wood” (*EM* 348).

The Western canon is not only solace; but it also exacts a heavy burden of conformity to tone, pitch, style, dynamics, and other aspects of any piece achieved only through long hours of working alone to find the most suitable technique for achieving precise pitches in authentic performances. Michael devotes much time and effort to meet the standards exemplified by a canon whose chief ideological power lies in the orthodoxy of intonation. Modern stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello) have three strings tuned in the intervals of perfect fifths. This perfect interval, vibrating in a ratio of 3:2, is easily detectable as out of tune by even the most indiscriminating of ears. Only the octave (2:1) or unison (1:1) is more noticeable when off. For musicians like Michael, rules of

intonation are almost inescapable;¹⁷ the physical habits of the body and ear are nearly impossible to undo, once learned. Rehearsing and performing as a musician (i.e., practicing scales to exacting social standards on an instrument that is an extension of the self) ensures the reproduction of the canon through the refinement of physical technique necessary to ensure its execution.

The Discipline of the Literary Canon in *Disgrace*

The Western literary canon has been under debate since at least World War II.¹⁸ Independence and civil rights movements have challenged the idea that a single cultural legacy of written works, especially one dominated by white men (many dead), could speak for women, people of color, new immigrants to past colonial metropolitan centers, and newly independent populations around the world.

The canon controversy is fueled by the closed nature of the system in the past, if not in the present. The “canon” has its textual origins in hundreds of ecclesiastical rules, determined by the consensus of monastic clergy agreeing to abide by them, designed to restrict personal will and to discipline individual bodies. Although current uses of the word as applied to bodies of music and literature lose the more punitive senses of law, they retain the ideas of both consensus and self-improvement. “Great works” are to be read and studied for the betterment of the individual. The recent canon debates, however, have been less concerned about improving the mind and more anxious about reflecting particular mindsets of reading constituents. Debates over the content of the literary canon have been particularly community-centered; feminist, minority, and postcolonial scholars have argued strongly since the 1970s for opening the canon to allow for better representation of authors and characters that reflect their gender, race, and national

backgrounds. The requirement for reflectiveness is, according to John Guillory, a demand for representation, specifically to see in the literary “a hypothetical *image* of social diversity, a kind of mirror in which social groups either see themselves or do not see themselves, reflected” posing as a “politics *of the image*” (7, italics in original),¹⁹ and resulting in a literary canon which is imagistic in its “expression of identity politics” (13). The canon becomes a visible record forming the basis of “an aesthetic and political order”²⁰ taught as part of high school and college syllabi under cover of the concept of “greatness,” an ambiguous term,²¹ which is, nonetheless, rendered substantive in the canon.

The shape is rarely so clearly demarcated as it is for Harold Bloom who designates the works of “Shakespeare and his few peers” (242)²² as comprising the standard of literary greatness by which all other works are evaluated as “more than, less than, or equal to” (247) them. Although Bloom’s specification seems far from Guillory’s formulation of the canon as “an *imaginary* totality of works [which...] change continually according to many different occasions of judgment or contestation” (Guillory 30), both men recognize concrete instantiations of the canon. Bloom suggests the Western canon is a kind of “survivor’s list”²³ texts whose aesthetic value sees them through periods of “immense struggle in social relations” (Bloom 256); Guillory depicts the canon as represented in another kind of list – the syllabus – where “every construction of a syllabus *institutes* once again the process of canon formation” (31). Despite the relative fluidity of its individual elements, critics on the right and left agree that the literary canon has persistence. It is part of the “*durée* of the school as both an objectification of ‘traditions’ (Guillory 59) and as a site of struggle and contradiction.

Whether conjured in memory or held in imagination, the idea of canon has basis in a real collectivity of texts on a shelf, in a set of titles comprising a list; it is confirmed by a reading public often guided by academic elite. In short, its bearing as a conceptual whole sets forth a depiction of “national, political, and cultural greatness” (Garber 270).²⁴ The grappling that comprises the debate about the structure of the canon attests to the stakes invested in its composition.

Guillory has also suggested that canon formation has tended to judge texts and artworks as “either great or of no interest at all” (210),²⁵ according to historical proclivities applied retroactively: only in hindsight do critics and other canonizers²⁶ (e.g., teachers, critics, publishers, other artists, among others) unify a body of cultural production (211). A canon, thus, might be conceived as describing a memorialized “field of cultural production” (to use Bourdieu’s phrase), a site of artistic work laden with expectations, open to potential newcomers, and inscribed by relations of power. Bourdieu describes the literary or artistic field as “a *field of forces*” that, simultaneously, “is also a *field of struggles* tending to transform or conserve this field of forces” (30).²⁷ Critical attitudes form, according to Bourdieu, in relation to a “space of possibles,” historically and culturally determined, where difference is identified and assigned value. Judgment of a particular artwork changes with each different time period or with each new space of re-production. Given the backward glance of canon formation, we understand that innovation produces art not yet constituted as a body or field. However, we might also note that in conditions of social upheaval where society and culture itself may be up for redefinition, earlier, more established canons tend to dominate all categories of greatness.

Frantz Fanon suggests that postcolonial conditions are particularly vulnerable to usurpation, given that pre-colonial cultural formations have been thoroughly derided by European colonizers, while new national art movements have not had the time or the power to coalesce into recognized bodies of excellence. Fanon suggests that when faced with a choice between native and European cultures, the intellectual who claims to speak “as an Algerian and as a Frenchman” or as “Nigerian and English” (218)²⁸ tends to denigrate his native culture. Continuing unfavorable comparisons learned during the era of colonialism, educated elites often find their culture lacking in “figureheads which will bear comparison with those, so many in number and so great in prestige, of the occupying power’s civilization” (219). The colonized intellectual, Fanon posits, has likely “thrown himself greedily upon Western culture. Like adopted children who only stop investigating the new family framework at the moment when a minimum nucleus of security crystallizes in their psyche, the native intellectual (*sic*) will try to make European culture his own” (218-19).

It might be argued, as Richard Rorty, Harold Bloom, and others have done, that “great works” engage, expand, and refine the imagination in ways that liberate the mind. But a contradiction develops when the terrain mapped by the canon is not the same terrain being traversed by its intellectual travelers. This disconnect describes colonialism, when the education of the British and other imperial powers portrays ground which newly colonized subjects, raised in aesthetic traditions unrelated to the Anglo-European societies and geographies, have never tread. The effect of canon in the colonial sphere was, and continues in the post-colony to be, particularly forceful as a disciplinary rod enforcing the educational efforts of colonial pedagogues teaching English and Western

texts and their values. Scholes traces the etymology of canon to posit the eventual appropriation of both senses of the term (i.e., guns and ruling) by the British Empire. Violence, English rule of law, and exacting educational standards, he suggests, combined in a way that made use of “cannon, canon, and canes – to a startling degree” (281).²⁹

Given that canons have often been instrumental in consolidating national identities,³⁰ we might understand how the disjunction continues in the postcolonial era. That is, European conceptions of the self, not necessarily indigenous (Indian, African, Caribbean) notions of identity, prevail in the literature consumed by postcolonial subjects educated in Anglo-European histories, philosophies, literatures, sociological and cultural studies. Scholes asserts: “Where there is a canon, there is both power and sanctity. Above all, however, there is discipline. A textual canon is always a disciplinary function. A canon is in every sense a phallographic object”(281). It valorizes heteronormative systems of power, which given their complicity with existing binaries of colonial domination are, as we see in *Disgrace*, at best difficult and at worst impossible, to undo.

The canonic disjunction caused by a literature of one realm and a reality of another results in an unsettled national identity for postcolonial subjects. In the novel, the protagonist simply borrows from the more established and stable (i.e., European) bodies of art, where intellectual frameworks, methodologies of engagement, and physical practices of the adopted social order provide ready materials for self-fashioning.

* * *

In *Disgrace*, David Lurie, an aging college professor in Cape Town, finds institutions, personal relationships, and social dynamics in flux in a post-apartheid South Africa. At the opening of the novel, his steady relationship with an escort-girl ends

abruptly, leaving him sexually adrift at a time when he is equally unsettled with his new teaching arrangements which result in his course load becoming Basic Communication classes. He is unaccountably taken with Melanie, a girl in his one Romantics course, but the brief, non-reciprocated affair ends badly. He is charged with sexual harassment (though his act has been closer to rape), censured, but refuses to confess to wrongdoing which would absolve him and reinstate him in good graces with the faculty. For his obstinacy, he is fired. He leaves Cape Town to visit his daughter, Lucy, who farms and kennels dogs on a smallholding on the Eastern Cape. He fills his hours helping Lucy and her farmhand/neighbor, Petrus, and also works for Bev Shaw at a clinic for small animals, mostly unwanted, brought in to be euthanized. One afternoon, without warning, David and Lucy are attacked at her home: she raped and he burned badly on his head. Lucy refuses to press charges, even after she finds out that Petrus knows the rapists. When she learns she is pregnant, she agrees to become Petrus' third wife to protect the future of her child and to ensure her ability to continue to live on the farm. Waiting for the birth, David extends his stay, continues at the clinic, and begins to write the chamber opera that has henceforth existed only in his mind. It is through work on the opera that David discovers the ongoing ridiculousness of his situation, which is not only tied to his aging, but also connected to his marginalized status vis-à-vis the European canon that he has held so dear and practices so rigorously. Eventually, he follows his daughter's lead and lets go of everything – the poetry of Wordsworth and Byron, the opera about Byron, the loves he has felt for women, and the dog who keeps him company.

Disgrace depicts David as addict of the European high culture in the form of Romantic poetry and European art music that has sustained him since the days of his

colonial-style education. The doubt he has about it does not prevent its discourses from rolling off his tongue in all manner of circumstances, including love, teaching, parenting. David conceives his love life in terms of grand emblematic abstractions, from totem to god. Rather than a man of base instincts whose aggression against women might be termed at best, lust, and at worst, rape, he sees himself as an erotic being. With Soraya, a working escort, he ascribes himself the snake as totem, thinking it emblematic of a love that is dangerous, seductive, passionate. With Melanie, his student, he is Eros, impulsive, roving, playful, mischievous. In both cases, his conceptualizations liberate him from the world of experience; he is rather, in his eyes, the star in a drama removed from life.

He knows that his cultural and material references are outmoded, that he and “his colleagues from the old days [are] burdened with upbringings inappropriate to the tasks they are set to perform” (*D* 4). And yet, David remains oblivious of the extent to which his everyday conversations are laden with discourse from European literature and art and to which the canon informs the structures of his consciousness. Phenomenologically, David’s mind is European; he cannot speak from another frame – even when it disrupts any possibility of love, even when it means the destruction of his career, even when it has no application to the immanence of the farm life at Lucy’s Eastern Cape smallholding to which he retires.

Canon as Ethics

Gerald L. Bruns usefully distinguishes two different theories of ethics. The first, subject-centered (and aligned with Emmanuel Kant and Martha Nussbaum) “tries to characterize the ethical in terms of our beliefs, desires, values, principles, perceptions, actions, experiences, and so on” (207).³¹ The second, other-oriented (recognizing the

other as alien – and aligned with Emmanuel Levinas), “tries to characterize ethics in terms of how we are with respect to other people, or more accurately to the other as singular and irreducible (someone not in any way like me)” (207-8). The distinction allows us to distinguish, on the one hand, the “claims of reason,” that is, those sensory, empirical, and cognized elements that develop into an individual’s idea of goodness, right-acting, and morality and contribute to a process of ethical individuation. On the other, we distinguish the claims of pre-rationality, that is, the acknowledgement of others which disrupt the coalescence of ipseity, of selfhood.

The canon, perhaps unsurprisingly given its breadth of views, represents simultaneous instantiations of these two conceptions of ethics. On one hand, the canon is a resource from which readers/musicians/perceivers might gather ideas on virtue. As Nussbaum writes, “the novel can be a paradigm of moral activity”(148)³² given its focus on the particularities of human thought and action. Although the canon is a collective, its force is always one of singularization on particular members of its constituency. Each text addresses its reader/its interpreter as an individual, even if the results of the reception are then coalesced into a group effort, a reading group, a class discussion, a symphonic concert. Further, this individualization results in isolation, even when the experience with the canon is a shared event. That is, the canonic elements are read singularly, even when the desired end is service to collective accomplishment or activity. In alienating while homogenizing, the canon takes on the qualities of Foucauldian discipline; the canon interpellates each person as a singular being, commands individual attention and atomized response, and in the end, produces individuals whose values, principles, beliefs coalesce around a set of similar ideals. At this point, we remember with Foucault that “[t]

he whole indefinite domain of the nonconforming is punishable” (194). Nonconformity becomes not just an infraction of the rules, but in the case of the student, an “inability to carry out his tasks” (194), that is, an inability to learn the rules of the canon.

On the other hand, the canon represents to readers/musicians the wholly other, both thematically and formally. The canon not only depicts otherness for imagination and thought in the particulars of human beings and behaviors that might become instructive models (as is mostly directly true of the literary canon), but also in its discursive, and in the case of music, its non-lingual form, the canon represents otherness of a material and sensory kind. Drawing on both Levinas and Hegel, and conscious of the reduction of their theories in the following projection, I nonetheless would argue that in its conceptualization of the other – whether intellectually (as model or as form-as-process) or materially (as textual presence, language of expression, or genre) – the canon is both an entity that must be recognized as separate from the individual before it is engaged and as a mediating body by which the other is known. Therefore, I suggest the canon has the power to constitute the identity of the subject by offering a prescriptive system of values and principles that are grasped through comprehension and knowledge, while it simultaneously functions as the medium for that system. Thus, returning to Bruns, we might conclude that even while embodying a system of values, principles, experiences, and the like as a subjective ethics, the canon simultaneously disrupts the very notion of an ethics of intimacy by projecting an otherness that precludes the immediacy of experience or of knowledge of the other.

Relations with others that might be called sympathy or love both invite and deny knowledge. Levinas puts it this way: “Everything which comes to me on the basis of

being in general, of course, offers itself to my comprehension and possession. In such a case I understand the Other on the basis of his or her history, surroundings, habits. That which escapes comprehension as regards the other is precisely the being that he or she is” (127).³³ This is precisely Gayatri Spivak’s point when she argues that ethics is “the experience of the impossible” (427),³⁴ but an experience that must be pursued even though it will always be insufficient, producing interactions in which information transfer fails. Even one-on-one encounters, which she describes in terms of “ethical singularity” in which each party responds to the other and each desires that nothing remain hidden, fail at full communication. Ethical singularity describes an intersubjective relation, consciously realized from a particular first-person perspective. It lies at the heart of Spivak’s prescription for cultural change that returns control of human existence to the level of humanity, despite the conditions of globality. She asserts that the human community must work collectively towards institutional and systemic changes in the law, in economics, in education, in welfare, but that any collective effort is, according to Spivak, fruitless without a “mindchanging” love whose possibility lies in ethical singularity. While asserting love’s necessity, she questions its possibility, given the unverifiability and vulnerability of its core, ethical singularity. She writes: Love is “an effort – over which one has no control yet at which one must not strain – which is slow, attentive on both sides – *how does one win the attention of the subaltern without coercion or crisis?* – mindchanging on both sides, at the possibility of an unascertainable ethical singularity that is not ever a sustainable condition”(emphasis added).³⁵ Spivak’s formulation of love embeds ambivalence (in italics above) about the possibility of non-coercive engagement in our right of responsibility towards another. Given that Western

conceptions of ethics have often, throughout the history of the discipline of ethics, assumed an intersubjective pair, the epitome of which might be the couple in love, Sangeeta Ray rightly highlights the dangers of this ambivalence. She suggests that Spivak's concept of love that might "attenuate the violence of subject constitution,"³⁶ in fact, risks becoming in practice a form of "soul-making."³⁷ Can continuing to learn about the other through singular interactions, she asks: "help us move from the emphasis on individual interactions to an articulation of collective responsibility as right? Might we not slip back to the mode of soul making in/through violence?"³⁸ Ray finds refuge in texts, but I argue that even such textual mediation does not avoid the assertion of the will of collective consciousness toward the individual over time. As the subject of education, the canon mediates the relation between teacher and student, but also becomes a site that exceeds mere descriptions of existence and succeeds as a "system of *oughts*," to use William Weber's phrase. The canon, backed by authority and institution, becomes prescriptive and self-informing. Simultaneously, especially as it intercedes in postcolonial consciousness, it is also the largest obstruction to true human connection. As a mediating body between a theory of ethics and its application, the canon finally disrupts a relation with another through its very insistence on comprehension, on knowing. The canon is finally a way of learning about others and an obstruction to that learning. As process of learning, it is like David's description of the copulation of snakes, seductive and dangerous: "lengthy, absorbed, but rather abstract, rather dry, even at its hottest" (*D* 3). As learning's obstruction, it is like David's *Byron* project that "fail[s] to engage the core of him" (*D* 181) or like Michael's solo on Schubert that separates him from self-

awareness. In short, the canon projects a system of ethics, while disrupting any possibility of ethical singularity.

Ethics in *An Equal Music*

The concert repertory of the Maggiore Quartet is dominated by a handful of canonized composers from the Classical and Romantic periods. The core of the canon consists almost entirely of German composers: Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schumann, to name a few. During the eighteenth century, a growing bourgeois class took pains to distinguish its own artistic and musical style from that of the Crown and the Church.³⁹ *Grove* has noted that the renowned German publishing house of Breitkopf and Härtel was instrumental in establishing and promoting the canon: “The practical and ideological force of the canon, the German canon in particular, was already apparent in the 19th century. Practically, it allowed the significant to push into obscurity the only marginally less significant (the Brahms symphony obscures the Bruch symphony), and this authoritarian quality became increasingly pronounced in the early 20th century, as ‘classical’ repertories were placed in a polarized relation to avant-garde and commercial repertories.”⁴⁰ This consolidation of “the best” led to a restriction in programming – audiences demanded that music directors and conductors include the well-known classics in every concert -- and it produced what *Grove* identifies as a “notion of a single culture, of which the canon might be regarded as the finest expression.” This core has had profound influence on individual musicians and audiences, in part because it is significantly less geographically diffuse and less broad in terms of historical periods than the literary canon.⁴¹

* * *

An Equal Music launches an interrogation of British colonial power by staging a confrontation between two equally hegemonic powers: the British and Hapsburg Empires. Western classical music has an established canon, originating in the period of British imperial power, but, perhaps surprisingly, this canon completely bypasses the output of British music production.⁴² England's composers from any musical period lack the durability or international renown of their German (or French and Italian) counterparts. This is particularly true of the period from 1750 to 1830, when composers of the Hapsburg Empire residing in Vienna dominated cultural production of "classical" music. The musical powerhouse that is Vienna challenges claims by London to superiority, not only in the Imperial Era, but also continuing through the Modern Period and to today. *An Equal Music* confronts England with its cultural inferiority in the field of Western classical music. Composers from the vanguard Viennese schools have for more than a century outrivalled British counterparts. In the past, even though its colonial-imbued wealth always ensured that it was a scene of imported performances, England lagged behind other major powers in classical music production: "From 1830 onwards, London's wealth, population and theatrical and musical resources continued to attract the most eminent performers even when British composers' contribution to the international repertory was small."⁴³ Seth's novel contests England's imperial power where England is culturally most vulnerable – in contributions to the Western music repertory. Compared to the first Viennese School,⁴⁴ which includes luminaries, such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, England has produced no equal.

By employing music as venue, the text puts England in the marginalized role it normally relegates to its former colonies. The narrative about British characters in Europe

uses musical representations steeped in another dominant cultural system – that of Western classical music. In choosing to write about Western “art” music, Seth eschews expectations, based on his nationality, of a colonial-colonized dialogic and, instead, challenges British cultural superiority with “universal” Western musical practices. By zeroing in on Vienna and London, *An Equal Music* neutralizes Western musical epistemology as a dominant knowledge. By confining its purview to Western classical music, Seth's novel is free to exploit the inequalities in cultural production between London and Vienna since both operate in the same epistemology. Without a colonial-colonized dynamic, it portrays the English as compromised in power arrangements.

However, Seth’s novel complicates the simple binary of Empire-to-Empire confrontation by offering a depiction of English nationalism as inspiration that insulates the protagonist against the disorienting influence of music’s imperial center, Vienna. For example, in contrast to his valorization of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert on the public stage, Michael finds the English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, a personal inspiration and a foundation for identity. Vaughan Williams’ “Lark Ascending,” is a critical influence for Michael on his way toward becoming a professional violinist. “The Lark” evokes his industrial hometown, Rochdale where larks are a common sight and sound in the open countryside. Michael’s passion for music stems from two versions of “the rising song of the lark” – natural and artistic (*EM* 28). After his first concert where he heard the “Lark” and Handel’s⁴⁵ *Messiah*, Michael begged the local music teacher, Mrs. Formby, to teach him violin. Additionally, Mrs. Formby – who as her name implies, not only forms Michael as a young musician through lessons, but also crucially, loans him her Italian-made violin – confirms the importance of “The Lark” to Michael by

reciting, with “ecstatic expression,” the George Meredith poem that inspires Vaughan Williams.⁴⁶

Thus, while the novel challenges the notion of British cultural superiority with a counter thematic discourse about the Hapsburg Empire, Englishness leads not to destitution for Michael, but rather to inspiration. As such, English culture is both insufficient and foundational. In a complicated interplay, the novel presents England as both a space that is tentatively home (Rochdale and London), and as a site of what comes to be a more permanent “home” in classical music (Vienna). In the latter mode, London is the exilic margin struggling for voice and presence in contest with the center of classical music, Vienna.

The cultural relationship between the two imperial metropolitan centers as political entities cannot be easily described as ethical, as the term is used to describe the relations between individuals. However, the project of Empire has been identified as “supremely morally ambitious,”⁴⁷ and, as we know from Spivak’s analysis, this morality underwrites the colonial pedagogical *mission civilatrice*. The canon is subject to appropriation; in certain teaching scenarios, canonic works become conduits of discipline; as mentioned above, they convey the norms of tonality, form, and by extension, the regimen required for virtuosity in performance. In the scene of pedagogy, norms and prescriptions convey the ethical relation. Pedagogy gives the canon the more intimate dimensions of face-to-face interaction; this is particularly true in the tutorial of the music lesson, which perhaps might be most identified with Aristotle’s observation that “the righteous man is a *kanón* of human conduct” (41).⁴⁸ In the pedagogical relationship that provides the subtext of *An Equal Music*, predications of cultural

superiority inherent in the framework of classical music outlined above overdetermine an expected inequality between teacher and student. Where an ethics of responsibility might be expected to emerge, the Viennese professor of music, the famed master violinist, Carl Käll objectifies the student, seeing not Michael, but “one of the potential diamonds on his crown [that] was proving itself to be merely carbon, convertible to its ideal form only under intense and continuous pressure” (*EM* 82). Käll amplifies the distance between himself and Michael: he demands to be addressed in the formal German manner (“Herr Professor”); he mocks English music: “Oh, you English! Finzi! Delius! It would be better to remain in a land without music than to have music like that” (*EM* 55). Käll conducts Michael’s lessons in the mode of the Victorian schoolmaster: “[h]is bow went up and down like a little switch while he told [Michael] what to do” (*EM* 108). Any sort of group work – orchestral or ensemble – he ridicules, even though chamber music is Michael’s preference. He insists upon pedagogical methods that take no consideration of Michael’s previous training, talents, and physical capacities, and insists upon conformity to “proper” technique despite the fact that it does not make playing easier for Michael. Just the opposite: Michael feels himself under constant pressure to reproduce Käll’s techniques, even though “they did violence to [his] own style” (*EM* 108). Michael loses facility in his third finger; his trills are sluggish and Käll takes non-performance as a personal insult. To stay, Michael realizes, is to lose himself, to “unravel” under Käll’s dictatorship. The deciding factor is Michael’s disastrous recital.

As Foucault predicts, the penalty for the inability to perform to standards is humiliation and alienation. Unable to mount a resistance to Käll’s onslaught of criticism and abuse, especially given that he is studying in Vienna as “a sort of graduate appendage

attached to a particular teacher” (*EM* 81), Michael comes to think he has just one option. Feeling betrayed by Julia’s counsel to stick with his studies and overwhelmed by a “bleakness of mind” that he can tell no one about, he flees Vienna and Käll, even though it also means leaving Julia. He chooses exile, becomes a “fugitive” in London. The tactic of flight, that is, the “art” of “fugue” (which Michael eventually refines into the strategic ploy of deafness) does not require that he remove himself entirely from the purview of the canon and its masters, but allows him to achieve the necessary separation from it to achieve space for the development of his own style.

Deafness as Fugue

Edward Said reflects upon exile as a state of being that is “strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (173).⁴⁹ Said calls the exile’s predicament – isolation, displacement, homelessness, the breaking of familial and cultural bonds – “as close as we come in the modern era to *tragedy*” (183, italics added). The danger is getting drawn into new attachments that promise the security in belonging, losing what Said comes to value as critical perspective. A life in exile, a state of lovelessness, though crippling in ways, offers “an *alternative* to the mass institutions that dominate modern life” (184). Exile defamiliarizes language and home and exposes previously unnoticed assumptions. The unease of exilic consciousness emerges from simultaneous experience of two (or more) cultures, settings, and homes, resulting in a “plurality of vision” and “contrapuntal” dimensions of existence. The “reward” is liberation from the established order of things. Said sees as an impetus to “cultivate a scrupulous” subjectivity, but in addition, it is an

opportunity to sidestep the conventional belief systems, to stand apart from the canon, to break the tie of prescriptive ethics through a process of intense individuation.

Willed deafness is a strategy of exile that Michael has adopted without thinking his whole musical career. He practices daily in a sound-proof cell, free from external noise; he immerses himself in the quartet's three-octave scale – to the exclusion of every other sound – for the same purpose, to insulate himself within the canon. In both cases, Michael also enters the discipline of standard tuning and canonic tonality. To be able to play Bach's *Art of Fugue*, Michael makes the opposite move. He and Helen, the violist, make a radical adjustment in the tuning of strings in order to *exit* the canonic systems. To unlearn the finger-tone association he has ingrained in his brain, he adopts a crude form of deafness: he wears earplugs. Then, when he lowers the pitch of his lowest string one whole note from a G to an F,⁵⁰ distorting the pitches of the open strings so they are unequal (rather than even and perfect fifths, the intervals are now a sixth and two fifths), Michael can play the low F that is outside the normal range of his instrument. What is not apparent (and not mentioned in the novel explicitly) is the adjustment he must now make to all the fingering on that string. At first, he understates the impact of the change he has made⁵¹: “I have made a small adjustment to the Tononi backstage. I now check it [on stage] almost silently, and tell it not to let me down” (*EM* 89). But then, recognizing the importance of the tuning to the success of the performance of the encore, Michael acknowledges that he “take[s] his first two notes on open strings, almost as if they were a transition from tuning into music” (*EM* 89). Finally, he admits that “the tiny quaver, the minuscule quibble of a note” was a “source of [...] anxiety” (*EM* 89). The deliberate distortion of the equal fifths means Michael is unable to rely on kinetic memory, must

think consciously about his fingering, and must rethink the relation between notes and actions in order to play the score accurately.

Paul Gilroy identifies George Orwell as someone who becomes a deliberate émigré to escape orthodoxy while continuing to live within dominant culture. According to Gilroy, Orwell gathers a “dissident inventory of British life” at home and in the colonies, rejecting “the cozy comforts of the national community.” Instead, Gilroy contends, Orwell remains a “vagrant and exile” who “traded the dubious benefits of his imperial Brit nationality for a rare opportunity to connect with and even understand the whole world” (79).⁵² Gilroy argues that identity politics as well as the “autonomy and self-possession” (80) that often accompany it (and that might be considered part of the process of individuation I mention above) are counterproductive to the translocal connections necessary to fight national racisms and ethnic absolutism. However, he makes particular note of “[p]urposive vagrancy and exile, albeit in temporary forms” (79) that are able to recognize and support a humankind that is mutable, continuing, and singular. In other words, working towards change, political or otherwise, he argues, requires separating oneself from the known, the familiar, and the everyday that becomes, if undetected, orthodoxy.

An Equal Music, through Michael’s daily and life-changing strategies, is instructive in not only how to adopt a temporary state of deafness, but also how to recognize and take advantage of those coincidental, spontaneous, and inadvertent bouts of deafness as a *modus operandi*. Thus, at times, the canon, its practices, and the condition of its deployment within a particular ethics, might be avoided, even when it remains necessary to work within these systems in the majority of circumstances.

Ethics in *Disgrace*

Frantz Fanon identifies those colonial elites who call the canon of the European colonizer their own in part because they perceive this canon superior to any national expression of art or culture. Although white South Africans whose native language is English (like Coetzee and his fictional character, David) might be expected to identify more directly with the English language and the English literary canon,⁵³ the relations are, in fact, complicated by ambiguity.⁵⁴ David's points of reference are writings in English; his identity is intertwined with the English Romantic poetry he teaches, and yet, he has a disjunctive association with the canon of which he is not always aware. David finds himself intertwined with the figures of his lectures, in much the same way as the personality of Byron is subsumed by readers' perceptions of his literary personas. It is important to note, though, that Byron's synthesis is with literary figures of his own creation, while David becomes Byronic and Wordsworthian at a distance, adopting personas and literary philosophies whole and complete. Such adoption creates disjointed experience not unlike that experienced by Fanon's colonial elite, who must deny a certain native culture in order to adopt an imperial one. In other terms, we might say that while Byron creates personalities that come to be intermixed with his own, David appropriates personalities and belief systems alien to him.

Despite this alienation, the culture disjuncture between canon and reader is harder to detect in South Africa where "the English language cannot be seen as an imperialist tongue [...] in any simple sense" (Head 17).⁵⁵ It is an exclusion of which Coetzee himself is aware; as critics have noted, he describes himself as a writer precluded, by his location in Africa, from easy access to "the kind of shared values he associates with European

literary heritage.”⁵⁶ He observes a network of support behind European writers that he lacks: “the almost infinite lattice that a shared European culture provides.”⁵⁷ Unlike Coetzee himself, in his novel David assumes this network of European literary heritage as his own. The novel recounts David’s painful realization that he is indeed outside European culture and its system of ethics, whether embodied and projected. *Disgrace* traces David’s attempt to create music in existing canonized forms, and his ultimate recognition of the canon’s failure to continue to function for him in a post-apartheid South Africa in ways that he has always assumed.

David is oblivious to his non-European status; he assumes access and rights to the European canon, both literary and musical, as a speaker of English, French, and Italian, as a student of English Romantic poetry, as a pianist and aficionado of Western classical music. His assumption of this right is most apparent in his nonchalant intention to use music from Western operatic composers (Wagner, Strauss, Gluck) for his own opera, *Byron in Italy*: “I have no qualms about borrowing” (*D* 63), he tells Lucy. The origin of his assumptions of ownership of the canon resides undoubtedly in his formal education in the literatures and music of Europe; his continued attachment, I argue, goes much deeper. The European canon is the source of his power over others; thinking that he is in control of his imagination, he is unaware of the ways in which European culture controls the constructions of his self. He does, in fact, master the Western canon, but in the process of mastery he becomes simultaneously mastered.⁵⁸

The novel portrays David, a man used to being in control of the images and terms depicting him and his encounters with others, as one who loses control of those discourses that define him. Whereas Lucy voluntarily relinquishes the stories about

herself to others, David resists vigorously what he sees as defeat. His masterful wielding of descriptive terms in defining his love affairs demonstrates his first line of defense. He claims Soraya as part of his totem, the snake, envisioning them intertwined in lovemaking. He renames his student, Meláni, the Dark One,⁵⁹ making her his conquest in name prior to taking her in body. Indeed, David's appearance before the committee of professorial conduct records his effort to withstand usurpation of the terms in which he tells his life's story. Standing accused by Melanie, David resists the committee's demands that he express remorse and repent prior to receiving an offer of reconciliation from them. Instead, he asserts publicly the private terms he has used to describe his seduction and ravishment of Melanie to himself: he "became a servant of Eros" (*D* 52). David refuses to depart from his conception of the scene and instead chooses to sever himself from his job and the university for the sake of his version of events. It is not that he refuses responsibility for his actions; he accepts a verdict of guilty from the committee regarding the alleged violation. It is simply that he rejects the committee's definitions of the crime. Licensed by canonic authority that has more legitimacy, in David's eyes, than the ad hoc regulatory committee assembled by the university, David simply rejects the committee's designation of his actions as "abuse," or rape. In his mind, his approaches and lovemaking to Melanie have nothing to do with his vision of barbaric rape: "a great thick-boned male bearing down on a girl-child, a huge hand stifling her cries" (53).

In figuring David as accepting of his guilt for certain actions, while refusing the categorization of the official charge, the novel aligns David with the white South African leadership defending itself before the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁶⁰ The former president, F.W. de Klerk, for example, admits that

“[a]partheid was wrong” and apologizes “in a spirit of true repentance, in full knowledge of the tremendous harm that apartheid has done to millions of South Africans,”⁶¹ while avoiding personal culpability by “repeated denial of having authorized or having known about gross human rights violations” (Nagy 716). De Klerk absolved himself of direct responsibility by appealing to the long-standing authority of the State, whose authority overrode that of the ad hoc TRC. Further, he asserted that “gross human rights violations were aberrations” (719) conducted by an overzealous security force beyond his full control. Refusing the systematicity of apartheid and appealing to a larger governing framework (i.e., state of the Republic of South Africa), de Klerk is able to assert, like David does with his appeal to Romanticist conceptions of love, that what happened, even with its dire consequences, was beyond his control (719). In both cases, the overarching authority (i.e., the State and the canon) facilitate individual self-delusion. Discourses of power reframe acts of violence by providing language that allows admission of guilt to stand in for taking responsibility; relying on universal terms of regret and apology, the authoritative frameworks provide language that elides personal blame. At the same time, the institutions of power provide the language of ethics that licenses acts of violence: in the case of the State, it is the discourse of duty and obligation; in the case of the Romantic canon, it is the discourse of love and eroticism.

The vocabulary of prescriptive ethics that justifies individual actions within larger humanistic frames simultaneously obstructs a true, that is, face-to-face, ethical encounter, of which taking responsibility would be the visible sign.

The Indulgent Canon: Ethics without the Encounter

The Promise of Eternity in *Equal Music*

Beatrice Hanssen extends Frantz Fanon's term *ethical transit (glissement)* to refer, not only to the colonized subject's tendency to identify with the colonizer, psychologically importing a white idealized-I that functioned to abject the native (black) self, but also and more generally to a "psychological transitivity, in which the reciprocating other is *assumed* to mimic the liberal subject's moral gestures at the imaginary level" (155, emphasis added).⁶² What this generalization of the process of identification with the "master" figure discloses is the expectation of moral sameness that exists within the structures of the canon itself; that is, the canon, selected and judged the "best" by a particular constituency, anticipates its subjects' like-minded value system. This expectation is passed along and reinforced in scenes of teaching. Thus, the "imposition of culture" that Fanon documents begins in imperial conditions and continues as a force promoting a certain universal moral agency with the reception in imagination of the canon. Although, according to Hanssen, the "phenomenon of ethical transitivity" is always a surreptitious mechanism for producing a divided self (147), but within the process of recuperating the abjected self lies the possibility of another sense of ethics operational for the individual. This recuperation often depends "on one's forceful *imposition* of oneself" (Fanon qtd. in Hanssen, 148) against the cultural hegemon. This self-assertion materializes, at least potentially, in poesis, the imaginative making of an artwork, a cultural object, a performance that might be placed in opposition to, or more successfully, as a supplement to, the canonic texts and its processes. The novels here translate previously unrecognized strategies of resistance from everyday events and practices into an articulation of actions and products that highlight the ineffectuality of canonic governance and the inapplicability of its moral codes to the protagonists.

In *An Equal Music*, Michael's response to metropolitan centers (both London and Vienna) is unease and nausea. The same mental disorientation pervades his attempts (at Käll's insistence) to become a virtuoso soloist. Michael rejects the imposition of authority (not only from Käll, but also the lawnkeeper who tries to prevent his walking across the grass in Hyde Park and more importantly from his parents who think a musical career suicidal). Centrality, whether in location, in career, or in another's irrevocable claim of authority over him causes Michael acute discomfort; it is as if a certain claustrophobia sets in when he anticipates there will be no exit from his current site.

Michael comes to perceive that his use of earplugs, which allow him to exit the hearing world in order to learn to extend the parameters of orthodox tuning, and the much more frightening sensory chasms that assail him mid-performance, may be conceived as related to Julia's involuntary deafness, and like it, useful in escaping influence of the masters. She describes her deafness in terms of freedom *for* originality:

When I go to a concert or listen to a recording, all I can get is some general sense of what's going on. All the subtleties of other people's playing are lost on me now. So when I come to play something myself, especially something I've never heard before, I'm absolutely forced to be original. (*EM* 253)

The novel suggests that Michael has always sought this freedom, though its vague appearance in the mundane details of his life, even after his Continental education under the master tutelage of Käll, does not occur to him as conscious desire. The confinement and weight of his public career (e.g., the sealed practice room, the hours of practice alone, the surveillance of the public stage under the scrutiny of critics and agents, the demands of recording company executives to meet a specific market niche) obscures the undercurrent of his private life that details a different, less-centered, more open condition

of life. Michael finds reassuring the multiplicity that is the quartet: a “strange composite being” (*EM* 86) of wood, metal, sound, and humanity that produces complexities for the ear raising a range of emotions. He loves the city of his early musical education, Manchester – surprisingly multicultural (not only “the civic-heroic statuary in Piccadilly Square,” but also “the Habib Bank and the Allied Bank of Pakistan [...] a Jewish museum, a mosque, a church, a McDonalds” (*EM* 62)). He loves the open countryside of his hometown, Rochdale and the fact that the Serpentine River has an outlet to the Thames (knowing this, he can swim it). He favors incomplete texts: Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony, Coleridge’s incomplete “Christabel” (specifically, the fragment quoted as preface to Byron’s “Fare Thee Well”⁶³), and most importantly, the piece that is identified with him in the novel, Bach’s *Art of Fugue*, a work of multiple variations on a single theme, with a final contrapunctus unfinished.⁶⁴

It is Julia’s choice to perform the *Art of Fugue* in a solo debut undertaken at the point when her hearing loss precludes further ensemble work that finally allows Michael to understand he need not be victim to canonic discipline or the vagaries of its occasional open-endedness. Rather, he can control its totalizing force through voluntary exits and exile. The novel ends with Michael’s departure from Julia’s recital midway (at intermission). He is exceedingly happy in the music, which is, at the moment he leaves “sufficient” – a moment longer would have been “too much,” an amount “the soul could not sustain” (*EM* 381). Instead, in his departure from the concert hall, Michael disrupts a prescriptive notion of beauty, of wholeness, of aesthetic perfection. In this instance, he physically vacates a site of normativity; he understands that the awkward and graceless departures from conservatory training under Käll and even the rather mechanistic exodus

from the world of sound with earplugs have permitted separation necessary for the imaginative reconstruction of new musical standards and epistemologies. Seth's novel thus illustrates the difficult process of coming to what Hanssen describes as "an ethical openness *within* the political" (165), a "radical openness" that need not precede the political as Levinas might have it, but one that leaves open more than strategic (i.e., theoretical) options.

The Promise of Origin in *Disgrace*

In *Disgrace*, David's everyday existence depicts, in an unconscious register, an equally strong resistance to canonic influence, even while he believes he is in control of the Romanticist abstractions signifying his life's narrative. Additionally, and different from Seth's novel, *Disgrace* insists that the canon is not simply open to manipulation by individuals, but instead has already relegated newcomers to its margins. In postcolonial South Africa, this relegation results in dissemination of the European canon in a way that ultimately precludes the possibility of an intimate ethics. Unlike Fanon's description of intersubjective exchange in the post colony of Martinique in which a white ideal supplants the construction of a black self, Coetzee's novel suggests that the white ideal conveyed through the canon and the white South African consumer of the canon (i.e., David) becomes confused, resulting in a double articulation of selfhood, without the beneficent insight of double consciousness. In other words, the self and the white ideal exist simultaneously, indistinguishable in imagination one from another. As difficult as an abjected, black sense of self might be for Fanon's elites, it is in some sense a selfhood that might be recuperated through an appeal to a previous authentic culture or a resurgence of national culture in new creative forms.⁶⁵ The dual sense of self for those

like David produces the mistaken conception that the canon belongs to the white South African, as if European. It is a misrecognition that, in effect, renders the white South African an object of ridicule, the comedic subject, within the canonic framework. In the end, Coetzee's novel insists that the entire canon be violently ejected from consciousness before new spaces of imagination and of existence might be created.

David has conceived his life in terms of a grand Romance. However, he is unable to sustain the proper illusion. Contrary to the Wordsworthian philosophy he attempts to live, David should veil the image of a woman, such as Soraya or Melanie, with imagination, thus retaining her in his mind as "the goddess." However, once David catches a glimpse of Soraya's real life (he spies her with her two sons), he is unable to confine her to the mental image as part of his totemic. Instead, he pursues her ruthlessly to the point of having her traced by a private investigator. All the effort only serves to prove he is the odd man out. He is in fact, a figure of comedy, who, according to Aristotle, is ridiculous, ugly, the figure of the nonpainful mistake and the unharmed deformity (1449a).⁶⁶ David's excessive behavior evokes Soraya's derision. At the point when David asserts that his pursuit of Melanie is motivated by Aphrodite's arrow, he becomes laughable. Cooking for Melanie the first night she comes to his house, David considers a scenario in which a pretty young wife is greeted after work every night by a lovely dinner cooked by "the husband, colourless Mr. Right, aproned" (*D* 14). He even thinks that this situation smacks of "[r]eversals: the stuff of bourgeois comedy" (*D* 14), but he doesn't apply the label to his current self (even if he thinks it might be part of some future reality with her). As with Soraya, he is unable to retain Melanie in imagination strictly as lover. She becomes younger and younger in his mind's eye until,

when she seeks refuge in his house, he thinks of himself as “Daddy.” He then cannot avoid comparisons of himself with Mr. Isaacs, her father, who reduces him from worshipped totem to treacherous viper and with Ryan, her lover, who alienates him with the admonition to keep to his own kind. His ex-wife, Rosalind, pronounces his indiscretion disgraceful and vulgar (*D* 45).

David remains oblivious to the disjunction between his imaginative conceptions of his life and the discourse that articulates his real life. Even after he is shaken by the life-altering events at Lucy’s smallholding – her rape, the assault on him, the theft of his possessions – he does not abandon the adopted discourse of the Western literary canon. In going to see Melanie for a second time in the comic stage play, *Sunset at the Globe Salon*, he sees the same scene he saw during the previous visit. This scene depicts a “flash” that causes chaos on stage; it inadvertently interprets those startling moments in life in terms directly obverse to David’s interpretation of them. That is, flash on stage produces chaos and ignorance, whereas David predicts that a flash produces insight and understanding in poetry, art, and love. Further, this situation in its repetition follows others in repeating the Marxian axiom about history being first tragedy, then farce. When David first sees this scene, the flash fails; no chaos (or insight) ensues. The second time around, Melanie’s character, as planned, gets her broom tangled up with an electric cord, producing the expected “screaming and scurrying around” (*D* 24). The insight follows; not on stage, but in the audience. Watching Melanie, bewigged and hilarious, David becomes enraptured. He descends into voluptuous reverie, remembering the hundreds of women he has had casual sex with in terms taken directly from *Piers Plowman*: they are, he thinks, “*a fair field full of folk*” (*D* 192)⁶⁷ and represent his right to be “enriched.”

David is brought to his senses: Ryan, Melanie's lover, throws spitballs which chase him from the theater, humiliated. David's life is taking a long slow march from Romance to Comedy, but he cannot see it until it plays out for him in the opera.

The novel depicts again and again David's inextricable complicity with the canon, as if, like his hero Byron, he is unable to separate himself from his literary creations.⁶⁸ Teaching Byron's "Lara," David, in explaining Lucifer, explains himself, though David remains unaware of his conflation with his object of study. The "erring spirit," "a being who chooses his own path, who lives dangerously, even creating danger for himself" (*D* 32) is not only Lucifer, but David. Lucifer, "condemned to solitude" (*D* 34), bespeaks David's fate. That Byron's poem insists that "it will not be possible to love [Lucifer], not in the deeper, more human sense of the word" (*D* 34) specifies the isolation that becomes David's lot.

An ethical encounter is not an *experience* of the impossible for David, but a literal impossibility. David employs the canon in ways that separate him from the immediacy of his life. In seducing Melanie, David spouts a Shakespearean sonnet, turning her off. After sex, David conceives of the aftermath of love-making in terms of George Grosz's *After the Storm*.⁶⁹ In the midst of the brutal attack on Lucy's farm, David thinks of it in terms of the economic philosophy of Adam Smith.⁷⁰ The canon is the media of dialogue and exchange between David and his students, but the eruption of its abstract theories into everyday conversation (for instance, David quotes Blake to Lucy rather than replying in his own words⁷¹) eliminates the possibility of unmediated connections to another. Theoretical abstractions extracted from the canon serve to isolate David, but also, in a bizarre way, they accomplish the Levinasian goal of ethics: "letting the other be [...not]

subjugating him to an imposing, specular gaze, but respecting the other's infinity, as it emanated from his face" (Hanssen 153). That is, for David, the canon becomes the mechanism by which he separates from others; its prescriptive formulas for ethical being and acting interfere with the possibilities for intimacy.⁷²

David's use of the canon becomes a practice of habitual borrowing. Cultural borrowing is, according to Said, something we all do, and indeed it is necessary to ensure the freshness and invigoration of thought.⁷³ Said suggests that "traveling theory," as he calls it, is a fruitful movement and circulation of ideas, provided that the borrower of the theory opens the ideas "toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests."⁷⁴ In other words, only in making a theory responsive to the conditions of its new elaboration will the borrower avoid the risk of stagnation. Sedentary theories, blind to their own enervation through rigid transfer to new circumstances without social responsiveness or through totalization in their scope, risk becoming "cultural dogma." However, shuttling ideas from one sphere to another, to see "the humanities or the great classics [...] as small provinces of the human venture" is a means for developing new alternatives that have the power to escape "the reach of dominating systems" (Said 246-7). David commits the cardinal sin of cultural borrowing; he imports European philosophies and notions wholesale, without considering the circumstances of, at least, the "new" South Africa, if indeed he ever considered the local milieu. A particularly stiff and ineffectual attempt occurs when David asserts a geographical mapping of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. Failing to convey to his students Wordsworth's use of imagination to realize "heightened reality" (as Wordsworth might phrase it), he suggests: "We don't have the Alps in this country, but we have the Drakensberg, or on a smaller

scale Table Mountain, which we climb in the wake of the poets hoping for one of the revelatory, Wordsworthian moments we have all hear about” (*D* 23). Given the unrealizability of the canonic sense-image (Mont Blanc) in South Africa, the possibility that this was a teaching moment appears slim. The canon is, for David, a singular resource of unconscious borrowing; it has ceased to unsettle him, to generate new thought, to feel in any sense foreign, and instead has become the basis of his “structures and attitudes of reference” (53).⁷⁵ Unlike Petrus, who borrows an old tractor, but adapts it to his own purposes by coupling an old rotary plough to it, David makes no adaptations of the literature to its new location.

Having spent a lifetime using the Romantic canon as the foundation of his identity without giving it another thought, it is not surprising to learn that David holds fast to the idea of borrowing music for *Byron in Italy*. When his ideas about the music for Byron’s lover, Teresa, fail to coincide with the historical Teresa, David changes the characters. Even though he does not change history, he reimagines Teresa and Byron beyond the stage of romance. Given that his Teresa is in middle-age and that Byron is now beyond the grave, there is no music that suits this non-normative development. He realizes he must compose. When he discovers in his Cape Town attic a toy banjo from KwaMashu township, its ugly plink, plank, plonk seems to suit the project, and especially the humiliated Teresa, who has been made the butt of jokes and gossip in England, where Byron’s friends have pilloried her in memoirs. David makes some headway: although Byron chants in monotones and chromatics, and Teresa sings monosyllables in English, David is thrilled when the music starts to come to him. But, as in previous love affairs, David finds himself on the margins of the love story; although it is not surprising that he

does not write himself into the libretto, it is somewhat surprising that he does not identify with one of the characters. Instead, he finds that “he is held in the music itself, in the flat, tinny slap of the banjo strings, the voice that strains to soar away from the ludicrous instrument but is continually reined back” (*D* 184-5). It is from this trivial position “held in the music” that David finally experiences the flash of insight about love – as it is playing out in the opera, in his private life, and in his career. It is not, he figures out, “the erotic that is calling to him after all, nor the elegiac” (*D* 184). Nor, we might add, is it the tragedy that Said predicts as the effect of exile, to which David submits. The opera absorbs his attention so completely because it is comic, and he is the comedic figure, the odd man out, signified by the “ludicrous” instrument, intervening in the opera not as one of leads, not even as the music, but as the marginal, barely perceptible, figure “held” by the music. At the fringes of music, David occupies a trivial site, in both senses; he is one of three, and he is of no consequence.

In particular, the recurring threesomes throughout the novel interrogate an already fraught sense of ethics. David, as postcolonial scholar of the canon, and particularly as the ambiguous figure of the white South African, who is neither rightly English nor African in important ways (heritage, race, ethnicity), complicates reception of literary and musical canons. That is, the very presence of the European canon’s prescriptive ethics (more applicable to the constituencies which constituted it) disrupts an intersubjective ethics in South Africa, either in teaching or in love because the white South African self triangulates binary logic of relations projected in the canon. Through such a pedagogue, the canon can neither function as the instructive engine of the civilizing mission engaged in the project Spivak identifies as soul-making, nor can it be the object against which

self-assertion is exerted, as Fanon suggests. Instead, David is on neither end of the binary that describes the Manichean colonial world, inhabiting an ambivalent site that disturbs canonic colonial epistemologies for students, while never establishing ground in the new South Africa. The resulting condition might be conceived as an ethics of the ridiculous, which is more accurately a complete incommensurability with traditional ethics as a function of pairs.

The presence of this distortion of the condition of traditional ethics is marked by the proliferation of trios in the novel. On the one hand, they are relatively benign formations, even humorous in the light sense of comedy. Burdened by the thought of needing to be cared for as he ages, David allows himself to fantasize highly unlikely *ménage-a-trois*: “Three. That would be a solution of sorts. He and Lucy and Melanie. Or he and Melanie and Soraya” (*D* 88). David settles on a trio accompaniment for his opera – flute, cello, bassoon – reiterating the one female (Teresa) and two male voices (Byron and David, himself, in the music) of the opera. His opera allows for the intercession of Byron’s daughter, Allegra, who suddenly appears in his mind. David even considers giving a part to the wounded dog who loves the opera. On the other hand, threesomes introduce ugliness and distortion, particularly when they interrupt the expected romantic pair. David’s intrusion into marriages, relationships, and even the romance of the opera is the most obvious example. But there are also the three rapists, meaning three possible fathers of Lucy’s unborn child. Lucy offers to become Petrus’s third wife, giving him control over her well-being, her property, and her destiny. Among Petrus’s African guests, David is the “odd one out” (*D* 133). Most importantly, the child-to-be comes between Lucy and David and changes everything. It is the child who denies the

“Manicheism” of the colonizing mind, which David has been reproducing in his unexamined transfer of the English Romanticist canon to his classes, as a distillation of the structures of his mind. Like David, held in the music, the child is held in the womb, both trivial in substance. But whereas David finds no place for himself in the new South Africa, as an aging academic who has no will or energy to change or to reform himself, the child embodies a definition of the future of South Africa. The child (and not the rape producing conception) depicts an ideal Coetzee has long held for South Africa; that its people will move “towards cultural and biological hybridity” (Head 7).⁷⁶ When David learns that Lucy is pregnant, when he formulates this idea into a thought of a *child* (his emphasis), he reads it as signaling the demise of his way of life to this point, a culmination for a long list of factors preceding it: the failure of English to properly articulate South Africa, particularly Petrus’s story; the failure of English (French or Italian) to save him or Lucy from attack; his increasing use of Afrikaner terms and the coincident decline of European phrases in his conversations and thoughts; Lucy’s refusal to tell her story of the rape. The promise for the future is not English or the canon of English literature or music, but rather the hybrid South African who comes to know Africa as well as Europe.

For David personally, an avenue of exit from his condition of ridicule comes from both Lucy and Teresa. Lucy’s solution is complete abasement: taking on the national burden of guilt at the personal level. Taking ridicule to the depths of humiliation, Lucy abandons every material and mental construct of her previous life. She discards her dream of *ländliche*, agriculture, to become a *bywoner*, a tenant farmer. She refuses David’s offer to send her to her mother in Holland, rejecting a return to colonial roots.

She makes no resistance to the ambiguity of paternity ascribed to her child-to-be. Rather, she relinquishes all rights to the story about the “partnership” with Petrus: she tells David to “Say he can put out whatever story he likes about our relationship and I won’t contradict him” (*D* 204). Spivak writes that Lucy’s decision to go forward with absolutely nothing is “the casting aside of the affective value-system attached to reproductive heteronormativity as it is accepted as the currency to measure human dignity” (21).⁷⁷ In surrendering the story, Lucy puts at a distance those that might tell that story. In the end, she decides to disengage from the discourse of the story, but the result is her metaphorical death. The reward is the possibility of beginning anew in what will be a cocoon of twoness between herself and her child. Teresa, on the other hand, simply refuses death. She has immortal longings and she sings them. David can choose neither death nor song, nor can he prevent the canon from instructing his mind. His meager compositional efforts fall short of the modulations, transitions, and harmonies in his head. He hopes that he will somehow compose one authentic note, but he understands that even if he does, he will not hear it because his mind is biased in ways that he does not have the energy to undo. In the end, he abandons the opera even though he realizes through the dog’s reaction to it that it contains some life force.

To escape the discipline of a prescriptive ethics, in which he will never have opportunity for other than a marginal role, David refuses Lucy’s model of abasement, but he does accept nothingness in another form; he accepts that he can do “less than little: nothing” (*D* 220). But he does the little he can do. He eliminates the sole audience for his opera – the dog – sending him to be euthanized. Thus, David abandons his work in the canon.

Conclusion

The novels present rather thin options for escaping canonic influence. *An Equal Music*, though, might be said to be optimistic in its suggestion that withdrawals from dominant cultural hegemony need only be periodic and temporary to achieve the critical distance and separation necessary for developing individualistically. *Disgrace* allows no such prospect for remaining within the canon; escaping canonic prescription and discipline presents the choice of staying in or abandoning it, at least for aging academics constrained by years of service to, and rehearsal in, the canon. Despite limited alternatives for protagonists, the novels themselves might be conceived as promoting non-canonic options in employing music as a way to dismantle the system of narrative that, to some degree, underwrites the act of colonization.⁷⁸ As mentioned throughout this study, representations of music provide means to think beyond the textual, while remaining within the text. In these particular novels, we might come to two conclusions. First, *An Equal Music*, particularly, suggests that departure or exit is itself an ethical move; as Levinas argued, the Other is the means to disrupt a singular and insular consciousness of self, the dread of continual and non-ending “mere being.” Music enacts and advocates an exit strategy for these texts concerned about the disciplinary functions of the canon. Second, *Disgrace*, particularly, suggests a way to avoid the embedded binary of ethical encounter. If the deployment of ethics is always one-on-one, even in situations recognizing the validity of multiple ethical systems, *Disgrace* points to an ethics skewed by the ridiculous. Such an ethics undoes the ethical binary by recognizing that which is marginal and that which can only be sensed but not seen. This is the

condition of music in text, not beyond the unequal power arrangements of language and the non-lingual, but disrupting it just the same.

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Notes to Chapters:

Chapter 1

¹ The novels that Smyth refers to in his review are Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music*, Salman Rushdie's *Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Toni Morrison's *Jazz* and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*. All of these novels are addressed in this study. Smyth, Gerry. "The Same Sound but with a Different Meaning" Music, Repetition, and Identity in Bernard MacLaverty's *Grace Notes*. *Eire-Ireland*. Fall 2002. 5-24.

² Although this phrase is generic, my formulation is directly influenced by Bruce Robbins' anti-humanist "humanisms" developed in his essay, "Race, Gender, Class, Postcolonialism: Toward a New Humanistic Paradigm?" *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000: 556-573.

³ Mishra, Vijay and Bob Hodge. "What Was Postcolonialism?" *New Literary History* 36 (2005): 375-402. *Project Muse*. Research Port, U of Maryland Lib. 31 Aug 2006. The authors are quoting David Spurr in *The Rhetoric of Empire*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993. 6.

⁴ Mishra and Hodge argue that "a recognition of the pastness of postcolonialism, present indeed in Said's own project, released energies that have been locked into an ever more onerous task, to maintain and extend its scope, in a present and future increasingly constituted in other terms" (376).

⁵ Parry, Benita. "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004: 66-80.

⁶ Brennan, Timothy. "From Development to Globalization: Postcolonial Studies and Globalization Theory." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004: 120-138.

⁷ Bahri, Deepika. *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

⁸ Benita Parry insists upon grounding of the postcolonial studies in the lived violence and disjunctions of postcolonial experience and criticizes Homi Bhabha for his over-reliance on the primacy of discourse: "The implications of rewriting a historical project of invasion, expropriation and exploitation in the indeterminate and always deferred terms Bhabha proposes and implements are immense, and for me immensely troubling, since his elaborations dispense with the notion of conflict – a concept which certainly does infer antagonism, but contra Bhabha, does not posit a simplistically unitary and closed structure to the adversarial forces" (56). Parry, Benita. "Signs of the Times." *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. 37-54.

⁹ Ella Shohat cites the danger of valorizing concepts, like "hybridity" and forgetting the realities of the position it supposedly describes: "the postcolonial in its Hebrew translation offers an undifferentiated valorization of 'hybridity.' How can we think through the relation between a postcolonial discourse that reads resistance into the fact of hybridities on the one hand, and the current apartheid-like and literally fenced-in reality of Israel/Palestine, on the other? Think about the cruel hybridity imposed, for example, in construction sites of the Separation Wall, where the linguistic frontiers of Hebrew and Arabic are indeed traversed, but where Palestinians are obliged to build the very wall that tears their lives apart. What is gained, then, when the asymmetries of hybridity are bracketed or even elided and encoded as resistant?" (40). Shohat. "The 'Postcolonial' in Translation: Reading Said in Hebrew." *Paradoxical Citizenship: Edward Said*. Ed. Silvia Nagy-Zekmi. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006. 25-47. (Orig. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33:3 (2004): 55-75).

¹⁰ Arif Dirlik locates a dangerous generalizing that ignores social and political realities in the conditions of writing for postcolonial intellectuals themselves: "released from the fixity of Third World location, the identity of the postcolonial is no longer structural but discursive" (504). Third World intellectuals, according to Dirlik, failed to recognize that the singularizing of minority experience resonated with the homogenizing of rising global capitalism; that discourse obscured the spatial and temporal boundaries of the postcolonial, and, finally, that "projecting globally what are but local experiences" (514) merely reinstates another form of totality on lived experience. Dirlik, Amir. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World

Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism.” *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*. Ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, Ella Shohat. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. 501-524.

¹¹ Although he traces the effects of imperialism in colonial narratives, Said is explicit in his documentation of “an immense wave of anti-colonial and ultimately anti-imperial activity, thought, and revision” (195) that represents the challenges of “subordinate” peoples, like Frantz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Tayeb Salih, Aimé Césaire and others that Westerners previously incorporated “into the great Western empires, and their disciplinary discourses” (195). See Chapter 3, “Resistance and Opposition” in Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994. (Orig. New York: Knopf, 1993).

¹² Bahri. 19.

¹³ Bahri usefully quotes Martin Jay’s definition of the term “constellation” as used in the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School: constellation refers to “a juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle” (96).

¹⁴ Robbins writes: “The obscurity of much writing in the postcolonial field can perhaps be taken as a sign [...] that more than the usual number of constituencies are being implicitly factored in, listened to or at least for; their interests and sensibilities consulted or at least imagined” (568).

¹⁵ Moore, David Chioni. “Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?: Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique.” *PMLA* 116:1 (2001), 111-128.

¹⁶ Brennan, 120.

¹⁷ Brennan, 123.

¹⁸ Mishra and Hodge, 399 .

¹⁹ As a preface to his edited volume, *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, Neil Lazarus compiles an “Indicative Chronology” dating from 1898, with the intention of “construct[ing] a list that gestures towards the multiplicity and huge diversity, both of the literary works actually or potentially implicated by the term ‘postcolonial literary studies,’ and of the social and political events that provide the overarching contexts for these works” (xii).

²⁰ Edward Said writes: “By 1914, the annual rate [of increase in land mass] had risen to an astonishing 240,000 square miles, and Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths” (8). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994 (Orig. New York: Knopf, 1993).

²¹ Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Said identifies “Electronic communications, the global extent of trade, of availability of resources, of travel, of information about weather patterns and ecological change [...] as] first established and made possible by the modern empires” (6).

²² Jefferess, David, Julie McGonegal, and Sabine Milz. Introduction: “The Politics of Postcoloniality.” *Postcolonial Text* 2:1 (2006). 19 Jan. 2006.

<http://pkp.ubc.ca/pocol/viewarticle.php?id=240&layout=html>.

²³ Shohat, 36.

²⁴ Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Gilroy makes what he calls an “unorthodox defense of [a] twentieth-century utopia of tolerance, peace, and mutual regard” (2).

²⁵ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet/Imperative zur Neuerfindung des Planeten*. Ed. Willi Goetschel. Vienna: Passagen, 1999. 44.

²⁶ Wai Chee Dimock notes this particular quality of literature, which travels the globe with its readers and which transports readers by imagination to multiple elsewhere: “Instead of upholding territorial sovereignty and enforcing a regime of simultaneity [as proposed by Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities], literature [...] unsettles both. It holds out to its readers dimensions of space and time so far-flung and so deeply recessional that they can never be made to coincide with the synchronic plane of the geopolitical map” (175). Dimock. “Literature for the Planet.” *PMLA* 116:1 (2001): 173-188.

²⁷ Robbins, Bruce. “Race, Gender, Class, Postcolonialism: Toward a New Humanistic Paradigm?” *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 556-573.

²⁸ Robbins quotes Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini in this passage.

²⁹ DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. *Gender, Race, and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry: 1908-1934*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

³⁰ In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak examines the disciplines of a “European national language-based Comparative Literature and the Cold War format of Area Studies” (10-11).

- ³¹ Spivak warns that literature cannot be a “blueprint” for “unmediated social action” (*DoD* 23).
- ³² Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 2000.
- ³³ Szeman, Imre. “Globalization.” *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. John Hawley. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001. 209-217. 16 Aug 2006.
<<http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~szeman/global.htm>>.
- ³⁴ Lazarus, Neil. “The Global Dispensation since 1945.” *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge UP, 2006. 19-40. Lazarus quotes a speech by ex-neoliberal politician, John Gray, in this passage. From the vantage point of the first decade of 2000, Lazarus reminds us that there are specific beneficiaries of globalization, a handful of people who are becoming increasingly wealthy at the expense of “the steady immiseration of the large majority of the world’s population” (27). Timothy Brennan has also been vocal about denouncing any sense of ubiquitous global power that prohibits resistance; by emphasizing “the sovereign subject, the evils of the state, the attractions of nomadism, cultural pluralism, the delegitimation of a focus on class, absolute freedom against any and all authority,” cultural theorists, Brennan suggests, have played into the hands of “neoliberal orthodoxies.” What Brennan proposes is a reconnection to personal “outrage” that names the aggressive reach of U.S. corporations and U.S. government into the resources and governments of overseas locations. See Brennan. “The Subtlety of Caesar.” *Interventions* 5:2 (2003): 200-206. Accessed 27 Dec 2005.
- ³⁵ See Nick Bentley and Imre Szeman (notes 9 and 2, respectively).
- ³⁶ Bentley, Nick. Introduction: “Mapping the Millennium Themes and Trends in Contemporary British Fiction.” *British Fiction of the 1990s*. London and New York: Routledge. 1-18.
- ³⁷ Mouffe, Chantal. *The Democratic Paradox*. London and New York: Verso, 2000.
- ³⁸ See Brennan, note 3.
- ³⁹ Brennan notes the U.S. intervention to remove heads of state and the extraction of plant life from Brazil and oil from Nigeria and Mexico as examples. Brennan, 201.
- ⁴⁰ O’Brien, Susie and Imre Szeman. Introduction: “The Globalization of Fiction/the Fiction of Globalization.” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100:3 (2001). 603-626. 16 Aug 2006.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/south_atlantic_quarterly/v100/100.3obrien.html>.
- ⁴¹ O’Brien and Szeman, 607. The authors are summarizing the arguments of Kalpana Seshadri-Crook.
- ⁴² Dirlik, Amir and Brennan, Timothy. “Cosmo-Theory.”
- ⁴³ Homi Bhabha makes use of Salman Rushdie’s phrase “how newness enters the world” (finish & cite).
- ⁴⁴ Hardt and Negri write “We suspect postmodernist and postcolonialist theories may end up in a dead end because they fail to recognize adequately the contemporary object of critique, that is, they mistake today’s real enemy”(137). Future references to *Empire* in subsequent paragraphs will be indicated in the text by *E* and the page number.
- ⁴⁵ Arguing against consensus politics in the United States frame, Dana E. Nelson documents a similar, though not coincident thinking. Attributing the genesis of her ideas to Sheldon Wolin, she argues: “we have failed to pay enough attention to the way that the Constitution created a new, abstracted, and antipolitical national identity [...] construct[ing] a political unity [that] encouraged citizens to look away from and even to fear democracy’s enormous potential for changing their relation to the concept and practice of nation” (560). Nelson’s ideas are also resonant with Chantal Mouffe’s argument. Nelson, Dana E. “ConsterNation.” *The Futures of American Studies*. Ed. Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2000. 559-579.
- ⁴⁶ Troy, Charles E. and Piero Weiss. “Intermezzo.” *Grove Music Online*. 10 Aug 2006.
<<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=opera.002509>>.
- ⁴⁷ Richard Terdiman is instructive in the functionality of counter-discourse. He examines instances of its appearance in discourses of nineteenth-century France; however, his insights can be productive for reading twentieth-century postcolonial literature. Terdiman’s formulations make three pertinent points relative to my argument. First, dominant discourses are crucial to the mode of counter-discourse: “dominant discourse is a *necessary language*, unreflectively present to itself but – what may be more significant – also present for any *other* discourse, even in denial or absence” (62). Second, Terdiman asserts dominant discourse is “internally fragmented,” – “not a ‘thing’ but a complex and shifting formation” (57). Its complexity gives discourse a formidable ability to absorb and integrate, thereby making counter-discourse problematical. Counter-discourse can but hope to be seen or heard by “liberat[ing] *newness* against the absorptive capacity of those established discourses” (13). Its goal is the elucidation of the fissures of dominant discourse, what

Terdiman calls “mapping the multivocality” (37). Finally, it is Terdiman’s contention that despite the universalizing tendency stemming from their absorptive qualities, dominant discourses exist on the premise of difference, both in structure (Saussure) and in social meaning (Bakhtin). Counter-discourses simply unveil this difference on which discourses depend, and in doing so, are named “other” even though they merely elucidate what is in any case inherent. However, as “other,” counter-discourses attain a power “to relativize the authority and stability of a dominant system of utterances which cannot even countenance their existence. They read that which cannot read them at all” (15-16). In short, counter-discourses, as Terdiman describes them, are part of, yet separate from, discourse. They work from within to disrupt the system that produces them. Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1985.

⁴⁸ For example, in the 1990s native populations in Hawai’i mount an independence struggle against U.S. colonization.

⁴⁹ In a much-cited and much-criticized formulation posed by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, the designation of “postcolonial” is extended to the United States among those formerly colonized by European powers, particularly Britain (2). See the introduction to *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. Both Deepika Bahri in *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature* (see chapter 2: Uncommon Grounds: Postcolonialism and the Irish Case (pp 55-87) and Jahan Ramazani in *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* (see chapter 2: W.B. Yeats: A Postcolonial Poet?) make a case for considering Irish literature “postcolonial.” Several critics read the Scottish novel I treat here, Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet*, in terms of postcolonial theory, particularly the concept of hybridity, including Tomás Monterrey’s “A Scottish Metamorphosis: Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet*” and Peter Clandfield’s ““What is in my Blood?”: Contemporary Black Scottishness and the Work of Jackie Kay.”

⁵⁰ Said, Edward.

⁵¹ Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Gilroy notes the emergence, post 9/11, of “revisionist ways of approaching nationality, power, law, and the history of imperial domination [which are] designed to conform to the economic machinery of weightless capitalism and work best when the stance of colonial history and the wounds of imperial domination have been mystified or, better still, forgotten” (3).

⁵² Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia UP, 2003.

⁵³ Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. C. Lenhardt. Ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. (Orig. in German, 1970). Adorno asserts that the “aesthetic relations of production – defined as everything that provides an outlet for the productive forces of art or everything in which these forces become embedded – are sedimentations of social relations of production bearing the imprint of the latter. Thus in all dimensions of its productive process art has a twofold essence, being both an autonomous entity and a social fact in the Durkheimian sense of the term (7-8).

⁵⁴ Said, Edward. “Introduction: Criticism and Exile.” *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. xi-xxxv.

⁵⁵ Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 56.

⁵⁶ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet/Imperative zur Neuerfindung des Planeten*. Ed. Willi Goetschel. Vienna: Passagen, 1999.

⁵⁷ Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 4.

⁵⁸ Said, Edward. Preface to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 2003. (Orig. Vintage 1979). Other references are referred to by page number in the text.

⁵⁹ Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. Further references are indicated in the text by page number.

⁶⁰ Said, Edward. “Introduction: Criticism and Exile.” *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. xi-xxxv.

⁶¹ Said, Edward. “From Silence to Sound and Back Again.” *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. 507-526.

⁶² Frederic Jameson writes in the concluding paragraphs of his famous essay on the “Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” that discusses the need for maps when representing empirical experience as opposed to representing ideology. Kevin Lynch, the city planner on whose work Jameson bases his theories of cognitive mapping, features in *The Image of the City*, “subjects clearly involved in pre-cartographic operations whose results traditionally are described as itineraries rather than as maps; diagrams organized

around the still subject-centred (*sic*) or existential journey of the traveler, along which various significant key features are marked – oases, mountain ranges, rivers, monuments and the like” (230). His reading suggests that empirical reality, from the view of the subject, is perhaps more advantageously represented in “itineraries,” which remain open to individual manipulation and/or disregard altogether. Jameson. “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” *The Jameson Reader*. Ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000: 188-232.

⁶³ Although maps are considered by many to be the more advanced form of spatial communication because they are more abstract, the more “primitive” itineraries, what Frederic Jameson calls the “pre-cartographic,” are succeeding maps once again, tied as they are to on-the-ground reality. Nick Paumgarten writes in a review of GPS and mapping systems that “Before there were maps, as we understand them, there were itineraries, sequences of customized directions. Maps, to say nothing of the ability to read them, were the stuff of progress. To see and depict the landscape in such abstract terms, as you might from above, requires a measure of sophistication that the mere itinerary, with its blindered view of the world, does not. So it’s curious that the current geographic revolution is in many ways a reversion to primitive techniques: it is a high-tech gloss on the lowest-tech approach” (88). Paumgarten, Nick. “Getting There: The Science of Driving Directions or Where Mapquest Comes From.” *The New Yorker*. 24 Apr 2006: 86-101.

⁶⁴ Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1993. The citations in this paragraph are all taken from this volume. See particularly Chapter 1.

⁶⁵ Barthes, Roland. “The Grain of the Voice.” *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1985. 267-277.

⁶⁶ Leppert, Richard. Commentary. “Music, Language, and Composition.” By Adorno, Theodor. *Essays on Music*. Ed. Leppert. Trans. Susan H. Gillespie. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002: 85-95.

⁶⁷ There are two examples, widely different, that belie this usual bar to code mixing: W.E.B. DuBois included fragments of notated Negro spirituals in his text, *Souls of Black Folk*; children’s books sometimes offer sound-effect strips to accompany the stories – the correct sound to be inserted is indicated by icon in the text.

⁶⁸ Said, Edward. “From Silence to Sound.” *Reflections*, 515. Said writes that the fictional and real compositions aspire, in their powerful alienation from society, their technical difficulty, and their lack of concern for audience, to silence.

⁶⁹ Balibar suggests in his essay, “Is There a ‘Neo-Racism’?” that “will to know” coupled with “misrecognition” promotes a particularly hard-to-eradicate racism: individuals and social groups avoid raising biological difference, but rather speak in terms of cultural difference; by projecting social understandings that purportedly maintain differences in life-styles, traditions, etc., racism is preserved. In Balibar, Etienne and Immanuel Wallerstein. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. Trans. Balibar and Chris Turner. London and New York: Verso, 2000 (originally 1988). See chapter 1, particularly pages 19-20.

⁷⁰ An illustration of music’s interpretation by its more universal codes in sound than by its more specific linguistic codes occurs in the novel *Twelve Bar Blues* by Patrick Neate. In this case, the words to a song in a native African language are simply ignored, because not understood by the English listener, in favor of interpretation of the musical sounds as a love song: “He sang in Zamba and she didn’t know enough to translate. So she bathed in those enigmatic phonemes and created new stories from the mysteries of those same building blocks” (287). Neate, Patrick. *Twelve Bar Blues*. London: Penguin, 2001.

⁷¹ *Word and Music Studies: Defining the Field*. Ed. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher, and Werner Wolf. I refer generally to essays in two sections, Part 1. Theoretical Considerations, and Part 3. Music in Literature; see pages 9-91 and 187-261, respectively.

⁷² Brown, Marshall. *Turning Points: Essays in the History of Cultural Expressions*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997. I refer to the chapter entitled “Origins of Modernism: Musical Structures and Narrative Forms.” See pages 220-235.

⁷³ Jameson’s parallels between, on the one hand, mental imaging of a cityscape and belonging to it (Lynch) and, on the other, internalization of an ideology and owning it (Althusser) come immediately to mind. See Jameson, Frederic. “Cognitive Mapping.” *The Jameson Reader*. Ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 277-287.

⁷⁴ Marx, Karl. “The German Ideology.” *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd ed. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton, 1978, 146-200.

⁷⁵ Wolf, Werner. "Musicalized Fiction and Intermediality: Theoretical Aspects of Word and Music Studies." *Word and Music Studies: Defining the Field*. Ed. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher, and Werner Wolf. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999. 37-58.

⁷⁶ Grim, William E. "Musical Form as a Problem in Literary Criticism." *Word and Music Studies: Defining the Field*. Ed. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher, and Werner Wolf. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999. 237-248.

⁷⁷ Said, Edward. Introduction: "Criticism and Exile." *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. xi – xxxv. Said makes a survey of the formalist practices of Lukás, T.S. Eliot, Hayden White and others to a lesser extent.

⁷⁸ Said, Introduction, *Reflections*, xxx.

⁷⁹ Adorno writes that tonality had ruled composition practice for 350 years; although the great composers sought ways to escape its generalizing schema, Schoenberg was the first to "avoid[] producing the tonal center of gravity" in his music, "every sound became autonomous, all tones enjoyed equal rights, and the reign of the tonic triad was overthrown" (636). See Adorno's "Toward an Understanding of Schoenberg" in Leppert (see note 2).

⁸⁰ Corbett, John. "Experimental Oriental: New Music and Other Others." *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*. Ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000. 163-186.

⁸¹ This study's focus on literature as its subject precludes more than passing references to the debates in the fields of musicology and ethnomusicology itself concerning the applicability of Western musical theory and form to analyze non-Western musics. In the introduction to their text, *Western Music and Its Others*, the editors Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, note their discomfort with the terms in the title, specifically the implication of "non-Western" music "which makes it sound as though the rest of the world is a kind of residue of the West" (47, fn1).

⁸² Jeffrey Richards documents England's export of music with other products of education and civilization. To give just one example, Sir Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) composed music for the Canadian national hymn (30), wrote music for "Kipling's poem *The Absent Minded Beggar*, the proceeds of which went to Boer War Charities" (37), and "when he died, [...] his music was known and loved all around the Empire" (40). In 1911, the Empire organized The Dominion's Tour to counter a "deep concern about the unity of the Empire": a huge imperial choir of 10,000 voices (200 simply to hold up the English flag during each concert) traveled to Canada, the United States, Hawaii, Australia, and South Africa. Richards details the countless national hymns, celebratory music for Empire Day, marches and symphonies composed specifically to promote the Empire that were played both at home and in the colonies, even though today this "veritable ocean of imperial music from the classical to the popular" is now mostly forgotten (3). The imperial export consisted not only of English music, but also European compositions by Gluck, Verdi, Beethoven, Chopin and many others were staged throughout the empire in Rhodesia, Dublin, Sydney, and so on. Richards, Jeffrey. *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP 2001.

⁸³ Huxley, Aldous. *Point Counterpoint*. New York: Random House Modern Library, 1928. All future references to the novel will be indicated by PC and the page number.

⁸⁴ Blom, Eric. *The New Everyman Dictionary of Music*. Rev. Ed. David Cummings. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1988. See page 161.

⁸⁵ Schubert, Peter. "Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance." *Cambridge Guide to Western Music Theory*. Ed. Thomas Christensen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 503-533.

⁸⁶ Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. "Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature: The Components of Expression." Trans. Marie Maclean. *New Literary History* 16:3 (1985), 591-608.

⁸⁷ This discussion of decolonization efforts is indebted to Tamara Sivandandan's article "Anticolonialism, National Liberation, and Postcolonial Nation Formation." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 41-65.

⁸⁸ Sivandandan notes that the "boundaries of colonized land had been defined by European powers in a way which had denied and repressed existing communities. [...] Popular or insurgent nationalism served to reclaim or imagine forms of community again, to forge collective political identities within these imposed boundaries sufficient to challenge colonial rule" (49).

⁸⁹ Lazarus cautions that the corruption, greed, and ineptitude of political leaders that has failed to advance the work of anti-colonial movements cannot be seen in isolation, but must take note of the international

influences and interventions: “To lay the blame for the destruction of the environment, the impoverishment of communities, and exploitation of workers in Nigeria, Malaysia, Venezuela, and Trinidad on corrupt and autocratic national rules, without also taking into account the central roles played by the massive and hugely powerful Western-based oil conglomerates, for instance, would clearly be to invert reality” (20).

⁹⁰ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. Said calls describes national resistance as “far from being merely a reaction to imperialism, [it] is an alternative way of conceiving human history” (216).

⁹¹ Anne McClintock is also an editor to this volume, which in full is titled, *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*.

⁹² See Susan McClary’s *Feminine Endings* and Jeffrey Kallberg’s *Chopin at the Boundaries*.

Chapter 2:

¹ Adorno, Theodor. “On the Social Situation of Music.” Trans. Wes Blomster, revised by Richard Leppert. *Essays on Music*. Comp. Richard Leppert. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 391-436.

² Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Foreword Frederic Jameson. Afterword Susan McClary. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

³ Jameson, Frederic. Introduction. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985: vii-xiv.

⁴ Thanks to Elizabeth Loizeaux for her suggestion of this term.

⁵ These principles I devise based on the suggested components of a poetics listed in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* and modify for suitable accommodate literary representations of musical compositions and compositional processes. Miner, Earl. “Poetics.” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Ed. Alex Péminger and T.V.F. Brogan. Assoc. Ed. Frank J. Warnke, O.B. Hardison, Jr., and Earl Miner. New York: MJF Books, 1993. 929-938.

⁶ Aaron Copland influences me in the designation of these categories. In his chapters, “The Creative Process” (16-25) and “From Composer to Interpreter to Listener” (211-229), Copland identifies (and downplays) inspiration, also the musical idea, sound medium, additional of lesser ideas, processes of elongation or development, and bridging mechanisms. Additionally, he specifically argues that more than any other artist, the composer “gives us himself,” that is, “that part which embodies the fullest and deepest expression of himself as a man and of his experience as a fellow being” (212, *all masculine references excepted*). Copland. *What to Listen For In Music*. New York: Signet Classic, 2002. (Orig. McGraw Hill, 1957).

⁷ Rushdie, Salman. “The New Empire Within Britain.” *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*. London: Granta and New York: Viking, 1991: 129-138.

⁸ Laura Chrisman continues the description of English linear and historical identity this way: “the nation’s identity and credibility depend upon the assertion of unbroken cultural tradition” even though the nation as a political entity “arises from the historical rupture of capitalist modernity.” Chrisman. “Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies.” *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 183-198. Chrisman cites Anne McClintock and Partha Chatterjee as two critics who have identified this paradoxical view of nations.

⁹ Frankenberg, Ruth and Lata Mani. “Crosscurrents, Crosstalk: Race, ‘Postcoloniality’ and the Politics of Location.” *Cultural Studies* (1995). 292-310.

¹⁰ At the time of the writing of the essay, Hong Kong was included in the list of retained colonies.

¹¹ Rushdie, 130.

¹² Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996.

¹³ Brannigan, John. “Northern Irish Fiction: Provisionals and Pataphysicians.” *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*. Ed. James F. English. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

¹⁴ Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*.

¹⁵ Brannigan cites Richard Kirkland’s analysis employing Gramsci’s concept of the interregnum.

¹⁶ English, James F. Introduction. *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*. Ed. English. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 1-15.

¹⁷ Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*. “Conviviality” is a critical term in a process whereby British citizens might move from melancholia, guilt, and violence to fresh intercultural interchanges, building on the

strengths of hybrid conditions in a postcolonial world after facing and acknowledging the horrors committed in the name of British imperial progress.

¹⁸ Jameson writes of Wyndham Lewis's protagonist in his novel *Tarr*: Given a range of "various national types" pressed together in a singular social situation, "allegory ceases to be that static decipherment of one-on-one correspondences with which it is still so often identified and opens up that specific and uniquely allegorical space between signifier and signified, in which [in Lacan's terms] 'the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier' [producing...] the ultimate conflictual 'truth' of the sheer, mobile, shifting relationality of national types and of the older nation-states which are their content" (310). Jameson. "National Allegory in Wyndham Lewis." *The Jameson Reader*. Ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 308-314.

¹⁹ Jameson, "Third-world Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Reader*, 315-339.

²⁰ Jameson, headnote, *Reader*, 313. He contends that the essay "was intended as an intervention into a 'first-world' literary and critical situation" which had lost valuable means of national commentary due to the effects of the capitalist economy that has forced a split between private and public realms, psychologizing individual stories. The quote in the headnote was originally part of an essay in *Social Text* (1987), entitled "A Brief Response."

²¹ McEwan, Ian. *Amsterdam*. New York: Anchor Books, 1999. All further references to the novel will be indicated by *A* and the page number.

²² Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1961 (Orig. 1920).

²³ Although Lambeg drumming is viewed in the late twentieth century as competitive entertainment, its political overtones, begun in its association with nineteenth century Orange Order rituals, have hardly decreased. The drums' huge size – over three feet high, spanning from a drummer's neck to his knees – are matched by an enormous sound. Bamboo canes, rather than wooden-knobbed sticks, "achieve a volume of 120 decibels – comparable to that of a pneumatic drill, or a light aircraft engine" (Hastings xii). The novel suggests, but then dismisses as myth, the image of Lambeg drummers so fanatic that they beat their instruments until their wrists are bloody. In contrast, Gary Hastings, raised an Ulster Protestant, suggests a truth underwrites the myth: "The Lambeg is obviously a very macho instrument. Stories of men playing until the blood dripped from their wrists after having rubbed them continuously on the brace hoops during long stick-ins [impromptu drumming matches] cannot be discounted as untrue – although modern drummers would say that the wrists should never touch the drum" (64). Lambeg drumming still conveys an aggressive masculinity that is Protestant in identity.

²⁴ Attali, 4.

²⁵ Schmidt, Leigh Eric. "Hearing Loss." *The Auditory Culture Reader*. Ed. Michael Bull and Les Back. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003. 41-59. Schmidt writes: "As much of the writing on the modern sensorium has argued or presumed, vision is the dominant sense of modernity, the other senses being comparably repressed (such as smell) or vestigial (such as hearing's former centrality in oral cultures)" (42). To illustrate the pervasiveness of sight, we need only consider Foucault's treatise on the totality of human knowledge framed in terms of sight. Foucault invites the reader to assume the role of the painter "standing a little back from his canvas" (3), suggesting one's position is neutral when "the *observer* and the *observed* take part in a ceaseless exchange" (4-5, italics added). In what Foucault eventually identifies as a Velasquez self-portrait, a window and a mirror standing in for what cannot be seen. Nonetheless, the whole of what can be known or not is presented in terms of sight. Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*. Trans. Unidentified. New York: Vintage, 1973. Gayatri Spivak criticizes the "objective" viewpoint that Foucault, among other philosopher-critics claim, critiquing their presumption of neutrality. Specifically, she notes that Foucault puts himself at the center of a panoptical theoretical perspective, given that, in her view, his concept-metaphor for power "fills the empty place of the agent with the historical sun of theory, the Subject of Europe" (254). Spivak, Gayatri. Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1999.

²⁶ Bishop Berkeley is quoted in the Introduction to *The Auditory Culture Reader* as noting "sounds are as close to us as our thoughts" (5). *The Auditory Culture Reader*. Ed. Michael Bull and Les Back. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003.

²⁷ Don Ihde suggests thinking of "inner speech as a special type of auditory imagination" (63). Ihde, Don. "Auditory Imagination." Bull and Back, 61-66.

²⁸ Adorno, Theodor. *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E.B. Ashton. New York: Continuum, 1995. (Orig. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966).

²⁹ Perfect pitch also attests to certain internal rigidities: “Research has shown that people with perfect pitch have an overdeveloped planum temporale – a site on the left side of the brain [...stor[ing]...] acoustic archetypes that automatically compare incoming pitches.” Ebrahimian, Shirley. “Pitching a Fit: Perfect Pitch Can Better Your Musicianship – Or Make You Climb the Walls of Sound.” *The Washington Post*. 20 Apr 2004. F1+.

³⁰ *Grove’s Music Online* notes that “perfect pitch” is a popular term (the specific musical term is “absolute pitch”) and one that musicians claim for themselves. In other words, unless formally tested by acoustical engineers or measured by other musicians who do indeed have the ability to identify tones by exact labels (such as C, 261 Hz), musicians’ claims to absolute pitch usually remain unverified. According to *Grove*, only about one in 10,000 people claim to have tone-AP (what is usually meant by “perfect pitch”). Therefore, Linley’s claim is an elitist one. Additionally, musicians who claim absolute AP, may not be better at distinguishing tones of near frequencies than other musicians, and indeed, may enjoy music less because of a constant reminder of the tone’s label while listening. Parncutt, Richard and Daniel J. Levitin. “Absolute Pitch.” *Grove Music Online*. Accessed 7 Apr 2004. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

³¹ Walsh, Stephen. “Symphony § II: 19th Century, Essence of the Genre.” *Grove Music Online*. Ed. L. Macy. 20 Mar 2007. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>. The four movements are: first movement in sonata form (ABA), lyrical slow movement, dance-like scherzo, and fast finale.

³² Although there are many who support arts sponsorships, McEwan’s novel does not join this chorus. The novel’s view might be summed as follows: in the guise of beneficence, commissions lead to bad compositions that are played for the purpose or event of commissioning and forever after fade (rightly) into obscurity. For a supporting position, see for example: Nickson, John. “Arts Sponsorship: An Unholy Alliance.” *The Musical Times* 132:1779 (1991), 237-240.

³³ The committee has in mind the BBC’s wildly successful appropriation, for the 1990s World Cup “theme song,” of Luciano Pavarotti’s 1996 rendition of Puccini’s aria (translated as “Let No One Sleep”) from the opera, *Turandot*. It is unlikely to have bothered them that this opera about a Chinese Mandarin princess might be seen, like Verdi’s *Aida* analyzed by Edward Said, as an example of European “Orientalism.” The plot of *Turandot* briefly unfolds as follows: The Princess Turandot is to be wed against her will to the first that can answer her three riddles. After several executions of those who fail, a Tartar prince, Calaf, answers correctly but allows Turandot an escape if she can discover his name. Calaf sings the “Nessun dorma” which reiterates Turandot’s proclamation that no one in the kingdom shall sleep until Calaf’s name is discovered, thus releasing her from her marriage obligation. Liú, a willing slave to Calaf’s father because she loves Calaf, is tortured by the Princess to reveal the name. Loyal until the end, Liú kills herself with one of the torturer’s knives. In an “inevitable anticlimax,” composed after Puccini could not solve the problem of his own making in introducing a slave girl into the traditional fairy tale plot, Calaf continues to woo Turandot even after Liu has died for love of him. *Grove* suggests that Puccini has composed beyond the “mere orientalism” of *Madama Butterfly*, employing “bitonality” and “whole-tone, pentatonic and modal harmony.” However, given that the same article discloses that Puccini’s inspirations are “a Chinese musical box belonging to his friend Baron Fassani and some folk music supplied by the firm of Ricordi,” it is difficult to designate Puccini’s efforts as authentic, given European intermediaries, not the least of which is the composer himself. Budden, Julian. “Turandot (ii).” *Grove Music Online*. Accessed 4 Jan 2007. <<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=opera.905166>>.

³⁴ Clive’s works seem at best “light” and at worst ignored. His violin sonatina makes suitable material for an eleven-year-old (A 10-11); his music setting William Blake’s poem, “The Poison Tree,” was performed once and never again (A 164).

³⁵ Adorno, Theodor. “On the Fetish-Character of Music and the Regression of Listening.” *Essays on Music*. Ed. Richard Leppert. Trans. Leppert. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002. 288-317.

³⁶ Thomas, Adrian. “Górecki, Henryk Mikołaj.” *Grove Music Online*. Accessed 7 Apr 2004. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

³⁷ Thomas notes that this dismissal, mostly by Western European critics, occurs as a result of misunderstanding Eastern Europe music: “the symphony’s underlying ethos of reflection and transcendence and its candid combination of emotional and technical directness may not always cross cultural boundaries.” See note 36 above.

³⁸ “Vaughan Williams, Ralph (viii-ix).” *Grove Music Online*. Accessed 7 Apr 2004. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

³⁹ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

⁴⁰ Gilroy cites Peter Ackroyd’s use of the term “‘natural’ landscape” in *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*. London: Chatto and Windus, 2002.

⁴¹ This chapter focuses on high culture in the figure of the wealthy, musical, Clive Linley; the media and the political classes are represented in the figures of Vernon Halliday and Julian Garmony, respectively.

⁴² *Oxford English Dictionary*. “Grace (n).” 16 Mar 2005. <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>.

⁴³ Édouard Glissant offers an extended discussion of a poetics of relation, which cannot be summed adequately here. However, the ideas which Glissant explores include his suggestions that a Poetics of Relation is rooted rhizometrically in the shared knowledge of the Middle Passage, extended in the experience of the Plantation, and dispersed in the elliptical language of poetry that defies the rationality of Western thought. Poetic of Relations describes a non-filiated expansion “in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other” (11). Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2000. (orig. in French, 1990). Paul Gilroy also advocates for relationality in *Postcolonial Melancholia*; his views are developed in the course of this paper.

⁴⁴ Ernst Bloch alludes to elaboration as a technique in his essay on the production of ornamentation. He suggests that in the overwhelming industrialization of the early twentieth century machines will take over the task of functionality, freeing expression from its duty as style: “Only when functional form is content to fulfill its modest duty will expression emerge, without a care, freed from style” (14). That is, art will become ornamental when it is removed from utility and become again the expression of the interior being. Bloch, Ernst. “The Production of the Ornament.” *The Spirit of Utopia*. Trans. Anthony A. Nassar. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2000. (Orig. 1918 & 1923). 10-33.

⁴⁵ Thanks to Sangeeta Ray for naming the concept I describe here and for alerting me to Benedict Anderson’s related notion of “seriality.”

⁴⁶ MacLaverty, Bernard. *Grace Notes*. All further references to the novel will be indicated by *GN* and the page number.

⁴⁷ Rushdie, Salman. “Influence.” *Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002*. New York: Random House, 2002. 62-69.

⁴⁸ Rushdie uses reference to “ground beneath her feet” in this essay and as the title to his novel written later the same year about a history of rock ‘n roll.

⁴⁹ Pedagogical imperatives, she suggests, demand finding common ground among different cultural perspectives to enable an “adequate theory of practice” (472). Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Teaching for the Times.” *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*. Ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, Ella Shohat. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

⁵⁰ Griffiths, Paul. “Messiaen, Olivier (Eugène Prosper Charles).” *Grove Music Online*. Accessed 22 Sep 2005. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁵¹ Benedict Anderson proposes a similar radical decentering in his concept of “unbounded seriality.” This notion focuses, as I understand it, on expanding, concentric circles of connection, “exemplified by such open-to-the-world plurals as nationalists, anarchists, bureaucrats, and workers” (29). It not only signifies a recurrent simultaneity of experience (as with newspapers), but also universal domains of discourse and understanding within a “world of mankind” (33). I see the movement depicted in Anderson’s unbounded seriality from a particular to an expanding universal, without a concern for locating middle positions. By “serial mediation,” I prioritize intermediacy over seriality. Therefore, whereas Anderson conveys notions of simultaneity and coherence in his term, I suggest sequentiality and dispersal – the continual movement from middle to middle.

⁵² Eric Armstrong writes about Celtic grace notes: Irish ornamentation is still left largely to the performer; embellishments are added at the musician’s discretion and thus define his/her style. A grace note generally refers to a move called a “cut” is an addition of an “extra, higher note of extremely short duration” produced differently on various instruments, but basically involves “flicking” a finger on the string to interject between two tones of the same pitch a higher tone that is “cut in” between the two.”

⁵³ Jameson, Frederic. Foreword. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* by Jacques Attali. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Chapter 3:

¹ Gilroy, Paul. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. See particularly Chapter 3, "Identity, Belonging, and the Critique of Pure Sameness." 97-133.

² I rely on Foucault's notion of heterotopias. Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Trans. Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16: 1 (1986), 22-27. *JSTOR*. 9 Jun 2005. <<http://www.jstor.org>>.

³ Kernfeld, Barry. "Improvisation: III Jazz." *Grove Music Online*. 9 Jul 2005. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

⁴ Dove, Rita. *Grace Notes*. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1989. All subsequent references to this text will be indicated as *DGN*.

⁵ Morgan, Robert P. "Musical Time/Musical Space." *The Language of Images*. Ed. W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980. 259-270. (Orig. 1974).

⁶ Kernfeld, Barry. *What to Listen for in Jazz*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1995.

⁷ Kernfeld. See particularly pages 130-145.

⁸ Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997.

⁹ Clifford assembles this strict definition from the writings of William Safran.

¹⁰ Gilroy, *Against Race*. 123.

¹¹ Gilroy, *Against Race*. 111.

¹² Gilroy cautions against depoliticizing diaspora by de-historicizing it. He is anxious that the term not be reduced to some sense of "unambiguous exile" where easy reconciliations with origins (return) or current residence (assimilation) are possible.

¹³ Edward Said suggests that exile is an experience in cultural contrapuntalism, in which two cultures unfurl in imagination simultaneously. See "Reflections in Exile" from *Reflections in Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. 173-186.

¹⁴ Related to the discussion of Gilroy's processes of identification outlined here are what Bruce Robbins identifies as "better cosmopolitanism" (567), in which race, gender, class, sexual orientation cease to be straightjackets that label a personality with singular identity, but rather aspects of a complex postcolonial or humanist condition. That is, race, gender, sexual orientation become terms that recognize a planetary scope rather than retaining their "resistant, particularizing perspectives." Robbins, Bruce. "Race, Gender, Class, Postcolonialism: Toward a New Humanistic Paradigm?" *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 556-573.

¹⁵ This term opposes, juxtaposes Orland Patterson's concept of "natal alienation" from *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1982.

¹⁶ Kernfeld takes the term "paraphrase improvisation" from a jazz historian and critic writing in the 1950s, André Hodeir. Kernfeld's other terms appear to be his own, developed from his scholarship in the function and use of the musical elements involved. My reading through this essay is indebted to Kernfeld's useful categorizations. Other writers focus on other aspects of improvisation to explain it. For example, David Demsey's "Jazz Improvisation and Concepts of Virtuosity" in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* distinguishes the elements of the improvised solo, including form and harmony, melody, voice-leading (progression), and rhythm and time. See pages 788-798.

¹⁷ Time signature simply indicates the number of beats per measure and which beat gets a full count. Thus 4/4 indicates 4 notes per beat with a quarter-note getting a full count.

¹⁸ Pereira traces the connections between the earlier poems, including their depictions of Akron, Ohio of 1921 with its "dingy beach" in "Jiving"; Beulah's "reticence about courtship" in "Courtship," and Beulah's fascination with worlds elsewhere in "The Oriental Ballerina" with the Negro beach scene "this side of the world" in "Summit Beach, 1921." Pereira, Malin. *Rita Dove's Cosmopolitanism*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

¹⁹ Malin Pereira argues that Dove herself inhabits an in-between position as a poet. Pereira situates Dove's middle position in personal biography, suggesting that Dove marks a split in African American poetry between "Afro-Modernism and black nationalism, also seen as mainstream integrationism versus black separatism" of the 1940s (7). Pereira argues that Dove identifies with Derek Walcott's particularly cosmopolitan view of the world, which coalesces in a "cultural mulatto sensibility." Pereira observes Dove's view of herself as "a 'world citizen,' free to include any culture and its materials in her art" (22), who does not shy away from either the "colonizer's culture" or assimilation. Pereira. "'When the Pear

Blossoms/Cast Their Pale Faces on/the Darker Face of the Earth': Miscegenation, the Primal Scene, and the Incest Motif in Rita Dove's Work." *African American Review* 36:2 (2002), 195-211.

²⁰ George Lipsitz defines "white privilege" as "As the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations" (1).

²¹ Bhabha, Homi. *Location of Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

²² The novel designates Cole's family inheritances as Scottish and jazz. The fact that Joss steadfastly refuses to name his own father's antecedents underscores Joss's idea that legacy he passes along to Cole is jazz.

²³ Kernfeld, 200. A fakebook provides a shorthand of popular music.

²⁴ Brown, Lee B. "The Theory of Jazz Music 'It Don't Mean a Thing...'" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49: 2 (Spring 1991), 115-127.

²⁵ Hawkins moves away from the fundamental harmony primarily by means of "tritone substitution," which in jazz "involves two chords having separate identities, one fundamental and the other supplemental, with the two interlocking in an audible way" (498). Brothers, Thomas. "Solo and Cycle in African-American Jazz." *The Musical Quarterly* 78:3 (Autumn 1994), 479-509. *Jstor*. 13 Feb 2006. <<http://www.jstor.org>>. See particularly pages 495-498 for Brothers' discussion of Hawkins' "Body and Soul."

²⁶ Benson, Stephen. "For Want of a Better Term?: Polyphony and the Value of Music in Bakhtin and Kundera." *Narrative* 11: 3 (2003), 292-311. *Project Muse*. 4 Feb 2006. Research Port. U Maryland. <<http://muse.jhu.edu>>.

²⁷ Carole Jones makes the connection between Butlerian performativity, improvisation, and identity formation: "Jazz music, and particularly the prominent characteristic of improvisation, is a thematic and structuring influence on the novel" (194). She specifically makes the point that Kay's "performative conception of identity in *Trumpet*" has direct parallels to the "performative theories of identity, especially as conceived in the work of Judith Butler" (196). Jones, Carol. "'An Imaginary Black Family': Jazz, Diaspora, and the Construction of Scottish Blackness in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*." *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 8:2 (2004). 191-202.

²⁸ Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York and London: Routledge, 1993.

²⁹ Gilroy, *Against Race*, 129.

³⁰ Kernfeld, 137.

³¹ Demsey, David. "Jazz Improvisation and Concepts of Virtuosity." *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000. 788.

³² Gilroy, *Against Race*, 129.

³³ Pereira, Malin. "'When the Pear Blossoms/Cast Their Pale Faces on/the Darker Face of the Earth': Miscegenation, the Primal Scene, and the Incest Motif in Rita Dove's Work." *African American Review* 36:2 (2002), 195-211.

³⁴ Bhabha cites Archer of Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady* and Aila of Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story* as exemplars of women who discover their homes suddenly filled with the terror of unfamiliarity. See pages 13-14 in *The Location of Culture*.

³⁵ Said, Edward. "Reflections on Exile." *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. 173-186

³⁶ J. Michael Dash identifies in Glissant's oeuvre a "pattern of secretive infolding and mobile thresholds" (151), and that in his "shift from folds to fractals represents the use of a modern scientific model to refute the hypothesis that the world is evolving, or rather devolving toward an all-encompassing transcendental sameness" (155). Dash, J. Michael. *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998.

³⁷ Dimock, Wai Chee. "Genre as World System: Epic and Novel on Four Continents." *Narrative* 14:1 (2006), 85-101. *Project Muse*. Research Port. U Maryland. 9 Mar 2007. Such a geometry, Dimock suggests, would be useful for designing a history of literature based on the "scalar recursiveness" traceable in genres, focusing in at different levels of specificity. Literature, so ordered, might take up the geometry's capacity to become "a mediation on infinity, on what keeps spinning out, in endless spirals" (88). Within finite parameters (i.e., genres), fractal geometry suggests to literature an infinite unfolding, "allow[ing] us to see [...] a tangle of relations" (89) that escapes periodization and nationalization.

³⁸ Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. (Orig. in French, Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

³⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*. 10 Mar 2007. <http://dictionary.oed.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu>.

⁴⁰ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "World Systems and the Creole." *Narrative* 14: 6 (2006). 102-112. *Project Muse*. Research Port. U Maryland. 9 Mar 2007.

⁴¹ Kay, Jackie. *Trumpet*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998. All references to the novel will be indicated by *T* and the page number.

⁴² Kernfeld, 143.

⁴³ In an interview with Pereira, Dove says: "I [...] think that resolution of notes, the way that a chord will resolve itself, is something that applies to my poems; the way that, hopefully if it works, the last line of the poem, or the last word, will resolve something that's been kind of hanging for a while. And I think musical structure affects even how the poems are ordered in a book. Each of the poems plays a role."

⁴⁴ McClary, Susan. *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press, 2000. The twelve measures of each blues verse breaks into three four-bar sections: each "four-bar section operates on the basis of a call/response mechanism, with two bars of call followed by two of instrumental 'response'" (39), also called the "fill."

⁴⁵ McClary explains the musical underpinnings this way: "Harmonic closure arrives punctually at the beginning of bar 11, yet musicians typically undermine that sense of an ending by stepping away from I [the tonic-home] to V⁷ (40-1).

⁴⁶ As Kernfeld tells us, this is why jazz endings are so often the splats, fade-outs, and odd waverings that sound "abrupt, tentative, awkward, corny, nebulous, and dissonant" (43).

⁴⁷ C. Fred Alford describes what Levinas calls the "fundamental anxiety" of "mere being, being with no exit, being into eternity" (33). Alford notes that to suggest "Levinas is talking about some Other more august and transcendent than real other people [...] miss[es] the point Levinas is trying to make, that we know the infinite only through other people" (34). Alford, "Emmanuel Levinas and Iris Murdoch: Ethics as Exit?" *Philosophy and Literature* 26 (2002), 24-42. EBSCO. Research Port, University of Maryland Lib. 1 Jul 2005.

⁴⁸ Alford writes: "Infinity is comparable with tragedy" (39). In Alford's view, because Levinas identifies an exit in the human other, he never knows tragedy.

⁴⁹ This paragraph on heterotopias and my concluding discussion are informed by Foucault's article, "Of Other Spaces." Foucault. "Of Other Spaces." Trans. Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16: 1 (1986), 22-27.

⁵⁰ Carole Jones writes: "This is an image of a dead country, looking to the immigrant for new life. It is a simple image perhaps, but one that goes to the heart of imperialism, and how the colonial venture consumed the objectified bodies of the colonised peoples" (199). See also Tomás Monterrey's suggestion that "John Moore's early twentieth-century Scotland is with scope for personal autonomy and success, as he manages to earn a 'plausible living' as a house painter" (179).

Chapter 4:

¹ Grandt, Jürgen E. "Kinds of Blue: Toni Morrison, Hans Janowitz, and the Jazz Aesthetic." *African American Review* 38:2 (Summer 2004): 303-323. *Literature Online*. 9 Sep 2005.

<<http://lion.chadwyck.com>>. No pagination online. All quotations from Grandt are from the same article.

² The idea of music as a "sediment of social relations" comes from Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*. Adorno held a negative view of jazz, considering it in the grip of the culture industry, its slave and spiritual roots adulterated by white interlopers. Notwithstanding his denigration of jazz as art, his observations about artworks are useful here: he contends that artworks contain aesthetic relations that are a social sedimentation comprised of the interrelations between the artwork and the outside world, including the work's adoption of a particular style of a period, its employment of the labor of the artist, its use of materials from the real world, and its enlivenment by each new set of viewers/listeners. (See pages 4-7.) Adorno, Theodor. W. *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. C. Lenhardt. Ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann. London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

³ My idea of a sedimented jazz repository depends on an agglomerative view of the music. It differs from that of Wynton Marsalis, who has advanced the idea that jazz is "America's classical music." According to Lee B. Brown, Marsalis basis his characterization of jazz in part on the idea that "It is the deepest expression of our American roots" (165), and is specifically defined as "African-American music, because

our American struggles about race are definitive of us as a people” (164). Brown argues against claiming the label “classical” for jazz, suggesting that it comes with ties to institutionalism, elitism, and conservatism that are difficult to countenance. Unlike Marsalis, Brown also refuses to see jazz as an expression solely of black culture. Although the point of Brown’s argument is not to state a counter-thesis to Marsalis’s jazz-as-classical notion, he does suggest jazz as a “plurality of competing paradigms into which jazz has fragmented” (167) and sees great worth in the “seething funkiness and unbuttoned vitality of Vine Street in Kansas City around 1937” (169). In other words, Brown sees jazz as an African-American genre, but one that is inclusive, vital, expanding, and street-wise. Brown, Lee B. “Jazz: America’s Classical Music?” *Philosophy and Literature* 26: (2002), 157-172.

⁴ By “cultural saturation” I am referring to the history of jazz. In its development as a musical genre, jazz agglomerates the stylistic elements and content from its predecessors and its influences, including the blues, ragtime, spirituals, slave songs, African drumming, and European march music. *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*. Ed. Bill Kirchner. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. For more information, see the first six chapters of this volume, which speak to African and European roots, ragtime, blues, and urban influences on jazz.

⁵ Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Double Consciousness and Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992.

⁶ My notion of a palimpsest in terms of translation is highly influenced by the concept of “palimpsest translations” advanced by Mihaela Moscaliuc in her dissertation, “Translating Eastern European Identities into the American National Narrative.” A palimpsestic translation is one which “asserts itself concomitantly as literary original and as translation, though the translating processes are etched in layers that rarely transpire in the foregrounded work” (52-3). Moscaliuc’s theory of palimpsestic translations identifies a particular situation of translation in which there is no original in a foreign language that underwrites a translation in English: that, the case of a writer versed in a native language choosing to compose directly in English-as-a-second-language. The “original,” then, is native cultural history and native-language semiotics and semantics, interlaced from the start with the English language in which a text is produced. See Section 4, “Immigrant Narratives as Palimpsestic Translations,” 50-80. Moscaliuc, Mihaela D. *Translating Eastern European Identities into the American National Narrative*. Digital Dissertations. ProQuest. Research Port, University of Maryland Lib. 2006.

⁷ My use of the phrase “time lag” comes from Homi Bhabha, who defines it variously a “slowing down” of “the linear, progressive time of modernity” (56) in “Freedom’s Basis.” *October* and “the temporal break in representation” (274) in “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern.” *Location of Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

⁸ Venuti admits that his translations regularly draw from both camps, but he foregrounds the division between potential audiences for his translations to identify the institutional resistance to “innovative materials and practices” which may be constrained by existing “institutional values” (250). These values may demand “translation strategies that minimize the foreignness of foreign writing by assimilating it to linguistic and discursive structures that are more acceptable to academic institutions” (250). Venuti, Lawrence. “Translating Derrida on Translation: Relevance and Disciplinary Resistance.” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16:2 (2003), 237-262. *Project Muse*. Research Port, University of Maryland Lib. 10 Jan 2006. <<http://muse.jhu.edu>>.

⁹ This idea that the detail in music is as important as the whole is from Adorno. Although he normally advocates structural listening which calls for listening to the part within its whole in order to make sense of it, in “Little Heresy” he recognizes that the detail might be overwhelmed in the totality or might lose its spontaneity if heard only as part of a whole. Therefore, here he notes both that “the detail can be understood as the representative of the individual, and the whole as that of the universal” (320) and also that “the way to understand the whole would have to lead up from the individual part, as well as down from the whole” (322). Adorno, Theodor W. “Little Heresy.” *Essays on Music*. Ed. Richard Leppert. Trans. Susan H. Gillespie. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002: 318-324.

¹⁰ Bhabha, Homi K. “Articulating the Archaic.” *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994: 175-198.

¹¹ Bhabha, Homi K. “Freedom’s Basis in the Indeterminate.” *October* 61 (Summer 1992), 46-57. Online access. 16 Jan 2006. <<http://links.jstor.org>>.

¹² Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Translation as Culture.” *Parallax* 6:1 (Jan 2000), 13-24. All further quotations in this paragraph are from this article.

¹³ Roberta Rubenstein's work is illustrative of this type of observation: "Jazz depends on a call-and-response pattern. Each of the ten sections of Morrison's novel concludes with an idea or phrase to which the opening words of the next section respond; additionally, like jazz improvisations on a blues theme, each 'response' opens into a new (narrative) direction." Rubenstein, Roberta. "Singing the blues/Reclaiming jazz: Toni Morrison and Cultural Mourning." *Mosaic* 31.2 (Jun 1998), 147-164. See also Brown, Caroline. "Golden Gray and the Talking Book: Identity as a Site of Artful Construction in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*." *African American Review* 36:4 (Winter 2002): 629- 43. Literature Online. 9 Sep. 2005.

¹⁴ Anne-Marie Paquet-Deyris is one of several critics who see improvisation in the narrative of Morrison's novel: "Figuring in the major fragments implies, then, figuring out the voice's shifts, just as a musical improvisation might shift to a different basic chord." Paquet-Deyris, Anne-Marie. "Toni Morrison's *Jazz* and the City." *African American Review* 35:2 (Summer 2001): 219-231. Literature Online. 9 Sep 2005. From the same database, see also Lesoinne, Veronique. "Answer jazz's call: Experiencing Toni Morrison's *Jazz*." *MELUS* 22:3 (Fall 1997): 151-166; and W. Lawrence Hogue who talks of Morrison's "jazz riffs on 'that Violet.'" Hogue, W.Lawrence. "Postmodernism, Traditional Cultural Forms, and the African American Narrative: Major's *Reflex*, Morrison's *Jazz*, and Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*." *Novel* 35: 2/3 (Spring 2002): 169+.

¹⁵ Eusebio Rodrigues argues that onomatopoeia, repetition, and punctuation mimic jazz sound. Rodrigues, Eusebio L. "Experiencing Jazz." *Modern Fiction Studies* 29: 3-4 (1993): 733-54.

¹⁶ Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955: 69-82.

¹⁷ Brodzki, Bella. "History, Cultural Memory, and the Tasks of Translation in T. Obinkaram Echewa's *I Saw the Sky Catch Fire*." *PMLA* 114:2 (1999), 207-220.

¹⁸ Venuti, *op.cit.*, 252.

¹⁹ Moscali quotes from Venuti's *Translator's Invisibility* in this passage.

²⁰ Richard Sudhalter distinguishes the jazz that becomes "synonymous in the American vocabulary with forced gaiety, abandon – and any music lively or loud enough to promote it" from "'genuine' jazz [that is] in fact a different, rather subtler, phenomenon [...] a coherent blend of improvisation, rhythmic intensity, emotional involvement, and personalization of style and execution" (149) that became known as "hot music." Sudhalter. "Hot Music in the 1920s: The 'Jazz Age,' Appearances and Realities." *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*. Ed. Bill Kirchner. Oxford UP, 2000. 148-162.

²¹ Kirchner, Bill. Introduction. *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*. Ed. Kirchner. Oxford UP, 2000. 3-6.

²² Although I claim that the novel is a translation of jazz culture as opposed to jazz pieces, per se, there are a few works named in the novel. For example, Duke Ellington's 1924's *Trombone Blues*.

²³ Miller, D.A. *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981.

²⁴ Morrison, Toni. *Jazz*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. All further references to the novel will be indicated by *J* and the page number. The gender of the narrator is undeclared in the novel; I find that I think of the narrator as a woman in part because of the attitude of self-deprecation evident in this statement.

²⁵ The narrator is self-denigrating in the depiction of Golden Gray: "I have been careless and stupid and it infuriates me to discover (again) how unreliable I am" (*J* 160). See full exposition of Golden Gray story below.

²⁶ Warhol, Robyn. "Neonarrative; or, How to Render the Unnarratable in Realist Fiction and Contemporary Film." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 220-231. The categories which Warhol identifies are the subnarratable, those events not warranting narration (the insignificant or banal); the supranarratable (discussed here); the antinarratable, those events that should not be told because of social prohibitions, and the paranarratable, those events that would not be told because the genre prescriptions preclude it. Thank you to Brian Richardson for bringing this source to my attention.

²⁷ Paul Gilroy documents the repetition of love and loss in blues and jazz that he suggest encodes a discourse of unspeakable suffering. *Black Atlantic* (complete).

²⁸ Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000, 73.

²⁹ Warhol, 222. Warhol provides Gerald Prince's definition of the term, "narratable" from his *Dictionary of Narratology*.

³⁰ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 218.

³¹ Said, with Nietzsche, notes the tautology of texts' self-sustaining power: they are "fundamentally (*sic*) facts of power," and "compel attention away from the world even as their beginning intention as texts, coupled with the inherent authoritarianism of the authorial authority." Said, Edward. "The World, the Text, and the Critic." *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983: 31-53.

³² Said writes that literary critics who work solely within the epistemologies of the text, ignoring literature's referentiality, risk falling into a self-fulfilling cycle of complicit power: "liberal consensus [results when] the formal, restricted analysis of literary-aesthetic works validates the culture, the culture validates the humanist, the humanist the critic, and the whole enterprise the State" (175). Said. "Reflections on American 'Left' Literary Criticism." *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983: 158-177

³³ Said, "World, Text, and Critic," 46.

³⁴ See, for example, Richard Middleton, who posits a continuum between ideal types of structure, the circular "monad" and the linear "infinite set," and then positions music towards the monadic "extreme of total sameness" and language towards the narrative "extreme of total differentiation" in his essay, "Play it again Sam': Some notes on the productivity of repetition in popular music." *Popular Music* 3 (1983): 235-270.

³⁵ D.A. Miller suggests: "What defines a nonnarratable element is its incapacity to generate a story. Properly or intrinsically, it has no narrative future – unless of course, its nonnarratable status is undermined (by happiness destroyed, an incorrect solution, a choice that must be remade)" (5). Miller. *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981.

³⁶ Belton, Don. "Talking Blues: Magic, Music, and Form in Jazz." MLA Convention. 28 Dec. 2005. Washington, DC.

³⁷ Callendar, Christine. *Education for Empowerment: The Practice and Philosophies of Black Teachers*. Trentham Books, 1997. Google Books. 19 Mar 2007. <http://books.google.com/books?isbn=1858560721>>.

Callendar notes that this paralinguistic exclamation is likely an African habit of language that continued into the new world because it was an easily hidden gesture, but readily understood in context by African-American or African-Caribbean communities. Sucking teeth might express disdain for self or frustration towards others (92-93).

³⁸ Miller writes that "Gossip offers a typically blinded form of [...] busy quiescence. [...] The opposition between someone else's story and its [gossip's] own discourse works to neutralize its activity, staged as mere observation" (123-4).

³⁹ Kernfeld writes that timbre, which is the quality of music that he defines as "personal sound," is illustrated superbly by Louis Armstrong's voice, in "the outpouring of an irresistibly joyful private language:" scat. (167).

⁴⁰ Romagnolo, Catherine. "Circularity and Postmodern Narrative Beginnings in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." International Conference on Narrative. 15 Mar 2007. Washington, DC: Georgetown University.

⁴¹ See for example, Wolfgang Iser's dialectic between background and foreground, where the background must contain the familiar to facilitate the reader's ability to interpret the unfamiliar in the foreground (92-99). Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. More recently, consider the importance of repetition to the image of "Signifying Monkey" posed by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.: "he [the signifying monkey] who dwells at the margins of discourse, every punning, ever troping, ever embodying the ambiguities of language – is our trope for repetition and revision, indeed, is our trope of chiasmus itself, repeating and simultaneously reversing in one deft, discursive act" (686). Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "The 'Blackness of Blackness': A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey." *Critical Inquiry* 9: 4 (Jun 1983): 685-723.

⁴² Edward Said has already, famously, posed counterpoint as the underpinnings of a methodology for contrapuntal reading, in which previously overlooked presences in Romantic and Victorian era texts may be read as critical to the assumptions sustaining the economic and social conditions of a novelistic, operatic, and other fictionalized worlds. Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage (Random House), 1994. See, for example, page 51.

⁴³ Miller, J. Hillis. "Narrative." *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. 2nd Ed. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Orig. 1990, 66-79.

⁴⁴ The website, "Race Riot at East St Louis – 1917," reproducing material by John Cobb and Elliott Rudwick, report that "the newspapers said that over 200 people had been killed, but the official count was 39 Negroes and nine whites." The unofficial count for Negro deaths is estimated to be higher "because it can be presume that some of the bodies were never found."

<http://www.eslarp.uiuc.edu/ibex/archive/nunes/esl%20history/race_riot.htm>. (16 Jan 2006). James Patrick writes in "The Horror of East St. Louis Massacre" (2 Feb 2000): "It's estimated that from 40 to 150 African Americans were killed and that 6,000 African Americans were driven from their homes, that were indiscriminately burned. All the impartial witnesses agree that the police were indifferent or encouraged the barbarities, and that the major part of the Illinois National Guard was indifferent or inactive."

<<http://www.exodusnews.com/HISTORY/History010.htm>>. (16 Jan 2006).

⁴⁵ Barry Kernfeld details the "fake-book" notational system: Fake books were used to notate in "a shorthand version [...] popular or jazz tune(s). [...] the chord symbols are notoriously inaccurate (200). He continues, "Fake-book notation exists for the sake of performance, not of analysis. Without any cues from the notation, an instrumentalist is expected to learn how to realize individual chords in a way that brings harmonic continuity to the whole"(202). Kernfeld. *What to Listen for In Jazz*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1995.

⁴⁶ Miller spells out this "whole course" as "the affirmation and reinforcement, even the creation, of the most basic assumptions of a culture about human existence, about time, destiny, selfhood, where we come from, what we ought to do while we are here, where we go" (71).

⁴⁷ Said summarizes this "course" in the following shorthand: "the sexual relations between men and women give rise to matrimony, the institution of matrimony gives rise to cities, the struggle of plebeians gives rise to laws; the people in conflict with laws give rise to tyranny; and tyranny leads finally to capitulation to foreign powers. Out of this last debasement a new cycle will begin, arising out of man's absolute degeneration in the wilderness" (112). Said, Edward. "On Repetition." *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983: 111-125.

⁴⁸ Snead, James A. "On Repetition in Black Culture." *Black American Literature Forum* 15:4 (Winter 1981): 146-154. All quotations from this article are from page 150.

⁴⁹ Shapiro, Marianne. "Repetition." *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Ed. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan. New York: MJF Books, 1993: 1035-1037.

⁵⁰ Middleton, Richard. "'Play It Again Sam': Some Notes on the Productivity of Repetition in Popular Music." *Popular Music* 3 (1983): 235-270.

⁵¹ Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh summarize in their Introduction the position of James Snead regarding repetition in black culture given in his essay "Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture," cited above.

⁵² Stokes, Martin. "Voices and Places: History, Repetition and the Musical Imagination." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 3, 673-691. Stokes writes: "Whilst music is built on repetition (from the smallest details of the musical phrase to the wider experiences of 'tradition' and 'repertory'), it is also built on a paradox: that what is repeated can never be exactly the same" (687).

⁵³ Mihály Szegedy-Maszák identifies two types of repetition, the polysemantic and the redundant. In the first version, "the same constituent part is involved in a new relationship [thus ...] repetition renders variation possible" (42). Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály. "Forms of Repetition in Music and Literature." *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 32 (1983): 39-49.

⁵⁴ Middleton identifies two types of variation as "musematic" and "discursive." The former repeats morpheme-size units often continuing without variation throughout an entire piece. The latter repeats longer clause-size units, varying each time by volume, speed of notes, quantity of notes, etc. See page 238 of the article referenced in footnote 37.

⁵⁵ The novel is not explicit on this point; Alice loses her husband. That Alice murders him is one possible reading. See *Jazz*, page 86.

⁵⁶ With apologies to Three Dog Night. The first verse of the lyrics to the song, "One," reads: "One is the loneliest number you'll ever do / Two can be as bad as one / It's the loneliest number since the number one." *Three Dog Night* Webpage. Online access 17 Jan 2006. <http://www.threedognight.com/l_one.html>.

⁵⁷ Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1972.

⁵⁸ Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. Editor's Introduction: "Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes." *Race, Writing and Difference*. Ed. Gates. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 1-20. Gates suggests that race has become a dangerously fixed metaphor for difference: "the term 'race' has both described and *inscribed* differences of language, belief system, artistic tradition, and gene pool, as well as all sorts of supposedly natural attributes such as rhythm, athletic ability, cerebration, usury, fidelity, and so forth. The relation between 'racial character' and these sorts of characteristics has been inscribed through

tropes of race, lending the sanction of God, biology, or the natural order to even presumably unbiased descriptions of cultural tendencies and differences” (5). Morrison interrogates the fixed nature of the trope, suggesting that “race” might, at least in conditions of hybridity, be a matter open to choice.

⁵⁹ O’Reilly, Andrea. *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004. See pages 5-6 and 170.

⁶⁰ This is the knowledge– self-knowledge and sensitivity (rather than numbness) – that Violet obtains in wielding the razor against Dorcas.

⁶¹ Ronald Bogue notes that Deleuze and Guattari categorize refrains as that part of music that territorializes. Refrains are equated with closed systems, such as “ancient Greek modes or the ‘hundred rhythms of the Hindu *deçi-tâles*” (16). They extend the idea of territorialization from bird songs as territory markers to “any kind of rhythmic pattern that stakes out territory” (17); they include experiential repetitions with artistic ones. Bogue. *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

⁶² Gilroy. *The Black Atlantic*. See Gilroy’s redefinition of the term “tradition” (198-199), including his assertion that traditions continue to develop through “a two-way traffic between African cultural forms and the political cultures of diaspora blacks over a long period” (199).

⁶³ Beale, Charles. “Jazz Education.” *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*. Ed. Bill Kirchner. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

⁶⁴ Beale notes that transcriptions, that is, notations of live performances, for Louis Armstrong solos were published in 1927.

⁶⁵ Kernfeld, Barry. *What to Listen for in Jazz*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1995.

⁶⁶ Gerard Genette, responding to criticisms from Barbara Herrnstein Smith, writes “I do accept the point that no narrative, including extrafictional and extraliterary narrative, oral or written, can restrict itself naturally and without special effort to a rigorously chronological order” (758). Genette, “Fictional Narrative, Factual Narrative.” Trans. Nitsa Ben-Ari and Brian Hale. *Poetics Today* 11:4 (1990), 755-774. This paragraph is indebted to Genette’s analytical terms for narrative discourse.

⁶⁷ The narrator of *Orlando* writes, “we leave a great blank here, which must be taken to indicate that the space is filled to repletion” with ordinary words between friends so “poetic” they “cannot be written down” (253). Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993. (Orig. 1928). Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* also contains several self-conscious transitions, such as the purposeful omission of chapter 24 in Book IV because of stylistic incommensurability (312) or the deliberately blank page that is saved from narrative “malice” in favor of space for reader’s imaginative painting (490). Sterne, Lawrence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. New York: Random House, no date.

⁶⁸ Saslaw, Janna. “Modulations (i).” *Grove Music Online* Accessed 18 Jan 2006.

<<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?music.18843>>.

⁶⁹ For example, comparing two relative keys, such as E♭ major and C minor, (that is, two keys, one major and one minor, having the same key signature of 3 flats), a G-B♭-D chord in E♭ major would have the label III, also known as a third chord, whereas, the same chord in C minor would have the label V, known as a dominant chord.

⁷⁰ Petterson, James. “Louis-René des Forêts: “Face à l’immémorable.” *MLN* 111 (1996): 747-759. JSTOR. 4 Feb 2006. <<http://www.jstor.org>>.

⁷¹ The novel is vague about whether Golden has joined Wild in her self-imposed exile, though this seems likely, or whether she has simply taken (or been given) his belongings.

⁷² Drowne, Kathleen. “House-Rent Parties.” *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*. Ed. Cary D. Wintz and Paul Finkelman. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Online Sample Entry. 19 Mar 2007.

www.routledge-ny.com/ref/harlem/parties.html. House Rent-Parties were dance parties thrown by occupants to raise money. Preparations included rolling up the rug and changing the lightbulbs to a “sensuous color.” Music was always the highlight of the evening, though food was always served.

⁷³ *Grove Online* notes other techniques of modulation, including “‘direct’ or ‘phrase’ modulation, in which there is a change of key between phrases without the use of any pivot [...] and] ‘sequential’ modulation, or straightforward restatement of a phrase in a different key.” Saslaw.

⁷⁴ Genette, 154.

⁷⁵ Bhabha, Homi. “How Newness Enters the World.” *Location of Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

⁷⁶ Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*.

⁷⁷ Bakhtin, Mikhail. *From Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 1963. Trans. C. Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov*. Ed. Pam Morris. London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1994.

⁷⁸ The narrator's account lacks punctuation, building in along passionate sentence that Violet ends, taking over the story as if she's so riled by the rhythm of the relating that she is sucked into the telling (notice the repeated words just before Violet leaps in with "I"): The narrator imagines the lovers go to a nightclub and "sit way back so they could hear the music wide and be in the dark at the same time, at one of those round tables with a slick black top and a tablecloth of pure white on it, drinking rough gin with that sweet red stuff in it so it looked like soda pop, which a girl like her ought to have ordered instead of liquor she could sip from the edge of a glass wider at the mouth than at its base, with a tiny stem like a flower in between while her hand, the one that wasn't holding the glass shaped like a flower, was under the table drumming out the rhythm on the inside of his thigh, his thigh, his thigh, thigh, thigh, and he bought her underwear with stitching done to look like rosebuds and violets, VIOLETS, don't you know, and she wore it for him thin as it was and too cold for a room that couldn't count on a radiator to work through the afternoon, *while I was where?* Sliding on ice trying to get to somebody's kitchen to do their hair? (*J* 95, italics added)

⁷⁹ Kundera, Milan. *The Art of the Novel*. Trans. Linda Asher. New York: Grove Press, 1986. All quotations come from pages 71-96 of the interview entitled "Dialogue on the Art of Composition" between Christian Salmon of *The Paris Review* and Kundera.

⁸⁰ Kaplan, Amy. Response to George Lipsitz's essay, "Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory and American Studies." *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline*. Ed. Lucy Maddox. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1999. 310-334.

⁸¹ Bhabha, Homi. *Location of Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994. Further references to this text are indicated by page number.

⁸² Gilroy. *Black Atlantic*

⁸³ Carol Stabile notes that "capitalist education is organized and has a purpose, [...] held in place by a number of [...] institutions and their ideologies" (209), which produces a "disciplined capitalist workforce" (208) meeting the needs of industry, maintaining "divisions between capitalists and workers" (209), and ensuring passive consumption "of products, information, and politics" (210). Stabile's solution is in doing, getting beyond the institution of the university in order to participate to find opportunities for collective, political struggle against racism, sexism, and homophobia (217-8). Stabile, Carol. "Pedagogues, Pedagogy, and Political Struggle." *Class Issues: Pedagogy, Cultural Studies, and the Public Sphere*. New York and London: New York UP, 1997: 208-220.

⁸⁴ Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. All remaining citations in this paragraph are from this critique and are indicated by page number in the text or the footnote.

⁸⁵ Gilroy quotes James Baldwin as saying, "Music is our witness, and our ally. The beat is the confession which recognizes, changes and conquers time. Then, history becomes a garment we can wear and share, and not a cloak in which to hide; and time becomes a friend." (*Black Atlantic*, 203).

⁸⁶ Gilroy cites Percy Mayfield's song, "The River's Invitation" as particularly illustrative of love and death intermixed in the blues. The lyrics depict a man sitting alone by a river, enticed by the solace of death by drowning. (205).

⁸⁷ Gilroy records Morrison's thoughts on *Beloved* as "outside most of the formal constricts of the novel." He suggests that Morrison questions the rightness and utility of the novel form "as a resource in the social processes that govern the remaking and conservation of historical memory" (218-9).

⁸⁸ DeMan, Paul.

⁸⁹ Benjamin, also Bhabha

Chapter 5:

¹ Colonial settlers traveling from Britain to New Zealand endured conditions that included measles, seasickness, birth of a child, heavy pitching of the ship, restricting of rations and water, beatings of passengers by crew, death. See for example, "Thomas Harrison – Extracts from the Log (1842)." *New Zealand Yesteryears: Shipboard Diaries*. National Archives, Wellington, NZ, 21 September 1976. 3 Mar 2007. <<http://www.yesteryears.co.nz/shipping/shipdiary.html>>.

² The *New Zealand in History* webpage records the founding of the settlement of Nelson in 1842. Given that Ada traveled to the colony in the mid-1850s, Nelson settlers had been consolidated for more than a decade. “The New Zealand Company.” *New Zealand in History*. 2000. 19 Oct 2006. <<http://history-nz.org/colonisation.html>>.

³ A lack of a clear designation of what constitutes “postcolonial literature,” we might begin to assemble a tentative definition from Neil Lazarus. Describing Booker prize winners since the 1980s, Lazarus notes they are “writers either living in, raised in, or with close connections to the former colonial world: Salman Rushdie, J.M. Coetzee (twice), Keri Hulme, Ben Okri, Michael Ondaatje, and Arundhati Roy” (14). Additionally, describing Prix Goncourt winners, he suggests postcolonial literature is “vibrant, audacious, and inspiriting contemporary writing [...] by such writers, whose work derives from and reflects upon the experiences of colonialism and post-coloniality, even if the intellectual and ideological formation of the writers cannot be separated from the metropolitan *studium*, the various ‘great traditions’” (14). Lazarus. Introduction: “Introducing Postcolonial Studies.” *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Lazarus. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2004: 1-16. Deepika Bahri adds to our understanding of the concept in her own focus on “a select hegemonic strand” of postcolonial literature, those “works that meet metropolitan standards” which “loosely typify[] a genre [Timothy] Brennan describes as cosmopolitan writing with a largely metropolitan context of reception” (2). Bahri. *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

⁴ Leonie Pihama writes: *The Piano* is a film that is very much linked to a colonial gaze. It neither criticizes nor challenges the stereotypes that have been paraded continuously as ‘the way we were.’ The representation of Maori as ‘uncivilized, lounging-around-doing-nothing natives’ merely affirms limited ideas of our people. We are left with the notions that Maori women cook and talk continually about sex and that Maori men carry pianos around in the bush, are irrational, and are unable to control their ‘native warlike instincts’” (130). Pihama. “Ebony and Ivory.” *Jane Campion’s The Piano*. Ed. Harriet Margolis. Cambridge UP: Cambridge Film Handbooks, 2000.

⁵ See, for example: Siegel, Marc. “Among the Lotus-Eaters.” *Nation Online* 17 Feb 2003. 6 Nov 2005. Academic Search Premier. Research Port University of Maryland Libraries.

⁶ There are many reviewers who make this connection, but see for example: Siegel (note 5 above). See also: Charles, Ron. “Situation Desperate – Send in the Pianist!” *Christian Science Monitor Online* 19 Sep 2002. 6 Nov 2005. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0910/p15s02-bogn.html>>.

⁷ In addition to a comparison to Conrad, Justin Wintle notes: “the dénouement [...] touches on the great game played out in Asia between Britain and Russia.” Wintle. “Into the Heart of Imperial Darkness in Burma.” *The Independent Online* 29 Jan 2003. 6 Nov 2005. <<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk>>.

⁸ Ripin, Edwin M. and Stewart Pollens. “Pianoforte, §I: History of the Instrument.” *Grove Music Online*. 22 Sep 2005. <<http://www.grovemusic.com/data/articles/music/2/216/21631.1.1>>. All further references to this source will be indicated in the text by *GPI* and the section number.

⁹ The foot pedal was an innovation that allowed pianists to activate a continuous tone “at will [even] after the fingers had left the keys” (*GPI.1*) that provided resonant background to the running melody. This development was quite different from the sharp, singular harpsichord tones and even those made on earlier versions of the piano.

¹⁰ Knight, Christine. “Ada’s Piano Playing in Jane Campion’s *The Piano*.” *Australian Feminist Studies* 21:49 (Mar) 2006, 23-34.

¹¹ Weliver, Phyllis. *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900*. Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000. This section about musical environments for Victorian women is indebted to Weliver’s fine study. Further references are indicated in the text by the abbreviation *WM* and the page number.

¹² Weliver cites Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s novel, *Aurora Floyd*, in which “Aurora’s guest, Mrs Lofthouse, is mistaken for a governess by the footman because ‘she plays too well for a real lady’” (36).

¹³ Joyce, James. “The Dead.” *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. vol. 2 Ed. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2000.

¹⁴ Robinson, J. Bradford. “Pianoforte, §II, 2: Piano Playing: Romantic Period.” *Grove Music Online*. 12 Oct 2006. <<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music21631.2.2>>.

¹⁵ The *Grove* cited above notes Chopin's arpeggio (broken chord) etudes included larger-than-octave reach to 10ths and 11ths; additionally "his study in octaves, op 25 no. 10, demands the participation [...] of the entire arm."

¹⁶ *Grove Online* (see note 15) notes that these quotations are from Chopin: the first is his "conservative" advice to his young niece, Luwika; the second is from a conservative piano teacher, Kalkbrenner, whom Chopin is critiquing in his methodology for more individualist style.

¹⁷ Weliver writes: "For upwardly mobile families, magazine articles were key indicators of genteel ideals and behavior within the home. In other words, publishers sent messages directly or indirectly to their readership regarding music, and readers learned through conscious or unconscious emulation of stories and non-fiction articles" (32).

¹⁸ An example from the United States is *Godey's Lady's Book*, which printed lists nearly every month of suitable new collections for women. An online reproduction of the Philadelphia magazine for February 1850 lists, for piano, a *Caprice pour le piano*, two polkas, a march, and a waltz, and an equal mix of polkas, waltzes, and "sweet songs" for voice. "New Music." *Godey's Lady's Book*. February 1850. 19 Oct 2006. <<http://www.history.rochester.edu/godeys/02-50/nm.htm>>.

¹⁹ Representations of musical performance rarely divulge the disciplinary parameters. Chang-rae Lee's *A Gesture Life*, discussed in the conclusion, is one of the few exceptions.

²⁰ A musical interval is the "difference between two musical pitches" measured either "diatonically, that is in terms of the major or minor scale" or "acoustically, particularly in terms of 'cents', divisions of the semitone into 100 equal parts and the octave into 1200 equal parts" (349). *The New Everyman Dictionary of Music*. 6th ed. Rev. Ed. David Cummings. Orig. Ed. Eric Blom. London: J.M. Dent, 1988. (Orig. 1958). The piano tuner's work involves distinguishing the finer distinctions of the semitones into cents.

²¹ Rasch, Rudolf. "Tuning and Temperament." *The Cambridge History of Western Musical Theory*. Ed. Thomas Christensen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 193-222.

²² Isacoff, Stuart. *Temperament: How Music Became a Battleground for the Great Minds of Western Civilization*. New York: Random House, 2001. See pages 29-31.

²³ Formulated in the Summary. Cohen, H. Floris. "Simon Stevin's Equal Division of the Octave." *Annals of Science* 44 (1987), 471-488. 18 Aug 2004.

²⁴ Isacoff, *op.cit.*, 40.

²⁵ Cohen, 471.

²⁶ Unlike tuning a violin which may be accomplished by the instrumentalist, tuning a piano to equal temperament requires the services and expertise of a piano tuner who works to adjust the sound of each tone on the piano in relation to the other pitches playable on the keyboard. Equal temperament requires finely honed hearing, such that the tuner must distinguish micro-tonal differences between perfect pitches (numerically simple) and the out-of-tuneness (intervals defined in fractions) that the human ear will still accept as harmonious. In contrast to the tuner, we as laypersons listen to music every day tuned to equal temperament with its system of planned inharmonicity, without hearing anything out of the ordinary. Anita Sullivan suggests in *The Seventh Dragon*, her portrayal of the piano tuner's work, that "[t]he tuner with her trained ear works in a very narrow dimension indeed, a place most people do not know exists" (62). The piano tuner starts with pure fifths and fourths and then un-tunes them, distorts their pitches in order to achieve the equi-distances that maintain the purity of the octave. This process of un-tuning requires the piano tuner to hear, not only the 3:2 ratio of the perfect fifth, but also a small distortion equal to about 1/3 of one percent, that is a ratio of 2.996:2. Sullivan, Anita. *The Seventh Dragon: The Riddle of Equal Temperament*. Lake Oswego, OR: Metamorphosis Press, 1985.

²⁷ Adorno writes: "deconcentrated listening makes the perception of a whole impossible. All that is realized is what the spotlight falls on – striking melodic intervals, unsettling modulations, *intentional or unintentional mistakes*, or whatever condenses itself into a formula by an especially intimate merging of melody and text" (305, emphasis added). Adorno, Theodor W. "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." *Essays on Music*. Introduction and Commentary Richard Leppert. New Trans. Susan H. Gillespie. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002. 288-317.

²⁸ There are many references which document a chaotic process of land acquisition by British emigrants enticed to New Zealand by the promise of abundant pastoral land. See for example: Stenhouse, John.

“Churches, State and the New Zealand Wars: 1860-1872.” *Journal of Law and Religion* 13: 2 (1998 - 1999), 483-507. *Jstor*. Research Port University of Maryland. 22 Mar 2007. <<http://links.jstor.org>>.

²⁹ Lipari, Lisbeth. “Listening for the Other: Ethical Implications of the Buber-Levinas Encounter.” *Communications Theory* 14:2 (2004), 122-141.

³⁰ See an extended discussion of this poem in Chapter 3, pages 10-11.

³¹ The entire quotation, of which I cite only a portion above, comes from Barthes’ examination of psychoanalytic listening: “Listening to the voice inaugurates the relation to the Other: the voice by which we recognized others (like writing on an envelope) indicates to us their way of being, their joy or their pain, their condition; it bears an image of their body and, beyond, a whole psychology (as when we speak of a warm voice, a white voice, etc.) (254-5). Barthes, Roland. “Listening.” *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1985. 245-260.

³² Kallberg, Jeffrey. *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre*. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1996.

³³ According to Kallberg, Clara Schumann suffered “improvements” to her compositions made by her famous husband, Robert; Fanny Hensel did not publish an accomplished nocturne at all because her famous brother, Felix, objected. See particularly pages 49-61.

³⁴ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. See pages 383-4.

³⁵ Roland Barthes identifies what he calls an “alert” listening: “the appropriation of space is also a matter of sound: domestic space, that of the house, the apartment [...] is a space of familiar, *recognized* noises whose ensemble forms a kind of household symphony: differentiated slamming of doors, raised voices, kitchen noises, gurgle of pipes, murmurs from outdoors” (246).

³⁶ Campion, Jane. *The Piano*. Screenplay. New York: Hyperion, 1993. All further references to the screenplay will be indicated in the text by *PS* and the page number.

³⁷ Harvey Greenberg, an MD as well as film critic, cites medical literature about mutism. The “electively mute” child is “characterized as symbiotically bound to a powerfully possessive adult; as alternately clinging and shy, or intensely stubborn and negativistic; as terribly fearful of the sound of its own voice; as traumatized by abuse or non-abusive injury; as fighting intense family scapegoating with passive-aggressive silence.” He continues, making a specific connection to Ada’s character, that the “syndrome is thought by some to represent a strategy of active manipulation and control, rather than merely being a symptom of autistic withdrawal.” Greenberg. “The Piano.” Movie Review. *Film Quarterly* 47:3 (1994). 21 Oct 2006. <<http://course1.winona.edu/pjohnson/h140/greenberg.htm>>.

³⁸ Knight writes that Ada’s “muteness indicates her rebellion, in Lacanian terms, against the Law of the Father” (30). See also Jaime Bihlmeyer, who argues that “Ada’s nonvocal state deconstructs the dominance of spoken language in the Symbolic order and obliquely references the unspeakable nature of the repressed m/Other” (70). Bihlmeyer. “The (Un)Speakable FEMININITY in Mainstream Movies: Jane Campion’s *The Piano*.” *Cinema Journal* 44:2 (2005), 68-88. In a related, but slightly more nuanced argument, Mary M. Dalton and Kirsten James Fatzinger suggest that “Ada chooses silence from age six, not to escape the oppression of her culture oppression but to defy it” (34). Dalton and Fatzinger. “Choosing Silence: Defiance and Resistance Without Voice in Jane Campion’s *The Piano*.” *Women and Language* 26:2 (2003), 34-39.

³⁹ See scene 100 of the screenplay in which Flora explains to Stewart another compulsive incident in her mother’s life during Ada’s loud and strong playing, seemingly unconsciously in her sleep. (*PS* 87-88).

⁴⁰ Gorbman, Claudia. “Music in *The Piano*.” *Jane Campion’s The Piano*. Ed. Harriet Margolis. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2000: 42-58.

⁴¹ Lipari, 138.

⁴² Smith, Barbara Hernstein. “Contingencies of Value.” *Critical Inquiry* 10:1 (1983, 1-35. *JSTOR*. Research Port University of Maryland. 9 Oct 2006. <<http://links.jstor.org>>. My discussion regarding personal and market economies is indebted to Hernstein Smith’s argument.

⁴³ Gorbman, Claudia. “Music in *The Piano*.” *Jane Campion’s The Piano*. Ed. Harriet Margolis. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. 42-58.

⁴⁴ Metge, A. Joan. “Marriage in Modern Maori Society.” *Man* 57 (1957), 166-170.

⁴⁵ Leonie Pihama, for one, discounts the depiction of Baines as somehow in kinship with the Maori. She suggest the tattoo is an “appropriation [...] reminiscent of ‘Norman Mailer’s ‘white negro’”; she concedes

the tattoo “serves also as a means of constructing dualistic oppositions to the character of Stewart” (126). Pihama. “Ebony and Ivory: Constructions of Maori in *The Piano*.” *Jane Campion’s The Piano*. Ed. Harriet Margolis. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. 114-134.

⁴⁶ See for example “Questions and Answers about the Treaty of Waitangi.” *Maori Independence Site*. 03 26/07. <<http://aotearoa.wellington.nz/back/project.htm>>.

⁴⁷ O’Malley, Vincent. “Lad Deeds as Treaties: The New Zealand Experience.” Melbourne: 17th Annual Australian and New Zealand Law and History Society Conference, 1998. 26 Mar 2007. <<http://www.historyworks.co.nz/papers/OMalley-LandDeedsasTreaties.pdf>>.

⁴⁸ There are others besides the one’s discussed in this chapter; for example, Baines ups the ante in his bid for Ada’s love by returning the piano before the payments have all been made, that is, before he’s collected all the “visits” due according to the number of black keys.

⁴⁹ Stewart uses this phrase after his false-stop (p. 19) and after Stewart reopens the house windows, which he has boarded up in an effort to keep Ada home (p. 93).

⁵⁰ The fragment by Thomas Hood, British poet of the early nineteenth century, reads: “There is a silence where hath been no sound/There is a silence where no sound may be/In the cold grave, under the deep deep sea” (*PS* 123)

⁵¹ Mason, Daniel. *The Piano Tuner*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. All further references will be indicated in the text by *PT* and the page number.

⁵² Said, Edward. “Representing the Colonized: Anthropology’s Interlocutors.” *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. 293-316.

Chapter 6:

¹ I assert such a binary in the colonial situation based on its implicit existence in Gayatri Spivak’s notion of “soul-making” at the heart of the European civilizing mission: reading *Jane Eyre*, Spivak suggests that marriage and sexual reproduction are simply the local manifestation of the imperial project, in which the native, “not-yet-human Other” (122) might be pressed into the service of actualizing the European self. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1999.

² Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York, London: Penguin Putnam, 2000. (Orig. Great Britain: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1999). Further references to the novel will be indicated by *D* and the page number.

³ Adorno, Theodor. “Little Heresy.” *Essays on Music*. Selected, with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Richard Leppert. Trans. Susan H. Gillespie. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 318-324.

⁴ See Benjamin’s “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” *Illuminations*.

⁵ Johnson, Randal. Introduction: “Pierre Bourdieu on Art, Literatures and Culture.”

⁶ Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. See pages 215-237.

⁷ Barthes, Roland. “Grain of the Voice.” *Image, Music, Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill & Wang, 1977.

⁸ Bergeron, Katherine. Prologue: “Disciplining Music.” *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Ed. Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. 1-9.

⁹ Christensen, Thomas. Introduction. *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*. Ed. Christensen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 1-14.

¹⁰ Bergeron, 1-2.

¹¹ Foucault suggests that discipline exacts regularized behaviors in five ways: by comparing, differentiating, hierarchizing, homogenizing, and excluding. That is, penalties track insufficiency in performance, value individuals hierarchically according to their ability to play the game, and demand conformity while distinguishing those that excel and excluding those who fail (See p 193-197). Foucault, Michel. “The Means of Correct Training.” *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, 1984. 188-205.

¹² As illustrated in the previous chapter, this intonation has been especially constrained by fixed-pitch instruments, most notably the piano and its system of equal temperament, which calls for an absolute equal division of the octave into twelve parts. These twelve intervals, though equal, are not pure given the incommensurability of the most important intervals, the octaves with the second most dominant intervals, the fifths.

¹³ Bergeron, 4-5.

¹⁴ Purely sounding intervals are often called “beatless” because perfect intervals have synchronizing sound waves. When interval-notes are not exact, their asynchronicity can be detected by attentive listeners.

¹⁵ Seth, Vikram. *An Equal Music*. New York: Vintage: 2000. All further references to the novel will be indicated by *EM* and the page number.

¹⁶ There does not seem to be a real “Tononi” violin maker. It is nominally germane to my argument of Vienna’s oppressive power that Vivaldi, (1678-1741) hugely popular in his lifetime in his native Venice and throughout Italy, also fails in Vienna and dies there in poverty in 1741. From Blom, Eric. *The New Everyman Dictionary of Music*. Rev. Ed. David Cummings. New York: Grove, 1988. 814.

¹⁷ When I was explaining to a very fine musician with perfect pitch, Victoria Gau, this strategy that Michael adopts to avoid the canonic imperative of tonal hierarchy based in the tuning to perfect fifths on every violin, viola, and cello, she shuddered. The notion of placing her finger on the string and not hearing the “correct” tone was practically unthinkable and certainly not something, I got the impression, that she would willingly tackle.

¹⁸ Lee Morrissey writes in an introduction to the canon debates: “After World War II, liberation movements swept the globe: postcolonial, feminist, and civil rights. Each of them brought not only a literature, but also a criticism. Together, this literature and criticism tackled directly the assumptions of universality implicit in the idea of the Great Books that had come together over the preceding two centuries” (6). Morrissey.

Introduction: “The Canon Brawl.” *Debating the Canon: A Reader from Addison to Nafisi*. Ed. Lee Morrissey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 1-13.

¹⁹ Guillory, John. *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993. Guillory agrees with Laclau and Mouffe that the cultural is political, but suggests that social identity, even one based in the common experience of oppression, is insufficient explanation for canon formation.

²⁰ Guillory quotes Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in this phrase, see page 7.

²¹ See, for example, Marjorie Garber’s essay on “Greatness,” from *Symptoms of Culture* found in *Debating the Canon: A Reader from Addison to Nafisi*. Ed. Lee Morrissey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 263-170.

²² Bloom, Harold. “From ‘An Elegy for the Canon,’ *The Western Canon: The Books and the School of Ages* (1994).” *Debating the Canon: A Reader from Addison to Nafisi*. Ed. Lee Morrissey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 241-257.

²³ Bloom, 255.

²⁴ Garber continues: “the more anxious the government, the more pressure is placed upon the humanities to textualize and naturalize the category of the ‘great’” (270).

²⁵ Guillory, John. “From ‘Preface’ and ‘Canonical and Noncanonical: The Current Debate,’ in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993). *Debating the Canon: A Reader from Addison to Nafisi*. Ed. Lee Morrissey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 207-214.

²⁶ The term is employed by Philip V. Bohlman. Bohlman. Epilogue: “Musics and Canons.” *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Ed. Katherine Bergeron and Bohlman. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. 197-210.

²⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre. “Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception.” *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Johnson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. 215-237.

²⁸ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963. (Orig. in French *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris, François Maspero, 1961).

²⁹ Briefly, the etymology of “canon” develops from origins referring to a living plant (a tubular reed, a cane) and its properties (straight rod, ruler, standard), through secular application of the word to tubular weapons (i.e., cannons) and through Christian uses that recognized a body of standards and rules (i.e., canon), including a process of recognizing sainthood (i.e., canonization). Scholes, Robert. “from ‘A Flock of Cultures: A Trivial Proposal,’ *The Rise and Fall of English*. *Debating the Canon: A Reader from Addison to Nafisi*. Ed. Lee Morrissey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 279-287.

³⁰ William Weber suggests that early eighteenth-century England was a time of “unusually unstable context of ideas and politics” and also of a burgeoning publishing industry, producing “[c]anonic thinking [that] became more national in literature and more cosmopolitan in music” (492). Weber. “The Intellectual Origins of Musical Canon in Eighteenth-Century England.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*

47:3 (1994), 488-520. *Jstor*. Research Port, University of Maryland Lib. 27 Jan 2007.

<<http://www.jstor.org>>. Jim Samson observes that by mid-nineteenth century, the musical canon had become consolidated in the form of collected editions of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Schubert and other German Romanticists printed by the Leipzig printing house of Breitkopf & Härtel contributed to the structuring of an “integral link between canon formation and the “construction of national identities.” These compositions/composers were also presented as “representative of universal values, a paradox in tune with German classical art and the new philology.” Samson. “Canon (iii).” *Grove Music Online*. 27 Jan 2007.

<<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.40598>>.

³¹ Bruns, Gerald L. “Poethics: John Cage and Stanley Cavell at the Crossroads of Ethical Theory.” *John Cage: Composed in America*. Ed. Marjorie Perloff and Charles Junkerman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994. 206-225.

³² Nussbaum, Martha. *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.

³³ Levinas, Emmanuel. “Is Ontology Fundamental?” Trans. Peter Atterton. *Philosophy Today* 33:2 (1989): 121-129. (Orig. “L’Ontologie est-elle fondamentale?” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 56 (1951): 88-98. *ProQuest*. Research Port, University of Maryland Lib. 1 Jul 2005.

³⁴ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1999.

³⁵ Spivak, *Postcolonial Reason*, 383.

³⁶ Ray, Sangeeta. Untitled conference paper. *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s Influences: Past, Present, Future*. Modern Language Association Convention. Philadelphia, PA. December 28, 2006.

³⁷ Ray describes Spivak’s concept of soul-making as the project of the imperial mission that “seeks to make a subject of the colonized [...] by drawing attention to the very alterity of the colonized.”

³⁸ Ray, see note 37.

³⁹ Samson, Jim. “Canon (iii).” *Grove Music Online*. 14 January 2007.

<<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.40598>>. My discussion of the canon is indebted to Jim Samson article on the classical music canon and to the Hans-Martin Plesske article (see citation below) on Breitkopf and Härtel.

⁴⁰ Plesske, Hans-Martin. “Breitkopf & Härtel.” *Grove Music Online*. 14 January 2007.

<<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.03920>>. These collections focused largely on German composers, including Beethoven, Bach, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schumann, Schubert, Schütz, Berlioz, Schein, Liszt, Haydn and Wagner.

⁴¹ Even though there is a definite body of canonic works within the field of classical music, this subfield of the larger category of Western music is today losing its authority as the definitive model of excellence. Robert Fink dates the canonic period in which “classical” held the top position in musical hierarchy from the late nineteenth century to 1965 (141). Unlike the literary canon which has tended to become more reflective of its constituency, the Western classical music canon lacks social reflectiveness. That is, with the failure of modern “classics” to attract audiences, who found, for example, the twelve-tone row compositions of Schoenberg abrasive and unpleasant and the aliatory music of John Cage or Karl Stockhausen perplexing and annoying, the Romantic compositions continued well past its contemporaneity to be the most popular programming material. The twentieth century is the first period of music in which contemporary music is not heard in the concert halls. The result is a growing alienation between “classical” music concerts and their modern and postmodern audiences. Declining audience has meant that Western art music has become more and more isolated and irrelevant, prompting an unsought autonomy for its canonic compositions. Fink notes that “For the first time in a century, classical music has lost even its symbolic or ritualistic power to define hierarchies of taste within the larger culture” (139). He cites not only the rise of popular music to preeminence, notably in commercial shelf-space, but also he attributes classical music’s separation from its original purposes and venues, alienated in forms such as the “Disneyfied” version in the popular film, *Shine* or the self-help version in the notion of Mozart for the Mind. These efforts at popularization might be seen as attempts to close the gap between music and audience. Fink. “Elvis Everywhere: Musicology and Popular Music Studies at the Twilight of the Canon.” *American Music* 16: 2 (1998). 135-179. *JSTOR*. 14 January 2007. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0734-4392%28199822%2916%3A2%3C135%3AEEMAPM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>>.

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- ⁴² In part, the canonization of German music is attributable to the German music publishing firm of Breitkopf and Hartel deliberately constructed a canon to promote its own commercial interests.
- ⁴³ “London.” *Grove Music Online*. ed. L. Macy. 4 Jan. 2005. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>
- ⁴⁴ Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert constitute the majority of what would be the First Viennese School, though it has never been formally named such, but only implied with the formal naming of the Second Viennese School, which does “officially” include Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern.
- ⁴⁵ Handel, though born in Vienna, is claimed by the English as a national composer given that he emigrated to London in 1712 at the age of 27. Blom, Eric. *The New Everyman Dictionary of Music*. 6th ed. Rev. and Ed. David Cummings. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1988.
- ⁴⁶ Vaughan Williams himself is inextricably associated with England. Not only was he born in England and lived the majority of his life in London, he also was a collector of English folk songs and employed them extensively in his compositions. The text employs the most English of English composers as Michael’s inspiration.
- ⁴⁷ Purdy, Jedediah. “Liberal Empire: Assessing the Arguments.” *Ethics and International Affairs* 17: 2 (2003). Feb 2004. Research Port. 21 Feb 2007. <http://www.ciaonet.org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/olj/cceia/cceia_2003_2g.html#asterisk>. Purdy concludes his review article of imperial systems with the following proviso: “Imperial undertakings, then, are not amoral but supremely morally ambitious, and a large part of their hazard consists precisely in their moral quality. They are, in salient respects, attempts to break out of the constraints our period has accepted as part of its freedom, which include a fair amount of hypocrisy and frustration, and the cynicism that accompanies those. Although their supporters present them as square-on confrontations with the worst facts about human nature and world politics, imperial policies are also evasions of other obdurate facts about the dangers of power and the limits of politics. As exceptions they are hazardous. As governing principles, they have potential for disaster.”
- ⁴⁸ Quoted from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* by Joseph G. Kronick. Kronick. “Writing American: Between Canon and Literature.” *The New Centennial Review* 1:3 (2001) 37-66. Research Port. 21 Feb 2007. <http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/journals/new_centennial_review>.
- ⁴⁹ Said, Edward W. “Reflections on Exile.” *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. 173-186.
- ⁵⁰ The demands on Helen, the violist, are much more severe. *The Art of Fugue* calls for her lower string to be tuned down not just an interval of a second (as Michael is doing), but down an interval of a fourth. Her colleague, an instrument maker, thinks she’s crazy to try. In his opinion, even a “major third [would be] impossible [...]. Even if you could get a sound out it, it would be a flabby sort of sound. A fourth – but why would anyone in their right mind ever want to tune a viola down a fourth?? (EM 131).
- ⁵¹ In another sign of its status as *alter ego*, Michael credits the Tononi with a capacity for cognition.
- ⁵² Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia UP, 2005.
- ⁵³ As indicated above in the discussion of the Seth novel, little English music of the Romantic (or any) period has made it into the European canon, whereas English literature holds its own in the canon. For purposes of the discussion of the Coetzee novel, I will be using the term “canon” to indicate European works from various countries despite the particular weaknesses or strengths in category and genre. I am interested in the influence of canonic European artworks, generally.
- ⁵⁴ Dominic Head makes the comparison between the writings of Nadine Gordimer and those of Coetzee: “Where, for example, Nadine Gordimer has immediate recourse to Frantz Fanon, a modern anti-colonial thinker, to delineate the process of decolonization, Coetzee sometimes looks back to Hegel” (6). Head, Dominic. *J.M. Coetzee*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.
- ⁵⁵ Head notes that Coetzee and his family spoke English at home, while speaking Afrikaans only outside the home(1). The colonial history of South Africa records English education at the university level from the period of 1829 when the first multi-racial institution of higher learning was established in what is now Cape Town. Additionally, it might be noted that British recognition of a right for Afrikaners to establish their own education system resulted in a “competing” university system under the auspices of the Dutch Reformed Church. The National Party was able to exploit the fear of racial integration in the school systems; with their election win in 1948, all high schools taught both English and Afrikaans. See *Library of Congress: Country Studies: South Africa*. 2 Mar 2007. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/zatoc.html>>.

⁵⁶ Head, 13.

⁵⁷ Coetzee is quoted in Head, 12.

⁵⁸ The master being mastered evokes Hegel. As Head writes: “Coetzee has drawn especially on Hegel’s conception of the master/slave or lord/bondsman relationship as mutually damaging, but also as an inverse dependency which in some measure authenticates the bondsman rather than the lord” (6).

⁵⁹ The novel underscores David’s subsumption in the canon by this use of a reference that conjures Shakespeare’s references in his sonnets to a Dark Lady. David’s re-naming of Melanie is complimented by quoting Shakespeare’s sonnets, as a strategy of seduction with her. Thanks to Sangeeta Ray for bringing this resonance to my attention.

⁶⁰ Rosemary Nagy provides an excellent account of the ways in which the “competing narratives of reconciliation and responsibility: played out before hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa. Nagy asserts that Coetzee “relentlessly captures the ambiguities of assigning and taking responsibility, and the limits of seeking moral transformation” (709). She suggests that “the commission’s language [...] of ‘ritualised platitudes’ and ‘genuine remorse’ [...] remind[s] of David, who is caught between his principled stance against confession and his inability to grapple satisfactorily with his moral shortcomings” (716). The TRC witnessed many “confessions” that elided personal responsibility, including, on the one hand, from leaders who identified apartheid as “the *context* of crime, rather than the crime itself” (714) and recognized the horrific effects of apartheid in terms of displacement, shame, humiliation of racial discrimination without acknowledging authoritative responsibility; and, on the other hand, from victims whose individual sufferings of torture were conflated with “the image of a wounded nation [thus] homogenis[ing] pain” (718). Nagy. “The Ambiguities of Reconciliation and Responsibility in South Africa.” *Political Studies* 52 (2004), 709-727. Research Port. 3 Apr 2004. <<http://www.researchport.umd.edu>>.

⁶¹ De Klerk is quoted in Nagy, 716.

⁶² Hanssen, Beatrice. “Ethics of the Other.” *The Turn to Ethics*. Ed. Marjorie Garber, Beatrice Hanssen and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. New York: Routledge, 2000. 127-179.

⁶³ The lines from Coleridge speak of the friendship between the lovers of Christabel: “But never either found another/To free the hollow heart from paining --/They stood aloof, the scars remaining,/Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;/A dreary sea now flows between; --/But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,/Shall wholly do away, I ween,/The marks of that which once hath been” (lines 408-426). Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. “Christabel.” *The Complete Poetical Works*. London: Clarendon Press, 1912. *Literature Online*. 16 Feb 2007. <http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion-us&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:po:Z300317143:3>.

⁶⁴ The first violinist, Piers, makes the connection: ““But I associate you with the “Art of Fugue”, Michael. So do we all”” (*EM* 374). Bach’s *Art of Fugue* retains even today an air of mystery. The final fugue, *Contrapunctus 14*, is unfinished. Some writers, like Timothy A. Smith, attribute the incompleteness not to the composer, but to “carelessness on the part of the executors.” Others, like Christoph Wolff, believe the 14th contrapunctus was finished, but lost. And finally others, such as Helmut Walcha, Lionel Rogg, and Michael Ferguson, believe that Bach left the work in an “‘unfinished’ form as a musical puzzle – an invitation to other composers to either guess his intentions or come up with their own solutions” (Pipedreams). See Smith. “Introduction to the *Art of Fugue*.” *Sojourn*. 29 Jan 2007. <<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~tas3.introaof.html>>; “The Art of Fugue: Did Bach Really Leave Art of Fugue Unfinished.” *Pipedreams*. 16 Feb 2007.

<<http://pipedreams.publicradio.org/articles/artoffugue/unfinished.shtml>>, and Stone, John. “On Bach’s Art of the Fugue.” *Kunst der Fuge*. 29 Jan 2007. <<http://www.kunsterfuge.com/theory/stone/artfugue.htm>>.

⁶⁵ Fanon advocates the development of new national culture through handicrafts, pottery, oral and literary arts, which both precede political change and become its expression. See his “On National Culture” in *Wretched of the Earth*, particularly page 241-248.

⁶⁶ Aristotle. “Poetics.” *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*. Intro. Edward P.J. Corbett. New York: Modern Library, 1984.

⁶⁷ Bruce M S Campbell writes that William Langland, author of *A Vision of Piers Plowman*, employs this phrase to describe a medieval rural life of men leading according to their given circumstances, ““the meaner and the richer, working and wandering, as the world asks of them”” (60), at the very moment with the Black Plague will sweep England and Wales, causing irrevocable changes in lives and practices. Campbell.

“A Fair Field Once Full of Folk: Agrarian Change in an Era of Population Decline, 1348-1500.” *Agrarian Historical Review* 41:1 (xxxx), 60-70. 17 Feb 2007. <www.bahs.org.uk/41n1a5.pdf>.

⁶⁸ The Norton Anthology observes: “Byron was fated to discover that the literary alter egos he had created could in turn exert power over him: his social disgrace following the breakup of his marriage in 1816 was declared by Walter Scott to be a consequence of how the poet had ‘Childe Harolded himself, and outlawed himself, into too great a resemblance with the pictures of his imagination.’” *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Age*. 12 Feb 2007.

<http://www2.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/topic_5/>.

⁶⁹ George Grosz is a German Expressionist painter; his work was among that condemned as “degenerate” by Hitler’s fascist government.

⁷⁰ David’s paraphrase of Adam Smith begins: “Too many people, too few things. What there is must go into circulation, so that everyone can have a chance to be happy for a day” (D 98).

⁷¹ In defense of his pursuit of women, David quotes from Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: “Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires” (D 69).

⁷² Fred Alford writes an excellent article explaining Levinas’ “relationship without relation,” which holds that maintaining distance between I and Other, holding the other as infinitely other, ensures me that there is a “good existing beyond being” (33). In turn, in the Other, I have an exit beyond mere endless existence. Alford, C. Fred. “Emmanuel Levinas and Iris Murdoch: Ethics as Exit?” *Philosophy and Literature* 26 (2002): 24-42. Research Port. 1 Jul 2005. <www.researchport.umd.edu>.

⁷³ Said, Edward. “Traveling Theory.” *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983. 226-247. Specifically, he writes: “Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas, and whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale appropriation, the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity” (226).

⁷⁴ Said. “Traveling Theory,” 242.

⁷⁵ Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Said refers to “the way in which structures of location and geographical reference appear in the cultural languages of literature, history, or ethnography, sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted, across several individual works that are not otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology of ‘empire’” (52).

⁷⁶ Although Head’s literary biography is completed before the publication of *Disgrace*, the observation holds, justified in part by the inclusion of this hybrid child in the novel. Head, 70. Head makes his observation based on interview between David Attwell and Coetzee in 1992 (published in a volume entitled *Doubling the Point*) in which Coetzee identifies himself as part of a group of South Africans, “whose native tongue, the tongue they have been born to, is English. And as the pool has no discernible *ethnos*, so one day I hope it will have no predominant color, as more ‘people of color’ drift into it. A pool, I would hope then, in which differences wash away.”

⁷⁷ Spivak, Gayatri. “Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching.” *Diacritics* 32: 3-4 (2002), 17-31.

⁷⁸ Although Stephen Slemon discusses Coetzee’s use of allegory against itself, I am influenced by his thinking in this conclusion. Slemon. “Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History.” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 23:1 (1988), 157-168.