

**Experiments in Postcolonial Reading:
Music, Violence, Response**

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Abstract

This thesis is a response to a lacuna in musicology, namely the near absence of postcolonial and decolonial epistemologies. Employing both diachronic and synchronic perspectives, it provides a historical overview of the institutional positioning of musicology as an academic discipline founded on structures of expectation and exploitation indebted to Western imperialism. This longer historical view is accompanied throughout by an examination of ethics in its institutionalised forms, specifically in the domains of knowledge production and the university. The thesis maintains that while such ostensibly ethical underpinnings may promise redress on the basis of the violence inflicted by an imperialist past, the discourse employed in its application in fact serves to strengthen the ideological hold of Western hegemony and, in so doing, betrays the promise of reparation that ethics is ordinarily understood to encompass.

The thesis examines different aesthetic and epistemological manifestations of the postcolonial, considering at length Steve Reich's string quartet, *Different Trains* (1988), Philip Glass's opera, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (2005), and Philip Miller's choral work, *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* (2006). Both content and style weave these works together as they engage, by means of a post-minimalist aesthetic, stream-of-violence narratives intimately bound up with the

postcolonial condition. Of particular importance in the consideration of these musical texts is the urgent necessity for epistemological transformation, marked in musicology as the lack of post- and decolonial perspectives. Finally, the thesis grapples with the (im)possibility of complicit scholarship that must, through its very expression, wound its subject.

Decolonisation was no wound for the colonisers, only an occasion for resentment, an opportunity, to be re-actualised under the name of 'neocolonialism'. It is a wound, on the other hand, for those who lived and continue to live its failure, and the salt we pour in this still open wound is the terrible, derisive adjective 'postcolonial'. Decolonisation is a wound, our wound, a rotting, open sore, still today unhealed, gaping at us.

Nick Nesbitt¹

Where are we? And who are we in the university where apparently we are? What do we represent? Whom do we represent? Are we responsible? For what and to whom? If there is a university responsibility, it at least begins the moment when a need to hear these questions, to take them upon oneself and respond to them, imposes itself. This imperative of the response is the initial form and minimal requirement of responsibility. One can always not respond and refuse the summons, the call to responsibility. One can even do so without necessarily keeping silent. But the structure of this call to responsibility is such—so anterior to any possible response, so independent, so dissymmetrical in its coming from the other within us—that even a nonresponse a priori assumes responsibility.

Jacques Derrida²

¹ Nick Nesbitt, 'The Postcolonial Event: Deleuze, Glissant and the Problem of the Political', in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, eds. Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 111.

² Jacques Derrida, *The Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, trans. Jan Plug and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 83.

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Chapter 1

Experiments in Postcolonial Reading: Music,

Violence, Response

A few days ago I heard a performance of the Sibelius fifth symphony. As the closing bars approached, I experienced exactly the large, swelling emotion that the music was written to elicit. What would it have been like, I wondered, to be a Finn in the audience at the first performance of the symphony in Helsinki nearly a century ago, and feel that swell overtake one? The answer: one would have felt proud, proud that one of us could put together such sounds, proud that out of nothing we human beings can make such stuff. Contrast with that one's feelings of shame that we, our people, have made Guantanamo. Musical creation on the one hand, a machine for inflicting pain and humiliation on the other: the best and the worst that human beings are capable of.

J. M. Coetzee³

Modernity includes a rational 'concept' of emancipation that we affirm and subsume. But, at the same time, it develops an irrational myth, a justification for genocidal violence. The postmodernists criticise modern reason as a reason of terror; we criticise modern reason because of the irrational myth that it conceals.

Enrique Dussel⁴

A sinister paradox. Sibelius's Fifth Symphony and Guantanamo Bay.

Musical creativity and the creation of death machines. The emancipated modern individual and the rationalisation of the brutally irrational, of genocide on a scale that never should have been conceivable, let alone

³ J. M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007), 45.

⁴ Enrique Dussel, 'Eurocentrism and modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)', *Boundary 2*, 20:3 (1993), 66.

justifiable, within the bounds of emancipative reason. The aporia confounding the protagonist of J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*, one Senor C, is the cohabitation in the human organism of irreconcilable extremes: that 'we, our people', are capable of creating sounds that stir in us deep reverence for life, but also the sounds of naked fear and cracking bones that escape the human body when submitted to the methodical forensics of professional torture. *Diary of a Bad Year* is a book of intimate extremes, a book wherein the incommensurable and the irreconcilable cohabit every page as form, while content and genre strain at the limit where philosophy passes into non-philosophy. The 72-year-old Senor's 'strong opinions' on subjects ranging from the state to suicide bombers, the university and music, are interrupted on every page by a second layer of narrative that substitutes the inanities and servile romantic fantasies of an aging middle-class academic with philosophical iconoclasm.

One of the short chapters entitled 'On music' scales aporia down to self-enunciation:

Each bird-cry is a full-hearted release of the self into the air, accompanied by such joy as we can barely comprehend. *I!* says each cry: *I! What a miracle!* Singing liberates the voice, allows it to fly, expands the soul. In the course of a military training, on the other hand, people are drilled in using the voice in a rapid, flat, mechanical manner, without pause for thought. What damage it must do to the soul to submit to the military voice, to embody it as one's own!⁵

The aporetic, in this instance, is between the release—the coming into a self and a world—of the individual subject through the singing voice and the crushing of the individual *qua* individual when subordinated to

⁵ Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 132.

military injunction. Frankfurt critical theorists in one way or another confronted this crisis intrinsic to human subjectivity as they grappled with the staggering abyss that separated the Nazi death camps from the panacea of human possibilities which, two centuries earlier, unfolded under the banner of European Enlightenment. Theodor W. Adorno's negative philosophy is fundamentally a recognition of the irresolvable extremes constitutive of the human condition—a confrontation with aporia, not for the sake of recovering an illusion of reconciliation, but to question the reality enabling such irresolvable extremes.⁶ Edward Said, in his 1989 lectures on music, glosses this history of aporia and violence, reading back through Rose Rosengard Subotnik and Adorno: 'the beginning in humanistic optimism and the ending in a twelve-note dissonance' tells the story of a promise of freedom that descended into the unspeakable atrocities of the trenches and the gas chambers.⁷ Walter Benjamin's adage—that documents of human civilisation are invariably documents of barbarism—is another, perhaps the best-known, rendition of the same aporia.⁸ Benjamin does not explain the relation between culture and barbarism with recourse to metaphysical diversions. Instead, he reads back from the socio-economic towards the production of texts and interpretations, thereby linking culture, unevenness and exploitation to reach a troubling conclusion that places violence and aesthetics into a relation of contiguity and commendation. Every work of art carries the silent imprint of 'anonymous toil', of those whose labour is the condition of

⁶ See, e.g., the discussion of Adorno's negative philosophy in Andrew Bowie, *Adorno and the Ends of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), esp. 22-25.

⁷ Edward W. Said, *Musical Elaborations* (London: Vintage, 1992), 48.

⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zoan (London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1973), 258.

possibility for its creation and circulation.⁹ In 1985, Gayatri Spivak repositioned Benjamin's statement as 'a starting rather than a stopping-point for Marxist axiological investigations',¹⁰ 'A "culturalism" that disavows the economic in its global operations', she wrote, 'cannot get a grip on the concomitant production of barbarism'.¹¹ Implicit in this reworking is that reading or critique cannot operate oblivious to the economic text, although grappling with economic exploitation within the bounds of textual analysis 'is certainly not required of every literary critic'.¹²

The second epigraph above suggests that the aporetic moment is nothing other than the logical unfolding of coloniality. Whereas the Frankfurt School, and postmodernists in general, have repudiated the long tradition of rationalist thought in the wake of two successive World Wars, decolonial thinkers have been at pains to point out that the terror of reason is the constitutive underside of Western modernity: an irrational myth that simultaneously conceals and unleashes genocidal violence upon the colonies. There is no aporia or irreconcilability here. There is only, as Walter Mignolo observes, the 'logic of coloniality... disguised with the rhetoric of modernity, of salvation and progress. What have been seen as "contradictions" are indeed the two faces of the same coin — "modernity/coloniality"'.¹³ Modernity in this context owes its formulation

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 232.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 231.

¹³ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), xvi.

to Enrique Dussel.¹⁴ Historically, it commences with the invention of the Americas, an invention disguised as the discovery of the so-called New World. Qualitatively, modernity is understood as ‘a European phenomenon but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity that is its ultimate content... [and] part of its self-definition’.¹⁵ A related point is that certain aspects of modernity have attained global status—Anibal Quijano names the bourgeois family, the nation-state, the capitalist corporation and rationalism.¹⁶ The catastrophe of modernity—the uneven distribution of those benefits that accrued from unprecedented progress in science, medicine, industrialisation, and all the spiritual and cultural values celebrated by the Enlightenment—is the logical outcome of coloniality.

Coloniality is the result of colonial domination but, crucially, survives into the postcolonial present. Coloniality, or ‘the colonial matrix of power’, refers to the structures of knowing, being and sensing that define much of how we think, of what counts as knowledge and what not, of how we perceive ourselves and others. ‘Coloniality’, writes Nelson Maldonado-Torres, ‘is kept alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience’.¹⁷ When taken as a theoretical-critical paradigm, coloniality/modernity enshrines the assumption that modernity cannot be

¹⁴ Enrique Dussel, ‘Eurocentrism and Modernity’, 65-70 and ‘Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism’, *Nepantla: Views from North*, 1:3 (2000), 465-478.

¹⁵ Dussel, ‘Eurocentrism and Modernity’, 65.

¹⁶ Anibal Quijano, ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America’, *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1:3 (2000), 545.

¹⁷ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, ‘On the Coloniality of Being’, *Cultural Studies*, 21:2/3 (2007), 243.

thought in isolation from coloniality, which is its constitutive and much darker underside.¹⁸ Thus, coloniality/modernity names epistemically the aporetic crisis noted by Coetzee's protagonist, Adorno and Benjamin, a crisis it names and then reconfigures, not as impasse or contradiction but as the operative logic of coloniality.

It is important to note that decoloniality, or as Mignolo calls it, the 'decolonial option', is one amongst several such options; as with Spivak above, Mignolo refrains from any prescriptive agenda to which thought must adhere.¹⁹ It is further important to recall that the coloniality/modernity critical framework is not new, and that there are other means to reach the same conclusions. Without needing the phraseology of decolonial thought, Alain Badiou's depiction of the twentieth century is commensurate with that of decolonial thinkers. Badiou wonders whether any relation exists between the creative immensity compressed into the decade leading up to the First World War (a time he associates with, amongst others, Freud, Einstein, Joyce, Proust, Pessoa, Wittgenstein and Schoenberg) and the mass slaughter of human lives that ensued.²⁰ Any response to this question must take into account that the same pre-war period marked the apogee of imperialism, a period of staggering oppression and genocide that unfolded at a convenient distance from Western cultural centra. 'And therefore', he writes, 'that

¹⁸ See, for example, Anibal Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality', *Cultural Studies*, 21:2/3 (2007), 168-178.

¹⁹ Ruben Gaztambide-Fernandez, 'Decolonial Options and Artistic/Aesthetic Entanglements? An Interview with Walter Mignolo', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 3:1 (2014), 196-212.

²⁰ Alain Badiou, *The Century*, trans. Alberto Toscano (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 6-7.

elsewhere, far away but also very close to everyone's conscience, in the midst of every family, servitude and massacre are already present'.²¹

Two points in particular are worth noting in respect of Badiou's reading of the twentieth century: that the aesthetic and intellectual apogees of the early twentieth century coincided with the era of high imperialism, and that the indifference towards massacres that happened 'elsewhere' rendered the horrors visited upon Europe in the first half of the twentieth century both conceivable and acceptable. In the 'dark fury of the 1930s, in the indifference to death, there is something that certainly originates in the Great War and the trenches, but also something that comes—as a sort of infernal return—from the colonies, from the way that the differences within humanity were envisaged down there'.²² Those differences consisted in classifying the black man as a creature in-between: a few rungs above the gorilla yet vastly inferior to the European.²³ In Badiou's reading, the Jewish Holocaust does not mark the eruption of an originary violence, unseen and unforeseen until the rise of Nazism. Rather, the Holocaust as a singular event marks the return of 'the century's uninherited thoughts'.²⁴ What was produced in Europe at the level of ideology in the course of the nineteenth century initiated a violent cycle which, having been unleashed upon the colonies during that same century, returned to Europe in the form of the Holocaust.

This thesis examines artistic and intellectual responses to structural, physical and psychic violence. An underlying premise is that the aporetic

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Ibid., 7-8.

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

moment—the moment that enables the coproduction of irreconcilable extremes—might be historicised with recourse to the notion that modernity and coloniality were inextricably linked. What I take from the work of those authors discussed above is an insistence to regard the production of knowledge and epistemology as synchronic manifestations of colonial violence. The three musical case studies that will be considered in subsequent chapters each responds programatically to a particular instance or era of imperial violence, whilst activating secondary links to yet others. Steve Reich’s piece for tape and string quartet, *Different Trains*, is a musical reflection on the human tragedy that devastated mid-century Europe, namely the Holocaust and the German imperialism in whose name it was perpetrated. Composed in 1988, its inception coincided with the continuation and intensification of American imperialism, ongoing Israeli apartheid and the first Palestinian Intifada. Philip Glass’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* (2005) is an operatic response to an emboldened American imperialism in the wake of military incursions into Iraq and Afghanistan. Whereas the opera furnishes an explicit critique of American imperialism, its wide array of intertextual sources draws into the conversation South African apartheid, Cold War America and, by means of the discursive figure of the barbarian, a genealogy of imperial violence directed against the Western ‘Other’. The commemorative piece composed in 2006 by the South African composer Philip Miller, *Rewind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*, is a musical meditation on the public hearings held by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa that commenced ten years previously. Miller’s cantata inflects questions

about political and aesthetic strategies of survival and reconciliation in a present still reeling from multiple colonial pasts.

Each of the three musical works bears some affiliation with minimalism, thereby centring a particular aesthetic technique and its subsequent mutations. The choice is not a disinterested one in a thesis that grapples with postcolonial and decolonial questions. The next chapter will provide an account of minimalism and postminimalism that positions both with recourse to the postcolonial. Here I will mention only the most salient reasons for choosing musical case studies that fall under this broad heading. Besides constituting one of the most important musical developments of the second half of the twentieth century, musical minimalism originated in the decade beginning in the late 1950s, in the USA, during a time that also witnessed the increasing hegemony of American imperialism and neoliberal capitalism—geopolitical movements that are indispensable to any consideration of postcoloniality. Minimalism partakes of a broader critical moment during which the foundations of Western thought comes under scrutiny, not only by the emergence of what became known as post-structuralism and postmodernism, but also in its rejection of musical modernism and especially the institutional prestige enjoyed by serialism during the 50s and 60s. Finally, the technical and aesthetic means of minimalism invite structural affinities with the aporetic and the contradictory. The slow changes in speed and sonic material, the additive structures propelled by repetition, the initial interest in minimal musical resources and mechanical manipulation—all of these considered alongside a propensity for sprawling formal constructions that could last for hours on end as well as subjects with ostensibly cosmic or universal

bearing, render minimalism an aesthetic medium that, in many ways, reverberates with the contradictions and irreconcilabilities of aporia.

Before proceeding any further, some shorthand definitions are in order. In the four chapters that follow, imperialism and empire will be used to refer to the formalised economic, cultural and political domination of one nation or territory by another, and will be reserved largely for describing nineteenth-century European and British expansionism and the rise of American hegemony after the Second World War.²⁵ Although it overlaps geographically and historically with imperialism, colonialism will be used specifically to refer to the age of exploration, beginning with Columbus's invention of the Americas, and including the gradual acquisition of overseas territories by the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and British.²⁶ Decolonisation, which refers to the 'juridical-political decolonisation of the periphery', has inserted into discourse the idea of the postcolonial.²⁷ The meanings and characteristics attributed to the postcolonial in this thesis vary according to their context. As it relates to literary or musical works, the postcolonial will 'cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day'.²⁸ The notion that ours is a fully realised postcolonial reality will not be encountered on these pages, for reasons both simple and distressing. Viewed against the systemic production of inequality and its

²⁵ European imperialism is by no means the first or the only expansionist regime of the modern world. Contemporaneous examples of imperialisms exist in the East: Chinese, Ottoman and Mughal, to name but three.

²⁶ See, e.g., Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-2.

²⁷ Ramon Grosfoguel, 'The Epistemic Decolonial Turn', *Cultural Studies*, 21:2/3 (2007), 219.

²⁸ I here follow Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 15.

wide-spread prevalence in the formerly colonised world, it is tendentious to understand the present as proximate to a postcolonial world. Ramon Grosfoguel correctly identifies as a powerful and misleading myth of the twentieth century ‘the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonisation of the world’, a position that is uncontroversial amongst postcolonial and decolonial theorists.²⁹ But beyond this commonplace understanding, no consensual position can be assumed. Both as a noun denoting certain geopolitical reconfigurations and an adjective that orients discourses and disciplines in relation to a colonial past and a present that is somehow beyond that past, the idea of the postcolonial is highly contested and charged with emotive meanings. It divides the globe geographically into East and West, global south and global north, and fuels intractable differences between former victims and former perpetrators, between militants and denialists, progressives and revisionists. For millions, to those Frantz Fanon called the wretched of the earth and to those who today live with the open wound of colonialism and imperialism, the postcolonial is, to recall Nick Nesbitt’s description, ‘the salt we pour into this still open wound... a terrible, derisive adjective’.³⁰ To others, postcolonialism contains a threat to intellectual and aesthetic traditions long revered; yet to others, postcolonialism promises access to previously withheld institutional structures responsible for the production and dissemination of knowledge and theory; or simply a trendy addition to scholarly vocabulary.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Nick Nesbitt, ‘The Postcolonial Event: Deleuze, Glissant and the Problem of the political’, in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, eds. Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 111.

The violence of coloniality, unlike the sudden, seismic and grossly mediated violence of an event such as 9/11, is stripped of spectacle and historical visibility. It is akin to what Rob Nixon has evocatively called slow violence—a violence dispersed across time, space and bodies, its imperceptible unfolding lacking the force of spectacle, global catastrophe and rapid destruction.³¹ The effects of slow violence are delayed and out of sync, its casualties often discounted rather than counted or accounted for, its victims those without resources and expectations, be they material, intellectual or economic.³² One might construct a brief history of slow violence with recourse to statistics. Consider that, around 1750, the GNP per capita income of the developed, developing and Third World nations was seen as more or less equal, a dispensation that now seems unthinkable.³³ In 1800, Europe held approximately 35% of the earth's surface. By 1878 the proportion was 67%, a rate of increase of 83000 square miles per year. In 1914, Europe held a grand total of roughly 85% of the earth.³⁴

The same history could be glossed differently, not with reference to the occupation of living space but to the 'long dyings' of imperialism.³⁵ In his monograph entitled *Late-Victorian Holocausts*, Mike Davis attributes

³¹ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 4, 9.

³³ Paul Bairoch, *Economics and World History: Myths and Paradoxes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 104-106.

³⁴ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 6. Robert Young puts the percentage of land surface under Western domination around the turn of the nineteenth century at 90%. See Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: a Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.

³⁵ I borrow 'long dyings' from Ann Laura Stoler, Introduction to *Imperial Debris: on Ruins and Ruination*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 23.

the gap separating the Third from the Second and First Worlds to ‘the outgrowth of income and wealth inequalities... that were shaped most decisively in the last quarter of the nineteenth century’.³⁶ For Davis, the Third World was founded less on military violence than the synchrony of natural disaster, starvation and epidemic disease, the consequences of which could have been staved off by proper administration and political will.³⁷ Lacking in both, the outcome was catastrophic. Three consecutive waves of ‘organised’ famine, exacerbated by drought and disease, led to an estimated 30-50 million deaths during the golden years of the British empire (roughly the last quarter of the nineteenth century).³⁸ In his trenchant critique of postcolonial discourse, Peter Hallward presents other numbers and percentages, although the narrative remains unchanged. Estimated at roughly 3 : 1 in 1820, the ratio measuring the income gap between the richest and the poorest countries rose to 35 : 1 in 1950, 44 : 1 in 1973, and 72 : 1 by 1992. In 1999, the total income of the 582 million people in all the so-called developing countries (\$146 billion) amounted to just over 10 percent of the combined wealth of the world's 200 richest individuals (\$1,135 billion).³⁹ In 2015 Oxfam projected that 1% of the world’s population would own 99% of global wealth in 2016, a projection that turned out to be accurate.⁴⁰ One can continue, on and on, churning

³⁶ Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2002), 25.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

³⁹ Peter Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 63.

⁴⁰ Deborah Hardoon, ‘Wealth: Having it All and Wanting More’, *OXFAM GB*, published January 19th, 2015, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/wealth-having-it-all-and-wanting-more-3381255>; Deborah Hardoon, Ricardo Fuentes-Nieva, and Sophia Ayele, ‘An economy for the 1%: How Privilege and Power in the Economy Drive Extreme

out numbers and graphs that concretise the effects of coloniality. But the risk of normalisation in a world accumulating crises like so many clichés is very real, the paralysis of non-engagement furnishing the new global normal. And as Badiou writes, ‘if number... is today’s fetish, it is because at the place where the real comes to falter, there stands blind number’.⁴¹ Reified by the clinical order of percentages and comparative statistics, and barred from physical proximity by sealed national borders, victims of coloniality enter discourse as absent symbols that afflict Western consciousness and conscience.

The question of response/responsibility is one raised by the subtitle of this thesis. In light of the sketch just provided, the following related questions present themselves. Where lies the proximate limit of responsibility? Who is to be held accountable and who not, and can complicity ever be something other than always already implied? What of the public intellectual, the university and the artist, and how does the recognition of responsibility propose to negotiate the collusive and exploitative structures erected in the name of a responsibility towards those regarded as lesser beings?⁴²

One might begin by pointing out the hypocrisy of raising the question of response/responsibility in the largely privileged contexts of scholarship and aesthetics. Access to the privileged sites of a transnational knowledge economy usually entails having escaped the severest consequences of

Inequality and How this can be Stopped’, *OXFAM GB*, published January 18th, 2016, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/an-economy-for-the-1-how-privilege-and-power-in-the-economy-drive-extreme-inequ-592643>.

⁴¹ Badiou, *Century*, 26.

⁴² For a critical overview of the social claims imputed to art from Plato to the present, see Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett, *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

inequality. The ability to theorise inequality, to make it the subject of aesthetics and ethics, to turn it into a theoretical impasse, ‘to autonomise the ethical moment as quandary and as dilemma, and abstract it analytically and existentially from its organic embeddedness in the macro-political situation’,⁴³ is a luxury ill afforded the victims of poverty, ongoing war and environmental injustices. To put it crudely, those with the ability to extract themselves from the staggering inequality of the present are also those with the luxury to theorise about coloniality and its ongoing grip on the unequal present. Likewise, the marginal and the subaltern are profitable sites, not only for the proliferation of sweatshop labour and massive economic exploitation, but as an idea that is used by, and is useable to, the centre but hardly so to those trapped in the conditions— socio-economic and material—that name the marginal.⁴⁴

Even if power and capital demand the perpetual reproduction of the marginal, there has been no shortage of developmental and/or cultural initiatives, oftentimes accompanied or followed by justified scepticism. Gauri Viswanathan has extensively critiqued the corrosive effects of English literature imported into the colonies to civilise and subjugate. ‘[I]t should be amply clear by now’, concludes Viswanathan, ‘that the Eurocentric literary curriculum of the nineteenth century was less a statement of the superiority of the Western tradition than a vital, active instrument of Western hegemony in concert with commercial

⁴³ Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, *Theory in an Unequal World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing LTD, 2003), 125.

⁴⁴ See Timothy Brennan, ‘The economic Image-Function of the Periphery’, in *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*, eds. Ania Loomba et al (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 101-122.

expansionism and military action'.⁴⁵ Grant Olwage, writing from the purview of ethnomusicology, has shown how the promotion of sol-fa notation and choral singing for the English working classes in mid-nineteenth century England provided the 'testing grounds' and evidential substance for the idea that music could 'calm the savage breast'.⁴⁶ More recently, the neocolonial agenda of developmentalism has been called out and extensively critiqued.⁴⁷ Although I am mindful not to propound an essentialist scepticism of scholarly initiatives that claim for music an activist role in the production of social cohesion and cultural understanding, this thesis remains critical of such claims when imputed to music.

There is another and no less problematic aspect to response/responsibility, in many ways the opposite of developmentalism. It begins with a turn inwards, with critique and self-reflexivity as strategies that recognise the epistemic and social injustices of coloniality, but only to arrive at refusal and non-engagement. Radhakrishnan makes the case succinctly: 'withdrawing from its sorry history of knowing the Other through dominance, a self-critical Eurocentrism abandons the Other

⁴⁵ Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 167.

⁴⁶ Grant Olwage, 'Discipline and Choralism: The Birth of Musical Colonialism', in *Music, Power, and Politics*, ed. Annie J. Randall (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 43. For a recent ethnographic study critical of the 'social impact' agenda and its often unseen ramifications, see Geoffrey Baker, *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴⁷ See, amongst others, Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997); Ilan Kapoor, *The Postcolonial Politics of Development* (London: Routledge, 2008); Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalisation and its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002); Cheryl McEwan, *Postcolonialism and Development* (London: Routledge, 2009).

altogether in the name of non-interference'.⁴⁸ It is worthwhile to note in passing that withdrawal from the other is programmatically bound up with a postmodernist penchant for 'self-reflexivity as a catch-all answer for cross-cultural crises and problems', thereby enabling self-critique to act as an avenue for retreat into silence and irresponsibility.⁴⁹

This thesis renews the question of response/responsibility, a question it raises in the geopolitical and geoaesthetic contexts of colonialism, imperialism and the stream-of-violence constitutive of the neo-imperial present. The question of responsibility has been raised before in respect of music and musicology. In a book chapter entitled 'In responses begins responsibility: music and emotion', Lindsay Waters draws lessons for musicians and musicologists from Edward Said's 1989 Wellek lectures at the University of California.⁵⁰ The chapter consists of paradoxes seemingly thrown up by the musical event or text, paradoxes that are then turned into productive negotiations between self and other, self and self, self and world, or any number of such egocentric mutations. The music of Waters's responsibility is all things to everyone, and hence also her gloss of Said's main argument: 'that in responses, in our individual responses to works of art, begins responsibility'.⁵¹ The essay does not go beyond such arguably haphazard generalisations, and promotes, if anything, the 'drastic' as the only locus of responsibility. A more compelling thematisation appears in Lawrence Kramer's *Critical*

⁴⁸ Radhakrishnan, *Theory in an Uneven World*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁰ Lindsay Waters, 'In Responses Begins Responsibility: Music and Emotion', in *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power*, ed. Paul A. Bové (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 97-113.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

Musicology and the Responsibility of Response. Kramer conceives of response/responsibility in general terms, as distributed between music, the hermeneutic act of listening, and the object[s] of our response/responsibility:

When music moves us, to what are we moved? What is at stake in what we come to feel? And just who do we become, who do we recognise ourselves as being, when music addresses us? What kind of person feels just these things, in just this way? What conception of the person is put into play by the music in question? What does it mean to be a person moved by music, and by this music in particular? What is responsible for our response, and to what is our response responsible?⁵²

Kramer's list of questions works in two directions. There are the self-reflexive questions, usually accompanied by the pronoun 'who', and there are questions directed away from the subject, usually accompanied by intimations of an object, a 'what' rather than a 'who'. 'What is responsible for our response, and to what is our response responsible?', asks Kramer. The reason for retaining the subject-object division which Kramer redistributes between response (orientated towards a 'who') and responsibility (orientated towards a thing or object) might be explained with recourse to the main concern he hopes to address in thematising response and responsibility. That concern—which has been for him an enduring one—is to illustrate that music signifies, that it is worldly, that music possesses objects with contingent histories and meanings. This project, at least in his hands, is through and through postmodern, as Kramer would be the first to acknowledge.

⁵² Lawrence Kramer, *Critical Musicology and the Responsibility of Response: Collected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), x.

Why a postmodernist musicology? Kramer's answer appears early on in *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge*: 'postmodernist strategies of understanding offer... new and badly needed means for the criticism and historiography of the arts to meet, not only their aesthetic, but also their social and conceptual responsibilities'.⁵³ Kramer never identifies these responsibilities concretely, but one may safely assume that postcolonial concerns are not beyond the pale of his musicology, and the same can be said of the so-called critical turn in musicology. These musicologies—whether new, critical, postmodern—have opened up discursive space for 'others' and alterities, bestowing scholarly validity on agendas previously scorned by an avowedly Western and Eurocentric discipline. That opening, its place of origin and interested manifestations, is not unproblematic. The appeal to a collective disciplinary conscience for a musicology more responsible, more inclusive and self-critical than its disciplinary predecessors, also announced—explicitly or implicitly—the arrival of a distinctly new and North-American musicology come to save an increasingly irrelevant musicological universe from itself and its perceived obeisance towards a discredited modernist agenda. All of this in an age of American interventionism when the same tropes—promising freedom from all the despotisms of the past—have provided rhetorical cover for seizing land and natural resources under the pretext of protecting the rest of the world against a common enemy (the terrorists) about as abstract as the version of modernism so decried by new musicologists.⁵⁴

⁵³ Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 6.

⁵⁴ In his book-length critique of the new American musicology, Pieter van den Toorn notes that 'the strategy of the new musicologists, that of promoting appreciation by

The ‘decolonial option’, to recall Mignolo’s phrase, begins from premises and questions different to those that animate the new musicology. The latter, in Kramer’s words, brings to music a range of topics and interpretive possibilities that ‘stem from the desire of a critical or postmodernist musicology to overcome the traditional opposition of musical and extramusical meaning’.⁵⁵ Its agenda is partly motivated by the desire to return music—and especially classical music—to a position of pertinence, to make a case that this music ‘still matters’.⁵⁶ What Mignolo calls the decolonial option or an epistemology of the border ‘emerges from the senses, from the body sensing the power differential of the border’.⁵⁷ The border is not so much something that is actual and material, than the marker of a consciousness that always thinks the present in relation to the history of coloniality. When thinking becomes border consciousness it also poses differently the question of response/responsibility. No one would genuinely dispute the existence of a very real and practical limit to the ways in which scholarship and the aesthetic can hope to intervene in a neoliberal environment predicated on the normalisation of structural inequalities. The indisputability of such a limit, even if it appears impossible to fix decisively the exact point beyond which scholarship is unable to intervene, does not imply a concrete limit on responsibility per se. Put another way, the limit of scholarly intervention and the limit of

encouraging more and more interdisciplinary study—retreating from “technical matters”, in other words, as part of a rear-guard action to “save” music—will not work’. See his *Music, Politics and the Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵⁶ Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). See also Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵⁷ Mignolo, ‘Decolonial option’, 199.

scholarly responsibility are neither mutually interchangeable, nor mutually determinable. In his well-known monograph entitled *The University in Ruins*, Bill Readings explains the desire to delimit responsibility. ‘The desire to know fully our responsibility to others’, he writes, ‘is also the desire for an alibi, the desire to be irresponsible, freed of responsibility’.⁵⁸ The obligation of response, as it is understood in this thesis, does not answer to the question of who is to be held responsible. This thesis is also not a plea for scholarly activism or musical advocacy, at least not if it is assumed that the latter embed slogans such as ‘changing the world’ or ‘social change’. Rather, following Derrida, this obligation, ‘this imperative of response is the initial form and minimum requirement of responsibility’.⁵⁹

When was the postcolonial musicology?

One might indeed extend to musicology the question Ella Shohat posed in 1992: when, exactly, did the present become post-colonial? How might one characterise this postcolonial reality? And whose reality did it represent?⁶⁰ Shohat’s seminal contribution was accompanied in the same special issue of *Social Text* by yet other calls to rethink critically the subtler implications of postcolonialism.⁶¹ Temporality is central to Anne McClintock’s critique of postcolonialism in its institutionalised incarnations. For her, the

⁵⁸ Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 189.

⁵⁹ Jacques Derrida, *The Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, trans. Jan Plug and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 83.

⁶⁰ Ella Shohat, ‘Notes on the Post-Colonial’, *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992), 99-113.

⁶¹ Also published in 1992, Aijaz Ahmad’s *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures*, furnished another seminal critique of postcolonialism.

replacement of one set of binaries by another under the sign of postcolonialism presupposed continuation and renewed colonisation, rather than a significant break in the uneven relations structuring intellectual as well as socio-economic encounters. Thus, the colonial binaries that postcolonialists were challenging (Shohat mentions ‘self/other, metropolis/colony, centre/periphery’) were collapsed into another and even more sweeping binary that posits a before/after colonialism.⁶² This new temporal axis, McClintock writes, fails to account for the uneven politics of power, ‘since it does not distinguish between the beneficiaries of colonialism (the ex-colonisers) and the casualties of colonialism (ex-colonised).⁶³ In 1994, Arif Dirlik continued interrogating the postcolonial, arguing that its origins coincided with the acceptance of postcolonial scholars into the academic mainstream—Edward Said, the Palestinian raised in relative privilege on Bach, Brahms and Chopin, with a university education and stellar academic career in the US, is a paradigmatic example, but so, too, are Spivak and Bhabha. Dirlik is sceptical of the rhetoric of intellectual hybridity and transnationality, the rhetorical self-characterisation of frictionless belonging beyond the regressive binary politics of anti-colonial struggle and nationalism:

Postcolonial intellectuals have arrived in the first world academy, not only because they have broken new intellectual ground (they have rephrased older themes) but also because intellectual orientations that earlier were regarded as marginal or subversive have acquired a new respectability. Postcoloniality... has found favour even among academic conservatives who prefer it to a less

⁶² Anne McClintock, ‘The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term “Post-Colonialism”’, *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992), 84-98.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

tractable vocabulary that insists on keeping in the foreground contemporary problems of political division and oppression.⁶⁴

Much of the ongoing debate hinged on whether or not the postcolonial turn, as it occurred in Anglo-American academia, represented a continuation of the anti-colonial movements (military, aesthetic and intellectual) that traced their genealogies to the Bandung conference of 1955, or whether, on the contrary, following a shift to the right in Britain and America in the 1970s, postcolonial scholarship arose as a result of the incorporation into academia of the radical possibilities opened up by the anti-colonial movements of the 1960s. Timothy Brennan phrased this predicament at the hand of three questions.⁶⁵ Was the institutional endorsement of postcolonial studies in the 1980s a reaction against the rightward shift of the Thatcher-Ragan era? Or did it perhaps represent a radicalisation of the linguistic turn in the humanities that confronted symbolic forms with socio-economic materialism and a refusal to depoliticise the sharp inequalities of the postcolonial world? Or, finally, was the institutionalisation of postcolonialism 'the academic intellectual's version of the rightward shift itself' noted in the first of his questions?⁶⁶ Brennan's agenda is not to privilege any one of these questions, but to show how postcolonial and anti-colonial theory have failed to engage with economic theory, preferring instead questions that reside in the domain of poetics—questions concerning 'agency and being... or the ethics of political

⁶⁴ Arif Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Ccapitalism', *Critical Inquiry*, 20:2 (1994), 344.

⁶⁵ Brennan, 'The Economic Image-Function of the periphery', 103.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

violence and the psychology of otherness'.⁶⁷ When the economic did make an appearance, it was in the end as 'a matter of inertia... carry[ing] no sense of obligation to work through available scholarship on the world economy, patterns of investment, shifts in managerial strategies, or the actual relations of production'.⁶⁸

I return to the question posed at the beginning of this section. When was the postcolonial musicology? Should 'postcolonial', deployed here as an adjective, be interchangeable and thus also reducible to the new, the critical or the postmodern? The literary scholar, Nicholas Brown, in a monograph entitled *Utopian Generations*, offers a preliminary answer: 'it is perhaps no accident', he remarks, 'that there is no such field as "postcolonial music" ...even though much of the world's most interesting and culturally important music is produced on postcolonial territory'.⁶⁹ Brown's observation may well be accurate, but his reasoning is less so. The more general argument he is advancing is that 'postcolonial literature bears a specific ontological burden' inherited from colonialism, an argument in which the field of 'postcolonial music' is cast merely as the affirmation for a fully articulated position.⁷⁰ The implication, here, is that music bears no such historical burden, and it is a view postcolonial literature has not done much to dispel. When music has been in the foreground, discussions have tended towards the music industry, jazz and popular music, with little by way of historicist analysis or close reading

⁶⁷ Ibid., 104.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 106.

⁶⁹ Nicholas Brown, *Utopian Generations: The Political Horizon of Twentieth-century Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 21.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

beyond text or lyrics.⁷¹ In Brown's account of British literary modernism, music is kept out of the historicist fray until the closing chapters, where it returns as the utopian possibility interpellated by the book's title.⁷² Brown draws on Jacques Attali's well-known argument that music reveals future codes, so that listening to music is also a listening in on the pre-articulated future.⁷³ Ever since Eric Drott published his 'rereading' of Attali's *Noise*, it is no longer possible for Anglo-American academia merely to paint the latter in the radically dramatic colours that so energised a nascent new musicology struggling against perceived disciplinary sclerosis.⁷⁴ Brown cannot be faulted for reading Attali the way he does, and Drott's article appeared a decade after *Utopian Generations*. It is nonetheless perplexing in a commentator as astute as Brown to read that 'musical practice does not present us with anything but itself... but rather calls us to a social body that does not yet exist'.⁷⁵ Gilroy also avails himself of music's ostensible uniqueness as a 'non-representational, non-conceptual form', a uniqueness, however, he sets to work deconstructively on the very idea that semantic content emerges solely in and through language, whilst being critical of the opposite move towards textuality as a means of

⁷¹ Besides Brown's *Utopian Generations*, see, amongst others, Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism*, 69-79; Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 196-225. A notable example is Paul Gilroy who, although not writing about Western or classical music, situates what he calls black music in a richly contextualised nineteenth-century background. See his *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 72-110.

⁷² Brown, *Utopian Generations*, 171.

⁷³ Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

⁷⁴ Eric Drott, 'Rereading Jacques Attali's *Druits*', *Critical Inquiry*, 41:4 (2015), 721-756.

⁷⁵ Brown, *Utopian Generations*, 171.

depriving the musical of subjective agency.⁷⁶ What is worth pointing out is that perceptions of music as self-contained and self-sufficient have often—and especially in the nineteenth century—provided grounds for enlisting music or the musical in a utopian argument to reveal some or other as yet unrealised social formation. To summarise an argument made elsewhere by Lydia Goehr, ‘the concept of the purely musical... functioned as a metaphor in the nineteenth century to capture philosophy’s silence or that which was philosophically unsayable’.⁷⁷ Brown does not entertain the possibility that music/musicology might in fact bear some ‘ontological burden’, or at the very least bear it differently to literature, an assumption that is so integral to Gilroy’s work that it hardly requires mentioning.

Several publications have noted, and begun to address, the relatively scant attention devoted to manifestations of coloniality in German thought (including aesthetics and literature) before Unification in 1871.⁷⁸ For Edward Said, one of the primary contributions of German scholarship to the colonial project ‘was to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas, and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France’.⁷⁹ It is perhaps unfortunate that Said did not extend the same critical acuity to his musical writings, which is not to say that he approached the subject of music with unadulterated admiration for the ‘masters’. Said is aware of the blighted

⁷⁶ Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 76-78 (the quoted phrase is on p.76).

⁷⁷ Lydia Goehr, *The Quest for Voice: on Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy: The 1997 Ernest Bloch Lectures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

⁷⁸ See, amongst others, Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997) and Sander L. Gilman, ‘The Figure of the Black in German Aesthetic Theory’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 8:4 (1975), 373-391.

⁷⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 19.

legacies, of Wagner and Strauss's anti-Semitism, of a conservative strain in musicology which has resisted the idea of music's worldliness. Yet, Said himself has not wholly escaped the temptation to adopt an 'over-romantic view', as Kofi Agawu was quick to point out, which is to say that his musical elaborations lack the breadth of engagement with surrounding literature and the depth of close reading that are elsewhere in evidence.⁸⁰ *Musical Elaborations* shows little concern for postcolonial questions, which would have been a legitimate critique had Said framed the volume along those lines. Said is unapologetically frank in positioning the book. He came to the project 'with no professional musicological reputation at stake', and the effect of this is palpable in the writing. Said himself characterised the volume as a venture in 'risky, often impressionistic theorising and descriptions'.⁸¹ Had Said not been something of an intellectual celebrity, the book would arguably not have received the attention it did at the time. His most evocative moves towards a postcolonial musicology appear in the second chapter of *Culture and Imperialism* where he reads Verdi's *Aida* as an instance of imperialism 'at work'. But even here, orientalism and exoticism make up the primary interpretive paradigms, although Said is no compiler of chronological surveys, stylistic indices, the tracing of orientalism in a specific genre (opera, for example), or narratives of influence in which the non-Western agent determines, or at least alters, Western approaches to composition.⁸² Said's lengthy account of *Aida*'s Egyptian premiere and subsequent

⁸⁰ Kofi Agawu, 'Wrong Notes', *Transition*, 55 (1992), 64.

⁸¹ Said, *Musical Elaborations*, xiii.

⁸² I'm indebted to Matthew Head for the four characterisations of musicological engagement with orientalism. See his 'Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory', *Music Analysis*, 22:1/2 (2003), 218.

restaging in Europe closely attends to opera as industry, as a vast yet microcosmic construction of power relations governing an on-stage reality, a hierarchy of power relations not unlike the entire imperial project that intrudes upon the stage of history to establish a new order.

Much has transpired in the intervening years between *Culture and Imperialism* and the present. Musicologists now know better than to garb their discipline in the descriptive language of imperialism à la Guido Adler—likening artists to conquerors of new territories, tailed by a retinue of scholarly preservationists and patrons tasked with guarding existing territorial gains and consolidating new ones. As the editors of a recent collection of essays on musicology write in their introductory chapter, ‘few music scholars today would wish to think of themselves in Adler’s terms, as auxiliaries in the service of empire’.⁸³ But certain qualifications are necessary, not least because paying lip service to the postcolonial as a scholarly and political priority is a rhetorical necessity, and no longer perceived as a challenge to the existing status quo. To rephrase the proposition, then: few music scholars today wish to think critically and systematically about themselves and the music named by musicology with recourse to postcolonial theory, whilst more generally, musicologists have been reticent in undertaking a sustained consideration linking imperialism to contemporaneous ideas about music and space. Their accounts have rather tended towards contextual orthodoxies such as modernism, masculinity and positivism, framed more generally as the pursuit of autonomy in relations binding individual to state and society, or—at the

⁸³ Olivia Bloechl and Melanie Lowe, eds., Introduction to *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, eds. Olivia Bloechl and Melanie Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2.

disciplinary level—the arts to sciences and philosophy. A basic search through *19th-Century Music*, one of the foremost musicological journals concerned with music of the period, may illustrate this point. ‘Colonialism’ returns a total of six results; ‘imperialism’ fares considerably better (just over 200%) with some thirteen hits, whereas ‘nationalism’ tallies a respectable 103. It is indisputable that the history of nineteenth-century ‘serious’ music, unlike that of imperialism, is largely an Austro-German affair, which might go some way towards explaining the thematisation of nationalism over and above its internationalist counterparts.⁸⁴ But if Said and others are correct, the German-speaking lands before 1871 were not exempt from the lure of colonial fantasies, and a ‘musical safari’ through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a view on identifying and cataloguing orientalisms and exoticisms in music will not suffice by way of ideological and epistemological critique.⁸⁵

Elleke Boehmer has identified two ‘inflections’ characteristic of postcolonial writing—a ‘global inflection’ and a ‘resistance inflection’.⁸⁶ Whilst both inflections conclusively view the colonial project as generally and unjustly skewed towards the coloniser, and whilst they intersect and overlap in practice (Boehmer does not have in mind a tidy binary division), the global inflection is nonetheless at pains to characterise the encounter between coloniser and colonised as complimentary and constitutive. This

⁸⁴ In the interest of a longer historical argument, it is worth keeping in mind that the notion of a musical canon and the ‘classics’ arose in eighteenth-century England, rather than in the German-speaking countries. See William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

⁸⁵ Head, ‘Musicology on Safari’, 211-230.

⁸⁶ Elleke Boehmer, ‘Postcolonial Writing and Terror’, in *Terror and the Postcolonial: A Concise Companion*, eds. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 142-143.

inflection, writes Boehmer, 'is associated with migrant spaces for which the colony as a situation of violent repression, and the nation as horizon of expectation, have retreated, to be replaced with a concept of cultural exchange and contestation as primary and form-giving'.⁸⁷ Work that broadly aligns with this agenda regards the minutiae of day-to-day cross-cultural and cross-border encounters as ranging from complicity and reciprocity to solidarity and subversion. Boehmer's own work can be said generally to belong to this first inflection, along with scholars such as Laura Chrisman, Marie-Louise Pratt, Stuart Hall, Antoinette Burton, and much of the work done by the Subaltern Studies Collective. The second inflection espouses an altogether more sceptical view of postcolonialism in its institutional and disciplinary guises. Timothy Brennan, Anne McClintock, Ella Shohat, Benita Parry, Aijaz Ahmad, Walter D Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, as well as much of Spivak's writing that evidences an overtly Marxian orientation, and writing that relies on Marxian-materialist perspectives in general, fit this second inflection. 'Postcolonialism under this heading', Boehmer writes, 'correlates with struggle, subversion, the nation, the region, resistance to the global status quo—whether that be capitalist-driven colonialism or contemporary neo-imperial globalisation'.⁸⁸ What I want to suggest by way of positioning the work presented in this thesis in relation to the existing musicological literature that deals with postcolonial questions, is that musicology has overwhelmingly privileged the first inflection, often only to slip from acknowledgment of the colonial/imperial past into a reappraisal of

⁸⁷ Ibid., 142.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 143.

colonial encounter as mutually beneficial. This thesis is an attempt to shift musicological discourse and analysis closer to Boehmer's second inflection, an attempt to rebalance a field that—hitherto—has been concerned overwhelmingly with orientalism, exoticism and cross-cultural encounter.

In drawing music scholarship into the fray of Boehmer's two-pronged characterisation of postcolonial studies, the problem of music's separate yet overlapping subdisciplines presents itself. The scholarly study of music, at least as practiced in Europe and the English-speaking world, must contend with an epistemic fissure, namely the methodological and often still professional division of the field into musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory and, more recently, also popular music studies. In the US and UK, music analysis, musicology and ethnomusicology continue to be served by separate societies and society journals, although the separation is not enforced rigorously at the level of content. The postmodern turn in music scholarship has inaugurated a new age of boundary crossings. That scholars nowadays don many hats simultaneously, or deftly switch between them depending on the demands of the moment, is a commonplace. But the disciplinary status quo has also enabled the perception that, as David Beard and Kenneth Gloag write in their *Musicology: the Key Concepts*, 'the musicologists most closely associated with the issues raised by these [postcolonial] theorists are ethnomusicologists'.⁸⁹ Kofi Agawu, speaking as insider and authority on West-African music, has lashed out against ethnomusicology for its

⁸⁹ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005), 104.

numerous and unabated colonial excesses, and not without justification.⁹⁰ In his capacity as eminent music theorist on the other hand, Agawu has chastised a Kermanesque ‘critical’ or ‘new’ musicology for dismissing music analysis perceived to be ‘formalist’ or ‘positivist’, and again not without some justification.⁹¹

This thesis privileges musicology, which is to say that the literature pertaining to music that will be encountered here can be said to fall under that particular disciplinary rubric, although foregrounding the musicological is not to be construed as a blanket assertion that all musical scholarship ought to be subsumed under the heading of musicology or, on the contrary, the more politically slick music studies. The former would in many ways be a perpetuation of the colonial difference as a structuring principle for the musical disciplines, thereby continuing to fortify the music of the West as a seemingly coherent and historically nameable category; whereas the latter affords a too easy and conveniently felicitous neutralisation in an age when colonialism and imperialism no longer command the moral higher ground, even as Western hegemony endures. The former is what allows Agawu to cathect anti-colonial and anti-imperial views solely onto ethnomusicology whilst showing little or no inclination to raise the colonial/imperial question also in relation to music theory and musicology, the latter a too hastily concocted display of political

⁹⁰ Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (London: Routledge, 2003). For one response that faults Agawu for misrepresenting the field of ethnomusicology, see Louise Meintjes, ‘Review of *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* by Kofi Agawu’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 59:3 (2006), 769-777.

⁹¹ Kofi Agawu, ‘Analysing Music under the New Musicological Regime’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 15:3 (1997), 297-307 and ‘How We Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back in Again’, *Music Analysis*, 23:2/3 (2004), 267-286.

correctness by which a disciplinary label could cover over the day-to-day continuation of business as usual. Despite using musicology as a shorthand, this thesis falls across the musicology-ethnomusicology divide. Perspectives from both subdisciplines will be encountered, perspectives united in their general concern with Western classical music (and I use the latter designation advisedly).

Boehmer's first category, the 'global' inflection, correlates with musicological writing concerned specifically with orientalism, exoticism and historical accounts of music in travelogues, diaries and painting.⁹² The point is not to reduce a diverse body of writing to the hegemony of a category or a Herculean footnote. Rather, it is to show how musicology has engaged almost exclusively with orientalism/exoticism, taking these to represent the entire field of postcolonial scholarship. Jeffrey Richards's

⁹² Richard Leppert, 'Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British subjects at Home in India', in *Music and Society*, eds. Susan McClary and Richard Leppert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 63-104; Ralph P. Locke, 'Constructing the Oriental "Other": Saint-Saens's *Samson et Da Lila*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 3:3 (1991), 261-302; Philip Brett, 'Eros and Orientalism in Britten's Operas', in *Queering the Pitch: the New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, eds. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 235-256; Ian Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1995); Jonathan Bellman, ed., *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: North Eastern University Press, 1998); Derek B. Scott, 'Orientalism and Musical Style', *The Musical Quarterly*, 82:2 (1998), 309-335; Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, eds., *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London: Royal Musical Association, 2000); Woodfield, *Music of the Raj: a Social and Economic History of Late Eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), esp. 63-79; Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Richard Taruskin, *On Russian Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); *Bob Van Der Linden, Music and Empire in Britain and India: Identity, Internationalism, and Cross-cultural Communication* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Rachel Beckles Willson, *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Belini Ghuman, *Resonances of the Raj: India in the English Musical Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

study of imperialism and music is a significant and mostly overlooked addition to the musicological literature—significant, because unlike the majority of musicological work that touches on colonialism and imperialism, Richards insists on imperialism (not exoticism or orientalism) as the over-arching geopolitical paradigm, and thus also the prism refracting British nationalism, race, class, gender, militarism and the heroic.⁹³ Richards is also refreshingly unapologetic about what he terms the ‘present-day ignorance’ of British imperialism, reflected and perpetuated in curricula where ‘Roman Britain is regularly taught in schools, the British empire only rarely’.⁹⁴

Returning to the surfeit of articles and books on music and orientalism/exoticism, it is necessary to distinguish between contributions that advance a more sympathetic version of colonial encounters and those that treat sites of contact and exchange with some scepticism. The work of Richard Leppert, Timothy Taylor and Rachel Beckles Willson provides striking examples of the latter. In Leppert’s case, there can be no doubt about the critical angling of an essay such as the one included in *Music and Society*. Leppert studies eighteenth-century paintings of Anglo-Indian sitters to uncover how visual representations of music contributed to racial

⁹³ Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 16. I should also mention alongside Richards’s study Vanessa Agnew’s *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Agnew’s is an exemplary contribution to the musicological literature insofar as it explores ways in which musical encounters with otherness in the eighteenth century shaped the development of ethnomusicology, aesthetics and musicology, including their evolution in the nineteenth century into distinct specialist fields.

⁹⁴ Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, 1.

estrangement and growing enmity.⁹⁵ Also working at an historical level is Timothy Taylor's argument 'that the rise of tonality and opera facilitated representations and appropriations of Europe's cultural others'.⁹⁶ Rachel Beckles Willson is perhaps the one scholar who has continuously and systematically probed questions of orientalism, colonial encounter and their postcolonial residues. Resisting the temptation to turn the West Eastern Divan Orchestra into a tale of reconciliation and peace-making, she has noted the forms of structural violence reproduced within the orchestra itself (ethnic, racial and professional) and the skewed power relations at the heart of the entire project.⁹⁷ In her subsequent book on musical mission in what is now occupied Palestine, Willson has moved beyond Said in her engagement with postcolonial theory, modelling at least one chapter on the work of Dipesh Chakrabarty, while she cites contributions by Ranajit Guha and Tim Mitchell as influential 'back cloths' to her own work.⁹⁸

In the case of Jonathan Bellman, a different agenda is in evidence, as Karen Henson observed in her review of a volume of essays edited by Bellman. The volume, and Bellman in particular, she argues, 'alludes to "post-colonial critics" on a number of occasions, explaining how the book tries to move beyond their apparently over-politicised work; not once... is a

⁹⁵ See also Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹⁶ Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism*, 24.

⁹⁷ Rachel Beckles Willson, 'The Parallax Worlds of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 134:2 (2009), 319-347 and 'Whose Utopia? Perspectives on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra', *Music and Politics*, 3:2 (2009), <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mp/9460447.0003.201/--whose-utopia-perspectives-on-the-west-eastern-divan?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

⁹⁸ Willson, *Orientalism and Musical Mission*, 181-214 and 8-9.

specific name or reference provided'.⁹⁹ Nicholas Cook's chapter entitled 'Encountering the other, redefining the self: Hindostannie airs, Haydn's folksong settings and the "Common Practice" Style' also attempts to move beyond critique towards a view of colonial encounter in somewhat more convivial colours. Cook wants to 'put forward an alternative to the pessimistic view of cross-cultural encounters', one predicated on 'an innocent openness to non-European culture'.¹⁰⁰ To make his case, Cook proposes to use empirical evidence: Hindostanni airs transcribed for Western instruments that circulated amongst employees of the East India Company and/or their extended families in India during the 1780s. Empirical evidence, however, is thin. The original sources of these transcriptions cannot be located, or are simply too difficult to identify with any certainty, so Cook proposes another method: to chart disruptions of Common Practice Style (CPS) conventions that arise as a result of attempts to adapt Hindostanni music to the restrictions imposed by Western notation.¹⁰¹ In other words, any deviation from CPS, provided it is untainted by orientalist proclivities, is to be taken as indicative of a cross-cultural encounter marked by respect and genuine interest to understand and represent accurately the music of the 'other'. In what he calls the first generation of transcriptions made by Indo-British in the 1780s, Cook accordingly notes the somewhat awkward musical results yielded by forced attempts to accommodate Hindostanni music to the CPS. His conclusion:

⁹⁹ Karen Henson, 'Review of *The Exotic in Western Music* by Jonathan Bellman,' *Music and Letters*, 80:1 (1999), 147.

¹⁰⁰ Nicholas Cook, 'Encountering the Other, Redefining the Self: Hindostannie Aairs, Haydn's Folksongs and the "Common Practice" Style', in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s: Portrayal of the East*, eds. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 16, 17.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

that Hindostanni music led to a ‘structural fracture’ of the CPS, thereby providing empirical evidence that ‘the impact of the other is traced in the deformation of the self’.¹⁰² Cook cites yet other archival evidence to lend weight to this conclusion:

There is no suggestion that, when they heard Mozart’s orientalisms, the Viennese thought they were hearing real Turkish music. But the documentation of the Hindostanni air is full of assertions of authenticity. When Margaret Fowke sent some Hindostanni airs to her father she wrote ‘you may be assured they are exact’, and when she sent them to Sophia Plowden, the latter replied ‘how you can note them down so correctly I cannot conceive’. Fowke also sent a book of Hindostanni airs to Warren Hastings, who replied, ‘I have had the pleasure to hear them all played by a very able performer, and can attest that they are genuine transcripts of the original music, of which I have a perfect remembrance’; what makes this assertion of authenticity the more striking is Hastings’s statement in the same letter that ‘I have always protested against every interpolation of European taste in the recital of the music of Hindostann’.¹⁰³

Vienna and British India are odd choices for the purpose of direct comparison, and audiences in Vienna very likely did not expect to hear Turkish music, just as transcriptions of Hindostanni music would have been expected not to deviate significantly from their original sources. But there is another problem: the cast of characters wheeled in to advance the authenticity argument is at best nebulous. Warren Hastings, first Governor-General of India, is by far the best-known. Sophia Plowden, who played the harpsichord and assisted with transcriptions of Hindostanni music, was the wife of Richard Plowden, a future director of the East India Company. Margaret Fowke left England in the 1870s, probably with the express purpose of finding a (British) husband in India. She married John

¹⁰² Ibid., 23.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 24.

Benn, who relocated to England in 1786 with his new wife and £80 000 profit from trade in opium and diamonds.¹⁰⁴ Hardly a cast of dependable (let alone authoritative) sources, and certainly not one celebrated for showing respect and integrity in their dealings with the colonised.

In a second generation of transcriptions made in England, Cook regards the removal of infelicities (i.e. traces of the ‘other’) as evidence of overt domestication. Here, too, domestication need not imply appropriation:

It would make at least as much sense to interpret it as asserting that the values of the English glee are universal beneath the distinctive national clothing of different musical traditions—a message that would be more consistent with Enlightenment thought than with the colonial ideology for which the British empire was at this precise time the world laboratory.¹⁰⁵

Cook’s reading presupposes a tidy separation between Enlightenment thought and colonial ideology, as if they functioned in unrelated and sealed off discursive spheres—an ahistorical premise that much postcolonial and decolonial theory have refuted (I return to this question in Chapter 4). In the closing section of his chapter, Cook considers Haydn’s Scottish folksong settings to argue that even the so-called father of the symphony engaged in some ‘CPS-busting’ of his own, leading him to conclude that Haydn’s encounter with the Scottish air and the willingness

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 24. The biographical information is from Kate Smith, ‘Warfield Park: Longing, Belonging and the Country House’, *East India Company at Home, 1757-1857* (April 2013), 1-17, <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/warfield-park-berkshire/>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 30.

to deface CPS conventions evince respect and openness towards the music of the ‘other’.¹⁰⁶

But why draw the Scottish air and Haydn into a chapter on the Hindostanni air, even if, as Cook points out, there are obvious stylistic similarities between them? Perhaps because the argument demanded more empirical evidence than was permitted by the available sources, leading Cook to resort to the CPS as the only non-variable in an argument that had to demonstrate how Hindostanni music transformed the CPS. But even if the available sources are taken at face value, the question remains as to why Cook finds it necessary to devote so much intellectual energy to only those aspects that portray cross-cultural encounter in a positive light—a question that is all the more pressing in the comparative absence of a critical postcolonial musicology.

To maintain that a ‘resistance inflection’ has been largely absent from musicological writing hardly amounts to a controversial position. Musicology, as Paul Harper-Scott has observed, is ‘perhaps the most conservative of the humanities disciplines’.¹⁰⁷ Harper-Scott’s point is that ‘musicology has never engaged at a radical level with either Marx or Freud’, a list to which, this thesis argues, must be added also the postcolonial theory and decolonial thought which fall under the heading of resistance and critique of a neocolonial status quo. As Shohat and others were debating the temporal and geographic limits of postcolonialism, musicology had other things on its mind. The heated exchange between Lawrence Kramer and Garry Tomlinson was to discover which of them

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction and William Walton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6 (see note 15).

represented the real positivist, a debate that doubled also as a mud-slinging contest over whether musicology or ethnomusicology provided the surest basis for musical thought.¹⁰⁸ Shohat's question initiated a critical reevaluation of postcolonialism that interrogated the 'politics of location', the flattening of different types of imperialism and colonialism into a single conceptual category that seemingly wanted to move beyond anti-colonial sentiments and the violent nationalisms they stood accused of fomenting. The Tomlinson-Kramer debate, meanwhile, was followed by yet other acrimonious exchanges. Susan McClary accused the avant-garde of elitism and hermeticism, to which Pieter van den Toorn retorted that the true culprits were in fact new musicologists and postmodernists, who 'seem to deny the ability of "ordinary people" ... to inform themselves about music'.¹⁰⁹ When musicologists got round to critiquing Said (still the only postcolonialist whose thought has entered musicology with anything approaching regularity), their enterprise had little in common with the general tenor of critiques advanced by Dirlik and Ahmad. Cook has even invented an acronym for the uncontested reception Said's work received in musicology: the RSM, which is meant to refer to the Received Saidian Model (not the usual Royal Schools of Music one intuitively associates with that acronym).¹¹⁰

Pursuing a somewhat different line, Jonathan Bellman bemoans the reduction of orientalism to 'a single, damning idea', and the

¹⁰⁸ Gary Tomlinson, 'Musical Pasts and Postmodern Musicologies: A Response to Lawrence Kramer', *Current Musicology*, 53 (1993), 18-24 and Lawrence Kramer, 'Music Criticism and the Postmodernist Turn: In Contrary Motion with Gary Tomlinson', *Current Musicology*, 53 (1993), 25-35.

¹⁰⁹ Van Den Toorn, *Music, Politics and the Academy*, 228.

¹¹⁰ Cook, 'Encountering the Other, Redefining the Self', 15.

disappearance of ‘earlier and more respectable meanings’ attributed to orientalism—meanings ‘that referred to academic fields of study and branches of knowledge’.¹¹¹ In the same article, Bellman issues a few reductions of his own:

Postcolonial criticism, generally speaking, seeks to identify and resistantly read artworks and documents in which an ‘oriental’ flavour or undercurrent is present and thereby working in a subliminal, non-neutral way. Given the relationship of postcolonial music criticism to the broader area of cultural criticism, such ‘oriental’ spice is rarely considered to be benign or beneficial.

The proliferation of mixed metaphors suggests a writer barely able to conceal his disdain for ‘postcolonial critics’ espousing an agenda incommensurate with his own. Bellman’s project, correspondingly, is to defend Said (who had passed away eight years before) against his devotees, specifically the ‘doctrinaire postcolonialism’ practiced by Matthew Head.¹¹² For Bellman, Said has long surpassed the stifling confines of binarisms and a persistent preoccupation with the violence effected by colonial exploits.¹¹³ His is the Said of a peculiarly detached contrapuntal consciousness, who inhabits two worlds with equal comfort; the Said whose ‘eye was focussed on the colonialist implications of Western ideologies’ and the Said who ‘also had a deep personal investment in Western culture’: ‘Said’s political activism reflected the one and his engagement with Western art and literature testified to the importance of the other, and the two impulses

¹¹¹ Jonathan Bellman, ‘Musical Voyages and their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 94:3 (2011), 417-418.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 428.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 421-427.

cross-fertilised each other in interesting ways'.¹¹⁴ For Bellman, this 'interesting cross-fertilisation' of the political and the cultural seemingly enables their dissociation. And thus, Bellman reminds the reader that Said, when he put pen to paper as a music critic, 'often did not address issues of East and West, of exile, and of appropriation'.¹¹⁵

The Said Bellman invokes is in a sense a far more sedate postcolonial critic than the Said energising the work of Head or Locke. But the pertinent point is that Bellman, Head and Locke have not looked much beyond the Said of *Orientalism*, whereas musicological work that correlates with Boehmer's second inflection of the postcolonial is virtually non-existent. The picture presented in Beard and Gloag's *Musicology: the Key Concepts* is symptomatic of this theoretical deficiency. The entry on 'Post-colonial/Postcolonialism' is comparatively thin, not exceeding more than a few lines. Said, Bhabha and Spivak are the only theorists mentioned, with the latter—significantly—reduced to the Spivak of local knowledges and subalternity.¹¹⁶

This thesis is neither about musical orientalism, nor about music and race, music and gender, or any other sequence of nouns attached to a musicology charged with socio-political impotence or intellectual irrelevance. As it relates to music and musicology, the postcolonial will be used in the strong sense, not as an event or condition reducible to one of a list of omissions of which musicology stands accused, nor as an extra-

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 421.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 103-104. At the time of finalising this thesis, a revised and expanded edition of *Musicology: The Key Concepts* appeared (2016), although the section in question did not alter significantly, and the theoretical gloss of postcolonialism has remained completely unchanged.

musicological priority or appendage used in conjunction with music and musicology (musicology and postcolonialism; musicology and race; musicology and difference).¹¹⁷ The chapters that follow work at the intersection of interpretation and the institutionalised discourse of music, where these might be brought closer to Boehmer's second inflection of the postcolonial.

In the next chapter, this second inflection will reside in the act of reading or interpretation, and will proceed through the interlocking of the 'here and now' with the 'then' and 'there'. Rather than an interpretive manoeuvre brought to bear extraneously on the musical text, Reich's *Different Trains* is itself based on a spatio-temporal blurring of past and present, self and other. The piece performs the irreconcilability of, on the one hand, a vicarious autobiographical fantasy of the unscarred 'self' who reimagines herself to have been a Jew in Auschwitz, and, on the other, the Auschwitz survivor who, as William Niederland has observed, cannot forget because he or she 'no longer has reliable mechanisms of repression at their command'.¹¹⁸ In the third chapter, J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Philip Glass's 2005 opera of the same title underpin a wide-ranging exploration of different ways of thinking and occupying space through music, interpretation and response. I draw on the work of Deleuze and Guattari to distinguish between thought as occupation (what

¹¹⁷ It is worth noting that colonialism, imperialism and postcolonialism were not on the list of omissions with which Joseph Kerman charged musicology in 1985. Kerman's list was restricted to 'post-structuralism, deconstruction and serious feminism'. See his *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 17.

¹¹⁸ Niederland is quoted in W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction: With Essays on Alfred Andersen, Jean Amery and Peter Weiss*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 2003), 153.

they call State Thought) and thought as experimental digression (what they call nomad thinking). Chapter 4 questions institutionalised forms of resistance and response in the context of imperialism, the university and the disciplinarity of music. By taking a longer view of disciplinary and institutional change, the chapter will endeavour to show how, over time, response and resistance might become integral to the operational conditions of the very system they had set out to oppose. The modern university and the disciplinarity of music furnish sites where the seemingly irreconcilable domains of, on the one hand, spirit, culture and aesthetics and, on the other, bureaucratisation and epistemic violence, interact through resistance and collusion. Chapter 5 uses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa and Philip Miller's *Rewind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* (2006) to explore both aesthetics and writing as loci of response pressed into the service of national reconciliation. The chapter will consider shame, violence and reconciliation as possible registers of response to histories of national division, and grapples with the impossibility of finding an adequate response, the impossibility of ever doing justice through writing, and the impossibility of not writing/composing. The thesis epilogue is an experiment in response in the form of personal correspondence between myself and the South African musicologist and novelist, Stephanus Muller. The correspondence is both recognition and negotiation—of the institutionalised limitations placed upon scholarship, and an attempt to get out, to respond, but also to explore what happens when what we do as academics becomes open to critical voices un beholden to the hidden codes and ethical norms that structure scholarly engagement. In other words, it

attempts to make visible the university, our scholarly activities and the bodies—of knowledge, of the living and the dead, the author, the interlocutor and the friend—that constitute them.

Chapter 2

‘A stony invitation to reflect’: *Different Trains*, Musical Document and Musical Reality

In Different Trains (1988), Mr. Reich went the full distance and earned his place among the great composers of the century. For here is where he solved the other problem. He has composed the only adequate musical response — one of the few adequate artistic responses in any medium — to the Holocaust. With famous and flatulent self-importance, Adorno announced that after Auschwitz, poetry had become impossible. The kind of art Adorno upheld — pretentiously abstract, ostentatiously alienated and self-involved — surely did ring hollow after the art-loving Nazis, co-opting the masterpieces of the past, had unmasked the moral contingency of high ‘humanistic’ aesthetics... Different Trains does it, well, differently... There is just the perception that while this happened here, that happened there, and a stony invitation to reflect.

Richard Taruskin¹¹⁹

Prologue: ‘While this happened here, that happened there’

Steve Reich’s *Different Trains* for string quartet and tape (1988) is negative autobiography borne of identification. ‘What if’, to paraphrase the question that provided the creative impulse for the piece, ‘what if I, an American Jewish boy, were riding on different trains in 1939-1942,

¹¹⁹ Richard Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 101-102.

European trains very different to those I was riding in America?’¹²⁰

Different Trains earned the composer his first Grammy in 1990 and subsequently the unqualified praise of America’s foremost musicologist and music critic. ‘So successful a mapping of structure and meaning, so thorough an interpenetration of sonic material and conceptual metaphor’, declared Richard Taruskin, ‘is the mark of a master composer’.¹²¹ Reich’s piece is a synchronic exploration of train journeys he took as a young boy between Los Angeles and New York, with others not taken. *It* sets to music these spatio-temporal coexistences in three movements arranged chronologically as a time before, during and after the war, thereby introducing into Reich’s autobiographical fantasy a sense of passing, linear time. Each movement incorporates prerecorded train whistles, sirens, and speech fragments as markers of place and individuation: snatches of Holocaust survivors’ testimonies, interspersed with voices of a train porter, even the voice of Reich’s governess who accompanied him on his boyhood journeys. Reich took care to choose speech fragments of Holocaust survivors roughly his age, who, after the war, immigrated to America. ‘In the third movement’, he explains, ‘the Holocaust survivors tell of the war

¹²⁰ Reich describes the inception of *Different Trains* as follows: ‘The idea for the piece comes from my childhood. When I was one year old, my parents separated. My mother moved to Los Angeles and my father stayed in New York. Since they arranged divided custody, I traveled back and forth by train frequently between New York and Los Angeles from 1939 to 1942, accompanied by my governess. While these trips were exciting and romantic at the time, I now look back and think that, if I had been in Europe during this period, as a Jew I would have had to ride on very different trains. With this in mind, I wanted to make a piece that would accurately reflect the whole situation’. Steve Reich, *Writings on Music: 1965-2000*, ed. Paul Hillier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 151.

¹²¹ Taruskin, *The Danger of Music*, 102. Ironically, Taruskin’s review of *Different Trains* bulges with ostentatious claims of the kind he attributes—unsubstantiated—to Adorno: ‘great composers of the century’, ‘only adequate musical response’, ‘the mark of a “master” composer’.

ending and coming to America... They follow a geographical path in the United States similar to the one that I took as a child—but in a totally different human context'.¹²²

In the year that Reich composed *Different Trains*, decades of systematic oppression of the Palestinian peoples led to the eruption of what became known as the first intifada. That same year (1988), a liberal-leftist Israeli newspaper published a piece on collective memory and the Holocaust, written by a noted Jewish public intellectual. Yehuda Elkana's article of 2 March 1988, 'The need to forget', rekindled a fierce debate, and one never far from Jewish consciousness:

I see no greater threat to the future of the State of Israel than the fact that the Holocaust has systematically and forcefully penetrated the consciousness of the Israeli public, even that large segment that did not experience the Holocaust... For the first time I understand the seriousness of what we were doing when, decade after decade, we sent every Israeli child on repeated visits to 'Yad Vashem'. What did we want those tender youths to do with the experience? We declaimed, insensitively and harshly, and without explanation: 'Remember!' 'Zechor!' To what purpose?¹²³

Elkana and 'The need to forget' relate to Reich and *Different Trains* as autobiographical other and antithesis: Elkana was a living embodiment of the young boy that Reich never was, and of the young boy that *Different Trains* imagined him to have been. Born in 1934 in the former Yugoslavia, Elkana had been Reich's senior by two years. He went on to study physics and mathematics at the Hebrew University before completing a PhD in the

¹²² Reich, *Writings on Music*, 181-182.

¹²³ Yehuda Elkana, 'The need to forget', *Ha'aretz*, March 2nd, 1988, http://www.einsteinforum.de/fileadmin/einsteinforum/downloads/victims_elkana.pdf. For a discussion of the article, see Daniel Gutwein, 'The Privatization of the Holocaust: Memory, Historiography, and Politics', *Israel Studies*, 14:1 (2009), 42-45.

history and philosophy of science at Brandeis. After teaching for a year at Harvard, Elkana took up a post at the Hebrew University where he subsequently led the Department of History and Philosophy of Science before relocating to Hungary in the 1990s, where he was appointed rector of the European Central University. In 1944 Elkana was taken prisoner and transported along with his family to Auschwitz. Their survival, as one writer observed, occurred 'by sheer accident': 'As they were being lined up for the gas chambers, SS guards pulled them out of the line and sent them in a train with other Jews to clean up Allied bomb damage in Austrian cities'.¹²⁴ Elkana, the man who survived by sheer accident, never visited Yad Vashem; nor did he follow the post-war political trials, including that of Eichmann. Rather than scheduled memorials and public acts of intentional remembrance, his was a private mourning. When Elkana penned his article in 1988, then, he wrote as a Holocaust survivor, but also as someone deeply perturbed by more recent events and what he perceived to be a potential slide from national victimology into the ostensibly just policy of a transmitted national consciousness through a militant commitment to existential struggle. 'Today I see no more important political and educational task for the leaders of this nation', Elkana concluded,

than to take their stand on the side of life, to dedicate themselves to creating our future, and not to be preoccupied from morning to night, with symbols, ceremonies, and lessons of the Holocaust... I know full well that no nation does or should totally forget its past, with all that is included therein...

¹²⁴ The passage is from an obituary that appeared in *The Telegraph*. 'Professor Yehuda Elkana', *The Telegraph*, December 11th, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/9737917/Professor-Yehuda-Elkana.html>.

What I am trying is to displace the Holocaust from being the central axis of our national experience.¹²⁵

In 2004 Philip Roth published *The Plot against America*, a novel that explores what Walter Benn Michaels describes as ‘an alternative or counterfactual history’ of the USA: a history of ‘a US that follows in Nazi Germany’s footsteps’.¹²⁶ Like *Different Trains* 16 years earlier, Roth’s novel answers to a ‘what if’ question: what if Charles Lindbergh became president and not Frank Roosevelt, and what if Lindbergh’s USA declined to enter the war, instead charting a systematically anti-Semitic course for the USA? To be sure, Roth’s novel is fiction, but the conceit gains plausibility in the form of a recognisable cast of historical figures: the narrator, a Jewish boy, is himself named Philip Roth, and ‘transplanted into a parallel time’.¹²⁷ Roth’s alternative history, the separate amenities, the lynching, the quotas – all of this happened, Michaels points out, but ‘it happened to black people, almost never to Jews’.¹²⁸ Likewise, what *Different Trains* narrates, the fractured memories and the horror of human beings carted like dispensable cargo to death camps—all of this happened, but not to Reich, and not to the Jewish nation in 1988.

What, then, is the object of the summons to reflection that Taruskin hears in the piece? If it is to reflect on the Holocaust, then Elkana’s question above is pertinent: to what purpose? Which subjectivities and solidarities are enabled by Reich’s autobiographical filiation with the

¹²⁵ Elkana, ‘The Need to Forget’.

¹²⁶ Walter Benn Michaels, ‘Plots Against America: Neoliberalism and Antiracism’, *American Literary History*, 18:2 (2006), 288.

¹²⁷ The phrase belongs to Michael Wood, who reviewed Roth’s novel for the *London Review of Books*. See his ‘Just Folks’, *London Review of Books*, November 4th, 2004, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n21/michael-wood/just-folks>.

¹²⁸ Michaels, ‘Plots Against America’, 289.

Jewish other that he never was? Whose wounds are these to remember, and whose to forget—in the present, the past, as lived knowledge, memory, identity, or history? How might one hear a piece such as *Different Trains* in 1988, in the present, and against the backdrop of the uneven realities of the postcolonial? In what follows, *Different Trains* provides the environment for setting to work these questions inside a complex network of interlocking histories, geographies, temporalities and autobiographies. First, before turning at length to *Different Trains*, it is necessary to situate the manifestation of musical minimalism in relation to certain of the central themes running through this thesis, namely the postcolonial and musical responses to violence.

Musical minimalism: Debates, monuments and transitions

For the purposes of this thesis, I use minimalism specifically with reference to ‘repetitive music, in which melodic or rhythmic figures are incessantly repeated, often with some gradual change taking place, like lengthening or phase-shifting’.¹²⁹ This working definition is nothing more than a practical solution to an unresolved—perhaps unresolvable—set of questions. What is musical minimalism? When did it become post-

¹²⁹ Keith Potter, Kyle Gann and Pwyll ap Siôn, introduction to *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, eds. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann and Pwyll ap Siôn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 3.

minimalism (or postminimalism)?¹³⁰ Where lies its stylistic antecedents, and whose music best exemplifies a minimalist aesthetic?

For an aesthetic claiming in its most rigorous applications to be devoid of history, intentionality and semantic content, minimalism is unusually riven with contested ideas and identities. If the standard literature is anything to go by, credible accounts of minimalism commence with obligatory explorations of unresolved disputes swirling about the label, beginning with ‘the question of whom to include under the minimalist rubric... [And] whether to use the rubric at all’.¹³¹ One can say this much without courting controversy: the cast of composers most frequently associated with musical minimalism consists of four white American males, namely La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich and Philip Glass.¹³²

Efforts to attribute stylistic characteristics or lines of influence have only aggravated already precarious relations among the so-called ‘Fab Four’.¹³³ Reich has claimed as his own the discovery of tape phasing, although there is little doubt that he has understated Riley’s part in the allegedly accidental discovery of what is arguably the sonic signature of

¹³⁰ Kyle Gann observes that post-minimalism often referred to the later work of Reich and Glass, marking their departure from minimalism itself. Postminimalism has been used to refer to a group of composers whose music adheres more closely to early minimalism, although they belong to a younger generation. Kyle Gann, ‘A Technically Definable Stream of Postminimalism, its Characteristics and Meaning’, in *Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, 42.

¹³¹ Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 17.

¹³² Keith Potter notes that La Monte Young is singular amongst the four in having accepted ‘minimalism’ as an accurate characterisation of his early work. Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

¹³³ The label has been applied—although playfully—by Edward Strickland, and has occasionally resurfaced in the literature. See K. Robert Schwarz, *Minimalists* (London: Phaidon, 1996), 12.

early minimalism.¹³⁴ Edward Strickland's description is probably more accurate: that Reich in actual fact turned Riley's 'anything-goes tape techniques' into a system or, as the composer would write in 1968, a musical process in which what is audible is both the unfolding of a gradual process and the music itself.¹³⁵ The question of whom to credit with first using minimalism with reference to music has also spawned disagreement, with Reich opting for Michael Nyman, and Glass for Tom Johnson.¹³⁶

General unease with the label is understandable in the light of the derogatory characterisations bound up with its reception history. Minimalism, lamented music critic Annalyn Swan in 1983, 'is emotion-first, feel-good music that depends, at least for part of its effect, on high amplification and a glittery, glassy surface', before musing 'how the reception history of minimal music would have been different had his name been, say, Philip Mudd'.¹³⁷ There have been other detractors, notably Wim Mertens, Peter Kivy, the post-war serialists mostly concentrated at

¹³⁴ The truncated title of what is now widely regarded as the first tape work in which Reich discovered phasing survived in a longer version at least until 1968 as *It's gonna Rain, or, Meet Brother Walter in Union Square after Listening to Terry Riley*. See Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 164-165. Reich's debt to Riley is discussed at some length in Ross Cole, 'Illusion/Anti-Illusion: The Music of Steve Reich in Context, 1965-1968' (Master's diss., The University of York, 2010), 38-41.

¹³⁵ Strickland, *Minimalism*, 285.

¹³⁶ Schwarz, *Minimalists*, 8. Kyle Gann notes Tom Johnson's claim to being the first critic to apply the label to music, whereas Strickland dates its first use in relation to music in a 1965 article by Barbara Rosen. Strickland, like Gann and Glass, agrees that Tom Johnson used 'minimalism' to speak about a school of composers rather than, as in the other cases, with reference to an individual. Jonathan W. Bernard has in turn credited Michael Nyman with first using minimalism in conjunction with music. See Kyle Gann, 'Thankless Attempts at a Definition', in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, eds. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (London: Continuum, 2007), 299. See also Jonathan W. Bernard, 'The Minimalist Aesthetic in the Plastic Arts and in Music', *Perspectives of New Music*, 31:1 (1993), 87. A comprehensive discussion on the question of definitions can be found in Edward Strickland, 'Minimalism: T', *Writings on Glass: Essays, Interviews, Criticism*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 113-127.

¹³⁷ Swan is quoted in Ian Quinn, 'Minimal Challenges: Process Music and the Uses of Formalist Analysis', *Contemporary Music Review*, 25:3 (2006), 284.

Yale and Princeton, and Elliott Carter, who defended his refusal of minimalism as a refusal ‘to be advertised to’.¹³⁸ His indictment went further: ‘[minimalists] were not aware of the larger dimensions of life. One also hears constant repetition in the speeches of Hitler, and in advertising’.¹³⁹ John Cage, too, took exception to the popular proclivities inherent in later musical minimalism, whereas Richard Toop saw ‘the “transparent impenetrability” of recent music by composers such as Glass and Adams [to be]...a result of their having acquiesced to the culture industry’s demand for consumable objects’.¹⁴⁰ Strickland tellingly opens his 1993 book on the origins of minimalism with a reminder that sentiments about the death of minimalism are hopelessly out of touch with reality. The easy integration of minimalism into everything from pop rock and New Age to commercials for breakfast cereals, perfume and life insurance bespeaks a different scenario, one characterised by ‘the proliferation of vacuously decorative, sloppily portentous, and fatuously eclectic art’.¹⁴¹

One way of understanding the severity of these reactions emerges when they are considered in the discursive contexts of musical modernism and tradition. As Strickland writes, ‘the later history of minimalism marks the transition of twentieth-century art from its waning as an autonomous and implicit critique of mass culture to its demystification and acceptance

¹³⁸ Quoted in Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 62.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 5, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 395.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 10.

¹⁴¹ Strickland, *Minimalism*, 11-13 (the quote is on p.13).

as but another commodity'.¹⁴² During the early 1980s, Wim Mertens enlisted minimalism in a grand dialectic scheme encompassing nothing less than the history of music, philosophy, society and economics. Detecting in minimalist music all the social and psychic deprivations Adorno had reserved for so-called popular music and jazz, Mertens's book-long assessment—one of the first devoted to American minimalism—was largely a scathing affair. Mertens structured his argument along dialectical lines drawn from Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music*.¹⁴³ Alongside Schoenberg, Mertens positions serialism, the alienated subject as the only ethical proposition and the continued possibility of dialectical motion. On the opposing side he mentions Stravinsky, 'all non-dialectical music' including American minimalists and their philosophical co-perpetrators of libidinal economics (Deleuze, Guattari and Lyotard). The failure Mertens attributes to minimalism and libidinal economy is their refusal of dialectical motion. In other words, whereas the dialectical composer proceeds via negation, that negation is always already the renewal of dialectics itself, and therefore also the renewal of possible synthesis. Dialectics, thus, guarantees conditions of possibility within which synthesis might—and never does—occur.¹⁴⁴ Rather than keeping open

¹⁴² Ibid., 13.

¹⁴³ Elsewhere Mertens describes the difference between dialectical and non-dialectical music as follows: 'Repetitive music is mono-functional and sounds are not programmed to achieve a final solution of the opposition between material and structure. In dialectical music the real drama lies in the opposition between form and content and the final resolution of this opposition'. Wim Mertens, 'Basic Concepts of Minimal Music', in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, 309-310.

¹⁴⁴ Mertens explains the process thus: 'This negative dialectic reacts against the type of dialectic which leads to a synthesis because this synthesis is seen as an impossible one. But because this negative dialectic views these contradictions as if they can still bring about a synthesis, this resistance is still dialectical'. Wim Mertens, *American Minimal*

possibility as negativity (and here lies the problem for him), libidinal economics renounces dialectics in a move which recognises that ‘in modern capitalism opposition has become useless, since it is immediately absorbed by the system’.¹⁴⁵

Elsewhere Mertens has raised the stakes still higher, to encompass the entire history of Western music. There are, he says, two types of repetition that must be distinguished in the ‘global musical context’: ‘American repetition and repetition in classical music’.¹⁴⁶ The opposing sides dialectically structuring the history of music are thereby seemingly established: Europe and America, a dialectical struggle that—geoaesthetically—coincides with a struggle over global dominance between two regimes of empire, the first in decline (Britain and Europe), the second on the rise (America).

In Mertens’s schematic of European versus American repetition, Europe is a cipher for so-called classical or traditional music, for music that is ‘teleological or end-orientated, because all [such] musical events result in a directed end or synthesis’.¹⁴⁷ Above all else, European repetition is always historical in that it ‘appears as a reference to what has gone before’, whereas American minimalism claims to be without history and liberated from the constraints of ‘clock-time’.¹⁴⁸ ‘It is this non-historical

Music, La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, trans. J. Hautekiet (London: Kahn and Averill, 1983), 115.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁴⁶ Mertens, ‘Basic Concepts of Minimal Music’, 307.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 308-309.

character of repetitive music’, Mertens concludes, ‘that is the real negation of subjectivity’.¹⁴⁹

These earlier critics of minimalism, who wrote mostly in the 80s and 90s, opposed minimalist music on account of its uncritical embrace of late capitalism, its succumbing to immediate and ‘feel-good’ gratification, its seemingly hapless exploitation of musical ‘others’, and the Fukuyamaesque claims of post-historicity that, tacitly, are advanced by an aesthetic claiming to be without meaning and teleology. But minimalism, even in its later and more commercialised guises, also had its scholarly advocates, as the epigraph to the current chapter makes apparent. Taruskin has celebrated the minimalists as ‘the first truly and authentically and fundamentally and exclusively twentieth-century generation of musicians’, an opinion predicated on the full absorption in their music of the technological advances made in recording and communication.¹⁵⁰

What these critics and devotees of minimalist music share, however, is the notion of a break with history, with a Western tradition and with dialectics, a break which is interpreted differently by each side. For all the vocal disdain for serialism and European musical modernism, the ideological allegiances of early minimalism might just as well be inverted, so that minimalism—rather than repudiating the austere formalism of serial composition—might be construed as a renewal of those very same aesthetic strategies. It is this position that, as we have seen above, was adopted by critics who equated the main-stream integration of

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 312.

¹⁵⁰ Taruskin, *Oxford History*, vol. 5, 352.

minimalism with its critical blunting—a situation that implied a break with a critical tradition of twentieth-century (European) music.

But what if the notion of a ‘break’ is itself placed under scrutiny? It is here that the introduction of a postcolonial reading of minimalism might be productive. To date, there exists no in-depth or systematic consideration of minimalism in general, and musical minimalism in particular, that directly relates them to postcolonial concerns. Minimalism is more readily thought of in critical and theoretical proximity to postmodernism, especially given its affinities with pop art, its disregard for conventional boundaries between different genres, and a self-conscious rejection of high modernism and serialism.¹⁵¹

The figure of a ‘postcolonial hero’ makes a brief and perplexing appearance in Robert Fink’s reading of the Suzuki Method, an approach to musical pedagogy based entirely on repetition.¹⁵² ‘As details of the Suzuki method became known’, writes Fink, ‘it became clear that these child prodigies were nurtured by—and ready to nurture in —America a Zen-like culture of repetitive listening and performance so intense that it had no analogue in the world of European art music’.¹⁵³ Fink, of course, finds such an analogue in ‘the exact contemporaneous rise of minimalism’, a reading strengthened by the unparalleled success Suzuki’s teaching methods had in

¹⁵¹ Already on the second page of Frederic Jameson’s seminal article on postmodernism and the cultural logic of late capitalism, Philip Glass and Terry Riley are mentioned as exemplary postmodernists. See Frederic Jameson, ‘Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism’, *New Left Review*, 146 (July-August 1984), 54. See also Kenneth Gloag, *Postmodernism in Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 14.

¹⁵² Fink, *Repeating Ourselves*, 234.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 212.

the USA of the 1960s.¹⁵⁴ For Fink, it is in Suzuki's reappropriation of Western classical music 'in the humble pedagogical repetitions of Talent Education, that we can actually hear the musical subaltern speak'.¹⁵⁵ It is not clear who this 'subaltern' is, and by whose voice he or she is enunciated. That Suzuki and his methods came from Japan, conquered music pedagogy in America, and preached an ethos of solidarity and selflessness, hardly render the son of a wealthy factory owner who taught at the Imperial School of Music in Japan a postcolonial hero.¹⁵⁶

Far more convincing and evocative is Lloyd Whitesell's article about the subtle reassertion of whiteness as the normative position of a cultural avant-garde. Whitesell reinterprets what Mertens and Strickland regard as the moment of failure (the disruption of dialectics) as precisely the inverse: 'It would seem that the avant-garde urge for clearing away traditional gestures of willpower does not rule out the revised expression of a dynamic will. Perhaps what is making itself known is the "futurist" urge to begin building anew'.¹⁵⁷ In other words, emptying music of intentionality, of climaxes, tonal and narrative trajectory, and dispensing with the regulatory grids of serialism, might also be construed as a ground-clearing exercise in preparation for beginning all over again. This reading gains in plausibility, Whitesell argues, 'when one looks beyond minimalism proper to its aftermath. Steve Reich's career... progresses from experiments in

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. The American reception of the Suzuki Method was initially laced with fears about 'assembly-line production' and an exchange of properly Western values emphasising individuality and musical expressivity for what *The Times* dubbed a (presumably musical) 'Invasion from the Orient' (218, 216).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 234.

¹⁵⁶ Fink agrees that Suzuki makes for an unlikely 'postcolonialist hero', but nonetheless persists with his reading for the reasons mentioned above. Ibid., 234-235.

¹⁵⁷ Lloyd Whitesell, 'White Noise: Race and Erasure in the Cultural Avant-Garde', *American Music*, 19:2 (2001), 181-182.

minimalist austerity to a more expansive postminimal expressivism'.¹⁵⁸
This expansiveness is evidenced to a higher degree still in Glass's
postminimal oeuvre, which, at present, includes ten symphonies and over
two dozen operas. For Whitesell, then, there is no break, only renewal and
continuation: 'postminimal music has once again embraced the traditional
modes of Western enterprise: the heroic, the teleological, and the
monumental'.¹⁵⁹

Historical events, the heroic, memorialization and memory are
ubiquitous programmatic motifs in postminimalist art. 'The 1980s and
1990s', writes Daniel Abramson, 'have been surprisingly fertile decades for
monument building in the United States'.¹⁶⁰ This observation is apposite,
not only for the light it sheds on the cultural ethos that very likely
influenced the inception of *Different Trains*, but because Abramson's
consideration of Maya Linn's monuments singles out the reorientation of
60s minimalism in ways pertinent to musical postminimalism. 'Lin's
monuments, and particularly the Vietnam Veterans Memorial', he argues,
'popularized the difficult formal vocabulary of minimalism, subverting its
effects and thus making it accessible to a wider audience'.¹⁶¹ The same can
be said of Reich and especially Glass. Like Linn's monuments, their music
'repackage[s] the difficult, the divisive, and the controversial into loci of
popular satisfaction and conciliation', of which the ubiquity of their

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 182.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Besides the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial (1980) which is the subject of
Abramson's article, he lists a number of monuments belonging to the same period,
including 'astronauts and police, Joe Louis and Duke Ellington, Korean War and women
veterans... and countless other subjects' among the monumentalised of this period'.
Daniel Abramson, 'Maya Lin and the 1960s: Monuments, Time Lines, and Minimalism',
Critical Inquiry, 22:4 (1996), 679.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 705.

trademark sonic signatures in film music are prime examples.¹⁶² Carolyn Dean has also remarked on the special affinity between minimalism and testimony within a larger psychic and social context which has witnessed a remarkable upsurge in public testimony.¹⁶³

Reich's early tape compositions already carry the hallmark of documentary and testimonial material, with Sumanth Gopinath describing *Come Out* 'as the most prominent historical memorial for the legal and political drama known as the Harlem Six case'.¹⁶⁴ *Come Out* furnishes as well a case study in the political and ethical questions arising at the intersections of artistic enterprise, commercial success and the aestheticisation of testimony. Reich's involvement in a benefit concert intended to raise funds for the retrial of six black youths wrongfully convicted of the murder of Margit Sugar in 1964 was in the first instance accidental, and arguably would have passed by unnoticed had the ensuing legal battles of what became known as the Harlem Six, as well as *Come Out*, not acquired such prominence in their respective social spheres. The invitation came from Truman Nelson, and Reich accepted it on condition that he might use the materials for a piece if anything compelling turned up in the many hours of tape-recorded conversations with the six youths which Nelson subsequently handed over to him. In a footnote to Gopinath's chapter we read that Reich on several occasions

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Carolyn Dean, 'Minimalism and Victim Testimony', *History and Theory*, 49:4 (2010), 85-99. Dean notes the existence of a general consensus on the past three decades (she is writing in 2010) as an 'era of witnessing' (87).

¹⁶⁴ Sumanth Gopinath, 'The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich's *Come Out*', in *Sound Commitments: Avant-garde Music and the 1960s*, ed. Robert Adlington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 121 (a discussion of the Harlem Six retrial and the series of agitations that precipitated the implication of the six youths can be found on pp.124 -128).

misrepresented the role of *Come Out*, as well as the outcome of the court battles that ensued, suggesting that ‘the piece performed its role “successfully... the kids did have a retrial”’.¹⁶⁵ Reich, unlike Truman Nelson, never donated proceeds to help finance the retrial. Nor did he pay royalties to Daniel Ham—one of the Harlem Six—despite basing his entire piece on a sampled phrase spoken by Ham.¹⁶⁶

Reich followed up his early documentary tape pieces with numerous explorations of musical processes, amongst which are *Piano Phase*, *Clapping Music*, *Drumming*, and *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (which won him his second Grammy). Along with works such as Young’s *Draw a Straight Line and Follow it*, *Poem for Chairs, Tables, Benches, etc.*, Riley’s *In C* and Glass’s *Music in Twelve Parts*, these instrumental pieces epitomise the ideals of early minimalism: abstract, austere, stripped of narrative content, dialectical tension and resolution. Reich’s discovery of his Jewish identity in the mid-70s, however, paved the way for a wave of programmatic pieces in the 80s and beyond, whereas Glass in the same period began exploring operatic theatre as a medium conducive to loosely biographical narratives of, mainly, historical figures. Although belonging to a younger generation, John Adams embarked on the first of several collaborations with Peter Sellars in the 1980s, resulting in what the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 142 (note 28). Reich later implied that one of the six was indeed guilty of committing the murder, although there had in actual fact been no conclusive evidence of the kind. For a recent consideration of the case, see Carl Suddler, “In all our Harlems”: policing black youth and the case of the Harlem Six’, paper delivered at the 128th meeting of the American Historical Association, Washington DC, January 2014 (an abstract is available at <https://aha.confex.com/aha/2014/webprogram/Paper14180.html>). In personal email correspondence received on 27 September 2015, Suddler informed me that his subsequent research into the case revealed that Robert Rice, the individual implicated, had been released in 1988.

¹⁶⁶ Gopinath, ‘The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich’s *Come Out*’, 142.

composer described as ‘the first opera ever to use a staged “media event” as the basis for its dramatic structure’.¹⁶⁷ *The Death of Klinghoffer* followed in 1991, and in 2005 Adams and Sellars collaborated on *Doctor Atomic*, with a libretto drawn entirely from ‘original sources’.¹⁶⁸ Reich followed up *Different Trains* with another documentary work, *The Cave*, a video opera based on speech melodies, spoken reflections on the biblical figure of Abraham/Ibrahim and snatches from interviews he had conducted with Jewish, Palestinian and American individuals.

It is perhaps indicative of the profound scars 9/11 left on the American psyche that the first three artists signed by Nonesuch, the record label which decisively placed minimalist music on the global market, all went on to compose music thematically related to the single event that redefined twenty-first century geopolitics. Of these, Philip Glass’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* is the least overt, in the sense that the opera interrogates the aftermath of 9/11, and then only by relying on allegory and intertextuality. In 2014, Glass composed music for a short film entitled ‘Rebirth at Ground Zero’, which is on permanent display in the 9/11 Museum in New York. The film is the final in a series embarked upon by Project Rebirth, a collective who describe their films as ‘a resilience resource for all who serve the country’.¹⁶⁹ Reich composed *Daniel Variations* in 2006, a piece for voices and large ensemble (including four pianos) in remembrance of Daniel Pearl, the American-Jewish journalist

¹⁶⁷ John Adams, ‘About Nixon in China’, *Earbox.com*, accessed September 21st, 2015, <http://www.earbox.com/nixon-in-china>.

¹⁶⁸ John Adams, ‘Biography’, *Earbox.com*, accessed 21st September, 2015, <http://www.earbox.com/john-adams-biography>.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Rebirth at Ground Zero’ opens at the National 9/11 Museum’. *NewsWire*, May 19th, 2014, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/rebirth-at-ground-zero-opens-at-the-national-911-museum-259852231.html>.

who was taken hostage and beheaded in 2002 in Pakistan. In 2009, two decades after he composed *Different Trains*, Reich produced another string quartet (there had not been any in the interim) entitled *WTC9/11*, and some seven years earlier, John Adams completed a large-scale orchestral work, *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2002) to a commission by the New York Philharmonic.¹⁷⁰

The idea of a neutral aesthetic in many ways provided the basis for critical aspersion and aesthetic justification in the case of these often politically charged works. Adams described his operatic recounting of the 1985 Palestinian hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* and the murder of the wheel-chair bound Leon Klinghoffer (one of the passengers aboard the Italian cruise ship) as one in which ‘absolutely no sides were taken’. Peter Sellars spoke along similar lines of the opera’s premiere as a ‘memorial service’, describing the work as reaching for ‘a human level, beyond all political differences’.¹⁷¹ Critics of the opera—of which there was no shortage—found in the opera’s ‘even-handedness’ and ‘moral equivalence’ the tacit condoning of anti-Semitism and terrorism.¹⁷² In a now infamous review, Taruskin—pursuing the opposite line—charged Adams and Sellars with presenting an unbalanced and prejudiced account of the hijacking

¹⁷⁰ Glass’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* is discussed at length in the next chapter. To my knowledge, *WTC9/11* has not been discussed at any length within the scholarly literature. For a review of the first recording of the work, see Jayson Green, ‘Steve Reich and Kronos Quartet: *WTC9/11*’, *Pitchfork*, September 9th, 2011, <http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/15796-steve-reich-and-kronos-quartet-wtc-911>. For a consideration of *On the Transmigration of Souls*, see Dan Blim, “‘Meaningful Adjacencies’: Disunity and the Commemoration of 9/11 in John Adams’s *On the Transmigration of Souls*”, *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 7:4 (2013), 382-420.

¹⁷¹ See Robert Fink, ‘Klinghoffer in Brooklyn Heights’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 17:2 (2005), 174.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

and tragic murder of Leon Klinghoffer,¹⁷³ implying—tacitly or otherwise—the possibility of a perfectly balanced or neutral account. In fact, part of Taruskin’s admiration for *Different Trains*, as already mentioned, stems from its pared-back treatment of the Holocaust, a neutral statement of fact ostensibly unencumbered by the trappings of sentimental humanism: ‘There is just the perception that while this happened here, that happened there, and a stony invitation to reflect’.

Different Trains: Musical document and musical reality

Pace Taruskin, I would argue, along lines similar to those suggested by Whitesell’s work on post-minimalism, that *Different Trains*’ neutral aesthetic exemplifies the return of the subject, marked in Reich’s composition by the structuring and musical presence of an autobiographical ‘I’ whose Holocaust response is the central concern of the piece. In order to unfold this argument more fully, it will be necessary to consider the sonic aestheticisation and spatialisation of autobiographical anti-memory and archival testimony within the larger context of traumatic history.

The work of memory invariably activates the production of subjects and subject positions, presences and absences of an ‘I’ inscribed spatially and temporally. Understanding how such subjects are arranged,

¹⁷³ Taruskin’s review entitled ‘The Danger of Music and the Case for Control’ is reproduced and expanded in Taruskin, *The Danger of Music*, 168-180. For Fink’s discussion of Taruskin’s review, see his ‘Klinghoffer in Brooklyn Heights’, 176-181.

rearranged, at times deranged, encrypted or silenced will be one of my chief concerns. Put another way, the ‘disciplining’ and ‘de-disciplining’ of aesthetic spaces (photos, prose, music) are at stake, processes that will be explored through a pair of imagined photographs inspired by W.G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, observations by Proust, Adorno and Benjamin, and *Different Trains*. The objects that will be encountered belong to different orders: trains and railways are ongoing themes running through different discursive environments, namely photographs and music. These discursive environments simultaneously furnish repositories of biographical, memorial, documentary and aesthetic impressions—often collapsing fiction and fact into ‘faction’.¹⁷⁴ The discursive environments that will be considered are interrelated, although not by means of coherence, elucidation or simplification, except artificially, in that each concerns memory and, to a varying degree, violence.¹⁷⁵ Instead, they function constitutively as a generative grid of possibilities, related one to the other by a play of free association, amplification and what can be thought of as mutual resonance or elicitation.

In approaching the question of subject formation in *Different Trains* I have deliberately tried to avoid relying exclusively on a Freudian-Lacanian interpretation of repetition, keeping in mind Fink’s point that

¹⁷⁴ For ‘faction’, see Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 116-117.

¹⁷⁵ The meaning of ‘discourse’, a term often employed and seldom explained in formal writing, will help to underscore the kind of relationship between the different discursive environments identified above. Martin Jay explains discourse as being a ‘corpus of more or less loosely interwoven arguments, metaphors, assertions, and prejudices that cohere more associatively than logically in any strict sense of the term. Discourse in this usage is explicitly derived from the Latin *discurrere*, which means a running around in all directions’. See Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 16.

such interpretations, useful as they are, lock analysis into a cycle of repetition-compulsion, and have tended to dominate readings of musical repetition, partly due to a dearth of hermeneutic alternatives. Naomi Cumming bases her reading of *Different Trains* primarily on Lacanian theory, arguing that the relevance of that body of theory ‘is found in its capacity, developed from Freud, to elaborate the kinds of relationship that may form between an interpreting subject and an “other”, an interpreted thing, in a way that suggests different kinds of emotional investment in the relationship’.¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, her interest lies with how ‘shared signs, such as the train, can act as the point of contact for strongly divergent affective experiences of repetitive music’, thereby producing different types of subjects and experiences in the course of listening.¹⁷⁷ While I agree with the gist of Cumming’s argument, I am concerned by the restrictions placed on interpretation when the analytic frame commits interpretation exclusively to psychoanalysis. Reading with Žižek (who, in turn, is reading Lacan), Cumming maintains that ‘attempts at representing the unrepresentable are part of the process of reintegrating “unspeakable” (unsymbolised) horrors into cultural memory’.¹⁷⁸ The problem with this approach is its foreclosure of the types of question we have encountered via Elkana and Michaels—a foreclosure that operates precisely at the point where listening to *Different Trains* risks trapping the listening subject inside the Lacanian ‘real’, which can only ever signify what lies beyond signification.

¹⁷⁶ Naomi Cumming, ‘The Horrors of Identification: Reich’s *Different Trains*’, *Perspectives of New Music*, 35:1 (1997), 134.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

Like Cumming, then, I am interested in the production of subjectivity and modes of identification, although I will approach Reich's piece with a different set of comparative and analytical tools, namely ekphrasis and what, drawing on the work of Eric Clarke, might be called a psycho-ecological approach to listening. In choosing ekphrasis and psycho-ecology as primary interpretive strategies, I hope to resist enclosing the experience of listening to *Different Trains* inside a 'pre-subjective space that Lacanian psychoanalysis calls "the Real"', cut off from time, history, and locked inside the "prearticulate" of the Real as refuge from the Holocaust and its "horror of identification".¹⁷⁹

Photographic elicitations: Ways of remembering and forgetting

Proust observes that 'in photos, the grandfather of a duke or of a middle-class Jew is so alike that we forget their difference of social rank'.¹⁸⁰ In respect of this statement, Adorno is interested in seeking out the reason for the retrospective conflation of different 'classes' of photograph. Similitude is likely to occur, he explains, because 'the unity of an epoch objectively abolishes all the distinctions that constitute the happiness, even the moral substance, of individual existence'.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Here I am quoting Robert Fink who, in turn, is quoting David Schwarz, Cumming and Julia Kristeva. See Fink, *Repeating Ourselves*, 6.

¹⁸⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 26.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

Adorno is not claiming for different epochs a kind of internal unity contra the modern project of subject fragmentation. What he is suggesting is that distant images from the past—photos, thoughts, impressions—when processed by memory, shed certain distinctive qualities and are imbued by yet others, so that very different ‘things’ closely resemble one another. This erosion and subsequent (con)fusion of images, he further explains, can be ascribed to the working out of a certain retrospective epochal unity.

Walter Benjamin insinuates something similar in his well-known account of the angel of history: ‘Where we perceive a chain of events, he [the angel] sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet’.¹⁸² Thus, in the aftermath of catastrophe, very different images (in Adorno’s analogy, that of a wealthy duke and that of a middle-class Jew) begin to look alike. Whether because of ruins (as de Certeau puts it ‘death effaces all differences’¹⁸³) or distance (the gaze extends outwards as the granular surfaces of objects or images become fainter and more similar), is not quite clear.

If the above Proustian photographic pair lock difference into the same by means of spatialised time, the following literary rendition from W.G. Sebald’s autobiographical novel, *Austerlitz*, splinters a single photograph into numerous intersecting plateaus of meaning by peeling back time concurrently with the elaboration of photographic memory. The passage consists of remembering inside remembering, coupled with both temporal and spatial displacement. Whilst describing his childhood,

¹⁸² Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1973), 259.

¹⁸³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2.

Austerlitz (Sebald's protagonist) remembers how he used to misremember—or rather, associate very different images with one another. The narrative result is a (con)fusion of images and impressions by means of recollection, a process that, as is frequently the case with Sebald's narratives, dissociates time, space and 'the real'. Sebald's protagonist narrates impressions from his childhood spent in Wales.¹⁸⁴ At the time of narrating these recollections, he is able to apprehend certain autobiographical blanks which persisted for much of his life as distinctly vague memory fragments whose exact content eluded consciousness.

He discovers a story in the photograph—which emerges as his own—shaped by the Second World War, even though he had no first-hand experience of its darkest terrors. Austerlitz, a four-year old boy sent abroad by his biological parents only days before the Nazis invaded Prague, was raised by foster parents in a staunchly religious environment. His journey

¹⁸⁴ The passage from *Austerlitz* reads as follows: 'Further on in the story of Moses, said Austerlitz, I particularly liked the episode where the children of Israel cross a terrible wilderness, many days' journey long and wide, with nothing in sight but sky and sand as far as the eye can see. I tried to picture the pillar of cloud going before the people on their wanderings "to lead them the way", as the Bible puts it, and I immersed myself, forgetting all around me, in a full-page illustration showing the desert of Sinai looking just like the part of Wales where I grew up, with bare mountains crowding close together and a grey-hatched background, which I took sometimes for the sea and sometimes for the air above it. And indeed, said Austerlitz on a later occasion when he showed me his Welsh children's Bible, I knew that my proper place was among the tiny figures populating the camp. I examined every square inch of the illustration, which seemed to me uncannily familiar. I thought I could make out a stone quarry in a rather lighter patch on the steep slope of the mountain over to the right, and I seemed to see a railway track in the regular curve of the lines below it. But my mind dwelt chiefly on the fenced square in the middle and the tent-like building at the far end, with a cloud of white smoke above it. Whatever may have been going on inside me at the time, the children of Israel's camp in the wilderness was closer to me than life in Bala, which I found more incomprehensible every day, or at least, said Austerlitz, that is how it strikes me now. That evening in the bar of the Great Eastern Hotel Austerlitz also told me that there was no wireless set or newspaper in the manse in Bala. I don't know that Elias and his wife Gwendolyn ever mentioned the fighting on the continent of Europe, he said. I couldn't imagine any world outside Wales'. See W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2001), 77-80.

from Prague via London to Wales is one of loss—his real name, nationality, parents and relatives felt but as yet unknown. Under the watchful supervision of his Welsh foster parents, the Welsh Children's Bible is Austerlitz's single literary handbook and window of escape from an insular upbringing.

For a boy ensnared by a traumatised post-war life from which the war is both absent and present, a picture of the people of Israel in the desert becomes not representative of Sinai but of the suffocating surroundings of a Welsh town in which his early childhood is spent. Yet, if this childhood is spent in Bala, it is relived through pictures overlaid with other places. Another world begins to cover over the visible aspect of the picture, revealing to Austerlitz unlived or buried memory, that of which he is already aware, but does not yet know: a concentration camp to which the entrance is a doomed railway and the final exit a crematorium.

Whereas Adorno and Proust describe the always fading return of past traumatic events in pictures, Sebald makes evident that, quite often, more than images are interrupted in the aftermath of traumatic histories. The net result is not an incarceration of different images into a single picture, but a fragmentation of the one image into many imaginaries. In a general sense these descriptions of photographs might be regarded as instances of ekphrasis. W. J. T. Mitchell develops this latter concept when he theorises an 'ekphrasis of the self' as a process during which an 'other'—subconsciously—begins to speak for the 'self'.¹⁸⁵ This form of ekphrasis expands considerably on more conventional movements between different

¹⁸⁵ W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 156-181.

works and media, so that one work/medium evokes another ekphrastically. Mitchell's reconceived notion of ekphrasis does not move between, say, music and painting or a photograph and verbal narration, but between different subjectivities or forms of the 'I'. In other words, unlike 'the typical ekphrastic text [that] ... speak[s] to or for a semiotic "other"—an image, visual object, or spectacle—usually in the presence of that object', an 'ekphrasis of the self' occurs when 'the "other" [speaks] for herself, [and tells] her own story'.¹⁸⁶ As in the case of Austerlitz, this 'other' turned 'self' is in actuality another 'self ... mediated and distanced by memory and autobiographical transformation'.¹⁸⁷

Viewed through Mitchell's 'ekphrasis of the self', the Proustian pair of photographs mentioned already unfolds the process of catastrophic history, which, in its totality, shatters particularity so that variance appears as the same. The same ekphrastic frame, when brought to bear on the Sebaldian text, unfolds the point of view of the individual subject whose traumatized past leaks into the unfolding picture by means of writing over the paper reality.¹⁸⁸ Both have in common a certain interruption of a first-level signifier (or reality) with which the content is confused or replaced by another that comes to take the place of the first. Broadly, this is the structural process from which Sebald (de)constructs memory. The result is a fragmented narrative in which memory, by means of displacement, replacement and resemblance, shapes traumatic events, thereby rendering them relatable. Sebald's work is an exemplary body of ekphrastic instances

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 184.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 184-185.

¹⁸⁸ I have adapted this notion from Roland Barthes's use of a similar idea which he calls 'paper-time'. Roland Barthes, 'The Discourse of History', trans. Stephen Bann, *Comparative Criticism*, 3 (1981), 7-20.

that respond creatively to the ancient orientation of the ekphrastic text: 'whether or not the works [or thoughts, in Sebald's case] really exist', Lydia Goehr reminds us in a different context, 'the point is to see all that can be done with words, through literary description'.¹⁸⁹ Ekphrasis, in moving unbounded between different forms of representation, disregards the distinction between the 'real' and the symbolic or the invented in favour of artistic experiment that searches beyond reality for the limits of semantics, words, genres and disciplines.

Composing the archive: Musical and documentary realities

Reich's *Different Trains* explores a different approach, and one the composer has characterised as blazing a fresh trail for musical composition:

Different Trains ... begins a new way of composing that has its roots in my early tape speech pieces *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966). The basic idea is that speech recordings generate the musical material for musical instruments. The piece presents both a documentary and a musical reality and begins a new musical direction by introducing a kind of theatrical element into a traditional chamber music form. In this particular piece the theater is, so to speak, in the mind, since there is nothing visual beyond the musicians. *Different Trains* points in a direction, however, that may very well lead to a new kind of documentary music video theater.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Lydia Goehr, 'How to Do More with Words. Two views of (musical) ekphrasis', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 50:4 (2010), 407.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 158.

Reich fails to interrogate this ‘new direction’ with recourse to a deceptively obvious set of questions. Besides sounding together two distinctly different realities—documentary and musical—what, precisely, is achieved by their synthesis? Does *Different Trains* sound a ‘new direction’ merely because of the synthesis of document and music (arguably not a new innovation)? If music begins to speak for or in the presence of a particular ‘documentary’ reality, what, if any, type of ekphrasis is the result? Finally, it is necessary to pose questions concerning the production of subject positions as they occur ekphrastically in *Different Trains*. Who is in the music? A former/later version of the self, as exemplified by ‘ekphrasis of the self’, an ‘I’ that demands or denounces propriety (the grandfather of a duke or a middle class Jew)? Is it the composer, the listener or the performer, and where, exactly, do these subjectivities reside? Can each be distinguished clearly, or is the particularity of identification musically obliterated?

Before applying these questions to *Different Trains*, a brief consideration of Eric Clarke’s work on listening and ecological perception is necessary by way of addressing the formation of subjects and subjectivity in music. An ecological approach privileges the relationship between a listener and a structured environment or ecology which includes all the active and passive agents in the music-making process. Such an approach ‘gives a coherent account of the directness of listeners’ perceptual responses to a variety of environmental attributes, ranging from the spatial location and physical source of musical sounds to their structural function and cultural and ideological value’.¹⁹¹ A structured

¹⁹¹ Eric Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 46.

environment by no means essentialises the subject position in relation to the music by substituting the unique ‘subjectness’ of a subject with ecological determinism. But, rather similar to the way in which Foucault conceived of the author as a delimiting agent,¹⁹² ecology epistemologically narrows or structures perceptual and hermeneutic possibilities.

Drawing on film theory, Clarke usefully adopts the distinction between an ‘empirical spectator’ (whose interpretation is heavily impinged upon by highly variable and personal ‘extraneous factors’) and a more stable ‘subject-position’, which has to do with ‘the way in which a film solicits, demands even, a certain closely circumscribed response... by means of its own formal operations’.¹⁹³ Implying that real and imagined motion have particular affinities with subjectivity and meaning, Clarke further understands musical motion as a meaning-producing movement. ‘Since sounds in the everyday world specify (among other things) the motional characteristics of their sources’, he writes, ‘musical sounds will also specify movements and gestures—both the real movements and gestures involved in actually producing music ... and also the fictional movements and gestures of the virtual environment which they conjure up’.¹⁹⁴

An ecological approach to the perception of music, then, is sensitive to its direct environment, and especially recognizes that musical motion and a structured ‘subject-position’ generate particular responses or modes of identification. How does this all come to bear upon *Different Trains*? To

¹⁹² Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984), 118.

¹⁹³ Clarke, *Ways of Listening*, 92.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

quote Clarke again, my reading of Reich's piece concerns 'the way in which the relationship between listener and music defines an aesthetic attitude'.¹⁹⁵

However, as will become apparent from the ensuing analysis, more than just an 'aesthetic attitude' is enunciated in Reich's composition, precisely because of the merger between two distinctly different realities. More specifically, my analysis is concerned with the space practised by the music and how such practices situate the 'I' of the listener in relation to the music. A straightforward view of this relationship persists within a model of stasis, i.e. the listener is situated passively relative to the tones in motion. He or she might be seated in a concert hall, train or bus, or perhaps in front of a listening station in a library, reclined on a bed, or even behind the wheel of a moving vehicle. But I would argue that the listener-subject-music relationship, the 'I' in the music, is complicated as a result of what I will call the shuttling back-and-forth of the listening subject or 'I' to different positions relative to the music. In other words, in Reich's 'theatre of the mind', music harnesses the ability to shuttle the listener from one imaginary position to another in relation to the music so that the music is heard, alternately, from the inside, from the outside, from aboard a train, from a platform approached by a train, from America, Europe, Auschwitz, in the past, the present, as fact, fiction and ultimately as faction.

Reich's earliest experiments with phasing already afforded the listening subject a sense of spatial disorientation. *Piano Phase* introduces phase-shifting into 'live' performance—a process, says Reich, that is

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 91.

‘indigenous to machines’¹⁹⁶ and subsequently imposed on human performance. The opening of *Piano Phase* fixes on a single repetitive musical statement. The musical process is closely coupled with the mechanization of human performance, and both throw out of joint the diffusion of sound in space, due to what Reich calls ‘psycho-acoustic by-products’:¹⁹⁷ the shape, placement and timing of the initial musical statement is made less stable as the music unfolds in time and space. Reich’s interest in the performative intersections of man and machine effect a dizzying acousmatic collage. Sub-melodies—heard, but not scripted ‘in’ the music—proliferate; uncertainty sets in: is the listener hearing one, two, or a multitude of musical fragments? Psycho-acoustic confusion is produced, so that the listener is uncertain of the direction and source from which each musical fragment stereophonically hits the ear, and whether he or she is listening to, or inhabiting the sound surface.¹⁹⁸

At the extreme limit, listener encounters with the mechanization of performance pose a troubling question: is the listener being ‘played’ by machines or by human beings, and why? As one critic observed at the end of a Reich concert in 1970, ‘Granted the pleasure of humans doing the job, one wonders nonetheless if they really need bother, when machines can do it so much better’; whilst another critic heard in *Drumming* ‘dehumanised assembly-line labour’.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Reich, *Writings on Music*, 22.

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 190.

¹⁹⁸ I here borrow some of Reich’s own descriptive vocabulary. See his *Writings on Music*, 35.

¹⁹⁹ Both these observations are quoted in Rebecca M. Doran Eaton, ‘Marking Minimalism: Minimal Music as a Sign of Machines and Mathematics in Multimedia’, *Music and the Moving Image*, 7:1 (2014), 5. Aside from *Different Trains*, Eaton mentions several examples of what she calls a ‘minimalism/machine enculturation’ especially prevalent in

Different Trains effects a sense of disorientation not dissimilar to the spatial and temporal unhinging of the earlier phase compositions, even though Reich's initial experiments with phasing were no longer seminal to his compositional approach in the 1980s. The superimposition of four string quartet tracks yields a vertical layering of sound, whilst music and document mesh horizontally, resulting in a roughly chronological narrative that shuttles the listener through, in and out of the music. In keeping with Reich's idea of trains, the spatial organisation of the sound surface might be understood as linked 'sound compartments', separated and conjoined by a train whistle and the introduction of a new speech melody. Each new compartment introduces varying levels of rhythmic and harmonic alterations. Together with a train whistle, the insistent ostinato drive of the first compartment specifies the approach of a train, heard by the listener from a position outside an oncoming train (compartment I: 0:00-0:35).²⁰⁰ The abrupt arrival of the second musical compartment marks the introduction of the first prerecorded vocal fragment (the voice of Virginia, Reich's governess) and its accompanying melodic derivative or speech melody (compartment II: 0:36-1:23). The string ostinato gradually relaxes its compulsive drive in subsequent compartments through a drop in intensity (compartment III: 1:24-2:37; compartment IV: 2:38-3:43; compartment IV: 3:44-4:42; compartment VI: 4:43-5:42). By introducing into the sound surface the speaking voice of Reich's governess, the listener

the later 1980s—among them Philip Glass's *Koyaanisqatsi* and John Adams's *Short ride in a fast machine* (p.10).

²⁰⁰ All timings are based on Steve Reich, '*Different Trains*', *Works 1965-1995* [sound recording], 10 discs, disc 8 (New York: Nonesuch, 1997). to the music

is pulled from a position outside the approaching train to a position inside the train.

Throughout *Different Trains* this process of (dis)lodging or shuttling in and out of the music is increased by the inexorable repetitive force of the instrumental material. If strictly musical evidence is needed to establish the former point, Reich supplies it. Remarking on the musical and psychological effects of repetition upon the listener, he registers the ability of repetition to fracture subject-orientation:

While performing and listening to gradual musical processes, one can participate in a particular liberating and impersonal kind of ritual. Focusing in on the musical process makes possible that shift of attention away from he and she and you and me outward toward it.²⁰¹

Repetition as a gradual musical process, suggests Reich, yields a certain (dis)lodgment of the subject, a shuttling in-and-out of the 'self'. The process is compounded in the compulsive drive of the musical material of the outer movements of *Different Trains*. The first and third movements function as musical portals, leading the listener to and away from the central traumatic scene: 'Europe—during the war', or more essentially, the Holocaust. Here it is necessary to turn to the second constituent of Reich's new 'musical direction', that of documenting history musically by means of spoken testimonies.

Reich valorises sung and spoken vocal material according to what he calls the 'documentary' aspect of the latter. 'The particular voices of my governess, the porter, and the Holocaust survivors in *Different Trains*', he

²⁰¹ Reich, *Writings on Music*, 36.

says, 'tell the actual story of a period in history from just before to just after World War II. There is no singer's "interpretation" but, rather, this: people bearing witness to their own lives'.²⁰²

Reich finds unmediated access to 'actual' history in the 'actual' testimonies of war survivors. His treatment of the spoken text in *Different Trains* is consistent with his notion of accessing through sound unmediated history, and consequently special care is taken to preserve narrative integrity. There are fewer mechanical interferences with the speech material, less looping, fragmentation and manipulation of spoken phrases, perhaps attesting also to an awareness of the intensified materiality of the voice. Spoken testimonial material, it seems, could create a new social reality or an intensified level of consciousness binding together history and listener, one that is mediated musically by an aesthetic that ostensibly refuses explicit commentary.

Reich goes further still in the second and third movements by shaping the recorded voices of the Holocaust survivors with a cautious authorial hand: 'these phrases', he says, 'cannot be "played" with in the same manner as those in the first movement'.²⁰³ Despite this display of aesthetic and creative integrity, the survivor's testimonies are severed from

²⁰² Ibid., 198.

²⁰³ Ibid., 182. Reich displays a not dissimilar authorial restraint in his approach to so-called African instruments. Upon learning to play several indigenous drums and bells on his visit to Ghana, Reich began thinking about ways of introducing these instruments - their 'actual' sounds - into his own music. He concluded that the entire process, at least in the case of his own work, would be inappropriate: 'One of my first considerations ... was tuning, since these bells obviously did not correspond to the notes in our scale. Because the bells were made of iron, a metal file would be necessary to retune them. The more I thought about this, the more it began to seem like a kind of musical rape. These bells came from a certain musical context and history and it seemed to me totally inappropriate to take a file and retune them.' Ibid., 148.

their initial narrative contexts and dropped into a wholly different sound environment.

Similar to the outer movements of *Different Trains*, chronology is preserved throughout the middle movement, from its opening when Rachella announces the year '1940' up to its ending, when the train musically grounds to a halt in Auschwitz. In the process, the highly personal semantic content/context of individual Holocaust testimonies is increasingly destabilized. For example, placed directly after Paul's recollection of anti-Semitism at the hands of his second grade teacher, Rachel's recollection of a note she received from her school teacher ('no more school') (at 2:20) incorporates the note into Paul's narrative, while Rachel's own blurred experiences are stripped of emotive import.²⁰⁴

In doing so, and because the speech fragments seem extricated from their fragile and personalized individual contexts, the chronological narrative taking shape is no longer that of individual wartime survivors but crystallises into a different and disorientated narrative. It is Reich's reconstruction: a patchwork of decontextualised memory fragments, forming a musico-documentary network of overlapping narrative strands. The piece becomes Reich's post-war reminiscence on the Holocaust, narrated by voices that are not his, and speaking about traumatic experiences that are not his. Yet as we have seen, *Different Trains* is self-

²⁰⁴ Amy Wlodarski remarks as follows on the role of Rachel's two vocal fragments in *Different Trains*: 'To the casual listener, Rachel's two lines appear more functional than emotive, a means of moving the libretto from childhood memories of school ("no more school") to the actual trains themselves ("you must go away"). In reality, these two lines reflect the most traumatic moment of Rachel's life—the "beginning" of her Holocaust testimony and her final farewell to her father [Rachel's father died in Auschwitz]'. See her 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 63:1 (2010), 121.

professed autobiography and implicates Reich's own childhood journeys explicitly. If, then, according to Reich, the speech fragments are 'actual' and 'unmediated' history, and if they generate the melodic material for the strings, and if the trains, whistles and sirens are just that—trains, whistles and sirens—how is Reich's autobiographical voice realized musically? One might single out the layers of string quartet as one possible answer: they introduce and reiterate the speech melodies Reich extracts from the spoken testimonies, offering a composed response to the recollections voiced by Holocaust survivors.

After studying the archival sources from which Reich extracted the 'documentary' reality of *Different Trains*, and the personal, emotional and musical processes guiding the selection of materials, Amy Wlodarski contends that Reich's claims of 'self-effacement' are deceptive.²⁰⁵ In a strongly argued article, she concludes that the entire piece is a secondary witnessing of the Holocaust—Reich's rather than anyone else's rendering of history.²⁰⁶ This raises the question of agency, a topic Reich has dealt with in his own writings. Unlike the aleatorists, Reich was not interested in wholly obscuring or erasing the authorial trace from the creative process. The emphasis, for him, is on musical processes rather than musical works as such. These processes became, for Reich, spaces for practising authorial intentions:

I saw that my methods did not involve moving from one note to the next, in terms of each note in the piece representing the

²⁰⁵ The archives in question are the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (housed at Yale University) and the Wiener Oral History library (housed in the New York Public Library). See Wlodarski, 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', 121.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

composer's taste working itself out bit by bit. My music was more of an impersonal process. John Cage discovered that he could take his intentions out of a piece of music and open up a field for many interesting things to happen, and in that sense I agree with him. But where he was willing to keep his musical sensibility out of his own music, I was not. What I wanted to do was to come up with a piece of music that I loved intensely, that was completely personal, exactly what I wanted in every detail, but that was arrived at by impersonal means. I compose the material, decide the process it's going to be run through—but once these initial choices have been made, it runs by itself.²⁰⁷

Reich's inclination to align musical process with the intentions of the composer is consistent with the idea that musical processes are socially contingent, a stance with which scholars ranging from Adorno, Alfred Schutz and more recently Jacques Attali, Susan McClary and Nicholas Cook are all in agreement. For Cook, 'the sound of music is the sound of community in action'. 'Melody, accompaniment, homophony, counterpoint, heterophony and fugue', he writes, 'embody different ways of relating to other people'.²⁰⁸ Such claims of direct resemblance could blunt more nuanced formulations of music's 'worldly' relations, but the general point is important, and one with which Reich concurs. Whilst rejecting Philip Glass's vexed idea that minimalist music aspires to an 'intentionless music', Reich correctly points out that the composer's voice and intentions—themselves representative of social agents—are always already embedded in the musical surface or process.²⁰⁹

For a concrete example in which this Reichian musical 'process' is worked out in its most advanced form, I now turn at length to the final movement of *Different Trains*. 'After the war' is a fully worked out

²⁰⁷ Reich, *Writings on Music*, 33.

²⁰⁸ Nicholas Cook, 'Writing on Music or Axes to Grind: Road Rage and Musical Community', *Music Education Research*, 5:3 (2003), 251.

²⁰⁹ Quoted in Wlodarski, 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', 105.

realization of Reich's idea of creating and synthesising two parallel realities, documentary and musical, in which 'the unity between the speech melody and the music became complete'.²¹⁰ In thus laying claim to synthesis and structural cohesion, the Reichian aesthetic seems to be in pursuit of some higher level unity, a project by no means restricted to *Different Trains*. In *New York Counterpoint* for clarinet, a soloist prerecords ten parts, and adds an eleventh in real-time performance so that there is, at least conceptually, only a soloist playing with, or against, versions of a pre-recorded 'I'. In doing so, *New York Counterpoint* achieves unity almost to the point of obsession. Even the voicing of different parts is brought to cohesion, in that the different plateaus of sound and the division of labour each represents are synthesized into a single performing subject. Many versions of the performing 'I' sound simultaneously, a compression of layers of individual consciousness into a single performed time unit. This is a musical example of Mitchell's 'ekphrasis of the self' discussed earlier. But importantly, and keeping in mind questions of agency and authorial presence, as far as the question of 'who' or 'what' is speaking, confusion—at least on the most basic level—is eliminated, since it is evident that the performing subject is making music along with different iterations of a self.

In *Different Trains*, however, the musical process abets the production of multiple subjectivities and ekphrastic obfuscation. It is not so much the addition of a 'documentary' to a 'musical' reality (to recall Reich's terms) that becomes problematic, but the particular psycho-ecological environment in which Reich's musical process is realized. In

²¹⁰ Reich, *Writings on Music*, 198.

choosing to synthesize ‘documentary’ and ‘musical’ realities, the technical question that bears on the material is one of intra-musical relationships, which is to say that ‘documentary’ and ‘musical’ reality metonymically raise the fundamental question of music’s being in the world: how music ‘makes’ and reflects the world, and how the world is ‘made’ and reflected musically. The possible modes of articulation between music and reality are limitless: commentary, précis, emphasis, silence or withholding, interrogation, irony—the types of relation are potentially inexhaustible.

In a gesture that betrays his predilections for pre-Bachian musical processes, Reich conjoins ‘documentary’ with ‘musical’ reality through exact resemblance. As he intimates, all the instrumental material in the third movement is derived from the speech melodies.²¹¹ Unsurprisingly, in the light of his earlier remarks on musical cohesion, Reich considers the final movement of *Different Trains* as ‘the finest of the three’.²¹² In the case of Reich’s chosen musical process (resemblance by means of derivation), the isomorphic doubling of music and document propels the production of automaton-like reiteration. Hence, when the third movement opens with the phrase ‘the war is over’, the last word is looped back and forth by the strings across the sound surface. As the music advances to the next compartment, Rachela asks ‘are you sure’? Again, ‘documentary’ reality is fed into the sound surface where it is repeated and played back by the strings.

Reich’s idea of mechanising human performance—part of the impetus for *Piano Phase*, as suggested previously—achieves total

²¹¹ Ibid., 182.

²¹² Ibid.

realisation at this point, and meshes with another musical process which he explored in his 1967 composition, *My Name Is*. In this piece, ‘members of the audience are invited to speak their own first names into a microphone, preceded by the words “My name is”; the resulting recordings are made into loops and phased against each other’.²¹³ *Different Trains*, on the other hand, leaves behind excessive looping and phasing in an attempt to found a musico-documentary reality. However, the ‘musical’ reality functions not as a finely worked out articulation or interaction with the ‘documentary’ reality, but more like a psycho-analytic machine into which the individual testimonials are spoken and spoken back—musically—according to their most striking auditory characteristics. The derivation of musical from vocal material fails to fashion the derived musical content into a nuanced musical response to the original vocal material. Transformation of this kind could, in Reich’s opinion, be faulted ethically for ‘playing’ with the speech melodies (or in his more explicit formulation, amount to ‘musical rape’).²¹⁴

However, it is precisely the substitution of direct resemblance for response, of the automaton speaking back to the musical ‘I’, that abets already problematic imputations of actual and implied history. The instrumental material, now, stages a similar claim: it, too, derives directly and purely from the ‘actual’ documentary reality that inheres in the spoken fragments. Put another way, music acquires the semblance of iconicity by means of an ‘ekphrasis of the self’ as the space of enunciation in which an

²¹³ Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 173. On the same page Potter argues that a piece such as *My Name Is* ‘demonstrates the composer’s continuing search for ways of using recorded speech material in live performance situations, which led eventually to *Different Trains* and *The Cave*’.

²¹⁴ Reich, *Writings on Music*, 148.

‘other’ interrupts the ‘self’, not as another ‘self’ speaking from elsewhere, but as an ‘other’ masked—disguised musically by means of resemblance—as that very ‘self’.

Musicking: ‘To what purpose?’

For the first time I understand the seriousness of what we were doing when, decade after decade, we sent every Israeli child on repeated visits to ‘Yad Vashem’. What did we want those tender youths to do with the experience? We declaimed, insensitively and harshly, and without explanation: ‘Remember!’ ‘Zechor!’ To what purpose?

Yehuda Elkana²¹⁵

What kinds of ‘musicking’ are afforded by *Different Trains*, and to what purpose? The question of music’s relationship to the world, writes Christopher Small, inheres in action and relationships arising in the context of musical events.²¹⁶ ‘Context’ in this formulation must be taken in the broadest sense, as the technological, social, historical and economic relationships enabling of any particular musical event. Small’s thesis is simply that musical encounters are dynamic and constitutive of sociality, irrespective of genre, tradition or technological mediation—that they are transitive rather than intransitive. Hence Small’s well-known addition of ‘musicking’ as descriptive of what we do in the space of music.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Yehuda Elkana, ‘The need to forget’, *Ha’aretz*, March 2nd, 1988, http://www.einsteinforum.de/fileadmin/einsteinforum/downloads/victims_elkana.pdf. For a discussion of the article, see Daniel Gutwein, ‘The Privatization of the Holocaust: Memory, Historiography, and Politics’, *Israel Studies*, 14:1 (2009), 42-45.

²¹⁶ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 138-39.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

The closing compartments of *Different Trains* implicate musicking in a very particular manner. The testimonial sequence that carries the third movement to its ending consists of the following:

- a) 'from New York to Los Angeles' (Mr. Davis),
- b) 'one of the fastest trains' (Virginia),
- c) 'but today, they're all gone' (Mr. Davis),
- d) 'there was one girl, who had a beautiful voice' (Rachella),
- e) 'and they loved²¹⁸ to listen to the singing, the Germans, and when she stopped singing they said, "more, more", and they applauded'.²¹⁹

To a listener unfamiliar with the narrative tactics at work in *Different Trains* (decontextualisation through recontextualisation of testimonial material), Mr. Davis's first vocal phrase sounds like a reprise of the beginning of the first movement, a cyclical gesture or recapitulation that begins to prepare the piece for its ending. On a narrative level, however, the chronology remains intact: Mr. Davis's phrase is not explicitly referring back to trains, but to Rachella's post-war journey to Los Angeles. His second phrase, when heard in the reassembled context of 'document' and music, articulates the fate of Holocaust victims (who 'are all gone') and obscures the reference to Pullman trains in Reich's original interview with Davis. The semantic content of this last phrase is altered according to the synthesis of two distinctly different realities. Holocaust victims and express trains, man and machine, the incommensurable fates of Holocaust

²¹⁸ Wlodarski has identified a mistake in Reich's transcription of Rachella's testimonial material at this point. On the actual video footage that Reich used, Rachella tells about the German guards who 'laughed' at the singing, not 'loved' as Reich heard it. See her 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', 131-32.

²¹⁹ The testimonial fragments are reproduced in Reich, *Writings on Music*, 153 and in Christopher Fox, 'Steve Reich's *Different Trains*', *Tempo*, 172 (1990), 3.

survivors and a Jewish boy far removed from the carnage unleashed upon Europe, different narratives, objects, persona, fates and technologies shed their individuality, morphing into a new and distorted post-war narrative. Thus, ekphrastic confusion (who/what is speaking for/at or about whom) and spatio-temporal disorientation are already at work when Rachella's voice carries on the narration from Mr. Davis. She recollects a particular young girl in Auschwitz who had 'a beautiful voice'. In response to the singing of this girl the Germans applauded, with demands of 'more, more'.

Different Trains ends with this final consummation of 'document' and 'music', and returns the listening subject from the Reichian 'theatre of the mind' to the collective space of the concert hall or public theatre where, programmed habitually, each responds with the carnivalesque festive indulgence of the Auschwitz camp guards: applause and shouts of 'more, more'.²²⁰ This response encodes spatial practices of another order, particularly in relation to the way in which the audience practices actual and imaginary performance spaces. The 'real' meta-narrative of *Different Trains*, as I have argued along with Wlodarski, is Reich's Holocaust testimonial brought into positivity through a synthesis of musical and documentary realities. The audience externally inter-relates to this synthesis in the way that Reich's compositional process internally intra-relates music to document: by means of mimicry. The audience imagines responding to the horror of the Holocaust in a manner similar to Reich. They, too, are moved from middle-class comfort and privilege (to adapt Adorno's observation) by the possibility of riding different and doomed

²²⁰ I here follow the argument advanced in Wlodarski, 'The Testimonial Aesthetics of *Different Trains*', 132.

trains, and shudder at the sheer scale of the Holocaust's destruction. Perhaps they might even be mistaking themselves for Holocaust victims in a moment of vicarious identification: as Adorno has pointed out, in the aftermath of unspeakable trauma the passing of time erodes difference, so that a duke and a Jew may well begin to look alike. Dramatically pre-empted by the Auschwitz guards, the audience responds with applause and that late-capitalist programmatic motif: 'more, more'.

Mark Seltzer uses 'wound culture' to refer to the twentieth-century fascination with open bodies and wounds, wounding others, and being wounded. In such cultures, he suggests, 'death is theatre for the living'.²²¹ 'The crowd gather[s] around the fallen body', and shares in what he describes as 'a version of collective experience that centers the pathological public sphere'.²²² This 'pathological public sphere', for Seltzer, is a violent corporeal and mechanistic intersection between 'private desire' and 'public spectacle', so that the latter becomes a 'vehicle' and 'realisation' for and of the former.²²³ 'The coupling of bodies and machines is thus also, at least in these cases, a coupling of private and public spaces. It is not surprising, then, that these linkages are most powerfully literalized in the mechanical systems of public transport that speed the movement, or commuting, of bodies between these spaces: the railway system'.²²⁴ And, says Seltzer, these collateral encounters are exemplified most acutely by postmodern

²²¹ Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), 22.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., 31.

²²⁴ Ibid.

artistic practices that ‘prob[e] the wound and explor[e] the effects of the repetition of the trauma’.²²⁵

The links between *Different Trains* and ‘wound cultures’ are conspicuous. Reich’s piece meets most of Seltzer’s criteria, including a fascination with rail systems, the ‘coupling’ of bodies and machines, and the public exploration of trauma. To position *Different Trains* thus, within the context of ‘wound cultures’, is to situate more precisely the socio-cultural baggage brought to its poietic and esthetic processes. It is precisely this additional baggage, doubled rather than resisted or critiqued by the musical process, and triggered through performance, which renders *Different Trains* a problematic postmodern and post-traumatic testimonial artifact.

In this chapter I have argued that *Different Trains* is symptomatic of what Seltzer describes as a troubled fascination with open wounds, violence, memorials and documentary realities: a piece that invites reflection and simultaneously trivialises suffering through imaginary—and often highly problematic—subject associations. Reich’s attempt to combine music and document into a single reality and his fantasy to associate with the Jewish ‘other’ of his youth ultimately abets the perpetual looping of violence, continually displaced from one subject/object onto another via mimesis and direct resemblance. The next chapter will consider other musical and creative means of ‘becoming other’, not only through music but in the ways that different subjects think and occupy space.

²²⁵ Ibid., 254.

Chapter 3

Ways of thinking and occupying space: *Waiting for the Barbarians*

The relationship between Greeks and Barbarians is seen as part of the wider distinction between West and East; the Greeks are the ancestors of the West, the people who invented democracy, freedom of thought, science, philosophy, drama and naturalistic art, and whose literary works stand as the foundation of Western literature; the world of the East, the world of the people whom the Greeks described as Barbarians is a wholly different world, characterised by despotism and theocracy and the absence of all the Greek achievements.

Kostas Vlassopoulos²²⁶

In striated space, one closes off a surface and 'allocates' it according to determinate intervals, assigned breaks; in the smooth, one 'distributes' oneself in an open space, according to frequencies and in the course of one's crossings (logos and nomos).

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari²²⁷

Prologue: *Waiting for the Barbarians* and colonial encounter

In the figure of the barbarian is harboured the promise of revolutionary encounter. Menacing and violent, the barbarian is born of the Western

²²⁶ Kostas Vlassopoulos, *Greeks and Barbarians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

²²⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1987), 481.

imagination as a floating container for those inner longings and passions needing expulsion. The barbarian is always already constituted from elsewhere, yet never fully known aside from the deliberately constructed blankness of representation. If there is a single principle dictating the characteristics attributed to the barbarian at any time in history, it was stated in 1836 by John Stuart Mill. ‘Whatever be the characteristics of what we call savage life’, he wrote, ‘the contrary of these, or the qualities which society puts on as it throws off these, constitute civilisation’.²²⁸

We encounter the figure of the barbarian at the dawn of Western letters, in Homer, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides, differentiated from civilisation by a lack of land and logos. These differentiating qualities are inscribed onomatopoeically in the proper name given the Greek ‘other’: barbarian speech approximates to ‘bla-bla’ or ‘bara-bara’.²²⁹ The ancient stoics—more ecumenical in outlook than their Greek predecessors—regarded the condition of barbarity as stemming from voluntary action, rather than a fate bestowed by nature on some and not others.²³⁰ During the Middle Ages, Christianity furnished the determinate norm on which turned the arrogation of civilisation and rejection of barbarity. Bartomé Las Casas, a sixteenth-century Dominican priest, bishop of Chiapas and outspoken critic of the Spanish conquest, distinguished four types of barbarian. Las Casas’s typology emerged from a debate with Juan Ginés Sepúlveda who, following Aristotle, held that American Indians lacked

²²⁸ John Stuart Mill, ‘Civilisation’, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. 28, *Essays on Politics and Society*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1977), 161.

²²⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 51.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

reason and civilisation, with the implication that they lived in a state of natural bondage and could hence be colonised legitimately.²³¹ Las Casas called the first, third and fourth type of barbarian ‘barbarians secundum quid’, to denote lack or some manner of defect: the absence of reason, religion, statehood, social law or letters.²³² The third type Las Casas imported from book V of Aristotle’s *Politics*, as those naturally inclined towards slavery, although he is careful to stress that all slaves do not belong to this group merely by dint of their being enslaved. Rather, this third class of barbarian described a rank of human beyond the redemptive reach of reason and civilisation, a human species predestined by nature to live a life of subordination:

Wise men can hunt or track them like animals in order to bring them under control and make use of them... attending to their welfare and keeping them from doing harm to others... they can serve and profit their wise regent with their physical strength, because nature has made them robust for any work and chores they might be ordered to do.²³³

Las Casas argued that the nefarious nature attributed to the barbarian was more accurately a reflection of the dark desires lurking within Western civilisation. Las Casas’s critical reappropriation of the barbarian inaugurated a long tradition of auto-critique—the imperial gaze turned

²³¹ For a brief summary of the opposing positions held by Las Casas and Sepúlveda, see Daniel Castro, *Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé de las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and Ecclesiastical Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 126-134.

²³² For a brief overview of Las Casas’s four types of barbarian, see Walter D. Mignolo, Margaret R. Greer, and Maureen Quilligan, Introduction to *Rereading the Black Legend: the Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, eds. Walter D. Mignolo, Margaret R. Greer, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 6-7.

²³³ Cited in ‘The New World’, in *An Introduction to Contemporary Civilisation: A Source Reader*, prepared by the Contemporary Civilisation Staff of Columbia College, Columbia University, 3rd ed. (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1960), 536.

inward, thrown back into its own gaze—that re-emerged during the Enlightenment in the figure of the ‘noble savage’, especially in the disaffected writings of Voltaire and Rousseau. This tradition, though much invigorated, is present in postcolonial and decolonial theory, where the figure of the barbarian, like that of the nomad, is imbued with critical vigour, and explicitly aligned to a counter-imperial agenda. Hardt and Negri’s ‘new barbarians’ furnish perhaps the best-known example.²³⁴ Unconstrained by boundaries, be they social, sexual, or intellectual, these ‘new barbarians’ envision a new multitude ‘radically unprepared for normalisation’.²³⁵

The magistrate in J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) exemplifies the figure of the new barbarian, an imperial administrator whose encounter with the barbarian other alters radically and subversively his relations with the empire. The novel is a thinly disguised allegory of the politics of fear and suspicion operated by the Cold War West and its nationalist allies in apartheid South Africa. Philip Glass’s 2005 opera of the same title recasts Coetzee’s novel in the context of post-9/11 America.

Both the novel and opera open with the arrival of one colonel Joll in an imperial border outpost, beyond which stretches the desert territories of the barbarians. A highly ranked imperial officer working for ‘the most important division of the civil guard’, Joll’s mission is ‘to find out the truth’ about an alleged barbarian plot against the empire.²³⁶ The town and the country magistrate overseeing its administration are geographically and

²³⁴ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 214-218.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 216, 218.

²³⁶ J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (London: Vintage, 2004), 2-3.

ideologically remote from the imperial heartland. The colonel is a metonym, a mobile microcosm of the empire and its brutal methods of maintaining law and order. His arrival drastically alters the course of events, turning the 'lazy frontier' into a war zone.²³⁷ Barbarian men, women and youths are hauled from the desert, interrogated and tortured—Joll's way of 'probing for the truth'. 'First I get lies', he tells the magistrate, whose offer to observe Joll's methods first-hand is quickly dismissed, 'first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth'.²³⁸

Pensive and benign, the long-serving country magistrate oversees daily life in the town, collects taxes, administrates communal land and trade, convenes court and supervises a handful of junior officers. 'For the rest', he says, 'I watch the sun rise and set, eat and sleep and am content'.²³⁹ The magistrate dreams, reads classics, goes out fishing on 'native' boats, hunts, excavates ruins, devotes hours to deciphering an ancient script written on slips of wood, and hopes to find 'in the vacuousness of the desert a special historical poignancy'.²⁴⁰ But the only signs that erupt into visibility are bodies marked and claimed by the empire. When, for example, the magistrate happens upon the corpse of a barbarian elder (another casualty of Joll's search for the truth), his passive indifference to the empire solidifies into transgression.

In the colonel's absence, the magistrate sets free a group of barbarian captives and subsequently takes under his protection a blind

²³⁷ Ibid., 8.

²³⁸ Ibid., 5.

²³⁹ Ibid., 8.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

and crippled barbarian beggar. The unnamed girl shares his quarters and, before long, his bed. Yet, the magistrate's hedonistic sexual appetites are conspicuously absent from their intimacies. Instead, there are his insistent questions and palliative rituals: he bathes the girl, dresses her wounds with oil and bandages, and in a series of dreams spaced throughout the novel and opera, tries to unravel the meaning of his attachment to her crippled body. The girl, aloof and vigilant, responds to the magistrate's questions in monosyllables or not at all. In a rare exchange, she asks him why he is so interested in her scarred body. 'I feel I need to understand these marks on your body', sings the magistrate in the opera ('Do you enjoy living in the town?', 8:13),²⁴¹ a body he describes in the novel as incomprehensible and like 'a surface across which I hunt back and forth seeking entry'.²⁴² 'It has been growing more and more clear to me', reflects the magistrate, 'that until the marks on this girl's body are deciphered and understood I cannot let go of her'.²⁴³ But his quest for rational explanations and answers is abandoned in the presence of impenetrable otherness. The magistrate begins to understand that the girl in his bed has no need of his questions or of him discovering their answers. The consequences are decisive. When the girl expresses her wish to be reunited with the barbarians, the magistrate accompanies her on a perilous journey into the unmapped desert. As she regains her freedom, the magistrate loses his. Upon his return to the imperial outpost, the magistrate is accused by Joll of colluding with the barbarians, imprisoned and tortured.

²⁴¹ All references to the music are given in minutes and seconds and are from Philip Glass, *Waiting for the Barbarians* [audio recording] (New York: Orange Mountain Music, 2008).

²⁴² Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 46.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

Glass's opera, with a libretto by Christopher Hampton, follows closely the narrative situation of Coetzee's novel. The action is broken up into ten short scenes interspersed with five 'dream-scapes'. Robert Fink's gloss of Glass's signature aesthetic fits the sound-world of *Waiting for the Barbarians*: 'pulsating synthesizer chords that alternate between a minor [or at times major] tonic and its flatted sixth; faster, rumbling bass arpeggios; and, finally, a chanting, otherworldly bass choir'.²⁴⁴ Embedding the barbarian 'other' in an instrumental idiom powered by repetition throws up easy associations with the archaic or, on the contrary, the rigid mechanicity of non-individualised subjecthood—associations which are clearly problematic in a narrative about imperial domination. But such a flatly essentialist view of the music would be too general to be of much use, and unconvincing in the absence of conventional means of sonic differentiation. There are, for example, no Alla Turca style or exoticised evocations of distant places and peoples—no antithetical markers of otherness.²⁴⁵ The musical structure seems to operate independently of the unfolding narrative, and dramatic devices such as characterisation are left entirely to non-musical means. There is, Tristian Evans has argued, a strong totalitarian theme 'in the captive nature' of Glass's *Waiting for the Barbarians*—a move that places the repetitive music within the narrative parameters of the opera.²⁴⁶ The music, however, is not wholly without

²⁴⁴ Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), xii.

²⁴⁵ The idea that minimalist music lacks a signifying function has long been discredited. See, e.g., the excellent account by Rebecca Leydon, 'Towards a Typology of Minimalist Tropes', *Music Theory Online*, 8:1 (2002).

²⁴⁶ Tristian Evans, 'Analysing Minimalist and Post-Minimalist Music: An Overview of Methodologies', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and*

motivic reference points—small thematic units that serve a weak narrative function. One such motif consists of an arpeggiated minor triad that turns upwards to the flattened sixth before descending back to the root via the fifth and third. The motif is introduced in the first scene by a flute when Joll instructs soldiers to untie a barbarian prisoner who is about to be interrogated and tortured ('In fact we never had a prison', 4:23). The motif returns throughout the opera in the vicinity of recollected or actual violence ('Take off your cap', 4:12; 'Do you enjoy living in the town?' 1:36 and 5:02; 'Did you have a good evening', 2:58, 'Enemy barbarian lover', 2:59). Any sense of narrative orientation in the music begins to dissolve when the same motif reappears while the magistrate and the barbarian girl have sexual intercourse for the first and only time (they are in the desert on route to the girl's freedom) ('What is it', 1:57), and near the end of the opera, on this occasion following a sexual encounter with the cook ('You don't have to go', 4:36). The obvious point is that repetition in Glass's opera does not serve a referential function in the sense that signifiers and signifieds are tied together in the temporal unfolding of narration. As a result, and despite Evans's remarks, the music might be viewed as modelling surface-level egalitarianism by presenting to the listener a sound world stripped of clear sonic references to a theme or motif stated previously. Everyone and everything in the opera—servants, cooks, prostitutes, military officers and barbarians—sounds alike. Yet, despite the homogenising wash of sameness, Glass acknowledges the historical weight of his material and leaves open to the listener the agency of interpretation:

Postminimalist Music, eds. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann and Pwyll ap Siôn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 248.

I contacted John Coetzee about adapting his book into an opera back in 1991 and made my first treatment of the opera that same year... My aim then, as it is now, was to preserve Coetzee's bold allegorical approach while dramatising the classic themes of confrontation, crisis and redemption so the audience itself is left weighing the meaning of good and evil in their own lives.²⁴⁷

The novel and opera together embed these 'classic themes' in a network of literary and geopolitical traversals that reach back to the Roman empire through C. P. Cavafy's poem entitled 'Waiting for the Barbarians', and extend to the Cold War in the Western world, apartheid South Africa and post-9/11 America. The rich intertextual tapestry woven in the novel bears traces of Beckett, Kafka, Hawthorne, and Dino Buzzati's *On the Tartar Steppe*.²⁴⁸ Coetzee follows in broad strokes the narrative route of the latter, albeit with one crucial exception: whereas a hostile Tartar army appears towards the end of Buzzati's novel, the rumours of a barbarian uprising investigated by the colonel in *Waiting for the Barbarians* remain just that—absurd fabrications issuing from the imperial imagination.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Philip Glass, 'Waiting for the Barbarians', *PhilipGlass.com*, accessed November 22nd, 2014, http://philipglass.com/compositions/waiting_for_the_barbarians.

²⁴⁸ For a comparative reading of Coetzee's novel and Cavafy's poem, see Maria Boletsi, 'Barbaric Encounters: Rethinking Barbarism in C. P. Cavafy's and J. M. Coetzee's "Waiting for the Barbarians"', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 44:1-2 (2007), 67-96. See also Judie Newman, 'Intertextuality, Power and Danger: *Waiting for the Barbarians* as a Dirty Story', in *Critical Essays on J. M. Coetzee*, ed. Sue Kossew (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1998), 126-138.

²⁴⁹ Newman provides the following summary of *On the Tartar Steppe*: 'Giovanni Drogo, a young officer in an unnamed country, is posted to Fort Bastiani, located in a dead stretch of frontier, beyond which lies a great desert, the Tartar Steppe. Long ago there may have been Tartars, but as in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, none have appeared in living memory. Nonetheless, Colonel Filimore is "still waiting for them." Even Colonel Ortiz, who describes the legend of the Tartars as just that, a legend, comments: "The Tartars, the Tartars. At first it sounds like nonsense, naturally, then you end up believing it yourself". See Newman, 'Intertextuality, Power and Danger', 127. The two passages Newman cites are in Dino Buzzati, *On the Tartar Steppe*, trans. Stuart Hood (London: Secker and Warburg, 1952), 48 and 158.

In Cavafy's poem, it is once more rumours of the barbarians' imminent arrival that lay siege to the daily activities of the inhabitants of an unnamed city. 'Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly, everyone going home lost in thought?', asks one of the two interlocutors.²⁵⁰ Set in an unidentified—although probably imperial—city, the poem's dialogical structure unfolds as a sequence of questions posed by one speaker and responded to by another.²⁵¹ Why are people gathering in the town square? Why are the law-makers not legislating in the senate? Why is the emperor out of bed so early? Why is he sitting in state at the city gates? Why are the scholastics and orators not making their customary speeches? In each instance, the answer is fundamentally the same: the barbarians are bound to arrive at any moment. Empire, Cavafy seems to suggest, depends on a mangled fantasy about impending harm, the consequences of which are social dysfunction and paralysis. For the inhabitants of the imperial city, time itself has been suspended, frozen into a timeless state of waiting, the people poised between dread and hope, depending on whether the arrival of the barbarians will bring war or liberation. Neither of these possibilities is realised. Instead, the poem augurs a future of angst and existential futility: 'some of our men just in from the border say there are no barbarians any longer. Now what is going to happen to us without barbarians? Those people were a kind of solution'.

²⁵⁰ Throughout this chapter, I am using the translation from Greek into English by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. It is reproduced in Boletsi, 'Barbaric Encounters', 74-75.

²⁵¹ At the time of composing the poem, Cavafy had been reading Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, leading commentators to regard the latter as an important interpretive source and Rome the likely backdrop of the poem. See Maria Boletsi, 'Still Waiting for Barbarians After 9/11? Cavafy's Reluctant Irony and The Language of the Future', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 32:1 (2014), 57 and note 6.

Unlike the barbarians in Cavafy's poem, those assigned the equivalent ideological slot in recent history exist beyond any doubt. A 2013 editorial entitled 'Civilisation and Barbarism' in the *Weekly Standard* is symptomatic. Prefaced by the closing lines of Cavafy's poem, it compiles a list of 'modern barbarism[s]' which, remarks the author, turned out to be far more lethal than 'the old-fashioned kind':

The Soviet threat replaced the Nazi one. The barbarism of Mao and Pol Pot matched the worst of what had gone before. And the end of the Cold War didn't mean an end to the assaults on civilisation—foremost among them the attacks on 9/11.²⁵²

President George W. Bush inaugurated the rhetoric of post-9/11 reality only days after the events that would come to define the new millennium. Speaking from Camp David, the official presidential country retreat housed inside a US military base inside the Catoctin Mountain Park, Bush proclaimed that 'the American people need to go about their business as usual...but with a heightened sense of awareness that a group of barbarians has declared war'.²⁵³ Unlike the situation that plays out in Cavafy's poem, post-9/11 America—or so it seemed at the time—would not acquiesce to national paralysis, let alone an indefinite period of waiting for the next instalment of Bush's war. Despite promises of a 'swift and crushing response', the American government painted the prospect of a 'long and drawn-out' war.²⁵⁴ Bush encouraged America to continue with

²⁵² William Kristol, 'Civilisation and Barbarism', *Weekly Standard*, April 29th, 2013, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/civilization-and-barbarism/article/718055>. Kristol's piece is briefly considered in Boletsi, 'Still Waiting for Barbarians', 61.

²⁵³ Ian Christopher McCaleb, 'Bush Works Phones to Build Coalition', CNN.com, September 15th, 2001, <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/15/bush.terrorism>.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

business as usual, but cautioned that ‘travel might be more difficult’ and urged ‘Americans to be ready for the sort of disruption and heartache that could be brought on by sustained military action’.²⁵⁵

For an opera cast as a thinly veiled critique of American military conduct in detention facilities such as Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, the date on which Glass’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* premiered—one day before the fourth anniversary of 9/11—was fortuitous. ‘It’s clear who Glass’s target is—the US Bush administration and the war against Iraq’, wrote Simon Morgan, although ‘the production’s director... wisely avoids taking all-too-easy shots, only once showing blindfolded and hooded prisoners being led onstage on a leash in a reference to the atrocities carried out by the US army at Abu Ghraib prison’.²⁵⁶ The location of the 2007 American premiere was no less evocative: ‘Guy Montavon... staged Mr. Coetzee’s thinly disguised allegory of apartheid in a manner that suggested parallels to the current situation in Iraq—a provocative image in the city where President Bush served as Texas governor’, observed Steve Smith in the *New York Times*.²⁵⁷ Glass seems to concur: ‘at one point, this character [Joll] says, “Of course, we don’t approve of torture, but in an emergency situation, everybody understands that it’s allowed”. We hear people in the American government saying exactly this kind of thing’.²⁵⁸ If America is

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Simon Morgan, ‘Review of Philip Glass: *Waiting for the Barbarians*’, *MusicWeb-International.com*, accessed June 16th, 2015, <http://www.musicweb-international.com/SandH/2005/Jul-Dec05/barbarians.htm>.

²⁵⁷ Steve Smith, ‘*Waiting for the Barbarians*’, *New York Times*, January 22nd, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/22/arts/music/22glas.html?_r=0. accessed

²⁵⁸ Shirley Apthorp, ‘Philip Glass Talks About *Barbarians* Premiere, War, Music’, *Bloomberg.com*, September 9th, 2005, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aSPQ5iqd8hh8&refer=culture>.

the unnamed empire in Glass's opera, the remaining characters, now merely the familiar props in a post-9/11 world, easily slide into place: the barbarians represent the 'global terrorist threat', Colonel Joll the brutal dispensation of 'justice' meted out to anyone perceived as siding with terrorism, and the magistrate the conscientious official and citizen, caught between passive adherence and moral outrage.

The reason for dwelling at length on the historical, mythological and contemporary tropics of barbarity is to draw attention to the relays it constructs between territory and thought. The barbarian is the opposite of a landed citizenry; the migrants, terrorists and refugees defy borders; these same categories of people are thought to lack reason, intelligibility and human values. Utilising this potential for transversal analysis that obtains from the figure of the barbarian, this chapter will position the protagonists of *Waiting for the Barbarians* as allegories of opposing ways of thinking and occupying space, as embodying a series of encounters, between civilisation and barbarity, state and nomad, striated and smooth space, self and other, interiority and exteriority, imperial thought and the war machine. This treatment of the materials that will be discussed in the present chapter allows for transverse connections between music, thought, fiction, epistemology and territory, as part of a more general attempt to map imperial ways of thinking and occupying space. The three sections that follow extend these opposing ways of thinking and occupying space to and beyond the novel and opera: first to visual and pitch space, then to an insurgent decolonial micropolitics of folding, and finally to reading and interpretation. The question, throughout, will be how subjects think and move through space, a concern that stems from an awareness that

colonialism and imperialism are attended by spatial regimes, by ways of thinking and occupying space that codify, capture, restrict and striate. My working premise is simple, although with far-reaching consequences: ‘concepts of space and political ideologies combine in practices of representation, made manifest in texts and images, which do not simply reproduce the truths of some pre-existing reality’.²⁵⁹ One precedent for reading *Waiting for the Barbarians* through an overtly colonial spatial politics is found in Grant Hamilton’s Deleuzian reading of the novel. For him, Coetzee’s novel ‘exposes two combative conceptualisations of the earth that seem to characterise the colonial encounter’, namely state thought and nomad thought:

On the one hand is a state conceptualisation of the world that devours the essential quality of the earth, using it merely as a foundation to impose a reflection of its striated thought. It is a thought that thrives on the practice of limitation, organisation and compartmentalisation, which can only produce an always already falsified knowledge of the rich and various earth, but nevertheless continues to pass for truth. On the other hand is what we might think of as a smooth conceptualisation of the world—a world without limitation and organisation, a world that is not conceived as different from or apart from those that walk in it.²⁶⁰

The two types of colonial encounter structuring Hamilton’s reading are developed in Deleuze and Guattari’s second volume on capitalism and schizophrenia. Its twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth plateaus consider in turn the war machine as a loose assemblage of tactics working to disrupt the imperial state, the apparatus of capture which is the name they give to

²⁵⁹ Jeremy Larkins, *From Hierarchy to Anarchy: Territory and Politics Before Westphalia* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 4.

²⁶⁰ Grant Hamilton, ‘Becoming-Nomad: Territorialisation and Resistance in J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*’, in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, eds. Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 183.

characterise imperial or state thought, and smooth and striated space. In a general sense, State Thought is embodied by modern Western philosophy. Jeremy Larkins provides a succinct summary. State Thought ‘is organised by the principle of interiority that establishes a structure or axis... in terms of which objects and their relations are understood and explained’.²⁶¹ Nomad thought, on the other hand, ‘seeks to forge multiple, ever-changing and mutating connections or lines between heterogeneous realms such as semiotic chains, organisations of power, the arts and sciences, and social struggles’.²⁶² It is crucial to stress the interlocked nature of State Thought and nomad thought. It is never a case of one or the other. They exist ‘only in mixture: smooth spaces [nomad thought] constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space [State Thought]; striated spaces constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space’.²⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari are here directly borrowing from Pierre Boulez’s conceptions of musical space-time as striated and/or smooth.²⁶⁴ For Boulez, ‘striated space is marked by a standard, regular measure, which creates clear perceptual landmarks for the ear to orient itself, whereas smooth space is free, irregular and dispenses with all points of reference’.²⁶⁵ Or as Werner Strinz observes of the same distinction: ‘these considerations concerning musical space mark an enlargement of the conventional concept of

²⁶¹ Larkins, *From Hierarchy to Anarchy*, 45.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 474.

²⁶⁴ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Boulez, Proust and Time: “Occupying without Counting”’, trans. Timothy S. Murphy, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 3:2 (1998), 69-74 (the essay appeared in French in 1986). See also the brief discussion of Boulez’s smooth and striated space in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 477-478.

²⁶⁵ Edward Campbell, *Music After Deleuze* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 72. See also Pierre Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, trans. Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett (London: Faber, 1971), 83-87 and *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, trans. Stephen Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 117-119.

harmony—in which equal temperament serves as a neutral background canvas—to an integral dimension of sound organisation with converging concepts of harmony and temperament'.²⁶⁶ Smooth pitch space (non-tempered) remained, for Boulez, a speculative ideal. In practice, as Edward Campbell remarks, Boulez experimented with different degrees of striation, on the assumption that smaller partitions within a striated space yielded greater smoothness and continuity.²⁶⁷ When Deleuze and Guattari incorporate smooth and striated space into their own philosophy, they are not interested in formulating an orthodox version of these Boulezian concepts. Instead, smooth and striated space furnish one example amongst many others in a much broader characterisation of ways of thinking and occupying space. By way of contrasting the apparatus of the imperial state with the smooth space of nomad thought, they enlist a wide range of modalities and examples, including games, mathematics, history, philosophy, geography and technology. The striated ranks and files of the chess board and the properties of individual pieces, for example, operate according to a logic very different from that of Go.²⁶⁸ In chess there is hierarchy: a king, a queen, bishops, knights, rooks and pawns, each assigned a numerical value according to the rules that predetermine their movement in space. Chess pieces are fully individuated units, so that a knight cannot become a bishop or a pawn. Similarly, imperial thought blocks passages of becoming, so that the colonel who lives according to its principles cannot become animal, other, barbarian. The state, Hamilton

²⁶⁶ Werner Strinz, "Du Fond D'Un Naufrag": The Quarter-Tone Compositions of Pierre Boulez', in *Pierre Boulez Studies*, eds. Edward Campbell and Peter O'Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 161.

²⁶⁷ Campbell, *Music After Deleuze*, 73.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 352-353.

writes, 'seeks... to make everything known through a process of limitation that results in the absolute inhibition of possibility'.²⁶⁹ Like the nomad and the magistrate, Go pieces exemplify units of becoming—discs without intrinsic differentiating qualities and categorical rules according to individual type. Go pieces are individuated through a process of becoming, a process that always relates to the positions of other pieces on the board. 'A Go piece', Deleuze and Guattari write, 'has only a milieu of exteriority, or extrinsic relations with nebulas or constellations, according to which it fulfils functions of insertion or situation'.²⁷⁰ Yet another illustrative pair, this time derived from philosophy, is the maxim and the Nietzschean aphorism. The maxim, like State Thought, lays down a binding rule or principle. The Nietzschean aphorism, like nomad thought, 'revels in the transgression of the tight bounds drawn around it'.²⁷¹ In the fourteenth plateau, Deleuze and Guattari look to 'technological models' to characterise the differences and convergences of smooth and striated space. In knitting, for example, 'the needles produce a striated space' whereas crochet 'draws an open space in all directions, a space that is prolongable in all directions'.²⁷²

To think and move through space in the manner of the nomad is to inhabit a world of uncertainty, instability and perpetual unhinging—a world conditioned by motion and flux. It is a world that operates according to exteriorities and outsides, a world in which all manner of becomings are preferred to regulatory principles and systemic configurations. State

²⁶⁹ Hamilton, 'Becoming-Nomad', 189.

²⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 353.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 377. The explanation cited is from Joel Westerdale, *Nietzsche's Aphoristic Challenge* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013), 5.

²⁷² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 476.

Thought and the state apparatus, on the other hand, are locked in a mutually enabling reciprocity in which each depends on the other for its continued functioning. State Thought derives its architecture and spatiality from the state apparatus.²⁷³ As in the case of the clinical methodology of the torturer who disassembles the human body until truth is expounded and recorded, ‘State Thought proceeds in much the same manner as an archaeology, starting at the surface of an object and slowly working downwards to reveal the object’s “essential quality”’.²⁷⁴ Whilst furnishing the tools of State Thought, the apparatus of the state relies on the perpetual reproduction of homogeneity and consensus: ‘if the cogitatio universalis of state-thought cannot discern a meaning then there is no meaning to discern’.²⁷⁵

My interest in these Deleuzian models or images of thought resides in the transverse connections they enable. As a method, transverse thought is itself a means of opposing stratification and State Thought. As Hamilton puts it, ‘the rhizome... is always already detested by state thought. Necessarily uncountable, unknowable and indestructible, the rhizome... crosses all the limits and limitations erected by the state’.²⁷⁶ Taken together with the multiplicity of histories, geographies and myths enshrined in the figure of the barbarian, Hamilton’s Deleuzian reading of Coetzee’s novel enable a series of traversals that, in each case, can be grafted onto the models of smooth and striated space. The next section of the present chapter will depart from the novel and opera to follow one

²⁷³ Hamilton, ‘Becoming-Nomad’, 192.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 184.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 196.

such traversal into the domains of spectatorial epistemology and music's interior spatiality.²⁷⁷ The Cartesian references in Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of State Thought are not incidental. Discourses of sovereign subjects and states, argues Rob Walker, rely on a particular branch of Western philosophy that runs 'from Descartes' philosophy to Mercator's cartography, from Galilean mechanics to the magnificent constructions of Isaac Newton and Immanuel Kant'.²⁷⁸ Building on this argument, Jeremy Larkins suggests that Cartesian practices cannot account adequately for the origins of the Western territorial imaginary. It is necessary to go back further, to the 'revolution in the conceptualisation and representation of space that occurred during the Renaissance'.²⁷⁹ This genealogy is consistent with Foucault's suggestion that linear perspective 'assigns to the viewer a single, ideal place from which to behold the tableau', meanwhile instituting 'a game of evasion' in which 'painting conspires to make the viewer forget the materiality of the painting in favour of the representation it opens up'.²⁸⁰ The question then arises whether the discovery and subsequent normalisation of linear perspective reverberated also in the domain of musical space. In addressing this question, I will propose that the striation of musical pitch space by means of tempered tuning might be construed as the sonic mirror of perspective, on the basis that it disciplined pitch space into a striated surface consisting of twelve regular subdivisions. The third section of this chapter will return to the opera and

²⁷⁷ I here follow Edward Campbell's two-fold characterisation of musical space: '[1] interior spatiality (the pitch space continuum) and [2] exterior spatiality (the arena in which a musical performance occurs)'. See Campbell, *Music After Deleuze*, 68.

²⁷⁸ Walker is cited in Larkins, *From Hierarchy to Anarchy*, 33.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

²⁸⁰ Joseph Tanke, *Foucault's Philosophy of Art: A Genealogy of Modernity* (London: Continuum, 2009), 67, 69.

novel to seek out alternative ways of thinking and occupying space predicated on premises different from those of the Cartesian subject and spatial striation. Deleuze's most sustained and systematic response to Cartesianism is worked out in his study of Leibniz and the baroque as a universe of folds and extensions.²⁸¹ Through a careful unknotting and re-entangling of Leibniz's baroque monads, Deleuze abandons the binary structures of linear perspective, Cartesian rationalism and imperialism, holding out in their place the practice of nomadology. Where Cartesian thought and linear perspective split the world into subjects and objects, installing the subject as dominant agent and custodian of signification, the Leibnizian monad folds, releasing the object from a state of negative dependence on the subject. This process of release occurs most powerfully in the character of the magistrate in relation to the barbarian girl and the empire, a relationship I will explore by means of Deleuzian folding. Finally, in the closing section of this chapter, I will consider spatial practices tied to the acts of reading and interpretation. Coetzee's novel and Glass's opera together re-enact a compendium of possible (post)colonies, which is to say that both follow through on the logic of colonialism, but they do so in different ways, and that difference is significant. In the novel, empire remains the dominant paradigm despite—and this marks the moment of decolonisation—the flicker of revolutionary possibility kept alive in the character of the barbarian girl. Glass's opera, on the contrary, stages the unselfconscious incorporation of colonialism into the neo-colonial project, whereas the revolutionary moment that creates the

²⁸¹ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Continuum, 2006).

opening for decolonisation is incorporated as American auto-critique passed off as artistic freedom, and as the necessary condition for the continued perpetuation of the very system it sets out to critique.

While much of the critical work that follows is driven by aligning to State Thought a wide range of sonic and scopic practices—linear perspective, tempered tuning, Cartesian thought, and, finally, the colonel in *Waiting for the Barbarians*—the operative term is not the replacement of one episteme by another, nor the total denigration of the rational project represented here by linear perspective, Cartesian thought and State Thought. In keeping with the modernity/coloniality theoretical frame set up in Chapter 1, my concern is the simultaneous production of seemingly incommensurable realities and the ways in which these might be negotiated. Negotiation itself, I maintain, is enabled in this chapter by the relationship between its different sections and their potentially disjunctive themes. Rather than offering a linear or singular argument, this chapter is itself a series of dynamic folds in which each explores the political and aesthetic implications of the ways of thinking and occupying space allegorised in the protagonists of *Waiting for the Barbarians*.

Ways of thinking and occupying space: Linear perspective, Cartesianism and equal temperament

The formation of Western scales along with equal temperament and the equally tempered semitone may be described as the state-sponsored paradigm of a contemporary scale, in relation to which all other contenders are deemed defective.

In his only sustained engagement with music, Descartes set to work his ‘nascent deductivist method of geometrical reasoning’ in the service of objectification and assignation.²⁸³ The opening lines of *Compendium Musicae* (1618) assign music to the order of objects. ‘Music is the object of sound’, and must therefore be considered solely according to measurement, proportionality and order.²⁸⁴ Commenting on Descartes’s ontology of music, Jairo Moreno observes that the philosopher’s understanding of music very likely reflected the position of the Jesuit college where he had studied between 1607 and 1614: music belonged categorically to ‘the sensible objects that could be studied mathematically (others included astrology, perspective, geodesy, calculation, and mechanics) as opposed to those which could be known only in abstraction, separately from their matter (geometry and arithmetic)’.²⁸⁵ This division of the quadrivium into disciplines contingent upon the senses and those that could exist purely as abstract entities brings into focus the tension underlying Cartesian dualism, one which Descartes tried to resolve in the *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Descartes desired the elimination of whatever illusions masqueraded as absolute and correct knowledge, a

²⁸² Campbell, *Music After Deleuze*, 80.

²⁸³ Thomas Christensen, Introduction to *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

²⁸⁴ The passage is considered briefly in Suzanna Clark and Alexander Rehding, Introduction to *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Suzanna Clark and Alexander Rehding (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6. See also Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7 and Jairo Moreno, *Musical representations, subjects, and objects: the Construction of Musical Thought in Zarlino, Descartes, Rameau, and Weber* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 53-62.

²⁸⁵ Moreno, *Musical Representations*, 53.

desire that led him to begin with elimination: 'I WILL now close my eyes, I will stop my ears, I will call away my senses from their objects, I will even efface from my consciousness all the images of corporeal things'.²⁸⁶ Having thus proclaimed himself periodically blind and beyond the deleterious affectations of the senses, Descartes conducts a thought experiment. 'I find two completely diverse ideas of the sun in my mind', he reasons: 'the one derives its origin from the senses... according to this idea the sun seems to be extremely small; but the other is derived from astronomical reasonings... in accordance with it the sun appears several times larger than the earth'.²⁸⁷ Acknowledging the primacy of the latter, Descartes finds modern epistemology: 'knowledge can only be obtained either from innate ideas or from mathematics, the truths of which are guaranteed by the former, which are themselves guaranteed by God'.²⁸⁸

The veracity of Descartes's idealist philosophy was seriously jeopardised by one of the prized epistemological weapons of Enlightenment empiricism: the person born blind. If, as Descartes concluded, ideas were innate to reason and therefore safe from the corrupting lures of the senses, he had to prove, countered Pierre Gassendi in his objections to the *Meditations*, that knowledge of different colours and the qualities of different objects could be arrived at independently of the sensory faculty of sight:

²⁸⁶ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy in Focus*, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, ed. Stanley Tweyman (London: Routledge, 1993), 58.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁸⁸ Descartes is quoted in Kate Tunstall, *Blindness and Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 61. See also Descartes, *Meditations*, 63, 65.

If you want to grasp the fact that no part of this idea has been implanted in us by nature, you should inquire about the idea that a man born blind has. You will find first of all that the idea in his mind has no colour or luminosity. Next you will find that it is not even round, unless someone has told him that the sun is round and he has previously held a round object in his hands.²⁸⁹

All but deterred by Gassendi's charges, Descartes's rejoinder rather innovatively recast the etiology of blindness which, he suggested, was 'a mental disorder in which what is lacking in a blind man is not eyes so much as a mind that can see'.²⁹⁰ Descartes's self-professed inability to hear intervals, apparently, did not hint at any mental deficiency on his behalf, and perhaps even provided salutary reassurance for the anti-sensate philosopher.²⁹¹ The more fundamental point, however, is that without this fantasy to prop up his idea of vision as geometrical reason, Cartesian metaphysics and the *cogito* teeter on the edge of absurdity. Where does this fantasy come from? What are the conditions of possibility that render it thinkable? Which matrices of power and modalities of possession are thereby normalised? We have already noted Deleuze and Guattari's characterisation of Cartesian epistemology according to striation and State Thought. Descartes, in the above exchange, denies or closes off exteriority. Truth and ideas can only ever be intrinsic to the subject. And thus, if someone born blind is unable to identify the correct shape and colour of the sun, he or she invariably suffered from some or other intrinsic mental incapacity. Unlike Descartes, Gassendi understood that thought must originate from the outside, from what is experienced, touched,

²⁸⁹ Tunstall, *Blindness*, 61.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁹¹ Descartes's 'candid inability of not being able to recognise intervals' is mentioned in Moreno, *Musical representations*, 51.

encountered. For Larkins, it is to the discovery of linear perspective that we must turn to begin accounting for sovereign subjectivity and Cartesian thought.²⁹²

In 1425 Filippo Brunelleschi—painter, sculptor, architect and engineer—conducted an experiment that, according to the art historian Samuel Edgerton, ‘ultimately was to change the modes, if not the course of Western history’.²⁹³ Brunelleschi’s experiment introduced linear perspective to the Renaissance world as a method of representing three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. He painted two panels depicting a view of the Florentine baptistery from the portal of the then unfinished cathedral of Florence. The rest of the experiment is described by Brunelleschi’s biographer, Antonio Manetti:

[He] had made a hole in the panel on which there was this painting; which hole was as small as a lentil on the painting side of the panel, and on the back it opened pyramidally, like a woman’s straw hat, to the size of a ducat or a little more. And he wished the eye to be placed at the back, where it was large, by whoever had it to see, with the one hand bringing it close to the eye, and with the other holding a mirror opposite, so that there the painting came to be reflected back... which on being seen..., it seemed as if the real thing was seen: I have had the painting in my hand and have seen it many times in these days, so I can give testimony.²⁹⁴

Standing in the portal of Florence cathedral with an actual view of the baptistery whilst looking at the painted panel through the mirror and the

²⁹² See especially Larkins, *From Hierarchy to Anarchy*, 145-168. Larkins cites the political scientist, John Ruggie, who has argued ‘that the essence of modern subjectivity and its being-in-space is embodied by single-point perspective, which prioritized the sovereignty of “a single point of view, the point of view of a single subjectivity, from which all other subjectivities were differentiated”, in relation to the vanishing point’ (146).

²⁹³ Quoted in Michael Kubovy, *The Psychology of Perspective and Renaissance Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 32.

²⁹⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 32-33.

peephole, the experience must have been a dazzling one for the unsuspecting observer. Inasmuch as the eye of the observer in Brunelleschi's 'peepshow' (as the experiment became known) is visible through the peephole and reflected back in the mirror as part of the painting, the presence of an observer is 'framed' inside the painting—in other words, a mimetic centring of both observer and painting attained in the same movement. Before linear perspective sets to work, the observer, the painted panel, the mirror, the peephole and the view from the portal of the actual baptistery are distributed discretely in three-dimensional space. Perspective splits this scene into a subject (the observer) and a predicate or object (the painting), which are now extricated from the space of their affordance. The spatial operations of perspective consist of elevation (of the subject), framing (capturing on canvas the experience of a viewer standing in front of the actual baptistery) and reification (the view of the baptistery could be frozen spatio-temporally, rendering the sight/site reproducible as a 'visual field' available to capitalist circulation).²⁹⁵ It is thus also no surprise that 'the highly political world of the Italian city-states' sponsored the discovery of linear perspective. 'With the constant painting and repainting of family chapels', Joseph Tanke observes, 'an abundance of public commissions and new forms of patronage, stylistic experimentations were encouraged and innovations rewarded'.²⁹⁶

What is rendered visible by the point of view of linear perspective is not reality as experience but, to borrow a phrase from Moreno, a subject

²⁹⁵ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 58-59.

²⁹⁶ Tanke, *Foucault's Philosophy of Art*, 68.

observing ‘his own observation’.²⁹⁷ Linear perspective, in this sense, anticipates Descartes’s thinking subject and the colonisation of self-consciousness as peculiar to the cultural and intellectual refinements of Europe: ‘perspectiva (from *perspicere*, to see clearly, to examine, to ascertain, and to see through)’.²⁹⁸ Linear perspective purifies, renders more clearly, makes available a privileged point of view from a position where what is haphazard, disorderly or unpredictable coalesces (or is made to coalesce) into a two-dimensional grid.

Scholars of music, too, have speculated about possible reverberations of linear perspective in changing conceptualisations of musical space. Because linear perspective is a ‘visual logic’, says Chua, its sonification will occur as ‘a shift in the visualisation of sound’ which he duly locates in the spatial and notational innovations of sixteenth-century scores: ‘the score rationalises the fissured and layered patterns of medieval notation by containing music within a geometrical space that pictures the totality as a map’.²⁹⁹ Nicholas Cook has in turn suggested that tonality is to the auditory what perspective is to vision.³⁰⁰ Like perspective, Cook suggests, tonality privileges the production of subject positions temporally (goal-directed motion which, in turn, incubates narration), as well as topologically (tonal space constructs zones of relativity and proximity in relation to roots, tonics and a ‘home’ key).³⁰¹ Tonality is differentiated from its musical ‘others’ synchronically and diachronically, that is, tonality

²⁹⁷ Moreno, *Musical Representations*, 50.

²⁹⁸ Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 53.

²⁹⁹ Chua, *Absolute Music*, 54.

³⁰⁰ Nicholas Cook, ‘Classical Music and the Politics of Space’, in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 227.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 227-228.

claims to be qualitatively different from earlier forms of pitch organisation and contemporaneous non-Western musics. The sociologist Robert Witkin has also posited a homologous relationship between perspective and tonality, a relationship he extends as well to modern theatre and what he calls the bourgeois novel. They have in common, he writes, that the narratives they set out to portray 'could be relativized in a self-contained, rational and self-consistent totality'.³⁰² Following Adorno, Witkin makes the point that these artistic developments attest to the realisation of bourgeois ideology as constructing an 'organic identity between the whole and the part'.³⁰³ Donald Tovey, too, wrote about tonal harmony as 'the musical analogue to perspective' due to the logical relationships between keys and chords and its ability to express 'through its successions of tension and relaxation the experience of the single individual'.³⁰⁴

Despite the above, the pairing of visual perspective with tonality is not self-evident. First, they are not contemporaneous phenomena. Unlike the invention of perspective that dates back to the Renaissance, tonality is no older than the seventeenth century while the term itself is an invention of the nineteenth.³⁰⁵ Second, where narrative is concerned, it is not entirely clear why teleology is a function especially peculiar to tonality; rather, tonality as one possible musical environment serving narration (teleological or otherwise) unfolds in a particular manner which has to do with the hierarchical arrangement of musical space, according to the

³⁰² Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music* (London: Routledge, 1998), 40.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ Quoted in Christopher Small, *Music, Society, Education* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 13.

³⁰⁵ Cook notes that the term 'tonality' was invented in the nineteenth century without remarking on its historical asynchrony with perspective. Cook, 'Classical Music and the Politics of Space', 228.

principles of tonal tension and resolution. Modal music, to list one example, by no means precludes the possibility of narration; one might recall genres such as the pastoral or early opera which predate tonality but nonetheless retain a sense of story-telling in sung and instrumental forms. Third, where Tovey and Cook stress the spatial and narrative logic of tonality, it is difficult to reconcile the quasi-religious romantic mysticism that permeates the writings of perhaps the greatest champion of tonality, Heinrich Schenker, with the geometric rationalism of linear perspective.³⁰⁶ At the very least, it must be granted that the case for tonality as the sonic counterpart of perspective is not without some ambiguities. In what follows, I propose to consider musical temperament as the sonic mirror of perspective on the grounds that the former offers the closest musical equivalent to the ideological, aesthetic, and philosophical work done by State Thought and striation. This argument expands upon, rather than replaces, those that favour tonality as the analogue to linear perspective, not least because equal temperament, as Campbell observes, is ‘the form in which we most often encounter tonality today’.³⁰⁷

The cultural historian Martin Jay has characterised the spatial economy inaugurated by visual perspective starkly, as ‘one of the most fateful innovations of Western culture’.³⁰⁸ The fatality of perspective resides in a commitment to the ordering, rationalization, and commodification of space. Such a totalizing vision became attainable when

³⁰⁶ Writing about Schenker’s understanding of tonal space, Holly Watkins makes the point that it was ‘governed by a quasi-religious set of proscriptions and filled with symbolic characteristics’. See her *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought: from E. T. A. Hoffmann to Arnold Schoenberg* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 174.

³⁰⁷ Campbell, *Music After Deleuze*, 78.

³⁰⁸ Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 44.

perspective inaugurated a point of view predicated on a contract of mutual deceit, which is precisely the visual ruse cautioned against in the following text, which was popular with Florentine carnival-goers during the Renaissance.

Se la ricchezza, sapienza e fede
i fuor falsa il colore,
dunque, chi al vestir di costor crede,
fa più degli altri errore;
perchè la lingua, l'intelletto e'l cuore
hanno pien di dispetti,
e l'esser puri e netti
vi danno indizio; e questo sol deriva
che'l mondo é tutto fatto in prospettiva.

If wealth, wisdom and faith
are falsely rendered from the outside by colour,
then he who believes in the clothing of those [deceivers]
errs more than the others;
for their language, intellect, and heart
are full of unpleasant traits,
and their being so pure and neat
is but a sign of this; and it all derives solely from the fact
that the whole world is done in perspective.³⁰⁹

The song stanza names one of the most pertinent aesthetic functions of perspective: sanctioned deceit. Deceit is also central to what the neo-Gestalt psychologist Michael Kubovy calls the psychology of perspective. Kubovy takes issue with the Cartesian point of view and more specifically with perspectival epistemology. He identifies and elaborates on several functions of Renaissance perspective, namely the 'illusionist' function, 'narrative focus', and 'structural focus'.³¹⁰ Brunelleschi's peepshow is an exemplar of the first of these: aided by Leon Battista Alberti's treatise on

³⁰⁹ 'Canto de' Simulatori', quoted in Claudio Guillén, *Literature as System: Essays towards the Theory of Literary History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 299.

³¹⁰ Kubovy, *Psychology of Perspective*, 1-6.

painting and perspective which post-dates the peepshow by almost a decade, Renaissance visual artists quickly learned to apply the principle of linear perspective by compressing three-dimensional space onto a two-dimensional surface. Their ability to represent reality faithfully remained contingent upon the contract fundamental to perspective, one transacted between an observing subject, the agency of representation (the hand that shapes actual scenes into images) and the subsequent aesthetic object. This contractual bind obscures the deceit on which perspective depends by stipulating that a frozen reduction of actuality be regarded as the real.³¹¹ The deceit on which perspective depends requires denarrativization and renarrativization, which leads onto Kubovy's second function of perspective. The narrative focus of perspective, he suggests, facilitated the cutting of specific events from multi-sensory and three-dimensional actuality (denarrativization), and pasting them as scenes onto a two-dimensional canvas, 'like landmarks or spatial indicators' (renarrativization).³¹² Perspective as structural focus—the third of Kubovy's functions—facilitated the 'staging' of intricately arranged scenes for the spectating eye.³¹³ The combined aesthetic and ideological work done by perspective's illusionist, narrative, and structural functions installed it as the epistemological principle subtending an entire Western ontology and climaxing in the Cartesian Enlightenment subject. That subject occupied a privileged, rational, universal, transcendent point of view, bequeathed it by the perspectival painter who, in Jay's words, uses 'a

³¹¹ According to Warman Welliver, perspective leads to 'a new code for concealing allusion and meaning'. Quoted in *ibid.*, 6.

³¹² The phrase is from Guillén, *Literature as System*, 294.

³¹³ Kubovy, *Psychology of Perspective*, 1.

camera obscura to enframe and reproduce the world'.³¹⁴ Linear perspective, as Samuel Edgerton writes, inaugurated a 'new Quattrocento mode of representation... based on the assumption that visual space is ordered a priori by an abstract, uniform system of linear coordinates'.³¹⁵ It is the principles subtending this fundamental reordering of visual space which, I want to suggest, are at work also in pitch space and tempered tuning. To make this argument, it is necessary to distinguish between regular and irregular temperaments as degrees of spatial striation, and to recognise that equal temperament presents a higher degree of pitch space striation than, say, Harry Partch's tempered scale (which divides into 43 pitches) or Pythagorean tuning. It follows that the case for equal temperament that will be presented below does not pertain uniquely and only to that system, since its ascendancy is bound up with developments in instrument-making and practical musicianship.

I began this section with references to attempts at ridding philosophy and musical thought of error and ambiguity. For Suzanna Clark and Alexander Rehding, the same programme found its way into the domain of tuning: 'what the cognoscenti of the Florentine Camerata and elsewhere did in their studies of tuning was simply to "correct" what they conceived of as flaws in nature'.³¹⁶ What had to be corrected, in this instance, were the 'unpleasant' or 'bad' intervals that arose due to the irregularity of pitch space. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Simon Stevin calculated for the first time the exact tempered intervals that

³¹⁴ Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 69.

³¹⁵ Samuel Y. Edgerton, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 7.

³¹⁶ Clark and Rehding, Introduction to *Music Theory and Natural Order*, 6.

would yield what, today, is called equal temperament. For Stevin, as Rudolf Rasch observes, this was not an instance of tempering intervals, ‘since in his eyes the “equal-tempered” intervals were in effect the true intervals, whereas the small-integer-ratios were... misconceptions lying near the more complicated truth’.³¹⁷ The history of tuning and temperament can be considered from a regulative (practice-driven) or a speculative (theoretical) point of view, although it would be inaccurate to think of theory and practice as separate and unrelated. Whereas Clark and Rehding’s assessments as well as those of Daniel Chua (introduced below) are concerned with a speculative tradition, changes in tuning systems coincided also with the practical needs of musicians. Thus, Pythagorean tuning with its just fifths worked satisfactorily for parallel organum and music consisting mostly of perfect fourths, fifths and octaves.³¹⁸ But the introduction and increased usage of triads and third intervals caused problems that led, over time, to the replacement of Pythagorean with just tuning.³¹⁹

James Murray Barber suggests that Francesco Salinas provided a working definition for equal temperament in 1577:

We judge this one thing must be observed by makers of viols, so that the placing of the frets may be made regular, namely that the octave must be divided into twelve parts equally proportional, which twelve would be the equal semitones.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Rudolf Rasch, ‘Tuning and Temperament’, in *Western Music Theory*, 205.

³¹⁸ See Jan Herlinger, ‘Medieval Canonics’, in *Western Music Theory*, 176-178.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Cited in James Murray Barbour, *Tuning and Temperament: a Historical Survey* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), 5. Barbour’s study of musical temperament, despite having been published more than six decades ago, remains the definitive source on the historical development of tuning and temperament. See Rasch, ‘Tuning and Temperament’, 194.

Chua approaches the subject from a different angle. For him, equal temperament is one manifestation of a larger socio-philosophical process—what Max Weber and others characterised as the disenchantment of the world.³²¹ Thus, the musical correlate to this process, he argues, was the ‘ratio-nalization’ of musical space.³²² No longer was insight into the musical process thought to originate from sacred forces (Pan, Orpheus, Marsyas, the Platonic world spirit, the spheres, etc.), but it resided in a law guided by rationalism and measurement. As Chua writes: ‘music was objectified as an acoustic fact; it became natural matter for the control of empirical experimentation and the verification of the ear’.³²³ The point here is not that equal temperament initiated a process of rationalisation in music that, somehow, it had lacked previously. For Max Weber, whose writings on music play a prominent role in Chua’s overall argument, music’s rationalisation coincided with its relative autonomy as a professional practice.³²⁴ Rationalisation, for Weber, once more trapped the subject inside a modern double bind: the simultaneous production of emancipation and enslavement.³²⁵

Returning to Kubovy’s functional characterisation of linear perspective, it is possible to locate more precisely the correspondences

³²¹ I here follow the account of the disenchantment and naturalization of music supplied by Daniel K. L. Chua in his ‘Vincenzo Galilei, Modernity and the Division of Nature’, in *Music Theory and Natural Order*, 17-29.

³²² For the ‘ratio-nalisation’ of music, see *Ibid.*, 21.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 18. The disenchantment of music, for Chua, occurred coterminously with its re-enchantment, which he ascribes to music’s gradual migration from the scientific quadrivium to the domains of rhetoric and language characteristic of the trivium.

³²⁴ See Benjamin Steege, *Helmholtz and the Modern Listener* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 247.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

between linear perspective and tempered tuning. The structural function Kubovy ascribed to perspective greatly catalysed the rationalization of space. Correspondingly, tempered tuning rationalized space by discarding the just Pythagorean spiral of fifths and tempering the Pythagorean comma to yield a finite, closed circle of fifths where the measurements between pitches and pitch combinations are always equidistant. As was the case with the introduction of perspective into the domain of visual representation, equal temperament abetted the staging, reproduction, and ultimately the commodification of musical space. Pointing for example to wind instrument design at the end of the nineteenth century which occurred concomitantly with the growing popularity of amateur bands in America and what was known as ‘company bands’ in Britain, Ross Duffin writes that ‘the need to manufacture so many instruments quickly for this new market forced musical instrument makers to cut corners... so that the subtle tuning systems of several nineteenth-century instruments got replaced with basic ET [equal temperament] systems’.³²⁶ As a result, ensembles comprising various instruments no longer had to contend with the discords of natural tuning that became increasingly troublesome to the ear trained in equal temperament. Max Weber has also noted the benefits of mass production that accrued from the standardisation of tuning:

The idea of building pianos with twenty-four keys in the octave... is not very promising, mainly for economic reasons. As compared with the comfortable twelve-keyed keyboard, it would have no

³²⁶ Ross Duffin, *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (and Why You Should Care)* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 141.

market amongst amateurs and would remain a mere virtuoso instrument.³²⁷

For the same reasons, the division of the octave into 53 equidistant pitches and the ‘generalised keyboard’ designed by Robert Holford Macdowall Bosanquet in 1876, remain purely academic (because impracticable and expensive) solutions to a problem for which the division of the octave into twelve equidistant semitones has proven the most practical and easily reproducible alternative.³²⁸ Clark and Rehding state the point about the commodification of music in philosophical terms when they liken the naturalization of music (brought about in no small part by equal temperament) ‘to the establishment of “nature reserve areas”... an area of landscape [that] is fenced off with the purpose of perennial preservation in exactly the same state’.³²⁹ The fence here is the closure effected by the annulment of just intonation, which altered the commodity form of music from the micro-scale of the interval to the macro-scale of the work as a reproducible and standardized sonic object.

The narrative focus Kubovy ascribes to perspective has a counterpart in equal temperament when, as Chua suggests, the latter is understood as instrumental in the disenchantment of music.³³⁰ Equal temperament compelled music to exchange its transcendental ties (denarrativization) in the name of acoustical science (renarrativization), even if it meant that natural pitch space had to be redefined artificially by

³²⁷ Max Weber, ‘The History of the Piano’, in *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*, ed. W. G. Runciman, trans. E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 378-382 (the quote is on p.382).

³²⁸ Campbell, *Music After Deleuze*, 84.

³²⁹ Clark and Rehding, Introduction to *Music Theory and Natural Order*, 6-7.

³³⁰ Chua, ‘Vincenzo Galilei, Modernity and the Division of Nature’, 20.

the establishment of twelve equally spaced pitches. Finally, the illusionist function of perspective has to do with the persistent attempt to account for music according to fixed laws and acquired taxonomies, all in pursuit of a single and universally valid system. But the production of laws and axioms, as Jacques Attali writes of ‘harmonic order’, did not come to music naturally: ‘it has to be constructed by science, willed by man’.³³¹ And hence, he continues, ‘the introduction of bar lines in musical notation, of thorough bass and equal temperament, made music the representation of a constructed, reasoned order, a consolation for the absence of natural rationality’.³³² The illusion that equal temperament strove to maintain was that of music as a natural, scientific, rational, and acoustic fact, as a Cartesian discipline exclusively belonging to the quadrivium.

The issue is not whether one agrees or disagrees with equal temperament as the best solution to the complex problem of irregular pitch space. Rather, it has to do with the impulse instructing the will to power—the will to reduce reality to a rigidly predetermined set of axioms available to be controlled and coded according to a cultural and political dominant, and the historical contingency of that impulse. When Campbell describes equal temperament as partaking of a ‘state-sponsored paradigm’, he is not merely being whimsical or dismissive. Rather, he is acknowledging that there are reasons why it is that most of us think and hear in equal temperament instead of, say, the 22 pitches of a shruti.³³³

³³¹ Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 60.

³³² *Ibid.*, 61.

³³³ Campbell cites Louis Rowell who writes that ‘our confidence in the inevitability of the systems and grammars of pitch organisation in Western music is shaken—or ought to be

On getting out: baroque thought and folding

So we must look for the way out—to get out is the most important thing—and we must do that by looking in between.

John S. Howard³³⁴

Colonel Joll furnishes the modular prototype of Cartesian subjectivity. When, like the Cartesian subject, Joll ‘moves into space, [he] transforms one of the corners of the square or rectangle of its periphery into the site of a new centre, around which new extremities are established, and so forth, until space is conquered’.³³⁵ His quest for the truth is more accurately based on a violent deformation of reality to cohere with the dark fantasies of empire. In the disenchanted world of Joll and the empire no secret has been left undiscovered, no truth not yet codified and claimed by the mind of empire. Not only secrets and truths suffer the same fate of always having been already discovered, but bodies, too, bear the violent marks of having been claimed and categorised according to the logic of empire. But the colonel is only one part of Coetzee’s story, one half of the story of empire.

An ontological antidote to the rational universe of linear perspective and the disenchanted world it ultimately inaugurated is found in the ‘great axiom of the baroque’: ‘to be is to see’, although—crucially—the constitution of the subject does not rely on self-conscious sensory capacity

shaken—whenever we come in contact with the radically different scales and modes of the old high musical cultures of Asia’. Campbell, *Music After Deleuze*, 91.

³³⁴ John S. Howard, ‘Subjectivity and Space. Deleuze and Guattari’s BwO in the New World Order’, in *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*, eds. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin J. Heller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 115.

³³⁵ Tom Conley, Translator’s foreword to *The Fold*, xviii.

(the ability to sense myself sensing) as the guarantor of a fully conscious and rational individual.³³⁶ The subject of baroque thought is not a consequence of logical deduction predicated on its own ‘innate’ ideas. Unlike Cartesian thought, the sensate does not guarantee the presence of a subject, nor is it irreducible to negativity or dependence in the process of differentiating subjects from other subjects and objects. Not ‘to see is to be’, as Descartes might have said, but, in the words of Christine Buci-Glucksmann, ‘to be is to be seen’.³³⁷

In his study of the baroque, Deleuze notes Leibniz’s propensity for obfuscation. ‘Contrary to Descartes’, he writes, ‘Leibniz begins in darkness’.³³⁸ Deleuze’s Leibniz does not set out to organise, illuminate, categorise, fix binaries, and split the world into rational subjects and dependent objects. If the *Cogito* says ‘I am thinking’, Leibniz declares himself to be in a state of disarray: ‘within myself I perceive not only myself who thinks but also many differences in my thoughts, from which I conclude that there are other things outside of me’.³³⁹ Whereas Cartesian thought precipitates ‘distinct concepts’ and ‘ordered unity’, its Leibnizian counterpart elicits descriptions such as ‘exuberant’, ‘sloppy’, and ‘orgiastic’.³⁴⁰ Deleuze detects in the architectonic structure of the baroque house an allegorical counterpart of the production of uncertainty and

³³⁶ Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *The Madness of Vision: on Baroque Aesthetics*, trans. Dorothy Baker (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 2.

³³⁷ Buci-Glucksmann explains the link between being and visibility as follows: ‘I am never in front of—as in the space of modernity —“conceptions of the world”, where Being is parcelled into the double certainty of the requisite subject and object in order to represent the self’. See *Ibid.*, 26.

³³⁸ Deleuze, *The Fold*, 103.

³³⁹ Leibniz is quoted in Niamh McDonnell, ‘Leibniz’s Combinational Art of Synthesis and the Temporal Interval of the Fold’, in *Deleuze and the Fold: a Critical Reader*, eds. Sjoerd van Tuinen and Niamh McDonnell (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 70.

³⁴⁰ McDonnell and Van Tuinen, Introduction to in *Deleuze and the Fold*, 6.

multiplicity. The first thing to note is its multiple labyrinthine structures, consisting of lines infinitely bending into curves, folding over and in-between one another. The baroque house has two floors—an upper and a lower level—that are folded together. The upper level is windowless, ‘a room in black marble, in which light enters only through orifices so well bent that nothing on the outside can be seen through them’.³⁴¹ It is here, in the dark room decorated only with a stretched canvas ‘diversified by folds’, that Leibniz’s monads reside. ‘Blind and closed’, the upper room ‘resonate[s] as if it were a musical salon translating the visible movements below into sounds up above’.³⁴² Whereas the upper level is private, the lower is ‘assigned to the facade, which is elongated by being punctured and bent back according to the folds determined by a heavy matter, forming an infinite room for reception or receptivity’.³⁴³ Consistently open to the world, light pours in through the windows and doors. For Deleuze, then, the labyrinthine structures replicated on both floors of the baroque house forestall the crystallisation of centred subjects. Likewise, the point of view of the baroque house is not ‘a variation of truth according to the subject, but the condition in which the truth of a variation appears to the subject’.³⁴⁴

The two floors of the baroque house allegorise two different conceptions of lived space, each with its unique forms of habitation (souls on the upper floor and sensations on the lower). If the upper floor is a body, the lower is the world; if the upper floor is where souls and monads

³⁴¹ Deleuze, *The Fold*, 31.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

reside, the lower floor accommodates thousands of minute perceptions; if the upper floor is the domain of actualisation, the lower is that of realisation.³⁴⁵ Simplified thus, it is easy to find traces of the Cartesian subject-object pair in Deleuze's allegory: the upper floor houses the higher faculties of cognition, whereas the lower represents the realm of objects and things. Just as there are not two worlds, one intended for subjects, the other for objects, the two floors of the baroque house are related to each other: 'we realise that two worlds do not exist... there exists only one and the same world, conveyed on one hand by the souls that actualise it and, on the other, by the bodies that realise it'.³⁴⁶ It is here that baroque perception radically diverges from its classicist and rational counterparts. Whereas linear perspective and Descartes's *cogito* split the world into two, the baroque folds. 'The two floors', says Deleuze, 'are like two cities, a celestial Jerusalem and an earthly one, but with the rooftops and foundations of a same city'.³⁴⁷ They are inseparable in the sense that the two floors of the baroque house belong to the world as we know it. They are linked together by means of an 'inverse double belonging by which [the fold or vinculum] ties them together'.³⁴⁸ If Deleuze speaks of souls and bodies, an upper and a lower floor, it is not the regimentation of the subject and the object he has in mind. Just as the upper level of the

³⁴⁵ It is important to note that 'realisation' is not the same as reality. Deleuze formulates the difference as follows: 'To state that the bodies realize is not to say that they are real: they become real with respect to what is actual in the soul (inner action or perception). Something completes or realizes it in the body. A body is not realized, but what is realized in the body is currently perceived in the soul. The reality of the body is the realization of phenomena in the body. What is realized is the fold of the two levels, the vinculum itself or its replacement'. Ibid., 138.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 136.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 137.

baroque house consists of a dark room for receptivity, and just as the point of view of the baroque house marks a condition in which the variation of a truth might appear to a subject, the dominant member in each case (the mind in mind-body, the subject in subject-object, the intelligible in intelligible-sensible) is not what initiates, but is the result or becoming of a process of individuation. ‘Stop thinking of yourself as an ego (moi) in order to live as a flow (flux), a set of flows in relation with other flows, outside of oneself and within oneself’.³⁴⁹ The point is not to eliminate the self or the subject entirely. The art is to live inside and outside of oneself, and it is an art in which we engage all the time. ‘However’, to do it successfully requires skill and caution’:

You don't do it with a sledgehammer, you use a very fine file. You invent self-destructions (autodestructions) that have nothing to do with the death drive. Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself’. Rather it is essential, [Deleuze and Guattari] suggest, to hold on to small rations of subjectivity. Destroying the organism means death, a too violent rupture means the asylum.³⁵⁰

The magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians* is a character skilled in the art of folding, of living both inside and outside of himself, inside and outside of empire—arts he learns in the course of the novel. Embroiled in a search for ‘truth’, the magistrate’s learning or becoming-nomad occurs as a process of unlearning and dispossession—a process of small auto-destructions that work on the side of life and difference rather than death and homogenisation. The magistrate, like Deleuze’s Leibnizian subject,

³⁴⁹ Quoted in John Sellars, ‘The Point of View of the Cosmos: Deleuze, Romanticism, Stoicism’, *PLi*, 8 (1999), 6.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

‘swirls in the midst of forces ... that define the individual body, its elasticity, and its bending motions in volumes that produce movement in and of extension’.³⁵¹ Whatever he possesses can only ever be fleeting. Having, in the Leibnizian-Deleuzian scheme, is transitory rather than sedimentary: ‘this new domain of having does not put us into an element of calm, which would be a relation of the proprietor and property that could be easily established once and for all’.³⁵² ‘What rules in the domain of having’, Deleuze continues, ‘are moving and perpetually reshuffled relations among the monads’.³⁵³ It is against this background that folding is related to having, distinguishing it from the Cartesian relation between being and thinking. Folding causes ‘an illegitimate operation in a diagram as it turns the surface into the format of a “pop-up book”’.³⁵⁴ The fold attenuates the rigid striations of State Thought, it draws the outside into the inside (and vice-versa), and it connects disparate entities by virtue of interrupting linearity.

Folds proliferate in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, specifically inversion (each new fold encounters another fold or flips the world upside down) and inflection (when a line folds or bends into a curve). The magistrate’s dreams fold or crease the linear progress of time (the novel is set over a year), revealing to him glimpses of his complicity and atonement, as well as the girl’s facial features which are always receding from his memory. Folds also double, invert or reverse. Early on in the novel, a sombre omen appears, sent from the barbarians when an imperial

³⁵¹ Conley, Translator’s foreword to *The Fold*, xviii.

³⁵² Deleuze, *The Fold*, 125.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Rob Shields, *Spatial Questions: Cultural Topologies and Social Spatialisations* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 160.

soldier emerges from the desert on horse-back, crucified upside down in what resembles a deliberately grotesque inversion of imperial notions of self-sacrifice and duty. Later, when the magistrate is taken into custody, he is questioned by Joll in his former office, but now as the suspect sitting on the opposite side of the table. When Joll asks about the meaning of the wooden slips found in the magistrate's possession (he thinks they might be secret communications from the barbarians), the power of reading is set to work deconstructively on the imperial regime: the tortured and the dead, those whose bodies have been destroyed by empire, begin to signify. The decipherment of the wooden slips, when left to the magistrate, narrates history as it is inscribed on bodies and the land. And crucially, the narrative of decolonisation is set to work textually in the magistrate's act of (mis)interpretation. 'Now let us see what the next one says', he pretends to interpret:

there is only a single character. It is the barbarian character war, but it has other senses too. It can stand for vengeance, and, if you turn it upside down like this, it can be made to read justice. There is no knowing which sense is intended. That is part of barbarian cunning.³⁵⁵

Yet a longer and functionally important moment of inversion in the narrative is prefigured at the beginning of the third chapter of the novel. It opens in spring with the return of migratory birds. 'Like a rival city on the water', an ornithology of sounds glides towards the town.³⁵⁶ The return of the birds prefigures inversion and, inevitably as well, a point of return: the magistrate will undertake a journey into the desert to return the girl to her

³⁵⁵ Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 122.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

people, a journey that structures the most fundamental point of inversion in the novel and the opera. His journey itself is preceded by a striking landscape scene and a point of inflection. The magistrate tells the barbarian girl about a recent experience he had while out hunting. The picture painted is reminiscent of a canvas depicting the languid pastimes of a middle-class imperial officer. Glass's scoring of the scene functions as bas-relief, raising the tableau from its surroundings. As the magistrate begins to relate his story, the gestural disjunction between vocal and instrumental material that prevails for much of the opera settles into a shared harmonic and melodic frame as tension between voice and accompaniment dissipates ('Do you like living in the town', 5:18-6:34). The magistrate recounts to the girl how 'all the strength and swiftness of manhood' returned to him whilst lining up the shot, trained on an unsuspecting waterbuck. But the moment of virility dissipates, and instead of shooting the buck, the magistrate's gaze turns inwards upon himself, inflected away from the disappearing animal. The tableau bespeaks the slow dissolution of imperial dominance. But more importantly for my present purposes, the direct gaze of a wild animal which the magistrate is unable to return functions as inflection, as a modulation, a curved angle, a turn or bend in the narrative that unsettles the imperial order of things. The magistrate has arrived at his most subversive decision: to leave his post unannounced to fulfil the wish of the blind barbarian girl.

After several days of travel into the desert, the barbarians—just barely visible to the magistrate and his small party—appear on the horizon. At this point the magistrate proposes to the girl that she return with him to the imperial town to live out their days together. But, deep in the

unmapped desert and beyond the scopic regime of empire, the girl for the first time begins to signify independently. She declines the proposal, turns away from the magistrate and the empire, and continues deeper into the desert with the other barbarians. Jean-Paul Sartre's striking question, posed in another context, recasts in the language of decolonial encounter the magistrate's somewhat pathetic last-ditch proposal. 'What were you hoping', asks Sartre, 'when you removed the gags that propped up these black mouths?'³⁵⁷ The girl's implied answer, still following Sartre, marks decolonization as an instance of inversion, where the imperial gaze has its own gaze 'driven back into its eyes'.³⁵⁸ It is this moment of inversion that overthrows both the dominant order of vision and that of colonialism. Inversion is what Franz Fanon writes about as 'the look that the native turns on the settler town': 'for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place'.³⁵⁹ Yet, the inversion that follows this moment of rupture and freedom plays out differently, according to a spatial semantics other than that scripted as the direct inversion of colonial violence. As the barbarian girl travels deeper into the desert with her kin, the magistrate begins to retrace his steps back to the imperial border town. Upon his arrival, he is arrested by Colonel Joll, accused of consorting with the barbarians, and tortured in the very room where the barbarian girl had been interrogated. The girl does not return to the town and the magistrate's bed. Yet, she remains present in the magistrate's sporadic dreams. Reversal has taken place so that the

³⁵⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', in *The Aftermath of War (Situations III)*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Seagull Books, 2008), 259.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

³⁵⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 2001), 30.

tortured body of the girl becomes the magistrate's own (imperial) point of view, his protest, his embodied epistemology, and an instance of imperial self-emasculatation. In this reading, Glass's scoring of the desert scene is problematic. The entire desert scene overlays a strong musical return to the prelude, as if thereby holding out the promise of a new beginning. And new beginnings are never far from the magistrate's mind, evidenced not only by his wish that the girl return with him to the imperial town, but also by a violent fantasy for history to begin over. 'It would be best if this obscure chapter in the world were terminated at once', the magistrate thinks to himself, 'if these ugly people were obliterated from the face of the earth and we swore to make a new start, to run an empire in which there would be no more injustice, no more pain'.³⁶⁰ But there is more to the magistrate's genocidal fantasies. 'But that will not be my way', he continues, 'the new men of empire are the ones who believe in fresh starts, new chapters, clean pages; I struggle on with the old story, hoping that before it is finished it will reveal to me why I thought it worth the trouble'.³⁶¹

Ways of thinking and occupying space: *Waiting for the Barbarians* and a politics of reading

Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us.

Deleuze and Guattari³⁶²

³⁶⁰ Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 26.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 500.

The discrepancy between Glass's music and Coetzee's narrative noted above hints at the continuous interplay of imperial and anti-imperial forces in the novel and opera. Whereas the magistrate struggles on with 'the old story', the men of empire crave new beginnings and the empire itself is obsessed by a single thought: 'how not to end, how not to die'.³⁶³ This interplay of oppositional forces is manifested throughout the novel. In an interview with Coetzee, David Attwell points out the prevalence of 'disconfirmation' in the novel: the 'equivocal treatment of the barbarian girl, the transformations occurring in dreams, the ambiguities surrounding the march of events, the play on signification in the indecipherable barbarian script'.³⁶⁴ Contrasting with this constant sense of openness and precariousness is 'a highly ordered sense of time', with strikingly vivid and exact descriptions of terrain and passing time (the novel is set exactly over a year, of which the reader is made aware in the poignant descriptions marking the changing seasons).³⁶⁵ For Dick Penner, too, Coetzee's novel dramatises an interplay of binaries: 'a dialectic concerning reading the relation between empire and colony, master and slave-rebel, man and woman, blindness and sight, law and barbarism, and expediency and ethics'.³⁶⁶ His primary interest lies with one of these binary pairs in particular, namely 'Coetzee's skilful handling of the leitmotif of blindness and sight', worked out in the protagonists of the novel as well as the inner worlds of the magistrate: his dreams, ethical quandaries and 'Dostoevskian

³⁶³ Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 146.

³⁶⁴ David Attwell, ed, *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 143-144.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

³⁶⁶ Dick Penner, 'Sight, Blindness and Double-Thought in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*', *World Literature Written in English*, 26:1 (1986), 34-45.

double-thought'.³⁶⁷ It is not always apparent in *Waiting for the Barbarians* whose blindness belongs to whom, nor is it clear whether blindness itself sides with truth or invention. There is the barbarian girl physically blinded as a result of Joll's search for the truth, there are Joll's fantasies about the barbarians—his dark glasses which, he informs the magistrate, are worn nowadays by everyone in the capital and there is the magistrate's conflicted identification with the empire worked out in his vexed ties to the ethically blind Joll. The opening paragraphs of the novel rehearse these tensions in microcosm:

I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them.³⁶⁸

Joll initially possesses the benefit of sight, whereas the magistrate can only make out vaguely a pair of eyes sheltered behind the sunglasses. Indoors their positions are inverted. The magistrate possesses clear vision, and what he sees is the colonel who 'picks his way uncertainly among the strange furniture but does not remove the dark glasses'.³⁶⁹ Later in the novel, the magistrate comes to understand that he himself is no different from the colonel, marking a significant moral rupture with Joll and the empire. Blindness, or more precisely the loss of her frontal vision, especially marks the barbarian girl's position of voicelessness in the novel. Unable to return or resist the gaze of another, her line of sight is always a

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 34-35.

³⁶⁸ Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 1.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 1.

deflection or an inflection: she turns her head sideways in order to regard what is in front of her. The gesture is one of aversion in both senses of the word. Unable to face the colonial master, the gaze wavers, falls sideways in order to see, and in doing so also opens the possibility for aversion as a gesture of defiance: 'she gives me a strange regard, staring straight ahead of her until I am near, then very slowly turning her head away from me'.³⁷⁰

This interplay of interpretive uncertainty, as well as the oppositional pairs structuring the barbarian narrative, provide a basis for thinking through the relations central to colonial encounter and the types of subject/subjection each enables. Sight and blindness, state and nomad, reason and the sensate, rehearse on the level of structure the division between a First World reader and a Third World text, famously envisioned by Fredric Jameson in an article entitled 'Third-world literature in the era of multinational capital'.³⁷¹ In other words, both Coetzee's novel and Glass's opera explore—allegorically—the two polarities of Jameson's arguments.³⁷² Just because Third World texts seem to the First World reader comparatively impoverished in terms of narrative complexity and intellectual depth, Jameson writes, there is no reason not to read those 'other' texts as well. The encounter, nonetheless, generates tensions which Jameson is interested in exploring. The First World reader is disappointed

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 27.

³⁷¹ See Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Age of Multinational Capitalism', *Social Text*, 15 (autumn 1986), 65-88.

³⁷² It is worth pointing out that Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*—as indeed does Coetzee himself—belong uncomfortably and not without self-aware ambivalence to the category of Third World literature (see, for example, his brief comments cited in Penner, 'Sight, Blindness and Double-Thought', 34. My interest is not in the categorical status of the novel but in the colonial encounter it dramatizes, although the ambivalent position of Coetzee and his many literary personas necessarily contribute to the protean nature of identity politics.

by the seemingly unimaginative forms and devices deployed by the text, the directness of the narrative instead of subtlety and conceptual depth, while feelings of guilt proliferate in the reader faced with the carnage perpetrated in the name of high culture. The reader suffers nostalgia for the kinds of benevolent communal bonds that preceded the West's so-called maturation, a longing coupled with quiet appreciation of the vexing forces that made possible such a leap (the Enlightenment, capitalism and imperial powers). Finally, the First World reader is aware of another reader, a lesser reader who reads and experiences the same text very differently.³⁷³

How, then, ought we to approach Third World texts? 'All third-world texts', begins Jameson, 'are necessarily... allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories... particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel'.³⁷⁴ In his well-known critique of Jameson's article, Aijaz Ahmad has remarked on the easy paternalism at the heart of Jameson's sweeping classification: 'I realized that what was being theorized was, among many other things, myself'.³⁷⁵ Being made the object of another's theorising is indispensable to the programmatic operations of reading and interpretation. What is problematic is the reinforcement of precisely the asymmetry that Jameson wishes to contest. Jameson's 'cognitive aesthetics', Ahmed explains, reincarnates the 'upside-down world of the camera obscura'.³⁷⁶ Only those

³⁷³ Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital', 66-69.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 69.

³⁷⁵ Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures* (London: Verso, 2008), 96.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 98.

authors who write in English are eligible for inclusion, effectively rendering what Jameson categorises as Third World literature a First World construct that excludes the majority of texts it alleges to represent.

Jameson's hermeneutics of allegory is difficult to grasp in the light of thoughts he has offered elsewhere on that subject. Allegory, he writes in *The Political Unconscious*, is the reinvestment of a text with new meanings, although—as in the case of the patristic fathers—the source text retains both the status of historical truth and an inventory of meanings and moral principles that remain to be discovered by its future readers.³⁷⁷ Allegory refers to 'the opening up of the text to multiple meanings, to successive rewritings and overwritings which are generated as so many levels and as so many supplementary interpretations'.³⁷⁸ Yet such an opening up is precisely what national allegory forecloses, prompting the question of why the Third World text, in Jameson's view, must be sealed off under the condition of the national, thereby keeping the Third World text chained to its local (and mostly colonised) environment rather than setting it to work deconstructively on the interpretive economies of the First World. By reading Third World texts as Jameson wills it, a mechanism is set to work ensuring that a colonial cultural dynamic continues uninterrupted, effectively blocking a politics of decolonisation. Third World texts can at most write back to themselves about themselves, a dialogue in which the First World voyeur participates on conditions of his own choosing. The crucial question to ask is whether Jameson is at all interested in the Third World text as a locus for writing 'back' and 'over'

³⁷⁷ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen Press, 1981).

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

empire, thereby destabilising the entire project of hermeneutics as it has been developed and practised by the First World, or whether his desire is merely for the establishment of a more representative literary canon.

It is at this point that we might return to Glass's *Waiting for the Barbarians* as an exemplary refusal of the regionalism to which Jameson consigns the interpretation of Third World texts. The opera is, after all, a reappropriation of what is nominally a Third World text (Coetzee's novel and, before it, Cavafy's poem), but—crucially—set to work deconstructively on American imperialism. Yet, the opera still fails as political critique, at least according to its press reception. Glass's *Waiting for the Barbarians* is 'filled with disquieting and timely resonances', writes Smith, but without explicitly making attempts to do any political work.³⁷⁹ Writing in *The Guardian*, Andrew Clements is silent about any political affiliations whilst, for Morgan, the opera 'tackles some big issues' which are undermined by Glass's music.³⁸⁰ One problem, then, might be aesthetic: that the music fails to carry the narrative content of Coetzee's novel into a post-9/11 world without, in the process, sounding too close to that which it sets out to critique, and it is a problem to which I will return. Here, I wish to point out another and equally significant reason for the critical impotence of Glass's opera which has to do directly with his reading of Coetzee's novel: 'I discovered that it [the theatre] is the ideal place to discuss social issues... I'm interested in the ability of individuals to transform themselves'.³⁸¹ Coetzee's novel, he says in the same interview, is 'about social change and

³⁷⁹ Smith, 'Waiting for the Barbarians'.

³⁸⁰ Andrew Clements, 'Waiting for the Barbarians', *The Guardian*, September 13th, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2005/sep/13/classicalmusicandopera>. Morgan, 'Philip Glass: *Waiting for the Barbarians*'.

³⁸¹ Apthorp, 'Philip Glass Talks about *Barbarians* premiere'.

society, about violence and nonviolence'.³⁸² The chief difficulty is that social change is not self-evident, let alone realised, in the novel, which is bookended by the continuation of empire. The barbarian girl returns to the desert where she lived before Joll's appearance on the border. Joll's war is thwarted not by a military counter-offensive, but by the harsh desert conditions and unmapped terrain. The battered remains of the imperial army withdraw, promising to resume their war in the spring. The novel ends as life on the border outpost begins again, gradually resettling into its formerly unperturbed rhythms. The magistrate resumes his day-to-day administrative chores, and imperial rule continues in the far-away capital. The aftermath of Joll's military endeavours is inscribed on bodies and the land: the barbarian girl, crippled and blind, the magistrate weakened and physically scarred, the town plundered of its food supplies, houses and huts reduced to piles of rubble, the few remaining inhabitants fearfully brooding about an imminent barbarian uprising.³⁸³

Despite the significant temporal and geopolitical separation between Coetzee's novel and Glass's operatic rendering of it, it is interesting to note that the novel, too, attracted accusations of political impotence. 'This is a book which will be enthusiastically assimilated into the very system it (vaguely) condemns', observed one commentator: 'in the

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Commentators have derived from the figure of the magistrate lessons in identity politics and resistance although—crucially—unlike Glass, their conclusions stop short of intimating social change. For Spivak, the magistrate 'tries to grasp the barbarian in an embrace that is both singular and responsible', whilst his otherwise hedonistic sexual appetites are manifestly absent from their reluctant intimacies. For Hamilton, the magistrate's 'becoming-nomad is a very powerful kind of resistance to colonial practice—a deterritorialisation of the Self that instructs the self-destructive drive of the State apparatus'. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 21-22 and Hamilton, 'Becoming-Nomad', 183.

end it is not a disturbing book, and ultimately it challenges nothing. Coetzee is a fine writer. It's a pity he isn't a bolder one'.³⁸⁴ Glass's interpretation of the novel, especially its thematisation of social change and self-transformation, seems at odds with that of the South African critic who laments the novel's conformity and Coetzee's lack of temerity. Menàn du Plessis's review article disparages the leftist charge just cited, although she, too, is sceptical about the type of rhetoric Glass would later pursue in his opera. 'It distresses me a little, remarks Du Plessis, 'to have to realise that the bourgeois Marxist simply cannot afford the devastating self-criticism that an applied reading of Coetzee's work provides'.³⁸⁵ For her, it is not the absence of political realism in Coetzee's novel that is disparaging, but the complacency that is revealed when an understanding of resistance in literature (or the arts, for that matter) is reduced to realistic aesthetic representation. And thus, where Glass finds in *Waiting for the Barbarians* 'social change', du Plessis finds the opposite, a candid reflection on 'the ghastly stasis that our postbourgeois society seems to be floundering in'.³⁸⁶ And where Glass professes an interest 'in the ability of individuals to transform themselves', du Plessis thinks Coetzee 'is saying that 'the Romantic epoch has ended—that epoch which could believe in the idealist myth of glorious transcendence'.³⁸⁷ Ironically, what is not relayed from Coetzee's novel to Glass's opera is a materialist (anti-capitalist) critique, a lacuna all the more glaring in a work setting out to critique America's so-

³⁸⁴ Quoted in Menàn Du Plessis, 'Towards a True Materialism [review of J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*]', in *Critical Essays on J. M. Coetzee*, ed. Sue Kossew (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1998), 117.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

called war against terrorism. Glass's *Waiting for the Barbarians* frees the Others of the first world from Jamesonian geographically-bounded realism, but in a coterminous movement displaces onto the dispossessed subject—owning nothing but his/her body—the social exigencies of neocolonial capitalism. The subject is a mere attribute of the individual custodians of social change, a functionary ensuring that lack is produced continually. Social change and self-transformation, it bears stressing, are conceivable as long as some individuals possess a disproportionate amount of power in relation to others. The subject with power and resources is, to recall Conley's Cartesian phraseology, a self that 'moves into space, transform[ing] one of the corners of the square or rectangle of its periphery into the site of a new centre'. The dominant subject, it follows, depends for its identity on the continued production of alterity. 'Self-consciousness', writes Judith Butler of the Hegelian (romantic) subject, 'knows itself as that which consumes alterity, but it only knows this indirectly, inferring from the absence of an object its own power of agency'.³⁸⁸ The one ontological truth about alterity is its inexhaustibility. The barbarians, like the barbarians in Cavafy's poem, and like the refugees and migrants of our own time, are convenient solutions to the single problem contemplated by the empire: 'how not to end, how not to die'.³⁸⁹

Under cover of progressive polemics and social critique, Glass's opera markets itself as intellectual progressive whilst mimicking the order it claims to repudiate; polemics passed off as resistance, then, but resistance deeply invested in the very order it claims to resist. The

³⁸⁸ Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Thought in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 40.

³⁸⁹ Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 146.

suggestion, then, is that Glass's opera is both the sonic equivalent and the unproblematised underwriting of a deeply vexed construction of a specific type of explicitly American and implicitly neocolonial order, and it is a suggestion that is reinforced musically. Thus, it is necessary to return one last time to the opera and Glass's score.

The aesthetic and narrative treatment of violence in *Waiting for the Barbarians* is essential to understanding the struggle between neocolonial ambitions and the psychic and physical emancipation of colonial subjects scripted in the character of the blind barbarian girl. For Michael Halliwell, any ethical concern about the onstage reproduction of violence in the opera is relieved by the resistance of minimalist music to traditional modes of representation. Subsequently, he discerns in *Waiting for the Barbarians* a 'tension' between 'the abstract nature of the music' and 'the visual and visceral aspects of the performers' voices and bodies'. The music and the dramatic action refrain from deliberately colluding in vicarious masochism, while the opera deploys 'a distancing allegorical element' against which to offset 'the immediacy of dramatic representation'.³⁹⁰ The combined abstractions of repetitive music and allegory in the case of Glass's opera, Halliwell suggests, mitigate the immediacy and viscosity of a narrative whose violent and erotic charge is difficult to contain without forfeiting overall expressiveness. A contrary view has been proposed by Catherine Hickey, for whom the minimalist ensemble of intensified abstractness (semantic disorder or opacity) and finely regulated staging (a deliberate deepening of the visual element of the opera) yield audience

³⁹⁰ Michael Halliwell, "Communicating from the Margins": Postcolonial Themes in *Voss* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Musicology Australia*, 32:1 (2010), 59.

fixation rather than an overt attempt to disengage from the act of witnessing, even enjoying, violence.³⁹¹ Something of the sonic non-specificity of repetitive music might account for Halliwell and Hickley's readings which, in their diametrically opposing positions towards abstractness, border on arbitrariness—as if one can say anything about this music that claims to signify nothing. Halliwell and Hickley overlook an immediate set of questions that pertain to the 'narrative activities' of the music and the onstage characters rather than the events they describe: who is watching or doing the witnessing and the staring in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and for whom is the onstage display of violence intended?³⁹² In the first half of the opera (Act I), the representation of violence is restricted to recollection and reportage. The second half of the opera quite literally takes a 'different view' of violence, moving from reportage and recollection to display. To structure this difference between the two halves of the opera, it is necessary to regard each act in turn.

The opening scene introduces the narrative presence of violence sonically. As the magistrate announces to a barbarian elder (who will subsequently be tortured and killed) that Joll is from the imperial capital and is interested only in asking him for information about a suspected barbarian uprising, the first reference to violence is implied by a distant drum-beat. This gradually builds up until Joll 'takes over' the

³⁹¹ Catherine Hickley, 'Philip Glass's New Opera Evokes Abu Ghraib in Tale of Torture', *Bloomberg*, September 13th, 2005. <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aqBpfbOe.sfM&refer=culture>. She writes: 'the scenes of violence are unconvincing. The pace is too slow, the action too controlled to convey the sadistic, animalistic horror of man degrading man. These scenes should make an audience want to look away in disgust: Instead, they make you peer more closely to try to work out what is happening'.

³⁹² I here draw on Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 10.

interrogation, at which point neither magistrate nor operatic audience is witness to what transpires in the torture cell. There is only Joll's report of the 'very satisfactory conclusion' of his inquiry: the old man became aggressive during interrogation, Joll had to bump him 'none too gently', and the man fell with his head against the wall and died. Whilst witnessing this, Joll tells the magistrate, a young boy travelling with the man confessed to the plotting of a violent uprising against the empire. As the magistrate hears this, the music breaks out into a lilting march, energetic, infectious, ironic, a world of caricature and cartoon-like figurations. Irony is intensified by the vocal material: the 'very satisfactory conclusion' is achieved despite what Joll describes as the 'unfortunate' behaviour of the old man and the consequences to which it led. Following this conversation, the magistrate happens upon the evidence left behind in the wake of Joll's interrogation: the corpse of the man with one eye missing from its socket (the grandfather of the boy, we are given to understand), and a barbarian boy fatally injured and in shock. Irony has gradually drained from the orchestral music, and the steady forward lilt of the march is now disrupted by a shifting bar-line and a sense of increasingly urgent dramatic friction.

The second significant reference to violence in Act I occurs in scene viii, when the magistrate relates a recent hunting experience to the blind barbarian girl. They are in his bedroom, as he tells how, unusually, he was unable to fire at a wild buck, instead setting it free to live. The girl responds by collapsing into the narrative which had all along intrigued the magistrate, the wordless subtext here being that like the buck, she, too, is depicted as a wild animal assailed by empire. But unlike the wild buck, there is no passage of escape for the girl, her blind and crippled body

marked and claimed by the imperial state. She tells the magistrate her own story of imperial torture and shame. Her narration is intended for the magistrate, who is both fascinated and disturbed by the marks on her body: he listens, the girl narrates, and the music doubles recollection and narration, sounding by now familiar devices to encode violence (the torture motif and military-style percussion).

In Act II a dramatic switch in the sonic representation of violence occurs, from recollection to identification, and finally to depiction. The barbarian girl whom the magistrate has returned to her family in the desert vanishes from the real-time narrative, her damaged body replaced by a group of barbarian men about to be tortured. The inhabitants of the town are gathering in the square in anticipation, a growing crowd represented musically by a chorus chanting syllables of the word 'barbarian' ('What's going on', 0:59-6:15). Expectation and urgency accumulate as percussion and brass are added incrementally to the swelling textures of piano and strings. As the crowd comprehends what they are about to witness, a chorus of soldiers drown out their cries with a new slogan: 'enemy' (3:06). A group of barbarians has shifted into view, a line of downcast figures attached to one another with a wire that passes through the cheeks and both palms of each. A final dizzying musical climax is reached with the chorus and brass ululating at full throttle over rapid-fire percussion (6:06-6:15), and then suddenly broken off by the magistrate's entrance onto the scene. The music falls silent, the beating of barbarian men is interrupted, and the magistrate addresses himself to Joll and the crowd (6:15-6:27). As he tries to reassert his authority ('I remain the magistrate who is responsible for justice in this town', he sings), a slow

shimmer in the base breaks the instrumental silence (6:27). For the duration of this scene, music sides with the crowd of onlookers, stands with them, observing the grotesque spectacle of torture. We hear only the mounting excitement and the silence that follows the magistrate's entrance. The voices of the tortured remain silent and unheard. Given the repetitive aesthetic and its ostensible refusal to signify, it is more useful to speculate about what the music does *not* express at this moment, namely shock. When torture occurs for a second time, identification hardens into sonic illustration. 'You know the drill, I leave you in their hands', says Joll's second in command to the magistrate. A choppy, energetic march opens the ensuing torture scene ('Enemy barbarian lover'). The usual musical references to military activity are sounded, with the chorus still functioning as a crowd of onlookers, chanting full rather than fragmented words: 'enemy' and 'barbarian lover' (0:19-1:06). A noose is thrown over the magistrate's head and attached to two ropes, one tying his hands behind his back and another suspended and held at both ends by a soldier, one of them sitting in the tree and another standing on the ground. The soldiers pull at the rope, lifting the magistrate off his feet, hands yanked above his head by the tightening rope from which he hangs suspended. At this point the music, for the first and only time in the opera, turns into actual illustration. String runs tumble up and down, sonically depicting the rise and fall of the magistrate's body as he is lifted from the ground and dropped again (3:39-4:24). The most pressing question that must be asked is why, in an aesthetic that refuses characterisation and musical narration, at this particular moment the music switches to doing just that: exhibiting

and illustrating as if, when faced with such violence, music blanks out or—on the contrary—blithely plays along to the agony of the magistrate.³⁹³

Glass's opera sounds at its most ironic, perhaps, when it is acknowledged that—and here I am freely adapting a phrase spoken by the magistrate—it is the lie we can listen to again and again in order to maintain that things are well and in their place.³⁹⁴ That lie functions so well, in fact, that Western society is able to stage an auto-criticism of its own unequal neocolonial structures of power and capital without allowing for the disruption of those structures. 'Someone must put together a ballet under the title Guantanamo, Guantanamo!... It will have absolutely no effect on the people it targets, who could not care less what ballet audiences think of them', offers the protagonist of Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*.³⁹⁵ Although it is tempting to hear in the remark a subtle reference to Glass's reworking of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, no evidence exists to corroborate such a reading. But the observation—in actual fact an indictment—is revealing of a situation in which critique or social commentary has been reduced to repetition and impotence. In the next chapter, I will explore some of the institutional reasons for this situation, focussing on the modern university, culture and bureaucracy.

³⁹³ Robert Spencer, 'J. M. Coetzee and Colonial Violence', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 10:2 (2008), 173.

³⁹⁴ Coetzee, *Barbarians*, 135.

³⁹⁵ J. M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007), 37.

Chapter 4

‘That things are “status quo” is the catastrophe’: the arts of exclusion in an inclusive age

That things are ‘status quo’ is the catastrophe... Definitions of basic historical concepts: Catastrophe—to have missed the opportunity. Critical moment—the status quo threatens to be preserved.

Walter Benjamin³⁹⁶

Prologue: the university in ruins

I begin by citing from a colloquy hosted in 2012 by the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*. Matthew Morrison, a musicology graduate at the time, concluded his contribution on the invisible colour-line built into musicology with the following:

I cannot ignore that there are still only a handful of black (male) musicologists in the discipline; I cannot ignore those structures barring—or at the least significantly compounding—the ability of minorities to embark upon musicological studies; and I cannot ignore the sense that access to tertiary musicological training is still subject to the interests of a small group of stake-holders.³⁹⁷

If the status quo attitude towards disciplinary transformation and the democratisation of the field can be taken as indicative, it is reasonable to

³⁹⁶ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 473-474.

³⁹⁷ Matthew D. Morrison, '(De)Constructing Musicology's Borders along the Color Line', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65:3 (2012), 855.

suggest that Morrison's plea would have received an all-round sympathetic hearing. Research departments and scholarly societies are conscientiously encouraging topics and musical genres that, a few decades ago, would have raised suspicion, if not outright derision, from the inhabitants of the sound-proof chambers of musicology. The American Musicological Society (AMS) now hosts special interest groups at its annual gatherings, spanning gender, race, disability and ethnicity, whilst the RMA sponsors a dedicated LGBTQ research group and a South East Asia chapter. 'The blasphemy of talking politics during Bach year' (or during any other year, for that matter), to recall Susan McClary's poignant phrase, is blasphemous no more; and the sharp-edged polemics of the 90s now appear more like relics of musicology's tumultuous if somewhat belated arrival at postmodernism.³⁹⁸ If ours is a scholarly environment in which 'the marginal can speak and be spoken, even spoken for', why, then, as this chapter will maintain, does the need for disciplinary and institutional decolonisation persist?³⁹⁹ In what follows, I offer one response: that it is possible to endorse—even actively promote—calls for transformation such as the one issued by Morrison, as a means of inadvertently protecting the current unequal status quo. The central term is 'inadvertently', for I will be arguing that the production of inequality, whether epistemological or material, emerges more or less unintendedly alongside attempts to manage the generative crises thrown up by imperial and neocolonial

³⁹⁸ Susan McClary, 'The Blasphemy of Talking Politics During Bach Year', in *Music and Society*, eds. Susan McClary and Richard Leppert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 13-62.

³⁹⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Foundations in Cultural Studies', in *Questioning Foundations: Truth, Subjectivity and Culture*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1993), 156.

expansion—an argument that will be worked through in the contexts of the modern university and the institutionalisation of music scholarship.

In the sense which will be evoked throughout this chapter, the ‘modern university’ references the work of Bill Readings, especially his account of the idea of the university from the Enlightenment into the present.⁴⁰⁰ ‘The characteristic of the modern university’, he writes, ‘is to have an idea that functions as its referent, as the end and meaning of its activities’.⁴⁰¹ In his book-length account entitled *The University in Ruins*, Readings grounds a historicist understanding of the modern university according to three such structuring ideas or principles. The modern university begins with Kant’s University of *Reason*, succeeded in the nineteenth century by Humboldt’s University of *Culture* which, coterminous with the decline of the nation state, has made way for the present-day techno-bureaucratic university orientated towards the production of *excellence*. As the title of his volume suggests, Readings is by no means oblivious to the general sense of anxiety and crisis haunting academia. Part of his argument is that the social and intellectual parameters of the present crisis are not new: that our ontological questions about knowledge and the university vis-à-vis other social institutions have topped the agenda before. ‘Most projects for the University of the twenty-

⁴⁰⁰ For a critique of Readings’s account of the university, see Dominick LaCapra, ‘The university in Ruins?’, *Critical Inquiry*, 25:1 (1998), 32-55. Although he is critical of Readings’s position, Lacapra by no means seeks to downplay the importance of the book, describing it as ‘a center of discussion and an object of critical dialogic exchange for some time to come’ (32). For an example where Readings’s work on the university is evoked informatively in a consideration of music scholarship and its institutional and philosophical contexts, see Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴⁰¹ Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 54.

first century bear a striking resemblance to the University projects of the nineteenth century', he writes, 'which is why it is necessary to reread Humboldt, Schiller, Schleiermacher, Fichte, and Kant'.⁴⁰² These authors were grappling with the university's role in civil society and the types of knowledge at its centre. Whether autonomous, bound to any particular vocation or productive of demonstrable value, questions about the legitimacy and value of knowledge are as pertinent today as they were two centuries ago.⁴⁰³

Taking its lead from Readings's work, the first part of this chapter will reflect on the university in its contemporary and historical incarnations, beginning with a brief consideration of Kant's university of reason, the Humboldtian (cultural) university of the nineteenth century and the present-day techno-bureaucratic university, before proceeding to a consideration of disciplinarity, asking how musicologists have represented and legitimised their discipline, in the first instance amongst themselves, and in the second in relation to academe and society more generally. I will consider some of the countless definitions musicologists have tried out on their relatively young discipline, a consideration that opens onto the question of social function and disciplinary aspirations more generally.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 62.

⁴⁰³ Although Readings doesn't name him as such, it is noteworthy that Max Weber engages several questions that are as pertinent today as they were a century ago when he delivered his 'Science as a Vocation' lecture. Taking a somewhat longer view of bureaucracy, it is also noteworthy that his lecture dealt in large part with the opportunities and disadvantages arising from an increasingly bureaucratised university, and again the similarities with present-day concerns are striking. Weber cautioned against an economy of numbers in which spiking enrolment figures dictate the measure of success. He worried about the heavy lecture loads of early career scholars, and delineated the detrimental as well as the beneficial prospects of bureaucratisation in higher education. See Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, eds. David Owen and Tracy Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indiapolis: Hackett, 2004).

The aim is to provide a genealogy of the entrusting of musicology with particular social responsibilities, and to show how a socially responsible musicology—often inadvertently—has rearticulated borders of exclusivity.

In an aggressively market-orientated economy, the problem facing the humanities is that of guaranteeing what, in corporate speak, is known as returns on investment (ROI): in other words, value for money. The question of money and value can also be stated the other way round, thereby foregrounding the conundrum which is faced by the humanities in the context of the present-day university: the humanities are incapable of producing money in exchange for value, an incapability tied in with the conditions of possibility for their ongoing existence. I evoke the fraught relation between money and value here to broach the question of inequality in the context of the university. Decolonial thinkers have persistently noted a structural complicity between the intellectual project in its institutional forms and the production of inequality. ‘The history of the university (the Western version of higher education) has been the companion of European imperial expansion’, comments Walter D. Mignolo: ‘the accumulation of money has gone hand in hand with the accumulation of meaning and of knowledge’.⁴⁰⁴ Mignolo is careful not to express the relation between the university and imperial expansion in terms of causality, and the same can be said of the relation between meaning and money. What he seems to imply, rather, is a relation of inevitability: they go hand in hand, so that one invariably accompanies the other. From the

⁴⁰⁴ Walter D. Mignolo, ‘Globalisation and the Geopolitics of Knowledge: The Role of the Humanities in the Corporate University’, in *The American-style University at Large: Transplants, Outposts, and the Globalisation of Higher Education*, eds. Kathryn L. Kleypas and James I. McDougall (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 3.

point of view of marginal thought, the structures of complicity arising at the intersection of imperialism and inequality can appear crudely obvious, which is to say that few writing from the margins regard the production and dissemination of knowledge and the production of unequal relations as anything less than commonplace. I shall place on the margin of the ensuing discussion another question, the question that inquires into the geographic and body politics of that position capable of endlessly equivocating on whether or not the university is, or has been, complicit in the production of inequality.

A letter: ‘we expected better things of you’

In the introduction to his *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), Kant reproduces a letter he had received four years earlier, sanctioned by the highest authority of the land. As the royal proclamation phrased it, the problem was ‘how you misuse your philosophy to distort and disparage many of the cardinal and basic teachings of the Holy Scriptures and of Christianity’.⁴⁰⁵ ‘We expected better things of you’, chided King Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia in a letter written by his ‘favourite minister’, one Woellner, Minister of Justice and Head of the State Departments of Church and Schools: ‘you yourself must realise how irresponsibly you have acted against your duty as a teacher of youth and against our paternal purpose, which you know very well’.⁴⁰⁶ Kant responded with a letter

⁴⁰⁵ Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (New York: Abaris Books, 1979), 11.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, ix, 11.

explaining the erroneous assumptions which had precipitated the reproach:

I have not in any way offended against the highest paternal purpose, which I know: in other words, I have done no harm to the public religion of the land. This is already clear from the fact that the book in question is not at all suitable for the public: to them it is an unintelligible, closed book, only a debate among scholars of the faculty, of which the people take no notice. But the faculties themselves remain free to judge it publicly, according to the best of their knowledge and their conscience.⁴⁰⁷

The tightening of state censorship, as well as Kant's disparaging views of 'the people', reverberate unmistakably with the anxieties of royal and learned classes in the wake of the French Revolution.⁴⁰⁸ But the more crucial point is that Kant, with a single reference to the book in question (*Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*), hopes to effect a different stratification of society: the book was not the concern of the people, and nor, as he would subsequently point out, was it the business of the king and his ministers. One of the first hierarchical moves Kant makes in *The Conflict of the Faculties* is to subordinate the university to the state by effectively arguing that scholars relate to the state as the people relate to

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 15. The seemingly interchangeable use of 'public' and 'people' in the passage cited above (see the second sentence) would suggest that more than one 'public' operates in Kant's writings. Kevin Davis, in fact, distinguishes six different meanings, three of which are relevant to the above passage. The 'public' as it is used in Kant's well-known essay, 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?', is different to the 'public' of *The Conflict of the Faculties*, the former referring to a reading public (or a literate public), and the latter exclusively to scholars. Another 'public', as Kant uses the term, seems to refer to 'the people as a whole', which would suggest that Kant slides between the two without paying due attention to the different implications each has for his argument. See Kevin Davis, 'Kant's Different "Publics" and the Justice of Publicity', *Kant-Studien*, 83:2 (1992), esp. 170-176, 178.

⁴⁰⁸ Davis remarks on Kant's lack of regard for the 'people': they are 'idiots' and 'most people are too lazy even to act for their own happiness'. Davis, 'Kant's Different "Publics"', 178.

the scholars. 'It is beneath the government's dignity', he counsels, 'to mingle with the people (in this case, the people in the learned professions), who cannot take a joke and deal impartially with everyone who meddles in the sciences'.⁴⁰⁹ If all-round tetchiness is one reason why scholars are incapable of tolerating state interference, the more serious incompatibility is that the conditions that enable the intellectual project dictate that reason and reason alone can be the final arbiter in all matters. Just as the people conduct their daily lives unhindered by the vigorous conflicts carried on between scholars in the domain of reason, the faculties must be able to conduct their daily business free from demands made by those responsible for governing the people.

Kant recognised that a means would have to be discovered by which the state's monopoly on power and the university's insistence on autonomy could exist in a mutually productive and non-threatening relationship. This antinomy in the classical sense defines the order Kant sets out to resolve in his study of the university and its relations to the state and to theology. His solution, as Readings points out, is partly based on a necessary and consciously constructed fiction: reason can only be instituted if the institution remains a fiction that functions 'as if it were not an institution. If the institution becomes real, then reason departs'.⁴¹⁰ The issue from Kant's perspective, then, was that the king treated him as one of the 'people', whereas the Königsberg professor counted himself as belonging to the class of 'the faculties', and wished also to be counted so by others, including the highest authority in the land. Whereas the state

⁴⁰⁹ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 27.

⁴¹⁰ Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 60.

effectively thought on behalf of and for the people, the university—guided by reason—existed to be exploited by the state as the well-spring of thought and knowledge: ‘the crown is entitled not only to permit but even to require the faculties to let the government know, by their writings, everything they consider beneficial to a public religion of the land’.⁴¹¹ Nor had the state to concern itself with the production of knowledge at the level of the university, Kant pointed out, as there would be other scholars wholly devoted to reason and unencumbered by the demands of power to do the judging.⁴¹²

In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, then, everything—including the well-being of the state and its people—is contingent on reason as the single lodestar of the university. Within the university it is the lower faculty of philosophy rather than the higher faculties (theology, law and medicine) that is responsible for safeguarding reason, as the latter faculties are by their nature heteronomous rather than autonomous. In contrast with the higher faculties, philosophy ‘occupies itself with teachings which are not adopted as directives by order of a superior’.⁴¹³ It is only philosophy that, by lacking purposiveness, can operate solely—because disinterestedly—in the service of reason. Thus, for Kant it is in fact philosophy to which the higher faculties as well as the state must turn for self-critique.⁴¹⁴ But Kant knew that the university, and especially philosophy, depended on

⁴¹¹ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 15.

⁴¹² Kant phrased this point rather bluntly: ‘For the government does not teach, but it commands those who, in accepting its offices, have contracted to teach what it wants (whether this be true or not)’. *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 43

⁴¹⁴ Bill Readings helpfully summarises the role of philosophy vis-à-vis the higher faculties as Kant had conceived it: ‘Hence, philosophy questions the prescriptions of the legislative power and asks fundamental questions on the basis of reason alone, interfering with the higher faculties in order to critique their grounds’. Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 57.

leveraging authority from an institution other than itself; and precisely because reason had to remain autonomous—free of institutional trappings—the authority given to philosophy had to be sanctioned extraneously. Philosophy, in short, required affiliation to some higher authority than itself to be taken seriously at all, a problem that came to a head when Kant’s treatise on religion and reason was subjected to state censorship. Kant had no recourse to a synthesising principle bounding university and nation into a single enterprise with a shared culture and ethos. His references to the people, the republic, even the higher faculties, were always beholden to the mediatory function of reason, simply because reason had no other demonstrable function.

All of this changed in the nineteenth century, which is one of Readings’s main arguments. Wilhelm von Humboldt’s university, founded in Berlin in 1810, enshrined at its centre the intertwined projects of culture and the production of national subjects. The geopolitical fragmentation of German-speaking regions in the early nineteenth century denied the idea of German-ness the referential stability of an assumed category. Instead, central to the inchoate and scattered conceptions of a German nation state and the construction of a national subject, was the inward cultivation of knowledge and self-understanding. As Celia Applegate writes, ‘Becoming “national” in the German-speaking world of the early nineteenth century ‘was thus an infinitely expansive project of Enlightenment knowledge, a search for knowledge about self and environment’.⁴¹⁵ Humboldt was no convicted proselytiser for the cognitive and cultural virtues of music. His

⁴¹⁵ Celia Applegate, ‘How German Is It? Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *19th-Century Music*, 21:3 (1998), 288.

overall inclination was closer to the Kantian persuasion: that the art of tones was of a kind with laughter, caprice and jokes—they each strove for ‘the promotion of the business of life in the body, the affect of which moves the viscera and diaphragm’.⁴¹⁶ In spite of these soberly Kantian reservations, Humboldt openly advocated for ‘serious’ music’s synthesising role in society. Thus, he wrote to the Prussian authority that ‘music constituted the key to reaching [the] “common man” and integrating him into the great educational project that was the German nation’.⁴¹⁷ ‘The implications of Humboldt’s argument to the king were clear’, summarises Applegate: ‘give people this experience of equality in the context of culture and religion, and they will not seek it in political life’.⁴¹⁸

Whereas Humboldt was the primary galvanising presence behind the burgeoning of the modern German university, John Henry Newman emerged as one of the seminal figures in systematically setting out the ideals of the university in Britain.⁴¹⁹ Newman regarded culture and the nation state as central to his project, whose most significant departure from the Humboldtian model was the subordination of research to teaching. For Newman, it was ‘the diffusion and extension of knowledge’ rather than its ‘advancement’ which had to define the university as an institution.⁴²⁰ Whatever Newman’s ideal university lacked in research

⁴¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 205–212 (the quoted passage is on p.209).

⁴¹⁷ Cited in Applegate, ‘How German was it?’ 295.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ See, e.g. Páll Skúlason, *A Critique of Universities: Reflections on the Status and Direction of the Modern University* (Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 2015), 27.

⁴²⁰ Newman is quoted in Gerard Loughlin, ‘Theology in the University’, in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, ed. Ian Ker and Terrence Merriga (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 225.

ambition was compensated for by visions of imperial greatness: 'I am turning my eyes towards a hundred years to come, and I dimly see the island I am gazing on, become the road of passage and union between two hemispheres, and the centre of the world'.⁴²¹

Like Kant, Newman had to find a means of mediating incompatible institutional interests that concerned religion and the state: how to be both British and Catholic. One solution presented itself in the form of a catholic university in Ireland, where Newman served as rector. In one of his addresses, Newman articulated the boundedness of university and nation, an episteme in which the individual and progress can only ever signify in the language of the nation. 'Man is not born for himself alone, as the classical moralist tells us', Newman instructed his audience before launching into a direct address:

You are born for Ireland; and, in your advancement, Ireland is advanced;—in your advancement in what is good and what is true, in knowledge, in learning, in cultivation of mind, in enlightened attachment to your religion, in good name and respectability and social influence, I am contemplating the honour and renown, the literary and scientific aggrandisement, the increase of political power, of the Island of the Saints.⁴²²

Newman's address usefully demonstrates how the values so cherished by the European Enlightenment encountered in the emerging nation state a ready-made vessel—the latter acting as an increasingly irrefutable magnetic force, binding together geographically dispersed locales through culture, language, progress and science. Of these, language—and in

⁴²¹ John Henry Newman, 'Site of a University', in *Essays: English and American*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: Cosimo, 2009), 51.

⁴²² John Henry Newman, *The Idea of the University* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1899), 482.

particular literature—supplied a powerful medium for imperial culture. Newman again, this time as quoted by Readings: ‘by great authors the many are drawn up into a unity, national character is fixed, a people speaks, and the future, the East and the West are brought into communication with each other’.⁴²³ This passage is key to understanding why Readings, following a survey of German idealist thought apropos the university, migrates his narrative to mid-nineteenth century England to show how national literature decisively orientated the University of Culture towards the nation state.

The structural and social events that led to the replacement of the University of Culture with the university in its present-day incarnation is relatively well-known: the rise of American hegemony and global corporations, and the subsumption of the nation state by global capital. At the most extreme end of the spectrum, global corporates now boast their own universities, as witness Motorola and Toyota. In a chapter entitled ‘Measuring ROI in corporate universities: death of the student day and birth of human capital’, Matt Barney tells us that ‘the bottom line is what matters to your CEO’.⁴²⁴ And what matters to the CEO is not—as thought previously—student satisfaction, ‘smiley sheets’ and a corresponding rise in student numbers.⁴²⁵ These ‘old-school metrics’ have now been surpassed by a different kind of metrics altogether:

⁴²³ Quoted in Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 77.

⁴²⁴ Matt Barney, ‘Measuring ROI in Corporate Universities: Death of the Student Day and Birth of Human Capital’, in *The Corporate University Handbook: Designing, Managing, and Growing a Successful Programme*, ed. Mark Allen (New York: AMACOM, 2002), 197.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 198-200.

Corporate universities need to shift their focus to the bottom line issues that matter. This means becoming both physicians diagnosing business pain and investment bankers looking at what solutions will have the best payoff.⁴²⁶

The present-day research university has been impelled—grudgingly—towards the adoption of a similar rhetoric, although with considerable leeway as to the questions of metrics and what constitutes value. The Delivery Plan of the Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) for the spending period 2011-2015 tries to reconcile the more traditional research values of the university with what Noam Chomsky disparagingly calls the ‘Walmartisation’ of the university.⁴²⁷ The AHRC will:

Manage demand... maximise the use of its resources... focus on excellence and critical mass, allowing increased autonomy through longer and larger awards... scrutinise administrative systems to realise efficient and fair processes ... award funding on a strategic basis ... employ robust evaluation to ensure [it is] delivering both programmes and peer review effectively ... deliver significant collective savings and benefits in back office functions... continue its leadership in Europe ... develop its engagements with leading American funders ... prioritise [its] work in South Asia ... seek to facilitate interaction with the creative and cultural economy nationally...⁴²⁸

Culled from a passage early on in the 27-page plan, the overall picture is one of responsible management, of the availability and fair allocation of funds and the fostering of critical thought and autonomy—in short,

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 198, 197.

⁴²⁷ Noam Chomsky, ‘Corporate business models are hurting American universities’, *Salon*, October 10th, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/10/10/noam_chomsky_corporate_business_models_are_hurting_american_universities_partner.

⁴²⁸ Arts and Humanities Research Council, *Arts and Humanities Research Council: Delivery Plan 2011-2015*, accessed July 17th, 2015, <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/strategy/arts-humanities-research-council-delivery-plan-2011-2015>.

excellent administration and excellence in research and teaching. Despite its excessive use of the short, sharp rhetoric of bureaucratic efficiency, the AHRC's attempt to leave room for a wide range of research projects—most of which would doubtlessly perform dismally according to the metrics preferred by *The Corporate University Handbook*—is deserving of credit. The AHRC's 'priority themes' are set out under the following titles: Care for the Future, Translating Cultures, Digital Transformations and Science in Culture.⁴²⁹ The Delivery Plan also indulges the language of social development and greater equality, aiming to 'empower communities for sustainable development, active citizenship, economic regeneration, social cohesion and well-being'.⁴³⁰

Two decades after the publication of *The University in Ruins*, I believe it is not only possible, but necessary to place alongside culture and national literature another discourse inextricably bound up with the production of nineteenth-century identity, namely bureaucracy. Although heavily indebted to Readings's work, this approach recognises the many valences folded into the idea of culture, and resists any simple juxtaposition in which culture is de facto imagined to be acting against the forces of mechanisation and consumerism. This position recognises the compatibility of what, at a glance, might appear as paradoxical in a document such as the AHRC's Delivery Plan, namely simultaneous provision for bureaucratisation, research that fits uneasily the template of strategic funding and demonstrable social utility, and a commitment to agenda-setting research in the international market of ideas. The disparate

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

layers of meaning inscribed etymologically in the term ‘culture’ helpfully illuminate what is at issue whenever culture enters discourse: ‘cult’, implying the mystifications of religion and ritual; ‘colones’, a Latin word denoting inhabitation and the root for ‘colonies’, the ancient claim staked on culture as the exclusive provenance of the citizen and city dweller (as opposed to the stateless barbarians roaming freely about nature, independent of society and the responsibilities of citizenship), the agricultural as a physical claim to land, soil and subsistence, as well as the Enlightenment’s realignment of culture with cultivation, building and the intellectual and aesthetic care of the self.⁴³¹ John Stuart Mill’s distinction between, on the one hand, barbarism as an ‘incapacity of organised combination’ and, on the other, the implication that culture is the handmaiden of organisation and system, likewise relate culture and bureaucracy as mutually enabling processes.⁴³² Thomas Osborne has identified British India as a central site for the fashioning of nineteenth-century ‘administrative rule’, which makes it an instructive ‘micro-archaeology’ to any consideration of bureaucratic culture.⁴³³ This point is of particular relevance to understanding the university in its contemporary form as a bureaucracy predicated on the idea of excellence as well as—crucially—the dispersal of regulation across the entire structure, so that power is ubiquitously felt and yet susceptible to negotiation. Not only were

⁴³¹ I am here drawing on Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 27-32.

⁴³² John Stuart Mill, ‘Civilisation’, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. 28, *Essays on Politics and Society*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1977), 122. For a brief consideration of Mill’s essay, see Young, *Colonial Desire*, 33-34.

⁴³³ Thomas Osborne, ‘Bureaucracy as a Vocation: Governmentality and administration in nineteenth-century Britain’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7:3 (1994), 291, 294, 300 and 305.

nineteenth-century debates concerning governance and bureaucracy conducted by university academics but, as the next section will argue, they intersected to a considerable degree with the liberalisation of England's most prestigious universities.

The account that follows therefore does not commence with the felt effects of Thatcherism and neoliberal capitalism on higher education. That Thatcherism was accompanied by a resurgent bureaucratic culture is beyond dispute, but it does not follow that the instruments of managerialism are themselves without history and genealogy.⁴³⁴ This longer view is what I hope to recover in the following section in order to build on Readings's suggestion that the crises and questions confronting the present-day university have historical counterparts in the development of the nineteenth-century university. What follows thus differs from Readings's in that it positions bureaucracy and culture as contemporaneous responses to the questions of autonomy and institutionality that occupied Kant at the end of the eighteenth century, each setting to work differently a mechanism operating inhibitably at the boundary where the autonomous subject (Kant's man of reason) threatens state sovereignty.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ By her own account, Thatcher greatly admired the Indian civil service: 'I had an ambition as a child. I wanted to be part of the Indian Civil Service, because our Civil Service was the best in the world'. Quoted in Stephen Howe, 'Decolonisation and Imperial Aftershocks: The Thatcher Years', in *Making Thatcher's Britain*, eds. Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 236.

⁴³⁵ The part played by state centralisation and bureaucracy in the education reforms of the nineteenth century has been documented by Thomas Timar, and it is interesting to note how the absence of a functional bureaucracy in the USA made educational reforms much harder to achieve. 'The lack of an inherited administrative tradition led to a vastly complicated and diverse system of local government in which authority was dispersed among various units... While Europe continued to develop specialized institutions within a general framework of centralized and concentrated political authority, the American

Protecting the status quo, or making conquest ethical:

The university, culture and bureaucracy

All the orders given, and all of the acts of the executive officers, are reported in writing... so that there is no single act done in India, the whole of the reasons for which are not placed on record. This appears to me a greater security for good government than exists in almost any other government in the world, because no other probably has a system of recommendations so complete.

John Stuart Mill⁴³⁶

‘All thinking men are united in the opinion that the United States ought to establish in the Philippines a civil service which shall be thoroughly efficient and free from political pressure of every kind’.⁴³⁷ Thus opened Abbott Lawrence Lowell’s comparative study of imperial bureaucracies, entitled *Colonial Civil Service: the Selection and Training of Colonial Officials in England, Holland and France*. In musicological circles, Lowell will be recalled as the Harvard president who ridiculed the idea that musicology, or ‘grandmotherology’, to use his preferred designation, had any claim to the status of a university discipline, whereas in the Anglophone world he will be remembered as the Harvard president who imported the idea of the collegiate university from Oxford and

experience, both at the national and state level, belied such development’. Thomas B Timar, ‘The Institutional Role of State Education Departments: A Historical Perspective’, *American Journal of Education*, 105:3 (1997), 237.

⁴³⁶ Cited in Osborne, ‘Bureaucracy as a Vocation’, 301.

⁴³⁷ Abbott Lawrence Lowell and Henry Morse Stephens, *Colonial Civil Service: The Selection and Training of Colonial Officials in England, Holland and France* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), 5.

Cambridge.⁴³⁸ But the sweeping opening sentence of Lowell's comparative study is significant for very different reasons, namely its positioning of imperial expansion as the opinion held by 'all thinking men' around 1900. Lowell was by no means the only individual capable of reducing imperialism to a common sense imperative at the time. For a start, his cumbersomely-titled comparative study was commissioned by the American Historical Association and not—as one might reasonably expect in the light of its contents—by a state ministry. In 1895 an editorial for a magazine that circulated in the senior common rooms of Oxford colleges blurted out a similarly bold statement: 'we are all imperialists nowadays'.⁴³⁹

It is remarkable that, as Sankar Muthu writes, by the mid-nineteenth century 'anti-imperialist political thinking was virtually absent from Western European intellectual debates'.⁴⁴⁰ Muthu regards the Enlightenment as an 'anomaly' in the history of modern European thought on account of the anti-imperialist sentiments espoused by some of its most prominent figures, including Kant, Adam Smith, Bentham, Herder and Diderot.⁴⁴¹ Along similar lines, Jennifer Pitts has noted the evacuation of anti-imperialist thought from the intellectual agenda, a *fait accompli* she

⁴³⁸ Wilcomb E. Washburn, 'Grandmotherology and Museology', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 10:1 (1967), 43.

⁴³⁹ Cited in Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: the Last Lost Cause?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 9.

⁴⁴⁰ Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.

⁴⁴¹ Any argument for Kant as an anti-imperialist will have to contend with his ideas on race and universal peace which, one could argue with considerable evidence to make the case, are perfectly commensurate with colonial ideology. See, e.g. Walter D. Mignolo, 'The Darker Side of the Enlightenment: A De-Colonial Reading of Kant's Geography', in *Reading Kant's Geography*, eds. Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 319-344.

dates as early as 1830.⁴⁴² Muthu and Pitts's work propose one answer to the question of why Lowell did not spill much ink on arguing the merits and expediencies of colonial expansion. What most occupied his mind was simply whether the USA should follow the Dutch, French or British model in building up a civil service—on the rest, seemingly, everyone could agree.⁴⁴³ The thematisation of anti-imperialist sentiments in nineteenth-century Europe and Britain is a relatively recent affair which, of course, does not imply that that century was void of resistance to expansionism. It is nevertheless crucial to stress that scepticism towards the British empire was oftentimes implicated in, or merely a natural extension of, more prominent intellectual streams such as anti-patriotism, religious scepticism, positivism or anxieties that mastering the globe would exact from the imperial centre the cost of assimilation, leading to a situation where the distinctive codes and structures of feeling that signified European civilisation would no longer be recognisable in London.⁴⁴⁴

Yet the disappearance of almost any resistance to imperialism, despite the aforementioned qualifications, remains perplexing and in need

⁴⁴² Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: the Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1.

⁴⁴³ In focussing his study on England, Holland and France, Lowell had at his disposal centuries of experience amassed in the arts of colonisation. The English East India Company was founded in 1599, whereas the Dutch followed suit in 1603 with their own East India Company. France entered the race for commercial benefit and land in 1664 with the establishment of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. See Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow, eds., *Archives of Empire*, Vol. 1, *From The East India Company to the Suez Canal* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴⁴ Symonds, for example, points out that the Oxford-based historian Goldwin Smith was a strident critic of imperialism although his arguments were purely pragmatic, lacking any overt ethical or moral grounds. The positivists, and notably Auguste Comte, Symonds continues, did attack imperialism on moral grounds. See Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 81-101. For a brief discussion of moral degradation and a regress into barbarism as unavoidable by-products of imperial expansion, see Ross G. Forman, 'Empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. 91-94.

of further consideration. Two explanations are implicit in Eddy Kent's recent study of nineteenth-century imperialism entitled *Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786-1901*—that the nineteenth century witnessed not only the high mark of imperialism, but also the colonisation of the mind of the coloniser as the enabling condition of this rapid expansion, and that the rhetoric of colonialism/imperialism found a new outlet and altered guise in the language of corporate identity. Kent is interested in the 'manufacturing of imperial character', by which he intends the dissemination of a positive tropics of self-renunciation and inconspicuous heroicism, run together as the descriptive essence of nineteenth-century Britishness.⁴⁴⁵ Rather than attending to discourses of race and nation as sites of self-fashioning, he focusses on 'administrative practices, organisations, and techniques' entrusted with this task, reading them with an eye to understanding how well-educated men set aside luxury and a quiet life in the homeland to work in the civil service whose benefits—both in terms of finance and prestige—were disproportionately meagre. What makes his contribution especially invaluable to the vast body of literature on imperial identity formation in the nineteenth century is the claim, staked from the outset,

⁴⁴⁵ Eddy Kent, *Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786-1901* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 9. Rudyard Kipling sketches the prototypical civil servant as a representative of the 'virtuous empire' in his short story *On the City Wall*: '[y]ear by year England sends out fresh drafts for the first fighting-line, which is officially called the Indian Civil Service. These die, or kill themselves by overwork, or are worried to death, or broken in health and hope in order that the land may be protected from death and sickness, famine and war, and may eventually become capable of standing alone. It will never stand alone, but the idea is a pretty one, and men are willing to die for it, and yearly the work of pushing and coaxing and scolding and petting the country into good living goes forward. If an advance be made all credit is given to the native, while the Englishmen stand back and wipe their foreheads. If a failure occurs the Englishmen step forward and take the blame'. Quoted in *ibid.*, 4-5.

that the successful operation of imperialism entailed a double movement of colonisation. More than the minds of uncivilised natives had to come under its sway, of which the civil servants in charge of colonies were by no means the least important constituency.

The disappearance of vocal anti-imperial sentiment noted above coincided with a radical recasting of British imperialism which managed the transition from 'scandalous' colonialism to 'virtuous' empire. Stated as a precondition for successful imperial rule, the age of high imperialism became practicable when the means to discipline the autonomous subject could function seamlessly and unobtrusively at the ideological level, which returns us to Kant's struggle against institutionalised power and his attempts to exempt rational inquiry from state interference. From the point of view of power, the trouble with Kant's agitation for the autonomous subject of reason arose at the intersection of autonomy, exploitation and revolution. Kant himself, writing in the aftermath of the French Revolution, did not shy away from addressing the question of anarchy which, in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, he phrased simply as the subordination of 'duties' to 'inclinations'. Because the lower faculties had no duty other than the pursuit of reason (unlike the state and the higher faculties), they would ultimately be the custodian of order and unity.

Having just lost her American colonies, England was beginning to confront at the legislative level the same problem that reared its head in German-speaking lands, primarily in the more sanitary domain of ideas. For the British parliament, the 'accidental' acquisition of vast lands by oftentimes questionable means rearticulated the problem of the autonomous subject in concretely spatial and cultural terms as, in

Osborne's words, 'the central problem of liberal government': how to hold accountable Company men working beyond the reach of London?⁴⁴⁶

Ruthless commercial speculators such as Warren Hastings and Robert Clive played an important part in the mid-18th century story of English colonialism. An ordinary Company clerk, Clive effectively colonised large parts of India in the course of the 1750s by improvised military assault, not for the advancement of national (or Indian) interests, but purely as a means towards amassing great personal wealth.

In an age without recourse to highly developed instruments of precision and observation at the disposal of today's long-range imperialisms, the best solution to injustice in the colonies perpetrated against colonised subjects of the crown was bureaucracy which, Hannah Arendt reminds us, 'was discovered by and first attracted some of the best, and sometimes even the most clear-sighted strata, of the European intelligentsia'.⁴⁴⁷ The transition from 'scandalous' to 'virtuous' empire began, in Kent's account, with 'the first modern corporate corruption trial', of which the purpose was to expose publicly the corruption and mistreatment of Indian subjects perpetrated on the watch of the East India Company.⁴⁴⁸ The parliamentary impeachment brought against the first governor of Bengal was spearheaded by Edmund Burke who subsequently took on the role of prosecutor. 'My business is not to consider what will convict Mr. Hastings (a thing we all know to be impracticable)', Burke wrote, 'but what will acquit and justify myself to those few persons, and to

⁴⁴⁶ Osborne, 'Bureaucracy as a Vocation', 294.

⁴⁴⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 186.

⁴⁴⁸ Kent, *Corporate Character*, 23.

those distant times, which may take a concern in these affairs and in the actors in them'.⁴⁴⁹

The first part of Burke's assessment turned out to be correct. Warren Hastings emerged from the trial a free and acquitted citizen, but not without irreparable damage having been done to the reputation of empire in the eight years it took to answer Burke's accusations. 'I cannot... rejoice in our conquests in India', wrote Henry Mackenzie:

You tell me of immense territories subject to the English... what title have the subjects of another kingdom to establish an empire in India? To give laws to a country where the inhabitants received them on the terms of friendly commerce?⁴⁵⁰

Such sentiments were not uncommon in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1772 an anonymous pamphlet entitled 'An Inquiry into the Rights of the East Indian Company in Making War and Peace' accused 'the Company's military merchants of fraud, vice, extortion, and crimes against humanity'.⁴⁵¹ 'We have outdone the Spaniards in Peru', castigated Horace Walpole:

They were at least butchers on a religious principle, however diabolical their zeal. We have murdered, deposed, plundered, usurped - nay what think you of the famine in Bengal in which three millions perished being caused by a monopoly of the servants of the East India Company?⁴⁵²

Over in Hamburg the same famine provided an occasion for settling national scores when Christoph Daniel Ebeling, outraged by Charles

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁵⁰ Cited in *ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁵¹ Carter and Harlow, *Archives of Empire*, 2.

⁴⁵² Cited in Osborne, 'Bureaucracy as a Vocation', 295.

Burney's posturing on German music, wrote to the then senior statesman of English music:

I see wars, terrible wars, and the Thames foaming with much blood!... Let even the Polish and the poor fellow human creatures in East India tell the world who are the best men—the Germans who conquered Polonia, or the English who conquered Bengalia?⁴⁵³

Taking the Hastings impeachment as his point of departure, Kent suggests that virtuous empire not only became central to ideas about British national character, but enshrined through values such as service and self-sacrifice a particular corporate culture not dissimilar to present-day packaged identities of which the so-called Goldman Sachs phenomenon is perhaps the best contemporary example.⁴⁵⁴ 'The Britishness that formed the basis for ethical action was an explicitly corporate identity', Kent writes, one 'not grounded on traditional or essential forms (whether British, English, European, Christian, etc.) but manufactured by a series of novel processes and disseminated among would-be colonial civil servants'.⁴⁵⁵ It is here that the story of bureaucracy converges with national culture, education and a perceived ethical obligation to protect colonial subjects against what was regarded as the corrupt and self-enriching ventures of the East India Company—the gradual transformation of the idea of empire from the vigilante activities of company men who systematically exploited the freedom their location afforded to virtuous

⁴⁵³ Cited in Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: the Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford: 2008), 16, 18.

⁴⁵⁴ See, e.g., 'Why Goldman Sachs? Our Culture', *Goldman Sachs*, accessed February 2nd, 2015, <http://www.goldmansachs.com/careers/why-goldman-sachs/our-culture>.

⁴⁵⁵ Kent, *Corporate Character*, 65.

empire. In the case of the East India Company, perhaps fittingly in the light of the crucial role culture would come to occupy in the colonial project, the Hastings impeachment unfolded as, in equal part, officialdom, theatre and pageantry.⁴⁵⁶

Then as now, it was hoped that change could be leveraged with recourse to education. In 1800 the Governor General of India, Lord Wellesley, submitted a memorandum to the directors of the East India Company, elaborating on arguments for the establishment of a college devoted to the training of civil servants and informing the board that such an institution—an ‘Oxford of the East’—had already opened its doors in Calcutta.⁴⁵⁷ A direct consequence of Wellesley’s efforts was the founding in 1806 of the East India College at Haileybury. Company service abroad (to which entry was by nomination only) would henceforth be preceded by several years of study at the college, during which future Company men ‘destined to fill the important offices of Magistrates, Ambassadors, Provincial Governors, and other high situations’ would be trained.⁴⁵⁸ The Haileybury curriculum, amongst other things, was exemplary for its liberal education, which contrasted with the traditional Oxbridge education

⁴⁵⁶ *The London Chronicle*, Kent points out, reported the opening of proceedings ‘in a format not dissimilar from conventional contemporary theatre notices: ‘The Lords were then called over by the Clerk, and arranged by Sir Isaac Heard, Principal King at Arms, when upwards of two hundred proceeded in order to Westminster Hall. / The Peers were preceded by / The Lord Chancellor’s attendants, two and two. / The Clerks of the House of Lords. / The Masters in Chancery, two and two. / The Judges. Sergeants Adair and Hill. / The Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod Two Heralds. / The Lords Baron, two and two. / The Lords Bishops, two and two. / The Lords Viscounts, two and two. / The Lords Marquesses, two and two. / The Lords Dukes, two and two. / The Mace Bearer. / The Lord Chancellor with his train borne. / (All in their Parliamentary Robes)’. *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁵⁷ Osborne, ‘Bureaucracy as a Vocation’, 297.

⁴⁵⁸ ‘Extracts from the Report from the Committee of Correspondence to the Court of Directors of the East India Company; On the Formation of an Establishment at Home for the Education of Young Men intended for the Civil Service of the Company in India’, *The Literary Panorama*, 1 (1807), 117.

devoted to clergy and the bar. The Haileybury syllabus included literature, law and philosophy, alongside political economy and instruction ‘in the language, history, and manners of those nations among whom they are to exercise their respective functions’.⁴⁵⁹ In 1854, the taking of a competition examination replaced patronage and a Haileybury education as the only legitimate entry into the civil service, putting an end to the ill-reputed nepotism that had long plagued the public image of the company. No longer, wrote Thomas Malthus, would civil service in India provide ‘an opportunity for second sons “whose conduct and attainments do not promise a very fortunate career at home”’.⁴⁶⁰ An explicit aim of the reform programme was ‘to tie the civil service more closely to the universities’ (Oxford and Cambridge, in particular), while inversely, forging vocational ties with the Indian Civil Service committed universities to a liberal reformist cause.⁴⁶¹

Liberal imperialist arguments were not without their ethical justification. When Lowell in 1901 declared the single most important principle in ‘recruiting men’ to serve abroad as ‘a high general education, in fact as high a general education as it is possible to give’, he seems no longer ideologically estranged from an anti-imperialist such as Burke who, a century earlier, promoted institutions such as universities and literary academies as spaces of self-betterment essential to the well-being of a

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Kent, *Corporate Character*, 83.

⁴⁶¹ Osborne, ‘Bureaucracy as a vocation’, 304. ‘The civil service exam’, Osborne explains, ‘was effectively a re-run of the Oxbridge final year examinations; the liberal education of Oxbridge was tied to the vocation of civil service—just as had been decided in the case of the Indian service in the wake of the 1853 India Bill. The rationale behind this development was that of finding a new vocation for the universities. On the simplest level this was a matter of finding alternative vocations for Oxbridge students unwilling to enter either the church or the bar’ (304).

nation. It is furthermore noteworthy that Lowell, by insisting on freedom from political influence as indispensable to a successful civil service, seems also no longer so far removed from Kant, despite their diverging views on imperialism itself. When Lowell singled out the college at Haileybury as ‘the only practicable plan for the United States’, moreover, he had at his disposal sound ethical arguments.⁴⁶² Macaulay’s competition examinations and the focus on general rather than technical knowledge were fated as ‘a species of class control’ which ran contrary to the qualities of liberty and freedom which, he felt, bound the USA into a single and distinctive nation. British imperialism was similarly steeped in narratives of emancipation and justice. The British were the self-appointed maritime guardians to root out slavery and, on land, champions of initiatives such as the founding of an anti-foot-binding organisation that forged ahead with the aim of liberating Chinese women.⁴⁶³ In post-unified Germany, one of the discourses that energised imperialist desires for territorial expansion abroad was a revisionary portrayal of Alexander von Humboldt’s “peaceful conquest” of Latin America... as a specifically German tradition and described as a contrast to the violent conquests initiated by Columbus’.⁴⁶⁴

One of the instruments operating in the background, building bridges, synthesising and forging unlikely historical alliances, was ethics. If the ethical moment of culture and bureaucracy initiated the transition from ‘scandalous’ to ‘virtuous’ empire, it is interesting to note the return of the protagonists of scandalous empire in the age of virtuous empire, albeit

⁴⁶² Lowell and Stephens, *Colonial Civil Service*, vii.

⁴⁶³ Forman, ‘Empire’, 102-103.

⁴⁶⁴ Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, trans. Sorcha O’Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 17.

in a different guise and narrating a history other than the one Edmund Burke had in mind when he addressed his cause to future generations on the reason for pressing charges against Hastings. Lowell's version of the same history appears in a short paragraph:

It [Haileybury] educated the men who governed India during the last forty years of the Company's rule, when the empire, created by Lord Clive, saved by Warren Hastings, expanded and placed on a secure footing by Lord Wellesley and Lord Hastings, assumed a character of permanency, and presented problems of administration rather than of conquest; it trained the civilians who met the shock of the Sepoy Mutiny and re-established order in upper India after that terrible crisis; and its alumni superintended the organization of the new Indian Empire of the Queen-Empress, which, after the crash of the Mutiny, took the place of the old Indian Empire of the Company.⁴⁶⁵

Culture and bureaucracy take over, that is, when problems of conquest become available to thought as problems of administration, which is to agree with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o that 'the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard'.⁴⁶⁶ Lowell's version of history reveals something about the place occupied by ethics in the age of 'virtuous' empire. Ethical considerations mostly enter the field of power as an intervention into unfolding crises, as a seemingly corrective reaction against what is perceived as an unacceptable status quo (ruthless speculation under the exploitative structures of the East India Company), with Burke's impeachment of Lord Hastings putting a stop to cronyism and the patronage of the Company. The problem is that ethics, as intimately linked with the field of power—albeit mediated by culture—runs

⁴⁶⁵ Lowell and Stephens, *Colonial Civil Service*, 233.

⁴⁶⁶ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey and Heinemann, 1986), 9.

up against its own imperialist history of sublimation: and what is sublimated marks out the process by which an unethical status quo, over time, is transformed into institutionalised structures of ethical governance, which is another name for bureaucracy: ‘the ethos of office’, to recall Max Weber’s phrase.⁴⁶⁷

Representing equality: the bureaucratic University of Excellence

[T]here is no ‘contradiction’ in the fact that liberal bureaucracy says one thing and does another. Constitutive contradiction, ‘muddling along’, describes both its functioning and its very function. Its indeterminacy is predicated by its intermediacy... The written archive renders bureaucratic practice into a procedural, provisional, ‘actionable’ exigency. Bureaucratic writing sequesters bureaucracy from the responsibilities of either origins or ends.

Arindam Dutta⁴⁶⁸

The previous section has described a particular process of change, namely the ways in which transformative agendas that enter the administrative and discursive spaces of nineteenth-century imperialism as a corrective to exploitation are, over time, incorporated into the very mechanism that guarantees the continued functioning of imperial domination, albeit in new and as yet unrecognisable forms. This process is what Arindam Dutta, in the context of British imperialism and the aesthetic programme promoted by the Department of Science and Art (DSA), has called the

⁴⁶⁷ Cited in Osborne, ‘Bureaucracy as a vocation’, 292.

⁴⁶⁸ Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility* (London: Routledge, 2007), 69-71.

‘morphogenetic capacities’ of power: restitutive capacities that are set to work in moments when the seemingly unstoppable march of global capital falls into decay, moments that very likely register hope and a certain amount of optimism amongst those still attempting to undermine the neoliberal ideals of a free market economy.⁴⁶⁹ The critical moment, Benjamin speculates in the epigraph to this chapter, might also be the moment when the status quo threatens to be conserved. Read through Dutta, it is the morphogenic characteristics of power that drive this conservation.

In this section, I want to consider present-day responses to the unequal status quo bequeathed us by centuries of epistemological and material inequality. I will take as the basis of this consideration a number of recent policy statements and reports issued by bodies of oversight in the United Kingdom, partly because it represents something of my own research context over the past seven years, and partly because Britain, having given up over the past seven decades the bulk of her colonial possessions, provides a geopolitical context sensitive to the continuities and disruptions of the imperial project. I want to suggest that bureaucratic procedures, reports and policy documents are restricted in the kinds of accountability they can facilitate (hence the section epigraph above). I want to argue that the bureaucratic university is subject to many of the same problems Dutta has pointed out in the context of nineteenth-century liberal bureaucracy. Dutta suggests that liberal bureaucracy fulfilled numerous and oftentimes contradictory functions in the day-to-day facilitation of governance. It provided a means by which bodies of

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 10.

oversight could intervene in crises indirectly. Bureaucratic writing recognised and reconstructed the existence of exigency, and mandated provisional measures that would, over time, deliver attenuation. The written trace, and the continued production of bureaucratic practice to adapt to the morphogenic capacities of power—the tendency inherent in an unequal status quo to ensure its own reproduction—is able to trap intervention in an intermediate space where policy documents and strategic planning come to replace the assignation of responsibility. The gap between policy, practice and actuality can always be mitigated with recourse to those good intentions enshrined in the documents according to which practice is assessed.

Released in January 2015, the report of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) appointed by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) confronts head-on the issue of race and gender hegemony: ‘HEIS [Higher Education Institutions]’, it charges, ‘should proactively address inequalities in staff selection, rather than simply accept them as a general “sector issue”’.⁴⁷⁰ Lest the mandate of the EDAP inspire confusion, it is necessary to be clear about what is being reported on, and how. Following a short preface, the fifteen-page report opens with an introduction (five paragraphs) and background (seven paragraphs), before getting into the main body of results which deals with ‘circumstances’ (paragraphs 13-34 on pp.5-10) and ‘codes’ (paragraphs 35-41, pp.10-11). The report singles out for special consideration staff ‘with circumstances’, of which there are

⁴⁷⁰ Research Excellence Framework, ‘Equality and Diversity in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework: A Report by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP)’, *REF 2014*, published (2015), 11, published January 2015, <http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/equal/EDAP%20final%20report.pdf>.

two types: ‘clearly defined’ or ‘complex’. Clearly defined circumstances include qualifying as an early career researcher; absence from work due to working part-time; secondments or career breaks; and qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Staff with predefined circumstances relating to particular career pathways were also eligible within Units of Assessment 1-6.⁴⁷¹ Complex circumstances consist of the following: disability; ill health or injury; mental health conditions; constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of—or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to—the allowances made within the clearly defined route; other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member); gender reassignment; other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in paragraph 190 of ‘guidance of submissions’ or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.⁴⁷²

The overall tone of the report is upbeat, noting with approval that the ‘proportion of staff submitted with individual circumstances that had impacted on their research productivity has risen from 12 per cent in RAE 2008 to 29 per cent in REF 2014’, a trend it attributes to greater understanding of ‘individual circumstances’.⁴⁷³ The handful of paragraphs devoted to ‘codes’ in actual fact assesses an assessment of an assessment: ‘following our review of the codes of practice, we read HEIs’ final equality impact assessments, to get a sense of how well the sector had applied their

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 15.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 2.

codes and to identify elements of good practice'.⁴⁷⁴ The actual transformation of staff bodies, in other words, hinges on codes of good practice. And as the report states clearly, the codes are good. But what of the actual people?

Towards the end of the report, the panel expresses disappointment over its failure to attract a diverse membership, recommending that 'funding bodies should identify ways of more effectively mainstreaming equality and diversity considerations amongst all participants, at all stages of the recruitment process'.⁴⁷⁵ The report fails to mention that, in the United Kingdom where, according to data from 2012, only 1.1% of British-born academic staff and 0.4% of British-born professors represented black and minority ethnicity (BME) backgrounds, putting together a diverse panel should not have been slated as a surprise.⁴⁷⁶ 'The rhetoric is good', as Patrick Johnson writes in an independent report entitled *Aiming higher: race, inequality and diversity in the academy*: 'X University is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly... we believe that Black and Minority Ethnic staff and students are vital to the world of academia'.⁴⁷⁷ Good enough rhetoric is exactly what is required: rather than taking into account what transpires in

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 12 (paragraphs 42-44).

⁴⁷⁶ Kehinde Andrews, 'The Black Studies Movement in Britain: Addressing the Crisis in British Academia and Social Life', in *Aiming Higher: Race, Inequality and Diversity in the Academy*, eds. Claire Alexander and Jason Arday (London: The Runnymede Trust, 2015), 30, <http://runnymedetrust.org>.

⁴⁷⁷ Patrick Johnson, 'The Visible Minority: Nowhere to be Seen in the Academy', in *Aiming Higher*, 13.

reality, assessments are based on policy documents and codes of good practice, thereby furnishing HEIs with an easy ‘substitute for action’.⁴⁷⁸

For several reasons, the idea of excellence is the perfect counterpart to excellent written codes and admirable PR exercises. In the contemporary university, ‘excellence itself has been reduced to statistical accountancy’, which is to say that yet other means are available to compensate for the negative statistics of equality and diversity.⁴⁷⁹ The semantic vacuity folded into the discourse of excellence has significantly abetted this process. Again, the REF’s choice of vocabulary is revealing: ‘panels will aim to identify excellence wherever they can find it’, one reads in its assessment criteria.⁴⁸⁰ The difficulty with such a self-contained sentence is finding out what—qualitatively—is meant by the ‘it’ of excellence. Excellence is something on which everyone can agree without knowing the content of what is being agreed upon, as long as adjectives are readily available to enforce categorical distinctions.⁴⁸¹

Criterion	Four star: world-leading in terms of originality, significance and	Three star: internationally excellent in terms of originality,	Two stars: recognised internationally in terms of
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⁴⁷⁸ Andrew Pilkington, ‘The Declining Salience of Race Quality in Higher Education’, in *Aiming Higher*, 8.

⁴⁷⁹ Achille Mbembe, ‘Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive’, *Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research*, accessed September 16th, 2015, <http://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf>.

⁴⁸⁰ Research Excellence Framework, ‘Panel criteria and working methods’, *REF 2014*, published December 2012, http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/panelcriteriaandworkingmethods/01_12.pdf.

⁴⁸¹ The table is compiled from criteria published by the Research Excellence Framework, ‘Assessment Criteria and Level Definitions’, *REF 2014*, modified December 12th, 2014, <http://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/assessmentcriteriaandleveldefinitions>.

	rigour	significance and rigour, but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence	originality, significance and rigour
Point of reference	Primary or essential	Important	Recognised
Influence	Profound	Lasting	Some
Developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences	Instrumental	A catalyst for, or contribution to	Incremental or cumulative
The range and depth of research and its application	Major expansion	Significant expansion	Contribution to
Novel, innovative and/or creative	Outstanding	Significant	-

The language is slippery. Besides relying on tenuous distinctions ('profound influence' as opposed to 'lasting influence', to name one example), the ways in which excellence as an evaluative category can protect the present (and unequal) status quo are here amply in evidence. Far from being a neutral geographic indicator, the designation 'world-leading' covers over a distinctly political and contingent order. Whose world is referenced in the compound category of world-leading, and to what extent do the geographical coordinates of that world reflect the commitment to transformation professed by HEIs and the REF?⁴⁸² The

⁴⁸² The section of the REF report concerning music notes that 'Historical studies of non-European musical traditions formed a small but high quality part of the submission'. It is worth noting the insertion of excellence here as somehow compensating for the comparative absence of scholarship on so-called non-European traditions: few researchers work outside of Western art music, but their research is consistently of outstanding quality. See the Research Excellence Framework, 'Overview report by Main Panel D and Sub-panels 27 to 36', REF 2014, published January 2015, 95, <http://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/paneloverviewreports>.

same question applies to the development of new thinking with regard to practices, paradigms, policies or audiences: new thinking for, by and about whom? What measures are in place to offset the gains of such research against the real possibility that the same research might entrench—or widen—disparities between different types of knowledge and the capital they generate? If one problem is that excellence itself lacks a referent, and therefore acts as a floating signifier available to the existing status quo, another is that, as Readings points out, excellence protects the discourse of racism in seemingly non-racial terms.⁴⁸³ We might turn to musicology for some examples.

As a discipline generously endowed with theoretical tools that historically developed alongside the need for aesthetic arbitration, excellence is only one of the sophisticated alibis—autonomy and/or literacy providing equally persuasive means of recovering the widely critiqued category of ‘Western’ or ‘art’ music as a singular and distinctly Anglo-European narrative.⁴⁸⁴ Rachel Mundy’s reflections on the use of style as an interpretive and taxonomic category in the musicology of the past century brilliantly lays bare this process.⁴⁸⁵ Mundy identifies three stages in the development of style as a means of classifying difference in music: the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the replacement of taste and education with evolutionist and biological

⁴⁸³ Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 83–84.

⁴⁸⁴ Philip Bohlman writes about the structural complicity of musicology in a broader project of discrimination: ‘Quite simply, musicologists are engaged in making choices, usually at the behest of others, thereby establishing authority’. See his epilogue to *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons*, eds. Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 199.

⁴⁸⁵ Rachel Mundy, ‘Evolutionary Categories in Musical Style from Adler to America’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 67:3 (2014), 735–768.

determinism which, in the second half of the twentieth, gave way to discourse and the qualities of ‘the music itself’. In the late 1920s, Paul Bekker wrote critically about the use of evolutionism in the construction of musical hierarchies; erstwhile champions of evolutionism would follow suit (Mundy mentions Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs).⁴⁸⁶ The turn towards musical immanence as self-sufficient determinant of musical difference and stylistic categories, Mundy writes, ‘can be viewed as a post-war compromise with two opposing faces: the forceful rejection of racial rhetoric in the face of European anti-Semitism and genocide, and the encoded retention of style typologies and Spencerian historiography in fundamental conceptions of musical style’.⁴⁸⁷ With the help of critical theory, the ‘new’ musicology rejected accounts that privileged works and ‘the music itself’ at the expense of social and contextual considerations.⁴⁸⁸ As Joseph Kerman wrote in 1980, what is required is a new awareness of the ideological proclivities inherent in music analysis. Those proclivities, for Kerman, had their origins in organicist thought: ‘from the ruling ideology, analysis exists for the purpose of demonstrating organicism, and organicism exists for the purpose of validating a certain body of works of art’.⁴⁸⁹ What Kerman calls for, Mundy argues, is not the abolishment of stylistic categories derived, ultimately, from racist foundations, but precisely a critical awareness of style criticism’s spurious foundations.⁴⁹⁰ Mundy’s critique of Kerman and the ‘new’ musicology that ensued are not

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 748.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 750.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 758-759.

⁴⁸⁹ Joseph Kerman, ‘How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out’, *Critical Inquiry*, 7:2 (1980), 315. See also Mundy, ‘Evolutionary Categories in Musical Style’, 359.

⁴⁹⁰ Mundy, ‘Evolutionary Categories in Musical Style’, 359.

predicated on a failure to dispense with the idea of musical style—a project that, if at all possible, would smack of ahistoricism and unhelpful revisionism. Instead, she points out that recent musicology has found yet other means of ‘reinscribing a problematic species boundary—the human—as the benchmark against which naturalised assumptions about race and gender were rejected’.⁴⁹¹ In other words, recent musicology has simply replaced earlier ideological norms (organicism and ‘the music itself’) with humanism or the human in music.⁴⁹² What remains, however, is an operative species boundary that continues to justify cultural inquiry.⁴⁹³ Or, to rephrase Mundy’s proposal in the language of the present chapter, what allows an unequal status quo to be critiqued and maintained is the replacement of one species boundary with another. I want here to build on Mundy’s work by approaching the question of retention from another angle, namely the reasons determining the objects (or species boundaries) that are available to critique at any one time.

It is a commonplace that the primacy of Western music had been won using arguments now recognised as outright discriminatory.⁴⁹⁴ A typical example can be found in the manifesto for musicology Guido Adler formalised in 1885. Adler’s musicology and the music at its centre began—in truly Hegelian fashion—coterminously with history itself:

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 760.

⁴⁹² Mundy cites examples from the work of Subotnik, Gary Tomlinson and Ian Cross. Ibid., 759-760.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 760.

⁴⁹⁴ For critical reflections on musicology and race in turn-of-century Europe, Britain and America, see, amongst others, the chapters by Julie Brown, Erik Levi and Alain Frogley in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Musicology originated simultaneously with the art of organising tones. As long as natural song breaks forth from the throat freely and without reflection; as long as the tonal products well up, unclear and unorganised, so long also there can be no question of a tonal art... All people of whom it can be said that they have a tonal art also have a tonal science.⁴⁹⁵

Adler's opening statement is a dispassionately scientific rendition of views espoused by Hanslick, his former teacher and predecessor at the University of Vienna, who distinguished natural music from other music on the basis that the former was 'no music'.⁴⁹⁶ On one level, Adler's explanation for the absence of entire swathes of peoples and musics from the budding discipline of musicology was neither political nor prejudiced. This point is crucial to note, because what was thinkable as politics did not extend to what, from a present-day perspective, appears as structures of discrimination set to work in the founding documents of musicology. Nor did Adler advocate formalism of the type that alleged to purge music of the extra-musical, as the inclusion of 'diplomats' in his schematisation of musicology would suggest.⁴⁹⁷ Adler was merely operating within the domain of current scientism and universal education, where the fact that

⁴⁹⁵ Erica Mugglestone and Guido Adler, 'Guido Adler's "The Scope, Method, and Aim of Musicology" (1885): An English Translation with an Historico-Analytical Commentary', *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 13 (1981), 5. Martin Cooper's translation of the same passage reads as follows: 'Musicology came into existence at the same time as music itself. While man still simply opened his mouth and sang without thinking, while sound patterns formed themselves without being ordered or analysed, it was still impossible to speak of an art of music'. Adler, 'The Scope, Method and Aim of Musicology', trans. Martin Cooper, in *Music in European Thought: 1889-1912*, ed. Bojan Bujic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 348. For a discussion of late nineteenth-century concerns with musical origins, see Alexander Rehding, 'The quest for the origins of music in Germany circa 1900', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 53:2 (2000), 345-385.

⁴⁹⁶ 'When the South Sea Islanders clap rhythmically with metal pieces and wooden sticks while emitting an unintelligible howl, then that is natural music for the very reason that it is no music'. Cited in Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 117.

⁴⁹⁷ Adler, 'Scope, Method and Aim of musicology', 350, 355.

certain nations were ‘destined to play a role in musical progress’ and not others, amounted to ‘a matter of natural selection, a process similar to that of selective breeding in Nature, and this selection can be influenced by education or inclination’.⁴⁹⁸

In many ways, Adler belonged to his own time, no more and no less so than the postmodernist is a product of postmodernism and the postcolonial theorist a product of postcolonialism.⁴⁹⁹ The point of this last qualification is not to explain away—or even defend—the epistemological violence educed in Adler’s 1885 manifesto by equating it with the thought of the times and, in particular, with scientific belief. Instead, my interest lies with the objects that are available to critique, with what is sayable and thinkable at any particular time, with what is permitted by structures of coloniality in one historical moment and not in another. In other words, now that the significant benefits that accrued from the critical renewal of musicology and music can more or less be assumed unpolemically, it might be opportune to ask why it is that the racist foundations of nineteenth-century European (and musical) thought now appear so blatantly indefensible?

One answer might be that the ease with which contemporary scholars are able to call out the racisms enshrined in the writings of their predecessors is indicative of heightened ethical consciousness within the domain of scholarly practice—that the present has, indeed, learned from

⁴⁹⁸ Adler, ‘Internationalism in Music’, trans. Theodore Baker, *The Musical Quarterly*, 11:2 (1925), 282.

⁴⁹⁹ For an incisive consideration of Adler’s position on politics and science, see Kevin Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History: Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-century Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 133-187.

and surpassed the mistakes of the past. Rather than succumbing to the lures of self-aggrandisement contained in the notion that ours is a timeless and more ethical world than before, one such condition, I would suggest, resides in the fact that there is no longer the need for the racial, biological, Eurocentric and imperial premises that grounded demonstrations of musicology's scientific credentials—credentials which were instrumental in winning a place for musicology amongst the institutionalised disciplines. If an earlier musicology had to illustrate its scientificity to claim disciplinary status, today's musicology has to demonstrate excellence, critical awareness and at the very least a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, as well as a measure of social awareness. And indeed, in a time such as the present, these values sound both appealing and necessary. Whereas it is important to be aware of the effects of imperial thought on musicology, it is equally necessary to probe the new values charged with bestowing institutional legitimacy in respect of the structures of coloniality (or the darker side of [post]modernity) they might be instrumental in perpetuating.

Ever since a critical discourse crystallised around notions such as racist/racism and became the increasingly consensual position in the 1960s, it has been possible to diagnose correctly the pseudo-scientific claims of an earlier musicology—claims which now seem woefully transparent.⁵⁰⁰ One problem with critical exercises of this type, as Alastair Bonnett points out in another context, is that attempts to read racism/anti-racism into discourses that operated prior to their

⁵⁰⁰ Alastair Bonnett, *Anti-racism* (London: Routledge, 2000), 10.

crystallisation into linguistic and critical categories is anachronistic.⁵⁰¹ Rather than indulging such anachronistic fallacies, it might be more useful—but also more difficult—to shift the critical accent towards those conditions that regulate the limits and objects of critique. Permitting such a shift, we might ask, along with Walter Ben Michaels ‘why, in a world where most of us are not avowedly racist (where, on the humanities faculties at our universities, we might more plausibly say not that racist ideology is rare but that it is extinct) do we take so much pleasure in reading [and launching some of our own] attacks on racism?’⁵⁰² Michaels’s answer is, in a word, nostalgia, not for racism or anti-racism as such, but for the ‘continuing commitment to the primacy of culture that is structural as well as historical’.⁵⁰³

Not only has musicology a great deal over which to be nostalgic, but the very objects of that nostalgia might still furnish good enough reasons for a renewed commitment to a white and Western musicological centre. “Western music”, writes Richard Taruskin in the introduction to his *Oxford History of Western Music*, ‘means what it has always meant in general academic histories: it means what is usually called “art music” or “classical music”, and looks suspiciously like the traditional canon that has come under so much justified fire for its long-unquestioned dominance of the academic curriculum’.⁵⁰⁴ To be sure, Taruskin is himself sympathetic to the ‘social and political implications’ of persistently inventing traditions

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Walter Benn Michaels, ‘Plots Against America: Neoliberalism and Antiracism’, *American Literary History*, 18:2 (2006), 296.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 1, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xiv.

and indulging anachronistic interpretations in order to perpetuate the continued dominance of a Western canon.⁵⁰⁵ ‘But that very sympathy’, he continues, ‘is what impelled me to subject that impossibly heterogeneous body of music to one more (perhaps the last) comprehensive examination’.⁵⁰⁶ Where lesser scholars are inclined to invent traditions, Taruskin has one final card to play that ostensibly seals the case for Western music as a coherent body of sound, deserving to be studied as such:

All of the genres that are treated in this book, are literate genres. That is, they are genres that have been disseminated primarily through the medium of writing... The sheer abundance and the generic heterogeneity of the music so disseminated in ‘the West’ is a truly distinguishing feature — perhaps the West’s signal musical distinction. It is deserving of critical study.⁵⁰⁷

Taruskin might even be right in installing literacy as the synthesising principle that renders cohesive his version of Western Music History, although there are persuasive arguments to suggest otherwise.⁵⁰⁸ The trick is at any rate not a new one. Musical notation, as Randel writes in an early essay critical of musicology’s theoretical canons, ‘has often been the basis for the initial sorting of all possible musics’.⁵⁰⁹ Taruskin’s choice of synthesising principle, then, is also a return to the most fundamental tool in the musicological ‘toolbox’.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Gary Tomlinson, ‘Monumental Musicology’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 132:2 (2007), 358-361.

⁵⁰⁹ Randel, ‘The Canons in the Musicological Toolbox’, 11.

Perhaps more than any other, Taruskin's *History of Western Music*, were it subject to an REF-style assessment, would attract all the superlatives used to indicate excellence, and for this reason would be a significant generator of future intellectual and actual capital. Furthermore, for all its critical prowess (and Taruskin's abilities in this regard are notoriously accomplished), *The Oxford History of Western Music* can only preserve the existing musicological status quo. That is, as Gary Tomlinson writes, 'the story presented here is approximately the sum of the efforts of historical musicologists across much of the twentieth century'.⁵¹⁰ This situation, it bears stressing, is able to persist alongside and despite the critical vigilance championed by the 'new' musicology. Current musicology, moreover, cannot be faulted for critical deficiency. Dissenting voices are more often than not encouraged, if not overtly cultivated at institutions of higher learning. Taruskin-bashing, to name one example, has become something of a trendy enterprise. Insofar as his work is unrepentantly bold and refreshingly stripped of neutrality and critical distance, Taruskin's impressive oeuvre is not only welcoming of critique, but proof that the disciplinary field is a robustly contested amalgam of propositions and counterpropositions. Affronts to the musicological canon will likely meet with approval—even support led from the front by Taruskin himself—for as long as its decolonising thrust is turned inwards, delimited geographically to the Third World or at most to the domain of ethnomusicology.

However, one would be hard-pressed to find a more effective exit strategy from the musicological job market than promulgating the

⁵¹⁰ Tomlinson, 'Monumental Musicology', 350.

deliberate decentring of Western art music on the level of teaching and research. Yet, the possibility exists that it is precisely this state of affairs that might serve as a means of preserving an unequal disciplinary status quo. This is because concrete intervention, such as recalibrating curricula or implementing quotas specifically aimed at redressing the whiteness problem in higher education, is putatively labelled ‘reverse racism’. ‘This line of reasoning’, Stanley Fish points out, ‘underwrites such familiar statements as “you can’t fight discrimination with discrimination”’.⁵¹¹ Taken to its logical extreme, he continues, the academic freedom practised at our universities ‘find[s] quotas designed to exclude races from institutions of higher education no different from admissions procedures that take race into account’: both display racial prejudice, and therefore must be erased from permissibility under liberal ethics.⁵¹²

Liberal ethics, and along with it the totalising effect of capitalism’s abstract logic, require neither belief nor any particular idea structuring the domain of value. They require both the continued management of production—in other words, bureaucracy—and the semblance of belief in progress, the human good, world peace, or, in fact, canons, counter-cannons and capitalism itself. Or to put it the other way round: ‘capitalism is what is left when beliefs have collapsed at the level of ritual or symbolic elaboration, and all that is left is the consumer-spectator, trudging through the ruins and the relics’.⁵¹³ It is the same logic Stanley Fish detects when he

⁵¹¹ Stanley Fish, *The Trouble with Principle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 37.

⁵¹² Stanley Fish, ‘What’s Sauce for One Goose: The Logic of Academic Freedom’, in *Academic Freedom and the Inclusive University*, eds. Sharon E. Kahn and Dennis J. Pavlich (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 9.

⁵¹³ Fish, *The Trouble with Principle*, 42.

writes that academic freedom produces ‘a forced inability to make distinctions. An inability that follows from shifting situations out of the historical context that gave them meaning into an abstract context where they have no meaning’.⁵¹⁴

The logic of capitalism, insofar as one might name it thus, is interested neither in history, nor in being subjected to an historicist point of view, nor does it require a referent to remain in operation. Readings comprehends the consequences for critique when he writes that the university as an institution can no longer serve as the basis for any leftist anti-capitalist argument. In other words, even in our best attempts to resist as far as possible the complete marketisation of knowledge, the terms of participation demand integration into the bureaucratic institutions of the capitalist cash-nexus. If Readings’s account fails to startle, that failure is perhaps indicative of the overall precariousness of the present situation, where research is weighted according to certain ideological biases and purportedly social-minded ideals which, for all their rhetorical polish, are at risk of protecting the unequal status quo bequeathed to the present by centuries of imperial domination.

‘Like a struggle for empire’: The normalisation of crisis and inclusive exclusion

⁵¹⁴ This point is consistent with Readings’s characterisation of the function of the head of the university: ‘in the University of Excellence, however, a president is a bureaucratic administrator who moves effortlessly from the lecture hall, to the sports stadium, to the executive lounge. From judge, to synthesizer, to executive and fund raiser, without publicly expressing any opinions or passing any judgments whatsoever’. Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 55.

The expansion of the canon is more like a struggle for empire. It is a political move as much as an aesthetic one, for it serves first of all to incorporate foreign goods into the economy of the academy.

Don Michael Randel⁵¹⁵

One might speculate that musicology has always cultivated a certain affinity with the idea of exigency, that the recasting of disciplinary terms has more often than not been prefaced with crisis talk. Adler was already assailed by a sense of crisis when, in 1885, he commented on the necessity for a musical science: ‘the arts today are in such a precarious condition and there is so much uncertainty in artistic activity that scholarship may well be able to contribute to the improvement of the present situation’.⁵¹⁶ A few decades later, he offers the following: ‘We discern a confusion and conflict of styles; the art of music tosses on the waves and eddies of a rapid. This movement has gained momentum since about 1890, and now seems to be nearing a crisis like that of a fever, that shall cleanse the body of music’.⁵¹⁷ At the opposite end of the chronological spectrum crises continue to proliferate, of which one of the more extravagant examples appears on the opening page of *Rethinking Music*, edited by Mark Everist and Nicholas Cook. ‘The history of musicology and music theory in our generation’, they write, ‘is one of loss of confidence; we no longer know what we know’.⁵¹⁸ A

⁵¹⁵ Randel, ‘The Canons in the Musicological Toolbox’, 15.

⁵¹⁶ Adler, ‘The Scope, Method and Aim of Musicology’, 352.

⁵¹⁷ Adler, ‘Internationalism in Music’, 294.

⁵¹⁸ Susan McClary suffers a similar onset of uncertainty: ‘I am no longer sure what music is’. See her *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 19. For the idea that musicology is in crisis, see Giles Hooper, *The Discourse of Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 11; Korsyn, *Decentering Music*, 5–31; Philip V. Bohlman, ‘Musicology as a Political Act’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 11:4

few pages on, their epistemological anxieties balloon into a sense of global insecurity: ‘it is not just the disciplinary integrity of musicology that has become problematic; it is... the relationship between musicology and the rest of the universe’.⁵¹⁹ Such tropes of uncertainty represent a tendentious metalanguage knit into the very fabric of the ‘new’ musicology, which is itself a reflection of the ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’, to recall Lyotard’s characterisation of the postmodern condition.

The pervasiveness of unrelenting disciplinary crisis in musicological discourse is less surprising if, together with Vanessa Agnew, it is conceded that the discipline and its canons have in many ways been precipitated by an extended period of ontological crisis. Agnew has argued that European musical knowledge experienced something of an identity crisis during the age of exploration, resulting in the systematic fortification of European music.⁵²⁰ There had been reports of part-singing in Tonga and New Zealand that contradicted—perhaps even threatened—the European monopoly on harmony. Still worse, travellers professed to being taken in by these musics, whereas European music occasionally failed to work its civilising Orphic charms on the barbaric tribes.⁵²¹

(1993), 413-419; Alastair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 20 and Lawrence Kramer, ‘Musicology of the Future’, *Repercussions*, 1:1 (1992), 17.

⁵¹⁹ Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, Introduction to *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), vii.

⁵²⁰ Philip Bohlman has hinted at something similar when, writing in 1992, he remarked that ‘A distinct body of broadly musicological writings—historical, theoretical, critical, and anthropological—began to emerge in the eighteenth century at approximately the same moment at which European society began to carve out niches for more musics than those of an immediate time, place, and function—that is, music tempered by the tastes and contexts of the present and previous generation or so. There was, so to speak, an historical imperative for canon formation; and early musicology responded accordingly, forming its first canons by adhering to historical criteria’. See Bohlman, epilogue to *Disciplining Music*, 199.

⁵²¹ Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, esp. 113-119.

Nothing of this was supposed to be conceivable, let alone empirically verifiable. ‘It must seem strange’, J.N. Forkel observed, ‘that harmony, or polyphonic music, which, as we now generally believe and for good reason, was not even known to the inventive and refined Greeks, should have been found to exist with certain barbarians living in complete isolation from the rest of the world’, before making a few amendments of his own to a ‘specimen’ of notated music brought back from Captain Cook’s second voyage.⁵²² The transcription in question, according to Forkel, was simply wrong insofar as its different voices could not have ended in unison, as ‘Maori “counterpoint” was just a sequence of mixed major and minor thirds’.⁵²³

If Agnew is correct in suggesting that late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century developments in musical thought and practice had at least as much to do with a perceived threat to the very essence of European music as it had with the self-conscious cultivation of an autonomous aesthetic, then it is possible to discern in more recent scholarship the same structural coexistence of othering and aesthetic enclosure. Ever since the post-industrial first half of the twentieth century, the threatening outside of musicology had become more diffuse, more difficult to exclude merely by declaring European music transcendent and constructing theoretical and philosophical borders to keep out the rest. And, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the dreaded part of musicology turned inwards, as the devastating failures of a European bourgeoisie and its attendant

⁵²² Quoted in *ibid.*, 110.

⁵²³ As Agnew points out, Forkel was himself guilty of a few inaccuracies when he ‘referred to Polynesians as islanders who lived “around the South Pole”, cleaved the Tongan archipelago to New Zealand, and relocated both to nearby Tahiti’. *Ibid.*

metaphysical excesses led Adorno to remark that the mere fact of being alive, that life itself, ‘feeds the horror of a premonition’.⁵²⁴

In focussing attention on the thematisation of crisis in musicological discourse, my intention is not to diminish the seriousness with which each of these individuals has engaged the disciplinary field. But the argument of this chapter—that musicology, together with culture and bureaucracy more generally, has responded affirmatively to an inherently discriminatory status quo—invites a measure of scepticism towards the interminable reports of disciplinary crises, and this for two reasons. Especially in the latter half of the previous century, crisis has been pressed into the service of political and ideological work. As a result, for Jutta Weldes, crises must be understood as ‘social constructions that are forged by state officials in the course of producing and reproducing state identity’.⁵²⁵

Mark Fisher has in a sense updated the cold-war politicking behind Weldes’s remark on the post-9/11 condition, when he notes that crises might have become normative because they are structurally enshrined within what is perceived as a functional democracy.⁵²⁶ ‘The War on Terror’, he writes, ‘has prepared us for such a development: the normalization of

⁵²⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 364.

⁵²⁵ Jutta Weldes, ‘The Cultural Production of Crises: U.S. Identity and Missiles in Cuba’, in *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*, eds. Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson and Raymond Duvall (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 37.

⁵²⁶ Functional democracy is here itself a contingent construct, as Fisher has noted. Lacking any referent to philosophy or theoretical definitions, or to the ideals enshrined in this or that declaration of rights, democracy is a question of relationality in the absence of any conceivable alternatives. And as the West is currently beginning to acknowledge, the unthinkable risks people are willing to grant in the hope of a better alternative, show that possible better alternatives cannot be policed. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Ropley: O Books, 2009), 1-11.

crisis produces a situation in which the repealing of measures brought in to deal with an emergency becomes unimaginable (when will the war be over?)'.⁵²⁷ The same template seems eminently suitable to many other things: when will white hegemony and inequality slacken their grip on higher education, the composition of student and staff bodies, curricular choices and epistemological biases? One might even discover that these questions are the same ones that concern a sympathetic majority, though few seriously consider such changes practicable, let alone ideal.

Considering Weldes's understanding of crisis as a means towards reinforcing the status quo, it is possible to speculate that the perpetual production of disciplinary crises, when viewed from a different angle, has constructed and subsequently reassured professionalised hierarchies dispensed from the musicological centre in the course of shoring up a particular disciplinary identity.

As we have seen both here and in Chapter 1, musicologists have made some attempts to confront the constitutive role of colonialism in the formation and institutionalisation of the discipline. But postcolonial thought has all too often been an undervalued rhetorical presence in the list of previously marginalised musicological others: 'women, gay individuals, persons of colour, and those who grew up in colonial or postcolonial contexts'.⁵²⁸ The decolonising imperative has been programmed mainly as the burden of ethnomusicology, often presenting now discredited supporting arguments: whereas musicology and music theory tend to be orientated to other-worldly musics, ethnomusicology is

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁵²⁸ McClary, *Feminine Endings*, xvi.

circumscribed by the music of the West's others. This admittedly haphazard characterisation proffers a salient disclosure as to the origins of musicology, one hinted at already with recourse to Agnew's work. 'Music history, aesthetics, criticism, and the ethnomusicological', she reminds us, 'were intertwined realms of inquiry in the eighteenth century'.⁵²⁹ Agnew's work is exceptional precisely for refusing to perpetuate the romantic ideology whereby musicology operates within an other-worldly agenda uniquely equipped with specialised methodological tools. Hers is history from the standpoint of music's worldliness—a history played out in eighteenth-century cross-cultural encounters between European musical thought and the actual musics that, until then, sounded beyond earshot of Europe. In late eighteenth-century Europe, she argues, non-Western music operated as the negative objects of discourse, empty forms and relative means of which the content and value were matters of contingency according to the demands of an argument. Seldom if ever did such arguments concern non-Western music per se. Rather, they disputed the moral, social and economic value of music in the context of a rapidly expanding planetary consciousness and the excesses and social virtues of imported concert music vis-à-vis 'lower' forms of music-making.

One might contrast Agnew's approach to the disciplinarity of music with yet others emanating from the precincts of new musicology. Speaking in 1964 at a gathering of the American Musicological Society on the state of American musicology, Joseph Kerman responded disparagingly to the

⁵²⁹ Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 79. For a similar argument, see Gary Tomlinson, 'Musicology, Anthropology, History', in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 31-44.

‘terrifying’ idea of endowing musicology with a ‘social aim’.⁵³⁰ Kerman worries that such concerns about the sociological, when brought to bear prescriptively on musicology, will ultimately force the latter to become ethnomusicology, ‘to take its range of research to include material that is termed “sociological”’.⁵³¹ In a more recent example, Kevin Korsyn’s handling of the same problematic devotes several pages to the theory and history of wars that coincided with the dawn of the new musicology. With characteristic acuity, he points out the structures of misrecognition each sets to work in their rivalry for superiority. Rather than deploying hierarchy as a structural model, Korsyn proposes the mobius strip: ‘as we travel around the mobius strip, theory becomes history becomes theory becomes history in a never-ending cycle, as each impulse turns into its opposite without ever reaching a synthesis or coming to rest’.⁵³² The point, then, is that theory needs historicisation as much as history needs to be theorised. ‘Ethnomusicologists, too’, Korsyn suggests, ‘might gain much from adopting this model’:

Since the history of their discipline is intertwined with that of colonialism and postcolonialism, ethnomusicologists have begun to analyze the effects of that history on their explanatory models. At the same time, however, any understanding of that history also depends on explanatory models, which can themselves be contextualized. So the pattern of mutual interference that I have described as historicizing theory while theorizing history prevails here as well.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ Joseph Kerman, ‘A Profile for American Musicology’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 18:1 (1965), 61-62.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵³² Korsyn, *Decentering Music*, 89.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 90.

The attempt to emphasise common ground between the said disciplines is both important and commendable. Korsyn, moreover, is correct in pointing out the dialectical interplay and mutual interdependence of history and theory, a structural interdependency he wishes to extend to the corresponding constitutive parts of ethnomusicology. Of interest is the way in which that extension is conceptualised, and here Korsyn, the music theorist, momentarily gains the upper hand. For the bridge he desires is theoretical, and steers well clear of history. But if one continues the motion around the Mobius strip past this point, Korsyn's theoretical overlay is itself available to history, which brings me again to Agnew's work, specifically the positioning of non-Western music in relation to European musics which act 'like a fulcrum, seesawing existing aesthetic values, dethroning opera seria, and opening the space for a yet unstipulated musical alternative'.⁵³⁴ The history of music named by musicology is, in other words, also 'intertwined with that of colonialism and postcolonialism', meaning that musicology's explanatory models might themselves be in need of contextualisation within the broader scheme of postcolonialism.

Despite the professionalised gridding of the field, musicologists have defined their discipline broadly. Ralph Locke's definition carries to the extreme the rhetoric of inclusivity: 'I take the term "musicologist" to include not just the published scholar but also the journalist, the writer of programme notes, the classroom teacher, the radio broadcaster, and any

⁵³⁴ Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 151.

others in a position to affect the wider discourse on music'.⁵³⁵ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's noncommittal gloss amounts to the same, though he replaces Locke's 'anyone' with 'whatever'. Musicology, he says, 'is whatever musicologists do as musicologists'.⁵³⁶ Alastair Williams's understanding of the term is of similar import, although phrased differently. Rather than maintaining the tripartite schema (musicology, ethnomusicology and music theory), he says, it would be 'far better, then, to think of musicology as a general field that turns its attention to particular repertoires, using a variety of methodologies'.⁵³⁷ On the opening page of *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, the discipline is defined as 'the thinking about and study of music'.⁵³⁸

Such boldly catholic definitions neatly side-step the reinforcement of what is now considered the untenable and discriminatory proclivities of earlier musicologies, and their reluctance to set boundaries might also be taken as genuine expressions of goodwill towards the previously excluded. However, despite its glib virtuosity, Leech-Wilkinson's definition creates semantic problems of its own. Its self-referentiality and hermeticism are striking, and too similar to the discipline it purports to define: the practice of musicology insists upon itself as its own collective noun, subject, object and action. Paradoxically, the self-referentiality of this definition begins to

⁵³⁵ Ralph P. Locke, 'Musicology and/as Social Concern: Imagining the Relevant Musicologist', in *Rethinking Music*, 502.

⁵³⁶ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music: Scholarship, Ideology, Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 216. Later, he expands this definition somewhat as follows: 'good musicology is whatever musicologists do interestingly as musicologists' (260).

⁵³⁷ Williams, *Constructing Musicology*, 3.

⁵³⁸ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005), x.

look very similar to the formalist and hermetic inclinations of earlier musicologies so repudiated by the new musicology.

The definition gracing the pages of Richard Crawford's anniversary article written to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the American Musicological Society is one he attributes to the early days of the AMS. Interestingly, it closely resembles the more recent definitions of Leech-Wilkinson and Williams: 'the AMS of those days was defining musicology, broadly rather than narrowly, to mean simply "what those people do who call themselves musicologists"'.⁵³⁹ A penchant for inclusivity, it would appear, was hardly unusual. For Paul Henry Lang, musicology 'unite[ed] in its domain all the sciences which deal with the production, appearance and application of the physical phenomenon called sound'.⁵⁴⁰ Otto Kinkeldey (the first president of the AMS) was similarly disposed: 'Musicology denotes a rational, systematized, scientific formulation of what we know about music'.⁵⁴¹ The delimiting terms in these earlier definitions had less to do with different musical genres or styles. Musicology had to be a science. Somewhat exasperated, Louis Harap, in the hope of putting an end to such deliberations, suggested that the problem does not reside with music as a coherent category, but with 'the vagueness of the term "science"', in whose stead he proposed an alternative orientated towards

⁵³⁹ Richard Crawford, 'The American Musicological Society, 1934-1984: An Anniversary Essay' (Philadelphia: American Musicological Society, 1984), 11, http://www.ams-net.org/resources/Anniversary_Essay.pdf.

⁵⁴⁰ Lang is quoted in Louis Harap, 'On the Nature of Musicology', *The Musical Quarterly*, 23:1 (1937), 22.

⁵⁴¹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 22.

excellence: 'musicology is the sum of those collective disciplines relating to music that employ a rigorous technique'.⁵⁴²

But the self-referentiality of such a definition enables another possibility: the continuation of business as usual with the occasional obligatory nod to what or who has been (and continues to be) excluded. The array of definitions considered above promotes an all-inclusive musicology, regardless of what takes place in actual practice. This approach places musicology squarely in the domain of cultural studies, and renders it susceptible to the problems Readings identifies in respect of the latter conglomerate of humanities-based disciplines: '[cultural studies] finds nothing in the nature of its object culture that orients its intervention, other than the refusal of exclusion'.⁵⁴³ 'That is to say', as Readings writes earlier on, 'the content of the research comes to matter less and less, as research is ever more indistinguishable from the mere reproduction of the system'.⁵⁴⁴ When placed in the critical paradigm of cultural studies, the uncertainty over the ontological status of music that attended the new musicology might be rephrased. If we do not know what music is, it is not because the ontology of music has suddenly fallen into uncertainty, but because conventional ontologies undercut the 'political piety' of inclusivity.⁵⁴⁵ 'The expansion of the discipline', to alter very slightly the epigraph to this section, 'is more like a struggle for empire. It is a political move as much as an aesthetic one, for it serves first of all to incorporate foreign goods into the economy of the academy'.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 23.

⁵⁴³ Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 102.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid. 55.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 102.

Good citizens and relevant musicologists

How can a musicologist express her/his social concern? In what ways is her/his work socially relevant? And how might it become more so?

Ralph P. Locke⁵⁴⁶

Ralph Locke's essay entitled 'Musicology and/as social concern: imagining the relevant musicologist' poses questions which are as difficult as they are pertinent and ubiquitous. In thinking about music's social responsibility, Locke wishes to remind readers 'that numerous musicians of the past two centuries have been sensitive, well-informed and passionate observers of their society, and even the larger world'.⁵⁴⁷ On his list of such examples is Beethoven, Berlioz, Liszt, Brahms and Mendelssohn, although Locke is careful not to reduce social awareness to compassion and being informed. Openly discriminatory opinions, regardless of their author, must be repudiated.⁵⁴⁸ Locke eventually does arrive at what is perhaps the hardest question his essay seeks to address: 'what are the spheres of action in which music scholars might, most productively, lend a hand?'⁵⁴⁹ Musicologists, he says, might take an active interest in the advocacy of musical literacy, work to guarantee an institutional environment that is both non-racist and non-sexist, and they might adopt 'a public stand

⁵⁴⁶ Locke, 'Musicology as/and Social Concern', 499.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 506.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 525.

against unjust American military actions'.⁵⁵⁰ Musicologists might also work at what Locke calls the 'middle-level':

for protecting the environment, for better street lighting (so that people can walk safely at night), for sobriety behind the wheel, for universal health care or against drug abuse, for the prevention of spouse abuse and rape, and for better education in poor urban neighbourhoods. And to this very incomplete list I would add the ongoing need for us all to work against intolerance and religious, racial, and gender prejudice wherever we encounter them.⁵⁵¹

The nineteenth-century socially responsible citizen might have added to Locke's list anti-footbinding organisations, anti-slavery petitions, and efforts to root out corruption in the East India Company in the name of protecting colonial subjects against the exploitation of their English masters. While adding to Locke's list of causes conspicuous instances of 'social concern' from earlier centuries might itself be a case where interpretation overreaches, it is important in the context of this chapter to point out the ease with which Locke identifies musical and institutional expressions of social concern in earlier centuries. This proliferation of good examples should give us reason to pause and reflect. Those causes Locke lists are important, urgent, and causes with which few would disagree. But it is necessary as well to recall Michaels's question raised earlier: what is the meaning of our anti-racism in a world where—at the very least—governments that style themselves as democratic and 'Western' are unanimous in their condemnations of racism, inequality, poverty, violence, sexism and exploitation more generally? The catastrophe, says Benjamin, the missed opportunity, is that the status quo is again

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 529.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 529.

preserved. Locke's 'relevant musicologist' is also the status quo musicologist, the good and responsible citizen, the socially aware scholar ready to take a principled stand whenever it is required, the individual attentive to culture and education, and the advocate for the plight of the voiceless. And like Guido Adler, the relevant musicologist might hope that music could inaugurate an age of global peace: 'that music may remain fully conscious of her mission—to reconcile and harmonize the souls of all nations!'⁵⁵² It is to a critical interrogation of this mission which Adler (amongst many others) has attributed to music that I now turn in the final chapter of this thesis.

⁵⁵² Adler, 'Internationalism in Music', 300.

Chapter 5

The violence of slow time: Reconciliation, aesthetics, pedagogy

No poetry should come forth from this. May my hand fall off if I write this.

So I sit around. Naturally and unnaturally without words. Stunned by the knowledge of the price people have paid for their words. If I write this, I exploit and betray. If I don't, I die. Suddenly my grandmother's motto comes to mind: When in despair, bake a cake. To bake a cake is a restorative process. I snip into a bowl glacé pineapple, watermelon, ginger, green figs, dates, and walnuts. Big red and green cherries, currants, sultanas. I let it stand in a cool, dark cupboard--a bowl full of glistening jewels soaking in brandy. I relish the velvet of twelve eggs, butter, and sugar. I bake a fruit cake and eat small fragrant slices in the blinding blue Cape summer heat. And I think up delicious lines of lies and revenge.

Antjie Krog⁵⁵³

The main tropes of metahistory—including revolution, reaction, redemption, reconciliation, return, and rebirth (as well as catastrophe, upheaval, transition, and emancipation)—are all originally theological, but not in the sense of being spiritual rather than secular. They are, rather, about the time of change, the rate at which time changes, and the time it takes to change.

Robert Meister⁵⁵⁴

Prologue: 'I know that we understand each other'

⁵⁵³ Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 66.

⁵⁵⁴ Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 13-14.

The second day of public hearings held by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC) began awkwardly:

Before I hand over to Dr Boraine, there is a request here. Some people take these things home with them. I know they are not doing that deliberately it's just a mistake, if you go home with this equipment, it's not going to help you in any way. If you mistakenly take it, please bring it back, so that they can charge it over night for further use. I know that we understand each other.

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Although never identified as such, it is reasonable to assume that Commissioner Dumisa Ntsebeza's unscripted intervention had been prompted by the overnight disappearance of headsets transmitting multi-channel real-time translation of proceedings to members of the public in attendance. Part reconciliatory, part admonitory, the request is intriguing. Unless accidental negligence on the part of certain members of the audience could explain the whereabouts of the equipment (as Ntsebeza seems to imply), the 'mistake' is more properly a performance of *j'accuse*, putting at risk the production of national reconciliation—and this, already on the second day of public hearings. Ntsebeza acts swiftly to restore the unfolding of South Africa's national miracle: 'I know that we understand each other', he says.

Speculating about the motives behind the disappearance of TRC equipment—whether or not the incident was meant to incite—is not my main interest. Rather, it is the TRC's response—more accurately, the slide from response into responsibility—that invites closer consideration. The

⁵⁵⁵ For the online transcript, see Truth and Reconciliation Commission, '1 N Calata, Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Human Rights Violations', *South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Chrvel1/calata.htm>.

irony is glaring. To an unscripted case of interference with the complex system of simultaneous translation—a system without which a fiercely divided nation splinters into incommunicability—the Commission responds with an affirmation of mutual understanding, a response addressed to a collective of drifting pronouns (we, they, you). In acting thus, the Commission does not know, or pretends not to know, to/about whom it is speaking.

Aside from serving as a reminder that the TRC's role in post-apartheid South Africa was not uncontested (and there will be other such reminders in the course of this chapter), the incident makes conspicuous how the Commission more generally assumed responsibility on behalf of anyone unwilling to participate in the South African miracle, shuttling effortlessly between different registers of agency and responsibility. In his monograph on public testimony and the TRC, Mark Sanders argues that the Commission 'generalized responsibility across the body politic by making itself a proxy for the perpetrator vis-à-vis victims whose testimony it solicited'.⁵⁵⁶ When it became apparent that very few perpetrators were willing to apply for amnesty, he argues, commissioners tasked with leading evidence invariably slid from the role of facilitator into that of mediator and proxy, asking victims to forgive whilst apologising on behalf of absent perpetrators.⁵⁵⁷ The TRC, thus, effectively facilitated a transference of phantasmatic forgiveness, involving in the production of national reconciliation everyone who chose to participate, and acting on behalf of everyone else: sceptics, unrepentant perpetrators and the dead.

⁵⁵⁶ Mark Sanders, *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of a Truth Commission* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 9.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Sanders draws on Kleinian theory to reflect on the meaning of the TRC's politics of substitution and phantasmatic forgiveness/responsibility. The moment that the Commission slides into a role other than facilitator, substituting itself for an absent party, the wronged individual (the victim) seeking healing is recast as the object of public fantasy: 'the fantasy that the object is, and will always have been, intact and benevolent even when one has inflicted on it the most destructive violence'.⁵⁵⁸ But crucially, the fantasy works not for the wronged object, but is intended for another, whereas 'the object, having been made good, will be "good", but only for the agent'.⁵⁵⁹ Shut out of this enunciative economy, in other words, is a wronged object as subject, a 'self' who is in the first instance for itself rather than the fantasy object demanded by another. When, in the absence of a perpetrator, responsibility is generalised and nominally made available to the Commission as well as to the nation as such, the ensuing encounter between the agent initiating reconciliation and the wronged object is subordinated to conditions resting asymmetrically with the agent or subject.

This reorientation of relations on which the public dispensation of reconciliation in South Africa came to rely in the absence of actual perpetrators, is also a reinscription of the subject-object relation structuring the colonial encounter, albeit in altered form. But the more important observation in the context of narrative/testimony and the interpretive economy set to work by the TRC, is that the redistribution of agency that occurs when reconciliation is transacted between a wronged

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., 133.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

object and an absent or invisible perpetrator resembles the ‘disparity between subject and object’ that is at the heart of the literary project.⁵⁶⁰ For an example we might turn to the testimony of Eunice Miya and the subsequent chain of interpretations—metafictional and operative—her testimony inspired.

The tragic events that brought Miya before the TRC on the 23rd of April 1996 occurred ten years earlier in the township of Gugulethu near Cape Town. Jabulani Miya and six other youths were shot dead on the corner of Native Yard 1 and Native Yard 111, an operation planned and executed by the infamous Vlakplaas unit under the command of Eugene de Kock.⁵⁶¹ When the case appeared before the TRC, the deaths of the Gugulethu Seven had already been the subject of an inquest in 1986 (reopened in 1989) and a trial in 1987.⁵⁶² Miya’s testimony, one of the so-called ‘window cases’ of the TRC, took on a decidedly prominent role in the media and national imaginary, and would have been familiar to many who followed the Commission’s proceedings.

It is no surprise, then, that the testimony provided the creative impetus for a large-scale musical work to commemorate the tenth anniversary of public hearings. The creative process for the composition of *REwind: A cantata for voice, tape and testimony*, began with an extended period of listening to cassette-taped testimonies housed in the TRC

⁵⁶⁰ Timothy Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 7.

⁵⁶¹ These street names reflect the conventions used by the apartheid government in so-called native areas or ‘black spots’, appearing in abbreviated form (NY1 and NY111).

⁵⁶² Mary-Anne Gontsana, ‘The Gugulethu Seven Remembered 27 Years Later’, *GroundUp*, October 15th, 2013, <http://groundup.org.za/content/gugulethu-seven-remembered-27-years-later>.

archive.⁵⁶³ ‘One of the first I heard’, explains composer Philip Miller, ‘was that of a grief-stricken mother, Mrs Eunice Tsepiso Miya, who had learnt of the shooting of her son Jabulani when watching the news on TV. She had prayed: “Oh no, Lord. I wished the news could rewind”’.⁵⁶⁴ Upon encountering Miya’s testimony, Miller took her prayer for the news to ‘rewind’ as a plea for derealisation, as if the picture and the tragedy it unfolded never took place.⁵⁶⁵ But it later emerged that Miya’s prayer had nothing to do with mental paralysis owing to the shock of unspeakable tragedy. The real-time translation of Miya’s native Xhosa (the source for Antjie Krog and Philip Miller’s interpretations) suffered several inaccuracies, thereby altering the meaning of Miya’s Xhosa when translated into English. An alternative translation that comes closer to Miya’s account reads as follows:

A child appeared with a gun on his chest and another one appeared and he was my son, Jabulani. So we started to argue with my daughter. She said mama it is not Jabu and I said it is

⁵⁶³ Miller’s cantata will hereafter be referred to as *REwind*.

⁵⁶⁴ Quoted in Fiona Chisholm, ‘TRC Recalled via Heavenly Voices’, *Cape Times*, May 4th, 2011. For the official TRC transcript of Miya’s testimony, see Truth and Reconciliation Commission, ‘Day 2-23 April 1996: Case No CT/00100’, *South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/heide/ct00100.htm>. I have only reproduced the paragraphs from Miya’s testimony that are relevant to Miller’s interpretation: ‘When the music started for the news, then in the news I was told that there are this seven children who were killed by the Guerrillas from Russia. And one of the children was shown on TV who had a gun on his chest. He was facing upwards and there was a gun on his chest and now we could see another one and the second one only to find that it’s my son Jabulani. We were arguing myself and my daughter, she said it’s him, I said no it can’t be him, I just saw him this morning, it can’t be him. I can – I can still remember what he wore this morning. He had navy pants and green jacket and a warm – and a warm woollen hat. I prayed I said oh! no Lord, I wish – I wish this news can just rewind. Why is it just him, why were the others not shown?’ See also Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 252-254.

⁵⁶⁵ ‘For Miller’, writes Catherine Cole, this testimony ‘contained a rich metaphor of rewinding an analogue tape. Miya, he believed, wanted the news about her son to rewind, to not have happened’. Catherine Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission: Stages of Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 88.

him because I know what he was wearing this morning when he accompanied me to the station. (She is crying louder). I told her that he was wearing a navy blue pant and a green jacket and a warm woollen hat. I prayed and said 'God, as we are arguing about this child I wish this news could be rewinded and show his picture only'.⁵⁶⁶

As the televised images continued their round-up of the day's news, Miya's desperation was immediate, visceral, and stripped of the momentary respite of disbelief or erasure. Her prayer, in that moment of irretrievable loss, was not for the images to 'rewind' and never reappear, as Miller had thought, but for clarification: a prayer to re-view the picture of the unnamed body.

On one level, the mistranslation of Miya's testimony and the series of misreadings it spawned are symptomatic of what Njabulo Ndebele described as the 'chasm of engineered ignorance, misunderstanding, division, illusion and hostility... that highlights the national tragedy of people who have long lived together but could do no better than acknowledge only their differences'.⁵⁶⁷ On another, the cycle of misunderstanding is set in motion when the network of real-time translation breaks down, demonstrating the capacity for error and omission built into the raw material of reconciliation as public testimony: the ambiguity of memory and the fragmentary nature of pained speech — the gaps, abrupt swerves between metaphor, actuality and spoken languages, the inaudible placeholders for what must not be remembered and still less articulated, the psychic pain and vociferous exclamations, the deluge of testimonies, lists of witnesses, victims, perpetrators, dates,

⁵⁶⁶Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ Njabulo S. Ndebele, *Fine Lines from the Box: Further Thoughts about our Country* (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2007), 61.

places, and human rights violations—all circulating through a network of continuous translation, transcription and creative appropriation. In addition, there is the aesthetic transfiguration of victims' lives and narratives that substitutes metaphor for a loss that is actual and irrevocable, inventing nuance and alternative narratives when reality is in actual fact void of consolation.

Through a cumulative process of mediation, appropriation, and reappropriation, then, first the real-time translation from Xhosa into English, and then literature and music, discovered metaphor in a prayer that Miya had intended literally. This transition into the domain of the symbolic, as Homi Bhabha has suggested, is integral to the project of nation building which, he says, 'fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin, and turns that loss into the language of metaphor'.⁵⁶⁸ Transposed into the national discourse of reconciliation, it is the metaphor of healing and sickness that is most often evoked to trace a path of convalescence, defined as unanimously renouncing the moral turpitude of apartheid in the name of a new national consciousness. A striking and well-known example is found in the testimony of Lucas Baba Sikwere, who lost the use of one eye when a member of the police shot him in the face. 'What has been making me sick all the time', says Sikwere to the Commission, 'is the fact that I couldn't tell my story. But now I - it feels like I got my sight back by coming here and tell [sic] you the story'.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 200.

⁵⁶⁹ For a transcript, see Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 'Day 4-25 April 1996: Case No CT/00508', *South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Cheide/cto0508.htm>.

Sikwere never got his sight back; the mothers of three of the Gugulethu Seven were never found, their identities and fates consigned to the nameless masses silenced by apartheid; Jabulani Miya's image didn't reappear on the news that fatal night; Krog's hand does not fall off from writing about the victims of apartheid; nor does she die from not writing about them; and victims of apartheid—those who appeared before the TRC as well as the millions that didn't, were not compensated materially. In each case, the slowness—or indeed absence—of actual change and the irrevocable loss inflicted by apartheid is supposedly mitigated by symbolic platitudes ranging from declarations of national understanding to poetry and the shame of turning unspeakable suffering into objects of art. And in each case there is metaphor, a figure Deleuze describes aptly as 'furnish[ing] us with something to say when we no longer know what to do'.⁵⁷⁰ Elsewhere, Deleuze points out the same structure of impossibility that Krog articulates in relation to poetry. The crisis of the Third World artist, he says, is 'the impossibility of not "writing", the impossibility of writing in the dominant language, the impossibility of writing differently'.⁵⁷¹

This chapter does its work in and around such aporias that arise at the intersection of aesthetics, reconciliation and the ethical imperatives posed by social and political transformation. How might one compose a musical work intended to assist the accomplishment of national reconciliation? Under what conditions might Winfried Lüdemann's suggestion that music uniquely models 'cultural reconciliation' be

⁵⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 2005), 19.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 209. See also Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 37-38.

plausible?⁵⁷² How might music as process, practice and pedagogy sustain an ethic of reconciliation? And how does one write about a piece such as *REwind*? Should precedence be given to aesthetics, ethics, or both?

Bewes remarks on the ‘invidiousness’ of aesthetic criteria that answer to questions of success or failure in the case of works of art that thematise loss and violence.⁵⁷³ This raises the question of reading and interpretation. If, as I will suggest later in this chapter, *REwind* relies—unselfconsciously—on musical cliché and spurious archival realism (the latter no doubt borrowed from Steve Reich), what is there to say about this music other than rehearsing its clichés and conceptual predecessors? This chapter experiments with Bewes’s idea of reading the ‘difficulties and infelicities’ of the text, not along a continuum of evaluative aesthetic criteria, but rather as instances of inevitable failure—the inevitable failure of postcolonial aesthetics to meet adequately the imperatives of postcolonial ethics.⁵⁷⁴

Staging reconciliation: ‘the postcolonial event of shame’

To be white in South Africa means that knowledge of apartheid’s inhumanity is a voluntary acquisition. There is no need to know. One can keep one’s distance, choose to know selectively or not at all. The white skin can be relied upon to shield unexamined ignorance from the bodily

⁵⁷² Winfried Lüdemann, ‘Musiek en Kulturele Diversiteit in Suid-Afrika’, *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 49:4 (2009), 639-657.

⁵⁷³ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 56.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

wounds of administered knowledge. Being black in South Africa means that knowledge is a matter of involuntary corporeal fact, because knowledge is the price paid for not being white. In Njabulo Ndebele's words: 'to know is to know how badly one has been treated. Every other thing is irrelevant unless it is perceived as contributing to the extension of this knowledge'.⁵⁷⁵

Excepting the particularities of names, dates and places, every story heard by the TRC might have been anyone's story, as witnesses expounded on the consequences of being classified non-white in apartheid South Africa. For white South Africans, the TRC proffered a second chance to exercise the choice between knowing and denying: between the willingness to confront the evil perpetrated by a system from which they themselves were the beneficiaries or, once again, to exercise proactive apathy. The weekly Special Report, a news programme that continued for the duration of public hearings, supplemented TRC proceedings with short features describing the systemic injustices legalised under apartheid—injustices such as migrant labour, hostels, forced removals, Bantu education and pass laws—about which white South Africa displayed little interest and even less outrage.⁵⁷⁶ Apartheid beneficiaries, nonetheless, generally regarded the TRC as a 'skewed commission packed with "struggle" types', hell bent on a witch-hunt against Afrikaners and so obviously biased in favour of the ANC'.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ Njabulo S. Ndebele, *South African Literature and Culture: Rediscovery of the Ordinary* (Scottsville: Kwazulu-Natal University Press, 2006), 56.

⁵⁷⁶ See, e.g., Cole's discussion of the TRC Special Report in her *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission*, 111-119.

⁵⁷⁷ Desmond Tutu, chairperson's foreword to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998), 15,

The racial demography of amnesty applicants suggests an altogether different scenario. Of the 7015 applications received by the TRC, only 293 were from former functionaries of the apartheid state.⁵⁷⁸ Only one of the ministers who had served under apartheid applied for amnesty, whilst former president P.W. Botha refused to appear before the TRC—even after Desmond Tutu paid the retired ‘Crocodile’ a visit at his Wilderness home in the hope of persuading him otherwise. Rather than appearing before the TRC or tendering a formal apology, Botha informed South Africans at a press conference shortly after Tutu’s visit of his intention to pray for the victims instead.

South African apartheid is perhaps the only example of an oppressive regime whose demise evoked widespread praise for the morality of its latter-day leaders. When, in 2006, Botha passed away, South African flags were lowered whilst the ANC-led government offered his widow the option of a state funeral.⁵⁷⁹ Whereas Botha’s death by no means provoked an outpouring of international sentiment in similar vein, his political successor, F. W. de Klerk, shared the Nobel Prize for Peace with Nelson Mandela in 1993, and became first Deputy President in the Mandela government, a position from which he resigned two years into the new era he had worked so hard to create. Without a hint of irony, Hermann Giliomee writes of the Afrikaners that ‘they did something rare:

<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%201.pdf>. A few pages earlier, Tutu observes that ‘in almost all cases, there was an outcry only when the victim was white and the perpetrator black’ (12).

⁵⁷⁸ This figure is given in Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission*, 114. The remaining requests for amnesty came from perpetrators of so-called ethnic violence (black on black), often fomented and funded privately by the apartheid government whilst repudiating the same offences publicly.

⁵⁷⁹ Botha’s then wife declined the offer presented by the Mbeki government of a state funeral. South African flags, nonetheless, flew at half mass on account of Botha’s death.

surrendering power rather than resorting to more extreme forms of suppression and a suicidal last stand'.⁵⁸⁰ In exchange for this display of morality, the upper echelons of white elite capital were mostly unaffected by the political change, meanwhile moving swiftly to declare their new allegiance to the narratives and the hitherto unacknowledged history of the struggle against apartheid.⁵⁸¹

It is important to stress that the prevailing mood of white apathy had been as prevalent before the first democratic election as during its aftermath, a continuity too easily passed off in retrospect as nostalgia for the so-called 'betrayed' ideals of the Mandela era. During almost a decade of bargaining—first in secret and later publicly—over the redistribution of power, land, and other resources in a new South Africa, the governing National Party gradually retreated from most of the conditions on which it had entered into negotiations with the ANC. These included a blanket amnesty for police, military, and government officials, a minority parliamentary veto for whites under majority rule and a rotating

⁵⁸⁰ Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (London: C. Hurst, 2003), xiii.

⁵⁸¹ Examples abound. Towards the end of Nelson Mandela's only presidential term, planning commenced in earnest for what was envisioned as a 23-metre-high bronze replica of his forearm overlooking the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. The sculptor proposed as best qualified for the project, Danie De Jager, was indeed gifted in the production of life-size bronzes. Judging from commissions he received (both locally and internationally), De Jager seems to be particularly adept at monumentalising apartheid politicians and African animals: J. G. Strijdom, H. F. Verwoerd, 'a bronze abstract crocodile', Awu (a life-size bronze of an African elephant) and Oscar (a 2.7 meter bronze seal presiding at the entrance to the Table Bay Hotel on the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town). Funding for the R60 billion project that never came to fruition, despite planning having reached an advanced stage, was provided by De Jager and two businessmen who made their fortunes from selling skin-lightening creams to black people. The initiative enjoyed support from the presidential office and from Mandela who, not infrequently, appeared in photographs with the newly-converted patrons of national memory. See Annie Coombes, *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 22. For a comprehensive listing of De Jager's work, see 'Danie De Jager - History', *Danie De Jager, Sculptor*, accessed September 30th, 2015. <http://www.sculpturesa.com/History.html>.

presidency. Giliomee's somewhat fanciful suggestion—that an ill-equipped and at times incompetent team of NP negotiators bungled talks with the ANC—obfuscates a more fundamental point: that the moral bankruptcy of a system that for decades blocked political change became blatantly obvious once violence was disqualified as a legitimate bargaining chip.⁵⁸²

As the NP publicly committed itself to non-violent negotiations, it lost supporters to smaller vigilante groups who positioned themselves to the right of the right-wing ruling Party. These disgruntled Afrikaners, many of whom served in the South African Defence Force, embarked on an uncoordinated programme of violence 'to show their disgust with the implementation of the Transitional Executive Council', as the leader of one such group calling themselves The Pretoria East Boere Kommando put it.⁵⁸³ Fearing anything from a South African 'night of the long knives' to infrastructural collapse and civil war, many supporters of white rule sought new homes abroad. Yet others, opting to remain but nevertheless expecting the worst, stockpiled canned food, water, arms, flash lights, batteries, candles and fuel.

For the majority of white South Africans, in short, the national miracle hailed by the TRC had been from the start the wrong type of miracle, although not necessarily an inconvenient one. The (relatively) peaceful political transition and the idea of reconciliation ridiculed fantasies about genocide and total collapse that had been entrenched in

⁵⁸² Hermann Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders: A Supreme Test of Power* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), esp. chapters 10 and 11.

⁵⁸³ Coombes, *History after Apartheid*, 32. For an extensive review of attempted violence by Afrikaner right-wing groups as well as groups aligned with the so-called independent homelands, see Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), esp. chapter 8.

the white consciousness as the inexorable outcome of black rule. Many whites who supported apartheid did so because they regarded so-called independent homelands telescopically as future South Africas in miniature, as concrete proof that black rule was inescapably bound up with mayhem and social deprivation.⁵⁸⁴ By outlawing retributive violence, associated in the white imagination with vigilantism, necklacing, and plundering, the new political leaders illustrated a moral character that, for white South Africans, made the prospect of black rule easier to countenance.

In those rare instances where apartheid beneficiaries willingly engaged with the past, the TRC represented hope, forgiveness and, most of all, an invitation to belong to a new country under black rule without having to suffer the consequences of revenge. Reconciliation, for this group of mostly middle-class South Africans, meant seeking affective and symbolic relations with the formerly oppressed, coupled to an existential awareness of complicity and responsibility. In this respect, the widely-publicised TRC hearings came into their own as instruments of symbolic reconciliation. The TRC, says Albie Sachs, ‘wasn’t about findings’, thus emptying the law of any clearly distinguishable function when summoned to aid the facilitation of national reconciliation.⁵⁸⁵ Sachs, who became the first Chief Justice of the South African Constitutional Court, would know better than most the limitations of the law in fostering reconciliation: that

⁵⁸⁴ Richard Abel makes this point emphatically: ‘South Africa created urban township councils and rural homeland governments partly to be able to blame blacks for the illegality, corruption, and violence indispensable to white rule’. Quoted in Rosemary Nagy, ‘Violence, Amnesty and Transitional Law: “Private” Acts and “Public” Truth in South Africa’, *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 1:1 (2004), 10.

⁵⁸⁵ Quoted in Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission*, 77.

the former body, as Tracey Nicholls writes elsewhere, ‘cannot bring about a change in people's hearts’.⁵⁸⁶ This would explain the rest of Sachs’s understanding of the TRC: ‘It was about the acting out of a story of revelation, discovery and human interaction ... [about] seeing the people, the faces, hearing the voices ... the tears, the actual tone of voice, the body language’.⁵⁸⁷

The all too apparent problem is that there is no single definition of reconciliation that could cut across the categories of perpetrator, bystander, victim and beneficiary. A related problem is that truth commissions succeed when participants imagine these categories to be fluid and transitory. Robert Meister writes that ‘beneficiaries of past injustice are expected (when the story works) to identify with individual victims (or at least with their pain) and also to see themselves as victims, now that they know the “truth”’.⁵⁸⁸ A preliminary working definition for reconciliation, at least as the TRC conceived it, must begin with the idea that beneficiaries, bystanders, and even perpetrators are expected to redefine the apartheid past associatively through affective identification. This is to say that the guiding logic of reconciliation rests not in structures of causality and accountability that link the past and the present, but in a public display of a new ethic defined as forgiveness, truth-telling and remorse.

Miller’s *REwind* is a musical memorial composed of archival sonic material and based fundamentally on this ethic of reconciliation as it had

⁵⁸⁶ Tracey Nicholls, ‘Speaking Justice, Performing Reconciliation: Twin Challenges for a Postcolonial Ethics’, *Critical Studies in Improvisation / Études critiques en improvisation*, 6:1 (2010), 4, <http://www.criticalimprov.com/article/view/1082/1704>.

⁵⁸⁷ Quoted in Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission*, 77.

⁵⁸⁸ Meister, *After Evil*, 28.

been instituted by the TRC. The piece runs just under an hour, combining four soloists, a mass choir, double string quartet, and sonic material taken from the official TRC audio archives. It is broken up into 18 individual songs, each with a descriptive title: ‘The oath’, ‘Siyaya’ (a rendition of a well-known struggle song), ‘Rewind’, ‘The goat’, ‘The cry of Nomonde Calata’, and so on. The cantata received three performances in 2006: a workshop hosted by Spier on their wine estate in March, the official world premiere on 16 December at St. Georges Cathedral in Cape Town and, sandwiched between the South African performances, a “work-in-progress” presentation’, hosted by William College and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.⁵⁸⁹

The archival material, Miller explains, provides the basis for the music he subsequently wrote for the double string quartet: the mostly tonal material is derived organically from ‘actual voices telling their stories’.⁵⁹⁰ If Miller had been unaware of the ethical concerns this approach encouraged—the notoriously dubious figure of the (Western and often male) musician who finds in the songs of the impoverished and the nameless a means for transcending creative impotence—any such illusion would have been quickly dispelled by the discussions that occurred in the context of the Spier workshop. Miller found himself confronted with questions about ethics and the infringement of rights posed by the all-white audience in attendance. Did the sampling of archived testimony

⁵⁸⁹ For a short account of the 2006 performances, see Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission*, 147. In 2007 Miller invited the multimedia artist, Gerhard Marx, to create visual animations for the cantata. Marx’s projections were incorporated in subsequent performances. In writing this chapter, I had no access to Marx’s work which is not included on the official sound recording. For a description of Marx’s visuals, see *ibid.*, 148.

⁵⁹⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*, 138.

border on exploitation? Should victims be compensated financially for the use of their voices and stories? Must perpetrators also be compensated? Was it appropriate for a white composer to take ownership of this particular part of South Africa's history?⁵⁹¹

Deeply troubled by these early responses to the cantata, Miller embarked on a course that potentially had far-reaching consequences for his project:

Literally I just said, 'What would I do if I was a parent, who had testified at the TRC, who had broken down and cried, and my voice recording and my voice crying— because of the love and the loss and all that—was used by someone else in a piece of art. How would I feel?' And I thought, 'I would like to know beforehand that that would be the use of my voice. I would like to be given the option of saying it's okay or it's not okay'. Once I thought that, then, I thought, okay, that's the way I have to treat this. Therefore I knew I couldn't ignore the people whose words I was using. I literally placed myself in their position.⁵⁹²

The victims whose narratives and archived voices Miller wanted to incorporate responded enthusiastically to the idea of a TRC cantata. Apart from P. W. Botha, who passed away before Miller could approach him for permission, the only other 'perpetrator' whose voice was used in *REwind* was policeman Jeffrey Benzien. Although not withholding his permission, he later informed Miller that he wanted nothing more to do with the project.

Miller's reflections on instrumentation, medium and genre bear the hallmarks of a problematic set of aesthetic and social premises, presupposing a tidy realm of shared pursuits where music, the human

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 151-152.

⁵⁹² Quoted in *ibid.*, 153.

voice and the message of reconciliation are imagined as universal ingredients of a timeless story about suffering and triumph. The medium of music is ‘universal’ and ‘abstract’, he offers, whilst the ‘human voice ... is an incredibly powerful way of connecting with people’.⁵⁹³ And elsewhere: ‘the beauty of the human voice takes you into a spiritual realm that is not about sadness, but about life’.⁵⁹⁴ Bearing in mind its long-standing historical affiliation with epic and spiritual narratives, Miller felt that the cantata provided ‘the best avenue to bring stories of life under apartheid to the public, just the way the TRC did’.⁵⁹⁵

REwind’s fidelity to an ethic of reconciliation is striking. Like the TRC, the cantata seeks to dramatise inclusivity, recollecting the evils of apartheid but, crucially, without seeking to offend perpetrators and beneficiaries. Miller expressly tries to avoid the stereotypical positions of white victim and black perpetrator. ‘We don’t want audiences to feel they’ve been hit over the head or that they cannot watch another moment’, says the composer.⁵⁹⁶ The cantata, moreover, is meant for everyone, for ‘South Africans of all races as well as citizens of the world’, and refrains from ‘any strong political statements’, once more echoing the TRC’s policy of political neutrality.⁵⁹⁷ Cole, too, makes much of the structural, individuating and affective correspondences between the TRC and

⁵⁹³ Quoted in Justine Reisinger, ‘Giving Voice to the Past, Hope to the Future’, *City Press*, May 4th, 2008.

⁵⁹⁴ The Star, ‘Testimony, *Rewind*, Cantata: Trust the Human Voice to Soar above Torture and Brutality’, The Star, April 15th, 2008.

⁵⁹⁵ Quoted in Reisinger, ‘Giving Voice to the Past, Hope to the Future’.

⁵⁹⁶ Quoted in Chisholm, ‘TRC Recalled via Heavenly Voices’.

⁵⁹⁷ Quotations are from Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission*, 147 and Chisholm, ‘TRC Recalled via Heavenly Voices’.

REwind, positioning the latter as ‘something that could continue the repertoire of the TRC’.⁵⁹⁸

As if a public hearing were about to get underway, *REwind* opens with a catalogue of technical and legal procedure:

You can hear everything? You can hear my voice? Yes, yes, I can hear. Excellent, Yes, I can hear everything; Good. ['The oath', 0:00-0:12]. Can you hear the translation? Yes, I can thank you. Good, very good [0:38-0:44]. Think there's a problem with his microphone; Let him be sworn in [0:59]. Are you Afrikaans speaking? [1:12] He can't hear...[1:21]⁵⁹⁹

We hear Witnesses, commissioners, and translators test microphones and headsets, some reporting technical glitches in the multi-channel system, others indicating that the equipment is working. Fragments of testimony sampled from the 10,446 hours of tape-recorded hearings people the musical space with the bewildering speech of a nation seeking common ground where otherwise division and misunderstanding prevail. Legal ritual lends coherence to the collage of sampled voices, and it does so in seven of South Africa's eleven national languages. Passing between four vocal soloists, we hear witnesses taking the TRC oath in their preferred language: Zulu, English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda or Shangaan.⁶⁰⁰ Preceded only by a pair of spoken fragments, the strings enter with a two-bar triplet-quaver figure (triplet + 4 quavers) that seems initially to be incidental to the dramatic situation. Regular, repetitive and prosaic, the

⁵⁹⁸ Cole, *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission*, 149.

⁵⁹⁹ All timings are calculated from Philip Miller, *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* [sound recording] (Johannesburg: P. Miller, 2008). All transcriptions are my own.

⁶⁰⁰ I am indebted to Christina Mashobane for assistance with identifying the seven languages.

figure consists of perfect fourths and perfect fifths played on open strings (G, D, A) ('The oath', 0:04-1:25).⁶⁰¹ Dramatic flatness tightens incrementally as the opening figure is transposed upwards and overlaid by increasingly animated speech fragments combining question and injunction ('The oath', first transposition at 1:26):

I will be speaking to you in English. The translation will be into Xhosa. Is that all right? I know myself, I am Xhosa speaking! ['The oath', 3:08-3:18] You've got the earphones all right? Mr Hlope, can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? ['The oath', 3:40-3:56].

Only in the final bars of 'The Oath' does the rhythmic figuration give way to a lament-like figure—three consecutive descending semitones introduced by the strings and echoed by the choir: 'Nkosi ndincede' ['so help me God']. The dramatic accent shifts decisively from procedure to prayer and imploration, and continues to intensify as the choir repeats this last phrase nine times: first echoing the strings (three cycles) (3:57-4:10), then intensification (two cycles without the string echoes) (4:11-4:15), and further intensification (two cycles, transposed upwards with the string echoes returning) (4:17-4:33).

If deliberately maintaining a resemblance with the rituals and procedures of TRC hearings endowed *REwind* with a certain authenticity, it is noteworthy that public hearings similarly emulated particular rituals and structures of authority in order to manufacture legitimacy. From its outset, the architects of South Africa's reconciliation process redefined the genre of transitional justice. Unlike its predominantly South American

⁶⁰¹ All timings are calculated from Philip Miller, *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* [sound recording] (Johannesburg: P. Miller, 2008).

predecessors, hearings were not closed to the press and public. On the contrary, publicity was integral, even indispensable, to the commission's concept of reconciliation. Unlike the Nuremburg Trials, the TRC was not a demonstration of the 'sweeping neutrality of the law and its capacity to deliver justice in cases of genocidal violence'.⁶⁰² The commission devised and implemented an altered meaning of amnesty 'unlike anywhere else in the world', according to legal scholar Rosemary Nagy.⁶⁰³ Special powers were devolved to the TRC that both resembled and deviated from those of a court of law: it could exempt amnesty applicants from any legal consequences, subpoena individuals directly, hold public meetings anywhere within or outside the borders of South Africa, provide indemnity to perpetrators of human rights violations, and construct the truth about a past in which each of the commissioners had themselves participated.⁶⁰⁴

Due to this radical reconceptualisation of transitional justice, the TRC and the government had at the same time to manufacture the public legitimacy without which its version of transitional justice would lack credibility. Posing the question of social authority in relation to the TRC, Lars Buur takes as his starting point the premise that the authenticity of any new form of social institution rests on the extent to which the formal

⁶⁰² Catherine Cole, 'Performance, Transitional Justice, and the Law: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission', in *Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict*, eds. Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 171.

⁶⁰³ Nagy, 'Violence, Amnesty and Transitional Law', 2.

⁶⁰⁴ Lars Buur, 'The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Technique of Nation-State Formation', in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 149-181; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998), <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%201.pdf>.

and structural elements of the unfamiliar institution mime those of an established and widely-accepted authority.⁶⁰⁵ The TRC's established institution, he argues, was the law. By displaying the law's rituals and procedures, the commission could build recognition and continuity into a process otherwise concerned with imagining a new nation and a new beginning discontinuous with the apartheid past.⁶⁰⁶ Public hearings consisted of testimonies by victims, perpetrators, translators, commissioners, legal representatives, media and spectators, with an oath that witnesses swore before giving evidence. Amnesty hearings, in particular, acted out this resemblance in two respects: rigorous cross-examination of perpetrators and the granting of impunity to perpetrators whom the commission felt had satisfied the conditions for amnesty.

Hearings were, however, prefaced on a daily basis with a reminder that the TRC was 'not a court of law'. Despite retaining as far as possible the orderly facade of legal authority, histrionics constantly threatened to undermine this play of mirrors. Chairman Tutu, whom sceptics cast as 'the fool, the court jester, the ultimate cover-up artist',⁶⁰⁷ had to intervene on numerous occasions to preserve the gravity demanded by the occasion: 'Please stop making a circus of the whole thing' [to Jerry Richardson], 'I do not want for this hearing to degenerate into playing to galleries... I don't

⁶⁰⁵ Buur, 'The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission', 160. Buur is drawing on the work of Mary Douglas.

⁶⁰⁶ Citing the work of Ruti Teitel on transitional justice, Nagy in particular points out the 'deeply paradoxical' function of the law during political transitions: 'Whereas conventional law provides predictability and continuity, transitional law seeks discontinuity with the old order of institutionalized and often "legal" injustice'. Nagy, 'Violence, Amnesty and Transitional Law', 4. I agree with Buur, though, that the presence of the law, albeit in an altered form, was instrumental in bestowing on the TRC a sense of authority. See Buur, 'The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission', 5.

⁶⁰⁷ Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 202.

think that we want sarcasms or any of this sort, thank you' [to Winnie Madikizela Mandela], 'Order. Excuse me, excuse me, please, please we are not at a show, it is not a show [to the audience]'.⁶⁰⁸ The commission, unsurprisingly, has been depicted as presiding over a 'tissue war' or, as one journalist wrote some years later, as a 'travelling road show of misery and grief', where black South Africans were goaded into forgiving whites.⁶⁰⁹

Buur has proffered one of the more nuanced considerations of the TRC to account for the interlocking of truth, justice, and theatre. Public hearings, he suggests, had to provide 'a way of regulating and neutralizing current conflicts related to past responsibility and guilt, so that these conflicts could be contained and dealt with within one segregated domain'.⁶¹⁰ For this reason the TRC, with its unique interpretation of justice, had to function separately from the everyday operations of the state and its instruments of governance, without ever undermining the latter: a 'constitutive separation', he says, 'produced by a suspension of temporality and a suspension of place to create new time-spaces at the margins of the political and social domains of society'.⁶¹¹

In a much more general sense, theatre, cantata and reconciliation all rely on audience interaction across the lines of race and class. This

⁶⁰⁸ For the online transcript of these TRC hearings, see Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 'On Resumption on 03.12.97 – Day 8', *South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*,

<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/special/mandela/mufc8.htm>; and Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 'On Resumption on 04.12.97 – Day 9', *South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/special/mandela/mufc9.htm>.

⁶⁰⁹ Marianne Thamm, 'Cape Town Racist Club Assault: The Tragedy and Danger of an Ahistorical Upbringing', *The Daily Maverick*, November 27th, 2014, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2014-11-27-cape-town-racist-club-assault-the-tragedy-and-danger-of-an-ahistorical-upbringing/#.VIHPLMJyblU>.

⁶¹⁰ Buur, 'The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission', 161.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 159.

would explain Miller's discomfort with *REwind*'s all-white Spier reception. Recognising the social frame invariably invited and reinforced by a venue such as Spier, Miller moved the world premiere to St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town. But the stark irreconcilability of a gated wine estate with the demolition of historical barriers through music and memory, proved to be emblematic of *REwind*'s South African (and international) reception, framing the cantata in terms of colour and class, despite Miller's intentions to erode such boundaries. Plans to mount performances of *REwind* in each of the venues where, ten years before, the TRC held public hearings, also failed to come to fruition.⁶¹²

Several reasons present themselves to explain the discrepancy between the myriad ways in which Miller subordinated creative decisions to the TRC's victim-centred ethics and the cantata's failure to spawn performance situations that would enforce rather than negate those same ideals. One has only to contemplate the state of arts funding in South Africa in relation to the considerable cost of producing a large-scale choral work.⁶¹³ The subject material of *REwind*, Miller reports, rendered the cantata unattractive to corporate sponsors: a 'downer', and 'too overtly political' in an already precarious situation where only those projects with an explicitly celebratory agenda qualify as propitious contenders for funding.⁶¹⁴ Finally, there might be some truth to Sachs's observation that *REwind* is not so much intended for the Cape Town bourgeoisie as for 'those South Africans who have experienced what the piece represents'—an

⁶¹² On 16 December 2006, *REwind* premiered at St. Georges cathedral before travelling to America and the United Kingdom. Later on, performances were mounted in the Baxter theatre and the Market Theatre.

⁶¹³ Cole, *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission*, 149.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

audience who, due to a lack of personal resources, can play no part in shaping the cantata's performance context.⁶¹⁵

Each of these explanations regards the discontinuity between creative production and reception as the result of the depleted state of arts funding and/or general socio-economic conditions unfavourable to the cultivation of a concert-going class. These explanations, accurate as they are, do not manage to say anything remotely new or interesting, relying instead on the tragically uneven South African status quo. As such, they interrupt interpretation whilst hardly having interpreted anything at all. A far more fundamental problem, however, is that such explanations, in relying on contextual insights that are not immanent to the cantata, enforce a distinction between the often mythologised domain of composition, 'the work' as a closed ontology, and the socio-political reality to which composer, compositional process and cantata are inextricably bound.⁶¹⁶ Quoting well-known passages from Fanon and Benjamin, Bewes is clear on the ideological posturing lurking beneath the presupposition that a work of art can be parsed into creative production and reception. The work of art as a social object or artefact, Benjamin famously wrote, cannot be separated from the horror of its origin.⁶¹⁷ Fanon states the same principle in relation to the techniques of creativity: the colonised artist

⁶¹⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 147. Sachs raised the possibility of a performance in the chambers of the South African Constitutional Court on Capital Hill in Johannesburg, but once more logistics and funding jeopardised the venture.

⁶¹⁶ Bewes, whose work on artistic production in a postcolonial and post-Auschwitz age informs my thinking in this chapter, makes a similar point in relation to Nadine Gordimer and her view of fiction. For Gordimer, '[i]f there is incommensurability, it is located not in writing at all, but solely in the realm of the political'. Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 25. As with Gordimer, then, I argue that Miller regards composition as 'exempt from incommensurability'.

⁶¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1973), 256.

forges a 'national style' using tools, textures and cultural forms already infected by the scourge of the colonial enterprise. When one considers the social inextricability of the cantata's performance, Miller's hopes for a racially and economically diversified audience must appear, from the outset, to have been based on a chimera: *REwind*, like most other 'art music' performances in South Africa, must ultimately reinforce the starkly 'normalised' lines of segregation etched into the post-apartheid production of social, artistic and intellectual space.

How, then, might one begin to engage the discrepancy between *REwind's* reception and the ethical intentions that informed its composition? First, it is necessary to acknowledge, along with Nicholas Brown, that

good intentions count for nothing if one genuinely wants not to be counted among [Ayi Kwei] Armah's 'Western scholars...' who are 'nothing if not Westerners working in the interests of the West... just as much as any other Western expert hustling Africa, be he a businessman, an economic adviser or a mercenary war dog'.⁶¹⁸

To the white and Western sensibility, this affront to the scholarly and creative project might sound simplistic and crudely anti-Western. But perhaps our scholarly and creative endeavours could do with an occasional dose of reductionism. One might recall the thoughts on national shame penned by Coetzee's fictive writer in *Diary of a Bad Year*: 'Musical creation on the one hand, a machine for inflicting pain and humiliation on the other: the best and the worst that human beings are capable of'.⁶¹⁹ The

⁶¹⁸ Nicholas Brown, *Utopian Generations: The Political Horizon of Twentieth-Century Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4.

⁶¹⁹ J. M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007), 45.

predicament, as has been discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, is how to think together seemingly incompatible realities which, nonetheless, have been fully integrated into the social imagination. Bewes's solution is to theorise postcolonial creative and intellectual production through 'incommensurability', a type of relation that takes into account the splitting and splintering of a subject or form assumed to be consistent and coherent into 'many contradictory things... incoherent and inconsistent, divided at the same instant, split in two or more [parts] that do not jibe'.⁶²⁰ Incommensurability is a type of relation that proliferates around the production of reconciliation, whether the process is initiated by the TRC or by a cantata based on the latter.

Consider, by way of example, what Buur calls 'the "onstage", visible, public spectacle of the SATRC process and the "backstage", invisible, inside of the bureaucratic machinery of truth production'.⁶²¹ The latter is designated by the TRC's report as the commission's 'Information Management System', responsible for documenting the mostly oral evidence given by victims, and for transforming this amorphous body of dates, names, facts, discrepancies and silences into statistics. The TRC recorded approximately 22,000 statements, detailing a total of around 50,000 cases of human rights violations committed between 1960 and 1994. Trained statement-takers were dispatched throughout the country to invite and facilitate submissions from South Africans unable to access either of the four regional offices the commission had set up partly for this

⁶²⁰ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 56. Bewes is writing about fracture and incoherency in a character or person (referring specifically to Joseph K. and Primo Levi). I have substituted 'parts' for 'personalities'.

⁶²¹ Buur, 'The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission', 150.

purpose. A template consisting of set questions and prompts provided a measure of consistency for these initial encounters, otherwise dispersed across nine provinces and any number of languages. Once written down, statements had to be translated into English before they could be entered into the commission's 'information flow', using a software application designed to capture and code large data sets.⁶²² This effectively meant that cases were assigned one of three categories: those falling outside the TRC's mandate, those falling inside the mandate, and a representative sample extracted from the latter group to testify in public.⁶²³ It also meant that the fate of victims hinged in part on the fierce empiricism of data analysis.

The indispensability of a highly efficient information management system, but also its sheer irreconcilability with every value reconciliation purports to uphold, were experienced subjectively as personal failure by at least some of the officials working with the data flow of the commission. 'There is nothing you can do and that sense of helplessness both makes you powerful and leaves you feeling shitty', says one official: 'you know exactly what can be done, you know that this fucking matter falls outside the mandate, there's nothing that the Truth Commission can do for this person'.⁶²⁴

There is nothing you can do and you know exactly what can be done: an admission that the technical apparatus charged with dispensing reconciliation at the same time operates a bureaucracy of othering and

⁶²² The TRC used Oracle, which is a well-known database application. Ibid., 163.

⁶²³ For the criteria that guided the selection of victims for public testimony, see Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Vol. 1, 145-146. The main criterion concerned representativity, and it should be stressed that this process did not in any way impinge on the allotment of benefits and support to which all victims were entitled.

⁶²⁴ Buur, 'The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission', 170.

exclusion. For the TRC official responsible for sorting and sifting the commission's 'data', the inadequacy of categories and analysis is experienced subjectively as complicity and helplessness: the shame and resentment arising when one's own social privilege, itself a function of bureaucracy, is brought before an 'other' reduced to the object of that same bureaucracy. This shame and resentment are indicative of the impossibility of devoting oneself to the cause of national reconciliation without colluding in the creation of yet other unreconciled others. To push the comparison still further: it is ultimately the same bureaucracy that—in terms of a legal mandate—included some and not others, without which a regime predicated on categorisation, such as apartheid, would not have been able to operate.

The same structure of impossibility is at issue when Adorno poses what he calls a 'less cultural question':

Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living—especially whether one who escaped by accident, one who by rights should have been killed, may go on living.⁶²⁵

Writing as an Auschwitz survivor, Primo Levi finds himself having to confront precisely this question. 'The worst survived—that is, the fittest; the best all died', he wrote in what would become the final book he completed before ending his own life: 'we, the survivors... did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to

⁶²⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 363.

tell about it or have returned mute... We speak in their stead, by proxy'.⁶²⁶
In Levi's position, the kind of subjective shame felt by the TRC official—who knows that he is 'the last chance' for many victims of apartheid—is taken to its most painful extreme: an acknowledgment that survival and signification can take place only in 'taking the place of another'. The predicament of the survivor is how to write about the horror of the death camps if survival means having been spared the horror. Reflecting on the same passage, Bewes observes that 'Levi's shame is the shame of being able to speak, of having the tools to bear witness and, by that same fact, nothing to bear witness to'.⁶²⁷

One of the fictional observers in Krog's *Country of My Skull* reacts to a similar predicament: 'that is precisely why I say that maybe writers in South Africa should shut up for a while. That one has no right to appropriate a story paid for with a lifetime of pain and destruction'.⁶²⁸ Krog herself realises she has little of substance to say. A white Afrikaner woman, she is stunned, without words, whereas her act of solidarity is always already a rearticulation of the very inequalities against which she is writing. Registering her awareness of this implicative structure intrinsic to signification, the poet-turned-TRC-reporter admits the impossibility of writing about victims of apartheid, but also the impossibility of not writing about victims of apartheid, before summoning the advice of her Afrikaner grandmother: she bakes a cake and then begins to write after all, appropriating, betraying, inventing.

⁶²⁶ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: Abacus, 2013), 88-90.

⁶²⁷ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 56.

⁶²⁸ Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 312.

Incommensurability, then, occurs in that moment when ethical intentions—unintentionally—unfold their own negation: when, for example, *REwind*'s 'white' reception emerges as profoundly at odds with the ethical substance built into its aesthetic and creative processes; or when the dispensation of reconciliation initiates working definitions and processes irreconcilable with its very essence; or when Krog writes in her book about the TRC that one ought not to write about the TRC. What distinguishes the case of *REwind* from these other examples is that Miller seems not to regard incommensurability as inevitable in an ontological sense, but as something that—when it occurs—yields to explanation or reason: a lack of funding due to the socio-economic crisis that is so normal for South Africa. The hint of incredulity contained in his response to the 'lefties and their grandmothers' who made up the overwhelmingly white audience on the occasion of *REwind*'s premiere—whether, he ponders, his cantata constitutes 'a case of preaching to the converted'—is unthinkable in Bewes's understanding of the postcolonial condition. For Bewes, the positive existence of categories such as 'the converted' or aesthetic forms that could sustain a postcolonial ethic are foreclosed because, he maintains, 'the formal possibilities open to the work are incommensurable with, or simply inadequate to, its ethical responsibilities'.⁶²⁹ There is nothing to explain or to justify. There is only the event of postcolonial shame and its material ramifications.

If, then, the constitutive materials, forms and processes of the artwork are always already implicated by virtue of being socially situated, the postcolonial predicament shifts into view as an incommensurability

⁶²⁹ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 1.

between the aesthetic and the ethical, experienced in the work as a gap: a silence, a lack, a discrepancy indicative of the 'ethical deficit' of forms. Not only the inadequacy of forms, says Bewes, but 'the unavailability of a form that is uncompromised by everything it wants to escape'.⁶³⁰

The positing in these terms of a crisis in art in the twentieth century is, of course, not new. What Bewes's monograph evocatively brings to an analysis of the postcolonial (and implicitly also post-Auschwitz) condition is, in the first instance, an understanding of the literary enterprise 'as the locus of an incommensurability: between form and substance, expression and appearance, addressee and reader... which is experienced as shame'.⁶³¹ Secondly, there is his insistence that shame, as 'a principle of reading', requires that work and reader be detached from 'the regime of aesthetic gratification that comprehends the reception of works in terms of their failure or success'.⁶³² Thirdly, that shame should be treated as an 'event of writing' rather than an affective experience that can be conveyed adequately through narration, because shame is incapable of self-representation without at the same time reproducing either more shame or shamelessness.⁶³³ It follows, finally, that shame is not an ethical response.

Its resistance to instantiation, however, does not imply that shame is absent from specific acts of representation, be it in the form of writing,

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁶³¹ Ibid., 4.

⁶³² Ibid., 55.

⁶³³ Ibid., 15. 'Shame', he explains, 'resists interpretation, since to speak of it boldly, adequately, is to counteract it, to produce its opposite—or itself as its own opposite (shame as absence of shame)'(3). Shame appears overtly, as the text's experience of its own inadequacy. Bewes compares the structure of shame with that of taste. Just as taste cannot represent itself without also revealing its own 'tastelessness', shame, the moment it attempts to be explained, produces shame (the shame of revealing one's shame). Shame, then, is an 'abyssal structure', unable to explain itself adequately and shame, itself, is the experience of inadequacy. Ibid., 7, 138.

painting or composition. Once the inescapable simultaneity of signification and implication is admitted, the self-conscious creative and/or intellectual project endeavours to manage shame, sliding interminably into confession and autobiographical display.⁶³⁴ These modes of presentation themselves morph into literary masochism, the advocacy of silence and/or self-justification or absolution. In other words, intellectual or creative work risks becoming mere arenas for survivors, beneficiaries, bystanders and the practitioners of ethics to exhibit and discuss those works of art arising from ‘the shame of being able to speak, of having the tools to bear witness and, by that same fact, nothing to bear witness to’.⁶³⁵

Bewes’s notion of shame as event and materiality occasions a shift in the object of interpretation away from content to non-narrative components such as form and textuality. Such a move has evocative implications for musicology. Daniel Putnam, for example, thinks that shame arises only in relation to an object, which leads him to conclude that shame cannot find expression in purely instrumental music.⁶³⁶ Bewes takes a different view of the relation between subject and object when constituted from shame: ‘shame does not have an object that may be isolated from the subject—and shame is not an orientation of the subject towards an object’. Shame is instead ‘a profound disorientation of the

⁶³⁴ This structure of shameful complicity must be understood in the twentieth century and beyond as a causal link between knowledge, survival and complicity: ‘Not only is writing not suited to the representation of experience; writing, along with painting, music, and every other art form, is inimical to representation. This, indeed, is the definition of literary writing in the modern period, a period defined not only by its knowledge of the atrocities people are capable of, but by the sense of a universal and irrevocable implication in those events—merely by the fact of having survived them’. *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶³⁶ Daniel A. Putnam, ‘Why Instrumental Music has no Shame’, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 27:1 (1987), 55-61.

subject by the confrontation with an object... that renders incoherent every form available to the subject'.⁶³⁷ In pointing to this 'incoherence', Bewes acknowledges the restriction on interpretation imposed by the infinitely spiralling structure of shame through representation. When, therefore, representations of shame attempt to account for shame itself, they do so whilst invariably producing yet more shame. This 'paradoxical structure' of shame and the limit it imposes on interpretation are conspicuously at work in Paul Attinello's article concerning performance, sexuality and shame.⁶³⁸

Attinello exports the manifestation of shame to performance situations, thus sharing with Bewes an event-centred approach. As a result, when he broaches the subject, the reader becomes the receptacle for a litany of unfortunate performance mishaps, most of which place Attinello centre-stage. Interwoven into these accounts of technical or memory lapses, ungenerous audiences, the effects on the voice of flu or alcohol, are autobiographical reflections on the shame of being a gay man. For Attinello, shame is experienced subjectively as affect or paralysis that, once noticed, spirals out of control. The article unashamedly gushes forth autobiographical scenarios experienced as shaming, which is also why it ought to make the reader feel ashamed: ashamed because of Attinello's shame, and ashamed that an article which surely required considerable courage to write appears on the surface as too eagerly relishing self-exposure, as if the writing itself betrays some kind of perverse pleasure derived from the experience of shame. But Bewes would have us engage with shame differently. He is no advocate of exhibitionism or literary self-

⁶³⁷ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 3.

⁶³⁸ Paul Attinello, 'Performance and/or Shame: A Mosaic of Gay (and Other) Perspectives', *repercussions*, 4:2 (1995), 97-130.

laceration. His attentiveness to form and materiality implicitly admits the porousness of the supposed boundary between intellectualised anguish, confession or solidarity and ethical kitsch.

The interpretive implications with respect to *REwind* should be apparent. We have already encountered one example of incommensurability in *REwind*: between an aesthetic of reconciliation and its actualisation through performance. The list might be expanded to include the incommensurability between the white and middle-class London-born South African composer and the subject material of his cantata; and between the Western origins of the cantata as a genre and the packaging of the oppressed in that same genre with its overtones of European grandeur, spirituality and heroism. The shame that arises from such incommensurabilities is, in a narrow sense, that of being white, privileged and a beneficiary of apartheid. If one takes seriously Bewes's schematisation of shame, Miller's apparent reluctance to speak at length about his own subject position in these terms is much more preferable to, say, the autobiographical display that is invariably required to enable Attinello to write about shame in a subjective sense.

If, as Bewes maintains, interpretation is no longer in the first instance in the service of aesthetic criticism, informed evaluatively by whatever qualities are deemed worthy of canonisation, then neither the absence of a meaningful reception for *REwind*, nor the stylistic 'infelicities' of the cantata, would seem to promise substantive analytical insights. It is worthwhile asking precisely what the stakes of music analysis might be if its aims have been divested of any aesthetic criteria. Crucially, however, the instruments of close textual reading are thereby not discarded in

favour of focussing more overtly on aspects such as affect, narrative content or context. I would be willing to speculate that liberating the analytical enterprise from demonstrating aesthetic sophistication might be one way to orientate music and interpretation—particularly in a postcolonial context—towards a type of formalism that could genuinely radicalise the act of reading. Bewes’s monograph is in some respects fundamentally concerned with the same agenda. ‘The critical and theoretical attention to the event of shame’, he writes, ‘seeks to liberate works of literature from categories of thought that they are otherwise compelled to reproduce simply on account of their writtenness’.⁶³⁹

Returning to Miller’s cantata, the question remains how—if at all—shame is registered in *REwind*. In the next section, I will address this question, arguing that shame as an event of composition is expressed in *REwind* as an occlusion of the present and the presence of the people, despite the work’s rigorous realism, and as an incommensurability within the technical facility of composition. Here I include also adherence to an ethic of reconciliation and the enthusiastic support Miller’s project garnered from victims, as well as the proliferation of musical cliché as the materialisation of deficit, a materialisation through music of having nothing to say whilst having at one’s disposal all the tools of composition and dissemination to facilitate signification.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁹ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 7.

⁶⁴⁰ I owe this point in part to Bewes. See *Ibid.*, 56.

Performative iterations: *REwind*, a cantata for voice, tape and testimony

A 're' in the title. Re-wind. To reverse, to move backwards; but also to repeat where the idea of what is past is also present, or to return where the going back is a doubling back. To rewind: a spool of film, a thread of tape, a sound of a story. But we can't say where what is seen, or heard, or happened starts or finishes, or when. 'It has already begun and so already finished beginning'; it is always 'already there' and always 'not yet'. Rewind: With neither beginning nor end, there is only the property of a present, its presence - opened up, ramified, expanded, looped. Not driven by simple succession, it is time as a breach, as impasse, as something impassable. Not measured by continuity, it is time as the here and now, the immediate, the instant - swollen, stretched-out, abiding. Rewind: the presence of an atemporal dimension in time, or a time that has to 'break with continuity before it can continue'.

Jessica Dubow⁶⁴¹

The third world and minorities gave rise to authors who would be in a position, in relation to their nation and their personal situation in that nation, to say: the people are what is missing... Art, and especially cinematographic art, must take part in this task: not that of addressing a people, which is presupposed already there, but of contributing to the invention of a people.

Gilles Deleuze⁶⁴²

The title song of Miller's cantata, a sparsely scored lament, marks the first extended musical treatment of testimony. It is placed third, preceded by a robust choral rendition of 'Siyaya epitoli' ('We are marching to Pretoria'). The energetic respite afforded by this well-known struggle anthem is brief, and when the *toyitoyiing* choir concludes with loud whistling and

⁶⁴¹ Jessica Dubow, 'Introduction to *REwind*: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony', in *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*, ed. Carol Martin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 91.

⁶⁴² Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 209.

ulation, dramatic intensity shifts once more to the sonic interiority of public testimony. The lament samples snatches of Miya's testimony, combined with textures of grief (gasping, weeping, strained speech) uncannily echoed as the choir whispers in unison wordless glissandi spanning the interval of a third, and the sound that is produced when rewinding an audio cassette. 'I found a musical equivalent of that crying sound, which became a musical motif which I could then work and build up an entire song', says Miller.⁶⁴³ The melodic equivalent he 'found' is built around the intervals of a minor and a major third, with sometimes a whole-tone drop in the lower voice so that a minor third is alternated with a perfect fourth. These intervals figure horizontally as a descending semitone taken up variously by plucked strings, sopranos and full choir. Otherwise known as the *pianto* or musical sigh, the descending semitone is arguably more cliché than discovery.

It is not immediately clear why so much importance is bestowed on such a commonplace signifier, even if Miller's source is Miya's cry rather than a conscious deployment of the *pianto*. Yet its musical pertinence throughout the cantata is emblematic of the ways in which Miller's musical language eludes description in terms other than cliché, pastiche and comparison. Commentators have relied on simile and musical signposting when writing about *REwind*: '[Miller's] music has generally distinct South African textures'; 'like Kevin Volans, Mr. Miller has a knack for adapting the rocking sway of African music'; *REwind*'s 'conversational vocal lines, stormy choruses and chugging rhythms suggest lessons absorbed from Philip Glass and Mr. [John] Adams'; *REwind* is 'an enduring masterpiece

⁶⁴³ Quoted in Cole, *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission*, 140.

of diverse choral musical, cultural and oral traditions'; while, most opaque of all, 'Philip Miller speaks in arpeggios'.⁶⁴⁴

Jessica Dubow's reading of the cantata, cited in the first of my section epigraphs, utilises the primary temporal metaphor set to work in *Rewind*. The notion of 'rewinding' situates the archive as an analogue for the otherwise unrelated processes of recollection and composition, grafting both onto their original source: the life and archived voice of Miya's testimony. The manipulation of recorded time insinuates a sense of temporal duality that, as Dubow portrays it, constitutes a tension between a discontinuous time and a present of which the edges are constantly vanishing, rendering indistinguishable fixed markers such as beginnings and endings. On the one hand discontinuity, on the other an infinitely distended 'here and now'. This sense of double-time, aside from articulating the structure of traumatic memory, characterises a temporal metaphysics of transitional justice. Understood in terms of the second chapter epigraph, the experience of passing time during periods of transitional justice stems ultimately from an ambiguity: whether or not the past is truly 'in the past'.⁶⁴⁵ This ambiguity can itself be depicted discursively as arising from a disjunction between 'the time of history', defined through its built-in assumption that the past is no longer present apart from historiographic reconstruction, and 'the time of jurisdiction', stipulating the contrary notion that the past is present, albeit symbolically

⁶⁴⁴ *The Star*, 'Testimony, *Rewind*, Cantata'; Steve Smith, 'Bringing Life, Death, and Sight to Sound', *New York Times*, July 10th, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/10/arts/music/10rewi.html?fta=y&pagewanted=print&r=0>.

⁶⁴⁵ Meister, *After Evil*, 10.

and negatively as its material aftermath, until such time as past injustices have been addressed adequately.

Truth commissions are poised in between these two temporalities, and concerned ultimately with charting a national transition from one to the other.

Born always from political compromise, the problem of how to consign systemic injustice to the past non-violently—that is, without demanding retributive justice—is ultimately the predicament that truth commissions and their aesthetic and pedagogic counterparts must hope to resolve. That predicament might be articulated, as in the above, as a conflict between the past and the present, between forgetting and remembering or, between archival reconstruction and actual memory.

The representation of time in Miller’s cantata, especially through the notion of rewinding an analogue cassette, provides an obvious starting point for considering how these vying temporalities are present and worked through in *REwind*. ‘Immediately the word “rewind” resonated’, says Miller of his first encounter with Miya’s testimony:

There was the literalness of what I was doing, the physical process of rewinding and fast forwarding the testimonies... And then of course there was the more metaphorical meaning to the idea of going back and retelling testimonies, rewinding your memory, your thoughts.⁶⁴⁶

The rewind analogy, according to the above, operates on at least two levels, as metaphor but also literally, as a ‘physical process’. We have already considered in the introductory section of this chapter the level of

⁶⁴⁶ Quoted in Cole, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission*, 140.

metaphor: the emptying out of the literal and the actual into the symbolic construct of the nation that occurs when the meaning of Miya's prayer gets lost in translation. Absent from that earlier discussion is the literal correspondence between memory and the act of rewinding a cassette tape that is set to work in Miller's rewind analogy.

Both the mechanical storage of time and human/physical memory can be described as processes of corrosion and loss. Miller, for example, is aware that the cassette tapes held in the TRC archive 'will degenerate with time, perhaps becoming inaccessible before being converted into another format'.⁶⁴⁷ Although not stated as such in the same passage, he would also have been aware that the friction generated by consecutive cycles of rewinding and fast-forwarding accelerates decay, as the audio-magnetic tape slowly disintegrates. In his book on forgiveness and reconciliation, Jankélévitch uses the same notion of wear or disintegration to plot a temporal relation between forgiveness and time: 'the passing of time ... has thinned hostility into indifference'.⁶⁴⁸ The broader point is that neither actual nor mechanical memory can retrace time without thereby depositing a residual trace. And it is a point that poses a further question to the rewind analogy: how, if at all, this structure of slow decay and loss that 'rewinding' shares with actual memory finds expression in Miller's cantata. In attempting to answer this last question, another analogy will be helpful to access the notion of temporal decay made audible as the materiality of recorded sound. One of the most haunting pieces of music in which the processes of recollection, loss and passing time are heard as

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 158.

⁶⁴⁸ Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*, trans. Andrew Kelley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 36.

materiality and as a physical process, is William Basinski's *Disintegration Loops* (2002-2003). The piece makes for interesting comparative listening, positioned in relation to *REwind* as a sonic superlative of temporal decay. *Disintegration Loops*, moreover, shares with *REwind* the status of memorial art, whilst both are tape pieces originating from the archive as a creative repository.

Sometime during July 2001, Basinski began digitising several spools of tape containing material recorded two decades earlier. As the first tape loop began, he observed the slow, literal disintegration of material recorded twenty years previously. 'Over the period of the hour', Basinski recalls, 'that melody just decayed right in front of my ears... and eyes'.⁶⁴⁹ In the first of six *Disintegration Loops* which are now available as a vinyl box set containing hours of decomposing tape, the higher registers of the sound spectrum are gradually subsumed by distortion as the lower registers melt into an undifferentiated sound mass. Decay occurs, noticeably stripped of auditory spectacle or climax, as the disintegrating magnetic tape slowly crumbles into iron oxide particles. The resultant work, in the poignant description of David Keenan, is 'sound as matter being seized by time, the remorseless logic of its destruction counterpointing the staggering decay of memory'.⁶⁵⁰

In contrast to *Disintegration Loops*, temporal decay never encroaches literally on the materials and compositional process of Miller's cantata. In other words, what is heard so strikingly in the former, 'sound as

⁶⁴⁹ John Doran, 'Time Becomes a Loop: William Basinski Interviewed', *The Quietus*, November 15th, 2012, <http://thequietus.com/articles/10680-william-basinski-disintegration-loops-interview>.

⁶⁵⁰ David Keenan, 'Review of *The Disintegration Loops* by William Basinski', *The Wire* (August 2002), 61.

matter being seized by time', has no sonic corollary in the latter. There is instead only narration, iconicity and cliché: Miya's plea for the news to rewind, the sound of a rewinding cassette tape to complete the 'rewinding' analogy, and the persistent recurrence of the *pianto*. As the literal analogy which Miller makes it out to be, the process of 'rewinding' appears too seamlessly in *REwind*, as if memory and reconciliation are static objects of history, frozen inside the singular event of the TRC, impervious to temporal decay because they have been torn out of time and preserved inside the frame of dramatic representation. The fragments of testimony sampled throughout *REwind*—which Miller regards as the 'seed from which everything else flows' (itself a mixed organicist metaphor)—subsequently emerge as processed time (the digital manipulation and reproduction of past events) standing in for the process of time itself (that which is uniquely residual in an 'actual' TRC hearing when remembered and 'heard' after the event). This substitution of processed time or archival realism for the process of time or actual memory, in respect of the rewind analogy, is the literal or structural corollary of what occurs when, as the real-time mechanism of translation breaks down and Miya's testimony begins to circulate in the domains of literature and music, metaphor is substituted for a very literal notion of 'rewinding'. Reading back from metaphor to the literal or actual—in this instance the sonic materiality of rewinding a cassette tape—the notion that Miya's prayer had been a petition for derealisation is heard as the absence of loss and disintegration; as a memory that has been put out of time and exiled from its own present.

It is this loss of contemporaneity, the loss of a material 'here and now' that could have defined a post-apartheid nationness that is

articulated strikingly in victims' responses to Miller's cantata. For Miya, '*Rewind* gives me hope for the future, for our grandchildren. They will be able to see what happened in the past. It would be great for our grandchildren to learn something from our history'.⁶⁵¹ Nomonde Calata, whose son died a brutally inhumane death at the hands of apartheid authorities, voiced similar sentiments, despite the resurgence of loss and bereavement she felt sitting through a performance of *REwind*: 'this cantata will go very far and will also help the next generation to understand what happened in the past'.⁶⁵² In this moment of performance and cathartic identification, when actual victims themselves encounter through music the possibility of hope and reconciliation, their responses articulate the experience of those who find themselves exiled from the present, those for whom, to quote Bewes, 'ontology has not cleared a space'.⁶⁵³ The cantata, they say, will help their children, and their children's children, to remember. It is a musical gesture of hope and overcoming, intended for another time and another generation of South Africans—for a South African landscape and a national memory from which the scars of white domination are receding evermore into the past. For those people who are missing and left in a state of disarticulation by *REwind* and its reception, there is hardly reason to remember and reflect on the apartheid past if the material traces of that past are what remain present as facticity.

⁶⁵¹ Quoted in Reisinger, 'Giving Voice to the Past, Hope to the Future'.

⁶⁵² Quoted in *ibid.*

⁶⁵³ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 28.

Pedagogic iterations: Music and the ‘unfinished business’ of reconciliation

This unfinished business [of reconciliation] is creating increased levels of tension on various levels of the social life in the South African nation, such as the vexing language question, education, conflicting interpretations of our history, place names, land reform, etc. In the sphere of music — especially in respect of school curricula, the public media and the allocation of funding — such conflict is also noticeable... A musical (and intellectual) middle ground is then called for where various musical styles can interact with each other without necessarily giving up their particular aesthetic paradigms.

Winfried Lüdemann⁶⁵⁴

The conceit that they are representative torchbearers of Western civilisation in the southern corner of South Africa has prevented white South Africans from coming to terms with the full implications of the realities around them. The result is that they have developed an essentially derivative culture that sought to reproduce the metropolitan centre as the measure of their self-image. Accentuating their difference from Africans was part of their civilising mission. The hegemony of apartheid culture is extensive and complex: even those who would otherwise disavow it become its unwitting servants. For how can we fail to notice that part of the psycho-social justification for apartheid is the need to maintain the illusion of metropolitan purity precisely where it is impossible ever to achieve such purity without the genocidal extermination of black people?

Njabulo S. Ndebele⁶⁵⁵

Twenty years into majority democracy, the phrase ‘unfinished business’ is common currency in South African discourse, whether in informal discussions, the media or academic papers. All seemingly agree that South Africa's political transition and the work initiated by the TRC have been

⁶⁵⁴ Lüdemann, ‘Musiek en kulturele diversiteit in Suid-Afrika’, 639.

⁶⁵⁵ Njabulo S. Ndebele, ‘Good Morning, South Africa: Whose Universities, Whose Standards?’, in *Fine Lines from the Box* [eBook] (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2007), Chapter loc. no. 154-247 of 4945. The quote is at loc. no. 168-183 of 4945.

survived by ‘unfinished business’, but precisely what constitutes ‘unfinished business’ and how to go about addressing it are questions to which different segments of South African society have different answers. Aside from the phrase’s appearance in Lüdemann’s article quoted above, two recent examples are the short contribution published in July 2014 by Sufiya Bray from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, entitled ‘Reparation in South Africa: The “Unfinished Business” of the TRC?’, and an article by Desmond Tutu in the *Mail and Guardian*, entitled ‘The “Unfinished Business” of the TRC’s Healing’.⁶⁵⁶ In what follows, I will consider what a largely white and Western constituency, operating within the domain of institutionalised music, has to say about the contribution of an aesthetic enterprise to the ‘unfinished business’ of reconciliation.

The initiatory moment for the conjoining of aesthetics and reconciliation in South Africa can be traced to a widely discussed paper delivered in 1989 by the then exiled Albie Sachs, ‘Preparing Ourselves for Freedom’.⁶⁵⁷ Sachs’s main concern was that the political transition and the prospect for a united South Africa had to be expressed artistically through an aesthetics of affirmation. ‘Black is beautiful, brown is beautiful. White is beautiful. I think that affirmation is beautiful’, he wrote, and went on to suggest that members of the ANC should be ‘banned from saying that

⁶⁵⁶ Sufiya Bray, ‘Reparation in South Africa: The “Unfinished Business” of the TRC?’, *Pan-African Reparation Perspectives*, 2 (2014), 4-5.

<http://www.redress.org/downloads/140704pan-african-reparfinal.pdf>; Desmond Tutu, ‘“Unfinished Business” of the TRC’s Healing’, *The Mail and Guardian*, April 25th, 2014, <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-04-24-unfinished-business-of-the-trc-healing>.

⁶⁵⁷ Albie Sachs, ‘Preparing Ourselves for Freedom’, in *Spring is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom*, eds. Ingrid De Kok and Karen Press (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990), 19-29.

culture is a weapon of struggle'.⁶⁵⁸ Sachs was certainly not proposing the wholesale reclamation of theatres, galleries and concert halls as rehearsal spaces allotted to a 'multi-racial yuppiedom' charged with the invention of the New South Africa. His proposition to withdraw art from the struggle against white domination nonetheless, and understandably, stirred up a furore.⁶⁵⁹ The most prominent concern arising from Sachs's paper was the unshackling of art from the Manichean logic—white and non-white, apartheid and anti-apartheid, beneficiary and victim—which, until then, had defined struggle aesthetics. Notwithstanding its glaring idealism in supposing a non-racial society as a possible outcome in the space of a few years, Sachs's position had—understandably—been a timely one in a country where race had been the primary adjudicator in just about every field.

It is disquieting to encounter some of the same ideas in a chapter on music and reconciliation that, despite post-dating Sachs's paper by almost two decades, reduces the central concerns they share to little more than an idealistic and glib historical account, even as the later contribution reveals the absurdity contained in the idea that a non-racial South Africa was plausible—indeed the status quo white South Africans felt they had the right to expect—following centuries of unequal development. In 'Music as a Tool for Reconciliation in South Africa', Anne-Marie Gray argues that black and white South Africans will discover in each other's musics shared tropes of oppression, resistance and overcoming, knowledge that would

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁵⁹ In 1989, the end of white domination was inevitable, although how that end would play out remained uncertain. The ANC was still banned, its key leaders jailed or in exile, and violence was rife.

incubate reconciliation.⁶⁶⁰ Indeed, the historical South Africa Gray evokes in her essay yields to analysis with remarkable ease: a land occupied by two peoples with opposing cultures, black and white. Her chapter provides suitably matching headings. There is ‘the music of black South Africans’, informing the reader that twentieth-century struggle songs are subdivided into four styles: hymn-like songs, ragtime-like songs, songs with ‘indigenous elements’ and ‘the Toyi-Toyi’; and there is the ‘music of white South Africans’, defined in relation to historic events such as the South African War of 1899-1902 and the miners’ strikes of the 1920s.⁶⁶¹ There are similarities worth contemplating, she continues, that concern song and protest: defiant white mine workers during the 1922 industrial action, just like black South Africans in the struggle against apartheid, received death sentences and met their fates singing (black mineworkers occasionally sang along with their white compatriots, she adds).⁶⁶²

Gray’s ill-considered interpretation of South African history makes it difficult to take seriously her notion that a reciprocal exchange of cultural knowledge will advance an ‘authentic picture’ of the past congenial to reconciliation in the present. The Anglo-Boer War, she says, can educate both black and white South Africans about the suffering of white women and children in British concentration camps.⁶⁶³ But the prescribed lesson is itself in need of education, failing, as it does, to mention the large numbers of black South Africans interned during the same war in separate

⁶⁶⁰ Anne-Marie Gray, ‘Music as a Tool for Reconciliation in South Africa’, in *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, ed. Oliver Urbain (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 63-77.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 63-77.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 71.

camps where living conditions and suffering were no less devastating. Still more astonishing is the imagined pedagogical role of songs that appeared in the wake of the same war:

These songs ... could lead to an understanding of why white South Africans, amongst other things, instituted unreasonable restrictions and division of land at the beginning of the twentieth century. They had just spent four years of fighting for their fatherland against the British and they were not prepared to give it up to black South Africans.⁶⁶⁴

It is, of course, not the case that the so-called Boers were victorious in this war, nor is it the case that 1902 had been the inauguration of Afrikaner racism, as if bucolic harmony had prevailed until then. Gray's interpretations are guilty of pertinent omissions, and her version of history is symptomatic of the revisionism that must precede any presentation of Afrikaner history as a pedagogical tool for black South Africans.

The notion that music could help foster intercultural understanding and mutual respect is integral to Winfried Lüdemann's proposal to address diversity, reconciliation and multi-culturalism in South Africa, with insights gained from musicology and paleo-anthropology. His argument, in the broadest sense, positions multi-culturalism and diversity as the natural status quo of all life forms, and music and speech as expressions of a shared humanity—arguments he backs up with evidence from paleo-anthropology. Noting that 'Physical, cultural and biological' types of diversity are innate to nature (and, moreover, essential to human survival), Lüdemann worries about what he perceives as a threatening discrepancy between the global empathy displayed towards peoples and languages at

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 71-72.

risk of extinction and the urgency with which animal and plant species similarly at risk are preserved.⁶⁶⁵ Switching from the universal to the local, he detects in post-apartheid South Africa a related (and equally threatening) discrepancy between the active privileging of ‘political reconciliation’ and the almost total neglect of ‘cultural reconciliation’.⁶⁶⁶

Evidence for the volatility of the present state and the absence of cultural reconciliation are everywhere, at least according to the list compiled for the reader: increasingly acrid debates over racial integration in institutions of learning, changes in place names, the proposed school oath, the nature and content of school and university curricula, the land question, the race question, the social question and, most recently, xenophobic violence.⁶⁶⁷

Merely mentioning in passing the so-called xenophobic attacks that spread across South Africa in 2008—and this in the context of ‘cultural reconciliation’—is an inadequate way of arriving at even a basic understanding of their underlying causes. To suggest that the 2008 attacks resulted from racial hatred against foreigners (and by implication failed cultural reconciliation), does not in any way explain the fact that all the victims were black and living mostly in impoverished townships where one would be hard-pressed to find any white residents, unless the reader is being asked to contemplate the possibility that white foreigners are the only group welcomed by otherwise xenophobic black South Africans. The spectre of a future marred by escalating violence as a black majority excluded from the economy directs its wrath against whites, is what really

⁶⁶⁵ Ludemann, ‘Musiek en Kulturele Diversiteit in Suid-Afrika’, 640.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 643.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

underpins the public outcry from white South Africa in the wake of the attacks. As one commentator recently observed: ‘We’re basically sitting on a time bomb’.⁶⁶⁸ Rather than causally linking xenophobia to stunted cultural reconciliation, Ludemann would do well to acknowledge, along with a commentator such as John Sharp, that ‘the issue was not “foreigners” or “otherness” but the narcissism of minor differences: unable to attack the source of oppression—the government and the employers—‘foreigners became victims of this struggle because they were close at hand’.⁶⁶⁹

The appropriation of music as a counter-hegemonic strategy—Lüdemann speaks about democratisation and diversity—surfaced powerfully in the 1970s. Well before the advent of the ‘new’ musicology, ethnomusicologists readily challenged the ascendancy of Western art music by pointing to what Johann Kroier calls the ‘incomparability of musical taste’, together with the presupposition that ‘learning to appreciate some sort of non-European music... could trigger the process of intercultural understanding’.⁶⁷⁰ This critique, bolstered by the wholesale

⁶⁶⁸ Paul Verryn did not utter these words in 2008, a year marked by xenophobic violence; but in April 2015, as xenophobia flared up around the country. See Verryn quoted in Greg Nicolson, ‘Elastoplast on a Boil: Too Little, too Late for the Victims of Xenophobia’, *Daily Maverick*, April 16th, 2015, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-04-16-elastoplast-on-a-boil-too-little-too-late-for-the-victims-of-xenophobia/#.VS-WFMJozIU>.

⁶⁶⁹ Quoted in Nigel Gibson, ‘What Happened to the “Promised Land”? A Fanonian Perspective on Post-Apartheid South Africa’, *Antipode*, 44:1 (2012), 55. Gibson continues to write that ‘the specific grievances that led up to antifoignier attacks might have been unemployment, lack of housing, electricity, and toilets, as well as frustration with failed government policies and perceived corruption and favoritism’. Ibid. Paul Verryn shares this view: ‘As one begins to unpack xenophobia, then all the rest of the stuff comes out ... those issues are job creation, skills development, millions of people going hungry, service delivery, corruption, social investment, and widespread poverty, while a minority remains obscenely rich’. See Nicolson, ‘Elastoplast on a Boil’.

⁶⁷⁰ Johann Kroier, ‘Music, Global History, and Postcoloniality’, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 43:1 (2012), 140.

reorientation of the humanities that coincided with the student revolutions of the 1960s, has since compelled musicology to reevaluate critically its genueflective posture towards an Austro-German musical canon.

In Lüdemann's argument for music as a democratising strategy, the tenets of this earlier argument are present, although in a somewhat altered form. In both cases the underlying premise is that cross-cultural musical encounters could produce intercultural understanding and cultural reconciliation. But in the South African context, the idea that musical styles (unlike spoken languages) are untranslatable replaces the idea that different musical tastes resist comparison and hierarchy. 'Music cannot be translated from one style to another', Lüdemann offers: 'whilst it is possible to read Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in English translation, providing the reader with a nearly precise understanding of the story in its original form... a translation of Shostakovich's social-realist Fifth Symphony into the typical English style of Benjamin Britten is an absurd idea'.⁶⁷¹ One might question the extent to which Britten's idiom was 'typically English', or Shostakovich's symphony 'social-realist'. More importantly, why provide the example in the first instance, as if translating Shostakovich into Britten is a genuine concern of musicology or, to return to cultural reconciliation, an enterprise that could improve Anglo-Russian relations?

One reason might be discursive: the untranslatability of music for which Ludemann is arguing, hands to musicology a useful means of minimising its own place—and that of music—as instruments of colonialism. Put another way, musicologists, unlike scholars in, say,

⁶⁷¹ Lüdemann, 'Musiek en Kulturele Diversiteit in Suid-Afrika', 646.

literary studies, do not have to concern themselves with the musical equivalent of what Sandra Bermann calls ‘linguistic colonialism’: the preponderance of certain languages (she mentions ‘global English’, and as regional examples French and Mandarin) in higher learning.⁶⁷² The peculiar ‘absurdity’ of Lüdemann’s example has partly to do with an inadequately narrow view of translation. At least since Walter Benjamin, it is hard to think about translation simply as purely semantic transfer, by which a text is conveyed between languages. More recently, voices including Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Emily Apter, have made invaluable contributions to translation studies, an interdisciplinary field which Brigid Cohen has brought to the attention of musicology by calling for a ‘translational turn’ as a means of, amongst other things, ‘foregrounding networks of power far more complicated than the standard unidirectional accounts of “centralized” Western appropriations of “peripheral” non-Western sources’.⁶⁷³

The slide from ‘incomparability’ to ‘untranslatability’ raises many questions, most notably whether untranslatability, in an argument about cultural reconciliation and diversity, takes on some of the paradigmatic qualities of irreconcilability so as to clear conceptual space for a preservationist agenda. Lüdemann’s fears of minority cultures and musics about to be swallowed whole by a relentlessly totalising programme of Africanisation are at variance with the TRC’s notion of ‘cultural

⁶⁷² See Sandra Bermann, introduction to *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, eds. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3.

⁶⁷³ Brigid Cohen, ‘Working on the Boundaries: Translation Studies, National Narratives, and Robert Lachman in Jerusalem’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65:3 (2012), 831.

reconciliation', expressed as justice for victims, responsibility and complicity, mourning, apology and a radical questioning of the ways in which apartheid, as methodology and epistemology, might still structure musical thought in South Africa. Whether notions such as cultural reconciliation, humanity, dignity or multi-culturalism could similarly be exposed to corruption is not clear. What is apparent, however, is that cultural reconciliation, when steeped in tropes of diversity, human dignity and tolerance, addresses in one fell swoop the threat of political violence and the right of Western art music to cling to those institutional privileges that it previously assumed without needing any justification.

The categories of 'cultural reconciliation' and its corollary, 'political reconciliation'—a division that structures Lüdemann's argument—are not self-evident. Precisely where one ends and the other begins, when they must be regarded separately and when dialectically, and whether there are explicit zones of imbrication between them, are not specified. This typology is not helped by the fact that the dichotomy is set to work without recourse to the vast body of writing on reconciliation. When Lüdemann reverts to arguments about indigeneity and tradition in support of a case for Western art music in South Africa, the constitutive divide into a 'cultural' and a 'political' type begins to resemble the similarly subdivided paradigm of nationalism. Those clamouring for the speedy dissolution of symphony orchestras and infrastructural support for Western music, Lüdemann counsels, have overlooked the 'fact' that Western music (for which the Genevan Psalter is provided as an example) is one of the oldest types of music that continues to be practised in South Africa and, for that reason alone, is a great deal more 'indigenous' than recent imports such as

'jazz, popular music and kwaito'.⁶⁴⁸ The predictable riposte to such an argument is that its consistent application dislodges any assimilative claim to indigeneity with respect to the entire Western project, along with the name it devised for the place we still call South Africa and the music it imported. Indigeneity, whatever we think it is, is not a currency for measuring the existential claims of cultural imports.

Lüdemann's argument operates a chain of slippages, from 'incomparability' of musical tastes, to the untranslatability of musical styles, to their irreconcilability; and, on a broader level, from cultural reconciliation to cultural nationalism. However, a calculus that enhances the claim to indigeneity of certain cultural expressions over others, in Lüdemann's understanding, ultimately intends a type of equality and community that is based on an exchange of equal rights.

The etymology of 'community' already suggests ways in which reconciliation is bound up with conflicting modes of exchange. The prefix 'com-' stands for 'with' so that, when combined with the suffix '-unus' (one), community is taken to mean 'with oneness'—in other words, it is Unitarian. But if 'unus' is replaced with 'munus', a very different meaning emerges, no longer concerned 'with oneness' but 'with gifts or services'. William Corlett, to whom my brief analysis is indebted, sums up this ambiguity as follows: 'there is a plausible distinction, then, between...[munus and communis]...: being one [unitarian], or being obliged to serve [reciprocities]'.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁴ William Corlett, *Community without Unity: A Politics of Derridian Extravagance*, 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989), 18.

In the case of *com + munus*, the order of belonging is contractual: an economy based on exchange, on being compensated for services rendered (*re + munus*), and on immunity (*im + munus*) as enshrining the right to withdraw from the ‘vexations of municipal life’ at any time.⁶⁷⁵ But not everyone is able to exercise immunity: one might think of ‘the people’ who are missing from *REwind* and those ‘fucking matters’ that fall outside the mandate of the TRC. Completing the rest of the passage from which this latter example is taken helps us to formulate the problem succinctly: ‘That’s why you’re walking around with your list of the Human Rights Commission, Land Commission, lawyers that can take this matter further, the type of structures that these people did not have access to’, says the TRC official, ‘but access is not everything, access does not help them either. You are their last chance’.⁶⁷⁶

Because rights are empowering, they are also always—and fundamentally—products of pre-existing structures of power. Individual rights, Foucault reminds us, are structures of governmentality: a specific form of discipline and order responsible for the devolution of state power to individuals as rights and privileges, so that, in effect, domination operates as de-centralised from the state in the form of rights and forms of self-government.⁶⁷⁷ Bearing in mind the inextricability of rights and structures of governmentality, and the discrepancy between provision of and access to rights, the positing of a ‘middle ground’ where an exchange of ideas and music can occur justly, requires rigorous precision if one

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Quoted in Buur, ‘The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, 170.

⁶⁷⁷ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, 2nd ed (London: Sage, 2010), 18-30.

hopes to introduce the modes of exchange being proposed. This is also what Nicholas Brown calls the ‘cosmopolitan multiculturalism in our own dominant discourse, where pre-existing cultures develop a sense of goodwill in the “free exchange” of the mysteriously neutral ground of the university’.⁶⁷⁸

The aesthetic and intellectual middle ground Lüdemann proposes is based, we have seen, on the principles of human dignity and cultural diversity, the implications of which are stipulated in the form of reciprocal rights: the right to critique as long as that criticism is preceded by self-critique and ‘openness’ to the other; the right to voice one’s own preference; the right never to have to relinquish those preferences; and the right to differ non-coercively. These same rights, meant to guarantee an equal exchange of ideas, music, cultures and biases on the basis of respect for our shared humanity might, of course, be formulated negatively as prohibitions: there will be no conflict here, no revolt, no betrayal, no transgression. There will be only benignly inconsequential disagreement: in short, a prohibition on whatever threatens the stability of a community whose common interest, before all else, is their shared humanity, no matter the status quo at any particular time. A ‘middle ground’ underwritten by a tacit set of criteria or values held in common by everyone—no matter how wide the terms of that consensus are cast in the interests of fabricating inclusivity—is a sophisticated way of insisting on consensus before one might even begin to speak otherwise. There are no *différends*, no radical and incommensurable differences, only arguments concerning the exact nature of consensus.

⁶⁷⁸ Brown, *Utopian Generations*, 5.

The anti-racist racism of such an exchange shifts into view when there is acknowledgement that it is now ‘an inner differentiating quality...that operates the mechanisms of discrimination over which—legally—racism had presided before.’⁶⁷⁹ The ‘outsider’ is any individual or group perceived as being indifferent (and thus also not fully human) to these inner differentiating qualities that define a shared humanity. The genealogical points of connection from which the inner differentiating qualities of Lüdemann’s humanism enters South Africa are stated clearly: ‘Symphonic art music and 19th-century opera have been born from the same spirit that also gave us our constitution and, as such, reverberate with the very aspirations enshrined in the latter’.⁶⁸⁰ If there is a direct correspondence linking the music of Beethoven with the South African constitution, then it must be located as a progression towards the emancipation of free, equal and reconciled subjects—a belief, as Klopper writes, in ‘the Enlightenment ideal of a liberating reason that is able to discern the truth and act appropriately upon it’.⁶⁸¹ It is then also no coincidence that the European Enlightenment claims as its invention a cultural and aesthetic middle ground similar to what Lüdemann proposes:

The defining feature of the bourgeois public sphere is reasoned discourse by private persons on questions of public interest with the aim of achieving rational consensus. It is characterized by almost universal access, autonomy (participants are free of coercion), equality of status (social rank is subordinated to quality

⁶⁷⁹ Meister, *After Evil*, 117.

⁶⁸⁰ Lüdemann, ‘Musiek en Kulturele Diversiteit in Suid-Afrika’, 648.

⁶⁸¹ Dirk Klopper, ‘Narrative Time and the Space of the Image: The Truth of the Lie in Winnie Madikizela Mandela’s Testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, *Poetics Today*, 22:2 (2001), 462.

of argument) and exchange of arguments through rational-critical debate.⁶⁸²

A great deal has been written about the mutually emancipatory relation between the French Revolution, the constitution of free citizens no longer represented in and by a heavenly or earthly monarch, and an increasingly ‘autonomous’ music coupled to a surge of progress and individuality.⁶⁸³ Bearing in mind the positioning of music as congenial to reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, the interest, insofar as an emergent public sphere is concerned, is in the role attributed to aesthetics in the wake of sweeping social and political changes. ‘If the aesthetic intervenes here’, writes Terry Eagleton about the historical emergence of an European public sphere, ‘it is as a dream of reconciliation—of individuals woven into intimate unity with no detriment to their specificity, of an abstract totality suffused with all the flesh-and-blood reality of the individual being’.⁶⁸⁴ In other words, in the absence of any commonly-held purpose or identity—functions that, after 1789, were no longer performed by/through an earthly or heavenly monarch— aesthetics took on a reconciliatory function, binding disparate individuals and constituencies into a coherent body without—crucially—stripping away the social status and cultural predilections of the individual. More generally, the public sphere provided for “non-political” arenas... where the discursive patterns and practices were trained before they were applied to the political arena proper’; this was possible as long as

⁶⁸² Christopher B. Balme, *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 5.

⁶⁸³ Timothy C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁶⁸⁴ Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 25.

intellectual and cultural exchanges occurred on the basis of equality rather than rank or status.⁶⁸⁵

The paradigmatic example from a music-historical point of view is the rapid rise of a specifically German musical sensibility in the course of the nineteenth century, and the substantive contribution such a unified sensibility made to the formation of a national German identity in the absence of a sovereign state. Andrew Bowie goes so far as to suggest that music achieved what politics had failed to bring about: '[t]he growth of the importance of music in the German-speaking public sphere in the early nineteenth century', he writes, 'is connected to the failure to develop a politically effective public sphere'.⁶⁸⁶

Three claims bearing directly on music and/as reconciliation emerge from the above. Firstly, that reconciliation (in the context of transitional justice) and aesthetics are related through structure and function in that both mitigate the intersection of materiality and immateriality by subordinating the former to the latter. To be a reconciled victim in post-apartheid South Africa, thus, is to accept that apartheid has been defeated, and that a refusal to retaliate violently is the primary evidence that former victims have triumphed morally over former perpetrators. As far as the aesthetic enterprise is concerned, Alexander Baumgarten makes the point well: the task of aesthetics is to 'lift up' the sensory [the material] into the domain of rational science [the immaterial].⁶⁸⁷ Secondly, ever since Baumgarten coined the term in 1750,

⁶⁸⁵ Balme, *The Theatrical Public Sphere*, 5.

⁶⁸⁶ Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 204.

⁶⁸⁷ Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 13-14.

it has been up to ‘aesthetics’ to reconcile the agonistic struggle between the conceptual and the sentient, between rationalism and the chaotic domain of human bodies; or to use colonial nomenclature, between the civilised and the barbaric—a task that was accomplished by subordinating the second term in each of these pairs to the first.⁶⁸⁸ James Currie, for example, notes that ‘aesthetics may be less about Enlightenment per se, and more about defusing the potentially incendiary, revolutionary power of the body and the sensible’.⁶⁸⁹ Thirdly, if the subordination of the material to the immaterial is an inescapable attribute of the aesthetic enterprise, the idea that music—as performance or as pedagogy—could contribute to post-apartheid reconciliation raises fundamental epistemic concerns. The risk here is that, to quote Currie again, ‘enlightened discourse on others (e.g. women, non-Europeans, the masses) is isomorphic with aesthetic discourse, since they are all organized around the colonization of territory by means of reason’.⁶⁹⁰

A common thread running through each of the appraisals of music and/as reconciliation discussed thus far is the reconciliatory salience of aesthetics and/or music in terms of cultural knowledge and meaningfully shared experiences, whilst relegating the physical reality of suffering and impoverishment to some other domain or discipline. In post-apartheid South Africa the subordination of bodily precariousness to cultural understanding, no matter how emphatic the discursive commitment to critique and human dignity, presupposes that such encounters are

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ James R. Currie, ‘Impossible Reconciliations (Barely Heard)’, *Music and Letters*, 88:1 (2007), 123.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 122-123.

possible. One has only to open the TRC report to appreciate how far the idea of an intellectual and aesthetic middle ground is detached from the psychic and bodily trauma of post-apartheid South Africa. Moreover, to invoke the commonly-held principles of an increasingly global human rights as the ultimate moral basis for whatever music sets out to do in the name of reconciliation might in fact only reinforce the current status quo. The moment when reconciliation is bound up discursively with existential claims, the rhetorical troping of reconciliation and social change substitutes self-preservation for any meaningful transformation. What Nick Land has to say about Enlightenment society might then just as well apply to post-apartheid society: ‘an Enlightenment society wants both to learn and to legislate for all time, to open itself to the other and to consolidate itself from within’.⁶⁹¹ ‘Its ultimate dream’, he continues, ‘is to grow whilst remaining identical to what it was, to touch the other without vulnerability’.⁶⁹²

Land is not writing specifically with regard to music. The ambitious task he undertakes is to show how Kant’s three critiques pursue an omnipotent metaphysics that makes available knowledge about an ‘other’ on a purely rational basis; that is, a means of manufacturing knowledge that has no need for dependency, proximity, encounter and precariousness. If the basis of typically scholarly knowledge can be said to reside—at least in part—in a resistance to vulnerability, some of the reasons might emerge as to why we continue to write and compose, despite Krog’s advice to herself and others to ‘shut up’, and despite the knowledge

⁶⁹¹ Nick Land, *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987-2007*, eds. Robin MacKay and Ray Brassier (Falmouth: Urbanomic and Sequence, 2011), 63.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 63-64.

that the beneficiary and the survivor have nothing much to say. Why, to phrase the question as broadly as possible, will beneficiaries of a Western and now an increasingly capitalist hegemony not ‘shut up’ if their arguably fatuous speech exacerbates inequality? There are, we have seen in this chapter, perverse, delusional and boldly existential answers, answers which are mutually constitutive so that the reasons for creative or scholarly production can only ever be articulated integratively as their composite.⁶⁹³ Inasmuch as human rights, justice and reconciliation enable a social contract predicated on exchange rather than the rendering of services, creative and intellectual work claiming to proceed from—or go in pursuit of—these moral ideals invariably partake of a transaction that demands something in return. For the artist and the intellectual, that something is not only a preservationist agenda advanced under the rubrics of diversity and equality. It is also to grasp at immunity, to struggle against the possibility—pathological or real—of losing the socio-economic security and the spaces that inform our cultural expressions as they inform also the ways in which knowing (epistemology) and being (ontology) constitutively inform everything, from metaphysics, to the most basic operations of the everyday. This is not an accusation but a psychic fact of post-collapse societies.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹³ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 43.

⁶⁹⁴ ‘Psychoanalysis holds as a guiding principle the assumption of this tendency: ‘only a patient whose symptoms cause him suffering greater than the gain he gets from repression is willing to relax, step by step, the interior censorship preventing the return to consciousness of what has been denied and forgotten’. See Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behaviour*, trans. Beverley Placzek (New York: Grove Press, 1975), 15.

⁶⁹⁴ 15.

Art and scholarly work, in this light, are ideal 'places' where the positive and the detrimental outcomes of what has not yet been put into practice, the redistribution of resources and opportunities, might be thought through and entertained, but also contained, realised, secured and secured against. Art and scholarship, then, as strategies of vicarious transformation, strategies that vouch for their own humanitarian values, just intentions and blameless ethics.

Epilogue

Border zones and disciplinary impasse: A correspondence between Carina Venter and Stephanus Muller

... after apartheid a resolution is not really possible until the people who wish to impose themselves on Africa violate some essential part of their being.

V. S. Naipaul⁶⁹⁵

What might a musicology that dwelled in the border look like? I don't think it would consist of situating oneself in a violent border zone and there continuing the musicological business of collecting sounds of resistance ... And surely it would not consist of representing border issues—or creating border listening regions through aesthetic forms with broad commercial appeal and cult status—in the academy. On the contrary, I think that if musicologists want to operate in the border they will need to become acutely aware of the material reality of the borders against which they chafe, and be willing to confront in their scholarship the explosive violence that will emerge if they interrogate truly the power relations all borders sustain and reinforce. They will need to recognize the difference between North American musicological tourists' metaphorical fantasies of global freedom and the concrete reality of what Emily Apter theorizes as the 'checkpoint', which regulates traffic of people and goods and ... enacts relations of power through rituals of crossing in which language and translation become matters of life and death.

Tamara Levits⁶⁹⁶

**Prolegomenon: e-mail, Friday 11 July 2014 at 10:08
Subject: At long last**

⁶⁹⁵ V. S. Naipaul, *The Masque of Africa: Glimpses of African Belief* (London: Picador, 2010), 325.

⁶⁹⁶ Tamara Levits, 'Musicology Beyond Borders?', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65:3 (2012), 821-825.

1. You will notice that there is no formatting. The reason: the last operation I perform on any document is 'clear formatting', and then I do the formatting from beginning to end. Easier like that.
2. I am too tired to insert the citations.
3. The work is incomplete.
4. I don't know. I know nothing.
5. I give you a free hand.

E-mail, 11 July 2014 at 10:08

Dear Stephanus

When, in May 2012, we started planning for a conference about music and landscape in Stellenbosch, we knew only one thing: that the migration of a subject steeped in a long tradition of the picturesque – a scopic tradition, moreover, exclusive to Europe and almost always situated as the point of view of empire – could succeed meaningfully only to the extent that the entire endeavour failed.⁶⁹⁷ It strikes me now that *Night is Coming: A Threnody for the Victims of Marikana* – Kaganof's devastating filmic meditation on that conference – might help us formulate the inevitability of failure we felt instinctively but could not articulate other than reverting to generalisation and cliché.⁶⁹⁸

Kaganof has not distinguished himself in the domain of institutional ethics, which explains the sharply divergent responses to the film. Some of the harsher interpretations it has invited can be summarised in a few sentences. Kaganof rather unsubtly coerces academic discourse into a causal relation that culminates in Marikana, and once he gets going with this idea (in the first two minutes of the film) he

⁶⁹⁷ The Hearing Landscape Critically: Music, Place, and the Spaces of Sound Conference took place at Stellenbosch University (South Africa), 9-11 September 2013. The conference formed part of the Hearing Landscape Critically research network (HLC), an interdisciplinary and inter-continental project that ran from 2013-2016 with funding provided by the Leverhulme Trust. The HLC team, led by the principal investigator Daniel Grimley, has organised conferences at the University of Oxford, Stellenbosch University and Harvard University to date. More information is available on their website, www.hearinglandscapecritically.net.

⁶⁹⁸ Aryan Kaganof (dir.), *Night is Coming: A Threnody for the Victims of Marikana* [film], <http://hearinglandscapecritically.net/2015/02/25/night-is-coming-threnody-for-the-victims-of-marikana-film-by-aryan-kaganof>.

never stops.⁶⁹⁹ There is no sign of the obvious perpetrators. Those higher echelons of the mining industry and the SA government living off the spoils of global capitalism are apparently let off the hook onto which, instead, is hung a small gathering of academics and their ostensibly progressive ideas. One could list the film's protagonists: the Marikana Massacre (2012), a conference on music and landscape in Stellenbosch (2013), and somewhere caught between human devastation and academic claptrap, a hapless blind melancholic who, with the aid of Samuel Becket, a rocker and a braille typer, is just sitting and rocking and sitting and dying.

The question that spawns such institutional outrage, it seems to me, is the one that a conference delegate and eminent South African musicologist has put to me in a recent email. He wanted to know what Marikana had to do with an academic conference about music and landscape in Stellenbosch. Perhaps not incidentally, this is precisely the question that is engaged by the film and, I suspect, the question with which we ourselves must grapple.

Night is Coming develops from an aporia – an omission, we are told at the beginning of the film, of the Marikana massacre from a conference that concerns itself with music and landscape. When Kaganof describes the film as ‘theorising through Marikana’, he substitutes a particular landscape and a particular event for theory. The result is that Marikana defines a point of view that is then set to work theoretically on the conference. Kaganof’s film is not, as one might reasonably expect, informed by the intellectual and critical gains emerging from the HLC conference; instead it theorises the conference and its fundamental ideological and aesthetic commitments through the omitted event of Marikana. What happens to theory (as seeing) and to criticism (as cutting) when their discursive strategies are supplanted by those mostly disposable bodies of the dead and the disfigured?

Best,
Carina

⁶⁹⁹ The Marikana Massacre occurred in 2012 on 16 August, when the South African Police and Defence Force opened fire on striking miners at Lonmin’s platinum mines near Rustenburg. What started as a peaceful agitation for higher wages concluded in the death of 34 miners, many of whom were shot at point-blank range.

E-mail, 15 July 2014 at 9:17

Dear Carina

It is at your name where I have to begin. Carina. What does it mean that I address you thus? Not: what does it mean if someone calls you 'Carina'. But what does it mean that I, the man called Stephanus Muller, calls you 'Carina'. It is a singular interpellation, uniquely meaningful because it is I who speak the name 'Carina'. It does not mean that you are known by someone. It means: I, Stephanus Muller, knows you in the way that only I, Stephanus Muller, can know you.

I cannot move beyond the fact that you write a letter to me, Stephanus, by referring to our mutual friend Aryan as 'Kaganof'. What does it mean when you refer to 'Kaganof'? It means that you don't know him as 'Aryan'. But I know that you do. That must mean that you disown him as 'Aryan' in order to write this letter to me about *Night is Coming*. It is uniquely meaningful that you do this, as only you, Carina, know Aryan in the singular way that he is known by the person called Carina. Therefore, making him into 'Kaganof' in this letter is something that only the person called Carina can do. What that means can only be answered by you.

Best wishes,
Stephanus

E-mail, 16 July 2014 at 7:18

Dear Stephanus

You ask what happens when I make 'Aryan' into 'Kaganof'. I fear you are moving too hastily, so I can only try to end my letter where the one I wrote yesterday began.

The text you understood to be a letter addressed by Carina to Stephanus does, of its own admission, not as yet know what it is. Here is the opening of the letter I began on 28 June, the day that we decided to pursue the possibility of a correspondence.

Dear Stephanus

Let me begin with a confession. Most of this letter will be invisible to its reader. Not only have I erased the many false starts of writing, but – most crucially – also those thoughts which, once given concrete form, struck me as too intrusive, too transgressive, too haphazard, too close to the body doing the writing. The result is a text cleansed of the waste and the miscarriages that inevitably accompany the slow process of turning thoughts into written matter. It seems to me that this conceit is brutally undermined in the film *Night is Coming*. The film is a study in the art of decontextualisation as content and deformation as form.

The letter you expected and never received begins, as if by strange foresight, by declaring its invisibility. Folded into this declaration – perhaps it is a confession – is all the rivenness that writing, for whatever reason, is unable to master. This one sentence perhaps conveys the paralysis that sets in when what cannot ever be reconciled can also no longer be kept apart. As the work of a craftsman, it borders on deception. As the work of a craftsman with a body, what appears on the surface as deception is also an admission of the profound helplessness at the realisation that one's own language has broken down, even before signification could begin.

The last lecture Adorno gave – only three months before he died of a heart attack – dramatises the limits of his own philosophy. Those limits, I think, map the metaphysics of the existence Bataille metaphorises as an empty eye socket. Here is how one author describes what happened on that day:

‘Just as he started to speak, SDS members in the audience started to jeer at him. A perplexed Adorno stopped and asked the students whether they wanted to hear the lecture or not. At that moment three young women in black leather jackets stood up and approached Adorno at his desk. First they sprinkled flower petals on his head and kissed him, then all at once they snapped open their jackets and flashed three sets of naked breasts just inches from the old man's face. Adorno was dumbfounded. He jumped to his feet, clutching his briefcase before his face as if his life depended on it. And perhaps it did. Historian Guido Knopp, at that time a student seated in the front row, watched in horror as tears streamed down the great philosopher's cheeks. An assistant led Adorno out of the room, treading on leaflets the SDS had just

distributed bearing the prophetic words “Adorno as an institution is dead”⁷⁰⁰.

In the room with the ‘battleship grey’ walls that, the writer tells us, Adorno had painted specially to insure that his students would not be distracted during lectures, it is the tears, the shame, the paralysis that signify, not the orderly impartation of ideas occasioned by the lecture situation. There is a distressing element about this entire scene. Looking on as Adorno is confronted by the scantily clad students – the pathetic and helpless figure he cuts – seems not very far from voyeurism. The unease has to do with beholding the terrified vulnerability of another human being – in this case also one of the most prolific thinkers of the previous century. It is worthwhile recalling that the closest Adorno ever came to autobiography – literally the self writing its own bios – was, in fact, not at all an autobiography but a book of aphorisms subtitled ‘reflections on a damaged life’.⁷⁰¹

Taking in the scene itself, a site of signification that exceeds provocation and embarrassment, one might turn to the figure of metonymy. Adorno’s startled response as he shelters behind the briefcase marks a moment of voluntary blindness, a moment in which the briefcase functions metonymically as the rational and ordered domain of philosophy, university, institution. The briefcase as mechanism of defence is in the same instant also the instrument that inflicts blindness: that is, the ordered and rational speech of philosophy forfeits its sight and its signifiatory potential as bodily collapse sets in. The terminal state of alienation writ large over Adorno’s work here, in this last event, shatters its self-invented confines as it turns on its own body: a body so alienated that it can only recoil from sensuality and rebellious seduction, even from the possibility of playful or intimate becoming.

To return, then, to the question: what has Marikana to do with a conference about music and landscape? As long as discourse is restricted to ordered speech about itself, the answer is nothing and the outcome is stasis (catalysis). But chaos as precisely what defies regulation and intention can,

⁷⁰⁰ Noah Isenberg, ‘Critical Theory at the Barricades’, *Lingua Franca* (November 1998), <http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/9811/inside.html>.

⁷⁰¹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005).

in fact, not always be stabilised discursively. This, I think, is the last profound insight Adorno – willingly or not – bequeathed us. And it leads onto a different, if not unrelated question: how might academic discourse best avoid stasis?

Best,
Carina

E-mail, 15 July 2014, 20:17

Dear Carina

Everything hinges on this. ‘Kaganof’ is the briefcase, ‘Aryan’ the chiasm. If *Night is Coming* is to be read as text, it makes all the difference whether you, Carina, read it as having been made by ‘Kaganof’ or by ‘Aryan’. It doesn’t matter at all what anyone else calls him, as long as that name, for them, is his true name. For the person I know as Carina, I had understood that the film was made by Aryan. For me it was made by Aryan. I therefore cannot discuss a film called *Night is Coming* by Kaganof.

Best wishes,
Stephanus

E-mail, 16 July 2014, 7:18

Dear Stephanus

If, in what I wrote, the briefcase is Kaganof and the chiasm Aryan, in what you wrote the briefcase is Aryan, the chiasm a disowning that takes place prior to addressing ‘Aryan’ as ‘Kaganof’. For me the chiasm marks an intersection between what is and what, at times, takes flight from writing, and it marks also a multiplication. Perhaps our immediate task is to find out what is multiplied, and how.

Psychoanalysis allows for a more rigorous appreciation of the human body in a state of vulnerability, maintaining that moments of disorder and pain are at the same time ‘moments of tremendous potential and creativity’. Taking childbirth as the literal and metaphorical chiasm of death and life,

our analyst friend argues her more difficult understanding of embodied vulnerability.⁷⁰² The body in labour – contracting, gasping, tearing – is also the body that creates an opening. It is a state experienced as dangerous, painful, brutally and profoundly vulnerable, and as a possible becoming.

The notion that embodied vulnerability (chaos, distress and possibility) take over when reason and philosophy collapse, returns us to *Night is Coming*, irrespective of whether it was made by ‘Aryan’ or ‘Kaganof’.

Very best,
Carina

E-mail, 16 July 2014, 8:20

Dear Carina

How are you? How is your health? How are your family? I still laugh about that story of the skaapkoppe you told me, and then think of my harmony and counterpoint teacher at university. But that is another story. What is the weather like this time of year in Oxford? Have you had many sunny days? I suppose you don’t much get to wear that expensive blue coat that Aryan and I helped you spend your hard-earned pounds on in the P.C. Hoofdstraat in Amsterdam.

I try to remember the kind of deep blue, but my sense of colour, you know, is to the left or right of normative (wherever that is). And the name of the French designer of the coat? You know that my memory is not, well, dependable, and remembering the names of French designer coats is beyond me. I even see the image of the name. It starts with a ‘C’, I think. I see the luxurious carrier bag in my mind’s eye as it stands on my bed in my 13th floor (was it the 13th floor?) Amsterdam hotel room next to the Tropenmuseum, just after we’d bought it and we did a reading of the Gide with Aryan. The bag, you’d be interested to know, is in Aryan’s film *Night is Coming*. It sticks out behind you as you tell that moving story about washing your eyes. But because of my

⁷⁰² Lou-Marie Kruger, ‘Childbirth and the Breakdown of Narrative Order’, *Psycho-analytic Psychotherapy in South Africa*, 13:2 (2005), 1-23.

disastrous memory, I cannot make that image into a word.

I like the fact that we've decided to write to each other. It is a civilised thing to do. Thank you, by the way, for your e-mail. It arrived here, but it is invisible.

Till soon,
Stephanus

E-mail, 16 July 2014, 11:23

Dear Stephanus

I have been trying to understand what it means when your address comes to me in a language neither yours nor mine. It means, I think, that the address is no longer a singular interpellation that summons the one that is known to you, and only to you, as Carina. The civilising gesture is not that we write to one another, it is that we write to one another in a language that speaks neither of us. It is to address one another at a remove (or rather, at a double remove). This double remove, the speaking between parentheses, is also an invitation addressed to what, for lack of a better collective noun, I will simply refer to as the audience. The shift is subtle, much more subtle than that between Aryan and Kaganof, and therefore all the more significant. Are you addressing the singular Carina or the one that must be read by others? Put another way, is this 'Carina' just another word that is invisible to me, or is it the 'Carina' who wishes to remind you that the coat is black, not blue. A great deal, I think, hinges also on this.

Best,
Carina

E-mail, 16 July 2014, 7:20

Dear Carina

English, you are right, serves us both poorly. But it has its uses. I am interested in dancing in this language with the Carina who will dispute with me the colour of the blue coat, and therefore the Carina who is known to me and only

me as Carina. However, I must decline politely to pretend that the coat is a figment of my imagination. We have to hang on to that coat for dear life. Without it, Carina disappears into English. It is, in other words, an indispensable coat. I would even venture to say: a magic coat.

I must confess I have always wanted a proper winter coat. I think it is one of my most fundamental regrets about living in South Africa, the fact that such a coat would be a waste of money because it is just never cold enough to wear it. I also know what coat I want: a bottle green German Hubertusmantel, a Lodenmantel. I don't know why. I think it is because it looks slightly mysterious, slightly old-fashioned, and very definitely out of place in Africa, making it exotic. Of course, a young man cannot just dress in a Hubertusmantel. I think one needs to be on the wrong side of 35 to wear it with any semblance of dignity. One of the good things about ageing, is that I may start become more sensitive to the cold in old age. This means that I could perhaps, some time in future, buy the coat and use it. Who knows. It is one of my dreams.

Warmest,
S

E-mail, 16 July 2014 at 2:03

Dear Stephanus

The person in the black or blue coat whose luxurious bag you have spied out in Aryan's film is also wondering how to proceed with the jointly-authored paper we are trying to write.

All the best,
Carina

E-mail, 16 July 2014 at 11:21

Dear Carina

I notice that between the important discussions of coats you

slipped in the little concession of speaking of 'Aryan's film'. Perhaps it was panic at the direction our conversation was taking, perhaps just a little glitch. I admit that it is a trifling matter compared to your coat, but for me it makes all the difference. Aryan's film, *Night is Coming*, relies entirely on pivoting the private and the public in a gesture of non-betrayal. This seems to me entirely different to your Kaganof character, who sounds quite unscrupulous to me, to be honest.

Aryan's *Night is Coming*, I should think, is about speaking and not the foreclosure of speaking. I think it does the unthinkable by presuming the courage required to speak back to it. In this, it depends to a large degree on the pact between you and him. Kaganof clearly had no such pact, made no such a calculated decision, does not trust that anyone other than he possesses the courage to see and hear, cannot imagine someone speaking back or even vaguely comprehending. Aryan's film humanises, not by refusing to rationalise, but by responding to what I will call the imperative of the coat.

Yours,
Stephanus

E-mail, 16 July 2014 at 14:03

Dear Stephanus

As someone who knows me and that dear coat very well, do you think the paper we are trying to write should begin elsewhere?

Best,
Carina

E-mail (unsent), 17 July 2014 at 8:59

Dear Carina

I think this is an excellent suggestion. Adorno, whether confronted with breasts or not, is perhaps a bit heavy going

if one wants to get a move on. He really sets a very grey tone (presuming of course it is not a blue or a black tone).

I like the Docherty quote that you sent me in your visible e-mail of 11 July:

‘The return to a specific “metaphysical” attitude in criticism is indicative of the fact that we are proceeding beyond what Badiou describes as “the age of the poets”, beyond the “linguistic turn” in philosophy and criticism; and the consequence is a slightly humbler mood for a criticism which no longer pretends that the world can be seen as text, that political issues are merely matters of discourse, that poetry, even “the poetry of the future”, might be “capable of saving us”’.⁷⁰³

What about starting there?

Best,
Stephanus

E-mail, 11 July 2014 at 10:08

Dear Stephanus

The place from which I myself write is that of the broken promise. It is a place of betrayal, a place I regard as deeply inimical to writing and creative thought and, in fact, inimical also to life itself. That place, in the final event, also overreaches poetry; it is a body, a body possessed by this writer who is in turn possessed by that body. It is a body whose particular disfigurement had a great deal to do with subsequently initiating a project about landscape and music. The South African landscape as an object for aesthetic and intellectual contemplation, is also that place where we ourselves play at betrayal, a sight/site that inflicts blindness even as it promises visibility. My sense is that Aryan's act of non-betrayal, I will even call it an act of love, could not have happened without a certain measure of betrayal to which you were also party. Or is the gazing ear of the camera that is invisible to me

⁷⁰³ Thomas Docherty, *Alterities: Criticism, History, Representation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 2-3.

unless it declares its presence something other than a ruse and a betrayal and a massive leap of faith all at once?

What must be conceded is that the film is about betrayal. Broken promises proliferate: a discussion that did not take place at the conference; the ablution facilities that never got repaired; the man in the wheelchair who has waited for 26 years, and is still waiting; the ANC that forgot all their promises once in power; the Lonmin executives who promised to meet with the striking miners on 16 August 2012 and never turned up; the hearses parked near the doomed landscape, patiently waiting to receive the corpses of miners already from six o'clock on the morning of the massacre; the well-known South African poet and writer who so flagrantly betrays his art; the Biblical parable that promises something it won't deliver.

It seems to me that the broken promises, thwarted expectations and the betrayals share with Badiou's work the sense that poetry can no longer save us. If there is any respite, any chance of redemption, it is what the immediate and inescapable extremities of South Africa – but not only South Africa – demand of us: to begin outside the text, with an event, with 34 dead bodies, and also with our own embodied vulnerability, as an imperative for intellectual and creative work in an age beyond poetry.

Understood thus, the betrayal practised by the raging 'Jew with his camera' is, I would suggest, also the condition of a new ethics.

All the best,
Carina

E-mail 20 July 2014 at 01:31

Dear Carina

It is so easy to write away from the body and the bodies, loci of the catastrophe and the catastrophes. The temptations, O the temptations. Take that last sentence. It is clothed in the armour of the turned phrase, of the measured rhythm, of the dramatic effect, of the poetic repetition. Long before it entered into complicity with theory or convention the language pimps itself to rhetoric, and carries on with its dealings, unheeding the corpses.

There it is again, the previous sentence. And the previous one. Taking flight, loving itself.

But as you will ask me in the next e-mail, could we ever consider raising the stakes for academic work? It shouldn't be too difficult, as academic work has suffered from incremental inflation in which the stakes have been steadily lowered to the sweatshop equivalent of brand production. The meat market of the American Musicological Society. But that's not what you will be asking me, and therefore not the question I will not be answering.

I must at this point extract myself from the correspondence for the simple reason that I cannot for any length of time occupy the dark world in which you move. I am leaving for the light, leaving you behind, hoping to see you before long in that blue coat of yours, perhaps even go shopping for a brooch that will look good on that coat, who knows. I'm not promising anything. Betrayal is always just round the corner.

Good luck in wrapping things up. One option is just to end with the title of the paper, as I know you do. That always seals things very satisfactorily.

Look after yourself,
Stephanus

E-mail 20 July 2014 at 13:13

Dear Carina

Please exchange 'armour' in my last e-mail with 'coat'.

S

E-mail, 19 July 2014 at 05:59

Subject: The empty socket of an eye

Dear Stephanus

The paper we are trying to write, I concede, must begin

elsewhere. I'm impelled, somewhat against my will, to the invisible letter of 28 June. Bataille, the brutally honest craftsman whose feelings for his blind father was paradoxical to the extent of personal crisis, has articulated with extraordinary and moving precision the rivenness, past, present and future, folded into the opening sentence of that effaced letter I wrote on 28 June and then decided to withhold:

‘the lot and the infinite tumult of human life were open to those who could no longer exist as empty eye sockets, but as seers swept away by an overwhelming dream they could not own’.⁷⁰⁴

I now think about the text I sent instead of the 28 June letter as belonging to the class of dreamless empty eye sockets. You would have recognised at once the vacuous lapse into cliché and the contemptuous ironisation of chronically kitsch inspirationalism, and along the way also a caricature of those well-wishers at the ready to defend the blind woman in Kaganof's film against the opportunism of her devotees. The omniscience and the predictable mockery make for a rather sterile beginning for a letter written to the person I know as Stephanus.

And yet, the dexterity and the unexpected registral swerves have bestowed on our dance in another language a measure of illegibility that is also its richest moment of possibility.

Poetry might not be able to save us, but it might at least be able to save us and our letters from ourselves. I find myself clinging to poetry with dogged superstition despite the untruthfulness of parables and stories and poems etched into this disenchanted body. What remains is to own up to the imperative of the coat. The black or blue coat marks a moment of sovereign possibility, a moment that Aryan and Stephanus and Carina could not have brought about individually. And so it should also be with this correspondence.

If we thus refuse to distinguish between the friend writing this letter and her public persona, between invisibility as ‘what is’ and visibility as ‘what is made’; if, like in Aryan's film, we thus pivot the private and the public, is it to live more easily alongside ourselves and to attend

⁷⁰⁴ Georges Bataille, ‘The Sacred Conspiracy’, in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, trans. Alan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 181.

always to possibility, or might we risk raising the stakes for academic work through the paper we are trying to write? It is, you will recall, a paper about catastrophe and Marikana, one entitled 'The blind filmmaker and his pictures'.

Warmly
Carina

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