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# MUSIC AND MUSICAL CULTURE IN EZRA POUND AND T.S. ELIOT

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted either in whole or in part to any other University for the award of any other degree.

*Jane Pendry*

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## SUMMARY

This thesis explores how the cultural models of the past illuminate connections between literature and music, and offer a culturally and historically secure basis of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic novelty against which to frame the innovations of fresh, modernist ideas. Ezra Pound returns to the music of the troubadours to find a dynamic engagement with the musical rhythm of words, and frames *The Pisan Cantos* using a verbal polyphony which is structured from the motifs, ideas, reminiscences and sounds from history and his own past. T.S. Eliot uses the rhythms of popular music – ragtime and the cake-walk, particularly in his early work – to undermine poetry's feminised social norms, and develops his distinctive poetic voice in *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* through an interpretation of the musical ideas he encounters in the music of Wagner, Stravinsky and Beethoven.

Deeply influenced by the effects of the First World War, concepts of time – past, present, future – and timelessness resonate throughout Pound's *Pisan Cantos* and Eliot's *Four Quartets.* Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* sheds light on Pound's use of recurrent motifs, his destabilisation of rhythm, his use of patterns woven from history and memory, his awareness of birdsong, and his understanding of the musical structures which infuse troubadour poetry. Eliot engages with the form and construction of Beethoven's A minor String Quartet (Op.132), transforming and re-interpreting the motif of 'time' to confer unity on his cycle of *Four Quartets*, as well as dislocating metre and accent, and adapting traditional forms to find a new voice. Engaging with the traditions of music, Pound and Eliot re-interpret the traditions and language of poetry.

**MUSIC AND MUSICAL CULTURE IN**

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# MUSIC AND MUSICAL CULTURE IN

# EZRA POUND AND T.S. ELIOT

## INTRODUCTION

*Poetry begins to atrophy when it gets too far from music*
Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading*[1]

Modernist literature has often been explained and explored through a comparison to the visual arts,[2] but there are now equally informative and illustrative parallels being drawn between modernist literature and music.[3] In this thesis I explore the influence of music and musical culture in the work of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, drawing clear analogies between musical and poetic forms and structures, examining the aesthetic and philosophical backdrops to the impact of such interactions, and determining the extent and nature of the effects which music exerts on their poetic composition. The emphasis on musical culture is key. Placing Pound in the context of the Early Music revival shows how he shared the aims and even the prejudices of those musicians who wanted to

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[1] Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1934), p. 14.
[2] Rebecca Beasley, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[3] See for example, Emma Sutton, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); John Xiros Cooper ed. *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Michelle L. Witen, *James Joyce and Absolute Music* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); Nathan Waddell, *Moonlighting: Beethoven and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). More wide-ranging studies on music and literature include Maggie Humm, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Frances Dickey and John D. Morgenstern, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to T.S. Eliot and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Delia de Sousa Correa, ed. *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); and Catherine Brown and Susan Reid, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to D.H. Lawrence and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

rediscover old forms and re-establish medieval and renaissance instruments, who disdained mass culture, and who wanted to reconstruct the relationship between the élite artist and the élite audience. Pound's scholarly retrieval of the troubadour tradition, and especially his understanding of the connection between the rhythm of troubadour poetry and the rhythm of its music (since all troubadour poetry was sung), enabled him – and even imbued him with the authority – to present himself as a modern troubadour, standing outside 'convention', and, looking inwards, to criticise and excise the superfluous, wordy, imprecise and careless diction of Victorian and Georgian poetics. While he is interested in technical questions about rhythm and sound, Pound is simultaneously engaged in a grander revisionary endeavour involving a re-engagement with a lost literature and a lost tradition, with the deeper rapport between poetry and music, and with the sensibilities of the European past. Eliot's use of music is different. His cultural and musical models, and the contexts in which he discovered and explored music from American, African-American, and global traditions while in Paris and then London, were different from Pound's experiences, but his aims were similar: to use music as a way of discovering a new expression in language. In this study, a detailed exploration of how musical forms and techniques affected poetic form and language and an assessment of musical cultural influences are mutually important, the one supporting the other in defining the significance of music to both Pound's and Eliot's poetic development.

While the nineteenth century witnessed the development of deeper perceptual connections between the arts, represented distinctively in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* music dramas of Richard Wagner, modernist writers, composers and artists explored ever more diverse and, sometimes, experimental intermedialities[4] in order to test aesthetic

[4] Gemma Moss uses the term 'intermedial' in her chapter 'Classical Music and Literature' in *Sound and Literature,* ed. Anna Snaith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) pp. 92-113, citing Daniel Albright's view that 'modernist art is inherently interdisciplinary and intermedial' (p.

boundaries. The fascination with music, with its ability to represent what cannot be communicated through verbal language, with its abstract expression of what Schopenhauer calls 'the essence of human emotion',[5] and with its supposed direct transmission of 'meaning' to the listener,[6] is intensified by music's capacity to allow us to experience time as an interwoven simultaneity of past, present and future. Through a close investigation of specific musical forms and structures and their apparent parallels in the poetry of Pound and Eliot, I explore the influence which music, and 'musical time', exerts on their writing, suggesting that it was the essentially abstract nature of music, where 'meaning' is less fixed and stable, which was so fascinating for the modernists.[7] This fluidity, combined with music's capacity to exist both within a temporal framework – it occurs 'in time' – and outside that temporal framework, where the use of repetition, formal structure, paraphrase, and stasis alter the perception of time, offered a new perspective on language.

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94), and calling Wagner 'the archetypal (in the sense of combining different media) artist and theorist' (p. 96). In his introduction to the *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature – Image – Sound – Music* (Berlin and Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2015), Gabriele Rippl explains the meaning of the term: 'Generally speaking, the term "intermediality" refers to the relationships between media and is hence used to describe a huge range of cultural phenomena which involve more than one medium' (p. 1). He continues: 'As a central notion in the analysis of the arts . . . the concept of intermediality allows for a reading of literary texts against the backdrop of their cultural and medial contexts from systematic and historical perspectives' (p. 2).

[5] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, ed. by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), vol. I, p. 289.

[6] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 5–7 and 35. Meyer suggests that embodied meaning in music is a function of expectation, represented by (1) hedonism, a confusion of aesthetic experience with what is aesthetically pleasing; (2) atomism, an explanation of music as a succession of separable, discrete sounds, which are the result of learned experience; and (3) universalism, where responses to music are natural, and are defined by their physical effects on the body. He describes all three explanations as 'interrelated errors' (p. 5). In his study *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Jeremy S. Begbie acknowledges that 'Music always, to some extent, embodies social and cultural reality – no matter how individually produced, no matter how autonomous with respect to intended function, no matter how intertwined with the circumstances of a particular composer' (p. 13).

[7] Delia da Sousa Correa, *Phrase and Subject: Studies in Literature and Music* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 1. Quoting from Susanne Langer's 1942 study, *Philosophy in a New Key*, contrasting the 'fixed connotation[s]' of verbal language with the 'indefinite nature of musical expression', which 'has the power to express contradictory emotions', Correa rebuts this view with more recent theories of language and literature which 'do not share Langer's confidence in the stable referentiality of language'.

For many of the modernists of Pound and Eliot's generation, the musical aesthetic of the past, where performers and musicians were much more than mere commodities, was an important way of countering the industrialised twentieth century. Above all, the noticeably mechanised First World War was noisy,[8] and the music of the past, from apparently more regulated societies and more 'civilised' times, offered an escape from the mounting cacophony.[9] Early keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord and the clavichord, and stringed instruments such as the viol and the lute,[10] offered new and more authentic means of performing the music of the past, and suggested, especially to Pound, forms and rhythms which could be adapted and restructured for the new century. They also provided an alternative to the piano, and to its even more mechanical relative the pianola, which, to many musicians and artists, were the epitome of the industrialisation of art and musical performance.[11] For Eliot, it was the re-discovery of American musical style, re-worked and re-evaluated in Paris, which was deeply influential, his writing inspired by a fusion and intermingling of the 'high-' and 'low-brow', Western and non-Western, Eurocentric and cosmopolitan, white and black. Living in Paris, and then London, also enabled Eliot to encounter the innovative orchestral sounds

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[8] Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 1–2. See also James G. Mansell, 'Noise' in *Sound and Literature,* ed. by Anna Snaith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 154-169 (pp.156-159).

[9] In *Proof Through the Night*, Glenn Watkins identifies a pastoral musical style which recalls the rural idyll of a vanishing England, particularly in the songs of George Butterworth (p. 51), and in the English folksong movement represented by Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams (pp. 59-60).

[10] Arnold Dolmetsch championed the music of the English Renaissance, playing instruments he had copied from originals found in museums. The lutenist Diana Poulton was closely connected to writers such as T.E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound through the salon at Frith Street (see Thea Abbott, *Diana Poulton: The Lady with the Lute* (Norwich: Smokehouse Press, 2013) pp. 23-27).

[11] The original musical score to Fernand Léger's film *Ballet Mécanique* (1923-1924) was written by American composer, and friend of Ezra Pound, George Antheil (although score and film were not actually put together until 2000). The orchestration – entirely for 'mechanical' instruments – includes sixteen pianolas, a siren, three propellors and at least seven electric bells (see Townsend Ludington ed., *A Modern Mosaic: Art and Modernism in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) p. 185).

pioneered by Igor Stravinsky, as well as offering the opportunity to find a reinterpretation of the present in the music of Beethoven.[12]

In her study, Gemma Moss summarises a range of approaches – philosophical, social, historical, aesthetic, sensory, intermedial – taken by writers in their response to music. In surveying a number of different methodologies in scholarship, she charts different critical viewpoints linking music and literature.[13] Daniel Albright views modernist art as inherently interdisciplinary and intermedial;[14] Peter Dayan, Delia da Sousa Correa, Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis explore the close connections between words and music stretching back into the nineteenth century, and Correa also looks at music and literature from a feminist perspective.[15] The inescapable influence of Wagner is explored by many writers including Raymond Furness and Martin Stoddard, and the enthusiasm of British Wagnerism, which is so influential in Aubrey Beardsley and Virginia Woolf, is surveyed by Emma Sutton.[16] Mark Byron explains how musical episodes and scores can arise at moments of compositional complexity, since the intrusion of musical scores – such as the Janequin transcription which forms Pound's *Canto LXXV*[17] – not only 'stalls

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[12] Nathan Waddell, *Moonlighting: Beethoven and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[13] Gemma Moss, 'Classical Music and Literature', in *Sound and Literature*, ed. by Anna Snaith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 92–113. For a general overview, see pp. 93-99. Moss makes clear that she is largely discussing 'classical music', as in 'art music' (p. 92).

[14] Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*: *Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

[15] Peter Dayan, *Music Writing Literature: From Sand via Debussy to Derrida* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis, eds., *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2013).

[16] Raymond Furness, *Wagner and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982); Martin Stoddard, *Wagner to 'The Waste Land': A Study of the Relationship between Wagner and English Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), and *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Philip Waldron, 'The Music of Poetry: Wagner in "The Waste Land"', *Journal of Modern Literature* 18.4 (1993), 421–34; Aakanksha Virkar- Yates, 'Absolute Music and the Death of Desire: Beethoven, Schopenhauer, Wagner and T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets', *Journal of Modern Literature* 40.2 (2016), 79–93.

[17] Mark Byron, 'Musical Scores and Literary Form in Modernism: Ezra Pound's "Pisan Cantos" and Samuel Beckett's "Watt"' in Delia da Sousa Correa, ed., *Phrase and Subject: Studies in Music and Literature* (London: Routledge, 2017) pp. 87-98, and particularly pp. 87 and 96.

the act of reading', but also 'signals an immediate and specific challenge to literary form'.[18] Josh Epstein's wide-ranging exploration of music and 'noise' generates interestingly provocative arguments about their importance in race, gender, class and national politics in the twentieth century.[19] Moss also examines some philosophical explorations of the responses elicited by music. She cites Andrew Bowie's analysis of the impact of Wagner's philosophies and compositional innovations, as well as outlining more general perspectives on musical aesthetics.[20] Moss also weighs up the connection between absolute music (divorced from words and meanings) and German Romanticism, and the 'absolute' poetry of the French Symbolists.[21] While acknowledging the enormous influence and importance of Wagner and his musical concepts of the *leitmotif,* 'endless melody', and thematic transformation for the development of many modernist writers, I argue that the social, historical, intermedial and philosophical connections between literature and music are mutually interdependent, and find that it is through a more precise engagement with the language and structures of music that Pound and Eliot propel their search for a new means of poetic expression. In examining the influence of music on poetics from a more technically musical perspective, I contend that Pound and Eliot make new forms by echoing older, recovered, lost, disregarded yet still evocative and pertinent ones. The restoration of past sounds and sound-making in Pound and in Eliot shows an awareness of the weight and importance of historical resonances, historical memories, and historical mnemonics. In aesthetic and philosophical terms, I focus on how far Theodor Adorno's Schoenberg/Stravinsky paradigm might apply to Pound/Eliot, and how, for both poets, a dialogue with the musical past transfigures their biographical experiences, and their

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[18] Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: New Directions, 2003), pp. 28–29.
[19] Josh Epstein, *Sublime Noise: Musical Culture and the Modernist Writer* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).
[20] Andrew Bowie, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, Modern European Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1–14.
[21] See also Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 18–41 and 141–55.

remembered images of places and people heard and seen, to resolve each one's very different struggle to come to terms with a world in conflict, and with very different understandings of personal, religious, and political eschatologies.

The thesis falls into two parts. The first explores Pound's interest in music and the effect this had on the development of his poetic voice. In particular, he turned to the models of the past to discover a new and unexplored style, and found in the freshly-discovered writing, music and art-work of a pre-industrialised age a means of renewing and rediscovering his creativity. Chapter One explores how Pound's involvement with music, and especially with the flourishing revival of medieval music, is crucial to his development. The musical (as opposed to literary) salon is also shown to be an important nexus for the exchange of artistic ideas, and the musical connoisseurs who gathered in the fashionable drawing-rooms and salons of London and Paris, such as those which were assembled by the Sitwells or Violet Gordon Woodhouse, found in this new, 'early' music and art something exclusive which they could keep for themselves. Pound's growing interest in the music of the troubadours is examined in Chapter Two, and shows that his highly sensitive appreciation of the rhythms of troubadour poetry led him to understand the rhythmic interpretation of the music in ways which correspond to a more modern approach, and indeed anticipate the conclusions of recent musicologists. Denied the social connections which might have allowed him to break into upper-class intellectual and artistic circles, Pound left London for good in 1920, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* written as an epitaph to the 'rotten shell of a crumbling empire'.[22] Chapter Three explores Pound's musicality and his adoption of a type of vocal/historical polyphony in writing *The Pisan Cantos* (1945), and draws a comparison with Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (1941). Like Pound's *Pisan Cantos*, Messiaen's *Quatuor* was written in a prison camp, and philosophical and spiritual questions and

[22] Ezra Pound, 'Through Alien Eyes I', *The New Age*, 12.11 (1913), 252 (p. 252).

concerns are importantly played out in both works, the very real threat of imminent execution all too evident in Pound's preoccupation with past, present and future.

The second half of the thesis looks at T.S. Eliot's engagement with music, and his cultural experiences in Paris during the period 1910-11 are examined in Chapter Four. Many commentators have regarded the music Eliot encountered in Paris as representing a completely new discovery for him, but it seems clear that he experienced instead a re-working and re-imagining of a familiar *American* musical language and style, which were hugely popular in the early years of twentieth-century Paris. Composers such as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel and Erik Satie all enthusiastically incorporated American musical forms such as ragtime and jazz into their compositions, refreshing an over-worked musical style which was highly Romanticised and dependent on Wagner. Freshly liberated from protective maternal oversight, Eliot was likewise exposed to a distinctly new Parisian world of cabaret, night-club singers, and bars, as well as to the innovative theatrical, operatic, ballet and concert performances which marked out the cultural life of the city. The extent to which Eliot's composition of *The Waste Land* (1922) is influenced by his musical experiences in Paris and in London, both before and after the First World War, is set out in Chapter Five. The effect on Eliot of a range of different musical styles is elaborated: popular music, Wagner's operas, and Stravinsky's music for *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913), where the 'voice' of traditional folk music reaches back into a primitive, more deeply historicised time, before mechanisation and industrialisation corrupted society. It seems, therefore, that music offered Eliot a resolution to some of the ethical and moral dilemmas presented in the aftermath of the First World War.

The final chapter explores the ways in which Eliot relates the language of *Four Quartets* to the music of Beethoven's late string quartets, and in particular to the A minor String Quartet (1825). In his *Theology, Music and Time,* Jeremy Begbie acknowledges that music functions not simply to make 'reality' audible, or as a demonstration of ordered change, but to enable us to come to terms with temporal differentiation.[23] The parallels between Beethoven and Eliot, and between Messiaen and Pound, which are made here can therefore be seen to reveal a deeper connection through their understanding of time. Music is defined by time: by the rhythmic stresses implicit in melody, and in the pace of harmonic tension; by the suspension of pulse and in the displacement of accent; by its existence only in the present moment while dependent on the recollection of style and the anticipation of convention. Pound and Eliot were interested in music – in polyphony, rhythmic disruption, jazz, and the experience of sound to communicate different kinds of places – to make their poetry more complex and experimental, and because poems, like musical works, share similar features: they unfold time; they play with time; they can and do echo sounds of the past; and, crucially, they have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Where John Xiros Cooper and other critics who explore modernism frame their distinction between the radically experimental Pound and the deeply reactionary Eliot on Theodor Adorno's Schoenberg/Stravinsky model,[24] my examination of their responses to the influence of music calls this division, and even the analogy itself, into question. For Cooper, music in Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1943)[25] represents 'a nostalgic backward glance at nineteenth century *symboliste* metaphors'.[26] He applies the same description of

[23] Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 81–89.
[24] Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), pp. 1–18.
[25] The four separate poems which make up Eliot's *Four Quartets* were published separately between 1936 and 1942, and were first brought together by Eliot's American publisher in 1943.
[26] John Xiros Cooper, 'Music as Symbol and Structure in Pound's *Pisan Cantos* and Eliot's *Four Quartets*', in *Ezra Pound and Europe*, ed. by Richard Taylor and Claus Melchior (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA.: Rodopi Editions, 1993), pp. 177–89 (p. 179).

'absolute indirectness' to Eliot's poetry which Theodor Adorno gives to Stravinsky's music.[27] In comparison, Cooper sees Pound building 'out *from* the art of the past' (my italics), and regards his 'discovery of a new poetic' as leading to a renewal of technique which 'reconstructs responsibility'.[28] In viewing Pound as Schoenberg's literary counterpart, Cooper accepts Adorno's view of Schoenberg as the modern composer 'whose revolutionary moment . . . is the change in function of musical expression',[29] and whose music finds its 'epistemological energy [. . .] not in that it relates back to the "great bourgeois past" [. . .] but rather that it neutralizes in itself romantic differentiation in terms of technique'.[30] Cooper thus sees Pound as inaugurating a new mode of poetry, just as Schoenberg was similarly credited by Adorno with developing a 'new' music.[31] In parallel with Adorno's view that Stravinsky's 'historical innervation'[32] is merely a way 'to reconstruct the authenticity of music'[33], Eliot is seen by Cooper to be involved in reactionary repetition, or what Adorno terms 'a retrogression into the traditional'.[34] This study shows that Pound and Eliot were not part of that same bourgeois 'history of decline',[35] which the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky signified for Adorno.[36] Rather, the influence of music and of musical tradition on Pound and Eliot is shown as deeply significant in authorising the development of a new poetic language and voice in both writers.

Having performed the late string quartets of Beethoven as a cellist, and, as a musicologist, having worked on the repertoire of motets, mass-settings, and secular

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[27] Cooper, p. 179.
[28] Cooper, p. 183.
[29] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 25.
[30] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 38.
[31] Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 254–56.
[32] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 95.
[33] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 95.
[34] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 2.
[35] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 2.
[36] See also Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature and Other Arts* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000) pp. 14-18.

songs found in surviving medieval manuscripts,[37] I have found such detailed explorations of parallels between music and the poetry and Pound and Eliot both fascinating and illuminating. Adorno suggests that 'through its lack of objective substance and unequivocal relationships, music is more *free* than the other arts'.[38] The extent to which Pound and Eliot are inspired by this freedom is fundamental to the argument presented here.

[37] I studied with Professor Reinhard Strohm for an MMus in Musicology at King's College, London 1979-1980, and subsequently with Professor Ian Bent at Nottingham University, exploring the rhythmic interpretation of pieces from the 'Magnus Liber' corpus of mass settings, centred on the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris.

[38] Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 7.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Ezra Pound and musical cultural life in London

### *I Ezra Pound: discovering musical culture in London*

Ezra Pound arrived in London on 14 August 1908, eager to penetrate the literary and artistic circles which made the capital 'the place for poesy',[1] and determined to take the literary world by storm. In February 1909, he wrote to his friend William Carlos Williams, 'Am by way of falling into the crowd that does things here',[2] confirming the importance which making such useful contacts and acquaintances would have for Pound in order for him to do the things he had set out to achieve.[3] Throughout his time in London, access to such influential artistic and literary social circles was a significant factor in Pound's development and success. The important part which music and musicians played in that development, in stimulating Pound's lifelong interest in music, and in motivating cross-currents between music and literature, forms the initial focus of this study. The significance of the musical salon on the development of literary modernism will also be explored as an important influence on the promotion of artistic exchange, looking particularly at the part played by clavichordist Violet Gordon Woodhouse in facilitating such interactions.

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[1] Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. by D.D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 7.
[2] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 7.
[3] James J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris, 1908-1925* (Pennsylvania University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), pp. 5–7. Wilhelm gives a detailed summary of Pound's early years in London, and the acquaintances he made in London's literary circles.

On his way to England from America in the spring of 1908, Pound had published in Venice, at his own expense, a collection of his shorter poems entitled *A Lume Spento*. Once in London, it was only by pawning a few remaining copies that Pound managed to scrape together enough money to live on until more funds arrived from his family.[4] Anxiety about a lack of money preoccupied Pound throughout his time in London (and beyond), and explains why he was willing to take on a range of varied writing and editing jobs to earn much-needed income. Writing as a music critic was just one of the ways Pound could earn money in London. 'I do not, as a rule, go to "proms"', he wrote in *The New Age* for 19 September, 1918:

> There was the charm of the large and atrociously decorated interior of the Queen's Hall, the stimulus of the crowd, the general spirit of that novel called the 'Kreutzer Sonata' and all the 'Ganz und Stimmung'. Quite enjoyable, but no place for a critic . . . This was, at any rate, my first 'prom' for eight years.[5]

For Pound, the Queen's Hall in London was hardly an ideal venue, with its cavernous and shabby auditorium which had the capacity – albeit in somewhat cramped seating – for an audience of up to 2,500.[6] He preferred smaller concert spaces, such as the Bechstein (now Wigmore) Hall, or private, salon-style recitals with a select, invited audience of artistic intellectuals. It was into this milieu of society, populated by the well-educated and the well off, that Pound determinedly pursued access during his time in London. He rightly supposed that not only would his poetry be accepted by that section of society which embraced the artistic *avant garde*, but that they would also have the money and the time to attend his lectures, buy his books and support his ideas. However, being accepted into the upper-class artistic social circles which Pound aspired to join did not necessarily make for an easy life. In spite of being fêted as a notorious *enfant terrible* of the literary world, Pound's precarious finances condemned him to a

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[4] Wilhelm, pp. 4–5.

[5] *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. by R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), p. 124. This article was written, as was all his music criticism in London, under the pseudonym 'William Atheling'.

[6] Geoff Matthews, 'The Creation of Production Practice in the Early B.B.C. with Particular Reference to Music and Drama' (unpublished PhD, University of Leicester, 1984), pp. 56 and 103.

ceaseless hunt for literary commissions and publishing ventures which would make money, and associating with the wealthy demi-aristocracy and with those of private means reinforced a sense of 'otherness' which is discernible in Pound's work.

Throughout his life, Pound was interested in music, and his links to the artistic, literary and musical social circles in London not only introduced him to the writers he had expressly come to London to meet, but enabled him to mix with many of the leading artists, composers and performers of the modernist *avant garde*. In a letter to his friend Iris Barry,[7] written in August 1916, Pound describes his abiding interest in music and musicians:

> Yes, I care somewhat for music. My first friend was a painter, male, now dead, 2ND a Pyanist, naturally 15 years plus agée que moi. That was in "The States". I entered London more or less under her wing . . . Je connus the London mondo musicale, at least the concert-hall, recital part of it. Later I lived with Rummel several times for months at a stretch in Paris. He is a good but no longer very productive young composer, dated alas by Debussy. D. said that Rummel played his stuff better than he could. Both K[itty] H[eyman] and Rummel are *some* musicians. My present pinnacle is sponged stalls at the Beecham opera. Malheureusement, I can't offer them to my friends; the grip isn't strong enough.[8]

In this wide-ranging summary of his musical connections and interests, Pound recounts his indebtedness to various musical friends and acquaintances for their support.[9] One of the most important of these was the American 'Pyanist', Katherine Ruth Heyman, ten years older than Pound (rather than the '15' of his letter) and already well established in her musical career when they had first met in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in 1905. She helped Pound find his feet in London. Another key musical influence in these early years was Walter Morse Rummel, a grandson of the Samuel Morse who had invented the

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[7] Iris Barry (1895-1969) was a film critic and first curator of the film department of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1935. She knew Ezra Pound in London when she first moved there and was also the mother of two children fathered by Wyndham Lewis.
[8] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 95.
[9] A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet I The Young Genius, 1885-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 28–29. Pound had travelled in Europe in 1906 on a Harrison Foundation Fellowship for Romantics, researching in libraries in Madrid, Paris, and London prior to his PhD studies, subsequently abandoned.

telegraph. As an heir to the Morse fortune, Rummel was able to live comfortably in Paris while pursuing his career as a pianist and composer, and he often hosted Pound 'several times for months at a stretch'.[10] Rummel first introduced Pound to the musical, literary and artistic circles in Paris, where, as Pound relates, Debussy thought Rummel 'played his stuff better than he could'.[11] It was this acquaintance with the musical life of London and Paris, as well as with musical contemporaries – composers, performers, managers, and organisers – which allowed Pound to encounter new directions, styles and cultural trends which were being explored through music, and which would ultimately have a significant influence on his poetics. Yet although his early verse received critically encouraging reviews, he could not earn enough money from his writing alone and he remained strapped financially, in spite of giving lectures, teaching classes, writing articles, working as a music critic, and proof-reading to make ends meet. Throughout 1909, as Pound became more established in London, he began to make friends with some of the important figures of the literary world: Ford Madox Hueffer, May Sinclair, T.E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, D.H. Lawrence and, above all, W.B. Yeats and his circle. However, life in London, and especially life in the social circles to which Pound aspired to belong, proved beyond him financially and he decided he would have to return home to the USA. In February 1910 he even wrote asking his mother:

> Please insert the following "ad" in some reputable daily . . . POET / out of a Job . . . will do to travel, or stand unhitched while being fed.[12]

Before returning home to America in June, Pound decided to spend six weeks in Italy and in March he left London to spend a couple of days with Rummel in Paris on the way to Verona. By a stroke of good fortune, Rummel introduced Pound to Margaret Lanier Cravens, an independently wealthy and very talented American pianist who had come to Paris to study with Maurice Ravel and Harold Bauer. She immediately offered to

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[10] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 95.
[11] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 95.
[12] Moody, p. 123.

support Pound financially, and effectively became his patron, enabling him to remain in Europe and to continue working as a writer.[13] Lawrence Rainey observes that the average wage for an adult male industrial worker in the years leading up to World War I was about £75 per annum, whereas the average annual salary of the professional classes was about £340. Margaret Cravens' gift to Pound of about £200 per annum[14] meant that Pound could remain in London, with all its opportunities for recognition and advancement, even though it must have reinforced his sense of living on the financial brink.[15] Pound's experience of relative monetary hardship is further illuminated in an article which he wrote for *The New Age* journal of January 1913, reflecting on his early days in London:

> During the prelude of my London existence – that is to say, before people began to let me into their drawing rooms – I was permitted, even forced, to notice some of the viscera of this metaphorical beast. Here, as in all countries, one may find the implacable dullness of Suburbia – often a healthy dullness. One may find here, as elsewhere, boarding-houses, complete with billiard table (no cushions), bath (out of order), hot and cold water (geyser not working), pink, frilly paper decorations, complete board and lodging, 12s. 6d. per week.[16]

These reminiscences of his first months in London, entitled 'Thro' Alien Eyes', show that Pound was no stranger to the dubious charms of suburban boarding-house life, with its inadequate facilities, rickety furnishings, and frightful attempts at décor.[17] He notes that this was all 'before people began to let me into their drawing rooms', recognising the significance which being permitted to join the 'drawing room' set had for his progress into

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[13] Moody, p. 124.

[14] *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship, 1910-1912*, ed. by Omar S. Pound and Robert E. Spoo (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1988), pp. 12–13. Pound writes to Margaret Cravens that her 'largesse' as 'a sign from beyond that my work is accepted' (p. 12).

[15] Lawrence Rainey writes that Margaret Cravens' financial support of Pound was 'neither mean nor princely . . . but placed Pound firmly in the gap between the two' (see 'Introduction: F. T. Marinetti and the Development of Futurism', in *Futurism*, *An Anthology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p.198).

[16] *The New Age* Vol.12 No.12 (23 January, 1913) pp. 275-76.

[17] Pound's apparent contempt for suburban taste, revealed in his horror at 'pink, frilly decorations', connects with his subsequent series of articles 'Provincialism the Enemy', published in *The New Age* in the summer of 1917, in which Pound explains that 'Provincialism is more than an ignorance, it is ignorance plus a lust after uniformity' (*The New Age,* xxi.11 (1917) p. 244). It is in these three articles that Pound first begins to navigate his problematic cultural politics, which are described by Peter Howarth as 'terrible' (*The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. 35).

cultured, upper-middle and upper class society. Being accepted into the various circles of the independently wealthy, artistically cultivated and literate echelons of London society was key to Pound's success: it afforded him access to potential patrons who would buy his publications and support his endeavours, and offered the opportunity for introductions to the other artists, writers and musicians who were equally fêted and 'taken up' in the same way. The connections which Pound made at private salons, such as through his association with Violet Gordon Woodhouse, and with the people who attended her private concerts, not only enabled the development of Pound's literary career, but also gave him unique access to performances of contemporary music, and to rediscovered works from the musical Renaissance and Baroque, often played on 'authentic' reproduction instruments. These private concerts therefore encouraged the interest in early music which Pound had already developed while travelling in Italy and France, and which was to prove so important for the development of his writing.

The young Ezra Pound cut a very Bohemian figure in London society. The American novelist Phyllis Bottome recalls the impact he made:

> When I first met Ezra at a tea-party given by May Sinclair in pre-war London, he made the impression on me of an electric eel . . . [a] tall, slight, nervous young fellow, with the face of a scholarly satyr, red-gold hair, and a pointed beard of the same colour.[18]

In his recollections of the influential poet Sir Edmund Gosse, Osbert Sitwell relates that:

> . . . there were also those of whom [Gosse] disapproved, who must not, indeed, be mentioned in his presence, without a momentary displacing of the aura and an interference with its regular radiations. Of these, the ringleader was Ezra Pound, "that preposterous American filibuster and Provençal charlatan", as I once heard Gosse call him.[19]

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[18] Phyllis Bottome, *From the Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946) p. 71 (quoted in Wilhelm, p. 8).

[19] Osbert Sitwell, *Noble Essences, Or Courteous Revelations. Being a Book of Characters, and the Fifth and Last Volume of Left Hand, Right Hand! An Autobiography* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1950), p. 40.

The reference to Pound as a 'Provençal charlatan' shows that Gosse identified Pound with a somewhat eccentric interest in troubadour poetry. On 11 October 1909, Pound had given the first of a series of lectures at the Regent Street Polytechnic which were eventually published as *The Spirit of Romance*, his first major work of literary criticism.[20] In these lectures, he explores the underlying sense of expression and self-expression which lies at the core of 'romance' and which is no mere construct of the modern age but is, according to Pound, the foundation of all art and of all poetry. At the beginning of the second chapter of the 1910 edition, 'Il Miglior Fabbro', Pound explains his interest:

> The twelfth century, or, more exactly, that century whose centre is the year 1200 . . . is most excellent in the Italian-Romanesque architecture and in Provençal minstrelsy. . . Some temperamental sympathy may prejudice me in favour of this age. [21]

From this we can perhaps conclude why Pound is drawn to twelfth-century poetry and why he craves to be part of the select circle of the artistic élite: he not only believes the 'minstrelsy' was then at its 'most excellent', but sees in the music of the Middle Ages, and especially the music of the twelfth-century Renaissance,[22] not just a period of cultural renewal to which he is 'temperamentally sympathetic', but also a period in which poetry and music are indissolubly linked. He frequently returns to this theme of musical-poetic interconnectedness in his writing, and, as will be explored in the following chapters, this enduring interest and involvement in music exerts a strong influence on his poetic composition, underpinning both its structure and its rhythmic force. For Pound – and also for T.S. Eliot and other modernists – the cultural models of the past illuminate

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[20] Published in June,1910, by J.M. Dent and subsequently considerably revised for the 1929 and 1932 editions: Wilhelm, p. 46.

[21] Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance; an Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J.M. Dent, 1910), p. 23.

[22] This term was first coined by the American historian Charles Homer Haskins in *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Harvard: Harvard University Press,1927). The concept of a period of cultural growth and development in the Latin West dating from about 1070, and equivalent to the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance, has since been much discussed and debated (see *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* ed. by Robert L. Benson, Giles Constable, and Carol D. Lanham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

contemporary connections between the arts, particularly in literature and music, and act as a focus for renewal.

## *II Musical traditions in London*

Music in London was not just the preserve of the educated middle classes and upper-middle class élites: under the inspirational musical leadership of Henry Wood and the entrepreneurial management of Robert Newman, from 1895 onwards promenade concerts helped to popularise classical music for ordinary city workers in London. The Queen's Hall in Langham Place, which opened on 2 December 1893, was a successful venue from the start, with a perfect acoustic and with none of the 'dead-spots' which dogged the extraordinary resonances of the Albert Hall. The following year Newman approached Wood with an idea for a series of classical music concerts to be put on at the new Queen's Hall:

> I am going to run nightly concerts and train the public by easy stages. Popular at first, gradually raising the standard until I have created a public for classical and modern music.[23]

Newman had a sure touch as an impresario, engaging the young, largely untried Wood as the talented conductor of a new ensemble of players entirely devoted to performing at the innovative 'promenade' concerts. Newman's avowed intention to create 'a public for classical and modern music', and 'to train the public by easy stages' by means of the Queen's Hall concerts, followed in a well-established tradition for musical performances stretching back to the eighteenth century, when audiences were free to stroll around Vauxhall Gardens while orchestras were playing. Indoor 'promenade' concerts had been

[23] Ivan Hewett (12 July 2007), 'The Proms and Promenerders [sic]', *The Daily Telegraph*, London.

popularised from 1838 onwards by French emigré Louis Antoine Jullien,[24] and the Queen's Hall concerts were similarly intended to democratise concert-going, with affordable ticket prices and an informal atmosphere which allowed 'promenaders' to drink, smoke or eat.[25] The establishment and the growth of other concert societies, in London as well as in the expanding provincial mercantile towns and cities around Britain, reveal the demand for high quality classical music.[26] However, many of these were instituted as subscription societies, whose ticket prices, beyond the means of ordinary workers or employees, established a degree of upper class exclusivity. The Queen's Hall 'promenade' concerts were specifically aimed at this ordinary 'public', introducing the classical music of high culture to what T.S. Eliot dismissed as 'a complacent, prejudiced and unthinking mass'.[27]

This tension between art for the masses and art for the élite is a recurrent theme in examining the development of modernism and the *avant garde*. In moving the boundaries of what was considered to be 'good' art, the privileged and influential art groups, such as those centred on the Bloomsbury set or the Sitwell circle, inevitably excluded the mass of 'ordinary' people whose taste was, in their opinion, unformed or at best commodified.[28] Making the 'new' arts impenetrable, remote, hard to comprehend

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[24] Immortalised in the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *Patience* (1881) as 'Jullien, the eminent musico'.

[25] One of Robert Newman's brightest ideas was the provision of the one guinea transferable season ticket, which was, as its name implies, valid for all the concerts. This represented amazing value for money in an age when a single ticket for a symphony concert might cost anything between five shillings and £1.

[26] Such as the famous Hallé Orchestra in Manchester founded in 1858.

[27] T.S. Eliot, *The Criterion,* xvii (1938) p. 688. Quoted in John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012), p. 7.

[28] The relationship between modernism, commodity culture, and 'ordinary' members of the public is complex and contested. In *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Élites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), Lawrence Rainey contends that 'modernism and commodity culture were not implacable enemies but fraternal rivals' (p. 76). Although Howarth notes the fundamental élitism suggested by Pound's 'contempt for the ordinary reader' (p. 33), he also notes T. S. Eliot's paradoxical view that although 'good poetry would have only a small but discerning public,' it simultaneously 'depended on popular culture to survive' (p. 57). Critics like Anna Snaith, however, have also illustrated the social diversity of Virginia Woolf's readership on both sides of

and beyond reach was a move towards exclusivity which was both conscious and deliberate. But, as Pound admits in confessing his affinity for the twelfth century, the distant past also offered an allure to which other artists were also susceptible. Peter Makin suggests that the young Pound was drawn to the Europe of the troubadours for 'drama',[29] the language and poetic models of the troubadours representing a 'Provençal vigour . . . [an] anti-usurious honesty; and a certain limited but still honest charm'.[30] A romantic fascination with the 'dead' Provençal language, with the mysterious, lost culture of the Languedoc, with its subjugated nobility and suppressed Albigensian heresy, went back as far as Goethe,[31] but for Pound this interest in the poetry of the troubadours represented a re-connection with a world of direct, authentic expression, where poetry and music were still indissolubly intertwined. This intimate and indivisible link between words and music, or between '*motz el son'* as Pound termed it in the language of the troubadours, not only represented a re-working of the language of poetry for the modernist age, but was also a means of rediscovering a poetic language liberated from Germanic and overwhelmingly Wagnerian influences which were so tainted in the aftermath of the First World War.

## *III The German inheritance*

Interest in the literary, musical and artistic models of the past had been an unmistakeable development in all the arts from the time of Goethe, but from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, composers, artists and writers turned to historical models

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the Atlantic, challenging the view of Woolf as having written only for a select élite (see *'Three Guineas' Letters* (*Woolf Studies Annual,* vol. 6 (2000) pp. 17-168).

[29] Peter Makin, *Provence and Pound* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 9.

[30] Makin, p. 5.

[31] Makin, p. 2.

to discover ways of refreshing structures and formulas which no longer seemed a means of authentic artistic expression. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, for example, was highly influential in England, reviving medieval forms and themes in both his poetry and his paintings, and strongly influencing the mid-century aesthetic through the founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848. Medieval revivalism may therefore be regarded as a facet of later nineteenth-century Romanticism and, by extension, a significant manifestation of nineteenth-century nationalism – both important determining features in the operas of Richard Wagner.[32] The fusion of poetry and music which Wagner achieved in his music-dramas, supported by the four major theoretical declarations of his artistic aesthetic,[33] not only made Wagner a famous – not to say notorious – artistic influence in the later nineteenth century, but also resulted in him completing the transformation of the harmony and structure of Western classical music which had begun with Beethoven. Wagner's operas also became entangled with ideas of German nationalism, on account of 'his artistic and his cultural-political victories from the mid-1860s onwards'.[34] Success in the Franco-Prussian War and German unification after 1870 also strengthened the desire of many educated Germans to construct a distinctively German culture – a desire which Wagner perfectly fulfilled.

Wagner's music was popular with British audiences from the later nineteenth century onwards and it was through the influence of conductors such as Henry Wood and Thomas Beecham that Wagner, originally the darling of the musical élite and upper-class opera goers, became popular with the general public attending their affordable 'prom' concerts. In 1855, the London Philharmonic Society[35] invited Wagner to conduct its

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[32] Frank M. Turner, ed. by Richard A. Lofthouse, *European Intellectual History from Rousseau to Nietzsche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 200.
[33] These are: 'Art and Revolution' (1849), 'The Art-Work of the Future' (1849), 'Jewry in Music' (1850) and 'Opera and Drama' (1851).
[34] Turner, p. 197.
[35] The Philharmonic Society of London, founded in 1813, had been formed with the express intention of promoting 'the performance, in the most perfect manner possible, of the best and

entire season and he was initially received with great acclaim. In spite of the 'perfect shower of abuse' with which the newspapers greeted Wagner's first concert,[36] the public 'were eager to see the man who excited such ire in celestial bosoms, and many of those who came to scoff remained to admire'.[37] A scandal of any description made money, even in the nineteenth century. In accepting the invitation to conduct in London, Wagner helped to cement his reputation with the British public, as well as confirming his importance as a cultural influence. His musical achievement, and the reach and depth of his impact on literature, art and philosophy, are captured in Barry Millington's assessment of Wagner's influence:

> [Wagner's] protean abundance meant that he could inspire the use of literary motif in many a novel employing interior monologue; ... the Symbolists saw him as a mystic hierophant; the Decadents found many a frisson in his work.[38]

Reactions to Wagner permeate prose and poetry, painting, music and philosophy in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nietzsche had met Wagner in 1868 and was part of his social circle through the 1870s, writing a long essay 'Richard Wagner and Bayreuth' as part of the 1876 collection *Untimely Meditations.* The influence of Wagner's operas and music is strongly evident in the work of painters such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Wassily Kandinsky and Aubrey Beardsley, and literary connections to Wagner are apparent in much of the prose and poetry of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust and James Joyce all heavily reference Wagner in their novels, and the French poets Stéphane Mallarmé, Charles Baudelaire and Paul

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most approved instrumental music'. The Philharmonic Society commissioned works from some of the major composers of the nineteenth century, including Beethoven (the *Choral* Symphony) and Mendelssohn (the *Italian* Symphony), as well as inviting eminent composers such as Berlioz, Tchaikovsky and Louis Spohr – a particular favourite of Queen Victoria –to conduct the orchestra.

[36] 'Wagner in England', *The Musical World*, 67.30 (1888), 587–88 (p. 587). Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864) did more than any other composer at the time to establish a new form of French 'grand opera' in Paris during the 1830s and 1840s. Meyerbeer's vision of opera as spectacle and entertainment influenced Verdi and Wagner, and Meyerbeer was both supportive and helpful to the young Wagner, although Wagner later contributed to the decline in popularity of Meyerbeer's operas, describing them in *Opera and Drama* as 'effects without causes' (see *A History of Western Music,* ed. by Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Inc, 2001) pp. 609-610 and 621-622).

[37] 'Wagner in England', p. 587.

[38] Barry Millington, *The Wagner Compendium: A Guide to Wagner's Life and Music* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), p. 396.

Verlaine venerated Wagner with an almost religious fervour. James Joyce's youthful interest in Wagner was both affected and inspired by his knowledge of the work of other writers who were themselves heavily influenced by Wagner: George Bernard Shaw, W.B. Yeats, George Moore, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Édouard Dujardin. Other modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot also make liberal use of Wagnerian themes, motifs and references, which are not only indicative of the deep fascination which Wagner's music had for these writers but of the extent to which its influence pervaded cultural life.[39] Moreover, Wagner's technique of thematic transformation and *leitmotifs,* which is so characteristic of his music dramas, makes such an impact on literature expressly because it is, in essence, a literary construct which is ripe for literary adaptation.[40]

Wagner's music, the popularity of his operas, and the extent of his cultural influence – undoubtedly reinforced by German unification in the wake of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War – became a part of the newly-discovered Teutonic heritage adopted by many educated Germans as confirmation of a distinctively 'German' cultural tradition. It was this close association between Wagner and German culture which led to unavoidable cultural conflicts in England at the outbreak of the 1914-18 War. Osbert Sitwell, reflecting on the impact which the First World War had on the cultural life of London, recalls that 'music was under suspicion as a German agent'[41] and Ethel Smyth is reported to have warned the clavichordist Violet Gordon Woodhouse against playing Bach in her recitals, since it was 'playing the German game'.[42] Sitwell, Ethel Smyth and Violet Gordon Woodhouse were all linked to the cultured social circles to which Pound, Eliot and other

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[39] William F. Blissett, 'George Moore and Literary Wagnerism', *Comparative Literature*, 13.1 (1961), 52–71 (p. 52).
[40] Eric Prieto, *Listening In: Music, Mind, and the Modernist Narrative* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 16.
[41] Sitwell, *Noble Essences, Or Courteous Revelations. Being a Book of Characters, and the Fifth and Last Volume of Left Hand, Right Hand! An Autobiography*, p. 69.
[42] Sitwell, p. 69.

writers and artists also belonged. Sitwell recollects the effect on cultural life which came with the onset of War:

> the diminutive spiritual paradise of books, music and conversation into which I had recently found my way [. . .] was utterly smashed and broken [. . .] There were no longer as many concerts in London.[43]

Musical life in London and the provinces had for years been dominated by German, French and Italian musicians whose continental credentials made them more acceptable and credible than home-grown performers.[44] As a consequence, the outbreak of the First World War presented a moral, as well as a patriotic, dilemma to performers and promoters, and to choral and orchestral societies in London and around the country: should concerts and musical performances continue at all at such a time of national emergency? And if they were to continue, exactly what sort of music should they be playing? Evidence seems to suggest that, after an initial hesitation, cultural life continued as usual.[45] Thomas Beecham persuaded the Hallé Society in Manchester and the Royal Philharmonic Society in London to take the lead by performing new repertoire, although at first German music was banned.[46] The annual programme of London promenade concerts continued without interruption and on 15 August, just eleven days after the Declaration of War, the 1914 season opened at the Queen's Hall with a programme which featured works by Sibelius, Verdi, Percy Grainger, Michael Balfe and Elgar. Although this opening programme noticeably featured no works by German composers, the promenade concert performed just one month later, on Saturday 12 September 1914,

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[43] Sitwell, p. 69.

[44] European contributors to English musical life included the music historian Carl Engel, the music publisher Joseph Mainzer, Alfred Jaeger, close friend of Elgar and music consultant to music publishers Novello, piano teachers Ernest Pauer, Wilhelm Ganz and Wilhelm Ruhe, and the conductors Franz Rodewald and Charles Hallé.

[45] The writers and artists of the Bloomsbury group, as well as associated members of their Cambridge set, were, however, opposed to the war. Quentin Bell, the nephew of Virginia Woolf, stated that 'although [Maynard] Keynes was prepared, in metaphorical terms to shoulder a musket, he and Bloomsbury were in fact united during the war "by a determination to keep their heads in the maelstrom; whatever else they might so they would not accept the prevailing religion of hatred"' (Jonathan Atkin, *A War of Individuals: Bloomsbury Attitudes to the Great War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002) p. 21).

[46] Jessica Douglas-Home, *Violet: The Life and Loves of Violet Gordon Woodhouse* (London: Harvill Press, 1996), p. 134. See also Matthews, p. 78.

included two works by Richard Wagner: the overture to *The Flying Dutchman* and an Act III scene from *Lohengrin*, 'Mein lieber Schwan!'. Wagner's music continued to be performed as part of the promenade concert seasons during the course of war. A concert in September 1916 included Wagner's Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin*, the *Siegfried Idyll* and a scene from Act II of *Tannhäuser* before the concert interval, and music from *Tristan and Isolde* and *Götterdämmerung* in the second half of the concert.[47] That Wagner's music could be part of popular 'prom' concert programming throughout the War period shows the degree to which the taste for high culture had been gradually and successfully democratised by the turn of the century. Moving away from this heavily Germanised, Romanticised and Wagnerised musical culture was therefore not just an expression of patriotism in the face of war, it was also a way of creating a new élitism in the face of the popularisation of even this aspect of 'high' culture.

## *IV Élitist music for the élite? – The musical salon of Violet Gordon Woodhouse*

In *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, part of which appeared in the *Transatlantic Review* in 1924, Pound quotes from his 'London Letter' commenting on the uninspiring state of music in London:[48]

> The editor and I are agreed that a mere statement that there is no music of any interest being given in London is not particularly worth printing[49]

Further on in the same letter, he writes of his dislike of Wagner:

> *Opera*: "I don't like Wagner and Strauss but the performances were good" . . . My impression is that there is no English music, the public grows less and less musical. I can't very well write that and couldn't write anything else.[50]

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[47] BBC Proms https://www.bbc.co.uk/events/rjhbj5/series
[48] Schafer, p. 293.
[49] Schafer, p. 309.
[50] Schafer, p. 310.

Having left London for Paris at the end of December 1920, Pound's recollection of there being 'no music of any interest' on the London cultural scene, where 'there is no English music' is based on memories which are at least four years out of date, although Pound's assertion does corroborate the continuing public performance of music both German and Wagnerian during the First World War and its immediate aftermath. Private musical performances were very different. Salon-style concerts, which persisted into the early decades of the twentieth century, gave musicians the opportunity to present a diverse range of music to select gatherings of invited friends from the same artistic, literary and social circles. Concerts might feature modern compositions, premières of *avant garde* music from the continent or realisations of rediscovered 'early music', such as William Walton's collaboration with the Sitwells or the regular private recitals given by Violet Gordon Woodhouse. The drawing-room at 2 Carlyle Square, the home of the Sitwell brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, featured regular musical and literary gatherings.[51]

*1.1 The Sitwells' drawing room in 1926 (Illustrated London News)*

[51] Tim Barringer, 'Façades for "Façade": William Walton, Visual Culture and English Modernism in the Sitwell Circle', in *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960*, ed. by Matthew Riley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 125–46 (p. 125).

A photograph of the Sitwells' drawing-room was published in the *Illustrated London News* on 16 October 1926 with the title 'A well-known Modernist Poet's taste in furniture and decoration'. It captures several paintings by well-known contemporary artists, including Wyndham Lewis and C.R.W. Nevinson, with further works by coming artists such as Modigliani and Picasso also mentioned in contemporary accounts.[52] It was in this space, at 9.30pm on Tuesday 24 January 1922, that an invited audience of about 20 'painters, musicians and poets' gathered to hear the first performance of *Façade*.[53] This eclectic work featured music by the nineteen-year-old William Walton and poems by the Sitwells' sister, Edith, performed in a heavily accented and rhythmically declamatory style. A repeat performance took place about a fortnight later on 7 February 1922, once again in a drawing-room setting, with an audience of invited guests which included Sergei Diaghilev, the ballet impresario.

One of the central figures in the musical culture of modernist London was Violet Gordon Woodhouse. Although virtually unheard of in modernist scholarship, Woodhouse moved in the same social and artistic circles as the Sitwells, giving regular harpsichord and clavichord recitals in a comparable drawing-room setting. Encouraged by her mother to play the violin and the piano from a young age and showing prodigious talent, it was her introduction to early music through meeting Arnold Dolmetsch that originally encouraged Violet's interest in playing the harpsichord and then the clavichord. Violet attended her first Dolmetsch concert in 1896 and she seems to have immediately arranged to take lessons with him, quickly mastering the art of playing a range of early keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord, virginals, spinet and clavichord which had hitherto been regarded as museum rarities. Violet had already made a reputation for herself as a sensitive and original interpreter on the piano of the music of Mozart and J.S. Bach,

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[52] Barringer, p. 125.
[53] Osbert Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room* (London: Reprint Society, 1950), p. 190.

which she performed with a 'modern' authenticity considered unfamiliar by contemporary listeners.[54] With the encouragement and support of Dolmetsch, Violet quickly became an important exponent of 'early' music, performing works by Corelli and the newly-rediscovered Domenico Scarlatti, as well as by such English masters as Henry Purcell, John Dowland and Matthew Locke. Violet also became important to Dolmetsch as both a patron, buying his reproduction instruments, and as an exponent of his ideas about early music performance practice. Violet commissioned a reproduction harpsichord from the Dolmetsch workshop in 1899 and in the same year offered her drawing-room in the London house in Upper Brooke Street for a winter concert: 'the last of a winter series . . . by kind permission of Mrs Gordon Woodhouse', as promoted in the advertising leaflet.[55] Violet performed in the concert alongside Dolmetsch and members of his family, and the programme concluded with J.S. Bach's *Concerto in C major* for three harpsichords in which the soloists were Violet, Arnold Dolmetsch and his new wife, Elodie. Dolmetsch's passion for the authentic performance of early music on the instruments for which it was originally written divided the musical establishment. One of his earliest supporters was Bernard Shaw, who attended every single Dolmetsch concert between 1893 and 1895, but Dolmetsch's idiosyncratic ideas about performance practice and authentic instruments meant that he was largely dismissed by contemporary critics and musicians as being strikingly bizarre. In gaining the fervent support and backing of Violet Gordon Woodhouse, Dolmetsch not only found a talented performer of early music and a wealthy patron of his instrument workshop, he also gained entry to the exclusive world of drawing-room performances for an educated and wealthy élite.

The initial rapport between Violet Gordon Woodhouse and Dolmetsch changed the course of Violet's artistic life. From the early years of the twentieth century, she became

[54] Douglas-Home, p. 44.
[55] Douglas-Home, p. 46.

primarily known for her performances of early music on the harpsichord and the clavichord and was acknowledged as the 'supreme exponent' of Dolmetsch's ideas about performance practice in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music. Their musical collaboration ceased in the winter of 1899, presumably on account of differences in their approach to the performance of more 'modern' music, with anything after Mozart being rejected as mere 'noise' by Dolmetsch.

*1.2 Violet Gordon Woodhouse in the 1920s (The Clarion Review)*

Violet's theatricality was a key part of her performance persona. She designed unusual clothes in vivid colours which accentuated her exotic appearance: turbans, rich fabrics, lace, feathers and fancy drapery are all mentioned somewhat enviously in her sister's

diary.[56] Violet's glamorous and perhaps even eccentric appearance emphasised her uniqueness as a performer of 'different' music from a hitherto undiscovered age, appealing to that turn-of-the-century craving for exoticism and otherness which is also evident, for example, in the enthusiastic London reception of the Ballets Russes.[57] However, Violet's extravagant spending on clothes, jewellery, houses, gardens, furniture, instruments and entertaining put considerable strain on the inherited wealth of her husband, Gordon Woodhouse. The duration of the First World War had also generated profound changes in English society: as income tax rose from 8% to 30%, domestic staff wages soared, and the value of stock-market investments fell dramatically. These all necessitated severe cutbacks for Violet's household, but although she bowed to the inevitable and performed for professional fees through her agents Ibbs and Tillett, she was largely engaged for private, drawing-room concerts, described as 'all too rare opportunities of hearing the Sixteenth century music as it was really intended to be heard' in one promotional pamphlet.[58] Osbert Sitwell recalls the popularity of the clavichord and harpsichord recitals which were given by Violet in the drawing-room at another of her London houses, 37 Ovington Square:

> Here in London, people were brought in flocks to hear her play, and the members of her domestic circle were often hard put to dissuade her from expending every ounce of energy [. . .] Though on occasion, when her audience, basing anticipation on previous experience, confidently expected her to perform for an hour, she would, on the contrary, and very probably because she happened to have taken a dislike to someone who had been brought into the room, sit down, give one short piece, and then jump up from her chair and shut the instrument, clavichord or harpsichord, very deliberately and with an air of utter finality [. . .] yet I have known her equally to play for an entire afternoon and evening, pouring out her treasures because she enjoyed it.[59]

The unpredictability of Violet's performances, welcoming people 'in flocks' to her private concerts but then curtailing the recital after just 'one short piece' and jumping up from

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[56] Douglas-Home, p. 49.
[57] Gareth Thomas, 'Modernism, Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes in London, 1911-1929', in *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960*, ed. by Matthew Riley (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 67–92 (p. 72).
[58] Douglas-Home, p. 178.
[59] Sitwell, *Noble Essences, Or Courteous Revelations. Being a Book of Characters, and the Fifth and Last Volume of Left Hand, Right Hand! An Autobiography*, pp. 257–58.

her chair to 'shut the instrument . . . very deliberately' suggests a definite power dynamic in which Violet maintained complete control as the artist. Sitwell observes that concluding a concert so abruptly could even be on account of her having taken 'a dislike to someone who had brought into the room'. This is not the behaviour of a musician whose purpose is to please her patrons: rather, this is artistic genius in action, emphasising a distinct talent which her listeners are privileged to witness. It was the drawing-room setting which preserved and sustained this relationship between artist and audience. Here, the audience recognised their privileged position in being able to share in the performance and participate in the experience, rather than being mere ticket holders who had paid for a commodity to which they were then entitled.

The drawing-room recitals which Violet Gordon Woodhouse continued to give in her various London residences from the early years of the twentieth century, both during the First World War and on into the 1920s and 1930s, drew together many of the artists, musicians, performers and writers who shaped the new century. Violet attracted them all and Sitwell recounts that 'Picasso was only one among many eminent men and women' who visited her salon:

> . . . there can yet have been few music-loving artists and writers, and still fewer musicians, who did not at some time go to her house. . . Ellen Terry, Bruno Walter, Sir Henry Wood, Rachmaninoff, Diaghilew [sic], Stravinsky, de Falla, Karsevina and Madame Blanche Marchesi were others – names chosen at random – to whom she played. . . Among those whom my brother and I took at various times to hear this great artist play were T.S. Eliot, Bernard van Dieren, Wilfred Owen, Aldous Huxley, Arthur Waley, Ezra Pound, Robert Graves, Robert Nichols and Siegfried Sassoon.[60]

Violet's intimate recitals thus became a point of connection between the diverse artists who lived in or who visited London. The list of 'names chosen at random' nonetheless seems to be a roll-call of the prominent artistic figures of the early twentieth century: the

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[60] Sitwell, *Noble Essences, Or Courteous Revelations. Being a Book of Characters, and the Fifth and Last Volume of Left Hand, Right Hand! An Autobiography*, pp. 261–62.

stars of the Ballets Russes, composers and performers, poets, writers, and painters. Not only were Violet's concerts therefore an opportunity for artistic encounters, they became a nexus for modernist exchange. The music performed at Violet's recitals was a perfect setting for such exchanges: it offered a culturally and historically secure basis of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic novelty against which to frame the innovations of fresh, modernist ideas.[61]

## *V The allure of the past*

Entirely practical thinking also lay behind Violet's preference for drawing-room recitals: the clavichord in particular is a very quiet instrument, with the keyboard mechanism operating metal tangents which touch the tuned metal strings. Unlike the harpsichord, whose plucking action is dependent upon a completely even touch from the performer, the clavichord mechanism permits the performer to communicate a degree of sensitivity, and even dynamic control and vibrato, through the keys. It is not an instrument for a large concert hall, but is very well-suited to an intimate audience in a relatively confined space. The mechanism of the pianoforte, the keyboard instrument which came to dominate music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had been continuously developed from the second quarter of the eighteenth century onwards, gradually getting louder (as metal frames permitted greater string tension), increasing in compass (Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* piano sonata (1818) spans six and a half octaves), and developing an ever brighter tone.[62]

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[61] Bernard Shaw was one of the first music critics to recognise in Dolmetsch's theories about authentic performance practice a potential catalyst for innovation in contemporary music (Douglas-Home, p. 44).
[62] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 23–24.

Although pianos were originally luxury items, sales of instruments during the nineteenth century to the aspiring middle classes led to both a steep rise in manufacture and a concomitant fall in cost. It is calculated that some 23,000 pianos were sold in 1850, but the development of upright instruments and consequent popularity of parlour pianos meant that by 1910 sales had reached a peak of some 75,000 instruments.[63] Ownership of a domestic piano was something to which all the middle-classes could aspire. In Virginia Woolf's novel *The Voyage Out,* published in 1915, the character Rachel Vinrace describes herself as:

> . . . twenty-four years of age, the daughter of a ship-owner . . . never been properly educated; played the piano, had no brothers or sisters, and lived at Richmond with aunts, her mother being dead.[64]

Earlier in the novel, Rachel's music room is described by Mrs Ambrose as 'an enchanted place' with 'music open on the piano', and where 'books of music rose in two jagged pillars on the floor'.[65] The observation that music is 'open on the piano' suggests that the pianist has just walked away, very much with the intention of returning to resume playing. Similarly, the unsteady piles of music which rise like 'two jagged pillars' on the floor of Rachel's music room indicate an appetite for playing different music by a range of composers. Music publishing restrictions meant that 'compilation' albums of compositions by different composers were relatively rare, and so the piles of music on the floor not only denote Rachel's eclectic taste, but also – potentially – her technical expertise. This is subsequently confirmed by Rachel's attempts to master one of Beethoven's difficult 'very late' piano sonatas, practising the same passage again and again.[66] Emma Sutton defines Woolf's choice here of a late Beethoven sonata as a distinct link between Rachel, the female protagonist, and a 'repertoire that was unequivocally perceived as "masculine"', the piano representing the ideal musical

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[63] Ehrlich, pp. 144 and 157.
[64] Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2012), p. 261.
[65] Woolf, p. 244.
[66] Woolf, p. 388.

instrument for a mechanised, industrial age.[67] This mechanisation of music perhaps reached its ultimate expression in the pianola, a combination of pneumatic leverage for the keys and a mechanism for driving perforated paper to produce the correct notes in tempo. The first automated 'pianola' was produced in America in 1898 by the Aeolian Company and by 1904 more than forty different kinds of pianola were being marketed across the United States.[68] Just as Sutton argues that piano-playing was associated with the feminine, while 'hard' repertoire like a late Beethoven piano sonata was associated with the masculine, so Ehrlich remarks that conventional pianos were desirable because they represented the more feminine traits of middle-class prestige and domestic stability, whereas pianolas appealed to men because they were mechanical and shared the attributes of commercial and business success.[69] Advertisements for pianolas stressed the 'expressive' input of the 'operator':

> 'A talented player-pianist might produce music as good as, if not better than, that played by a top pianist' because the notes are struck for him and he can concentrate on 'the subtle nuances of phrasing, tempi and accentuation attainable from his controls'.[70]

Pianola enthusiasts were thus flattered into considering themselves expressive, active musicians, even when later models were operated by an electric motor. By 1920, the pianola was so successful – and so ubiquitous – practically every leading concert pianist had recorded piano rolls for these instruments, corroborating the advertising literature which attested to the 'minute fidelity' of the performances. Virginia Woolf's childhood home was typical of contemporary educated Edwardian households in that music was an important part of family and domestic life. Their home in Hyde Park Gate had a piano and Virginia recalls in 'Sketch of the Past' that her mother 'could play the piano and was musical'.[71] In 1902, the Stephen family acquired a pianola:

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[67] Emma Sutton, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 61.
[68] Ehrlich, p. 134.
[69] Ehrlich, p. 135.
[70] Ehrlich, p. 135.
[71] Sutton, p. 5.

> The Pianola is flourishing, and plays after dinner till the other side (the Mackenzies [their neighbours], who do only *hand* playing) are vanquished. Really it is a wonderful machine – beyond a machine in that it lets your own soul flow thro'.[72]

That the Stephens' pianola can 'vanquish' their neighbours' mere 'hand-playing' piano, suggests a sort of musical-mechanical battle being engaged each evening, and, moreover, a battle in which the pianola was certain to win victory every time. Leslie Stephen, Virginia's father, was 'resentful' about the purchase of the pianola:

> [W]e have subscribed, and bought a Pianola! Father almost weeps over us, and all his ladies are tender and reproachful.[73]

Virginia Woolf's account of her father's antipathy towards the acquisition of the pianola might seem at odds with the enthusiastic reception with which Ehrlich tells us husbands and fathers usually greeted the purchase of the 'new' mechanical instrument.[74] However, Leslie Stephen had 'no ear for music', according to Virginia, and was 'congenitally unaware of music', even when attending a performance by the Hungarian violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim.[75]

In turning away from the 'mechanical' piano towards the more authentic sounds of instruments such as the harpsichord and clavichord, Violet Gordon Woodhouse was part of a more general expression of distaste and dissatisfaction with the modern world which found refuge in the past. The instruments and sounds of early music seemed more directly under human control, where sensitivity of touch, interpretation and authentic performance practice not only connected to a pre-industrial world but also suggested a society where order and balance seemed more stable and predictable. Refuge from the

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[72] Quoted in Sutton, p. 5, from *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson and Joanna Trautmann, vol. I (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) p. 57.
[73] Quoted in Sutton, p. 5.
[74] Ehrlich, p. 141. Leslie Stephen's reaction to the new-fangled mechanical piano might be regarded as unusual, telling us more about his lack of musical sensibility, his aversion to all things mechanical, and his resistance to modernity, than about his particular dislike for the pianola *per se*
[75] Sutton, p. 52.

noisy, erratic and unpredictable world of the early twentieth century might have been one of the driving forces behind this emerging interest in the art, writing and music of the past, but these early artistic models also became a means of renewing the art of the new century. As will be seen in the next chapter, the music of the past was of vital importance, particularly for Pound, to the development of an evolving modernist aesthetic.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Ezra Pound, music and poetry: 'a return to origins'

### *I Pound, art, and modernist energies*

*Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916), Ezra Pound's memorial to his great friend the artist and sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska killed fighting in the First World War,[1] deliberates extensively on the nature of the relationship between the arts. In Chapter XI Pound recalls a passage written for the very first edition of *Blast*, the Vorticist magazine edited by Wyndham Lewis and founded to promote the English avant-garde:[2]

> Every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It belongs to the art of this form. If sound, to music; if formed to words, to literature; the image, to poetry; form, to design; colour, in position, to painting; form or design in three planes, to sculpture; movement, to the dance or to the rhythm of music or verses.[3]

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[1] Peter Ackroyd, *Ezra Pound and His World* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1980), p. 30. 'Perhaps the most important event of 1913 was Pound's meeting in London with Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, a young sculptor whose alert perceptiveness and somewhat eccentric notions of cultural history were profoundly to affect Pound's awareness of modern art and sculpture. Brzeska was to die two years later on a battlefield in France, but Pound recorded their brief friendship in a study of the sculptor's work: "He was certainly the best company in the world, and some of my best days, the happiest and most interesting, were spent in an uncomfortable and mud-floored studio when he was doing my bust." The bust survived, and was to be carted all over Europe by Pound in the course of his later wanderings. It was a permanent reminder of a man, and a whole past, destroyed by the events of the world [WWI]. Many years later, when Pound was incarcerated in an asylum, his psychiatric inquisitors were said to believe that Gaudier-Brzeska's death had materially affected Pound's sanity.'

[2] The avant-garde journal *Blast* was the brainchild of Wyndham Lewis, envisaged as a magazine which would counter the claims of Marinetti and the Italian Futurists, who had boldly swept onto the London artistic scene in 1910 and again in 1912. Hugh Kenner relates that 'By 1913, Lewis was setting out to organize a movement and a review, and Pound, to whose Imagist perceptions the visual arts were becoming important now that there was non-Impressionist visual art, perceived analogies to his own hard verse in the Timon designs and in the stone carvings of Gaudier. About 1 April 1914 he could write to James Joyce that Lewis was "starting a new Futurist, Cubist, Imagiste Quarterly . . . mostly a painter's magazine with me to do the poems". Quoted from *The Pound Era* (London: Pimlico Editions, 1991).

[3] Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* (New York and London: John Lane, 1916), p. 93.

In his analysis of the relationship between the arts and the expression of emotion, one of the first connections to which Pound draws attention is that of 'sound, to music', and the last of Pound's 'primary forms' is 'movement . . . to the rhythm of music or verses'. Pound acknowledges in this self-quotation the equally important connections which are offered by literature, poetry, design, painting and sculpture in presenting 'every emotion' to the 'vivid consciousness', and he asserts the significance of music to the expression of emotion. In a significant departure from those who, like Lewis, were asserting the primacy of the revolution in the visual arts, he gives music and rhythm a comparable standing to more visual stimuli in their influence on literature. Later in the *Gaudier-Brzeska* memoir, and under a sub-heading of 'Vorticism', Pound writes:

> It is no more ridiculous that a person should receive or convey an emotion by means of an arrangement of shapes, or planes, or colours, than that they should receive or convey such emotion by an arrangement of music notes.[4]

Pound seems to recognise that, while the concept of conveying or receiving 'emotion' through art or through music could, perhaps, be viewed as 'ridiculous', all the arts – poetry, literature, music, painting, sculpture – have an equal claim to being part of that 'emotional' language.[5] Whether any of the arts can be used as a means of transmitting or receiving 'an emotion' is a question to which Pound constantly returns throughout his writing, both in prose and in poetry. This chapter focuses on the scope of Pound's extraordinary and life-long interest in the connections between poetry and music – as part of his search for an 'authentic' voice in poetry – examining not only how contemporary musicological theories concerning the interpretation of troubadour song might have shaped the development of Pound's distinctive poetic style, but also the extent to which Pound's early writing as a poet and critic was influenced in the early

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[4] Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, p. 94.
[5] Rebecca Beasley, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 136–37.

twentieth century by those involved in the so-called 'English Musical Renaissance', or early modern movement, looking for an 'authentic' voice in the music of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Following my discussion in the first chapter, Pound's reaction to the cumulative noise and clamour of the developing modern world, to the mass media and in particular to radio, will also be investigated as a significant thread throughout Pound's work, and his paradoxical fascination with medieval music and song and with the pre-eminence of the individual 'voice' is explored as a countervailing response.

## *II Poetry and music – a new energy?*

In his essay on the nature of poetry and the role of art in society, 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris' (1912), Pound defends the importance of painting to the development of an understanding of emotion in society:[6]

> A few days in a good gallery are more illuminating than years would be if spent in reading a description of these pictures. Knowledge which cannot be acquired in some such manner as that of visiting galleries is relegated to the specialist or to his shadow, the dilettante.[7]

An analysis of modernist literature and poetry is often framed against contemporary movements and trends in painting and sculpture, because the visual arts seem to offer more familiar territory for comparison than music, with its separate language, syntax and arrangement of signs and symbols.[8] But it is through a *direct* experience of art – and of

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[6] First published as a series of twelve articles in *The New Age* journal, from 30 November 1911 to 15 February 1912.
[7] *The New Age*, 10.6 (7 December, 1911) p.130.
[8] Eric Prieto, *Listening In: Music, Mind, and the Modernist Narrative* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 26. Prieto separates out the respective components which make up music, a system which, he says, 'in linguistic terms . . . is essentially a syntax'. He continues: 'Musical syntax operates on tones (divisions of the octave into twelve equal intervals,

all the arts – that Pound recognises real benefit is to be gained: mere 'knowledge' acquired second-hand through reading about art, even when that second-hand experience is transfused via a specialist, is not going to convey such a deep emotional understanding. Pound's affirmation of the benefit of such direct experience was always extended from painting to music: for Pound, direct contact with the act of making music could be more 'illuminating' than a more second-hand knowledge gained just through the act of listening. This might explain, and be derived from, his life-long fascination with music explored in the first chapter: his close friendships with musicians, his involvement with concerts, his early career as a music critic, his promotion of new and rediscovered music, his association with the Dolmetsch family, his amateur dabbling on the clavichord[9] and the bassoon, and even in his impetus to compose. Pound's involvement in musical performances, as well as in composing his two operas, *Le Testament de Villon* and *Cavalcanti*, and his three operas for radio, show his consistent desire to have this *direct* experience of music for himself.[10]

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usually organized hierarchically around the diatonic scale) and rhythms (multiples or divisions of the basic unit provided by the beat.'

[9] Peter Bavington, 'Arnold Dolmetsch's Clavichord Making in the Years Before 1914', *Musica Antica Magnano: De Clavicordio*, viii (2007), 27–42 (p. 41). Pound wrote to James Joyce in 1915: 'So here I am with a clavichord – beside me, which I can't afford and can't reasonably play on'. Pound kept the instrument in his possession until his death in 1972.

[10] Pound began composing music in 1919 as a reaction to the impressionistic techniques of Debussy. He was largely self-taught, but relied on the assistance of musical friends such as the American composer George Antheil, the violinist Olga Rudge, and the London-based pianist and singer Agnes Bedford to transcribe his musical ideas. Pound described his own composition method as 'improving a system by refraining from obedience to all its present "laws"' (Margaret Fisher, *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas: the BBC Experiments 1931-1933* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2002) p.19). The opera *Le Testament de Villon* was first performed in preview concert versions in Paris in 1924 and again in 1926, when, on hearing it, the American composer Virgil Thompson wrote: 'The music was not quite a musician's music, though it may well be the finest poet's music since Thomas Campion... its sound has remained in my memory'. (Quoted in Fisher, p.20). The opera *Cavalcanti* was begun in 1931, but was not performed by the BBC as intended since reactions to the broadcast of *Le Testament* had been less than favourable.

In their study of Pound's critical writing, Litz and Rainey distinguish further evidence of Pound's assertion that real, first-hand experience as a practitioner is to be preferred over mere received involvement as a reader or listener. Not only is a direct experience of art essential, it is through this functional engagement that the writer becomes an active agent in the discovery and invention of new forms of expression. They propose that in this early essay, 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris', Pound adopts 'two of the period's most dominant idioms'.[11] The first of these is the superiority of real experience, here equated with 'life' over 'art':

> Pound, in 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris', appeals to the increasingly widespread reaction against the late Victorian cults of art and decadence and the correspondingly enthusiastic embrace of that ambiguous notion 'Life'. 'I am more interested in life', Pound proclaims early in his essay, 'than in any part of it'. . . However variously, Pound plants himself unequivocally on the side of 'life' over 'art'.[12]

The second of these idioms is defined by Litz and Rainey as 'the vocabulary of efficiency', cited by the authors as 'a favourite byword that was invoked by everyone from reformers of the army and navy to social workers and scientific researchers:[13]

> The epitome of efficiency was the engineer, the technocrat whose only criteria were the impersonal standards of utility and efficiency, whose decisions were outside, beyond, or even above the mundane realm of ideology. The rhetoric of efficiency is pervasive in 'I Sing [sic] the Limbs of Osiris'. The humanities, Pound urges from the start, should follow the proceedings of 'technical and practical education', where the goal is to 'make a man more efficiently useful to the community'.[14]

Throughout the essay, Pound makes analogies to the 'efficiency' of the machine:

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[11] A. Walton Litz and Lawrence Rainey, 'Ezra Pound', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Modernism and the New Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), VII, 57–92 (p. 62).

[12] Litz and Rainey, VII, pp. 62–63. Pound's interest in the troubadour tradition cannot be separated from its celebration of male desire, male heroism and masculine vocal vitality. Manly 'making' rather than aesthetic 'foppishness' was an essential area to stake out in the aftermath of the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895.

[13] Litz and Rainey quote from Jonathan Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament, 1895-1915*. 'Efficiency,' one historian noted, 'was one of the great shibboleths of the Edwardian period'. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986) p.117.

[14] Litz and Rainey, VII, pp. 63–64.

> In the history of the development of civilisation or of literature, we come upon such interpreting detail. A few dozen facts of this nature give us intelligence of a period – a kind of intelligence not to be gathered from a great array of facts of the other sort. These facts are hard to find. They are swift and easy of transmission. They govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit.[15]

In proposing this parallel between a switchboard and an electrical circuit, Litz and Rainey maintain that Pound is using the 'efficient' language of science and technology to describe the ways in which art, and the role of art, are interpreted in society. Both writers see Pound's consolidation of the two idioms of 'life' and 'efficiency' as a fundamental concept for understanding literary creation:

> The 'force' or 'energy' of tradition is regulated by 'the gauge' of literary technique, which is under the control of the poet-engineer, who in turn has constructed 'engines' of words'.[16]

In adopting the dynamic language of science and electromagnetism to convey his concept of artistic creativity, Pound attempts to transform the poet into a vital component in the scheme of modern society and development. This scientific analogy is also adopted in Wyndham Lewis's summary of Pound's Vorticist beliefs in his journal *Blast,* under the title 'Vortex. Pound'. Here, bold statements are printed to capture the scientifically 'new' thrust of artistic modernism:[17]

> The vortex is the point of maximum energy.
>
> It represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency.
>
> We use the words "greatest efficiency" in the precise sense – as they would be used in a text book of MECHANICS.

Lewis encapsulates Pound's 'energetic' ideas about science and mechanics as they might be applied to writing, drawing strong connections between 'mechanics', 'maximum energy' and 'the greatest efficiency', and ways to revitalise a literature enervated by the Pre-Raphaelites and the aesthetic movement. For Tim Armstrong, 'electro-vitalism

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[15] *The New Age*, 10.6 (7 December, 1911) p.130.
[16] Litz and Rainey, VII, p. 64.
[17] *Blast*, 20 June 1914, pp. 153-154. The magazine was not actually published until 2 July 1914 as initial publication was delayed by the onset of war.

provides the energies of modernity, a science both of the body and – following Whitman, so important as a model and forerunner for Pound – of literary transmission'.[18] Tracing a heritage from Edgar Allan Poe's exploration of 'mesmerism, galvanism, and the electrical resuscitation of the dead'[19] and the 'electrical metaphors . . . in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which the boundaries between life and death are problematized'.[20]

It seems evident that for Pound this 'electro-vitalism of literary transmission' comes from studying the models of the past, and particularly the models of the distant past, which represent for him an authentic tradition of vernacular poetry. This 'original' voice is to be found above all in the work of the troubadours, and the discovery and knowledge of this repertoire is, for Pound, fundamental to the revitalisation of poetry in the modern age. As Pound writes in his essay 'A Retrospect':[21]

> The scientist does not expect to be acclaimed as a great scientist until he has *discovered* something. He begins by learning what has been discovered already.[22]

## *III Pound and the musical traditions of the past*

[18] Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 19.
[19] Armstrong, p. 19.
[20] Armstrong, p. 18.
[21] Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1954), p. 6.
[22] Published originally as '*Pavannes and Divisions'* in 1918.

An earlier essay, 'Troubadours – Their Sorts and Conditions', which appeared in *The Quarterly Review* in 1913, details Pound's thinking on the importance and relevance of the study and knowledge of the poetry of the troubadour tradition:

> Any study of European poetry is unsound if it does not commence with a study of that art in Provence. The art of quantitative verse has been lost. That loss was due more to ignorance than to actual changes in languages, from Latin, that is, into the younger tongues. [. . .] It is true that each century after the Renaissance has tried in its own way to come nearer the classic, but, if we are to understand that part of our civilisation which is the art of verse, we must begin at the root, and that root is medieval.[23]

In returning to what he sees as the 'root' in order 'to understand that part of our civilisation which is the art of verse', Pound is also looking for a way of understanding how to re-invent poetry and 'the art of verse' for the modern age.[24] He continues:

> The poetic art of Provence paved the way for the poetic art of Tuscany; and to this Dante bears sufficient witness in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.[25]

Since the 'poetic art of Provence' provides a link to the authentic tradition of which Dante is a part, Pound believes that returning to this tradition offers modern poetry a means of restoring and revitalising itself, and perhaps even emulating or surpassing the grandeur embodied in the achievements of Dante. The 'medieval root' of verse-writing to which Pound advocates a return not only circumvents what he considered to be the exhausted

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[23] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 101.

[24] In *The Pound Era* (London: Pimlico Editions, 1991), p. 336, Hugh Kenner offers an interesting reading of a reference in Canto XXIX to Pound's visit with Eliot to Excideuil, a twelfth-century castle in the Dordogne which was besieged unsuccessfully by Richard Coeur-de-Lion no fewer than three times. Pound mentions the wave pattern cut into the stonework:

> Above him the wave pattern cut in the stone
> Spire-top alevel the well-curb
> And the tower with cut stone above that, saying:
> "I am afraid of the life after death."
> and after a pause:
> "Now, at last, I have shocked him" (141-145).

Kenner suggests that the contrast between Eliot's fear of death and the 'readiness with which, below Montségur, two hundred [Cathar heretics] embraced death . . . was impressed on Ezra Pound's mind, a luminous detail'. This signals the wider importance of Provençe for Pound: this is a heterodox world, linked to the Eleusinian mysteries, celebrating the energy of light, and in the end crushed by the Church. This represents, for Pound, an early instance of life-giving vitality crushed by the lust for control, money and, ultimately, the spirit of usury.

[25] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 102.

forms of Victorian versification,[26] but also provides a direct reconnection to the authentic voice of European vernacular poetry. In making this direct and vital link with the troubadour and trouvère[27] tradition, Pound is inevitably and explicitly re-establishing the close relationship between music and words, or '*motz el son'*, which that tradition embraced.[28] Troubadour poetry is intrinsically a musical as well as a poetic utterance.[29]

One of the ways in which Pound expressed his belief in the relevance of 'direct' experience was by walking some one thousand kilometres through the Provençal landscape in the summer of 1912 to discover the physical and cultural world of the troubadours for himself.[30] Pound's attraction to the troubadours not only suggests an interest in and engagement with the deep traditions of European vernacular poetry, but also offers him a personal reconnection with that tradition. In walking the land of the troubadours to re-energise his own poetic voice, his still highly mobile and eclectic poetic personality is founded on and established by his deepening identification with the troubadour tradition. This original tradition of vernacular poetry was, above all, celebrated in the individual voice of the troubadour, whose own lives were central to their

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[26] In Canto LXXXI, Pound refers to the first premise of his revolution in poetry, to bring it back to the speech of the people, 'To break the pentameter, that was the first heave' (537-538).

[27] Poetry composed in a different French dialect, spoken in northern France. 'Trouvère' was the equivalent of the Occitan 'trobador'.

[28] Charles Mundye, '"Motz El Son": Pound's Musical Modernism and the Interpretation of Medieval Song', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 20.01 (2008), 53 (p. 55). Mundye explores Pound's engagement with the issues of contemporary medieval scholarship in the light of subsequent discoveries and thinking, and quotes from p.366 of Pound's 1938 *Guide to Kulchur,* (London: Peter Owen, 1952), 'The particular problem, *motz el son,* did occupy the best auditors in South Europe for at least a couple of centuries (troubadours and all that, Arnaut Daniel, Sordello and Dante) and to that epoch . . . one must still go for the ABC of the subject'.

[29] Musicological scholarship in sources such as John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Richard Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: Norton & Sons, 1978) and literary scholarship such as Peter Makin, *Pound and Provençe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978) all support the reading of troubadour poems as songs.

[30] Ezra Pound, ed. Richard Sieburth, *A Walking Tour in Southern France: Ezra Pound Among the Troubadours* (New York: New Directions, 1992) p. viii and David A. Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet I The Young Genius, 1885-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p. 184.

work; but the poetry was often brought to life by 'jongleurs', performers who could sing, play instruments, dance, mime and do acrobatics.[31] However, it is the voice which is paramount. The troubadour tradition acclaims the human voice by bringing together words and music, and for Pound it is this connection to the individual voice which is vital. In his essay 'Troubadours – Their Sorts and Conditions', Pound outlines the 'several ways' in which 'a man of our time' might attain 'emotional, as well as intellectual, acquaintance with an age so out of fashion as the twelfth century':[32]

> He may read the songs themselves from the old books – from the illuminated vellum – and he will learn what the troubadours meant to the folk of the century just after their own. [. . .] Or he may try listening to the words with the music, for thanks to Jean Beck [one of the leading musicologists of the time] and others, it is now possible to hear the old tunes . . . Or, again, a man may walk the hill roads and river roads from Limoges and Charente to Dordogne and Narbonne and learn a little, or more than a little, of what the country meant to the wandering singers, he may learn or think he learns, why so many canzos open with speech of the weather; or why such a man made war on such and such castles.[33]

Making an emotional as well as intellectual connection with the world of the troubadours – landscape, accent, weather, everyday life – is clearly indispensable for Pound. He articulates the importance of having a direct experience through your own senses. Reading the songs 'from the illuminated vellum' perhaps references Pound's own experience of being in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, or in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, and smelling and feeling the living parchment on which this early repertoire is written. Pound even acknowledges the recent advances in musical interpretation by scholars such as Beck which make it 'possible to hear the old tunes'

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[31] Richard H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 262–63. Hoppin describes how the wandering entertainers known in Latin as *joculatores* or *histriones*, and in French as *jongleurs* (literally 'jugglers'), were even lower than the 'goliards', or 'wandering clerics', in the medieval social hierarchy. Educated in neither poetry nor music, *jongleurs* were essentially singers of other men's songs, their itinerant lifestyle contributing not only to the wide dissemination of the troubadour repertoire, but also facilitating the development of the *Occitan* vernacular tradition. See also Derek Attridge, *The Experience of Poetry: From Homer's Listeners to Shakespeare's Readers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) pp. 187-188.

[32] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 30. This first appeared in *The Quarterly Review* in 1913.

[33] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, pp. 94–95.

and to hear 'the words with the music'. But there is another way of experiencing the world of the troubadours: by walking 'the hill roads and the river roads'. In the poetry and critical writing produced after 1912, Pound draws on his personal knowledge of the terrain from making his own pilgrimage into the Provençal landscape and from finding out for himself 'what the country meant to the wandering singers'. Only by such direct experience of the weather might you understand how vulnerable an itinerant poet-musician might be the elements, and perhaps therefore understand why so many troubadour songs 'open with speech of the weather'.[34] Pound's own experiences of walking in Southern France included getting drenched 'in the devil's own downpour' as he approached Chalais.[35] The establishment of this sense of reconnection to the distant past enables Pound to identify with the troubadours and perhaps offers deeper insights into his sense of connection to the contemporary present. His interest in the poetry of the troubadour tradition represents for Pound not just a scholarly pursuit, but above all a way of redefining the concept of poetry in contemporary society. Pound seems captivated by the idea of a world which is lost and by a culture whose rich heritage of music and poetry is for him, as it was for his university tutors in America, the essential foundation of European literature.[36]

In the fourth part of 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris', Pound observes that 'the art of song' was the paramount art and he articulates very clearly his admiration for the work of the troubadour poet-musicians, and especially of Arnaut Daniel:

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[34] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 95.
[35] Ezra Pound ed. Richard Sieburth, *A Walking Tour in Southern France: Ezra Pound among the Troubadours,* (New York: New Directions, 1992) p. 11.
[36] *A Walking Tour in Southern France*, p. 109 refers to the standard monographs on Pound and Provençal poetry: Stuart Y. McDougal, *Ezra Pound and the Troubadour Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, Peter Makin, *Provençe and Pound* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978) and J.J. Wilhelm, *The American Roots of Ezra Pound* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).

> Moreover, as an art it had few rivals; of painting and sculpture there was little or none. The art of song was to these people literature and opera: their books and their theatre. In the north of France, the longer narrative poems held the field against it, but the two arts were fraternal, and one guild presided over them - not a formal guild, that is, but the same people purveyed them.
>
> Now in the flower of this age, when many people were writing canzoni, or had just written them -- Jaufre Rudel, Ventadorn, Borneilh, Marvoil, de Born -- Arnaut discriminated between rhyme and rhyme.
>
> He perceived, that is, that the beauty to be gotten from a similarity of line-terminations depends not upon their multiplicity, but upon their action the one upon the other; not upon frequency, but upon the manner of sequence and combination. The effect of "lais" in monorhyme, or of a canzon in which a few rhymes appear too often, is monotonous beyond the point where monotony is charming or interesting. Arnaut uses what for want of a better term I call polyphonic rhyme.
>
> At a time when both prose and poetry were loose-jointed, prolix, barbaric, he, to all intents and virtually, rediscovered "style". He conceived, that is, a manner of writing in which each word should bear some burden, should make some special contribution to the effect of the whole. The poem is an organism in which each part functionates [sic], gives to sound or to sense something - preferably to sound *and* [Pound's italics] sense gives something.[37]

Pound's admiration for Arnaut is rooted in his recognition of the medieval troubadour's mastery of what Pound calls 'polyphonic rhyme', the sequence and combination of line-endings which achieve their effect and beauty through 'their action upon one another'. Pound's use of 'polyphonic' in this context is illuminating, since Pound applies a more musical interpretation of 'polyphonic rhyme' in his own poetry, through the action of 'many voices' combining together to create a web of interconnected sounds, ideas, themes and recurring *leitmotifs*.[38] In the 'canzon'[39] of the troubadours, Pound sees the

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[37] *The New Age*, 10.8 (21 December, 1911) p.179.

[38] The term 'polyphonic' in literary criticism means 'a multiplicity of independent and often antithetic narrative voices' (*OED*), whereas in musicology the term refers to 'music in which simultaneous voices or instrumental parts are combined contrapuntally' (*Oxford Dictionary of Music* (6th ed.) ed. by Joyce Kennedy, Michael Kennedy and Tim Rutherford-Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) online [no page no.]). The fluid exchange of themes and motifs which combines in musical polyphony to make a unified whole is much closer to the interpretation of Pound's reading, and emphasises the significance to Pound of the fundamental interweaving of music and poetics found in the work of the troubadours.

[39] The terms *canso, canzon* and *canzone* are all used interchangeably by Pound to designate the form of any troubadour poem which was meant to be sung. Until the end of the twelfth century, the troubadours themselves most often used the term *vers* for a poem which as intended to be sung, but in this same period gradually came to attach more precise names to particular types and forms of poems. The *canso*, or love song in Occitan (also called *chanso* or *chanson* in the

origin of the 'new era' of Western poetry and literature, where vernacular poetry and song co-exist with the Latin models they eventually replaced. More importantly, Pound identifies in what he calls Arnaut's 'polyphonic rhyme' the influence of music on the development of the line-endings. The meanings and sounds of individual words and phrases are echoed and manipulated from line to line, with some words and ideas being repeated at regular, pivotal intervals to offer a counterpoint to the rhythm of the lines.[40] These techniques enable the poem to move 'beyond the point where monotony is charming or interesting'. Arnaut's achievement lies in 'a manner of writing in which each word should bear some burden, should make some special contribution to the effect of the whole': Pound adopts these methods into his own work, interweaving words, sounds and ideas into a poetic form which mirrors the style of the troubadour canzon.

The 1908 poem 'Na Audiart' was included by Pound in his definitive collection of early verse called *Personae*, which first appeared in 1926.[41] In this collection, Pound assumes a series of 'masks', including the disguises of various troubadour poet-musicians such as Cino da Pistoia, Arnaut de Mareuil, Piere Vidal and Bertran (sometimes Bertrans) de Born. In its entirety, the poem celebrates Bertran's hopeless love for the 'Lady Audiart', whose name echoes throughout the verse.[42] Not only does the poem use the name of the Lady Audiart as a refrain, the typography specified by

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Northern French dialect) was the most important of these forms, describing not just any form of song, but exclusively a love song which extolled the virtues of courtly love, *l'amour courtois*. To these song-poems, the composer-poets devoted their best efforts and found the greatest fame (see Hoppin, p. 271).

[40] Adrian Paterson sees in the typography of poems such as 'Aria' and 'A Return' what he calls 'attempts at Provençal-derived cadences' in which Pound adopts 'space as a rhythmic device'; see 'Modernist Poetry and Music: Pound Notes', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music*, ed. by Delia de Sousa Correa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 587–600 (p. 595).

[41] Michael Alexander, *The Poetic Achievement of Ezra Pound* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001) p. 52. In Alexander's view, this title salutes Robert Browning's *Dramatis Personae* poetry collection of 1864.

[42] Ezra Pound, 'Na Audiart', *Personae: Collected Shorter Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), pp. 8–10.

Pound emphasises the importance of her name in the layout of the lines on the page. Only at line 12, 'Pass I on', and line 18, 'Nay no whit', does the indentation mirror the layout of the repeated name, to indicate Bertran's desperate pleading to make her take notice of him. The explanation behind Bertran's invocation to the Lady Audiart is given by Pound in an introductory paragraph to the poem: the poet's feelings of rejection lead him to implore each of the pre-eminent ladies of the Langue d'Oc for 'some trait or fair semblance'.[43] The poem opens and closes with the same thought: 'Though thou well dost wish me ill', which is repeated in the original Occitan at the close of the poem: 'Que be-m vols mal'. Pound captures the paradoxical 'well' and 'ill' of the final *envoi* in the opening line, not only in the innate contradiction of the words but also in their inner rhyming repetition of the '-ll' sound. Throughout the poem, the final rhyming sounds at the ends of pairs of lines, even where they are separated, emphasises the flow of ideas: 'Audiart' at the end of line 2 is echoed by 'start' at the end of line 3; lines 7 and 8 are 'tender' and 'render'; 'girdle's scope' in line 14 is rhymed with the end line 16 'I breathe no hope', and so on. The 'polyphonic rhyme' which Pound observes in Arnaut's work is not only to be found here in the rhymes at the line-endings, but also in the repetition of words, phrases and ideas which recur throughout the poem, just as a musical theme might recur throughout a musical composition in different keys and configurations. Pound also weaves a polyphonic web of different 'voices' throughout the poem. The phrasing and words of the opening line, 'Though thou well dost wish me ill' are reworked in lines 32 and 33:

> . . . and though thou hate me well,
> Yea though thou wish me ill

[43] Personae, p. 8.

which, either consciously or unconsciously, recall the same ideas and phrasing from the opening line. Other ideas are used as recurring themes: a naturalistic image is evoked in a comparison between the lacing of Audiart's gown and ivy clinging to a wall:

> Where thy bodice laces start
> As ivy fingers clutching through
> Its crevices

This natural image is developed as she is described in line 7 as 'Stately, tall and lovely', which in this context perhaps suggests a young tree, and which is further expanded by 'thy girdle's scope' in line 14, linking back to the wreath of 'ivy fingers' in line 3. The image of nature is sustained in the second part of the poem, where the Lady is envisaged as having grown old and embittered:

> And being bent and wrinkled, in a form
> That hath no perfect limning, when the warm
> Youth dew is cold
> Upon thy hands

The 'warm dew' of youth is 'cold' on her hands, recalling the 'ivy' and 'stately' tree images from earlier in the poem, and contrasting the dawn of youth's loveliness with the crabbed, gnarled, 'bent and wrinkled . . . form' of old age. Now, there is 'no perfect limning' and hope, like the stale, cold dew, has soured:

> and thy old soul
> Scorning a new, wry'd casement,
> Churlish at seemed misplacement,
> Finds the earth as bitter
> As now seems it sweet,

This seems a harsh prediction: the succession of unvoiced alveolar and post-alveolar fricatives (the 's' and 'sh' sounds) in lines 42 and 43 adds a pseudo-reptilian sibilance which implies that this second Eve has not only joined forces with the serpent in the Garden of Eden, but is condemned to be bowed equally low, where she will find 'the earth as bitter / As now it seems sweet'. The juxtaposition of 'bitter' with 'sweet' at the

end of lines 44 and 45 is perhaps another instance of the 'polyphonic rhyme' which Pound saw in Arnaut; the proximity of the two contradictory meanings is equivalent to a musical motif being inverted, or to the close conjunction of major and minor tonalities.

As can be seen from this close reading of 'Na Audiart', the 'polyphonic rhyme' which Pound so valued in the work of Arnaut and the Provençal troubadours is already evident in his early poetry, influenced by his translations from Occitan of work by Cercamon, Peire Bremon lo Tort, Bertran de Born, and Arnaut Daniel.[44] As Pound's confidence grows, and his translations become more interpretative, so the thematic process is absorbed into his entire approach, with the translator, as Eliot says, 'giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original'.[45] There is a parallel between poetry and music in the repetition and development of themes and ideas. These are transformed and re-worked as the poem continues, distinctive not only through their almost 'melodic' development, but also in the way different 'voices' speak polyphonically in the poem, and thereby confer a rhythmic resonance, or 'inner form'.[46] The words at the ends of lines are especially important in determining the rhythmical progression of the verse, to make the poem, as Pound writes, into 'an organism in which each part functionates [sic], gives to sound or to sense something - preferably to sound *and* sense gives something'.[47] In this reinforcement of the relationship between 'sound and sense', regarded by Pound as a significant link between music and poetry, he is liberated from the conventions of Victorian and Georgian poetry and is enabled to confront his own

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[44] *Lark in the Morning: The Verses of the Troubadours*, ed. by Robert Kehew, trans. by Ezra Pound, W.D. Snodgrass, and Robert Kehew (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 36–41, 134–37, 142-155,196-221.
[45] Stuart Y. McDougal, *Ezra Pound and the Troubadour Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 39. McDougal quotes from T.S. Eliot's introduction to *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1928) p. 13.
[46] Paterson, pp. 593–95.
[47] See note 37 above.

engagement with the world, with intimate relationships, with politics, and with his status as a poet looking to reinvigorate the form, the sound and the rhythm of poetic expression.

## *IV 'Motz el son'*

The close interrelationship between the natural rhythm found in both words and music is the foundation of the link between *motz el son* which so fascinated Pound. However, the interpretation of the rhythm of troubadour song is – and always has been – a vexed question, and Pound returns to the connection between Provençal verse forms and music in his essay on *Cavalcanti.*[48] In a chapter of his essay 'The Other Dimension' (1910-1913), Pound discusses the nature of Provençal canzone:

> This canzone [*Donna mi Prega*], Guido's poetry in general, and the poems of medieval Provençe and Tuscany in general, were all made to be sung.[49]

Pound's assertion that troubadour poems were 'all made to be sung' raises interesting questions about the way they would have been performed, and particularly about how verses and the music might have fitted together. As John Stevens (whose writing on the topic is widely regarded as definitive) records in a footnote to his discussion of 'the courtly chanson', 'texts of some 2600 troubadour poems (in Provençal) survive; roughly a tenth of them have their melodies'.[50] This means that for ninety per cent of the extant sources of troubadour poems or songs, there is no music. We are left with what amounts to little more than informed conjecture regarding the way the troubadour repertoire was

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[48] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, pp. 149–200. This essay was originally published in *Make It New* (1934), but the essay as a whole must be dated, as it says in the footnote on p. 149, to 1910-31.
[49] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 167.
[50] John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) note 45 on pp. 26-27.

performed, partly on account of the lack of reliable evidence about the way verses might have been sung or performed, and partly, as Stevens advises, 'because of the intractability of the rhythmic problem'.[51] For musicologists, Stevens's 'rhythmic problem' is hugely significant, since there is 'as yet no agreed mode of analysis', as Stevens puts it, with regard to the way the meagre ten per cent of extant troubadour melodies might be realised. Thus, while Pound's assertion that all troubadour poems 'were made to be sung' is not at issue, the *way* they might have been sung is a thorny problem, especially with respect to the rhythmic interpretation of the words with their associated melodies.[52]

Pound's Provençal studies had begun as a student at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States, but his interest in the music and poetry of the troubadours broadened when he moved to Europe.[53] In 1906, as a Fellow in Romantics at the University of Pennsylvania, Pound visited the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, consulting the Chansonnier *Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana R71 sup*eriore,[54] one of the two main extant sources of troubadour songs.[55] His interest in medieval poetry and music, and in their connections and interdependence, coincided with a time of intense interest in the rhythmic interpretation of the monophonic song of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It seems clear that Pound was aware of the scholarly debates, dialogues and advances

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[51] Stevens, p. 27.
[52] See Appendix II for a more detailed discussion of Pound's interest in the possible rhythmic performance of this repertoire, and an analysis of different musicological and historical approaches.
[53] See Gail McDonald, *Learning to be Modern: Pound, Eliot, and the American University* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) where the high modernism of Pound (and Eliot) is contextualised against the very different educational programmes they experienced at American universities and colleges.
[54] Troubadour MS *G*
[55] A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet I The Young Genius, 1885-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 157. Pound writes home enthusiastically (27 July 1911) that he has 'found a mss. of Arnaut with musical notation which accords exactly with my theories of how his music should be written'. See also Adrian Paterson, 'Modernist Poetry and Music: Pound Notes' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music* ed. Delia da Sousa Correa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020) p. 595.

which were being made by contemporary musicologists and that he was interested in their interpretations of the rhythm of the musical notation found alongside the troubadour and trouvère poetry. In a final paragraph from his article, 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris', Pound explains his admiration for the work of Arnaut Daniel:

> Thirdly, he discerns what Plato had discerned some time before, that *melos* is the union of words, rhythm, and music (i.e., that part of music which we do not perceive as rhythm). Intense hunger for a strict accord between these three has marked only the best lyric periods, and Arnaut felt this hunger more keenly and more precisely than his fellows or his forerunners.[56]

Stevens detects in the work of the medieval theorists an understanding of the word *musica* which encompasses expertise in both music and words, and which also hardly distinguishes between music and speech since 'both are arts which measure sound in time'.[57] He quotes from Guido d'Arezzo, a theorist whose *Micrologus* (c.1025) is one of the earliest sources on polyphony:

> Thus, in verse we often see such concordant and mutually congruous lines that you wonder, as it were, at a certain harmony of language. And if music were added to this, with a similar internal congruity, *you would be doubly charmed by a twofold melody*.[58]

Pound and Guido are effectively praising the same harmonious conjunction between words and music. Similarly, Pound's *melos* is the way in which, through the 'union of words, rhythm and music', the ear of the listener is 'doubly charmed by a twofold melody', as Guido writes. Where Guido speaks of a 'symphoniae grammaticae' and of 'modulatione', some three centuries later Dante, at the end of that great early medieval period of melodic creation and inventiveness, writes of 'armonia', a word he frequently uses to describe not only the proportions of music and of words but also, for example, to consider the proportions of the human body.[59] Stevens argues that the noticeable

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[56] *The New Age*, 10.8 (21 December, 1911) p.179.
[57] Stevens, p.496.
[58] Stevens, p.497: 'Sicut persaepe videmus tam consonos et sibimet alterutrum respondents versus in metris, ut quamdam quasi symphoniam grammaticae admireris. Cui si musica simili responsione iungatur, *duplici modulation dupliciter delecteris'*.
[59] Stevens, p. 497; a longer quotation from Dante's *Convivio* is given on p. 385.

silence in Guido, Dante – and in all other medieval theorists 'to my knowledge'[60] – about the relationship between words and music in song is on account of this concept of 'armonia'. No medieval theorist needs to write in specific terms about the ways text and music relate to one another (except structurally in terms of grammatical-syntactical units) because 'harmoniousness' is intrinsic to the very nature of words and music together. A brief reference in Dante's *Paradiso* compares looking into Beatrice's eyes with a man looking into a mirror:

> a sé rivolge, per veder se 'l vetro
> li dice il vero, e vede ch' el s'accorda
> con esso come note con suo metro . . .[61]

> [He turns back to himself to see if the mirror tells him the truth, and he sees the reality agreeing with the image *as music to its verse . . .*]

Stevens points to Dante's 'revealing analogy for the relationship between words and music as Dante conceived it'. The intimate connection between words and music is comparable to an image reflected in a mirror: the sounds of music and the sounds of words are not only indivisible, they are closely parallel to each other, like an image to its reflection. As Dante reiterates in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, 'those who harmonise words, make songs'.[62] Pound recognises this same connection between words and music. In an early essay entitled 'Retrospect' (1918), Pound offers advice to budding poets:

> In short, behave as a musician, a good musician, when dealing with that phase of your art which has exact parallels in music. The same laws govern, and you are bound by no other.
>
> Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning.

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[60] Stevens, p.497.
[61] Quoted in Stevens, p. 497 from Dante, *Il Paradiso*, xxviii.4.
[62] Stevens, p.498: 'cantio nil aliud esse videtur quam actio completa dicantis verba modulationi armonizzata'.

> The term harmony is misapplied in poetry; it refers to simultaneous sounds of different pitch. There is, however, in the best verse a sort of residue of sound which remains in the ear of the hearer and acts more or less as an organ-base.[63]

Pound not only expresses his belief in the 'exact parallels' which exist between poetry and music, he suggests that they are governed by the same 'laws'. He specifically focuses on the rhythmic and harmonic aspects of music as they might be applied to poetry: 'rhythmic structure' should not be allowed to 'destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning'. Pound is not advising writers to avoid rhythm; rather, he is keen that the natural rhythm of the words should harmonise with the sounds of the words and support their meaning. The harmony in poetry self-evidently does not arise as it does in music from the simultaneous performance of 'sounds of different pitch', but comes from the 'residue of sound' which 'remains in the ear of the hearer, and Pound makes an analogy with a low pedal note played on the organ which acts as a bass-note to a musical phrase. This lingering 'residue' performs a similar role in poetry, where not only the ideas from different 'voices' and phrases are carried over in the ear of the listener, but the sounds of different words and repetitions of sounds act as a 'pedal note' underpinning the development of the verse.

In 1912, Pound collaborated with the pianist Walter Morse Rummel on *Hesternae Rosae*, a performing edition of some nine troubadour songs, seven from sources in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and two songs by Arnaut Daniel from the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan.[64] In the introduction to the edition, Rummel gives a special mention to Pound:

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[63] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 6. This was printed in *Pavannes and Divisions*, a group of early essays and notes which appeared in 1918.
[64] Pound and Rummel's friendship is explored in the roman-à-clef *Asphodel* (1921-1922) by H.D. [Hilda Doolittle] (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992).

> The two Daniel melodies are here published for the first time to the writer's knowledge, and he is indebted to Mr Ezra Pound MA for communicating them from the Milan library.[65]

This confirms Pound's deep interest not only in the original manuscript sources of troubadour poetry, but in the music which is available for some of the extant melodies. Rummel continues to give credit to Pound:

> The writer, with the help of Mr Ezra Pound, an ardent proclaimer of the artistic side of mediaeval poetry, has given these melodies the rhythm and the ligature, the character which, from an artistic point of view, seems the most descriptive of the mediaeval spirit.[66]

Michael Ingham observes that the Rummel musical settings of Pound's translations 'thump along lustily' and that Pound's 'delicate and nuanced texts' are 'imprisoned in a folksy triple meter'. He goes on:

> However, the Pound translations, sung to the troubadour tunes in a freely articulated rhythm and unaccompanied, yield a music of refinement.[67]

Pound's instinctive sense for the way in which troubadour poems should be sung is now very much in line with modern musicological thinking. Those few extant troubadour melodies remain as enigmatic as ever in terms of how they might have been performed originally, since modern scholarship suggests that the rhythm in these melodies is derived from the natural rhythm of the words, concurring with Pound's own observations on the way troubadour poetry might have been sung.[68] As Rummel writes in the preface to *Hesternae Rosae*:

> The musical notation of all these melodies is Neumatic (by nods and signs), and bears no trace of rhythmic indications, save for the occasional vertical lines which are supposed to have indicated pauses. The rhythmic reconstruction of such melodies is, therefore, for lack of more positive records, a somewhat hypothetical

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[65] Walter Morse Rummel, with M.D. Calvocoressi and Ezra Pound, *Hesternae Rosae: Neuf chansons de troubadours des XIIième et XIIIième siècles pour une voix et accompangement de piano*, (London: Augener Ltd, 1913).
[66] *Hesternae Rosae*, Preface p. 2.
[67] Michael Ingham, 'Pound and Music' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. by Ira Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 243.
[68] See Appendix II for a more detailed account of theories regarding the application of the liturgical 'modal' rhythmic system to monophonic song.

> task . . . The unfolding of the music of the troubadour must have therefore followed closely the rhythm of the text.[69]

Pound's assertion quoted above that ' . . . in the best verse a sort of residue of sound remains in the ear of the hearer', emphasises that he expects his verse to be heard – to be spoken aloud. This further underpins the connection with music, a performance art where scores are perhaps only 'read' by practitioners and where the actual music only comes alive when it is performed by singers and instrumentalists. Even contemporary scores, or 'nods and signs' on the page as Rummel describes the notation of the troubadour melodies, are equally unintelligible to a non-musician. For Pound, it was the *sound* of his poetry which formed that vital link with the rhythm and harmony of music, and it was the agency of the human voice which, above all, made that connection. Surviving recordings of Pound reading his own verse are of fundamental importance, not only as historical documents, but because they show how he read and interpreted that verse, as he insisted the troubadour poets did, in a distinctively rhythmical and tonal way.

A recording made in 1939 at Harvard University of Pound reading his own 'Sestina: Altaforte' captures the fiery declamatory style which must have so disturbed other diners at the London restaurant where he gave his original 'performance' of the poem in April 1909.[70] Pound's emphatic style of recitation at this meeting of the Poets' Club proved to be so unique that 'a screen had to be placed around the gathering to prevent a public disturbance'.[71] The poem is written in the fixed verse form of a 'sestina', whose invention

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[69] *Hesternae Rosae*, Preface p. 1.

[70] Florence Farr (1860-1917) was the 'poetic muse' of W.B. Yeats, whose voice he deemed perfect for the reciting of his poetry. She first introduced Pound to the group of poets who met in the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel, at which he first recited his 'Sestina: Altaforte' to such dramatic effect. The 1939 recording of Pound reading the poem at Harvard can be found at https://media.sas.upenn.edu/pennsound/authors/Pound/1939/Pound-Ezra_01_Sestina-Altaforte_Harvard_1939.mp3

[71] Ira B. Nadel, *The Cambridge Introduction to Ezra Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 42–43.

is usually attributed to Arnaut Daniel.[72] The form of the sestina, with its six stanzas of six lines and its three-line *envoi,* or final argument,[73] uses a complicated pattern where the final words of the lines are rotated in a set order, sometimes called *retrogradatio cruciata* or 'backward crossing'.[74] In his 'Sestina: Altaforte', Pound's interpretation of the sestina form switches the position of the six recurrent terminal words (peace/music/clash/opposing/crimson/rejoicing) during the course of the six stanzas, working them in three groups of two, not only paired by their syllable-length but also in their meanings. 'Peace' and 'clash' represent opposites, concord being opposed to discord, as well as both words having a single syllable. 'Music' and 'crimson' might be regarded as representing two different branches of the arts, appealing to opposite – or complementary – senses: painting refers to the eye and seeing, and music or sound refers to the ear and hearing. Both of these words have two syllables. The final pair of words, 'rejoicing' and 'opposing', have three short syllables each and their meaning also seems to be contrasted, with 'rejoicing' suggesting elation in time of peace, perhaps, and 'opposing' suggesting conflict and even warfare. Listening to the recording of Pound's 1939 reading, it is very clear where he puts the 'long' and 'short' stresses on the words, the relative weight and duration of the syllables perhaps suggesting a more metrical interpretation. This is a transcription of Pound's performance of the first stanza, showing the strong/long and weak/short stresses in his reading:

/ . / . / . / / /
Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.
. / . / . . / . / . / .
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!
. / . / . . . / /
I have no life save when the swords clash.

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[72] F.J.A. Davidson, 'The Origin of the Sestina', *Modern Language Notes*, 25.1 (1910), 18–20 (p. 18). In 'Sestina! or The Fate of the Idea of Form', *Modern Philology,* 105.1 (2007) pp. 218-241, Stephen Burt proposes that 'the sestina has serves, historically, as a complaint' (p.219).
[73] Hoppin, p. 274. The final section called the '*envoi',* or '*tornada'* in Occitan, was usually addressed to a beautiful woman, to a patron or to the mediator of a legal dispute.
[74] Marilyn Krysl, 'Sacred and Profane: The Sestina as Rite', *The American Poetry Review*, 33.2 (2004), 7–12 (p. 9).

. / / . / . / . / / / . . / .
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing
. . / / . / / / / .
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,
. / / / / / / . . / .
Then howl I my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.

*['/ '= strong/long and ' . ' = weak/short]*

Pound's performance of the sestina is surely indebted to his fascination with the troubadour tradition: the pattern of strong/weak or long/short stresses suggests the influence of the triple metres of the medieval poems which Pound had studied in the extant troubadour sources. Pound's sensitivity to the words and their inherent 'music' suggests a conscious imitation of the older style.

Florence Farr's book *The Music of Poetry*, in which she sets out her methods for connecting words with their full musical potential, was published by Elkin Matthews, Pound's own publisher, in April 1909. For a short time Pound collaborated with Farr on 'Psaltery settings' of some of his poems, developing her recitations to the accompaniment of the twelve-stringed instrument which had been made specially for her by Dolmetsch.[75] Moody conjectures that this experience of working with Farr 'would have given [Pound] a start on the technique of discovering and realizing the music latent in the vowels and consonants and their combinations'.[76] While Pound's brief collaboration with Farr must have been, at least to some extent, influential in the development of his mature style, his interest in the music and poetry of the troubadour tradition is also deeply significant to his understanding and interpretation of the underlying connection between poetry and music. W.B. Yeats wrote in 1909 that Pound had 'got closer to the right sort of music for poetry . . . it is more definitely music with

[75] Moody, p. 98.
[76] Moody, p. 98.

strongly marked time and yet it is effectively speech'.[77] In his chapter on 'The Dance-Song', Stevens notes a distinction between courtly song, Gregorian chant and narrative poetry, and song-forms such as the *rondeau, refrain* and *rondellus* in their respective approach to rhythm:

> The relationship is different from that we have seen in *la grande chanson courtoise* and shall see in narrative poetry, in Gregorian chant and elsewhere. It is a physical thing, basic and close to ordinary human experience. Granted the rightness of my initial assumption, that 'all choral dance-songs, all dances sung and performed in company, must have a metrical base' – a strictly measured regular rhythm – words as well as music are likely to contribute to this effect. And they do: either by being themselves accentually measured, or by allowing themselves to be used *as if they were.*[78]

The strophic structure of many troubadour and trouvère songs means that the same melody is used for several stanzas of text, with just one version of the melody notated in the surviving manuscript sources. However, this does not mean that performers would not have adjusted the contours and stresses of the melody to accommodate subtle changes in the words of subsequent stanzas, as the need of performance dictated. As Rummel and Pound noted in the preface to *Hesternae Rosae*:

> Let us not forget that in old music, a great part was left to the imaginative quality of the interpreter, to improvisation.[79]

For Pound, the concept of 'improvisation' is indissolubly linked with the live performance of his poetry, and with the pre-eminence of the sound of the human voice. As with his preference for live music performance, for the authentic instruments reproduced by Dolmetsch, for the repertoire of early music championed by Violet Gordon Woodhouse and the Dolmetsch circle, and for the music-poetry of the troubadours, Pound sees in the authenticity of the human voice the power to form a deep connection to the traditions

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[77] *The Letters of W.B. Yeats*, ed. by Allan Wade (London: Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 543.
[78] John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 196–97.
[79] Walter Morse Rummel, M.D. Calvocoressi, and Ezra Pound, *Hesternae Rosae: Neuf Chansons de Troubadours Des XIIième et XIIIième Siècles Pour Une Voix et Accompangement de Piano* (London: Augener, 1913), p. iv.

of the past. His distaste for the 'mechanics' of the piano, the organ, or – even worse – the pianola,[80] originates not only in the distance which these instruments artificially create between music or poetry performance and the listener, but also because, in this way, they detach art from society. In referencing the repertoire of the troubadours, Pound was deliberately evoking a sense of return to the authentic origin of European poetry, self-identifying with a process of 'starting again', as he writes in Canto LXXVI:

> As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill
> From the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor.[81]

This refers not just to the 'wreckage' of two World Wars, but also to the cultural, artistic and literary disarray which needs to be refreshed and restored, as he confirms earlier in the same Canto:

> Death, insanity / suicide generation
> that is, just getting stupider as they get older[82]

Andreas Huyssen comments that 'the anti-traditionalism of modernism is often subtly traditional',[83] and Pound's attraction to the 'first' voices of an authentic European poetic tradition – those of the troubadours – simultaneously maintains the connection with what he regards as a genuinely original tradition, while breaking with the models of the immediate – in his view, corrupted – past.

## *IV The 'authentic' voice*

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[80] *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. by R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), p. 125.
[81] Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: New Directions, 2003), p. 36.
[82] Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, p. 35.
[83] Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 163.

The BBC began broadcasting its first radio programmes from the Marconi Studios in the Strand, London, in November 1922. That same year, Pound began work on the composition of his first opera, *The Testament of François Villon,* assisted by the composer George Antheil and the violinist Olga Rudge. This work, the first of Pound's 'radio operas', was broadcast by the BBC in 1931.[84] Working with Antheil on the score of *The Testament* to achieve a detail and an accuracy in the musical notation of his rhythmic concept of its poetic language which possibly surpasses that of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Pound was also fortunate to have as his collaborator at the BBC the producer Archie Harding. Harding's speciality was, as Fisher puts it, 'the ability to manipulate the perception of volumetric space and geographic distances acoustically', and this produced a range of unusual and highly dramatic effects.[85] Such a collaboration enabled Pound's opera to be envisioned as 'a laboratory to heighten the sense of hearing'.[86] The broadcast was a success, with Pound being able to listen in clearly from his home in Italy:

> Whatever the demerits of the work, this much is established: I sat in the electrician's kitchen in Rapallo when the Villon was broadcast from London, and I not only knew who was singing (so far as the singers were known to me), but I could distinguish the words, and the sense of the words.[87]

Pound's promotion of the medium of radio, not only as a platform for the performance of his operas but also in his controversial wartime broadcasts for the Italian Fascists, presents a contradiction.[88] Given his aversion to 'mechanical' instruments and other

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[84] The success of *The Testament of François Villon* encouraged Pound and his BBC collaborator Archie Harding to plan a second opera, based on the life of Dante's teacher, *Cavalcanti*. Owing to the rumblings of war, this work was first performed only in 1983. (Margaret Fisher, *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas: the BBC Experiments, 1931-33,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press: 2002), p. 203).
[85] Margaret. Fisher, *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas: The BBC Experiments, 1931-1933* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2002), p. 82.
[86] Fisher, p. 94.
[87] Fisher, p. 88.
[88] Wendy Stallard Flory, 'Pound and Antisemitism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. by Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 284–300 (p. 287). Flory

forms of musical reproduction and his preference for authenticity, Pound's regard for the radio medium seems perverse. However, he may have been influenced by Marinetti, who wrote in 1913 that radio offered:

> . . . the absolute freedom of images or analogies, expressed by disconnected words and with no wire conductors of syntax and no punctuation.[89]

Sitting in that electrician's kitchen in Rapallo in 1931, Pound could clearly 'distinguish the words, and the sense of words', meaning that the reality of the authentic human voice was not undermined by the broadcast process. The radio seemed to offer a unique opportunity for this 'voice' to be' heard in its most genuine state.[90] In his attempt to use radio to disseminate the sound of that authentic voice, Pound perhaps believed he could regenerate the very poetic language he had set out to restore when he left America, and that this process of regeneration could be achieved through a re-establishment of those fundamental connections existing between poetry and music. Pound frequently returns to this consistent theme, insisting on the 'natural' rhythms and metres with which music inflects a more 'authentic' poetics. In his essay 'The Tradition' (1913), he observes the primary relevance of reconnecting with the unaffected, 'authentic' well-spring of creativity:

> A return to origins invigorates because it is a return to nature and reason. The man who returns to origins does so because he wishes to behave in the eternally

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describes Pound's 'clear manic tendencies', which, after 1935, 'became so pronounced as to constitute a manic mood disorder that co-existed with his Delusional Disorder'. She continues: 'His broadcasts [for Mussolini's Italian government] were typical of manic speech in being "pressured, loud, rapid, and difficult to interpret" . . . and "marked by complaints, hostile comments [and] angry tirades"'. Quoted citations are from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fourth edition) [DSM-IV], the official manual of the American Psychiatric Association.

[89] Fisher, p. 81.

[90] The extent to which modernism engaged with the continuum of mass communication radio, ranging from 'dystopian fears' to 'utopian hopes' (see Todd Avery, *Radio Modernism* (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006) p. 42), raises questions about how the transmission of their 'authentic voice' was also highly valued as a propaganda channel by Mussolini and Hitler. See also Jane Lewty, 'Broadcasting modernity' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2002) p. 327 onwards for an exploration of the significance and consequences of Pound's radio broadcasts.

> sensible manner. That is to say, naturally, reasonably, intuitively . . . He wishes not pedagogy but harmony, the fitting thing.[91]

Theodor Adorno also addresses the nature of the relationship between art and society in his *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1948):

> There is validity in the suspicion . . . that the concept of great music, which has today been passed on to radical music, belongs itself only to a moment in history; that man in the age of the omnipresent radio and juke box has forgotten the experience of music altogether.[92]

Adorno suggests that the immediate availability of music, by means of the 'omnipresent radio and jukebox', has engendered a state of societal amnesia about 'the concept of great music' on account of its disconnectedness from the real *experience* of music. In his essay 'Stravinsky: A Dialectical Portrait' (1961), Adorno restates his belief in the power of music to corroborate a personal experience of reality, writing that 'music never abjures its promise that one exists'.[93] Pound's understanding of the rootedness of music – and also, therefore, of poetry – in the authentic, original traditions of the past links to Adorno's expression of music's ability to confer the feeling of authentic existence on the listener. For Pound, however, the concept of the power of music to bestow on each individual their own personal voice is predicated on music's ability to connect with the traditions of the past.[94] Larry Scanlon views Pound's intense engagement with 'a return to origins' as a 'recognition of one of modernism's central paradoxes [where] the completeness of its break with the past actually ensures that the past can never be

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[91] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 92. Pound's article 'The Tradition' was first published in *Poetry* magazine in December 1913.

[92] Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), p. 15.

[93] Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), p. 151.

[94] Adorno's support for Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School is at odds with Pound's perspective on the authentic music of tradition. Adorno writes that 'the search for times past does not simply bring them home, but deprives them, rather, of every consistency. Arbitrary preservation of the antiquated endangers that which it wishes to maintain, and, with a bad conscience, opposes everything new' (*Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 4). For Pound, a return to genuine tradition – through music – was a positive reconnection and renewal.

forgotten'.[95] It is this paradox which infuses *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,* published in 1920 and regarded as Pound's 'farewell' to London.[96]

In 1913, while still living and working in London, Pound wrote in *The New Age*, 'I know I am perched on the rotten shell of a crumbling empire',[97] revealing, even before the outbreak of war, his growing impatience with an England he regards (in the same piece) as a 'comfortable, musty old studio'. Later in the same article, Pound writes of being 'disinterested and detached from the particular encounter [between England and Germany] . . . It is only a game of chess'. But his disenchantment by 1920 with the London literary world, and particularly with 'critics who considered Pound out of step with his time',[98] set him on a new path stylistically and personally. As Eliot writes:

> The effect of London is apparent; the author has become a critic of men, surveying them from a consistent and developed point of view; he is more formidable and disconcerting; in short, much more mature.[99]

The Pound whom Eliot considers 'formidable . . . disconcerting . . . mature' seems to be writing *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* 'under the influence' of Eliot's poem 'The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1915),[100] and *Mauberley* might even be regarded as 'a covert dialogue with Eliot, a composite biography of two great unappreciated poets whose flaws are frankly aired'.[101] But Pound is also in dialogue with the troubadour poet/musicians whose work he has studied, translated and edited, the different voices embedded within *Mauberley* echoing the performative characterisations captured in 'Cino', 'Marvoil' and

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[95] Larry Scanlon, 'Modernism's Medieval Imperative: The Hard Lessons of Ezra Pound's Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', *American Literary History*, 22.4 (2010), 838–62 (p. 839).
[96] James J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris, 1908-1925* (Pennsylvania University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), p. 252. Pound added an epigraph to the 1926 edition of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* in *Personae*: 'The sequence is so distinctly a farewell to London that the reader who chooses to regard this an exclusively American edition may as well omit it and turn at once to page 205'.
[97] Ezra Pound, 'Through Alien Eyes I', *The New Age*, 12.11 (1913), 252 (p. 252).
[98] Wilhelm, p. 253.
[99] T.S. Eliot, *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917), pp. 172–73.
[100] Oliver Tearle, *The Great War, 'The Waste Land' and the Modernist Long Poem* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 60.
[101] Lyndall Gordon, *The Imperfect Life of T.S. Eliot* (London: Virago, 2012), p. 170.

'Piere Vidal Old'.[102] In 'Cino' particularly, Pound's narrator develops a number of different voices to tell his tale:[103]

> Forgetful in their towers of our tuneing [sic]
> Once for Wind-runeing
> They dream us-toward and
> Sighing, say, "Would Cino,
> Passionate Cino, of the wrinkling eyes,
> Gay Cino, of quick laughter,
> Cino, of the dare, the jibe,
> Frail Cino, strongest of his tribe
> That tramp old ways beneath the sun-light,
> Would Cino of the Luth were here!"
>
> (*Personae*, 6-7, 13-22)

However, the range of different voices which Pound develops in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, are not just recounting remembered conversations. Here, the voices share with the speakers in 'Prufrock' the same petty drawing-room preoccupations, the same chatter of women, and even the same 'stifled romantic lives of the two protagonists',[104] even though the polyphonic interplay of voices and characters found in *The Waste Land* and in *The Pisan Cantos* has not yet emerged. Pound's speakers in *Mauberley* are simultaneously more integrated and more spectral than in 'Prufrock', with 'E.P.', 'Mauberley' and Pound himself merging in and out from one another. Pound asserts in a letter written to Felix Schelling in July 1922 that 'I'm no more Mauberley than Eliot is Prufrock . . . Mauberley is a mere surface'.[105] But it is a surface on which he inscribes his 'testament', both to his disappointment with the life he had tried to find in London, and to his hope for the future, creating a 'poem in 100 or 120 cantos'.[106]

The world had changed in the years between Eliot's composition of 'Prufrock' and Pound's writing of *Mauberley*. Although like many other modernist writers – Eliot, Woolf,

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[102] Pound, *Personae: Collected Shorter Poems*. 'Cino' p. 6, 'Marvoil' p. 21 and 'Piere Vidal Old' p. 28.
[103] 'Cino' is the Italian poet and jurist Cino da Pistoia (1270-1336/7) (see note 37 above).
[104] Tearle, p. 60.
[105] Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. by D.D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 180.
[106] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 180.

Lawrence – Pound had no direct experience of war service, he 'assimilated the war into [his] writing, both as concept and as form, [making] it a part of their idea of history, and of reality'.[107] This is why *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, generated by the same feelings of disgust and contempt for London and the British Empire which Pound later poured into writing the 'Hell' Cantos,[108] is not only a poem about the changing role of poetry and about worlds past and present, it is also a visceral response to the shock of the First World War, and especially to the wartime experiences and loss of many of his friends.[109] Sections IV and V in 'E.P. Ode pour l'Élection de son Sepulchre' particularly address the significance of the war, first speaking of the varied motivations of the volunteers:

> These fought in any case,
> and some believing,
> pro domo, in any case . . .
>
> Some quick to arm
> some for adventure
> some from fear of weakness
> some from fear of censure
> (*HSM* 'E.P.', IV, 1-7)[110]

Pound's insight into the multiplicity of reasons for 'joining up' might be attributed to his concern for the many friends who went off to war. Pound moves on to examine the England to which these soldiers have returned, capturing the disappointing world of 'many deceits' which awaits those who had 'walked eye-deep in hell'. His final verse in

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[107] Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992), p. 348.

[108] The 'Hell' Cantos XIV and XV were drafted just months after Pound had edited T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* in January 1922. Both poems evoke the horror and destruction of the First World War, as well as alluding particularly to the terrors of Dante's Second Circle of Hell. In 1932 Pound wrote to John Drummond that 'The Hell cantos are specifically London, the state of the English mind in 1919 and 1920' (Pound, *Selected Letters*, p. 239). Peter Ackroyd calls these two Cantos 'a sustained and vicious attack upon English culture' (Ackroyd, *Ezra Pound and His World*, p. 52).

[109] In *Canto XVI* Pound mentions Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and T.E. Hulme who were both killed in action, as well as other friends such as Richard Aldington, Wyndham Lewis, Ernest Hemingway and Fernand Léger who all fought in the war. *Canto XVI* is often seen as a representation of Pound emerging from the 'Hell' of *Cantos XIV and XV.* T.E. Hulme knew Diana Poulton, the lutenist who did much to revive the instrument and its music, when he lived with the family in Sussex as her mother's lover (see Thea Abbott, *Diana Poulton: The Lady with the Lute* (Norwich: Smokehouse Press, 2013) pp. 23-26 and pp. 45-53).

[110] Pound, *Personae: Collected Shorter Poems*, p. 187. All subsequent references to the poem are taken from this edition (pp. 185-202).

Section IV exposes Pound's bitter sense of loss, not only of his friends, but of the hopes he had cherished of revivifying poetry:

> frankness as never before
> disillusions as never told in the old days,
> hysterias, trench confessions,
> laughter out of dead bellies.
> (*HSM* 'E.P.', IV, 24-27)

Pound's despair at such 'disillusions' and 'trench confessions' very much mirrors the awful consequences of the physical and mental scars of battle which continued to afflict combatants even after they had returned home. One wounded infantryman confessed to his doctors in October 1918 his inability to expunge the living nightmare of the battlefield:

> The chief trouble now is the dreams – not exactly dreams, either, but right in the middle of an ordinary conversation the face of a Boche that I have bayoneted, with its horrible gurgle and grimace, comes sharply into view . . .[111]

Pound articulates the fruitless outcome of waging war for four years in the final two lines of Section V:

> For two gross of broken statues,
> For a few thousand battered books.
> (*HSM* 'E.P.', V, 7-8)

These lines echo the sense of hopelessness and futility experienced by the returning combatants, whose cultural heritage is discarded and who are fated to be exploited by the same bankers, industrialists, businessmen and newspaper owners – described in Pound's Canto XV as 'the beast with a hundred legs, USURA'[112] – who, for Pound, are as much to blame for the onset of war as they are for its consequences, on account of the ways in which they could exploit everything for their own gain. But Pound's ironic tone here also imitates the political and social satire of the *sirventes*, a poetic form used by the troubadours to satirise contemporary events, mock the Roman Catholic Church,

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[111] Peter Englund, *The Beauty And The Sorrow: An Intimate History of the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2011), pp. 489–90.
[112] Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1993), p. 64. This is Pound's version of Dante's monster Geryon, from Canto XVII of the *Inferno* (see p. 223-224).

or sling mud at personal enemies.[113] The influence of the troubadour tradition is apparent.

Writing from Rapallo in December 1924, Pound reminds Wyndham Lewis that, in his memory of England before he finally left in 1920 for Paris and then Italy, 'You will readily see that the "hell" is a portrait of contemporary England, or at least Eng. as she wuz when I left her'.[114] Hugh Witemeyer considers this 'conspiracy-theory of the economic and political causes of the war' an important underlying factor for Pound in the development of the 'philistine phase' of modern British society.[115] Much of the first sequence 'E.P.' in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* is concerned with exploring the response of different writers to the demands put upon them by such a cultural change, but the second sequence, 'Mauberley (1920)' is particularly taken up with the reaction of the 'Mauberley' persona – or is it Pound himself? – to artistic indifference. This is particularly evident in the third poem of the second sequence, 'The Age Demanded':

> Incapable of the least utterance or composition,
> Emendation, conservation of the "better tradition," [sic]
> Refinement of the medium, elimination of superfluities,
> August attraction or concentration.
> (*HSM* 'The Age', 46-49)

He finishes the poem with this despairing recognition of Mauberley's/Pound's failure to 'break through' into English literary circles:

> Non-esteem of self-styled "his betters"
> Leading, as well he knew,
> To his final
> Exclusion from the world of letters.
> (*HSM* 'The Age', 58-61)

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[113] *Kehew,* p. 7. Pound's translation of Bertran de Born's *Un sirventes on motz no falh* [Quarrels Where Words Don't Miss Fire] demonstrate his familiarity with the *sirventes* style (pp. 146-149).
[114] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 191.
[115] Hugh Witemeyer, 'Early Poetry 1908-1920', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. by Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 55.

Both poetic sequences which constitute *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* finish with an *envoi*, as was customary with troubadour songs and poems.[116] Pound's inclusion of such a medieval poetic 'device' in both sections of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* demonstrates what Thomas Grieve calls 'a consummation of his efforts to put the courtly love tradition to use in modern poetry'.[117] Pound's 'intrinsic and exemplary medievalism' might also be regarded as a manifestation of the concept of 'the modernist break', evidenced in 'a condensed meditation on the historical predicament of the modern poet.[118] In the 'Envoi (1919)' at the end of the 'E.P.' sequence, Pound transforms the medieval lyric into a declaration of literary intent:

> *Tell her that goes*
> *With song upon her lips*
> *But sings not out the song, nor knows*
> *The maker of it, some other mouth*
> *Might be as fair as her,*
> *Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers . . .*
> (*HSM* 'Medallion', 17-22)

Sanda Meyer notes that, in his pastiche of Edmund Waller's 'Goe, lovely rose',[119] Pound varies Waller's rhyme scheme of ababb, 'just as in *Mauberley* as a whole the rhyme patterns vary between sections'.[120] The interplay of 's', 'm' and 'w' sounds in the final verse especially focuses the attention on the melodic resonance of the language, underpinning Pound's emphasis on the 'Beauty alone' which survives when 'change hath broken down / All things', as well as exemplifying the 'emotional and musical tone' which informs the whole poem.[121] It is in the inclusion of all these distinctly medieval elements, so indicative for Pound of everything he admires in the troubadour tradition, that the nature of his farewell 'testament' seems most vividly drawn. The techniques of

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[116] See note 73 above, and also my earlier discussion of the *envoi* at the end of 'Sestina: Altaforte'.
[117] Thomas F. Grieve, 'Pound's Other Homage: "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley"', *Paideuma*, 27.1 (1998), 9–30 (p. 10).
[118] Scanlon, p. 840.
[119] Edmund Waller's poem 'Go[e], lovely rose' first appeared in 1645 in his collection, *Poems.*
[120] Sandra Meyer, 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley: "The 'Sculpture' of Rhyme"', *Paideuma*, 27.1 (1998), 109–14 (p. 113).
[121] Meyer, p. 114.

'polyphonic rhyme' which Pound has crafted and refined during his time in London are demonstrated in the 'Envoi' to show that he is free to move ahead to 'gather inspiration for a new beauty'.[122] In contrast, 'Medallion', which concludes the second 'Mauberley' sequence, shows the fictive minor poet trapped 'beneath the glaze', condemned to drift as a hedonist.[123] The singer of 'Envoi', '*With song upon her lips'*, is contrasted against the 'grand piano' of 'Medallion', uttering 'a profane / Protest in her clear soprano'. This evident championing of the authentic, human voice against the inauthentic, mechanical piano would seem to determine Pound's answer to his dilemma: he would turn his back on London and all it represented in order to focus his attention on composing a poem which would satisfy the demands of the new age. As he was later to write:

> There are three kinds of melopoeia, that is verse made to sing; to chant or intone; and to speak.
>
> The older one gets the more one believes in the first.[124]

Pound's conviction that 'only a huge, indigestible poem'[125] composed in the traditions of the past, but answering the questions of the present, was to motivate him for the next forty years.

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[122] Wilhelm, p. 253.
[123] Jo Brantley Berryman, 'The Art of the Image: Allusions in Pound's "Medallion"', *Paideuma*, 6.3 (1977), 295–308. Berryman suggests that Pound wants 'to preserve the image of the singer in a porcelain portrait, and to present an Image, where painting or sculpture seems transformed into words' (p. 299).
[124] Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1934), p. 61.
[125] Witemeyer, p. 57.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Ideas of time and form in *The Pisan Cantos*

### *I Music for 'The End of Time'*

Messiaen's completed eight-movement *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* was performed in freezing conditions at the Görlitz prison camp on 15 January 1941 to an audience of prisoners and camp guards. As Messiaen would later recall:

> They brought in an upright piano, very out of tune, and whose key action worked only intermittently. It was on this piano, with my three fellow musicians, dressed very strangely, myself clothed in the bottle-green uniform of a Czech soldier, badly torn, and wearing wooden clogs . . . that I was to play my *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, in front of an audience of five thousand, among which were gathered all different classes of society: peasants, labourers, intellectuals, career soldiers, medics, priests . . .[1]

Messiaen was released from captivity in Stalag VIII-A at Görlitz in May 1941, returning to Paris to take up a professorship at the Paris Conservatoire, where he remained until his retirement. But it was his experience of the prison camp with its enforced isolation and introspection, not to say the unusual instrumental ensemble of violin, clarinet, cello and piano, which inspired the composition of one of the twentieth century's great classical music masterpieces. The title 'Pour la fin du temps' is a reference to the Apocalypse mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Messiaen quotes from Revelation at the beginning of the score:

> En homage à l'Ange de l'Apocalypse,
> qui lève la main vers le ciel en disant
> 'Il n'y aura plus de Temps'[2]

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[1] Antoine Goléa, *Rencontres Avec Olivier Messiaen* (Paris: Julliard, 1960), p. 63. Pasquier also notes that the prison governor had given permission for prisoners in quarantine also to attend the concert.

[2] 'In homage to the Angel of the Apocalypse, who raises a hand towards Heaven saying: "There shall be time no longer"' (Revelation 10:6).

Exactly what Messiaen means by the 'the end of time' is open to a variety of interpretations. Clearly, the circumstances of composition might suggest uncertainty about when and how his imprisonment at the hands of victorious Germany might end, but the lecture which Messiaen gave immediately before the first performance invites an alternative reading:

> I told them first of all that the quartet was written for the end of time, not as a play on words about the time of captivity, but for the ending of concepts of past and future: that is, for the beginning of eternity, and that in this I relied on the magnificent text of the Revelation.[3]

Some twenty years later, Messiaen developed this analysis:

> My initial thought was of the abolition of time itself, something infinitely mysterious and incomprehensible to some of the philosophers of time, from Plato to Bergson.[4]

This idea of the 'abolition of time itself' resonates throughout the *Quatuor* in Messiaen's approach to rhythm and harmony which is, as Paul Griffiths points out, 'completely different from his predecessors and contemporaries'.[5] As a contemporary composition, Messiaen's *Quatuor* serves as a useful point of comparison through which the literary style and configuration of Pound's *Cantos* might be examined, both with regard to their 'musical' structure and also in their respective approaches to 'time' and 'the end of time'. In this chapter, the ways in which Pound uses the models of musical structure in his approaches to literary form and rhythm to develop what John Xiros Cooper calls a '"musicating" vision' will also be explored,[6] using aspects of Messiaen's *Quatuor* to illuminate Pound's musical-poetic concept for *The Pisan Cantos*.[7]

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[3] Goléa, p. 64.
[4] Goléa, p. 70.
[5] Paul Griffiths, *Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 102.
[6] John Xiros Cooper, 'Music as Symbol and Structure in Pound's Pisan Cantos and Eliot's Four Quartets', in *Ezra Pound and Europe*, ed. by Richard Taylor and Claus Melchior (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA.: Rodopi Editions, 1993), pp. 177–89 (p. 179).
[7] Pound's *Cantos* poem sequence has been read through a number of musical analogies such as the poetry of the troubadour tradition, fugue form, free jazz, the string quartet, and serialism, outlined in Richard Sieburth, *Ezra Pound and the Troubadour Tradition* and his edition of *The*

## *II The dissolution of time*

In the wake of their successful 'Blitzkrieg' assault on the Netherlands, Belgium and France in the early summer months of 1940, the German army captured nearly two million prisoners-of-war.[8] One of the French soldiers was a young medical auxiliary by the name of Olivier Messiaen. A composer and organist from Paris, Messiaen, then aged just 31, along with three other French soldiers who were seized together as they headed for Verdun, was taken by train to Stalag VIII-A, a prisoner-of-war camp situated at Görlitz, east of Dresden. When he was searched by the German camp guards, they were astonished to find not a stash of hidden weaponry, but a small library of pocket-sized music scores, which included J.S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and Berg's *Lyric Suite.*[9] Subsequently recalling his experience in Stalag VIII-A, Messiaen described his music library as 'my solace at a time when I would suffer, as the Germans themselves suffered, from hunger and cold'.[10] Not only did the camp guards leave Messiaen in possession of his library of music scores, they also provided him with a space in which to compose, and with music manuscript paper and pencils.[11] Initially, he composed music for an unlikely instrumental trio comprising violin, clarinet and cello, since these were the instruments played by three other musicians in the camp: the violinist Jean le Boulaire, the clarinettist Henri Akoka, who had been with Messiaen in the Nancy transit

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*Pisan Cantos,* Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past*, Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics*, and Josh Epstein, *Sublime Noise*.

[8] M.R.D. Foot, *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), n.p. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604464.001.0001/acre> [accessed 20 February, 2020]. As Foot writes, 'So completely did the Polish and French armies collapse during the Polish campaign and the fall of France that the Germans found themselves with more than two million prisoners-of-war on their hands'.

[9] Griffiths, p. 23.

[10] Anthony Pople, *Messiaen, Quatuor Pour La Fin Du Temps* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 1.

[11] Goléa, p. 61.

camp, and cellist Étienne Pasquier, who was his commander in the medical corps. The fourth instrument, the piano, was added to the texture as Messiaen worked on the movements in their entirety. Messiaen later recollected:

> They played to me in the lavatories, for the clarinettist had kept his instrument with him and someone had given the cellist a cello with three strings. Emboldened by these first sounds, I retained this little piece under the name 'Intermède' ('Interlude') and gradually added to it the seven pieces which surrounded it, thus taking to eight the total number of movements in my *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*.[12]

Pasquier remembers how the German officers listened 'respectfully' as the musicians rehearsed together every evening at six o'clock, becoming familiar with Messiaen's musical language and style.[13] This method of composition and of practical rehearsal explains the rich cross-references between the eight final movements of the work which eventually became the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*.

The experience of internment was felt deeply by Messiaen. According to the quartet clarinettist Henri Akoka, he was so affected by captivity that Messiaen had 'lost the will to compose'.[14] It was initially on account of Akoka's encouragement of the composer that the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* was born, as he recollected saying to Messiaen:

> Write something for me. We have time on our hands. We're prisoners. Write some music.[15]

The prophetic visions of the Angel of the Apocalypse in Revelation must have seemed all too real to the survivors of recent French defeat and occupation. Indeed, the devastation of World War II must have seemed like Armageddon itself, and that the Angel's prophecy had been fulfilled'.[16] The quotation alluded to in the title became

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[12] Goléa, p. 62.
[13] Rebecca Rischin, *For the End of Time: The Story of the Messiaen Quartet* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 36–37. Rischin quotes from an interview with Pasquier in June 1995, who recalls that the Camp Commandant allowed the musicians four hours of rehearsal each day.
[14] Rischin, p. 15.
[15] Rischin, p. 15.
[16] Rischin, p. 50.

'simply a point of departure' for the composition, prompting him to re-read those New Testament passages which offered Messiaen, a devout Catholic, great comfort in his despair.[17] The *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* is the second of eight compositions inspired by the biblical Book of Revelation during his career. Although Messiaen subsequently denied that the Apocalyptic forebodings of scripture were connected to the composition of the *Quatuor* while incarcerated in the prison camp, the Angel's prophecy 'There will be no more Time' became an inspiration for the music, as well as a source of consolation in the face of hunger, cold and deprivation in captivity:

> Since my mobilization, I had had in my backpack a little book containing, in spite of its very small size, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Epistles, Revelation, and the *Imitation*.[18] This little book never left me; it followed me everywhere. I read and reread it constantly, and I paused upon this vision of St John, the angel crowned with a rainbow. I found in it a glimmer of hope.[19]

This sense of the dissolution of 'time' is manifest in the *Quatuor* in a number of different ways. Messiaen outlines precisely his 'Petite théorie de mon langage rythmique' in the score's preface, including concepts of 'added value', 'augmented and diminished rhythms', and 'non-retrogradable rhythms'.[20] In its disorientating ametrical rhythms, its use of pitch sequences, and in its instrumental resonances imitating the 'gongs and trumpets' of the Apocalypse,[21] the structure of the music sustains the sense of the music existing 'outside time'.[22] As well as developing a specific theory for the 'rhythmic

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[17] Rischin, pp. 50–51.
[18] *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis.
[19] Rischin, p. 51.
[20] The explanation of his 'Small theory of my rhythmic language' is given in the preface to the miniature score of the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (Paris: Editions Durand, 1942). The rhythmic concepts are: 'La valeur ajoutée', 'Les rythmes augmentés ou diminués', and 'Les rythmes non rétrogradables'. 'Retrograde' in music is defined as 'a backward-read version of a melody' (*Oxford Companion to Music,* ed. Alison Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, online version 2011)). For these rhythms to be 'non-retrogradable' means that they read the same backwards as forwards – it makes no difference, because they are the same. In the preface to the score of the *Quatuor*, page III, Messiaen writes: 'Qu'on les lise de droite à gauche ou de gauche à droite, l'ordre de leurs valeurs reste la même'. See Appendix III, example 1 for a more in-depth discussion.
[21] Messiaen, *Quatuor*, p. II.
[22] Pople, p. 68. Messiaen constructs the rhythmic patterns against a repeating melodic sequence of pitches so that he avoids any sense of co-incidence which would establish an aural recognition of 'time'.

language' of the quartet in his approach to time values and rhythmical structure, Messiaen further dissolves the sense of 'time' in the third, fifth and sixth movements through the absence of a time signature in each case. While the music remains divided into bars, these are more to indicate musical phrasing and for the practical convenience of the players than for any sense of metrical division or stress. Thus, in a very real sense, the music of the *Quatuor* does seem to bring about 'the abolition of time itself', as Messiaen was to write in his subsequent analysis.

The biblical quotation from Revelation, in which the Angel announces 'Il n'y aura plus de Temps' (There will be no more Time) seems to be brought about in the music by the dissolution of a consistent beat in the rhythm. There is a rhythmic fluidity to the music, especially in the third, fifth and sixth movements which dispense with formal time signatures. The use of 'added value' notes, such as in the opening phrase of the clarinet solo in Movement III, 'Abîme des oiseaux', gives the music a hauntingly liquid character, where time itself seems to be suspended. More 'valeur ajoutée' notes occur in the long fourth phrase of the movement, and here Messiaen also includes no fewer than nine instances of the tritone[23] in the melodic strand, which serve to destabilise any incipient sense of 'key' or consistent tonal centre.[24] They also draw out the melodic thread, sustaining the implicit negation of pulse. Recurrent pivotal notes, which appear and reappear in the movement's contrasting phrases, impart an idea of musical coherence, as, for example, in the opening and closing F#s which seem to echo one another with an inherent sense of distant memory. Messiaen thus imbues the music with a more distinct shape and enables the listener to recognise a sense of form. However, the music is not structured through some temporal working-out of a dynamic drama between tonic and

[23] The interval of a tritone (or augmented fourth/diminished fifth) is equivalent to three whole-tone steps, for example C-F#, or F-B natural. It often functions harmonically to destabilise diatonic tonality, and was actively avoided in the modal church music of the Middle Ages.
[24] See musical examples 2 and 3 in Appendix III.

dominant or between established key relationships; Messiaen uses repeated phrases, intervals, motifs and rhythmic patterns to instil the sense of a unifying design throughout each of the eight movements. As he declared in the lecture which preceded the first prison-camp performance of the *Quatuor* in 1941, the 'ending of concepts of present and future' in his music is achieved by connecting the individual melodic lines, phrases, and motifs in a new way, by having a fresh approach to rhythm and by suspending the conventional 'rules' of pulse-driven tempo. Convention is also suspended in Pound's approach to poetics, and he similarly connects motifs, lines and phrases in a new way, applying ideas and structures from music.

### *III Time and memory*

This sense of 'the end of time' and even of the 'ending of concepts of present and future' is evident in the structure of *The Pisan Cantos*, themselves woven from threads of past reminiscence, memory and recollection interrupted by all-too-real bursts from the present, as in this example from Canto LXXIV:

> minus Hemingway, minus Antheil, ebullient
> and by name Thos. Wilson
> Mr K said nothing foolish, the whole month before nothing foolish:
> "if we weren't dumb, we wouldn't be here"
> and the Lane gang.[25]
> (LXXIV 100-104)

[25] Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: New Directions, 2003), pp. 5–6. All subsequent quotations from *The Pisan Cantos* are taken from this edition. Pound recalls the African legend of Gassire's lute ('Hooo Fasa') from Frobenius's *African Genesis,* and then moves into a quotation from Villon's 'Ballade des Pendus' ('Absouldre, que tous nous vueil absoudre'), which in turn connects to the biblical account of Barabbas, whom Pound appears to conflate with the figure of the crucified Christ between the two thieves. These characters are their turn fused with two of Pound's friends from 1920s Paris, Hemingway and Antheil, this reminiscence being interrupted by overheard dialogue in the present in the DTC from his named fellow prisoners.

Like Messiaen – although for very different reasons – Pound was incarcerated in a prison camp during World War II, the experience becoming inextricably tied to the composition of *The Pisan Cantos,* also regarded as a seminal work of the mid-twentieth century.[26] The influence of imprisonment is just as deeply etched in Pound's composition of *The Pisan Cantos* as it is on Messiaen's composition of the *Quatuor*. Both works fragment motif, memory and recollection through the prism of 'time', which, although fractured by the artist's experience of captivity, becomes a unifying thread transcending man-made temporal constraints.

Ezra Pound was summarily arrested at his house in the village of Sant' Ambrogio, near Rapallo, Italy, on Thursday 3 May 1945, by two men who were almost certainly ex-Fascist partisans looking to pocket the reward they supposed the Americans would pay for an acknowledged traitor.[27] He had time to gather up two of the books he was currently reading – a single-volume edition of Confucius's *Four Books* and a small Chinese-English dictionary – and he also picked up a dried eucalyptus seed ('and eucalyptus that is for memory') from the path as he made his way down to the road.[28] Like Messiaen's musical scores, these three objects were to be, for Pound, both an inspiration and a solace during his subsequent incarceration.

Pound was taken first to Zoagli before continuing to the Allied Military Post at Chiavari and onwards to Genoa, where he was handed over to the US Counter Intelligence Center [sic]. Washington had been contacted regarding a decision on what was to be done with this troublesome poet, and Pound continued translating and writing while waiting ten

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[26] Ronald Bush, 'Modernism, Fascism, and the Composition of Ezra Pound's Pisan Cantos', *Modernism/Modernity*, 2.3 (1995), 69–87. Bush outlines particularly clearly the controversial nature of the composition and subsequent critical acclaim of Pound's *Pisan Cantos.*

[27] A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet III The Tragic Years, 1939-1972* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 101.

[28] Moody, p. 101. First referenced by Pound in Canto LXXIV, line 373 (*The Pisan Cantos,* ed. Sieburth, p.13).

days for the outcome. Finally, on 21 May, the verdict came through that Pound was to be detained 'in a military stockade near Pisa' and that he was to be treated as though already convicted of serious offences:

> Exercise utmost security measures to prevent escape or suicide. No press interviews authorised. Accord no preferential treatment.[29]

On 24 May 1945, Pound was duly delivered to the 6677th Disciplinary Training Center[30] [sic] about three miles north of Pisa. The camp was a retraining facility for the army's own delinquents, its objective being to rehabilitate offenders back into army service. The regime for the three-and-a-half thousand inmates was deliberately harsh: fourteen-hour days of arduous exercise drills, combined with a strict discipline verging on brutality, were expressly designed to instil utter conformity. Although Pound was a civilian, he was confined in the maximum security area in order to obey the order for 'utmost security measures'. The ordinary wire mesh for Pound's cage was even replaced with sections of the steel matting used for emergency airstrips, constructing his very own 'gorilla cage'. The Pisa cages were all open to the elements, subjecting inmates to the worst effects of sun, wind and rain, and the general order was that Pound, the extraordinary civilian prisoner, was not to be spoken to. And yet, it was in this cage that the new cantos took flight, as Pound reworked and revised lines which he had already written, albeit in a relatively fragmentary state.[31]

The set of eleven Cantos, LXXIV to LXXXIV, was finally published in 1948 under the title of *The Pisan Cantos* to great – although not universal – critical acclaim.[32] In a contemporary appraisal written for the *Yale Review*, Louis Martz wrote:

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[29] Moody, pp. 115–16. The order for his transfer was issued by the Commanding General, Mediterranean Theater [sic] of Operations, United States Army.
[30] Hereafter referred to as the DTC.
[31] Ronald Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', in *A Poem Containing History: Textual Studies in The Cantos*, ed. by Lawrence S. Rainey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 169–211.
[32] The widely differing critical views on Pound's *Pisan Cantos* are captured in Moody, *Ezra Pound; Poet, III,* pp. 276-288, 'Thrown to the Wolves', and in Ronald Bush's 'Modernism, Fascism, and

> It is perhaps true that *The Pisan Cantos* are really a brilliant note-book held together by the author's personality, with poems scattered throughout.[33]

This sense of *The Pisan Cantos* being a sequence of autobiographical reminiscences, a 'note-book' of connected and disconnected memories, therefore seems to have been evident from its first publication. Ronald Bush also notes that 'the material's diary-like texture is the first use Pound made of it', adding that a note Pound enclosed with some fragments he had had already written on 23 September 1945 declares that 'he was sure the lines would be "more human than a dull letter"'.[34] Dorothy in turn wrote to Pound on 25 September, uncertain as she must have been that her message would be delivered:

> Should this reach you. – You may imagine that I am thinking of you all the time: but I do not worry all that time. I only hope captivity is not proving bad for your health, & that you are able to work at some writing or other. The moment perhaps for those ~~'Memoirs'~~ 'Memories'?[35]

Dorothy's message perhaps reveals a degree of ignorance regarding the precise circumstances of his continuing incarceration in solitary confinement, despite now being in the medical compound, and still prohibited from speaking to his fellow inmates or guards. Aware that working would be the best way for Pound to sustain himself during his imprisonment, her reference to 'those ~~"Memoirs"~~ "Memories"' is perhaps indicative, as Bush suggests, that Pound and Dorothy had already been in discussion about a work which was more autobiographical in nature.[36] By the time Dorothy received parts of

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the Composition of Ezra Pound's Cantos'. Moody quotes from the *New York Herald Tribune,* after the award of the Bolligen Prize in 1948: 'Pound's work, the jurors held, "represents the highest achievement of American poetry in the year for which the award is made". The jurors, however, explained their decision to recognize Pound's work despite objections made against him politically. "The Fellows are aware", the jurors said, "that objections may be made to awarding a prize to a man situated as is Mr. Pound. In their view, however, the possibility of such objection did not alter the responsibility assumed by the jury of selection . . . To permit other considerations that that [sic] of poetic achievement to sway the decision would destroy the significance of the award and would in principle deny the validity of that objective perception of value on which any civilized society must rest"' (pp. 280-281).

[33] Louis Martz, 'Recent Poetry', *Yale Review,* 38 (1948) pp. 144-148, quoted in Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, 3,* p.279.

[34] Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', p. 195.

[35] Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', pp. 195–96.

[36] Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', p. 196.

some of Pound's new Cantos, specifically sections of LXXIV, LXXVI, LXXX and LXXI, she felt able to write back:

> All these last, apparently, scraps, of cantos, are your self [sic], the memories that make up yr. person . . . Is one then only a bunch of memories? i.e. a bunch of remains of contacts with the other people?[37]

It is this 'premeditated act of remembering', as Bush calls it, that 'assures these cantos a place on our shelves'.[38] In *The Pisan Cantos*, Pound is effectively forced in on himself, virtually his only remaining resource being the reserve of memories, recollections and reminiscences he evokes from a lifetime of acquaintance, discourse, writing, financial struggle, travel, and the very business of living from day to day.[39] The poetic texture, woven from these apparently disparate fragments of memory, can be seen as a highly-charged musical structure where 'time' itself is a unifying thread. This very concept of time must have been inescapably important to Pound, detained as he was at the behest of the US government, and unsure of the ultimate outcome of his sentence, the possibility of execution being a very real one. Bush references Achilles Fang's observation from the 1950s that Pound's writing in *The Pisan Cantos* was undoubtedly influenced in terms of 'precedent and structure' by François Villon's *Le grand testament,* which had already formed the basis of Pound's 1923 opera *Le Testament de François Villon.*[40] Pound must have wondered throughout his incarceration whether, like Villon, his fate was to end with the gallows. From his isolated vantage-point in the DTC, Pound is thus distinctively positioned to view the past, the present and the future – if he even has one – form a

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[37] Quoted in Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', p. 196.
[38] Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', p. 196.
[39] Examples include the references to 'the cake shops in the Nevsky, and Schöners / not to mention der Greif at Bolsano', which Pound had formerly frequented (Canto LXXIV, lines 290-29, p.11), or his reference to 'Mr Joyce also preoccupied with Gibraltar' (Canto LXXIV, line 789, p25) recalling not only his friend James Joyce but the reference to Molly Bloom's childhood home in Gibraltar at the end of *Ulysses.* Pound also recalls memories of his time in England and in London, with a rich evocation of the winters he spent at Stone Cottage in Sussex (1913-1916) with W. B. Yeats; for example Canto LXXIV lines 666-671, and Canto LXXXI lines 168-174 (see James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats, and Modernism* (New York and Oxford, 1988), pp. 172-176 and 248-249).
[40] Bush, '"Quiet, Not Scornful"? The Composition of *The Pisan Cantos*', p. 197. François Villon

unique perspective 'at the end of time'. In navigating a passage through the varied currents and whirlpools of memory and history, and of time past and time present, Pound creates his own Odyssey to reimagine and rediscover, perhaps, through 'time', both the dissolution of self into Homer's 'No Man' and a sense of meaning within what the opening line of Canto LXXIV speaks of as 'the enormous tragedy.[41] If Messiaen's experience of French defeat and imprisonment in a prisoner-of war camp sparked thoughts of the Apocalypse, which in turn initiated the composition of the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps,* perhaps Pound's 'tragedy' is not just his captivity and isolation, but that he is also living through his own very different Apocalyptic experience following the fall of Italy and the lynching of Mussolini.[42]

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[41] Rischin, *For the End of Time: The Story of the Messiaen Quartet*, p. 15. References to Odysseus as 'No Man' ('Outis', which means 'Nobody') recur throughout *The Pisan Cantos*.

[42] Ronald Bush, 'Pound, Emerson, and Thoreau: The Pisan Cantos and the Politics of American Pastoral', *Paideuma*, 34.2/3 (2005), 271–91 (p. 288). See also Massimo Bacigalupo, *The Forméd Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound* (New York: Columbia University, 1980), who sees the Italian cantos LXXII and LXXIII (1944) as a 'coda to Pound's intended Purgatory . . . chiefly a celebration of the nazi [sic] and fascist final days of terror in North Italy' (p. 53). In his essay 'The Poet at War: Ezra Pound's Suppressed Italian Cantos', *The South Atlantic Quarterly,* 83 (1984) 69-79, Bacigalupo calls the two cantos 'a tour de force, bearing all the signs of Pound's energy . . . the misjudged politics of the broadcaster are much in the fore throughout' (pp. 70-71). In her essay 'Collapse and Recall: Ezra Pound's Italian Cantos', *Journal of Modern Literature,* 23.3/4 (2000) 535-544, Patricia Cockram suggests that Pound may have been suffering a 'dry spell' or 'expending most of his energy on his political writing' (p. 535), since he produced no poetry between 1940 and 1945. But she also conjectures that 'he may also have been experiencing a period of doubt' (p. 535). When he wrote the Italian Cantos, Pound was almost completely isolated in Fascist Italy, where 'the Fascist dream was evaporating' (p. 536). Cantos LXXII and LXXIII seem to resonate with the kind of Fascist propaganda churned out for the newspapers, perhaps indicative that Pound was writing 'to order'. Cockram additionally cites how aesthetically and stylistically different the Italian Cantos are from Pound's other work: while they ostensibly imitate Dante and Cavalcanti, they 'seem to represent both a moral and an aesthetic lapse, from which the *Pisan Cantos* can now be seen as a recuperation' (p. 536). Pound's Dantesque interrogation of Marinetti (LXXII) and of Cavalcanti (LXXIII) evokes lines from the *Paradiso* for Reed Way Dasenbrock in the essay, 'Cantos 72 and 73: What kind of textbook?', (*Paideuma*, 19.3 (1990) 129-131), suggesting that Pound 'is now ready to write his *Paradiso*, not a vision of a possible just society but a celebration of the "just society" of Fascism' (p. 130). Pound's glorification of war and the shocking scene in Canto LXXIII where the 'contadinella' leads the Canadian soldiers into a minefield, 'un campo di mine' (*Cantos*, p. 439) where twenty die, 'furon venti morti', seem disturbingly at odds with his earlier and later poetry. Pound writes that 'Lei dava un vezzo / per pur amore / che eroina! ['She played that prank / for love / acing 'em all for poise', [translation from Jack Ross, 'Pound's Fascist Cantos Revisited', *Ka Mate Ka Oro,* 3 (2007) n.p.], almost excusing the act as one of heroic self-sacrifice and patriotism. His belief in a Fascist mythology which never existed was, as Cockram writes, 'Pound's "enormous tragedy"' (p. 544).

Like Messiaen, Pound is fascinated by the corresponding underlying rhythms and textures in music and, in his case, in poetry too.[43] His letters and essays are full of references to the strong influence which he perceives music has on poetry, and the deep connections which exist between the two forms of artistic expression. As early as 1913, Pound writes:

> To begin with, consider the three propositions (demanding direct treatment, economy of words, and the sequence of the musical phrase), not as dogma – never consider anything as dogma – but as the result of long contemplation.[44]

Pound's insistence on the influence of this 'sequence of the musical phrase' is reiterated once again in 'A Retrospect', when he outlines it as one of the three guiding principles for the composition of the 'new fashion' of poetry:

> As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of the metronome.[45]

This emphasis on poetry being composed in the 'sequence of the musical phrase'[46] where it has 'exact parallels in music'[47] suggests that, for Pound, the most successful poetry echoes the natural phrasing of musical expression. In avoiding the mechanical 'sequence of the metronome',[48] Pound encourages writers to find the more natural poetic rhythm of an earlier age: the age of the troubadours in Provençe.[49] Acknowledging that to reinvent poetry for the modern age he must return to its European medieval 'root', Pound is inspired also to expose the musical elements which underpin this rhythmical

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[43] Rebecca Rischin writes in *For the End of Time* that Messiaen ' . . . became something of a celebrity in Stalag VIII-A . . . "There were all these people who would come to ask Messiaen for advice," claimed Pasquier, "because he was an exceptional musician. But he was also a poet! His mother was a poet and his father was an English translator, the most respected in his field."', p. 36.
[44] Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1954), p. 4. The essay 'A Few Don'ts' was originally published in the journal *Poetry* I.6 in March 1913.
[45] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 3. This group of early essays and notes appeared under the title of 'A Retrospect' in *Pavannes and Divisions* in 1918.
[46] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 3.
[47] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 6.
[48] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 3.
[49] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, pp. 101–2. See also Chapter 2.

'sequence of the music phrase'. In *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, Pound reiterates his belief in the importance of the connection between music and poetry:

> I pointed out that music and poetry had been in alliance in the twelfth century, that the divorce of the two arts had been to the advantage of neither, and that melodic invention declined simultaneously and progressively with their divergence.[50]

Understanding music, and rebuilding the fundamental connections between music and poetry, were ways for Pound to prevent the rhythms of poetry growing 'stupider'. Later in the *Treatise on Harmony*, he addresses once again what is, for Pound, the part played by the essentially mechanical nature of keyboard instruments in cultivating this abandonment of rhythm:

> Ninety per cent of failures are due to absolute incapability in the primary rudiments of music— rhythm! [. . .] Back to the troubadour![51]

He follows this exhortation to return to the days of the troubadours with a summary of what makes music – and thus poetry – come alive:

> A drag, a lack of the wave force, deadens, tires, utterly wears out the audience. Rhythm sense is not merely a tempo measure, it is not merely a clock-work of the bar-lengths. Measured time is only one form of rhythm; but a true rhythm-sense assimilates all sorts of uneven pieces of time, and keeps the music alive.[52]

Just as Messiaen describes his use of 'special rhythms' as causative in 'dismissing the temporal',[53] so Pound recognises that a natural sense of rhythm will instinctively imbue a poetic irregularity, or ametricality, which 'keeps the music alive'.

These 'uneven pieces of time' are apparent throughout *The Pisan Cantos*. In Canto LXXXI, he defines a middle section as a 'Libretto', almost a poem-within-a-poem (lines 97-115). The first 'Yet' hangs alone as a single syllable in line 97 before the next six

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[50] Ezra Pound, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (Chicago: Pascal Covici, 1927), p. 43.
[51] Pound, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, p. 79.
[52] Pound, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, p. 79.
[53] Messiaen, *Quatuor,* p. I: 'Des rythmes spéciaux, hors de toute mesure, y contribuent puissamment à éloigner le temporel' [special rhythms, beyond metre, contribute powerfully in dismissing the temporal].

lines set up a more regular iambic pattern which is only deflected by the cross-rhythms of 'aureate sky' and 'tempered the viol's wood' in lines 100 and 103. The next line (104):

To enforce  both the grave  and the acute?

not only breaks the iambic metrical pattern, but also reinforces the disruption in the way the printed words are set out on the page, with two unusually long spaces separating the three phrases. Hugh Kenner suggests that what he refers to as such 'delicate timing' in these lines from Canto LXXXI demonstrates in Pound 'a re-conception of what he meant by music'.[54] In his pursuit of 'the sequence of the musical phrase' in poetry, Pound is drawn not only to the traditions of the troubadours but also to the traditions of early English music, both of which he regards as more 'authentic'. Pound not only shows his respect for the English baroque composers Henry Lawes and John Jenkins in this section of Canto LXXXI, but he also links their names in the repeated couplet '*Lawes and Jenkyns guard thy rest / Dolmetsch ever be thy guest'* to Arnold Dolmetsch, great friend of Pound and passionate champion of early music, as seen in Chapter One. The importance for Pound of Dolmetsch's rediscovery of the authentic sound of early baroque instruments is honoured in recalling Dolmetsch's artisanal sculpting of the living material of resonance: 'Has he tempered the viol's wood . . . Has he curved us the bowl of the lute?'. Similarly crafting words, the living material of poetry, is both Pound's goal and his epitaph. Kenner reminds us that as early as 1911, Pound 'did not throw the troubadours over':

> That autumn in London he proceeded to re-examine the interest in Provençal that had washed him up a blind alley; to work once more through Arnaut Daniel, word by word; and to restate his interest in the technique of sound.[55]

Pursuing the 'technique of sound' thus underpins the development of his style.

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[54] Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (London: Pimlico, 1991), p. 85.
[55] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 82.

Writing under the pseudonym 'William Atheling' as music critic in *The New Age* in October 1919, Pound assesses what constitutes 'the perfect song':

> The perfect song occurs when the poetic rhythm is in itself interesting, and when the musician augments, illumines it, without breaking away from, or at least going too far from the dominant cadences and accents of the words; when ligatures illustrate the verbal qualities, and the little descants and prolongations fall in with the main accents of the poem.[56]

It is the musician as performer who is permitted the latitude to make improvised rhythmic alterations, provided they do not modify the poem's accents. Pound mentions 'ligatures' which illustrate 'verbal qualities', referring perhaps to the way notes are seen grouped together for a single syllable in medieval notation. This union between an 'interesting' poetic rhythm and a musician capable of the nuanced rhythmical adjustments, which Pound observes will enhance any performance, will result in 'the perfect song'. Such 'perfection', for Pound, is in direct contrast to songs performed with and composed for the piano, an instrument which, Kenner reminds us, Pound 'came to abominate'.[57] In the *Treatise on Harmony*, Pound laments the prevalence of the instrument which so dominates both composers and the concert platform that the close connection between words and music has been destroyed. 'A "song"', Pound says, 'is words set to pye-ano music. It doesn't matter what words'.[58] Later in the *Treatise*, Pound observes that 'from initial carelessness about pitch, piano-playing has gradually progressed to a carelessness about actual sound'.[59] The 'purity of tone' and 'sound-quality' which he sees as being of paramount importance in 'earlier' music has been sacrificed to the mechanical dominance of the piano.[60] For Pound, it is this fundamental connection to purity of tone and sound quality which attracts him both to the early English music championed by Dolmetsch and to the songs of the troubadours:

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[56] *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. by R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), p. 283.
[57] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 85.
[58] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 85.
[59] Pound, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, p. 72.
[60] Pound, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, p. 72.

> The value of the old instruments, harpsichords, spinets, clavichords, viols da gamba, is more that they induce the player and hearer really to listen to the quality of sound produced than in that they render the old music with veracity.[61]

Encouraging performers and listeners to focus on the quality of the musical sound being produced is what matters to Pound: it re-establishes the link between instruments and voices and between music and words, enabling poetry to be refreshed by and at the roots of European tradition.

## *IV A 'flight through time'*

Writing to his father, Homer Pound, from his home in Rapallo on 11 April 1927, Pound attempts to outline what he sees as the overall shape of the Cantos:

> Dear Dad: -/-/ Afraid the whole damn poem is rather obscure, especially in fragments. Have I ever given you outline of main scheme: : : or whatever it is?
>
> 1. Rather like, or unlike subject and response and counter subject in fugue.
> A. A. Live man goes down into world of Dead
> A. B. The "repeat in history".
> B. C. The "magic moment" or moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidian into "divine or permanent world." Gods, etc.[62]

Just a few lines later in the same letter he adds, 'Various things keep cropping up in the poem'.[63] This sense that the Cantos are, at one and the same time both closely structured, 'Rather like, or unlike subject and response and counter subject in fugue', and also casually put together, with 'Various things . . . cropping up in the poem', seems to be an apparent contradiction. However, if the structure of the Cantos is understood from a musical perspective, it is possible to see that Pound configures 'form' in the Cantos through his approach to 'time', both in terms of rhythm and in his use of recurring motifs and linked ideas. In his attempt to convey in the poems that same unity between

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[61] Schafer, p. 282.
[62] Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. by D.D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 210.
[63] Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, p. 210.

words and music which he sees as the touchstone of the European poetic tradition, Pound attempts to restore, as he says, 'the sequence of the musical phrase', copying the Provençal models he so admired.[64] The inconsistency between the 'fugal' structure explained in Pound's letter and the notion of 'things . . . cropping up' is perhaps rationalised if the rhythms and cadences of the words are seen in conjunction with the repeating ideas which recur throughout *The Pisan Cantos*. The fugal structure is achieved not through the simultaneous statement of thematic motifs, as with a fugue in music, but through the repetition of ideas which recur through time. Thus, the fugue becomes, literally, a 'flight' through time, through Pound's memories of the past, counterpointed against interjections from the immediate present. As he writes in his *ABC of Reading* from 1934, 'Rhythm is a form cut into TIME, as a design is determined SPACE'.[65] As early as 1910, in the introduction to his Cavalcanti translations, Pound outlines his theory of 'absolute rhythm', which Kenner believes to be the 'Great Bass' in an earlier form:

> Rhythm is perhaps the most primal of all things known to us. It is basic in poetry and music mutually, their melodies depending on a variation of tone quality and pitch respectively . . . but if we look closer we will see that music is, by further analysis, pure rhythm; rhythm and nothing else, for the variation of pitch is the variation in rhythms of the individual notes [. . .] Ergo, the rhythm set in a line of poetry connotes its symphony, which, had we a little more skill, we could score for orchestra.[66]

For Pound there is a close relationship between pitch and rhythm, where 'variation of pitch is the variation in rhythms of the individual notes'. He also sees in a more complete understanding of overtones that 'the tempo of every masterpiece is absolute'. In a continuation of the development of his theory of the importance of rhythm in words and music, Pound writes in an article entitled 'The Serious Artist', printed in *The Egoist* in 1913:

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[64] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 4. See note 31 above.
[65] Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1934), p. 198.
[66] Hugh Kenner, 'Self-Similarity, Fractals, Cantos', *ELH*, 55.3 (1988), 721–30 (p. 727).

> You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into the dance and into music, and into music with words, and finally into words with music, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some accurate trait of emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion.[67]

That 'most primal of all things', rhythm, gives words their 'emotive impression . . . the sheer character of . . . emotion', and it was by reworking and renewing the authentic root of the European poetic tradition – the tradition of the troubadours – that Pound revitalised the modern poetic voice.

In *The Pisan Cantos*, Pound uses both irregular rhythmic sequences and quasi-tonal motifs to develop close relationship between pitch and rhythm, resulting what might be considered to be an almost musical fluidity of form. The opening Canto LXXIV sets the series of poems on its course:

> The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's bent
> shoulders
> Manes! Manes was tanned and stuffed,
> Thus Ben and la Clara *a Milano*
> by the heels at Milano
> That maggots shd/ eat the dead bullock
> DIGONOS, Δίγονος, but the twice crucified
> where in history will you find it?
> (LXXIV 1-8)

Achieving that 'variation of pitch' which is 'the variation in rhythms of the individual notes', the vowel sounds might particularly be regarded as musical tones. In the opening line, the elongated '-ee' vowel-sound which is repeated through the articulation of the first 'The' followed by the lengthened vowel at the beginning of 'enormous', has the effect of deliberately punctuating the start of the line, slowing down the rhythm and reinforcing the significance and implication of the third word in the line, 'tragedy'. The subsequent procession of vowel-sounds in the sequence 'dream in the peasant's bent shoulders' results in an arc of tonal 'closure', with the long 'ee' sound in 'dream' echoing the sounds

[67] Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 51.

of the vowels in the first two syllables of the line, and in the darkening and shutting down of the articulated vowels towards the end of the line. 'Tanned' and 'stuffed' in the third line sound abrupt and short in comparison. The repeated long 'ee' of 'heels' in line 5 echoes the vowels in line 1 and the deliberate repetition of 'Milano' in lines 4 and 5 not only draws our attention to a sense of place, but enables Pound to conclude the two lines with the softer 'o' sound of the Italian language. Pound's repetition in lines 9 and 10 of the quotation from Eliot's 'The Hollow Men', 'a bang not a whimper', not only repeats the short 'a' sounds of 'Manes', 'tanned' and 'la Clara', but also echoes Eliot's own triple repetition of '*This is the way the world ends*' at the close of his poem.[68]

According to Richard Sieburth, these opening eleven lines were added after the initial composition of the canto, maybe because the overt references to Mussolini meant that Pound was unsure how they would play with his audience.[69] However, for Pound, as well as for his immediate readers, these were references not only to the unforgettable events of the very recent past, which linked back to literary characters like Villon, but they were also, unavoidably, connected to the 'enormous tragedy' of his own circumstances.[70] As an introduction, these lines demonstrate not only the careful structure and balancing of the vowel sounds, but also the irregularity of the metrical rhythm. The first line has an anticipatory double 'short' rhythm on 'The en-', acting like a musical anacrusis, followed by the stress on '-<u>nor</u>mous'. The triplet rhythm of '<u>tra</u>gedy' has the accent on the first syllable, but this is then reversed in 'of the <u>dream</u>' and again

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[68] T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 82.
[69] Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, p. 120.
[70] Tim Redman, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Catherine E. Paul, *Fascist Directive: Italian Cultural Nationalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016) both explore the extent of Pound's involvement in Italian politics and culture, and his investment in the cultural projects initiated by Mussolini's fascist regime. Pound's identification with the fascists led him to absorb his own tragedy into the greater common tragedy, for the Italians, of the defeat and execution of Mussolini. In turn, Pound perhaps associated the overthrow of Mussolini and the fascists with the much earlier destruction of the Cathars in the Albigensian crusade – the first time a group had been destroyed on account of the 'bankers'.

in ‘of the pea(sant’s)’, and, finally, the line ends with the almost duple rhythm of ‘bent shoulders’. Pound is using both metrical irregularity and musical consonance and dissonance to illustrate the crushing effect of the contemporary, tragic present, juxtaposed against the deeper tragedy of the past. The allusions to Dionysus (whose very name means ‘twice-born’) and to Christ, also connect the canto with concepts of temporal disruption, the inversions of norms and of senses, and the dissolution of time itself, as presaged by the Angel of Messiaen’s Apocalypse.

While sustaining this sense of time in the rhythm of the lines, Pound also promotes a sense of metrical irregularity: lines are of different lengths and are continually shifting their metrical accent. Successions of lines might share the same rhythm, but these passages are then interrupted with contrasting patterns which underpin shifts of mood and tempo. An example of this is at the end of Canto LXXX. From line 705 onwards, Pound parodies Browning’s poem ‘Home Thoughts From Abroad’:

> Oh to be in England now that Winston’s out
> Now that there’s room for doubt
> (LXXX 705-706)

Pound’s paraphrase in line 706 of the third line in Browning’s poem, ‘And whoever wakes in England’, trims the number of syllables from Browning’s eight to a mere six, which has the effect of abruptly arresting the anticipated rhythm of the pattern. Rhyming ‘out’ with ‘doubt’ reinforces this sense of curtness, which is immediately contrasted with the rhyming sequence of ‘nations / patience / vacillations’ in lines 707-709. Repetition in three successive ‘Ands’ drives the poem forward into a comparison between post-war politics and the era of the Magna Carta, a copy of which was kept at Lacock Abbey. The ‘tower’ motif, which recurs throughout *The Pisan Cantos*, appears here again as the place where time will once again pass:

To watch a while from the tower
where dead flies lie thick over the old charter
(LXXX 714-715)

The word 'watch' occurs no fewer than three times in lines 711-714, suggesting that for Pound, incarcerated as he was in the DTC, 'watching' is not only one of the ways in which he can still engage with the world around him, but that he is also 'watched' by the authorities and by the guards in the camp. 'Watchtowers' surrounding the camp would have been a visible sign of this continuous scrutiny, with Pound perhaps constantly aware of his every move being noted and reported.

This musical fluidity, which is simultaneously counterpointed by the repetition both of vowel sounds and of words and phrases, as well as by larger-scale thematic repetition, is another of the ways Pound sustains the overall poetic sequence throughout the series of the *The Pisan Cantos*. This sense of the 'sequence of the musical phrase' is particularly evident in the first lines (1-21) of Canto LXXXI.

The first three lines emphasise a recurrent soft sibilance, for example in 'Zeus lies in Ceres' bosom', which serves to introduce the contrasting vowels and consonants of Spanish in lines 4, 5, 6 and 7. The evident gentleness of this introduction, both in terms of the subject matter ('Come pan, niño') and in terms of the pitch and sound of the language, is juxtaposed in lines 20-24 with the 'hot wind' and the 'death-chill' which lead into a recollection of how the American Ambassador, Claude Gernade Bowers, reacted to the terrible fighting in the Spanish Civil War: 'but such hatred, I had never conceived such' (lines 22-23). Pound's memory of the Spanish words spoken by Padre José Elizondo 'in 1906 and in 1917' at the beginning of the canto are bleakly compared with the words of the woman whose husband was killed in the bloody siege of Alcázar:

and the hostess grinned: Eso es luto, *haw*!
mi marido es muerto
(it is mourning, my husband is dead)
(LXXXI 30-32)

The softness of the opening lines is no more: here is the sharp interruption of the reality of the modern world. Even the format of the printed lines draws attention to the stark statement of the widow, 'mi marido es muerto', with the preceding and succeeding lines shifted to the right so that the plain statement of 'my husband is dead' stands almost alone.

These interjections of other languages throughout the Cantos, mixing English with lines of Spanish, Italian and French, as well as quotations in Latin and Classical Greek, might be regarded as having the same effect as a change of key in music – not a prepared or gradual modulation, but a more sudden shift of tonality. Not only does each language have its own sense of tonal pitch and articulation, but each one also has its own distinct sense of intonation. These linguistic juxtapositions also serve to impart a contrasting rhythm to the lines of the Cantos, embracing 'all sorts of uneven pieces of time' as Pound writes in the *Treatise*, and thereby he 'keeps the music alive'.[71] Later in Canto LXXXI, Pound interjects as line 117 an Italian phrase 'Ed ascoltando al leggier mormorio' [And listening to the gentle murmur] which follows on immediately after a quotation from Chaucer (lines 114-115) and the forlornly emphatic 'And for 180 years almost nothing', before launching into the line of Italian. It is as though Pound is closely comparing the sound of Chaucer's English with the flow of the Italian words, perhaps suggesting a common origin, long forgotten, in the poetic foundation of Provençal. This next section of Canto LXXXI once again shows the interplay between different rhythms:

nor was place for the full *Eidôs*

[71] See footnote 51 above.

interpass, penetrate
casting but shade beyond the other lights
sky's clear
night's sea
green of the mountain pool
shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mask's space.
(LXXXI 127-133)

Pound's apparent recollection of women dressed for the carnival merges into a reflection on the sense of seeing and being seen, and on what the eyes might express or conceal. Pound's use of the Greek participle '*Eidôs*', meaning 'seeing' or 'knowing', suggests an innate distrust of what is apparently on the surface, 'casting but shade beyond the other lights'. The short lines 130-132, interrupt the rhythmical flow, but the rhyming pattern of the repeated long '-ee' sounds in 'clear', 'sea' and 'green' slow the rhythm towards line 133, 'shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mask's space', where the 'masks' connect back the idea of concealment and revelation. The phrase 'What thou lovest well' is repeated five times in the space of ten lines (134-143), with lines 136 and 137 repeated as lines 142 and 143, but swapped around. The metrical pattern of eleven syllables per line is consistent, perhaps in conscious imitation of a more archaic style, in keeping with the old-fashioned 'thou lovest' form of the verb. This self-conscious paraphrase of a more antique style is perpetuated in the next section of the poem, with the phrase 'Pull down thy vanity' occurring six times between lines 145 and 164. It is modelled on a verse from the beginning of the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament:

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.[72]

This passage has been understood by some commentators to imply that Pound is effectively admitting the errors he has committed in the past, particularly in his support of Mussolini and the Italian fascists.[73] The lines 'How mean thy hates / Fostered in falsity' might even bear out this interpretation. But the conscious pastiche of a metrical style, the echoing of biblical language and even the use of archaisms such as 'thy vanity' is

[72] Ecclesiastes 1:2, and Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, p. 153.
[73] See footnote 42 above.

more indicative, perhaps, of a 'mask' adopted as concealment for his inner thoughts captured in the final lines:

> But to have done instead of not doing
> this is vanity
> (LXXXI 166-167)

The sense that Pound has 'gathered from the air a live tradition'[74] re-establishes his adoption of the Provençal legacy, including its innate connection to music. Through his adoption of metrical irregularity, his counterpoints of pitch, rhythm, and motif, his linguistic juxtapositions, and his purpose in composing 'in the sequence of the musical phrase' Pound connects his poetics to the root of European tradition.

## *V The voices of 'The Pisan Cantos'*

John Xiros Cooper reminds us that the pursuit of what he calls 'the musical parallel' between music and poetry might appear to be unproductive on account of 'the monolinear operation of language as sequence'.[75] Cooper cites Stephen Adams's 'forceful' argument[76] against regarding *The Cantos* as a fugue, since 'the simultaneous soundings of music "correspond to nothing that can happen in language"'.[77] However, Cooper argues that Pound's concept for *The Cantos* is what he terms a '"musicating" vision of the world', borrowing a phrase from Marjorie Perloff.[78] He explains:

> Music represents the root epistemology of *The Cantos* as a whole, brought fully to light in the Pisa sequence, although it is there in a more submerged form in the previous seventy-three cantos . . . Pound's "musicating" vision develops after imagism, when pure perception reaches its cognitive limits in the barest form of aestheticism, and begins to transpose itself into knowledge, thus arriving at the contradictions which separate the arts of modernism from the social world in which they were born. [. . .] About thirty years later, at Pisa, the inherent

[74] Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, p. 100.
[75] Cooper, p. 178.
[76] Stephen Adams, 'Are *The Cantos* a Fugue?', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 45 (1975), 67–76 (p. 71).
[77] Cooper, p. 178.
[78] Cooper, p. 179.

> tendencies of the musicating vision finally surface and remain fully to view thereafter.[79]

Based on a reading of Adorno, Cooper elucidates an underlying musical 'concept' to the configuration and structure of Pound's *Cantos*:[80]

> The ground from which the poem conveys what it knows, is musical. Music is not a metaphor of a superb and rare variety of *cognition*, it is cognition itself, the primary structure through which cognition recognises and represents experience.[81]

Music is not an unnecessary attachment to the understanding of the *Cantos*, but is fundamental to the understanding of the entire structure which Pound has created. The foundations of rhythm, melody and form are central to his work, and reinforce Pound's use of musical models as part of his conscious connection to the roots of the poetic tradition.

Pound's contemporary, Messiaen, declared that in his *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* he tried to make an 'ending of concepts of past and future'.[82] Not only does Messiaen suspend a sense of musical time in his composition by means of his various theories of rhythmical variation, he also originates the melodic invention of his quartet in the deeply ingrained traditions of liturgical music with which he had grown up. At the Paris Conservatoire before the Second World War, Messiaen was taught by Maurice Emmanuel, Charles-Marie Widor and Marcel Dupré, who were all firmly grounded in the French organ tradition, itself rooted in the modal tonality and plainsong phrases of Roman Catholic church music. While Messiaen's *Quatuor* does not directly quote or paraphrase actual plainsong melodies, the rhythmic flexibility and melodic fluidity of the instrumental lines is evidence of the deep-seated influence of such an ancient tradition.

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[79] Cooper, p. 179.
[80] Cooper quotes from Adorno: 'The density of thematic interwovenness, of 'antiphonic work, tends to produce what one might call a suspension of time consciousness' (Adorno, *Philosophy*, p. 141).
[81] Cooper, p. 187.
[82] See footnote 3 above.

The influence of tradition is similarly evident in Pound's *Cantos*. Not only does Pound cultivate a sense of musical tonality and rhythm, much as he imagines was the case with the troubadour poetry of the Provençal tradition, and as he found in his rediscovery of the music of Vivaldi, he also develops his 'language of counterpoint' through a series of recurrent themes and motifs.[83] Moreover, this counterpoint of themes and motifs might be regarded as a polyphony of voices outside time, and in creating an interconnected polyphonic web of voices from history, from his own experience, and from his present reality, Pound achieves a suspension of time itself. Isolated in the DTC, Pound's memories and recollections materialise and simmer, his mind making diverse and sometimes unexpected links, constructing a web of new connections across the years. As he writes in Canto LXXIX:

> some minds take pleasure in counterpoint
> pleasure in counterpoint
> (LXXIX 49-50)

In lines 146-163 of Canto LXXIV, for example, Pound draws us back into the present reality of the DTC with its four watchtowers, before recalling how three guards dug a channel ('digged a ditch') around him in his 'gorilla cage' to protect him from the rain and damp. Thematically, the underlying motif here seems to be 'light'. The implicit watchtower lights shine remorselessly on the inmates of the camp, the 'light' of justice perhaps led the 'young men at the door' to help protect Pound from the damp and the rain, and the philosophy of Scotus Erigena, the 'Oirishman' who advises Charlemagne, reminds Pound that 'all things that are are lights'. There is also an underlying counterpoint through time, as Pound's recollections veer across the centuries, linking the present (the watchtowers) with the recent past (the digging of the ditch) and a verse from

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[83] Catherine Paul argues in *Fascist Directive: Ezra Pound and Italian Cultural Nationalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016) that 'Whether we think of his [Pound's] revelation of a vast Italian musical heritage that could be employed during the period of *autarchia* . . . the notion of a personal intellectual autarchy grew increasingly crucial in Pound's writings of the period'. (p. 252). Pound and Olga Rudge contributed considerable scholarly research towards the revival of the reputation and music of Antonio Vivaldi (1685-1741). The enterprise was part of the Fascist project to assert the importance of Italian culture.

the Old Testament (Isaiah), as well as seeing a connection between the light from the DTC towers and ninth-century philosophy from the Carolingian Renaissance ('sunt lumina'). This motif of 'light' is also developed in the subsequent lines of the poem, with references to the Manichaeans (159) and the Albigensians (160), two dualistic sects who held themselves to be 'Apostles of Light', although their adherents were regarded as heretics by the established church.[84] This 'problem in history', as Pound calls the Albigensians, reminds Pound of the money lent by the Athenian state to Themistocles in order to build the ships which won the battle of Salamis. Money and the corruption instigated by usury are the themes: whereas the credit extended by the state in fifth-century Athens had a beneficial outcome, the promise of rich pickings extended by Pope Innocent III to the northern French nobility in the Albigensian Crusade of the early thirteenth century resulted in destruction of the unique culture of the Languedoc. In lines 170-176, Pound returns to the motif of the tower: suddenly brought back into the immediacy of the present, he remembers that Louis Till, one of the DTC inmates, had been executed the previous day (2 July 1945), surely a sobering reminder of the finality of US justice.[85] Pound is reminded in lines 172-173 of Jason stealing the golden fleece from Colchis ('thought he was Zeus ram or another one'), linking Till with the character of Jason in Canto XVIII of Dante's *Inferno*, who is punished, along with other seducers in the Eighth Circle, by being whipped by devils.[86] A snatch of remembered conversation again draws Pound into the present, with the voices of the camp guards asking questions about the bible, capturing the exact demotic of the exchange:

> Hey, Snag, wots in the bibl'?
> wot are the books ov the bible?
> Name 'em, don't bullshit ME.
> (LXXIV 174-176)

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[84] Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber & Faber, 1999), pp. 32–42.
[85] Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, p. 122.
[86] Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. by C.H. Sisson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 122. In Canto XVIII, line 97, Dante writes 'With him go all deceivers of this kind'.

This polyphonic, essentially multi-voiced concept of *The Cantos* sustains the sense that Pound is engaged in composing a poem whose musicality, or 'musicating vision', is deeply rooted.

*VI Poetry, music, birdsong*

The musicality of *The Cantos* is also sustained in Pound's references to birds.[87] Canto LXXV in the Pisan sequence is a transcription – or 'abbreviation' as he called it – by the violinist Gerhart Munch of Francesco da Milano's sixteenth-century version of Janequin's 'Chant des oiseaux'. The music manuscript which is reproduced in the printed edition of *The Pisan Cantos* is in Olga Rudge's hand and is dated '28.9.33'.[88] The inclusion of this 'transcription of a transcription' as a musical piece within the body of *The Pisan Cantos,* and so early in the sequence, reinforces the importance of music as an underlying structure in the concept of *The Cantos* as a whole. However, it is the theme of the music for this canto – birdsong – which is also fundamental to Pound's view of the connection between his composition, *The Cantos*, and the root of European poetry. In the summer of 1912, Pound explored for himself the land of the troubadours. 'I had set out . . . with numerous ideas, but the road cured me of them,' Pound later admitted.[89] Many of

[87] References to birds are not only evident in the translations of troubadour songs, but also occur throughout *The Cantos:* for example in Canto II (pp.6-7) 'The gulls broad out their wings' (line 29) and 'Snipe come for their bath' (line 31); Canto XXVII (p.129) 'oth fugol othbaer' [one bird bore off] (line 6); Canto LXXXIII (p.551) "When the equities are gathered together / as birds alighting / it springeth up vital' (lines 98-100); and also in *The Seafarer* ' . . .at whiles the swan cries, / Did for my games the gannet's clamour, / Sea-fowls, loudness was for me laughter (lines 20-22).

[88] Pound, *Ezra Pound: The Pisan Cantos*, pp. 28–29. In his *ABC of Reading* from 1934 (New York: New Directions, 2005) , Pound writes about the Janequin piece transcribed as Canto LXXV: 'Clement Janequin wrote a chorus, with words for the singers of the different parts of the chorus. These words would have no literary or poetic value if you took the music away, but when Francesco da Milano reduced it for the lute, the birds were still in the music. And when Münch transcribed it for modern instruments the birds were still there. They ARE still there in the violin part.' (p. 54).

[89] *Lark in the Morning: The Verses of the Troubadours*, ed. by Robert Kehew, trans. by Ezra Pound, W.D. Snodgrass, and Robert Kehew (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. xv.

Pound's translations of troubadour poems include references to birds, and the singing of birds – or, by contrast, their silence – is of key importance throughout the troubadour repertoire. Not only were the troubadours, in common with everyone else in the Middle Ages, living in close proximity to the natural world, but their profession also connected them to nature's own songsters. This close association between music and birdsong can be seen throughout western art music, as composers have quoted bird calls and alluded to birdsong in their compositions from the Middle Ages onwards. From the English song *Sumer is icumen in*, which was probably dates from the early 1260s, and which has 'Lhude sing cuccu' (Loudly sing, cuckoo) as its second line[90], to the bird calls which feature so prominently at the end of the second movement of Beethoven's 1808 'Pastoral' Symphony No.6, birdsong has fascinated composers.[91] These are but three immediate examples; cuckoos, nightingales, finches, hens and turtle-doves are to be found in instrumental music, symphonies, concertos, operas and art-songs throughout western art music.

Like Pound, Messiaen was also deeply interested in birdsong. In Messiaen, however, we find a distinctive preoccupation with precisely rendering, in accurate detail, the songs of individual bird species, a preoccupation which led to the incorporation of birdsong into much of his music written after 1952.[92] As Paul Griffiths remarks:

> Messiaen was a more conscientious ornithologist than any previous composer, and a more musical observer of birdsong than any previous ornithologist.[93]

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[90] David Wulstan, '"Sumer Is Icumen In": A Perpetual Puzzle-Canon?', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 9.1 (2000), 1–17 (p. 2). The fifth line 'Sing cuccu' (Sing cuckoo) could perhaps be heard as an imitation of the cuckoo's call on the notes F-D-F, dropping a minor third and then stepping back up to the starting note.

[91] Beethoven's identification of the birds in the final cadenza to the second movement of the 'Pastoral' Symphony as 'Nachtigall' (nightingale), 'Wachtel' (quail) and 'Kukuk' (cuckoo) was probably as much for the benefit of the respective flute, oboe and clarinet soloists as for the audience, so that the musicians could more accurately imitate the 'real' bird-calls.

[92] *Le merle noir* (1952), which was commissioned from Messiaen as a test piece for flautists at the Paris Conservatoire, is based entirely on the song of the blackbird.

[93] Paul Griffiths, *Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 168.

Birdsong features prominently in the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*. The cellist Pasquier also recalls that the music for the third movement of the *Quatuor*, 'Abîme des oiseaux' for solo clarinet, was written before Messaien arrived at Stalag VIII-A in Görlitz, and was inspired by the dawn chorus which Messiaen heard outside Verdun.[94] The dawn chorus is also evoked in the calls of the blackbird and nightingale at the very opening of the first movement 'Liturgie de cristal', played by the clarinet and violin,[95] and also in the fourth movement, ''Intermède', where the call of the blackbird appears at various key points throughout the rondo-like structure.[96] The occurrence and repetition of birdsong in the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, and expressly in the first, third and fourth of the eight movements, is one of the first occurrences of the direct 'quotation' of birdsong in Messiaen's work.

Imprisoned in the DTC, Pound's fascination with birds might be attributed to the way they represent freedom as much as for their musical connotations or for their association with troubadour song. Messiaen describes birds – and, by implication, birdsong – as 'the opposite of time'.[97] The natural irregularity of the rhythms not only transcends time, but exists 'beyond' time, where 'Il n'y aura plus de Temps'. For Pound, too, the observation of birds and birdsong not only connects his work to the troubadour tradition, but also simultaneously acts to transcend time and to pull Pound back into the present. In Canto LXXXII, Pound captures the musical notation which the birds appear to be 'writing' as they hop and flutter on the telegraph wires overhead:

f f
d

[94] Rischin, pp. 10–11. Messiaen adds beneath the line of music, 'ensoleillé, comme un oiseau, très libre de mouv[emen]t'.
[95] See example 4 in Appendix III.
[96] See pages 1, 15 and 17-19 in the miniature score of Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (Paris: Éditions Durand, 1942).
[97] Messiaen, *Quatuor,* p. I: 'Les oiseaux, c'est le contraire du Temps; c'est notre désir de lumière, d'étoiles, d'arcs-en-ciel et de jubilantes vocalises!'.

g
write the birds in their treble scale
(LXXXII 77-80)

He notices 'Three birds on a wire' in line 35 earlier in the same canto, and in Canto LXXIX once more sees the antics of the birds, writing:

with eight birds on a wire
or rather on 3 wires
(LXXIX 37-38)

The effect of the birds looking like notes on a musical stave is perpetuated at the end of Canto LXXXII:

three solemn half notes
their white downy chests black-rimmed
on the middle wire
(LXXXII 131-133)

Pound not only ascribes note-values to the way the birds sit on the wires as 'half notes', he also discerns a sort of typography, 'black-rimmed', in the way they appear to him. They are also on 'the middle wire', suggesting a pitch which is neither high nor low, perhaps resonating with the 'middle' way he must now navigate. The minims are also 'solemn', which perhaps links back to the preceding lines in the poem:

but that a man should live in that further terror, and live
the loneliness of death came upon me
(at 3 P.M., for an instant)
(LXXXII 127-129)

The Classical Greek words '*Dakruôn*', 'crying', and '*Enteuthen*', 'whereupon', are added in the margin at this point in the text and suggest Pound has reached a point of crisis. The birds echo this serious moment with their 'three solemn half notes' at the end point of Canto LXXXII, and illustrating the correspondence, for Pound, between birdsong, birds as a representation of nature and even freedom, and the underlying dark mood of the poem.[98]

[98] Moody notes that in a letter to Kitasono written in February 1941, Pound relates that because of the war there will be no more concerts since 'all the foreign subscribers are gone'. However, he writes of music continuing as a dialogue between art and nature: 'the violinist playing the air

Imprisoned in the DTC, isolated and with only a book of Confucius, a dictionary and a eucalyptus pip as mementos of home, Pound was forced to rely on his inner resources in order to continue working on the poems he had already begun before he was captured. Memories of events and people, conversations, books and plays he had read, philosophies he had considered, journeys he had made, these all provided a rich landscape for what Dorothy Pound called his '"~~Memoirs"~~ "Memories"'.[99] As John Xiros Cooper suggests at the end of his essay 'Music as Symbol and Structure':

> For Pound . . . music neither exhausts poetry nor provides it with an emblem of its own unachievable perfection; that which is musical is simply another name for the logic of the process.[100]

In using the structures and processes of Messiaen's contemporary *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* as a means of examining the structures and processes of the *Pisan Cantos*, it is evident that Pound uses the configuration and concepts of music, both rhythmically and tonally, to develop a fresh approach to poetic composition. As part of this process, he simultaneously reworks the techniques which he sees underpinning the poetry of the troubadours and which, for Pound, lie at the root of the European poetic tradition. Since music is part of the foundation of that tradition, a rediscovery of the close connections between music and poetry must inevitably be key to restoring the significance of poetry in the modern age. Generating a polyphonic, interlocking lattice of motifs created from his memories of past acquaintances, events, places, and experiences, which in turn collide with the all-too-real present, allows Pound both to transcend and to suspend time. For Pound, as for Messiaen in the *Quatuor*, the composition of *The Pisan Cantos* becomes something outside time:

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of Mozart's 16th violin sonata / then a finch or some bird that escapes my ornithology tried to / counterpoint. all [sic] through in key' (*Ezra Pound: The Tragic Years*, p.34).

[99] See note 35 above.

[100] Cooper, p. 189.

> . . . written for the end of time, not as a play on words about the time of captivity, but for the ending of concepts of past and future.[101]

The language of music, rhythmically, tonally and structurally, provides a new framework for the re-visioning of poetic form. It also enables Pound to reconnect with the traditions of the past, as well as dissolving the distinctions between past, present and future. This might even be summarised in lines from Eliot's 'Burnt Norton' from *Four Quartets*:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future
> And time future contained in time past
> (*BN* 1-3)[102]

In Pound's *Cantos*, music is not only the structure by which the poet and the poem communicate ideas, but music also delivers an understanding and a perception of experience; music becomes cognition itself. It is through music that Pound is enabled in his poetry to recognise and express his engagement with the world. This 'composition in the sequence of the musical phrase', underpinned by his appreciation of an underlying ametricality – a poetic irregularity derived from an understanding of the natural rhythm of words derived from Pound's study of troubadour song – imbues the poetry with an instinctual freshness which 'keeps the music alive'. The counterpoint of themes and motifs, created through an interconnected web of voices from history, from his own experience, and from his present reality, might be regarded as a polyphony of voices outside time. Pound creates a highly-charged, musically-resonant poetic structure where 'time' itself is the unifying thread. In *The Pisan Cantos,* where Pound finds himself isolated in the DTC, confined to his 'gorilla cage' under appalling conditions, unsure as to his fate, wondering whether, like Villon, he will be hanged for his crimes, the interweaving of past, present, and uncertain future forms a unique perspective for his

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[101] Messiaen speaking to Goléa; see note 3 above.
[102] *The Poems of T.S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 179.

own ‘end of time’. The extent to which Pound’s envisioning of poetic language compares with that of T.S. Eliot, and how their respective approaches to time and to the ‘end of time’ are related, is the focus of the second part of this thesis.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ***Beyond the 'intellectual desert'*: formative influences on T.S. Eliot**

### *I T.S. Eliot: Music and musical culture in Paris*

Writing in *The Criterion* in April 1934, T.S. Eliot observed: 'Younger generations can hardly realize the intellectual desert of England and America during the first decade and more of this century', adding that 'the predominance of Paris was incontestable'.[1] After completing his degree at Harvard in 1910, it was therefore to Paris that Eliot decided to travel, since, as Jim Zimmermann observes, 'for Eliot, France had always represented "poetry".'[2] However, the attraction of Europe and of Paris lay not just in the chance of experiencing all the intellectual and cultural riches which Eliot believed would be available, or in freeing himself from the restrictions of familial and maternal bonds. Europe and Paris offered him the opportunity to find his own voice. In making himself into the 'outsider' he had always acknowledged himself to be, Eliot found his distinctive performative and allusive voice, often through the rhythms and cadences of popular music.[3] This chapter explores how Eliot's engagement with music – both the rhythms of popular music and the resonances of classical music – enabled him to find his own voice as a poet, as well as exerting a discernible influence on its development. Investigating the popularity of ragtime and other early forms of American jazz which were performed

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[1] William Marx, 'Paris', in *T. S. Eliot in Context*, ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 25–32 (p. 27).
[2] Jim Zimmermann, 'Alain-Fournier and the Tutoring of Tom Eliot', *Time Present: The Newsletter of the T.S. Eliot Society*, 73.1 (2011), 2–3 (p. 2).
[3] Michael North describes Eliot's use of the past as 'self-consciously and ironically allusive' (*Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 26), and also quotes from Clive Bell's 1922 article 'Plus de Jazz' in *Since Cézanne* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922) calling Eliot 'as much a product of the Jazz movement as so good an artist can be of any' (p.145). However, North captures Bell's subsequent contradiction, railing against the '"jeers and grimaces" of jazz mockery' and the 'irreverent' and 'impudent' way in which Eliot is 'playing the devil with the instrument of Shakespeare and Milton' (p. 145).

in Paris during Eliot's time there as a student, often by African-American entertainers (as well as by white performers in blackface), this chapter aims to show that Eliot's writing reflects the syncopated rhythm of this genre of music, and that encounters with a wide range of musical styles affected the performative structure of his work.

Between 1909 and 1910, Eliot had developed a particular fascination for the poetry of Jules Laforgue, whose work seemed 'to embody poetry and France'.[4] Reflecting on the origins of his writing in a 1940 essay on Yeats, Eliot recognises that his need to go to France as a young man had been in order to become the poet he knew he wanted to be: 'The kind of poetry that I needed, to teach me the use of my own voice, did not exist in English at all; it was only to be found in French'.[5] Robert Sencourt describes the impact of Laforgue's writing on the development of Eliot's early style, since 'it almost seemed to [Eliot] that in his body the soul of Laforgue had sought a reincarnation'.[6] In an article on his poetic precursors, Eliot directly states the importance of Laforgue's influence:

> Of Jules Laforgue, for instance, I can say that he was the first to teach me how to speak, to teach me the poetic possibilities of my own idiom of speech.[7]

Emphasising the impact of his acquaintance with Laforgue's writing, Eliot acknowledges the growing significance of the stylistic and performative aspects of his empowerment which this connection stimulated.[8] However, for Eliot, the experience of his year in Paris 1910-11 was much more than an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Laforgue.[9] At

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[4] Zimmermann, p. 2.
[5] *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 248.
[6] Robert Sencourt, *T.S. Eliot: A Memoir*, ed. by Donald Adamson (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1971), p. 41.
[7] T.S. Eliot,, *To Criticise the Critic and Other Writings*, ed. by Valerie Eliot (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1965), p. 126, 'What Dante Means to Me' (1950).
[8] David E. Chinitz, *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 34. Chinitz notes that Laforgue experiments with incorporating popular song into his poetry, for example in 'Complainte de Lord Pierrot', where the Pierrot character begins by parodying 'Au Clair de la Lune'. Chinitz quotes from Anne Holmes's study *Jules Laforgue and Poetic Innovation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) in suggesting that 'Laforgue rewrites familiar materials to "complicate and fuse worlds", the nostalgic, bucolic realm evoked *within* the musical allusions, and his own sophisticated, urban milieu, in which the songs are heard' (p. 34).
[9] Chinitz quotes Eliot telling Donald Hall ("*T.S. Eliot": Writers at Work*, *The Paris Review Interviews* (New York: Viking, 1963) pp. 98-107) that "My early *vers libre*, of course, was started under the endeavour to practice [sic] the same form as Laforgue'. (p. 35).

the beginning of the twentieth century, Paris was an ultra-modern, dynamic, sophisticated city at the forefront of artistic developments in painting and sculpture, music, ballet, and the theatre, a place which embraced modern technology, a crucible of philosophical thinking, and a crossroads of cosmopolitan cultural influences; and Eliot was eager to experience everything which Paris might offer him.[10] An article entitled 'What France Means to You', which Eliot wrote for *La France libre* in 1944*,* sums up the significance for him of this 'exceptional good fortune' to have been able to live in Paris for a year:

> Tantôt Paris était tout le passé; tantôt tout l'avenir: et ces deux aspects se combinaient en un présent parfait. [On the one hand, Paris was completely the past; on the other hand, it was completely the future; and these two aspects combined to form a perfect present.][11]

Eliot's decision to leave his native America for a year of study in Paris was thus motivated by a desire to experience the 'past' which Paris – and Europe – embodied, as well as glimpses of an exciting 'future' which life in the French capital also represented. That the two aspects of cultural life merged in Paris 'to form the perfect present' was, perhaps, irresistible to the young poet.

According to Nancy Duvall Hargrove's comprehensive study of Eliot's time in Paris, there were three significant influences on his decision to study in Paris. Firstly, his association with Irving Babbitt, professor of French Literature at Harvard and a teacher whom Eliot

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[10] Writing some fifty years after he studied at the Sorbonne in Paris for the academic year 1910/1911, Eliot recalls, 'I had at that time the idea of giving up English and trying to settle down and scrape along in Paris and gradually write French' (*The Letters of T.S. Eliot, Vol. I 1898-1922*, p. 13). His intention to master French (along with other European languages such as German) enabled him to improve his linguistic facility in a relatively short time. A letter written to Theodora Eliot Smith in early 1911 mentions the children he sees riding in little carts down the Champs Elysées on Sunday afternoons: '. . . it is hard to talk to the little ones, because they don't talk French very well yet, and I don't either'. However, by the summer of 1911, he is receiving letters written in French from his friends such as Jean Verdenal and Henri Alain-Fournier (his French language tutor), presumably sent on the understanding that Eliot's command of the language allowed him to comprehend the text in full (*Letters Vol I,* pp. 20-38). Eliot's fluency in French enabled him to make the most of his time in Paris, as well as of the Bergson lectures he attended.
[11] Robert Crawford, *The Young Eliot* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2015), p. 144.

later described as 'wise, learned and enthusiastic',[12] as well as the 'one teacher at Harvard [who] had the greatest influence on me'.[13] Secondly was an eagerness to explore philosophy, as well as French language and literature, since he had studied philosophy at Harvard under George Santayana, who may have recommended the lectures of Henri Bergson at the respected Collège de France in Paris.[14] Thirdly is what Duvall regards as the origin of Eliot's 'momentous and daring plan' to spend a year in Paris: 'his discovery in the small library of the Harvard Union in December 1908 of the recently published second edition of Arthur Symons's 1899 book *The Symbolist Movement in Literature,* which introduced him to the French Symbolist poets'.[15] So vivid was the impact of Symons' book and his encounter with the French Symbolists, including Laforgue, on Eliot, he would later recall the moment in a letter:

> I do not think I have come across any other writer since who has meant so much to me as he did at that particular moment, or that particular year.[16]

While, as Erik Svarny suggests, 'the full extent of Eliot's debt to Laforgue is almost impossible to exaggerate',[17] the influence of the entire group of Symbolist poets 'as an introduction to wholly new feelings, as a revelation' is recognised by Eliot,[18] as, too, is the importance of reading of Arthur Symons, and the relevance of Symons' critical writing:

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[12] Nancy Hargrove, *T.S. Eliot's Parisian Year* (Gainesville, Florida and London: University Press of Florida, 2010), p. 8.
[13] Crawford, p. 131.
[14] Hargrove, p. 8. During Eliot's year in Paris, one contemporary student, Henri Massis notes that 'Bergson was then at the height of his glory' (quoted from *Évocations: Souvenirs 1905-1911* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1931) pp.90-91, cited in Hargrove, p.39). Between 9 December 1910 and 20 May 1911, Bergson delivered two courses at the Collège de France, one, which was given on Fridays, on 'Personality' and a second course, on Spinoza's *Traité de la réforme de l'entendement* [Treatise on the Reform of Understanding] which took place on Saturdays. Hargrove deduces that Eliot 'doubtless attended every lecture' from his assertion that 'to have truly experienced *la ferveur bergsonienne* one had to have gone, regularly, every week to that lecture hall full to bursting where he gave his lectures' (p.39). Kent Cleland's article 'The Temporalist Harp: Henri Bergson and Twentieth-Century Musical Innovation' in *The European Legacy* 16.7 (2011), 953-67, explores the influences of Bergson on the music of Arnold Schoenberg and John Cage.
[15] Hargrove, p. 6.
[16] *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume I 1898-1922 Revised Edition*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 212.
[17] Erik Svarny, *'The Men of 1914': T.S. Eliot and Early Modernism* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1988), p. 46.
[18] Kermode, p. 52. Quoted from 'The Perfect Critic' (1920).

> Mr Symons . . . is a representative of what is always called 'aesthetic criticism' or 'impressionistic criticism'. . . Mr Symons, the critical successor of Pater, and partly of Swinburne . . . *is* the 'impressionistic critic'. He, if anyone, would be said to expose a sensitive and cultivated mind - cultivated, that is, by the accumulation of a considerable variety of impressions from all the arts and several languages – before an 'object' . . .[19]

We may conjecture that Eliot felt encouraged, through reading Symons's criticism of the Symbolists, and especially of Laforgue, to develop his own voice as a poet through direct experience of culture, the arts and languages. Paris offered him this experience, and offered it with a varied and diverse richness which was probably not available in any other comparable city at the time. It also offered him something else: a dynamic, international space, where cultures were able to fuse and be enlivened, and where Eliot could engage with a broad, cosmopolitan and open-minded social synthesis.

Paris in 1910 was at the height of the period now known as the 'Belle-Époque',[20] usually dated from 1871, the year in which the Franco-Prussian War ended and which marked the beginning of the Third Republic, to the start of the First World War in 1914. The city, which had been devastated in May 1871 by fighting between supporters of the Paris Commune and the army, had gradually been rebuilt, and by the second decade of the twentieth century the population of Paris had swelled by over a third to nearly three million inhabitants.[21] Contributing to the economic, architectural and cultural expansion of the city were the three Paris Universal Expositions which took place successively in 1878, 1889 and 1900, and which led directly to advances in city transport links, to the presentation of diverse scientific and technological innovations, and to architectural and

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[19] Kermode, p. 51. For further reading on Eliot's indebtedness to Arthur Symons see Anne Stillman, 'Prufrock and Other Observations' in *The New Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) pp.41-54; Louis Menand, 'The Modernists: T.S. Eliot' in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Vol 7: Modernism and the New Criticism,* ed. by Walton A. Litz, Lawence Rainey and Louis Menand, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 15-56; and Adrian Paterson, '"Try, If Possible, To Hear Something": Mediating Wagners' in *The Edinburgh Companion to T.S. Eliot and the Arts,* ed. by Frances Dickey and John Morgenstern, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 121-133.

[20] The term came into use in the years following the First World War, perhaps as a nostalgic expression for a less complicated, more optimistic – and lost – world.

[21] Alfred Fierro, *Histoire et Dictionnaire de Paris* (Paris: Laffont, 1996), p. 282.

artistic experimentation. A growing imperative for such international exhibitions was not only the prestige which they conferred on the host city, but also the platform which they offered to competing colonial powers to show off the 'civilising' and educational effects which their rule afforded the indigenous inhabitants. Claude Debussy heard a Javanese gamelan orchestra for the first time in the *Kampong Javanais* at the 1889 Paris Exposition, where an entire rural Sundanese[22] village was transplanted, complete with a central platform for their instruments.[23] Eliot would have been familiar with such displays from his experience of the St Louis World's Fair of 1904, where exhibitions of 'Anthropology and Ethnology, including the Philippine Islanders' were a significant feature.[24] Just as with the later St Louis exhibition, the Paris Expositions also brought a variety of world cultures to the city, revealing – often for the first time – aspects of a wide spectrum of ethnic heritages to their French, American, European and international visitors. The impact on Debussy of hearing the fresh sonorities and free rhythms of gamelan music has been well documented,[25] especially at a time when he was clearly looking for alternatives to the cadence-driven music of the European tradition, which he described as 'a barbarous kind of noise more fit for a travelling circus'.[26] His exposure to music originating from East Asia clearly exerted a lasting effect on Debussy's compositional style, apparent in piano works such as *Estampes* from 1903 and *L'isle joyeuse* from 1904, as well as in the orchestral work *La Mer,* which was first performed

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[22] Sumarsam, *Javanese Gamelan and the West* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2013), p. 106. The Sundanese inhabit Western Java, and are of Austronesian ethnicity.

[23] Annegret Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2005), p. 94. Some doubt is now cast on the musical authenticity of the actual performances in 1889, and it is documented that the gamelan orchestra which played at the 1889 Paris Exposition was a much smaller ensemble, chiefly comprising metallic percussion instruments, compared to the larger, more complete orchestra of varied sounds, which played at the 1900 Exposition. (See Kyoshi Tamagawa, 'Echoes from the East: The Javanese Gamelan and Its Influence on the Music of Claude Debussy', unpublished PhD, University of Texas, 1988).

[24] The 'global' experience offered by the 1904 St Louis World's Fair is perhaps captured by one historian commenting that a visitor could 'breakfast in France, take a mid-morning snack in the Philippines, lunch in Italy, and dine in Japan' (quoted in 'Treat Me in St Louis', *The Attic,* 23 November, 2018).

[25] Tamagawa, p. 22.

[26] Claude Debussy, *Debussy on Music*, trans. by Richard Langham Smith (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 278.

in Paris in 1905.[27] The period of the 'Belle Époque' saw Paris become the meeting-point of a great many different and contrasting cultures, some of them brought to the city by the three great Expositions, and others facilitated by better communications and quicker, more reliable means of transport. As well as enabling such encounters with Asian and African art, culture and music, the prevailingly liberated and liberating social and cultural outlook of Paris also encouraged significant cultural and musical influences from the United States of America. In Paris, Eliot could experience the rich cultures of the many different strands of American society in a new way, freed from the constraints of his class and his upbringing.

It was the effect of the collision between American rhythms and harmonies which were obvious to Eliot when he spent his year in Paris, and which were to have a lasting effect on his stylistic development.[28] Pulsating cross-rhythms which defied the regular musical beat suffused energy into the idiomatic, 'new' music of America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and into the so-called 'Jazz Age'.[29] The predominance and popularity in contemporary Paris of this American style of snappy, syncopated rhythms – in what Ann McKinley defines as 'the cakewalk and American minstrelsy'[30] – are also evident in French classical music from the beginning of the twentieth century, in works by Debussy, Maurice Ravel and Erik Satie.[31] Four of Debussy's piano pieces which

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[27] The influence of the 'gamelan' sound is particularly evident in 'Pagodes', the first movement of *Estampes.* Debussy completed the orchestration of *La Mer* while residing at Eastbourne's Grand Hotel, overlooking the English Channel.

[28] Steven Tracy, 'Beauty Is in the Ear of the Beholder: Eliot, Armstrong and Ellison', in *The Edinburgh Companion to T.S. Eliot and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 161–70.

[29] Tracy, pp. 165–66.

[30] Ann McKinley, 'Debussy and American Minstrelsy', *The Black Perspective in Music*, 14.3 (1986), 249–58 (p. 249).

[31] The 'cakewalk' originated on the American plantations of the deep south as a dance, created by black slave workers, which featured exaggerated steps parodying the dandified 'elegance' of the white plantation owners. These dances, and especially the music which accompanied them, became hugely popular with the very white audiences they had originally mocked. Song and dance routines performed by both blackface and black entertainers were enormously popular in America and in Europe. See James Deaville, 'Debussy's Cakewalk: Race, Modernism, and Music in Early Twentieth-Century Paris', *Revue musicale OICRM,* 2.1 (2014) 20-39 for an examination of the problematic issues underpinning this repertoire.

particularly capture these strong American influences (as well as the language and cultural references of the period) in quoting the then-current craze for ragtime and the cakewalk are 'Golliwog's Cake-Walk' from the solo piano suite *Children's Corner* (1908),[32] *Le Petit Nègre* (1906, published 1909),[33] 'Minstrels' from *Préludes Book I* (1910), and 'Général Lavine – Eccentric' from *Préludes Book II* (1910 – 1913). These pieces not only demonstrate the influence of the rhythms, phrases and cadences of African-American melodies, with their characteristic short-long-short cracking syncopation and their pentatonic tonalities, they are unmistakeably evocative of the minstrel shows which started making an appearance in Europe from around 1900, entertaining people at fairgrounds and circuses, or at fashionable seaside resorts.[34]

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[32] The piano suite *Children's Corner* (1908) was dedicated by Debussy to his three-year-old daughter, Claude-Emma (known as Chou-Chou). The 'golliwog' in the title of the final, sixth movement is most probably an allusion to the character of 'Golliwogg' [sic] created by the American children's author Florence Kate Upton (1873-1922). The toy, based on a doll which Upton rediscovered in her aunt's attic in upper New York State, became the central character in a series of popular children's books, the first of which was published in 1894 (Example 1 in Appendix IV).

[33] McKinley, p. 250. Debussy himself called the piece 'The Little Nigar' [sic], but the piece is now universally published with the French title, which, as McKinley, observes, 'dilutes what Debussy meant'.

[34] McKinley, p. 254. The origin and nature of blackface minstrelsy is addressed in Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 'It appears rather self-evident to us, as it did to antebellum partisans of the slave narrative, that slavery and race were matters which particularly defined America, and which might have been expected to furnish it with politically expedient and emotionally charged cultural material. That the minstrel show took up these issues at all is perhaps more significant than that it did so in an objectionable way . . .' (p. 93). Lott continues: 'The question of whose "national" culture best expressed American life emerged around the popularity of the minstrel show, [in which] one sees a constant struggle for control – encompassing black, white, immigrant Irish, and other cultures – within blackface forms themselves.' (p.96). In *Putting Popular Music in its Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Charles Hamm quotes from Robert Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) in exposing how the early minstrel show 'communicated pro-slavery images to Antebellum audiences: "With its images of Negroes [in the usage of the 1970s] shaped by white expectations and desires and not by black realities, minstrelsy . . . deeply embedded caricatures of blacks into popular American culture"' (p. 360).

*4.1* Ferdinand von Řezníček, *Dancing the Cakewalk in Paris 1900*

This atmosphere of good-humoured stage performance is conjured up particularly effectively in both 'Minstrels' and 'Général Lavine' by abrupt musical changes of mood, key and register, in clever pianistic representations of stage instruments – the banjo, cornet and drums, and in parodies of sentimental song melodies or snatches of dance tunes.[35] Debussy even adds 'Dans le style et le Mouvement d'un Cake-Walk' as a performance direction at the start of 'Général Lavine', emphasising the conscious stylistic dependence and borrowing.

It was John Philip Sousa who first introduced ragtime and cake-walk rhythms to Paris, when his marching band performed at the 1900 Exposition. At a concert given in the city in 1903, Sousa's final selection was billed as 'Songs from the American plantation'.[36] Debussy published his reaction to hearing Sousa's music in an article for *Gil Blas:*

[35] See musical examples 2 and 3 in Appendix IV.
[36] Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 83.

> If American music is unique in putting into rhythm the indescribable "cake-walk", I admit that at the moment this appears to me its sole merit over other music [. . .] then Mr. Sousa is undoubtedly its king.[37]

The ragtime and cake-walk syncopations which Debussy encountered in Sousa's arrangements, as well as first-hand in the performances given by entertainers visiting from America, all made a lasting impression in his music. Not only does Debussy capture the varied styles of individual performers and performances, he re-creates the modern sound and rhythmic vitality of the music which so gripped Paris in the early years of the twentieth century.

This was the Paris which Eliot encountered when he arrived in October 1910.[38] It was a bustling, cosmopolitan metropolis where a range of different cultures met and mixed, where philosophies converged and diverged, where the highbrow collided with the lowbrow, and where Eliot could broaden his experiences in order, as Robert Crawford says, 'to access and articulate unforgettably the wider spectrum of his inner life'.[39] Some observers have regarded Eliot's decision to move from Harvard to Paris – and ultimately England – as indicative of a deeper dissatisfaction with American life. As Gabriel Pearson suggests:

> In St Louis, and presumably elsewhere, Boston Unitarianism had prolonged its vitality for over half a century after it had faded in Boston itself. Eliot's youth was passed in the shadow of its final decline. . . St Louis had been the all-American experiment which had failed. For Eliot, I suggest, America had failed with it. In the poet's remove through Harvard and to England, he deliberately reversed the direction of the founding fathers.[40]

He proposes that Eliot's perception that 'Puritanism had ended by becoming "low"' reinforced his sense that it had become 'part of the general democratic vulgarity in which

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[37] Deborah Mawer, *French Music and Jazz in Conversation: From Debussy to Brubeck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 73–74.

[38] Eliot stopped off in London before making his way to Paris: Crawford suggests that Eliot's copy of the London 'Baedeker' inscribed with the date 'October the 14th, 1910', shows when he was there (Crawford, p. 145).

[39] Crawford, p. 151. Importantly, American culture was also seen not as inferior to European culture but as a refreshing, vital one, capable of renewing European forms and tastes.

[40] Gabriel Pearson, 'Eliot: An American Use of Symbolism', in *Eliot in Perspective: A Symposium*, ed. by Graham Martin (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1970), pp. 83–101 (p. 98).

he [Eliot] wanted no part'.[41] Pearson argues that, in seeking a new life in Europe, away from America, Eliot was looking for a more settled and uniform world, and not simply taking the opportunity to experience the wealth of diversity which Paris and Europe offered a young man. The relevance to Eliot's poetic development of such exposure to Parisian life, in all its varied refinement and vulgarity, is explained in an extract from his 1921 essay, 'The Metaphysical Poets':

> When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.[42]

Just as exposure to the sounds of the Javanese gamelan orchestra and to the rhythms of American ragtime and the cakewalk deeply affected Debussy's compositional style, so Eliot saw in Paris the possibility that American sensibilities, styles and forms could fuse with and renew European ones. American culture, refracted through the lens of Paris, became a different experience for Eliot, both more immediate and direct. Paris was increasingly a cosmopolitan melting-pot of world cultures, as well as permitting African-American musicians and entertainers a new freedom away from the stricter social segregations imposed in the United States. Here Eliot could assimilate the richly varied experiences of Paris to translate the dialogues of his emotional and psychological inner life into poetry.

## *II Eliot's experience of Paris*

Eliot was a devoted and loving son, who exchanged frequent letters with his family, and with his mother and brother in particular (although he destroyed the greater part of their

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[41] Pearson, p. 100.
[42] Kermode, p. 64.

correspondence after their deaths in 1929 and 1947).[43] However, among the chief attractions of Paris must have been the opportunity to be far removed from Charlotte Eliot's loving, but suffocating, oversight, and 'certain disapproval'.[44] Paris also presented a much more liberal and broad-minded range of culture and entertainment than he could have found in either St Louis or Boston. Free to spend his time and his allowance as he liked, Eliot was able to indulge his love of popular entertainment, as found in the music halls and in the café-concerts, revues, circuses and dance halls of the city, as well as the Parisian *mélodrames,* featuring detective and police stories, or the many cabarets, night-clubs and bars. Efficient and cheap transport systems enabled the working classes to travel quickly into the centre of the city, while the masses also had more leisure-time and money than before to spend on the luxury of popular entertainment.[45] This meant that venues offering these more 'popular' entertainments could attract audiences from a much greater diversity of social class, with middle- and upper-class patrons willingly mixing with less affluent and less well-educated customers, all revelling in their fraternisation with the less respectable societal fringes of the 'demi-monde'. For Eliot this was no less true. Certainly, his attraction to boxing – an explicitly masculine sport from the rougher part of town, and which features in his 'Sweeney' poems' – is evidence of Eliot's reaction against the feminised, maternal constraints of home, even before travelling to Europe.

While in Paris, and as well as enjoying the manifestations of high culture represented by opera, the theatre and the ballet, Eliot betrays his fascination with the world of louche bars, casual sexual encounters, cabaret music, and dancing in two poems from February 1911. In 'Interlude in a bar', he seems to capture a moment in a bar in the small hours

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[43] Eliot and Haughton, p. xvii. Valerie Eliot also records that his mother, Charlotte Champe Stearns Eliot, wrote to Eliot on 8 March 1924 to explain that she still had all his letters dating from the time he went to Milton Academy in September 1905, and that she 'supposed she ought to destroy part of them' (p. xviii).
[44] Hargrove, p. 226.
[45] Hargrove, p. 226.

of the morning, perhaps in the Latin quarter or in Montparnasse.[46] The repetition of 'pass' at the end of the second line and at the beginning of the third reinforces the sense of a consciousness blurred, sluggish and distorted as alcohol 'clog[s] the brain'. The final lines of the second stanza are almost like a sketch hastily jotted on a scrap of paper. Eliot captures a distinctly impressionistic style in the clarity of his detailed observations: the rhyming of 'hard' and 'scarred', and the repetition of 'hard' in the eighth and tenth lines; the 'almost' mis-reading of 'streams' as 'screams' in line six, offering an alliteration with 'scattered' which is not in fact present, and everything leading towards the 'dirty broken fingernails / Tapping the bar',[47] their percussive insistence underpinning the chaos.[48] Yet the rhythm of these lines could almost be taken from a popular song, with the syncopated short 'But' followed by the emphasised off-beat 'hard', and the swung rhythm of 'Tapping the bar' echoing the ragtime beat of the music which permeated the clubs of Paris, and which so fascinated composers like Debussy and Erik Satie.[49] The second of the 1911 poems, 'The smoke that gathers blue and sinks', first published in *March Hare*, also captures this cabaret atmosphere. Here Eliot contrasts 'The torpid smoke of rich cigars / The torpid after-dinner drinks', where 'Existence just about to die' is 'Stifled with glutinous liqueurs', with the jolt of a more lively injection of entertainment:

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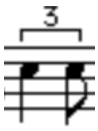
[46] *The Poems of T.S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 257.
[47] Ricks and McCue, p. 257.
[48] This image recurs in *The Waste Land:* 'On Margate Sands. / I can connect nothing with nothing. / The broken fingernails of dirty hands.' (*WL* 300-303).
[49] Nancy Perloff, *Art and the Everyday: Popular Entertainment and the Circle of Erik Satie* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 19–20. In *Music, Mobility and Place in Erik Satie's Paris* (PhD thesis: University of Oxford, 2012), Jonathan Hicks cites Satie's *Pièces humoristiques* (a series of piano miniatures published in Paris in the years just before the First World War) as demonstrating 'biographical, cultural and stylistic connections' between Satie's work and the *cabarets artistiques* of fin-de-siècle Montmartre (p. 170). Mary E. Davis in 'Modernity à La Mode: Popular Culture and Avant-Gardism in Erik Satie's "Sports et divertissements"', *The Musical Quarterly* 83.3 (1999) 430-473, also sees the influence of popular music and entertainment in the various movements of *Trois morceaux en forme de poire* (1903), a loosely collected group of seven piano duets written intermittently from 1890 onwards. She writes that 'Satie explored various ways of integrating high art . . . with melodic and harmonic materials derived from contemporary Parisian entertainments, including music-hall tunes, sentimental waltz melodies, operetta airs, and traditional French folk songs' (p. 433).

'What, you want some action?'. The poem includes the lines *'Throw your arms around me – Ain't you glad you found me',*[50] quoted from a song popular in 1909 called 'The Cubanola Glide'.[51] In making this explicit reference to the highly syncopated, ragtime chorus of such a well-known tune, Eliot is once again emphasising his connection both to popular entertainment and to the off-beat rhythms of popular music. The 'vamping' beat of the accompaniment in the left hand of the piano recalls the texture and rhythms of Debussy's ragtime and cakewalk-influenced piano pieces, such as 'Golliwog's Cakewalk' and 'Minstrels'. The syncopated rhythm of this song-quotation in Eliot's poem might also suggest a more syncopated rhythmical interpretation of the lines of the entire poem, especially the second section, where ragtime rhythms accentuate the short and long stresses to sound more 'off-beat':

/ - / - / -
What, you want some action?
/ - / -
Some attraction
/ - /
Now begins
- - / - - / - - / - /
The piano and flute and two violins

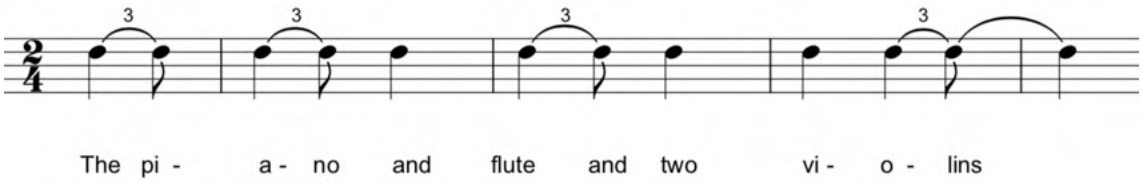
Here, particularly, the ragtime rhythm, where the notated 'equal' quavers:

are actually performed as 2/3 and 1/3 of the whole beat:




could result in a rhythmic interpretation/performance of Eliot's line as:

[50] Ricks and McCue, p. 259.
[51] Ricks and McCue, p. 1126. Lyrics are by Vincent Bryan and music is by Harry Von Tilzer (Example 4 in Appendix IV).




Although the published version of the song is for voice and piano, the performance which Eliot has caught in these lines is for 'piano and flute and two violins', which suggests he is recalling a particular occasion he saw and heard for himself. The singer's appearance, reduced to a memory of 'breast and rings', might also support this interpretation. The final lines of the poem evoke a world even more on the fringes of society: (Here's your gin / Now let's begin!).[52]

Following the admonition that listening to a cabaret or vaudeville song is hardly 'strong enough' in terms of experiencing what Paris might have to offer by way of 'real' entertainment, Eliot dives into a gleeful description of 'a negro (teeth and smile)' who 'Has a dance that's quite worth while'. Fresh from his upbringing in St Louis and Boston, Eliot was used to the presence of African Americans. As he grew up, Eliot was close to members of the Jones family, who, Crawford reminds us, 'would have known his family's history', since Eliot's grandfather had 'stood up for the African American community'.[53] 'Uncle Henry' Jones was janitor at the Mary Institute:

> He was a romantic figure to me as a child . . . because he was reputed to be a runaway slave and certainly had one mutilated ear.[54]

His son, Stephen, was an odd-job man, who teased Eliot in ways which suggest a genuine fondness for the little boy.[55] However, Eliot was also aware that his somewhat strait-laced world – marked by the history of slavery and segregation – was completely different from that of the Joneses and their African-American neighbours, despite their

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[52] Ricks and McCue, p. 259.
[53] Crawford, pp. 20–21.
[54] Crawford, p. 21. Quoted from 'Address', *From Mary to You,* by T.S. Eliot, December 1959, p.134.
[55] Crawford, p. 20.

proximity.[56] In contrast, Paris offered him entry into an entirely new and more egalitarian world, where African-American entertainers rubbed shoulders with performers from a host of backgrounds. The 'negro (teeth and smile)' of Eliot's 1911 poem echoes the characters immortalised in Debussy's piano preludes 'Minstrels' and 'Général Lavine – Eccentric', who burst into snatches of popular song, or dance a few steps from the current cakewalk or ragtime sensation.[57] Eliot's entertainer also 'Has a dance that's quite worth while'. But Eliot's poem ends on a significantly more sinister note. 'That's the stuff!' perhaps suggests the encouragement of a procuress or pimp, pressing her client to get on with 'business', urging him along with 'Here's your gin / Now begin!', the exclamation marks after 'stuff' and 'begin' serving to emphasise the startlingly imperative quality of the transaction.[58]

These two early poems offer a glimpse into the sort of new experiences which Paris offered Eliot. He not only had the opportunity to attend lectures at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France, but furthermore he was free to go to whatever type of entertainment or performance he wished: ballet, cabaret or the opera, music hall, the theatre, live-action melodrama, expensive restaurants or cheap bars. He lodged in the Latin quarter, at 151 bis rue St Jacques, with a respectable French couple, Monsieur and Madame Casaubon, who already had other Harvard men boarding with them. However, it was not his fellow Americans to whom Eliot was drawn, but a medical student, Jean Verdenal,

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[56] Crawford, p. 21.

[57] Eliot's poem celebrates a black, rather than a blackface, entertainer, as seems to be the case in the Debussy pieces. John Mullen draws a distinction between the attitude to blackface minstrelsy in Britain – and, by extension, in France – and the United States: 'It is particularly important to underline that the social utility of the minstrel show was different in the United States and in Britain. In the USA, minstrelsy was one of many weapons to help keep down a large local minority population, and to cement white fellowship in the public mocking of the denigrated Other. The audience of the US minstrel show had everyday dealings with Black people and the show gave them images which had a practical effect in everyday living. [. . .] In the UK, the mocking of black people was the mocking of a distant denigrated Other: the majority of the audience had probably never met anybody who wasn't white. The racist stereotypes remained functional as a way of reinforcing popular imperialism, but impinged little on everyday living' ('Anti-Black Racism in Popular Music', *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique,* 17.2 (2012) 61-80, (p. 64)).

[58] Chinitz observes in *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* that the words 'action', 'stuff' and even 'worthwhile' used in the poem were slang at the time (pp. 36-37).

who became a close friend and confidant.[59] Eliot was also tutored in French by Henri Alain-Fournier, whose brother-in-law, Jacques Rivière, also a friend of Verdenal, was already writing for *La Nouvelle Revue Française.*[60] Rivière and Alain-Fournier, an up-and-coming young writer who was already at work on his only novel, *Le Grand Meaulnes*,[61] suggested books which Eliot might read to stimulate him to write in a way which drew on aspects of his own experience. Eliot recollects that 'When I came first to Paris, I first read *Bubu de Montparnasse'.*[62] This novel by Charles-Louis Philippe, set in the sleazy world of the city slums, was much admired by both Rivière and Alain-Fournier, and praised by Eliot for its naturalistic evocation of 'the humble and oppressed'.[63] Grover Smith points out Eliot's indebtedness to Philippe's *Bubu de Montparnasse* in the composition of the third and fourth 'Preludes', written in Paris in 1911,[64] and also as a strong influence on 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night', from 1910 or 1911,[65] since 'Eliot

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[59] Crawford, pp. 154–56. Verdenal is the dedicatee of Eliot's volume of poetry *Prufrock and Other Observations 1917,* immortalised as 'mort aux Dardanelles'. Jean Verdenal was a doctor, killed in the Gallipoli campaign in May 1915 while tending to the wounded. Critics such as J.E. Miller in *T.S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977) and also in *T.S. Eliot: the Making of an American Poet 1888-1922* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), and Coleen Lamos in *Deviant Modernism: Sexual and Textual Errancy in T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Marcel Proust* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) explore what Sandra M. Gilbert calls 'John Peter's 1952 hypothesis that [*The Waste Land's*] central but repressed theme is its author's grief for a beloved male friend whom we now know to have been the young French medical student Jean Verdenal . . . Most Eliot scholars would concede that the death of Verdenal inspired in the writer of *The Waste Land* a personal and poetic crisis' ('"Rats' Alley": The Great War, Modernism, and the (Anti) Pastoral Elegy', *New Literary History,* 30.1 (1999) 179-201) (p. 193). Verdenal was a supporter of the right-wing political movement *Action Française,* and he introduced the young Eliot to other nationalist, conservative and anti-semitic thinkers, most notably Charles Maurras, the movement's principal philosopher and ideologue. Critics who detect a malign influence in Eliot's work find such thinking a shadowy presence. This study aims to offer a counter argument that Eliot was inspired by a fusion of 'high-' and 'low-brow' influences, the Western and non-Western, the Eurocentric and cosmopolitan, and by white and black. Verdenal's influence of the composition of *The Waste Land* is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter (see Chapter 5, footnote 59 in particular).

[60] William Marx, 'Les Deux Modernismes: T. S. Eliot et La NRF', *Romantic Review*, 99.1/2 (2008), 57–68 (p. 59).

[61] Alain-Fournier's novel was published in 1913, the year before he was killed on the Western Front in the first month of the First World War.

[62] Crawford, p. 151.

[63] Eliot and Haughton, p. 21. Eliot praised the novelist's 'sincerity' in his preface to an English translation of *Bubu de Montparnasse,* which was published in Paris in 1932 (see footnote 2).

[64] Ricks and McCue, p. 412. A detailed analysis of the dates of composition of the four 'Preludes' is given by Ricks and McCue.

[65] Ricks and McCue, p. 418. Eliot's somewhat hazy recollection of the exact date of composition is outlined here, although March 1911 is suggested as the most probable.

himself [. . .] has kindly suggested that he may have taken something from [*Marie Donadieu]*.[66] Visiting popular entertainment venues such as Cabaret Aristide-Bruant, the Cabaret des Quat'z-Arts or the Noctambules,[67] or larger music halls like the Casino de Paris or the Ba-Ta-Clan,[68] provided Eliot with the opportunity not just to see a host of different 'acts' on stage, but also to mingle with the lower classes and to see for himself the street-life of Paris, as captured in Philippe's novels.[69] As in a musical rhapsody, Eliot's poem moves between a series of themes, drawn together by an unstoppable sense of time being counted out at the beginning of most of the verses, starting at 'Twelve-o'clock' and finishing at 'Four o'clock'.[70] The rhythm of the words suggests a slow cabaret song, the measured lines perhaps sung against the syncopated counterpoint of a solo saxophone, as Eliot might have heard in a late-night cabaret. In the second verse, the repetitions of 'sputtered' and 'muttered' contrast with the more evenly-paced and slower first line, which marks the inexorable passing of the hours:

> Half-past one
> The street-lamp sputtered,
> The street-lamp muttered,
> The street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman
> Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
> Which opens on her like a grin.[71]

The fifth line then rattles on with a syncopated ragtime-like rhythm:

> - / - - - / - - - / - - /
> Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door

This is then slowed by the next line:

> - / - / - / - /
> Which opens on her like a grin.

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[66] Grover Smith, 'Charles-Louis Philippe and T. S. Eliot', *American Literature*, 22.3 (1950), 254–259 (p. 254).
[67] Hargrove, p. 230.
[68] Hargrove, p. 237.
[69] Eric Sigg poses the question, 'Is it too much to suppose that American popular music, whether from ragtime or Tin Pan Alley, helped to cultivate Eliot's ear for rhythm?' ('Eliot as a product of America' in *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 21).
[70] Ricks and McCue, pp. 18–20.
[71] Ricks and McCue, p. 18.

The effectiveness of the themes of poem, focusing on the 'torn and stained' and 'twisted things', which are 'Hard and curled and ready to snap', and ending with 'The last twist of the knife', is enhanced by the echoes of the rhythms of popular cabaret songs which seem to hang over the words. 'Some of these Days', a typical song of the period by the African-American composer Shelton Brooks, features a chorus in which the mixed emotions of the singer are suggested by the juxtaposition of long notes and shorter, syncopated phrases,[72] and which seem to be echoed in Eliot's verses.

The series of poems entitled 'Suite Clownesque', dating from October 1910,[73] apparently draws on Eliot's personal experience of being in the music-hall or cabaret audience:

> Leaning across the orchestra
> Just while he ponders, legs apart,
> His belly sparkling and immense:
> It's all philosophy and art.[74]

The comedian seems to be the 'act' with top billing, as he reappears at the end of the poem:

> It's the comedian again
> Explodes in laughter, spreads his toes
> (The most expressive, real of men)
> Concentred into vest and nose.[75]

Other entertainers include a troupe of female acrobats, each of whom Eliot notes 'is under age'.[76] The description of the group as 'Seven little girls run away from school' echoes the ensemble 'Three Little Maids From School Are We', from Gilbert and Sullivan's 1885 operetta *The Mikado*, even down to the jaunty rhythm of the words. The fourth section of the 'Suite' seems to depict a dance scene, complete with 'The milkmaids and the village girls' who 'incline / To the smiling boys with rattan canes'.[77] A brief

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[72] Shelton Brooks' 1910 song 'Some of these Days' was made famous and subsequently recorded (four times) for Edison by Sophie Tucker (Example 5 in Appendix IV).
[73] Ricks and McCue, p. 1108. 'Clownesque' is apparently a subsequent addition, written in pencil after 'Suite'.
[74] Ricks and McCue, p. 249.
[75] Ricks and McCue, p. 252.
[76] Ricks and McCue, p. 250.
[77] Ricks and McCue, p. 252.

reference to the characters of Italian Commedia dell' Arte is found when 'The hero captures Columbine', but then Eliot abruptly remembers that the audience, which 'rises hat in hand'[78] is also a vital element of the performance. As one, they seem to choose to leave before the end of the dance routine, 'the final saraband', which is perhaps too slow and poised for a popular show.[79] Impatient with the 'discovered masquerades' at the conclusion of the routine, they reach for their hats, for 'cigarettes and compliments', before the comedian returns to end the show – perhaps even hurried on by the stage manager to draw proceedings to a proper conclusion.

For Eliot, one of the chief attractions of the music hall is the way everyone in the audience is united in their mutual enjoyment of a popular entertainment, performed with an earthy, utterly genuine sincerity. His essay on 'Marie Lloyd', written in 1922 as a tribute to the entertainer whom he calls 'the greatest music-hall artist of her time . . . [and] also the most popular', celebrates her 'capacity for expressing the soul of the people'.[80] Eliot sees that in the popular song-and-dance routines and comic turns of the music hall the lower classes 'find the expression and dignity of their lives; and this is not found in the most elaborate and expensive revue.[81] Chinitz regards this as closely associated with Eliot's 'class politics and especially with his modernist antagonism toward the middle class'.[82] Participation makes each member of the audience a vital part of the shared ritual of performance:

> The working man who went to the music-hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the act; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary to all art and most obviously in dramatic art.[83]

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[78] Ricks and McCue, p. 252.
[79] A sarabande is a slow courtly dance in triple metre, probably of Spanish origin, which was popular in seventeenth-century France.
[80] Kermode, p. 172.
[81] Kermode, p. 173.
[82] See Sigg, p. 93.
[83] Kermode, p. 174.

In capturing the cadences of popular songs, or the rhythms of ragtime and the cakewalk in his poetry, Eliot attempts to associate his work with that same sense of collaboration or of participation in the ritual of performance which he found above all in popular entertainment.[84] In his 1951 essay on 'Poetry and Drama', Eliot sets out the 'ideal to which poetic drama should strive':[85]

> Beyond the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life . . . there is a fringe of indefinite extent [ . . .] At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express.[86]

Eliot is presented by Andreas Huyssen as one of the custodians of the 'sacred flame' of high culture, who kept his distance from the popular entertainments of the masses:

> Modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ortega y Gasset emphasized time and again that it was their mission to salvage the purity of high art from the encroachments of urbanization, massification, technological modernization, in short, of modern mass culture.[87]

Certainly Eliot's essay on 'Marie Lloyd' concludes with dire warnings about the consequences which all forms of 'mechanical reproduction' will have for society:

> When every theatre has been replaced by 100 cinemas, when every musical instrument has been replaced by 100 gramophones, when every horse has been replaced by 100 cheap motorcars, when electrical ingenuity has made it possible for every child to hear its bedtime stories from a loudspeaker . . . it will not be surprising if the population of the entire civilized world rapidly follows the fate of the Melanesians.[88]

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[84] Some critics have viewed Eliot's appreciation of popular culture and of Marie Lloyd's ability to capture an audience as evidence of his nostalgia for a more unified society. The 'collaboration of the audience with the artist' which occurs so noticeably in the music hall, and which might be indicative of a common heritage and background, suggests the nastier undertones of anti-Semitism in Eliot's work which have been examined by Anthony Julius in *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Christopher Ricks in *T.S. Eliot and Prejudice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994) and Jeremy Diaper in *T.S. Eliot and Organicism* (Clemson, South Carolina: Clemson University Press, 2018). Diaper refers to what he calls the 'fascist leanings' of the organic movement, determining that Eliot's comment in *After Strange Gods* that "reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable"' is 'uncomfortable reading when we consider his close connection with some of the organic movement's far-right individuals' (p.175). By contrast, the present study focuses on Eliot's use of popular culture from a range of different sources, and explores how Eliot tries to balance his suspicion of 'the small group and the great tradition which holds a [unified 'culture'] in place' (Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 76), thereby attempting to achieve some sort of universality.

[85] Kermode, p. 145.

[86] Kermode, pp. 145–46.

[87] Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 163.

[88] Kermode, p. 174.

However, Eliot is not dismissing forms of popular entertainment which are performed live before a real audience: rather, he rails against cinemas, gramophones and aspects of 'electrical ingenuity' which engender passivity and what he defines as 'listless apathy'.[89] Evoking the performances of musicians, dancers and acrobats, cabaret singers and comedians in his early poems seems to demonstrate not only Eliot's desire to capture the almost forbidden world of popular culture which he encountered in Paris, but also connects his work to that vital sense of shared ritual which unites performers and audience.

In his critical study of modernism, *Reading 1922,* Michael North addresses the effects of the social, cultural and economic changes felt in the aftermath of the First World War. He contends that, in identifying the fate of the 'civilised world' with the demise of the Melanesians, Eliot might be projecting his own insecurities about the failure of Western culture onto the destiny of the indigenous inhabitants of the Pacific.[90] North suggests that 'Melanesia may serve merely as a convenient screen on which to project Britain's anxieties about itself', since those very developments which had shrunk cultural distance and dissolved societal boundaries had resulted in 'the experience of confronting a perceptual system drastically different from one's own'.[91] North uses John Cournos' 1922 roman à clef, *Babel,* as a means of examining the consequences of this experience of confrontation:

> The 'general industrial concentration of the world into "one machine, one Empire" . . . produces, indeed requires, a universal medium of exchange. According to Cournos' first chapter, the modern world has not one but several such media: science, machinery, international finance, and finally modern art . . . In painting this means a rather extreme kind of primitivism, in music it means jazz, and in literature it means English deprived of most of its syntax.[92]

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[89] Kermode, p. 174.
[90] North, *Reading* 1922, p. 58 quotes from Charles S. Myers, *A History of Psychology in Biography Vol.3,* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1930) pp. 225-227 (p.228). This is described by the British psychologist Charles S. Myers as a 'psychological tendency' for clients to project 'their own deficiencies onto others'.
[91] Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 58.
[92] North, pp. 58–59.

The identification of jazz as music's 'universal medium of exchange' cannot be separated from the technological innovations in the methods of musical reproduction and performance represented by the phonograph, the gramophone and radio, which so perturbed Eliot. In his 2013 study *Sonic Modernity*, Sam Halliday examines the importance of such inventions:

> . . . sound recording 'was essential for the development of jazz', capturing improvisations which otherwise 'could not – or only to a limited degree – be written down.[93]

Halliday assesses the importance of improvisation as an element of jazz, marking out each individual performance as unique in itself, even when those performances were preserved as recordings:

> The actual history of recording instead reveals a 'paradox' whereby the differentiation of interpretation from each other is 'accelerated' [. . .] reducing the idea of a traditional style of performance to a 'chimera'. The fact that *one* performance can be recorded, that is, entails, the possibility of others being recorded too – and of the latter self-consciously cultivating its difference from the first, and so on. There is no reason to suppose that this effect is confined to classical music. On the contrary, it helps to explain all post-recording music's rapid pace of change.[94]

But with jazz, this self-conscious cultivation of 'difference' is even more obvious. The improvisatory contribution of individual performers not only distinguishes that artist's distinctive stylistic fingerprint, but also means that each subsequent performance is freshly re-interpreted.[95] For Eliot, this improvisatory aspect of jazz perhaps absolved it

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[93] Sam Halliday, *Sonic Modernity: Representing Sound in Literature, Culture and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 143. Halliday quotes from Hans-Joachim Braun's '*I Sing the Body Electric': Music and Technology in the 20th-Century* Hofheim: Wolke, 2000).

[94] Halliday, p. 142.

[95] In Chapter 4 of *Sonic Modernity,* Halliday addresses the effects which sound recording technologies had on both the composition and the performance of classical and of popular music. He notes the ambivalence of composers such as Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály towards the phonograph, for whom such inventions offered enormous possibilities for recording live performances of actual folk music in the countryside, complete with microtonal tunings, glissandi and sudden tempo and rhythm changes. However, recordings also captured 'live' music in a type of aural 'stasis', fixing performances for 'future times'. Bartók is quoted as saying, 'May God preserve our offspring from this plague'. Halliday also notes that, by contrast, Stravinsky welcomed the new sound recording and reproduction technologies, which in his view liberated performances from the constraints which were (in Bartók's words) 'an outcome of the structure of the human hand'. Stravinsky particularly valued the possibilities offered by mechanical instruments, which promised 'precision, velocity and polyphony' (Halliday, p. 138).

from engendering the 'listless apathy' in listeners which he feared, thereby preserving the social connection which taking part in 'live' performance created.[96]

### *III Eliot, music and feminine society*

T.S. Eliot's forebears were fused into the backbone of American history. From the 1670s onwards – and even earlier in the maternal line – Eliot men had been drawn to public service: politics, the law, education and, most notably, the church, which for the Eliots meant Unitarianism.[97] The Unitarian Church in America was largely a reaction against the 'Great Awakening' of the 1740s and the Calvinist ideas on which it was based. Early American Unitarians abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity, turning instead to a religion based on reason, and offering a belief in 'every individual's potential divinity'.[98] As Mathiessen writes:

> In protestant, democratic America, the emphasis was no longer on God become Man, on the unique birth and Divinity of Christ, who was killed and died back to eternal life, but on the rebel killed by an unworthy society, on Man become the Messiah, become God . . . The real basis for human brotherhood was not in humanitarianism but in men's common aspiration and fallibility, in their humility before God.[99]

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and especially in the wake of the Civil War however, 'resistance to female influence in religious discourse had grown'.[100] State support of New England's established churches was *de facto* withdrawn at the time of

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[96] Nancy Hargrove identifies the use of the gramophone as being 'prevalent at the time Eliot came to Paris'. Hargrove, p. 73.
[97] Eric Sigg, *The American Eliot: A Study of the Early Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 2.
[98] Sigg, p. 5.
[99] Quoted in Sigg, p. 5.
[100] Cynthia Grant Tucker, *No Silent Witness: The Eliot Parsonage Women and Their Liberal Religious World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 7.

the Revolution in 1776, although it lasted into the early decades of the new century in some states.[101] This affected attendance at Unitarian Church services:

> With the men whose taxes had paid their wages no longer invested enough to show up, these pastors were left with overwhelmingly female constituencies. The feminine face this put on their workplace suited some better than others . . . for those whose self-confidence suffered from being cut off from the realm of male culture, the female environment carried a risk that put them on the defense. [. . .] In short, liberal ministers had enough problems without women telling them what they should preach.[102]

This resulted in women instead being encouraged to see the home as their natural vocation, set apart like a sort of 'church of childhood'. The division between church and home is regarded by Tucker as a significant separation in the influence of women and men:

> It reinforced the division of precincts known as the doctrine of separate spheres and strengthened men's authority in the larger church outside.[103]

This is not to deny or diminish the influence exerted by women, such as Eliot's mother, Charlotte Champe Eliot, on the lives of their close family or on the wider community. However, it explains the strong female influence to which Eliot was exposed growing up at home in St Louis.[104]

Eliot's mother was forty-five when she gave birth to him on 26 September 1888, and he was born into a family of four sisters and one brother, a fifth sister, born in 1885, having

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[101] The 'established' church, whether Congregational or Unitarian, remained in Massachusetts until 1834 (see *Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* at *malegislature.gov).*
[102] Tucker, p. 7.
[103] Tucker, p. 8.
[104] In *The Feminization of America* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1977), Ann Douglas examines the gendered roles of men and women in the development of American society and culture, and particularly that American man became the guardians of wealth, enterprise and the world of work, while woman became the guardians of culture. She notes that '. . . the nineteenth-century minister moved in a world of women. He preached mainly to women; he administered what sacraments he performed largely for women; he worked not only for them but with them, in mission and charity work of all kinds' (p.97). Moreover, women were deprived of economic independence: 'They [women] comprised the bulk of educated churchgoers and the vast majority of the dependable reading public; in ever greater numbers, they edited magazines and wrote books for other women like themselves. They were becoming the prime consumers of American culture. As such they exerted an enormous influence on the chief male purveyors of that culture, the liberal, literate ministers and popular writers who were being read while Melville and Thoreau were ignored. [. . .] In very real ways, authors and clergymen were on the market; they could hardly afford to ignore their feminine customers and competitors' (p. 8).

survived a mere sixteen months.[105] There was a significant age-gap between the new arrival and his siblings: his eldest sister, Ada, was nineteen when her younger brother arrived, and she could easily herself have been mistaken for the new baby's mother. As well as his mother and four sisters, Eliot's home was full of women who made up the larger proportion of the 'team of servants' who ran the house.[106] The most important of these for the growing Eliot was his Irish nursemaid, Annie Dunne, to whom he was 'devoted'.[107] It was through Annie that Eliot first encountered a very different type of religious experience from the protestant Unitarian rigour espoused by his family, since Annie was a Roman Catholic and used to take young 'Tom' with her to attend mass at the nearby Church of the Immaculate Conception. He remembers that 'the pews had little gates that I could swing on', as well as 'coloured statues, paper flowers [and] alluring lights'.[108] Annie also took Eliot for regular walks, presumably not just for pleasure but also as physical therapy for a child with a congenital double hernia, whose 'masculinity ' was supervised 'very carefully'.[109] It was on these walks into neighbourhoods adjacent to the Eliot's large house in Locust Street that Eliot might have heard snatches of popular songs such as 'Frankie and Johnny', which he was heard to sing later in life, and which was made famous by 'Mama Lou' Fontaine at St Louis's notorious Castle Club.[110] Scott Joplin was another famous St Louis resident, who for some years lived less than a mile from the Eliot house. The ragtime composition 'Maple Leaf Rag', which first made Joplin famous, was published in 1899 and would have been familiar from repeated recitals in bars, music halls and amateur concerts, which Eliot could well have heard growing up. Certainly the city of St Louis was an important connecting point between the East Coast and the Mid-West. Its massive Union Station, which opened in 1894, was at the time the

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[105] Crawford, p. 12.
[106] Crawford, p. 18.
[107] Crawford, p. 24.
[108] Crawford, p. 24.
[109] Crawford, p. 23. The symbolism of castration is, perhaps, difficult to avoid and would surely have troubled Eliot.
[110] Crawford, p. 22.

largest and busiest train station in the world, with an impressive forty-two tracks covered by the main train-shed. Linking twenty-two passenger lines at the height of its importance, St Louis was not only a significant passenger and freight terminal, it became an increasingly diverse cultural meeting-point. Growing up in a city which was such an important transport hub meant that Eliot was inevitably exposed to these varied influences, which shaped both his experience and the rhythm of this language.[111]

As well as the music encountered by chance on the streets of St Louis, or at school or church, Eliot was also born into a musical household. His father, Hal Eliot, was partially deaf by the time his youngest son arrived, but he had previously been a keen musician, artist and poet who played the flute and the guitar, and enjoyed singing popular songs, such as those which were current at the time of the Civil War.[112] The young T.S Eliot was encouraged in the development of his musical skills, not only learning to play the piano as a boy, and practising on the baby grand in the Eliot's parlour, but also being a member of his school's Mandolin Club at the Mary Institute.[113] Over the years he seems to have retained some vestiges of these early musical skill: in December 1917, Eliot's wife Vivienne wrote to Mary Hutchinson that she 'really must try Tom's Negro rag-time', suggesting that she would 'love it',[114] and implying that Eliot had not forgotten the tunes he must have played growing up. Later still, holidaying in Margate in 1921 in an attempt

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[111] In *Reading 1922*, Michael North writes that, 'Modernist experiment in the arts was seen by its critics as part of a larger cultural change in which public life and private consciousness came to be dominated by representations, by images in the wide and generally pejorative sense of the term' (p.141). In his introduction, North refers to T.S. St.-Johnson's anthropological study *South Sea Reminiscences*, to observe that the 'influence of the British Empire' which had resulted in 'a social system in which "all were strangers" was already global and not exclusively metropolitan in 1922, and the linguistic effect. . . 'the elements of strangeness and distance, indeed of alienation" imported into language, was not in any way limited to expatriate writers' (pp. 12-13).
[112] Crawford, p. 13.
[113] The mandolin, along with the banjo and the guitar, was a popular instrument in America from the end of the nineteenth century through to the 1930s. The use of the mandolin in *The Waste Land* will be explored in the ensuing chapter. Clarence L. Partee was a founder member of the *American Society of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists,* visiting St Louis and also arranging over 150 works for these instruments.
[114] Eliot and Haughton, p. 239.

to enable Eliot recover his health, Vivienne recalls that he had been practising 'scales on the mandoline' [sic] before she left for London.[115] Eliot's experience of learning to play the piano and the mandolin would have given him a personal perspective on the technicalities of musical pitch, rhythm, notation and co-ordination, as well as, to some extent, acquainting him with repertoire ranging from the standard, piano-beginner 'classics' to popular songs arranged for mandolin ensemble. In spite of these early lessons, Eliot's reservations about his shortcomings as a musician are evident in a letter written to Stravinsky in 1959, declining an invitation to collaborate on a new composition:

> I have had no formal musical education, or should I say my education in performance on the piano was begun at the age of ten and ended at the age of twelve. At the age of twelve I could, to some extent, read music, or at least render simple pieces as [Franz] Schubert's Serenade with the aid of the musical score. This knowledge has completely vanished. I am now unable to read a note . . .[116]

Nevertheless, those two years of 'education in performance on the piano' between about 1898 and 1900 would have exposed Eliot to the demands of playing music for himself, thereby instilling a lifelong love for live music, whatever the style. Just as in Europe, the demand for buying and owning pianos not only followed in the wake of middle-class domestic respectability, but was also led by the proliferation of entertainment venues such as vaudeville halls, bars and night clubs. In America, sales of cheap music grew at an even faster rate than was the case in England, with hundreds of competing music publishers scattered across the country.[117] Sheet music arrangements of 'easy' classics, ballads, opera arias and popular songs were churned out in ever greater numbers, with 1892 offered by Whitcomb as a turning-point in popular taste, 'when gaiety replaced moral uplift'.[118] The commercial success of ragtime was part of this change, with travelling pianists performing new compositions by Scott Joplin and other popular

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[115] Crawford, p. 389.
[116] Suzanne Robinson, 'The Pattern from the Palimpsest: Convergences of Eliot, Tippett, and Shakespeare', in *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. by John Xiros Cooper (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 149–78 (p. 152). It may be that Eliot is deliberately downplaying his musical skills.
[117] Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 132.
[118] Ehrlich, p. 132.

composers at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and at the 1904 St Louis Exhibition. As a young pianist, Eliot may have had access to this wealth of music, easily obtainable in playable editions and opening up a range of opportunities for him to develop his skills beyond the 'Schubert's Serenade' he recalled half a century later.

The Eliot household was not only dominated by a strong female presence, it also attracted a large number of female guests. The youngest sibling is remembered by a friend of his sisters' as hiding away, 'pale and thin and shy', and keeping 'out of the way' of female visitors.[119] Going out and about in St Louis and later in Boston, Eliot would have seen this division marked even more strongly in the separation between the female and male, the interior and exterior, which is also evident in Eliot's approach to culture. High culture – opera, ballet, classical music, poetry and literature – is culture for women, whereas popular culture – ragtime, the cakewalk, jazz, cabaret and the music hall – emanates from the working classes and is more associated with men and with making money. Aspects of 'high' culture were approved and sanctioned by female society, with women often in a position to hold the key to wealthy patronage of 'the arts'.[120] Eliot seems to have been attuned to the negative gender politics associated with this 'feminisation' of high culture, and perhaps his 'escape' to Paris for a year after Harvard was a way of unshackling himself from the rigid conventions connected to the role of 'the male'.[121]

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[119] Crawford, p. 20.

[120] For example, Isabella Stewart Gardner opened her eponymous Museum in Boston, showing off her private collection of art and paintings, in 1903.

[121] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 311–14. Gilbert and Gubar are reminded by Grover Smith that, in the loss of his friend Jean Verdenal during the Great War, 'Eliot-Tiresias becomes . . . a sacrifice to feminized culture' (p.311). They see Eliot's *Waste Land* as a 'fragmented and surrealistic pastoral elegy, a work that both continues and, in response to drastic cultural change, disrupts the tradition of a man mourning for a man . . .' (p.311). Eliot finds himself 'in a post-war world where – in Freud's words – "his all-embracing patrimony [is] disintegrated"' (p.312). A possible consequence of the empowerment of women writers effected by the First World War is the concomitant disempowerment of male writers, often dependent on a new wave of female editors.

Eliot's personal experience of hearing and listening to music is evident in some of his earliest poems. 'First Caprice in North Cambridge', written in November 1909, immediately seems to recall the walks he might have taken with Annie Dunne around the streets neighbouring his Locust Street home, hearing 'A street-piano, garrulous and frail',[122] which could be a mechanical hurdy-gurdy or even a pianola, winding its way through some incessant popular song. Eliot's 'music' also transforms the scene in North Cambridge, with the harsh glare of the sun reflecting the 'yellow evening flung against the panes', and accompanying the 'distant strains / Of children's voices, ended in a wail'.[123] The lines end in persistent, heavy rhyme-endings (frail/wail, panes/strains), which also serve to stress the strong rhythmical accents. The second verse focuses on scene of urban decay and hopelessness, the vivid description of the broken glass, trampled mud and tattered sparrows seemingly accompanied in the background not just by the 'children's voices, ended in a wail', but also by the 'frail' music of the 'street-piano', offering a counterpoint to the dissolute landscape described in the second verse. The music which seems to play in the background of Eliot's poem creates a similarly oppressive atmosphere of despair, but is transformed by the final line into something entirely more cynical. The 'caprice' of this poem's title, and of 'Second Caprice in North Cambridge' (also November 1909), not only captures this mood of unpredictable sarcasm, but perhaps suggests an acquaintance with Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's orchestral fantasy of 1880, *Capriccio Italien*, or Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's suite *Capriccio Espagnol* of 1887.

Eliot's use of musical structures and allusions is also evident in 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.[124] This poem was, according to a letter which Eliot wrote to John C.

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[122] Ricks and McCue, p. 235.
[123] Ricks and McCue, p. 235.
[124] Mildred Meyer Boaz, 'T. S. Eliot and Music: A Study of the Development of Musical Structures in Selected Poems by T. S. Eliot and Music by Erik Satie, Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók.' (unpublished PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), p. 34.

Pope in 1946, 'conceived some time in 1910 . . . but the poem was not completed until the summer of 1911'.[125] Therefore, it is clear that Eliot drafted 'Prufrock' in Paris, during a year spent enjoying the rich cultural and musical diversity which the city afforded, but that he completed the poem in Munich during the summer of 1911, when, as Nancy Hargrove observes, 'he had the time to mull over all he had seen and done during the year'.[126] The impact of his Parisian experience on this poem is evident in its content, imagery, structure and rhythm: as Hargrove points out, 'he incorporated into his poetry – both immediately and later – aspects of the modern urban and technological scene observed in the French capital'.[127] In 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', and in 'Portrait of a Lady',[128] Eliot uses what Eric Sigg calls an 'imaginary grandeur' to confer an ironic distance between the soirée which the Prufrock character attends and the 'fantasy' of the dream world into which he drifts.[129] The 'exhaustion', which Sigg identifies as Prufrock's 'most terrible symptom of all',[130] he sees embodied in 'the poem's circularity; repetition of key images, phrases and sounds; anaphora; irregular rhymes that lazily resound like a pendulum; its leisurely iambic irony: these techniques define Prufrock as a prematurely aged specimen'.[131] However much Sigg might see such repetitive patterns as a means of stressing the ennui experienced by the central Prufrock character, analysing these patterns and repetitions from a more musical perspective offers a different interpretation. In his 1942 essay *The Music of Poetry*,[132] Eliot speaks about the use of repetition in poetry:

> The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements in a symphony or a quartet; there are

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[125] Ricks and McCue, p. 373.
[126] Hargrove, p. 280.
[127] Hargrove, p. 2.
[128] For an analysis of the influence of Chopin in Eliot's 'Portrait of a Lady', see Example 6 in Appendix IV.
[129] Sigg, p. 93.
[130] Sigg, p. 94.
[131] Sigg, p. 94.
[132] Kermode, pp. 107–14. Eliot originally delivered this as the third W.P. Ker Memorial Lecture at Glasgow University in 1942.

> possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter. It is in the concert room, rather than in the opera house, that the germ of poem may be quickened.[133]

The implication that 'recurrent themes' in a poem might be developed in ways which are analogous to 'the development of a theme by different groups of instruments', or even like 'different movements in a symphony or quartet' certainly suggests that Eliot was open to seeing music as a comparable framework for his poetry. If the structure and rhythm of 'Prufrock' are then viewed from the perspective of Eliot's experience of music in Paris, and particularly his experience of popular music (or even of popular idioms re-worked by classical composers),[134] the 'exhaustion' which Sigg detects as a result of these repetitions might, instead, be interpreted as echoes of a half-remembered – perhaps illicit – experience in a night club, drinking den or music hall. For example, the opening lines might be seen as a confrontation between Prufrock's conventional self, the 'patient etherised upon a table', and a racier, more audacious version of himself, who wanders 'through certain half-deserted streets', seeking 'restless nights in one-night cheap hotels / And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells'.[135] The pattern of stresses in the opening lines might also be interpreted in the rhythm of ragtime or a cakewalk:

/ - / - / - /
Let us go then, you and I,
- - / - - - / - / - /
When the evening is spread out against the sky
- - / - - - / - / - / -
Like a patient etherised upon a table;

The semicolon at the end of the third line could be compared to an instrumental break in a popular song, where the vocal line is interrupted by a motific repeat or countermelody, played by an accompanying instrument.[136] Similarly, the refrain in lines 13-14, repeated in lines 35 and 36, could also be spoken (or heard) with a syncopated rhythm:

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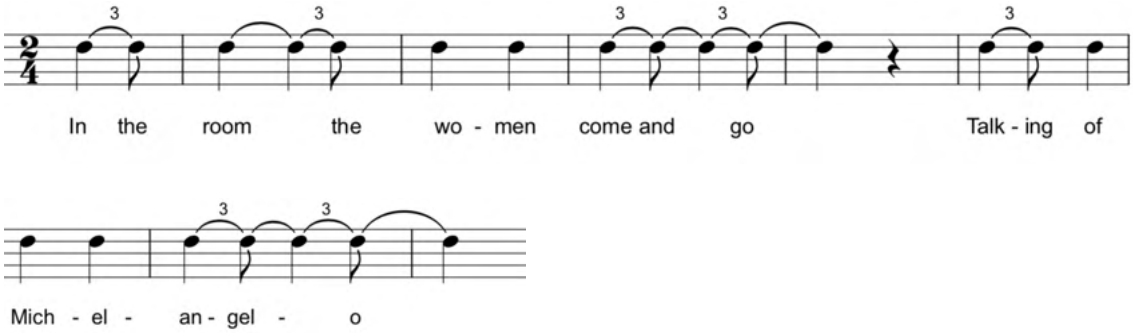
[133] Kermode, p. 114.
[134] For example, pieces by Debussy ('Minstrels' or 'Le Petit Nègre'), which use ragtime rhythms and phrasing, or pieces by Satie (*Trois pièces en forme de poire* or *Pièces humoristiques*), which quote cabaret songs (see note 50 above).
[135] Ricks and McCue, p. 5.
[136] In Tom Turpin's *Harlem Rag* (1897) for piano there are gaps in the melody which are filled in with rising chromatic movement (Example 7 in Appendix IV). Similarly, Shelton Brooks' song

- - / - / - / - /
In the room the women come and go
/ - - / - / - -
Talking of Michelangelo.

Performed in a ragtime or jazz style, with unequal 'jazz quavers',[137] this might be rendered musically as:




Suggesting that Eliot might have envisioned 'Prufrock' in these syncopated ragtime/jazz rhythms proposes that the influence of American music, and particularly of the American-style music he encountered in Paris, informs the rhythm of the lines, subverting the apparently civilised elegance implicit in the poem. The Prufrock character, his name both suggestive of 'prudence', 'prurience' and 'prudish' and fused to the 'frock' of women's attire,[138] seems to be a rather pitiful onlooker.[139] He is, above all, the consummate 'observer' of the anthology's title, the outsider condemned to spectate, subject to the will of the women in charge. The 'women' who 'come and go / Talking of Michelangelo' are as much the inheritors of nineteenth-century American femininity,[140]

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*Some of these days* (see page 128 and note 72 above) has long notes in the vocal line, against which the piano accompaniment plays a countermelody.

[137] See p. 123 for an explanation of the performance of jazz quavers.

[138] The term 'frock' was generally applied to loosely fitting garments for both men and women, as well as to the long habit with open sleeves worn by monks or members of the clergy. From the sixteenth century, the term was used for the outer garment, worn indoors by women (and children), consisting of a bodice and skirt; the term came to mean a gown or dress (1538) (*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) p. 809).

[139] Anne Stillman, 'Prufrock and Other Observations', in *The New Cambridge Companion to T. S Eliot*, ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 41–54 (p. 44). Stillman comments that, 'The name "Prufrock" radiates all the distinctive indistinctiveness of Violettes de Parme'.

[140] Ann Douglas quotes from 'an ecstatic panegyric on the well-bred female from the *Ladies Journal* of 1830: "A halo of glory encircles her, and illuminates her whole orbit. With her man not

as they are precursors of the independent women who kept Britain running between 1914 and 1918. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar write:

> . . . as young men became increasingly alienated from their pre-war selves, increasingly immured in the muck and blood of no man's land, increasingly abandoned by the civilization of which they had ostensibly been heirs, women seemed to become, as if by some uncanny swing of history's pendulum, even more powerful. As nurses, as mistresses, as munitions workers, bus drivers, or soldiers in the 'land army', even as wives and mothers, these formerly subservient creatures began to loom malevolently larger, until it was possible for a visitor to London to observe in 1918 that 'England was a world of women – women in uniforms'.[141]

In adopting the rhythms of popular ragtime songs and the cakewalk in the poem, perhaps Prufrock could be seen to be undermining, or even destabilising, the feminised society of polite afternoon tea-taking and chamber music concerts which he inhabits.

In *Reading* 1922, Michael North quotes from Clive Bell's 'Plus de Jazz' in summing up the aspects of modernism which contemporary critics considered most hostile to cultural tradition:

> As a practice of impudent parody, jazz threatens to upend the whole system of value, to demolish the basic principle 'that one idea or emotion can be more important or significant than another'.[142]

It seems that Eliot's intention may well have been to 'upend the whole system of value' by referring to popular culture and the well-known rhythms of popular music in the rhythms evoked by his poetry. His objective in hiding the rhythms in plain sight has the effect of subverting the refined, feminized culture he is obliged to inhabit through reference to a more common or even vulgar form of entertainment. It might also be seen as a reaction to the emasculating effect of the 'Prufrock' character being 'formulated, sprawling on a pin' by the 'Arms that are braceleted and white and bare', resulting in 'a bald spot in the middle of my hair' and his hair 'growing thin' and 'grown slightly bald'.[143]

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only feels safe, but is actually renovated. For he approaches her with an awe, a reverence, and an affection which he knew not he possessed"'. (*The Feminization of American Culture,* p. 46).

[141] Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 262–63.

[142] North, p. 145. Quoting from Clive Bell, 'Plus de Jazz' in *Since Cézanne* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), pp. 222-224.

[143] Ricks and McCue, pp. 6–8.

Certainly, such a preoccupation with hair loss appears connected to anxieties about a loss of male virility. Eliot's adaptation of the modern, off-beat rhythms of popular entertainment suggests a rebellion against this perceived mockery. There might be further comparison to be drawn between poetry and the classical music of the same period: in its use of syncopated rhythms, of repeated motifs and phrases, and quasi-musical refrains, 'Prufrock' almost seems to echo the structure of Debussy's piano prelude 'Minstrels', which not only imitates the performative aspects of black and blackface minstrelsy in parodying a sentimental song, or mimicking their drum and banjo accompaniment, but which is similarly fragmented.[144] In Paris, Eliot not only found an escape from the educational, social and familial bonds of home, but was able to experience at first hand a wider range of cultures, philosophies and traditions. In *The Music of Poetry,* Eliot writes that, 'it is out of sounds that [the poet] must make his melody and harmony'.[145] How Eliot made the melody and harmony of *The Waste Land* from the sounds he had experienced in Paris is the subject of the next chapter.

[144] Jocelyn Ho, 'Towards an Embodied Understanding of Performing Practices. A Gestural Analysis of Debussy's "Minstrels" According to the 1912 Piano Rolls', *Revue Musicale OICRM*, 2.1 (2014), 40–58 (pp. 43–44). Debussy's first collection of *Préludes* was composed between December 1909 and February 1910. See musical example 3 in Appendix III.
[145] Kermode, p. 112.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Music and *The Waste Land*

### *I Introduction*

In *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, his 'magisterial study of the war's origins',[1] Christopher Clark cites an eye-witness account of the mobilization of troops in Paris on the declaration of war in the late summer of 1914:

> There was no music, singing or cheering, just the scraping of boots, the clip-clopping of hundreds of horses, the growl of motor lorries and the crunching of iron wheels on cobbles as artillery pieces rolled under the unlit windows of apartments, many of whose occupants must have lain awake or sleepily watched the sombre spectacle from their windows.[2]

As Clark observes in his final chapter, 'The myth that European men leapt at the opportunity to defeat a hated enemy has been comprehensively dispelled'.[3] He goes on to add that, 'In most places and for most people, the news of mobilization came as a profound shock, a "peal of thunder out of a cloudless sky"'.[4] Away from the towns and cities, the news about the onset of war made even less sense. The 'stunned silence' which prevailed in Russian villages was broken only by the sound of 'women and children weeping',[5] and in the small commune of Vatilieu in south-eastern France, the primary

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[1] David Dutton, 'Review of "The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914" by Christopher Clark', *The Interational History Review*, 36.5 (2014), 991–93 (p. 991).
[2] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 553. Clark quotes from Richard Cobb's digest of eye-witness recollections recounted in Roger Martin du Gard's *L'Été 1914* (4 vols., Paris 1936-1940) quoted in Cobb, 'France and the Coming of War', cited in R.J. W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Eds.), *The Coming of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 125-144 (p. 137).
[3] Clark, p. 553.
[4] Clark, p. 553.
[5] Clark, p. 553. Clark quotes from Josh Sanborn, 'The Mobilization of 1914 and the Question of the Russian Nation: A Re-examination', *Slavic Review,* 59.2 (2000) 257-289 (p. 272).

schoolteacher recalled the devastating shock as workers and peasants assembled in the village square, summoned by the ringing of the tocsin:

> Wives, children, husbands, all were overcome by emotion. The wives clung to the arms of their husbands. The children, seeing their mothers weeping, started to cry too. What a disturbing scene'.[6]

In the summer of 1914, the twenty-five-year-old T.S. Eliot returned to Europe, following three years of study at the Harvard Graduate School for a doctorate in Philosophy.[7] He stopped off in London, Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels on his way to Marburg in Germany, where he intended to take a course in philosophy at the university's summer school, arriving there by 19 July.[8] However, as Crawford puts it, 'On Saturday 1 August he found himself in a changed country'.[9] Germany had declared war on Russia.

Although his journey from Germany to England in a newly-mobilized Europe was anxious and full of delays, Eliot did not find much peace in his Russell Square lodgings in London. Writing to his brother on 7 September, he makes a series of perceptive observations about his fellow residents:

> The noise hereabouts is like hell turned upside down. Hot weather, all windows open, many babies, pianos, street piano accordions, singers, hummers, whistlers. Every house has a gong: they all go off at seven o'clock, and other hours. Ten o'clock in the evening, quiet for a few minutes, then a couple of men with late editions burst into the street, roaring: GREAT GERMAN DISASTER!. Everybody rushes to windows and doors, in every costume from evening clothes to pajamas [sic]; violent talking – English, American, French, Flemish, Russian, Spanish, Japanese . . .[10]

This passage, with its detailed appraisal of all the different noises of the city – the musical instruments, the singing and humming and whistling, the dinner gongs, the newspaper sellers shouting out the latest headlines, the complete mixture of languages – clearly

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[6] Clark, p. 554. Quoting from Patrick James Flood, *France 1914-1918: Public Opinion and the War Effort,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), p. 7.
[7] *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume I 1898-1922 Revised Edition*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. xxv.
[8] Robert Crawford, *The Young Eliot* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2015), p. 202.
[9] Crawford, *The Young Eliot*, p. 205.
[10] Eliot and Haughton, p. 59.

reveals Eliot's extreme sensitivity to sound. Above all, his is an aural imagination. In composing poetry, Eliot demonstrates his understanding of the ways in which different sounds and voices can be layered to create rich, polyphonic textures. In *The Waste Land*, he not only dramatises the poem with a number of different character 'voices',[11] but also includes the sounds of nature, such as water, birds, the wind, the rippling of rivers or the slithering of vermin,[12] as well as human sounds made by individuals or by massed crowds.[13] The sounds of the city and of modern mechanisation also intrude, including church bells chiming, cars, motor horns, taxis, trams and even the sound of a gramophone.[14] The previous chapter explored the extent to which Eliot's early poetry was influenced by his sensitivity to the rhythms and phrases of contemporary jazz and ragtime, particularly while he spent a year in Paris. This chapter looks at the composition of *The Waste Land* and how Eliot transmuted what Jay Winter calls 'the universality of bereavement in the Europe of the Great War and its aftermath'[15] into that most celebrated of texts dealing with 'modern death'.[16] Evaluating Winter's contention that 'a complex

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[11] For example, 'He said, Marie / Marie, hold on tight' (*WL,* 15-16), Madame Sosostris (*WL,* 47-59), the dialogue of the women in the pub (*WL,* 139-172), or the 'typist home at teatime' (*WL,* 222) who thinks to herself with relief 'Well now that's done, and I'm glad it's over' (*WL,* 252). Eliot's original title for the poem was 'He Do the Police in Different Voices', taken from Charles Dickens' novel *Our Mutual Friend* (1864) (*The Poems of T.S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 595).

[12] For example, 'sound of water over a rock' (*WL,* 355), the nightingale which 'Filled all the desert with inviolable voice' (*WL*, 100) or 'the cry of gulls' (*WL,* 313), 'The wind / Crosses the brown land, unheard' (*WL,* 174-175), 'The brisk swell / Rippled both shores' (*WL,* 284-285) and even the rat which 'crept softly through the vegetation' (*WL,* 186).

[13] For example, 'Sighs, short and infrequent were exhaled' (*WL*, 64), and 'red sullen faces sneer and snarl' (*WL*, 343).

[14] For example, 'the peal of bells' carried down the Thames (*WL,* 288), or the 'final stroke of nine' chimed by the church of Saint Mary Woolnoth (*WL*, 68), 'the sounds of horns and motors' (*WL* 197), the 'taxi throbbing waiting' (*WL,* 217) or the 'Trams and dusty trees' marking the journey out of the city, and the typist who, 'with automatic hand . . . puts a record on the gramophone' (*WL,* 255-256).

[15] J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 5.

[16] Sandra M. Gilbert, '"Rats' Alley": The Great War, Modernism, and the (Anti)Pastoral Elegy', *New Literary History*, 30.1 (1999), 179–201 (p. 191). Jean-Michel Rabaté also analyses perspectives on *The Waste Land* as more of a 'modernist post-war poem than a modernist war poem' in '"The World has seen Strange Revolutions Since I Died": *The Waste Land* and the Great War' in *The Cambridge Companion to 'The Waste Land',* ed. Gabrielle McIntire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) pp. 9-23 (p.9). In *The Great War, 'The Waste Land', and the Modernist Long Poem* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), Oliver Tearle also explores

process of re-sacralization marks the poetry of the [Great] War',[17] this chapter assesses the ways in which sound, and particularly the music of Wagner and Stravinsky, influenced Eliot and might be seen as fundamental to the form and development of *The Waste Land.* Winter concludes his study by suggesting that for many post-war writers 'who engaged in this dialogue with the dead . . . their "modernism" was the product of a recasting of traditional language, not its rejection'.[18] How music enabled Eliot to recast his particular 'traditional language' in a new way in order to try to comprehend the torment, suffering and loss of the Great War – if not of civilisation itself – forms the subject of this analysis.

## *II The Experience of War*

Writing to Eleanor Hinkley from 'Shady Bloomsbury' on 8 September 1914, Eliot confesses:

> No war ever seemed so real to me as this: of course I have been to some of the towns about which they have been fighting; and I know that men I have known, including one of my best friends, must be fighting each other. So it's hard for me to write interestingly about the war.[19]

The sense that, despite having no direct experience himself, 'no war seemed so real', must have been familiar to most non-combatants from 1914 onwards.[20] Certainly, the

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reading Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a response to the Great War. He compares *The Waste Land* with Hope Mirrlees' poem *Paris* (1919), Eliot presenting what Tearle calls 'an altogether more conservative, even reactionary, picture of post-war Europe' (p. 80). He continues: 'Whereas Mirrlees' *Paris,* set at the time of the [Versailles] Peace Conference, celebrates the peace that had followed the war, *The Waste Land,* written a little later after the full ramifications of the peace talks became clear, is haunted by an awareness that peace has not come so easily to Europe, and there is no easy way for 'war' to be ended and 'peace' to be established' (p. 81).

[17] Winter, p. 221.

[18] Winter, p. 222.

[19] Eliot and Haughton, p. 62.

[20] Adrian Gregory, 'Lost Generations: The Impact of Military Casualties on Paris, London and Berlin', in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 57–103 (p. 59). Adrian

proximity of the Western Front (the sound of artillery could be heard on the south coast, and, on some days, even in London itself), the relatively speedy return of wounded combatants, vivid and frequent newspaper reports, and an efficient postal service which delivered twelve million letters to and from the Western Front each week at the height of the War,[21] all contributed towards making those at home aware of what was happening in ways which were hitherto unknown. A major retreat by the Allied forces on 24 August 1914, known as the Retreat from Mons, merged into early September's Battle of the Marne, where British and French troops succeeded in halting the German advance towards Paris, although at the cost of half a million casualties on each side.[22] By the middle of November the original British army was all but wiped out.[23]

Throughout 1915 the slaughter continued, with offensive and counter-offensive from both sides, but all to no avail, since 'going through the line was beginning to look impossible'.[24] Skirting round the impasse as far afield as two thousand miles to the south-east, at Gallipoli in the Dardanelles, seemed a possible way forward, and on 25 April troops began landing there. Among the French soldiers was Jean Verdenal, Eliot's correspondent and fellow-student from the *pension* Casaubon in Paris, described in 1911 to Eleanor Hinkley as 'one of my best friends'.[25] Verdenal was killed on 2 May, while treating a wounded comrade. Although there is no record of Eliot's reaction to the news of the death of Verdenal, some sense of his shock and numbness perhaps comes through in a letter written by Eliot to his mother in Autumn 1915, just after the doomed

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Gregory assesses the recorded dead and wounded documented in the three capital cities of Paris, London and Berlin, but, as he writes, 'What is not at issue is the sheer scale of the slaughter'.

[21] Information from the British Postal Museum and Archive and from https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25934407

[22] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 9.

[23] Fussell documents that 'At the beginning of the war a volunteer soldier had to stand at five feet eight to get into the army. By October 11 the need for men was such that the standard was lowered to five feet five. And on November 5, after the thirty thousand casualties of October, one had to be only five feet three to get in.' (p. 9)

[24] Fussell, p. 10.

[25] See page 158 and footnote 59 below.

Loos campaign. He conveys his utter horror at the conditions in the trenches endured by the soldiers at the Front, as undoubtedly reported to him by Vivienne Haigh-Wood's brother, Maurice, home on leave:

> It seems very strange that a boy of nineteen should have such experiences – often twelve hours alone in his dug-out in the trenches, and at night, when he cannot sleep, occupying himself by shooting rats with a revolver. What he tells about rats and vermin is incredible – Northern France is swarming, and the rats are as big as cats. His dug-out, where he sleeps, is underground, and gets no sunlight.[26]

In Eliot's shocked realisation that 'a boy of nineteen should have such experiences' of 'rats . . . as big as cats',[27] there is a distinct pre-echo of *The Waste Land:*

> I think we are in rats' alley
> Where the dead men lost their bones.
> (*WL* 115-116)[28]

As the war dragged on, Eliot, now married – albeit unsuccessfully – to Vivienne, and trying to carve out a path as a writer, took a job in the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyd's Bank in the City of London. This located Eliot firmly at the heart of the economic establishment, offering him a unique perspective as an American 'outsider' (like Ezra Pound) on the conflict, which he viewed as a trade war between imperial European nations.[29] By the summer of 1917, his view of the war seems almost to be one of anaesthetised detachment:

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[26] Eliot and Haughton, p. 132. Maurice Haigh-Wood's experience of life in the trenches is echoed in letter, 'grim with disgust and bitterness', written by Roland Leighton to his fiancée, Vera Brittain, also in September 1915, describing how he has supervised the reconstruction of some old trenches, where 'the wire entanglements are a wreck, and in among the chaos of twisted iron and splintered timber and shapeless earth are the fleshless, blackened bones of simple men' (Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (Glasgow: Virago, 1978) pp. 197-198).

[27] Maud Ellmann references Julia Kristeva's definition of rats as 'abject', and representing 'the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite' (quoted from Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia, 1982) p. 56): see Maud Ellmann, *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 14–15.

[28] *The Poems of T.S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 59. All subsequent references are to this edition.

[29] Tearle, *The Great War, 'The Waste Land' and the Modernist Long Poem,* p. 81. Tearle quotes from William Empson, summarising Pound's description of the context of *The Waste Land*: 'London has just escaped, from the First World War, but it is certain to be destroyed by the next one, because it is in the hands of international financiers'.

> To me all this war *enthusiasm* seems a bit unreal, because of the mixture of motives. But I see the war partly through the eyes of men who have been and returned, and who view it, even when convinced of the rightness of the cause, in a very different way: as something very sordid and disagreeable which must be put through.[30]

Six months later, this pessimism has, if anything, deepened:

> Everyone's individual lives are so swallowed up in the one great tragedy, that one almost ceases to have personal experiences or emotions, and such as one has seem so unimportant.[31]

Eliot's acknowledgement that 'individual lives' are completely consumed by the 'one great tragedy' of war demonstrates his understanding of its terrible consequences for the vast numbers of people affected. Even at this stage, he recognises a compulsion to express his feelings about the war in having 'a lot of things to write about if the time ever comes',[32] and that the 'sordid and disagreeable' unreality of war must be voiced. When the war does end with the Armistice on 11 November 1918,[33] Eliot's letter to his mother just two days later seems more preoccupied with his disappointment and exasperation at not being accepted for the Navy[34] than with the actual coming of peace:

> When I wrote to father the Navy Affair was still dragging on. By Thursday I decided that as no answer had been received I must throw the whole thing up, as I could not afford the expense. The Lloyds managers were very sympathetic . . . and I started in [at the Bank] to learn some new and more intricate work, and two days later the armistice was signed. So it is really all for the best that I did not get into the Navy.[35]

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[30] Eliot and Haughton, p. 203. Letter to his father dated 13 June 1917.

[31] Eliot and Haughton, p. 242. Letter to his father, dated 23 December 1917. On 18 December 1917, Ezra Pound had written to John Quinn that Eliot is 'in a bad way, back in his bank, but health in very shaky state. Doctor orders him not to write any prose for six months' (quoted in *The Letters of T.S. Eliot,* Vol. I, p. xxviii).

[32] Eliot and Haughton, p. 242.

[33] *The Silent Morning: Culture and Memory After the Armistice*, ed. by Trudi Tate and Kate Kennedy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 2–3. As Tate and Kennedy observe, the 'Armistice', derived from the Latin *arma* for 'arms' and *stiltium* for 'stopping', was simply a short truce, or, as the *OED* puts it, 'a cessation from arms'. They go on to establish that 'the exchange of fire stopped on 11 November, but it took many months for the peace treaties to be agreed. The war was suspended; the guns were silent, but that silence did not truly signify peace'.

[34] Given Eliot's congenital double hernia, this refusal was surely not unexpected.

[35] Eliot and Haughton, pp. 300–301. He also adds that, 'No-one can say that I did not try my best to get into the Army or Navy' (p. 301). Eliot seems at pains to explain how hard he had tried to volunteer to fight, probably because, as Adrian Gregory explains in Chapter 4 of *The Last Great War,* 'There was a widespread belief that volunteering ought to be a free act, not one motivated by social pressure; but at the same time there clearly was a great deal of social pressure. Some women handed out white feathers to ununiformed men . . .' (p. 77). Although he was an American

But maybe Eliot's reaction to the Armistice was not so unusual for the time. Modris Eksteins observes:

> Civilians, here and there, had celebrated a few victory parties. Soldiers had by and large felt little emotion . . . Europe slumped into a monumental melancholy.[36]

Unspoken fears that this 'war to end all wars' might not even have been 'worth the effort' were too dreadful to contemplate. People preferred simply to 'bury the thought' and, therefore, to 'bury the war'.[37]

### *III Post-War Perspectives*

As the concerns of wartime were gradually supplanted by those of peacetime,[38] Eliot was able to focus on literary projects once more. Editing the *Egoist,*[39] and writing for the *Athenaeum* and *Arts & Letters,* enabled Eliot to assert with growing confidence – and belief in his increasing independence from Pound:

> I really think that I have far more *influence* on English letters than any other American has ever had, unless it be Henry James.[40]

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citizen, Eliot must have felt this social pressure and, once the USA had entered the war on 6 April 1917, he was keen to join up as a translator, given his facility with languages, perhaps to avoid being called up as a regular soldier as 'cannon fodder'.

[36] Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), pp. 252–53. A different view is offered by Tate and Kennedy in *The Silent Morning*, showing the distinction between the ways in which news of the Armistice was received on the Front and at home: 'If the military fronts fell into an awkward silence on 11 November 1918, the Armistice was marked very differently in civilian zones. In many British cities, for example, the end of the war was greeted with a chaos of noise: guns, sirens, shouting, sometimes music. . . . Some people made a show of relief or joy, drinking and dancing in the street' (p. 6, quoted from Stanley Weintraub, *A Stillness Heard Round the World: The End of the Great War, November 1918* (London: Allan and Unwin, 1986) n.p.).

[37] Eksteins, p. 254.

[38] In December 1918, Eliot writes to his mother of 'Politics being in complete chaos at present' and of being 'very pessimistic about it' (*The Letters of T.S. Eliot,* Vol. I, p. 312).

[39] Eliot was assistant editor on the *Egoist* from 1917, replacing Richard Aldington after he was mobilised.

[40] Eliot and Haughton, p. 331. Letter to his mother, 29 March 1919.

This sense of being an 'outsider', who had decided to settle in England because he 'found the environment more favourable to the production of literature',[41] is emphasised in Eliot's declaration that:

> 'I am a *metic*, a foreigner and I want to understand you, and all the background and tradition of you . . . it is very difficult with me – both by my inheritance and because of my very suspicious and cowardly disposition. But I may simply prove to be a savage.[42]

He wants to reach a point of comprehending 'all the background and tradition' of the society and culture he has adopted, but Eliot recognises that, in spite of all his efforts, he may well 'simply prove to be a savage'. As Crawford remarks in *The Savage and the City in the Work of T.S. Eliot,* 'the primitive was in vogue' in the opening years of the twentieth century.[43] Crawford quotes from an unattributed article published in the *Nation* magazine[44] in 1908, which proposes that:

> . . . survivals of savage passion serve to remind us how thin is the veneer of our civilisation, how easy it is to drop back to the moral level of the ape and tiger.[45]

Eliot's choice of the word 'savage' in his letter of 1919 may well originate with reading the first edition of the avant-garde 'Vorticist' magazine *Blast,* which we know he acquired in London on his way to Germany in the summer of 1914.[46] Certainly the early years of the twentieth century exhibited various perspectives on what constituted 'the savage'. The Vorticist declaration that the modern artist should be 'permanently primitive' and 'a savage'[47] is echoed in Eliot's review of Lewis's novel *Tarr* (1918), which epitomises 'the thought of the modern and the energy of the caveman',[48] meaning artistic instincts which

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[41] Eliot and Haughton, p. 315. Letter to John Quinn, 6 January 1919.
[42] Eliot and Haughton, p. 379. Letter to Mary Hutchinson, 11 (?) July 1919.
[43] Robert Crawford, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T.S. Eliot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 61.
[44] The *Nation* is the oldest, most continuously published weekly magazine in America: the first edition appeared in July 1865.
[45] Crawford, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T.S. Eliot*, p. 61.
[46] The pre-war voice of the modern art 'Vorticist' movement in England, *Blast* was published only twice, once on 2 July 1914 (although the first edition was dated 20 June on account of printing being delayed) and for a second time on 15 July 1915. Both editions were edited by Wyndham Lewis. See Crawford, *The Young Eliot,* p.202.
[47] *Blast,* Volume I, (1914) p. 33 (Modernist Journals Project).
[48] T.S. Eliot, Review of 'Tarr', *The Egoist,* 5.8 (1918) 105-106 (p.106).

were less developed, less sublimated and repressed, permitting art-works to reveal violent instincts, sexual desire and even the lust to kill. For Eliot, being a 'foreigner' places him in the role of observer, looking in from the outside for the very reason that he does not 'belong'. Recognising that he may 'simply prove to be a savage' recalls the 'permanently primitive' nature of the Vorticist modern artist who rejects the values and principles of so-called civilised society.[49] As Marianna Torgovnick writes:

> The conceived link between us and them often depends on evolutionist premises, on the sense that the primitive represents, in Freud's words, 'a necessary stage of development through which every race has passed'.[50]

The brutality of mechanised warfare endured by soldiers on the Western Front, with human bodies – as individuals and as whole battalions – treated a mere *materiel* on the battlefield, was unmatched; the loss of life unprecedented. Reports would have perhaps suggested to Eliot that the innate 'savagery' of human beings lurked alarmingly close to the surface. Just how he might explain or lament the costs of the War, whether physical, ethical and moral or even begin to articulate some of those ideas and experiences – some of the 'things to write about if the time ever comes when people will attend to them'[51] – was to preoccupy him for the next four years.

## *IV Eliot and Wagner*

In 1920, the Hogarth Press printed a short run of just one hundred and seventy-five copies of Hope Mirrlees's avant garde poem, *Paris*.[52] This is an experimental work,

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[49] Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 70–79. This overview of 'primitivism' in literature, painting and music shows how deeply modernism was influenced.
[50] Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 8.
[51] Eliot and Haughton, p. 242.
[52] Hope Mirrlees, *Hope Mirrlees: Collected Poems*, ed. by Sandeep Parmar and Julia Briggs (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), p. xxxvii. Sandeep Parmar writes in the introduction to this collected edition of Mirrlees's poetry that '*Paris* can be justifiably seen as the bridge between

which portrays a metropolitan, modern consciousness unfolding in a single day (much like James Joyce's *Ulysses* or Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*) while walking across Paris. It begins with a significant line, 'I want a holophrase', conveying Mirrlees's intention to move beyond language and form in order to express her subject in a single word.[53] By the time the 'flâneuse' of the poem has reached the Île Saint-Louis and the Place de Vosges in the fashionable Marais district, 'The Seventeenth Century lies exquisitely dying . . .'.[54] At the top of the next page, Mirrlees prints a musical quotation, the first eight bars of the melody of the aria 'Lascia ch'io pianga', from George Frederick Handel's first London opera, *Rinaldo* (1711).[55] In choosing this famous tune, Mirrlees not only makes a statement about the connection between music, poetry and art in the modern age, but also associates her post-war optimism with Handel's desire to impress not only Queen Anne, but also the inhabitants of London, the greatest metropolis in Europe at the time.[56] Eliot's quotations in *The Waste Land* from two of Richard Wagner's operas similarly broaden the cultural scope of his text, especially since all the excerpts are sung by 'lesser' characters who are swept along by the tide of events, just like the human subjects of Eliot's poem.

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French models and T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, which was begun before 1921'. She continues: 'Briggs theorized that Eliot may have read *Paris* before writing his poem, as a Hogarth [Press] author (his formal collection *Poems* immediately preceded *Paris*'s publication) he would surely have known of its existence. Given the chance many years later, in an interview, to align her experiment with Eliot's famous poem, Mirrlees would not be drawn on conjectural similarities and simply said she did not know if he had read it, though the two were for many years intimate friends'.

[53] 'Holophrasis' or 'holophrase' is the prelinguistic use of a single word to express a complex idea (*Cambridge English Dictionary*).

[54] Hope Mirrlees, *Paris* (London: Hogarth Press, 1919), p. 17.

[55] Mirrlees, *Paris*, p. 18.

[56] Paul Kleber Monod, 'The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas, 1711-1718', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 36.3 (2005), 445–72 (p. 455). In his preface to *Rinaldo*, addressed to Queen Anne, Handel wrote: 'This opera is a Native of your Majesty's Dominions, and was consequently born your subject'. Handel had arrived in London in the winter of 1710, at what Monod calls 'a time of acute political crisis and violent partisanship' (p. 446).

Eliot's acquaintance with Wagner began as a student at Harvard, when he attended a performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* at the Boston Opera House in 1909,[57] an experience which inspired the poem 'Opera', dated November the same year:

> Tristan and Isolde
> And the fatalistic horns
> The passionate violins
> And ominous clarinet;
>
> (*Poems I,* 'Opera', 1-4)[58]

In identifying the instruments associated with particular *leitmotifs* in the opera, which Wagner uses to propel the drama forward through the music, Eliot is already demonstrating his appreciation of the musical complexity woven around the words. His friendship with Jean Verdenal in Paris served only to develop even further Eliot's knowledge and understanding of Wagner's music.[59] Writing to Eliot in February 1912, Verdenal shares his passion for Wagner:

> Music goes more directly to the core of my being, and I have been listening to it quite a lot recently (still mainly Wagner). I am beginning to get the hang of *The Ring*. Each time the plot becomes clearer and the obscure passages take on a meaning. *Tristan and Isolde* is terribly moving at the first hearing, and leaves you prostrate with ecstasy and thirsting to get back to it again.[60]

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[57] Nancy Hargrove, 'T.S. Eliot and Opera in Paris, 1910-1911', *Yeats Eliot Review*, 21.3 (2004), 2–20 (p. 3). Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* (WWV 90) was composed in 1859, and was first performed in Munich in 1865.

[58] Ricks and McCue, p. 236.

[59] Surviving letters from Jean Verdenal to Eliot dated from mid-1911 through to the end of 1912 show a friendship based on a mutual love of literature, poetry, opera, the theatre and philosophy. Verdenal's letters speak of their shared enjoyment of literature, such as Charles-Louis Philippe's novel *La Mère et l'Enfant* (Eliot and Haughton, p. 21), or of the philosophical differences between a range of poets: 'Quelle differences en effet! aperçues dès qu'on prend q[uel]ques noms (Verlaine, Huysmans, Barrès, Francis Jammes, Péguy, Bouget, Claudel, Le Cardonnel etc.)' (Eliot and Haughton, p. 23).

[60] Eliot and Haughton, p.32 (p. 29 for Verdenal's letter in the original French).

Verdenal recognises the enormous influence which Wagner's music has on him, especially the music of *The Ring* and *Tristan*.[61] Nathan Waddell also identifies the broad reach of the influence of Wagner, 'chiefly in its Anglo-American variants',[62]:

> Modernism as a whole – across all of its literary, visual, sculptural, musical, architectural and balletic manifestations – is basically unthinkable without some acknowledgement of how Wagner influences culture in its broadest sense in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[63]

Wagner's musical influence is evident in the works of his contemporaries and his successors, both in the way composers embrace his techniques of harmonic and melodic development, his orchestration and his use of *leitmotifs*, as much as in the way they might deliberately shun that influence.[64] But the influence of Wagner is apparent 'far outside the domain of opera', as Eric Prieto writes, and is 'instrumental in preparing the way for the kind of musical modelling used by twentieth-century storytellers'.[65] The attraction of Wagner for modernist writers is, according to Joyce Kelley, that 'he was a revolutionary figure, elevating the experience of opera to the spiritual and mythic, exploring new realms of tonality and orchestration, unabashedly incorporating sexuality, and giving his audience the "intellectual challenge" of tracing *leitmotifs*'.[66]

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[61] *The Ring Cycle (Der Ring des Nibelungen)* was conceived by Wagner around 1848, but was not finished until 1874. The complete cycle was first performed in 1876 at Bayreuth, Wagner's specially-built opera house in Bavaria. The cycle is made up of four operas: *Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried and Götterdämmerung*, which are usually performed on four consecutive evenings.

[62] Nathan Waddell, *Moonlighting: Beethoven and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 1. See also Anne Dzemba Sessa, *Richard Wagner and the English*, (London: Associated University Presses, 1979).

[63] Waddell, p. 12. Waddell quotes from Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics*, p. 4.

[64] Leon Botstein, 'Richard Wagner at Two Hundred', *The Musical Quarterly*, 95.2/3 (2012), 193–206 (p. 201). Botstein contends that modern productions of Wagner operas focus on the visual aspects rather than the musical, at a cost to the music. He continues, 'this was the view of both Brahms and Saint-Saëns. They thought that Wagner (whose craft they admired) ushered in the end of the primacy of musical culture and its subordination to the literary and visual. The irony was that it was Wagner's brilliant use of music that propelled that historical shift' (p. 201).

[65] Eric Prieto, *Listening In: Music, Mind, and the Modernist Narrative* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp. 6–7.

[66] Joyce E. Kelley, 'Virginia Woolf and Music', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, ed. by Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 417–36 (p. 420).

Wagner's belief in the absolute unity of music and drama is conveyed through a fusion of its outer and inner aspects: the sung words express the outer, direct aspect of the action – the events and situations which occur and develop in the drama; the orchestra articulates its inner aspect – the deeper thoughts, feelings and emotions which form the undercurrent to the drama.[67] Although literature cannot operate on the same level of simultaneity which is offered by music, for modernist writers, and particularly for Eliot, the ways in which these 'inner' and 'outer' aspects of the drama were interwoven by Wagner suggested a new way of composition.[68] Eliot's use of fragmentation and of recurring motifs and themes in *The Waste Land* achieves an effect which may be likened to the 'inner' and 'outer' aspects of Wagner's operas, and in his essay 'The Music of Poetry '(1942), Eliot declares his belief in the parallels which exist between poetry and music:

> The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter.[69]

Through the use of these 'recurrent themes', which Eliot observes to be 'as natural to poetry as to music', Eliot intertwines both the 'outer' aspect of the poem and its 'inner' commentary – like Wagner's voices and orchestra – to produce something which has a much richer poetic texture. Margaret Dana finds other strong connections between Eliot's *Waste Land* and Wagner:

> . . . the kind of music Wagner wrote is vital to [*The Waste Land's*] whole structure, enabling the poem's powerful subjectivity in ways that go far beyond the use of Wagnerian allusions. In addition to their shared use of tonal effects, music and

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[67] For a more detailed explanation of Wagner's compositional techniques, see Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), pp. 625–26.

[68] Prieto, pp. 8–9. What Prieto calls 'a commonplace assertion of twentieth century aesthetics', that 'musical meaning is immanent, having nothing whatsoever to do with the semantic concerns of the representational arts' he dates back to the publication of Eduard Hanslick's anti-Wagnerian (and pro-Brahms) treatise *On the Beautiful in Music*, first published in 1854.

[69] *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 114.

> poetry are both temporal forms whose patterns of repetition and contrast must be recognised moment by moment and held in the memory from first to last.[70]

The multi-layered references which bring cohesion to Eliot's poem are evocative of the *leitmotifs* and of the harmonic relationships which bring structure and unity to Wagner's operas, and show how Eliot uses the model of music to generate his poetic voice with a fresh ear.

In adapting Wagner's 'inner' and 'outer' voices in his poem, Eliot uses a set of themes or *leitmotifs.* The motif of water is evident from the beginning of *The Waste Land*, where Eliot's 'April is the cruellest month' (*WL* 1) recalls Chaucer's 'Aprille with his shoures soote',[71] and continued in 'Stirring /Dull roots with spring rain' (*WL* 3-4) at the start of 'The Burial of the Dead'. The 'water' motif is also evoked later in the 'drowned Phoenician Sailor' (*WL* 47), whose description – added as an aside in 'Those pearls that were his eyes' (*WL* 48) – pre-echoes a repeat of the same line from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in 'A Game of Chess' (*WL* 125). References to *The Tempest* continue in 'The Fire Sermon', where Eliot recalls Sebastian's memory of his drowning father ('the king my father's death before him' (*WL* 192)) connecting death, water and the mystery of music ('"This music crept by me upon the waters"' (*WL* 257)). Such references to other literary works act in a similar way to Wagner's orchestrations: the historical, dramatic, and literary connections reinforce the effect of Eliot's lines, and tie his ideas to the network of deeper literary connotations. The inter-connections between water, rain, drowning and storms produce the effect of harmonic resonance throughout the poem, and Eliot achieves similar outcomes with references to stone, dust, death, fire, wind, and to the sound of voices and of nature.

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[70] Margaret E. Dana, 'Orchestrating The Waste Land', in *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. by John Xiros Cooper (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 267–94 (p. 272).
[71] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'Prologue' to *The Canterbury Tales* (Ricks and McCue, p. 55).

Direct quotations from Wagner's operas *Tristan and Isolde* and *Götterdämmerung,* appear in parts I and III of *The Waste Land*, and a quotation from Verlaine in part III is an indirect reference to a third opera, *Parsifal*. All these Wagner references are associated with the motif of 'water', and therefore strengthen the underlying resonances in Eliot's poem. The two passages from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde,* which are quoted in 'The Burial of the Dead', juxtapose hope and despair, and frame what Margaret Dana calls 'the ecstatic memory of love in the Hyacinth garden':[72]

> *Frisch weht der Wind*
> *Der Heimat zu,*
> *Mein Irisch Kind,*
> *Wo weilest du?*
>
> 'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
> 'They called me the hyacinth girl.'
> – Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
> Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
> Speak, my eyes failed me, I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
> Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
>
> *Oed' und leer das Meer.*
>
> (*WL* 31-42)

Both passages, 'carefully transcribed in italics',[73] signify foreboding. The four lines from Act I of *Tristan*, beginning 'Frisch weht der Wind', are sung by a young sailor who is off-stage.[74] Like Eliot's hyacinth girl, Isolde is unaware of her fate, even though she hears the young sailor's innocent words, 'My Irish child, / Where are you?' as a reproach. The absence of an orchestral accompaniment, except for the portentous low strings, gives a sense of stasis to the music, as though Wagner has temporarily suspended the 'inner' instrumental commentary normally. Eliot's reference to the overwhelming sense of loss

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[72] Dana, p. 274.
[73] Adrian Paterson, 'Modernist Poetry and Music: Pound Notes', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music*, ed. by Delia de Sousa Correa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 587–600 (p. 596).
[74] Appendix V, example 1.

which permeates the *Tristan* score is reinforced by his second quotation from *Tristan*. 'Oed und leer das Meer' is from the song of the shepherd, posted to keep watch in Act III for Isolde's arrival by sea. But this again is a futile, despairing gesture: the sea is empty.[75] The orchestral accompaniment to this passage consists of plaintive, high violins playing in thirds which rise, then fall, then rise and fall again, echoing the chromaticism of the ground-breaking 'Tristan chord'.[76] The *Tristan* allusions, suggest that, for Eliot, the wounds of loss will not be healed: for those who have survived in the aftermath of the Great War, 'dull and empty the sea' remains, forever.[77]

Eliot connects his recurrent motifs (life and death, hope and despair, sacrifice and redemption) to the over-arching myths of Wagner's *Ring* and *Tristan,* using the musical references to offer deeper interpretations and reflections on his poem. A quotation from *Götterdämmerung*, the concluding opera of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, re-emphasises this motif despair. The Rhine-maidens lament the loss of their gold:

Weialala leia
Wallala leilala

(*WL* 277-278 and 290-291)[78]

But they seem remote from the events which doom the protagonists in *The Ring*. Even though the river's 'darkness' is a consequence of the loss of their 'Rhine-gold', Wagner's music, rippling with liquid ecstasy, reinforces their apparent detachment. Eliot's three Thames-maidens similarly 'can connect / Nothing with nothing' (*WL* 301-302), and also lament the 'Burning burning burning burning' (*WL* 308) which mirrors the flames of Valhalla at the end of *Götterdämmerung*. Robert Donington sees this destruction as

[75] Appendix V, example 2.
[76] Appendix V, example 3.
[77] The claim by John Peter in 'A New Interpretation of *The Waste Land* (1952)', *Essays in Criticism* 1969 XIX (2) (pp. 143 and 172-173) – successfully suppressed by Eliot while he was alive – that this hidden love lyric in *The Waste Land* depicts Eliot's love for Jean Verdenal was reworked by James Miller in *T.S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of the Demons* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977). Certainly this passage in Eliot's poem expresses a sense of profound loss.
[78] See Appendix V, example 4.

'disintegration with a purpose . . . shattering music, but with the shattering upheaval and creative pangs of rebirth'.[79] This offers a further connection between Wagner's music and Eliot's poem, where the themes of water and loss which persist throughout *The Waste Land* are brought to their conclusion: 'Death by Water' leads on to the implicit – perhaps – promise of rain in 'What the Thunder said', with the final 'Shantih' repeated in a musical incantation of reconciliation, offering some hope of renewal, some promise of peace.

The Grail motif is another important theme explored in *The Waste Land*, not only in its allusions to the wounded Fisher King, to myths of resurrection, and to rituals of fertility,[80] but also in a reference to Wagner's final opera, *Parsifal,* from Verlaine's sonnet, 'Parsifal':[81]

*Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*
(*WL* 202)

Following immediately on from Eliot's parody of a war-time ballad,[82] Wagner's 'voices of children singing' which joyously bring down the curtain at the end of *Parsifal* are missing from *The Waste Land*.[83] In Eliot's poem, the quotation from Verlaine is interrupted by harsh 'Twit twit twit / Jug jug jug jug jug jug' imitations of bird chirrups and squawks,[84] implying that there will be no final redemption here.[85] Eliot's juxtaposition of bird caws and croaks with *Parsifal's* redeemed 'Grail' motif parallels the way Wagner contrasts

[79] Donington, pp. 272–73.
[80] Jonathan Ullyot, *The Medieval Presence in Modernist Literature: The Quest to Fail* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 48.
[81] Philip Waldron, 'The Music of Poetry: Wagner in "The Waste Land"', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 18.4 (1993), 421–34 (pp. 425–26).
[82] Ricks and McCue, pp. 655–56.
[83] Appendix V, example 5.
[84] Hardly the melodious birdsong captured by Messiaen in his *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, or Olga Rudge's accurate transcription of Jannequin's 'Chant des oiseaux' included by Pound as Canto LXXV of *The Pisan Cantos.*
[85] The 'Erlösung' chorus which comes at the end of Act III of *Parsifal* is a 'resolved' version of the 'Grail' *leitmotif* which has appeared throughout the opera.

chromaticism and diatonicism in the opera score. The chromatic dissonances representing guilt and suffering in the opera are resolved in the diatonic, harmonically unambiguous resolutions embodied in the Grail's redemptive power. Eliot's use of the allusive Wagner fragments not only connects to Jessie Weston's book on the Grail legend, to which he acknowledges being 'deeply . . . indebted',[86] but also demonstrates how Eliot adapts Wagner's method of revealing the deeper actions and motivations of his characters through the illustrative orchestral themes and *leitmotifs* woven into the overall texture. The influence of music on Eliot's poetry is unmistakeable.

## *V Eliot and Stravinsky*

'We were going to the ballet with the Sitwells on Friday', wrote Vivienne Eliot in a letter to Mary Hutchinson in July 1919, referring to the London première of the Ballets Russes production of Manuel de Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat.*[87] This connects the Eliots with London's post-war upper-class literary and artistic intelligentsia centred on the Bloomsbury set and on the Sitwells (particularly Osbert and Sacheverell), who often rivalled one another as society's 'trend-setters'.[88] Sergei Diaghilev's innovative Ballets Russes dance company had not only dazzled Paris from its first performances in 1909, it also presented six seasons in London between 1911 and 1914, and a further six seasons from 1918 and 1922, with equal success.[89] However, Eliot would probably first have seen the Ballets Russes in 1911, during his time as a student in Paris, when the

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[86] Ricks and McCue, p. 72.
[87] Eliot and Haughton, p. 381. Vivienne Eliot's letter was written on 16 July 1919, but the first performance of the new Manuel de Falla ballet was put back until 22 July, as she goes on to remark: 'Now they say that the new one is postponed until Tuesday – so we are going back then' (p. 381).
[88] Gareth Thomas, 'Modernism, Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes in London, 1911-1929', in *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960*, ed. by Matthew Riley (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 67–92 (p. 75).
[89] Thomas, pp. 67 and 75.

company returned there for a third season with eight performances at the Théâtre de Châtelet from 6-17 June. Not only was the Ballets Russes extremely popular with the intellectual and artistic élites in Paris, its pioneering approach to dance and choreography, its fusion of all the arts – dance, music, art, literature, set design and costume – into an ideal unity (a realisation of Wagner's notion of Gesamtkunstwerk), and its revelation of the mysteries of Russian culture, as well as the opportunity to see some of the best and most celebrated dancers of the day, particularly Nijinsky, would all have made it an irresistible attraction for the young Eliot.[90] As part of its second programme, the 1911 season included the ballet *Petrushka*, an immensely original collaboration between Igor Stravinsky (music), Alexandre Benois (set and costume design) and Michel Fokine (choreography).[91] The ballet offered the company's principal dancer, Vaslav Nijinsky, what was to become his favourite role, affording him the chance to express not only the dual nature of the sawdust puppet who yearned to be human, but also the human body reimagined as a machine.[92] Valerie Eliot claimed that Eliot's vision of the 'stuffed' straw men in his 1925 poem *The Hollow Men* 'had in mind the marionette in *Petrushka*'[93]:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Leaning together
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
>
> (*The Hollow Men,* 1-4)[94]

This is confirmed by a note which Eliot wrote to his Italian translator, Roberto Sanesi, on 28 October 1960:

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[90] Nancy Hargrove, *T.S. Eliot's Parisian Year* (Gainesville, Florida and London: University Press of Florida, 2010), pp. 169–70.
[91] *Diaghilev: Creator of the Ballets Russes*, ed. by Anna Kodicek (London: Barbican Art Gallery/Lund Humphries Publishers, 1996), p. 163. Stravinsky and Benois also collaborated on the creation of the ballet's libretto.
[92] Hargrove, *T.S. Eliot's Parisian Year*, p. 178. Nancy Hargrove quotes from Geoffrey Whitworth's *Nijinsky* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913) (p. 60) that 'portraying the human being as machine gave him "a whole new range of attitude and movement"'.
[93] Hargrove, *T.S. Eliot's Parisian Year*, p. 178.
[94] Ricks and McCue, p. 81.

> I was thinking when I said 'stuffed men' rather definitely of scarecrows stuffed with straw, and I think it likely that the image of the Stravinsky ballet of Petrouchka [sic] was in my mind.[95]

*5.1 Vaclav Nijinsky dancing Petrushka in the original 1911 production (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)*

The pathetic figure of Petrushka, the Russian 'Pierrot', may also have stimulated Eliot's conception of the anonymous office-worker, mechanised 'Like a taxi throbbing, waiting' (*WL* 217), or 'the typist home at teatime' (*WL* 222) who:

> Paces about her room again, alone,
> She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
> And puts a record on the gramophone.
> (*WL* 254-256)

Connections between the *Petrushka* ballet, Stravinsky's musical score and Eliot's *Waste Land* may be seen in the way both works confront traditional forms. Stravinsky's music originated as a one-movement concert piece for solo piano in the late summer of 1910, which he developed into the orchestral score for the ballet at the request of Diaghilev.[96] The score's origins as a piano piece are evident in the importance of the piano in the

[95] Ricks and McCue, p. 717.
[96] Richard Taruskin, 'Chez Pétrouchka: Harmony and Tonality "Chez" Stravinsky', *19th-Century Music*, 10.3 (1987), 265–86 (p. 269).

finished orchestration, as well as in the articulation of the piano notes themselves.[97] There are many examples of completely parallel motion up and down the keyboard which results in successions of chords which defy the conventional rules of traditional Western harmony, just as the innovative choreography and unusual body-movements of *Petrushka* also break with ballet tradition. The progression of the hands up and down the keyboard in a fixed position perhaps foreshadows the unyielding mechanisation of the warfare to come in 1914, as well as maybe predicting the physical manifestations of 'shell shock', such as paralysis, rigidity or trembling.[98] *The Waste Land* similarly sees Eliot both adapting and defying tradition. These lines of 'The Fire Sermon' show his willingness to conflate the high- and low-brow, as well as to combine the rhythms of popular song with the (ignored) iambic tetrameter of seventeenth-century verse:

> But at my back from time to time I hear
> The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
> Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
> O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter[99]
> And on her daughter
> They wash their feet in soda water
> (*WL*196-201)

The juxtaposition of lines which parody Andrew Marvell's poem 'To His Coy Mistress' with a cleaned-up version of a war-time ballad about 'Mrs. Porter'[100] demonstrates Eliot's confidence in appropriating and adapting tradition and popular culture.

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[97] See Appendix V, example 6.

[98] José Luiz Pedroso and others, 'The Relationship Between the First World War and Neurology: 100 Years of "Shell Shock"', *Arquivos de Neuro-Psiquiatria*, 75.5 (2017), 317–19 (p. 318). The authors cite the work of Charles S. Myers, whose article in *The Lancet* in 1915, 'A Contribution to the Study of Shell Shock', first documented cases of shell shock. As Pedroso *et al* point out: 'Many soldiers had paraplegia, ataxia, tremors, and mutism of psychosomatic origin and other psychogenic movement disorders' (p.318).

[99] Lawrence Rainey writes in *The Annotated Waste Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) that 'contemporary American critics noted that this line ["O the moon shone bright"] echoes an anonymous, popular ballad known as "Red Wing"' (p. 104).

[100] The final line here is followed by Eliot's quotation from Verlaine, referencing *Parsifal* (see footnote 80).

In Stravinsky's ballet score, the so-called 'Petrushka-chord', with its dissonant combination of C-major and F#-major tonalities, is used throughout the ballet to express Petrushka's frustration, anger, and despair. The harmonic dissonance between the C-major and F# major chords suggests the torment of the puppet's anguish at being denied his humanity, since these two chords are a tritone apart harmonically, the most distant harmonic relationship possible within the Western diatonic system.[101] The duality of Petrushka's nature as a puppet/automaton who craves human love is strongly implied, especially in the mournful, arpeggiated sighs played by the two clarinets in the Second Tableau, with the sheer physicality of the pianist's performance later in the scene, combined with the orchestral intensity accentuating the held chord, emphasising the puppet's almost inexpressible rage.[102] In *The Waste Land*, Eliot too juxtaposes contrasting and contradictory images to create a web of motifs and allusions which recur throughout the poem. At the beginning of 'What the Thunder said', the 'silence in the gardens' is followed just two lines later with 'The shouting and the crying', opposing an overwhelming sense of quiet with a contradictory sudden tumult:

> After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
> After the frosty silence in the gardens
> After the agony in stony places
> The shouting and the crying
> Prison and palace and reverberation
> Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
> He who was living is now dead
> We who were living are now dying
> With little patience
>
> (*WL* 322-330)

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[101] Taruskin, pp. 268–70. The musical interval of a tritone, or augmented fourth, is the most harmonically unstable interval in the Western diatonic system. Richard Taruskin cites Arthur Berger's 'Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky' in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky*, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1968) pp. 123 and 154, for the origins of his theory that Stravinsky's harmony in *Petrushka* is derived from 'a single collection with a single referential order, i.e. the octatonic scale [so that] the dubious concept of "polytonality" need no longer be invoked' (p. 268). Taruskin proposes that Stravinsky's application of the 'octatonic' principle originated with his teacher, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

[102] Appendix V, example 6.

The interruption of the change of accent at the end of the line, 'He who was living now is dead', juxtaposes the sudden finality of the single-syllable 'dead' with the previous line-endings of 'faces', 'gardens', 'places' and 'crying', and wrenches the poem into a new rhythm. The use of the present tense verb here, '*is* now dead', also contrasts with the string of present participles which occur throughout this section, such as 'shouting', 'crying', and 'living'. Eliot additionally mixes the tenses of the verbs: 'was living', 'is dead', 'were living', 'are now dying'. Underpinning the entire section, and perhaps signifying the dead and the living from the Great War, there is a deeper, biblical allusion to the arrest of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.[103] The 'Prison and palace and reverberation' perhaps refers to the trial of Jesus before Pilate, as much as it may also refer to the echoing boom of the guns at the Western Front, or to the devastation which the terrible weapons of modern war brought to Northern France, as evidenced in Ernst Jünger's 1917 account of the effects of three years of war:

> . . . in short, we transformed the land into which the enemy would advance into a wasteland'.[104]

Not only does Petrushka rage in despair at his fate, he is also subject to the whims and commands of others. The stage direction at the beginning of the Second Tableau: 'Petrushka's Room', reads:

> As the Curtain Rises, the Door to Petrushka's Room Opens Suddenly; a Foot Kicks Him Onstage; Petrushka Falls and the Door Closes Again Behind Him.[105]

The pathetic Petrushka 'doll' is not only mistreated by some unknown figure off-stage, but, like all three puppets who perform their 'Russian Dance' to the astonishment of the Shrovetide Fair crowds, he is compelled to dance by the touch of the Magician's flute.

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[103] Ricks and McCue, p. 688. See also The Gospel of John, 18: 1-3.
[104] Michael S. Neiberg, '1917: Global War', in *The Cambridge History of the First World War Vol. I*, ed. by Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 110–32 (p. 116).
[105] Igor Stravinsky, *Pétrouchka: Burlesque in Four Scenes* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1948), p. 63.

This sense of Petrushka being subject to another's will, just like the other automata in the Little Theatre in the Benois's ballet set, perhaps has its parallel in the conscripted soldiers acting out their roles at the Front. Like Petrushka, they too are powerless. A soldier being urged to speak or communicate through his shredded nerves and shell-shock is captured in a few lines of 'A Game of Chess':

> 'Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
> 'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
> 'I never know what you are thinking. Think.'
> (*WL* 112-114)

Whether the scene is enacted between a soldier and a prostitute or girlfriend, or whether it is taking place in his over-wrought imagination, Stravinsky's victimised puppet surely inhabits the tragic human wreck returned from the Front.

Eliot's *Waste Land*, divided into five sections and presented in a variety of performative styles and dramatic voices, shares the 'burlesque' aspect of Stravinsky's ballet score.[106] There are four sections, or 'tableaux', in the *Petrushka* ballet:

I. The Shrovetide Fair
II. Petrushka's Room
III. The Moor's Room
IV. Shrovetide Fair (Evening)

Within each of the four tableaux there are contrasting scenes, with clearly defined musical styles and structures. The music comprises not only rapid changes of metre and tempo, but frequent time-signature changes, sometimes from bar to bar, which imbue the score with great vitality and restlessness.[107] In the First Tableau, after a

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[106] Michael Levenson, 'Form, Voice, and the Avant-Garde', in *The Cambridge Companion to The Waste Land*, ed. by Gabrielle McIntire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 87–101 (p. 87). Eliot's early working title for *The Waste Land*, *'He Do the Police in Different Voices'*, taken from Charles Dickens's novel *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865). Betty Higden introduces her ward, Sloppy, to Mr and Mrs Boffin: 'You mightn't think it, but Sloppy is a beautiful reader of a newspaper. He do the Police in different voices'.

[107] Stravinsky, p. 12. The music changes from 7/8 to 5/8 combined with 2/4, then 7/8 with 3/4, then back to 5/8 with 2/4 and then 8/8 with 3/4, all in the space of five bars. Using different time-signatures/metres simultaneously is also a phenomenon of twentieth-century musical composition, as discussed in Messiaen's score for his *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* in Chapter 3.

passage lasting for forty-one bars which introduces the bustle and excitement of the Fair, there is a sudden change of rhythm, metre and orchestration for the 'Group of Drunken Revellers, Dancing' scene. This has the effect of abruptly focusing the audience on a fresh part of the action, almost like a close-up in a film, and Stravinsky continues to use this technique throughout the First Tableau in particular: instrumentation, tempo, melodic motifs and dynamics are all used to differentiate between suddenly changing scenes and characters.[108] In *The Waste Land*, Eliot also uses abrupt changes of tempo and metre to signal a change of scene, or to introduce a new character. The opening passage of the first section uses a change of metre to indicate the change of season:

> Winter kept us warm, covering
> Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
> A little life with dried tubers.
> Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
> With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
> And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
> And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
> (*WL* 5-11)

The sense that, in spite of the rigours of winter, life is being secretly sustained beneath the snow is suggested in the present participles 'covering' and 'feeding', as well as in the enjambment from lines 5-6 and 6-7. The 'surprise' of summer's arrival is indicated by the change of metre in line 8, with memories of being out in the fresh air in Germany – the Starnbergersee and the Hofgarten are both in Bavaria – enjoying the rain, the sunlight, and conversation over coffee. This apparently benign summer scene not only cloaks a potentially deeper allusion to the death of King Ludwig II, but also indicates that Eliot, recalling happy personal memories of time spent in Germany with German friends,

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[108] Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring - Russia and France, 1882-1934* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 166. Walsh points out that Stravinsky's use of borrowed tunes, including urban popular songs, rural folk melodies and tradesmen's cries, which ' . . . were so well known to ordinary Russians . . . it was genuinely hard for them to hear the work as . . . an original product, rather than just a brilliantly assembled, stunningly orchestrated medley'.

sees *The Waste Land* as a lament for everything which has been lost on both sides of the conflict.[109]

Eliot's dramatic assortment of voice, style, register, motif and allusion is often executed as unexpectedly as the changes of musical scene which are heard in Stravinsky's *Petrushka* score. As Michael Levenson observes:

> The turn of the twentieth century was a moment of noisy modernity. The rise of mass journalism . . . the high-toned speechifying of bourgeois society; the public demands of suffragettes and the working class; the chug of urban transport – all bear on lyric tone. Eliot reflected on the audible pressures of new technologies: 'Perhaps the conditions of modern life . . . have altered our rhythms'.[110]

Given Eliot's highly-tuned musical ear (he can identify the 'dead sound on the final stroke of nine' in the cracked bell of Saint Mary Woolnoth),[111] Stravinsky's music for *Petrushka* would have lodged in his memory beyond that first 1911 performance. Just as the ballet features sudden changes of scene wholly engineered through the tempo, metre, dynamic and instrumental contrasts in the score, so Eliot shifts from voice to voice and between different characterisations and registers, as, for example, in this section from 'A Game of Chess':

> I remember
> Those are pearls that were his eyes.
> 'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'
> But
> O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag –
> It's so elegant
> So intelligent
> 'What shall I do now? What shall I do?

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[109] Ludwig II of Bavaria, Wagner's financial backer and a fanatical supporter of his music, was found drowned in the Starnbergersee, along with his physician, on 13 June 1886, the day after he was officially deposed. Both deaths were officially recorded as suicide. (Ricks and McCue, p. 604.)

[110] Levenson, p. 88. Levenson quotes from Eliot's introduction to Charlotte Eliot, *Savonarola: A Dramatic Poem* (London: R. Cobden-Sanderson, 1926), p. xi.

[111] Ricks and McCue, p. 57 (*WL*, 68). In his notes to the poem, Eliot described the sound of the bell as 'A phenomenon which I have often noticed' (Ricks and McCue, p. 73). Joshua Mabie writes in his chapter on 'Eliot, Architecture, and Historic Preservation' in *The Edinburgh Companion to T.S. Eliot and the Arts* that 'the dead sound that St Mary Woolnoth's bell makes is not the heavy peal of Donne's bell that forces his pre-modern auditors to reckon with their own mortality, but a sound that is "without resonance, dull, muffled" because it is "destitute of spiritual life or energy"' (p. 82).

(*WL* 124-131)

The quotation from Ariel's song to Ferdinand in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* connects across time and across cultures with lines from Gene Buckman and Herman Ruby's 1912 vaudeville song, 'The Shakespeherian Rag'.[112] But then Eliot also adds touches of the banal: 'Are you alive . . .', 'What shall I do now?'. Taken together, they produce Eliot's own 'music'.

In London, after the war, Eliot renewed his acquaintance with the concert and ballet performances given by Diaghilev's company. The Sitwells also invited Eliot, as well as members of the Ballets Russes – Diaghilev himself, Stravinsky, de Falla and Tamara Karsavina – and Ezra Pound, Auguste Rodin and Pablo Picasso to private concerts given by the clavichordist Violet Gordon Woodhouse, which further established Eliot at the heart of London society.[113] Like Pound, Eliot also distinguished himself as a music critic, and in September 1921 he published as a 'London Letter' in *The Dial* his review of the ballet *The Rite of Spring,* which he attended on 27 June.[114] The article is a retrospective of the London season, Eliot calling Stravinsky 'our two months' lion . . . Lucifer of the season, brightest in the firmament'.[115] He particularly admires Stravinsky's ballet score:

> The music was certainly too new and strange to please very many people . . . To me the music seemed very remarkable – but at all events struck me as possessing a quality of modernity which I missed from the ballet which accompanied it. [. . .] The spirit of the music was modern and the spirit of the ballet was primitive ceremony. The Vegetation Rite upon which the ballet is

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[112] Ariel sings to Ferdinand in Act I, Scene 2 of *The Tempest* of the drowning of his father, Alonso: 'Full fathom five thy father lies; / Of his bones are coral made; / Those are pearls that were his eyes'. Eliot uses motifs from this passage (drowning, pearls for eyes, bones) throughout *The Waste Land.*

[113] Osbert Sitwell, *Noble Essences, Or Courteous Revelations. Being a Book of Characters, and the Fifth and Last Volume of Left Hand, Right Hand! An Autobiography* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1950), pp. 261–62.

[114] T. Austin Graham, 'Hearing History: T.S. Eliot's Rite of Spring', in *The Edinburgh Companion to T.S. Eliot and the Arts*, ed. by Frances Dickey and John D. Morgenstern (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 146–60 (p. 149).

[115] T.S. Eliot, 'London Letter', *The Dial*, LXXI.4 (1921), 452–55 (pp. 452–53).

> founded remained, in spite of the music, a pageant of primitive culture . . . In art there should be interpenetration and metamorphosis.[116]

It is clear that Eliot is much more impressed by Stravinsky's 'modern' score, than by the ballet's choreography and dancing in London.[117] The first performance of *The Rite of Spring* ballet in Paris in 1913 was the original *succès de scandale*, with Stravinsky hailed as a 'genius' and the *Rite* becoming 'not only the talk of the town, but of the whole musical world'.[118] Certainly, the ballet received a very noisy reception in the Théâtre des Champs Élysées on its opening night on 29 May, even though such audience clamour was not repeated at subsequent performances.[119] In the score of *The Rite of Spring,* Eliot recognises Stravinsky's ability to develop and reframe the components of Western musical diatonicism into something original and 'modern', while at the same time connecting to a deeper, more authentic tradition of Russian folk melody, harmony and rhythm.

Stravinsky's innovative scores for *The Firebird* (1910) and *Petrushka* (1911) had inspired Diaghilev with great confidence in the composer's ability to produce imaginative, fresh music. However, listening to Stravinsky's first sketches for *The Rite of Spring* temporarily shook that confidence. The opening of 'Spring Divination', where the same complex chord is played fifty-nine times with varying rhythmic accentuation, perplexed even Diaghilev. Stravinsky later recalled:

> Confused and annoyed, but not wishing to offend me, he said something extraordinarily insulting. 'And is this going to go on for long?' I answered, 'Right to the end, my dear chap!' He was silent, understanding that my answer was a serious one.[120]

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[116] Eliot, p. 453.
[117] Graham, p. 149. Graham makes it clear that, at the three London danced performances of *The Rite of Spring* in June 1921, Stravinsky's music 'accompanied a newly choreographed ballet'.
[118] Jonathan Cross, *Igor Stravinsky* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2017), p. 51.
[119] Whether the 'riot' at the first performance of *The Rite of Spring* was foreseen by Diaghilev, or whether it was in fact instigated by him through the handing out of free tickets to young radicals, musicians and aesthetes who were opposed to the snobbery of the privileged classes and who championed the 'new', is still much debated. (Cross, pp. 51-52).
[120] Kodicek, p. 84. Quoted from *I. Stravinsky: Publitsist I sobesednik* (Moscow, 1988) p. 10.

As Nijinsky's choreography gradually began to take shape, Diaghilev recovered his trust in Stravinsky's music, and he supported the composer's use of a huge orchestra to play ever-more-complex harmonies and textures. However, Stravinsky was most satisfied by his discovery of 'the new language of rhythm' which underpinned the music of *The Rite of Spring.*[121] Like Eliot, who found a 'quality of modernity in the music' which he 'missed from the ballet',[122] post-war supporters of Stravinsky's music for *The Rite of Spring* found in the score a return to a purer, more authentically expressive tradition:

> Stravinsky's genius divests his instruments of their usual literary and sentimental associations, and makes them instead expressions of the essence from which they spring. He recaptures the significance of their origins in the world of nature, and makes audible that conflict which is for ever rending and tearing, *not* in order to destroy, but in order to emerge.[123]

In writing for all the instruments and sections of the orchestra to make them 'expressions of the essence from which they spring', Stravinsky uses them for their percussive quality rather more than for their inherent melodic or harmonic capabilities.[124] Daniel Albright suggests that the prevailing sense of 'heaviness' in both the musical score and in Nijinsky's choreography for *The Rite of Spring* might be regarded, like Nietszche's Dionysus, 'as an attempt to ground the truth of the civilised human condition in old ideas of the prehistoric condition'.[125] In discovering that Stravinsky constructed *The Rite* from fragments of existing folk tunes, Richard Taruskin has shown that the score is closely linked to a concept of pagan Russia, or what Albright calls 'a sort of implied kinaesthesia of Neolithic existence'.[126] Stravinsky sometimes claimed that the music for *The Rite of Spring* was inspired by memories of the 'violent Russian spring that seemed to begin in

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[121] Kodicek, p. 85. Quoted from *I. Stravinsky: Publitsist I sobesednik,* p. 10.
[122] See Eliot's review of *The Rite of Spring* from 1921 on pp.190-191 and note 118 above.
[123] *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960*, ed. by Matthew Riley (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 80. Quoted from H.R. [Henry Rootham], 'Music', *New Age* (30 June 1921), p. 106, a review of the first London concert performance of *The Rite of Spring.*
[124] See example 7 in Appendix IV.
[125] Daniel Albright, *Putting Modernism Together: Literature, Music, and Painting, 1872-1927* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 138.
[126] Albright, pp. 138–39.

an hour and was like the whole earth cracking',[127] and the sense that both the choreography and the music of the ballet recall a deeply historic sense of connection to the earth, reaching back to a time before the corruption of mechanisation, may have offered to Eliot a kind of resolution to the moral and ethical dilemmas presented in the aftermath of the War. In Part V of *The Waste Land*, Eliot envisions an arid world reduced to rock and sand:

> Here is no water but only rock
> Rock and no water and the sandy road
> The road winding above among the mountains
> Which are mountains of rock without water
> (*WL* 331-334)

In its imagery and rhythm, this passage recalls the primitive savagery of Stravinsky's music for *The Rite*; a harsh and unforgiving world, and a hostile landscape with 'no water but only rock', where the ancient tribal gods can only be propitiated by the sacrifice of a young woman.[128] These lines also evoke the war-time horrors of the Western Front, as painted by Paul Nash in 'We Are Making a New World':

*5.2 Paul Nash, 'We Are Making a New World' (1918) (Imperial War Museum)*

[127] Albright, p. 138. He quotes from Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), p. 526.
[128] Appendix V, example 7.

The 'dry sterile thunder without rain' might be the sound of artillery shells exploding in No Man's Land, as soldiers huddle in scratched-out trenches where they 'can neither stand nor lie nor sit'.[129]

Concluding the final paragraph of his 'London Letter' about *The Rite of Spring* in 1921, Eliot writes:

> Whether Strawinsky's [sic] music be permanent or ephemeral I do not know; but it did seem to transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, the beating of iron and steel, the roar of the underground railway, and the other barbaric cries of modern life; and to transform these despairing noises into music.[130]

Eliot's capacity to translate the 'barbaric cries of modern life' back into Stravinsky's primitive rhythms once again betrays his vivid aural imagination. In his essay *The Music of Poetry* (1942), Eliot observes:

> Dissonance, even cacophony, has its place: just as, in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating essential to the structure as a whole . . .[131]

Although Eliot had, in all probability, already written the first two sections of *The Waste Land* (and perhaps some parts of the third) by the time he heard the performance of *The Rite of Spring* in June 1921, there is a sense that the elemental sounds of Stravinsky's score affect the later stages of Eliot's poetic composition.[132] Graham suggests that 'it is still the case that *The Waste Land* became louder after he heard the music'.[133] Certainly, Eliot shares with Stravinsky an inclination towards the Ur-myths of European religion and

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[129] In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Jay Winter cites a report from General Ferre, responsible for overseeing the military cemeteries in Northern France after the War: '1922 was a baneful year for our cities of the dead due to numerous exhumations which, practically without precautions, upset the soil of military burial places, broke some funerary emblems, destroyed trees and shrubs and surroundings' (p. 27). This illustrates the continuing destruction and upheaval which was evident even after hostilities had ceased, and that Eliot would perhaps have been aware of the enduring devastation caused by the losses of the War.
[130] Eliot, p. 453.
[131] Kermode, p. 112.
[132] Graham, p. 155. Graham bases this assertion on Lawrence Rainey, *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
[133] Graham, p. 156.

folk tradition, particularly to create something new from the roots of tradition.[134] As Jayme Stayer asserts, 'what attracted Eliot to Stravinsky's severe music was the notion that 'tradition' might stretch further back than footnotes can reach'.[135]

Stravinsky and Eliot share a capacity to engage with the most elemental and deepest tradition – whether this is the tradition of music or of literature – in order to evolve something newly innovative, progressive and modern. In the consciousness of the 'primitive' they both find a means of authentic expression through which 'tradition' is allowed to break free and be re-imagined. Through the process of engaging with these 'primitive' traditions recalled in the ancient rituals of sacrifice, or in lamenting the loss of a whole generation or of a culture, *The Waste Land* draws on many of the themes and ideas which are also current in Stravinsky's music. Eliot's use of fragmentation, his sudden rhythmic shifts, or his abrupt juxtaposition of contrasting ideas can all be heard in Stravinsky's scores for *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring.* However, the themes of loss, sacrifice and transfiguration are also evident in the ways Eliot anchors the poems to the traditions of German Romanticism, through direct allusion to the operas of Richard Wagner. In framing his expansive poem through – and against – the ideas and language of tradition, Eliot makes *The Waste Land* at once an elegy, a lament and even a primitive ritual. Both the Romantic operas of Wagner and the 'new' music of Stravinsky offer a transformative sense of cohesive structure and form to the poem, especially in terms of Eliot's approaches to rhythm and the use of recurrent motifs. As Eric Prieto suggests:

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[134] Ricks and McCue, p. 72. In his 'Notes on the *Waste Land'*, written to accompany the publication of the poem, Eliot declares his indebtedness to 'Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance*', which 'will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do'; and also to the 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris' sections of Volume I of James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, from which 'anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognise in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies'.

[135] Jayme Stayer, 'A Tale of Two Artists: Eliot, Stravinsky, and Disciplinary (Im)Politics', in *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. by John Xiros Cooper (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 295–333 (p. 313).

> What literature can borrow from music is not actual tones or rhythm or a model of poetic diction but a model of semantic autonomy, a mode of signification that does not limit thought to the denotata of words.[136]

Just how Eliot was to take this 'model of semantic autonomy' forward in his composition of *Four Quartets* forms the final chapter of this study.

[136] Prieto, p. 8.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Music and the Composition of *Four Quartets*: T.S. Eliot and Beethoven

### *I Introduction*

Eliot's enjoyment of music is clear. His love of the opera and ballet, his attraction to the music hall, and his amusement at the cabaret are well documented in his letters,[1] and Eliot's writing demonstrates an attraction to musical titles for his poems: 'Song', 'Prelude', 'Five-Finger Exercise', 'Ballade', 'Nocturne', 'Caprice', 'Suite', and 'Quartet'. Music was a valued accomplishment as Eliot grew up in St Louis, a skill which he practised in Boston and in London, and a pastime in which he found refuge.[2] In his essay 'The Music of Poetry' (1942), Eliot explores the innate rhythm, melody and harmony of poetic composition as well as the parallels which might exist with music:

> I think that a poet may gain much from the study of music: how much technical knowledge of musical form is desirable I do not know, for I have not that technical knowledge myself. But I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure.[3]

The importance of music to Eliot the poet is fundamental: in spite of his self-confessed lack of 'technical knowledge', he values what music can offer in terms of understanding tempo, pace, pattern and form. How Eliot used the music of Wagner and Stravinsky in writing *The Waste Land* has been examined in the previous chapter; this chapter explores the influence of Ludwig van Beethoven, and especially the direct influence of

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[1] *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume I 1898-1922 Revised Edition*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 378. Eliot writes to Mary Hutchinson in July 1919 about 'personal taste'. In April 1922, again to Mary Hutchinson, Eliot writes about seeing Massine perform at the Coliseum with the Ballets Russes (pp. 666-667).

[2] Eliot and Haughton, p. 602. Eliot writes to Sidney Schiff in November 1921 while convalescing in Margate that 'I have read nothing . . . and practise scales on the mandoline [sic]'.

[3] *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 113. Originally given as a lecture at Glasgow University.

the String Quartet in A minor (Op. 132), on the composition of *Four Quartets.* Eliot's year in Paris, 1910-1911, which coincided with a burst of adulation for Beethoven and his music in France, provided him with the opportunity to hear a wide range of Beethoven's music performed in numerous concerts, culminating in a 'Beethoven Festival' organised in May 1911.[4] This experience not only acquainted Eliot with many of Beethoven's compositions, but also 'set in motion Eliot's lifelong devotion to the great composer'.[5]

In a lecture given in Connecticut in 1933, T.S. Eliot declared that among his objectives as a writer was a desire to 'get *beyond poetry*, as Beethoven, in his later works strove to get *beyond music*'.[6] For the middle-aged Eliot, asserting an ambition to emulate the achievement of Beethoven – and particularly the Beethoven of the 'later works' – suggests not only a thorough knowledge of Beethoven's music,[7] but also an appreciation of the particular importance of Beethoven within European culture, as well as an understanding of the significance afforded to Beethoven's 'late' or 'third period'

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[4] Nancy Hargrove, *T.S. Eliot's Parisian Year* (Gainesville, Florida and London: University Press of Florida, 2010), pp. 214–18. Hargrove gives details of many of the performances of Beethoven works which were given during the 1910-1911 season, including the Violin Concerto in D (by Kreisler), the Cello Sonata in A (by Casals) and *'Quartet Op. 18*' (p. 216).

[5] Hargrove, p. 217. Quoting Donald J. Grout 's opinion that 'Beethoven was the most powerful disruptive force in the history of music', Hargrove asserts that 'Beethoven's daring experimentation must have encouraged Eliot to try his own radical innovations'.

[6] F.O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 90 (Eliot's emphasis). See also Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), where it is proposed that Beethoven's late works 'constitute a form of exile' (p.31).

[7] *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume 3 1926-1927*, ed. by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 374. Writing in January 1927 in response to an invitation from Frederick Sard, the Executive Director of the Beethoven Centennial, to join a committee, Eliot declares that 'Of course I am familiar as an ordinary listener with a great deal of his work, but I have no special knowledge of his chamber music or of his later work'. He declines to 'commit myself to any expression of criticism of so great a musician as Beethoven'. The exposure which the 1927 centenary would have given to the whole range of Beethoven's compositional output in terms of the issue of gramophone recordings, live concert performances and radio broadcasts suggests that by 1933 Eliot had become a lot more familiar with Beethoven's works than he might have indicated in 1927.

compositions.[8] Eliot was not alone in being so interested in Beethoven and his music. The fascination which the music of Beethoven held for modernist writers, as well as the 'legend' surrounding the composer, the artist, and the man, is widely explored in Nathan Waddell's recent study examining the relationship between Beethoven and the literary modernists. He asserts that:

> All modernist Beethovenians, by definition, had a stake in the value of the Beethovenian [. . .] They accepted that Beethoven's life and music had a point, that it was worth something. They thought that it provided some stability in a world increasingly giving itself over to chaos, or to forms of order freighted with chaos.[9]

Focused on 'ways of understanding Beethoven's music which had long before 1900 taken shape as habit, myth, cliché, and fantasy', Waddell explores how the 'Beethoven legend' is apparent in the work of modernists such as E.M. Forster, Aldous Huxley, Wyndham Lewis, Dorothy Richardson, Rebecca West, and Virginia Woolf.[10] But Eliot might also be regarded as one of Waddell's literary modernist 'Beethovenians'. Interested in music throughout his life, Eliot's appreciation for the music of Beethoven was first unambiguously declared in February 1930 in his essay 'Poetry and Propaganda':[11]

> Those of us who love Beethoven find in his music something that we call its meaning, though we cannot confine it in words; but it is this meaning which fits it in, somehow, to our whole life; which makes it an emotional exercise and discipline, and not merely an appreciation of virtuosity.[12]

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[8] The late or third period, dated from about 1812, usually includes the last five piano sonatas and the *Diabelli Variations*, the *Missa Solemnis*, the Ninth Symphony, the last two sonatas for cello and piano, and the late string quartets.

[9] Nathan Waddell, *Moonlighting: Beethoven and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 166.

[10] Waddell, p. 1. See also Emma Sutton, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

[11] T.S. Eliot, 'Poetry and Propaganda', *The Bookman*, 70 (1930), 595–602. The essay is also printed in Jason Harding and Ronald Schuchard (eds.), *The Complete Prose of T.S. Eliot – The Critical Edition: English Lion 1930-1933* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015), pp. 20-35.

[12] T.S. Eliot, p. 600. In Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (eds.) *The Poems of T.S. Eliot* Vol. I (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), Ricks and McCue cite a reference suggesting that 'T.S.E. had read J.W.N. Sullivan's *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development* (1927)', and that Eliot was acquainted with Sullivan's work, as mentioned in a letter to Aldous Huxley dated 8 January 1925 (p. 895). Brought up in a musical household, Eliot not only played the piano himself (see Chapter 4, pp. 35-36), but also enjoyed attending classical musical concerts and the opera, as he had

Eliot's claim illustrates that, for the literary modernists as much as for Eliot himself, the appeal of Beethoven's music lay not simply in its offer of what Waddell terms 'stability', but also in the way that, over a century after it was written, it signified a sense of 'meaning' in a world where meaninglessness appeared to exert a conclusive grip on moral, emotional and artistic life. The popular view held by the literary modernists of the 'self-illuminating qualities of the Beethovenian' is seen by Waddell as reflecting 'a broader modernist inclination to discover the spiritual in late Beethoven',[13] and this appeal to a deeper spirituality is what overwhelmingly attracts Eliot towards Beethoven. The commemoration of the centenary of Beethoven's death in 1927 saw the publication of a number of studies, of which one of the most important was J.W.N. Sullivan's *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, a work which Eliot undoubtedly knew.[14] Sullivan explains in his preface that the book aims to show that 'in his greatest music Beethoven was concerned to express his personal vision of life',[15] and it is the recognition of Beethoven's ability to connect his personal artistic vision to a more universal expression of the human experience which underpins his appeal both as a composer and as an artist, and which makes him so important to modernist writers and to Eliot. For the modernists, Beethoven – the man *and* his music – offers not just a link to the more stable, more secure traditions of the past, he also exemplifies a way out of early twentieth-century (and post-World War I) disorder and uncertainty. This connection is perhaps

done in Paris when there as a student (see above). Robert Crawford writes that for Eliot, 'Beethoven would be a lifelong love' (*The Young Eliot,* p. 198). He also cites concert programmes kept by Eliot as evidence that he attended a performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Harvard in October 1913 (see *The Young Eliot,* p. 198).

[13] Waddell, p. 174.

[14] Herbert Howarth, 'Eliot, Beethoven, and J. W. N. Sullivan', *Comparative Literature*, 9.4 (1957), 322–32 (p. 327). Howarth demonstrates that, as editor of *The Criterion*, Eliot would have read the article submitted by J.B. Trend for the March 1928 issue which examined a range of 'appropriate and inappropriate literary approaches to music' (p. 328). Howarth goes on to speculate that Eliot had not only read Sullivan's study, but that *Four Quartets* echoes some of Sullivan's phrases (pp. 328-331).

[15] J.W.N. Sullivan, *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development* (Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK, 2020), p. i.

additionally grounded in empathy for the composer's struggle with life: his money problems, his growing deafness, his fraught family relationships, and his engagement with the turbulent revolutionary times in which he lived. As Glenn Stanley explains, 'the argument that "moral resistance to suffering" in art must replace mere representation of that suffering was a leading ethical and aesthetic idea for the composer and finds expression in the music of his entire career'.[16] The modernists were particularly receptive to this idea of 'moral resistance to suffering',[17] especially as expressed in Beethoven's late-period string quartets and piano sonatas.[18] The 'mystical resonances' which encouraged writers to be at their most 'experimental' when working 'in relation to the established limits and expectations of custom',[19] are certainly evident in Beethoven's late string quartets, which fulfil the description of 'experimental' in their approach to form, structure, harmonic language, key relationships and melodic invention. This is perhaps why Eliot draws on Beethoven's music, and especially on the A minor String Quartet – a work recognised as 'dangerously experimental'[20] – for particular inspiration in writing his *Four Quartets*. He undoubtedly seems to have been deeply affected by Beethoven's chamber music, and refers directly to Beethoven and specifically to the A minor Quartet in a letter written to Stephen Spender on 28 March 1931:

> I am delighted to hear that you have been at the late Beethoven – I have the A minor Quartet on the gramophone, and I find it quite inexhaustible to study. There is a sort of heavenly, or at least more than human gaiety, about some of his later

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[16] Glenn Stanley, *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 27. Samuel Hughes, 'Schiller on the Pleasure of Tragedy', *The British Journal of Aesthetics,* 55.4 (2015), 417-432, cites Schiller's belief in 'the consciousness of our freedom occasioned by witnessing resistance to that suffering' (p. 422). In *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Peter Howarth suggests that Eliot is 'tacitly following Schiller's arguments' (p. 170).

[17] Stanley writes that Schiller, 'the primary exponent of the belief that art and artistic endeavour are not solely matters of pleasure and ends unto themselves', is 'generally recognized [sic] as having most profoundly influenced Beethoven's views' through his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man,* first published in 1794 (p. 26).

[18] William Kinderman, 'The Piano Music: Concertos, Sonatas, Variations, Small Forms', in *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. by Glenn Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 105–26 (p. 121). Kinderman discusses the Piano Sonata in A flat (Opus 110) from 1821-1822, particularly the application of complex contrapuntal and fugal techniques and the interconnections between movements, as a typical example of Beethoven's late style.

[19] Waddell, p. 174.

[20] Daniel K. L. Chua, *The 'Galitzin' Quartets of Beethoven: Opp. 127, 132, 130* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 107.

> things which one imagines might come to oneself as the fruit of reconciliation and relief after immense suffering; I should like to get something of that into verse before I die.[21]

The *ekphrastic*[22] parallels which might be drawn between Beethoven's music and Eliot's poetry lie not just in the adoption of another 'renovative project',[23] but also in Eliot's understanding of how music might illuminate his own cultural and spiritual journey at a time of personal, social, and artistic crisis.

In his examination of 'Four Quartets: *the poem proper'*,[24] John Xiros Cooper is highly suspicious of studies which attempt to draw 'strict parallels between a verbal artefact and a musical one'.[25] Condemning such analyses as an 'approximate business', he asserts that:

> Most critical approaches to Eliot's *Four Quartets* that suggest the analogy, don't really do very much with it. They go about the business of interpretation in traditional ways that could have very easily proceeded without the drawing out of the musical parallel in the first place.[26]

However, this view, articulated from a very particular standpoint, is determined to see the musical analogy as one which confirms Eliot's role in corroborating the exclusivity of the 'mandarin'[27] class through the adoption of the classical quartet form. Helen Gardner's seminal chapter on 'The Music of *Four Quartets*', in which, says Cooper, 'she decided to make [music] . . . the formal axis of the poem, with Eliot's implicit support',[28]

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[21] *The Poems of T.S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 895. Quoted from Stephen Spender, *Eliot* (London: Fontana, 1975), pp. 128-129. In *Moonlighting,* p. 174 n. 21, Waddell notes that Eliot's writes 'gaity' [sic] in his letter to Spender.
[22] The term *ekphrasis* is used here in its broadest sense of a verbal elucidation of 'the arts', including music, rather than merely the visual arts.
[23] Waddell, p. 3.
[24] John Xiros Cooper, *T.S. Eliot and the Ideology of 'Four Quartets'* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 122–81.
[25] John Xiros Cooper, p. 168.
[26] John Xiros Cooper, p. 168.
[27] Cooper adopts the term 'mandarin' from John Hayward, Eliot's close friend and colleague, and discusses the use of the term more fully in Chapter 2 of *Ideology*, particularly pp.32-34.
[28] John Xiros Cooper, p. 162. He describes how John Hayward, one of Eliot's closest friends and confidants, approached Helen Gardner in 1948 to write *The Art of T.S.* Eliot (she writes in the Preface that Hayward 'first suggested I should write this book') and then acted as intermediary between Gardner and Eliot, as Cooper puts it 'ferrying the master's thoughts on the matter of the

is certainly focused on clear points of correspondence between Eliot's four poems and the form of the Classical string quartet. As Gardner sums up at the conclusion of the chapter:

> *Four Quartets* is unique and essentially inimitable. In it, the form is the perfect expression of the subject; so much so that one can hardly in the end distinguish subject from form.[29]

Recognising the 'indivisibility' of subject and form suggests that Gardner, whose evaluation and analysis of *Four Quartets* were approved by Eliot himself, appreciates that music, with its innate fusion of formal structure and motif, offers a usefully illustrative correlation to Eliot's poetics. While Gardner's investigation of *Four Quartets* is focused on exploring how 'each poem is structurally a poetic equivalent of the classical symphony, or quartet, or sonata, as distinct from the suite',[30] other commentators have found musical parallels between Eliot's *Quartets* and more contemporary compositions, especially the string quartets of Béla Bartók, with their comparable use of a symmetrical 'arch-form'.[31] Whatever the extent of Eliot's exposure to the music of Beethoven or of Bartók, Valerie Eliot said in 1967 that she hesitated to declare that 'any particular quartet, either by Beethoven or Bartók, could be held a pre-eminent influence in the writing of *Four Quartets*'. However, in adding that Eliot was 'especially fond' of Beethoven's A

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poem's import' (*Ideology*, p. 117). The fact that Gardner's readings are very much sanctioned by Eliot himself, 'in the very terms Eliot himself would have most preferred' (p.118), is – in Cooper's view – very much confirmed.

[29] Helen Gardner, *The Art of T.S. Eliot* (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), p. 55.

[30] Gardner, *The Art of T.S. Eliot*, pp. 36–37. The choice of these musically Classical forms – symphony, quartet, sonata – as opposed to the more general and distinctly Baroque (or even Renaissance) form of the suite, firmly places the musical analogy in the Classical period (c.1750-1820/30). Gardner does not mention Beethoven's string quartets in this context, but does mention 'the bridge passages and leading passages between two movements which Beethoven loved.' (p. 41). She also specifically mentions the second movement of the Beethoven Violin Concerto (p. 41).

[31] A. David Moody, *Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 197–98. Bartók's Fourth String Quartet (1928) is singled out by Moody as a possible influence on Eliot's *Burnt Norton* and *East Coker*: '. . . the five main sections of the second half [of *Burnt* Norton] correspond, in reversed or mirrored order, to those of the first half. One may wonder, given the likeness of this structure to that of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet (1930) . . . whether it was a hearing of that work which caused Eliot to reflect that "It is in the concert room, rather than in the opera house, that the germ of a poem may be quickened"'. (The quotation from Eliot is taken from the essay 'The Music of Poetry', see Kermode, p.114.) For a more detailed discussion of the possible influence of Bartók, see Appendix VI, example 12.

minor Quartet,[32] she confirms its relevance and importance to Eliot in his approach to writing, and, perhaps, particularly to his writing of *Four Quartets.* What is clear is that Eliot was inspired by music, and was profoundly inspired by the music of Beethoven, whose music represents both the culmination of Classical formal development *and* the transition to a more individual, personal and pioneering approach. Eliot's expansive aural imagination and his vivid recollection of sound – both words and music – ensured that music became a means of connecting with a new way of writing.

## *II Spiritual and philosophical tensions in Eliot and Beethoven*

Beethoven's moving Heiligenstadt Testament of 1802, written in despair at the age of thirty-two as he struggled to become reconciled to his inevitable loss of hearing, is a powerful witness to the way music gave him the inner strength to continue:

> I would have ended my life – it was only *my art* that held me back. Ah, it seemed impossible to me to leave the world until I had brought forth all that I felt was within me.[33]

Eliot also experienced personal and artistic crisis in his thirties. Not only did he suffer from frequent bouts of illness himself, but additionally had to cope with Vivienne's serious health problems, which were compounded by the increasingly obvious disapproval of her by Eliot's family and friends.[34] The strain of his marriage and his own poor health had consequences for his writing,[35] such that Ezra Pound wrote to Simon Guggenheim

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[32] Ricks and McCue, p. 895.

[33] Stanley, p. 27. Beethoven's emphasis. In a footnote, Stanley cites a suggestion made by Maynard Solomon in *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1977; 2nd edition 1998) that 'the Testament was meant to be read after his future death, and concluded it was a symbolic "leave-taking", in which he "enacted his own death", and "recreated himself in a new guise, self-sufficient and heroic"' (p. 309).

[34] Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot* (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1985), pp. 144 and 149–50. Charlotte Eliot expressed her disapproval of her son's marriage to Vivienne, saying in a letter to her brother-in-law in March 1923 that it 'was not a "eugenic" marriage' (p. 144). Ackroyd outlines Vivienne's health problems and her strained relationships with Eliot's circle on pp. 149-150.

[35] Ronald Schuchard, *Eliot's Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 21. Schuchard describes how '[Bertrand] Russell, his former

in February 1925 that 'it may be too late to intervene' since Eliot's literary production 'has been reduced to a minimum'.[36] Confiding to friends in the same month that he was considering separation from Vivienne as a possibility, the offer to Eliot later that year of a permanent position at publishers Faber and Gwyer as businessman, financier and 'talent scout' gave him the new start he needed, as well as the chance to get away to Europe with Vivenne, paid for by an advance on his salary.[37] But ten years had left Eliot and Vivienne trapped in a marriage which was the essence of mutual disappointment. As Eliot admitted to Russell, 'living with him [Eliot] had harmed Vivienne, and in turn she knew that she was a burden to her husband'.[38] On account of his work and travel, Eliot and Vivienne were already spending a great deal of time apart, and Eliot's growing religious faith served only to intensify his detachment. Eliot converted to Anglicanism, to what he called the 'English Catholic Church',[39] and he was confirmed into the Church of England in June 1927, adopting British citizenship in November that same year. Ackroyd recognises in Eliot's actions both his need to find 'hope for himself', and also a desire to become a part of 'English community and English culture'.[40] However, in spite of taking these decisive steps to establish his identity, Eliot's self-confidence appears to falter. In 1930 Eliot disclosed to Ada Leverson that *The Criterion,* the literary magazine which he had established in October 1922, 'was losing vitality and had become, like its editor, middle-aged'.[41] The poem *Ash-Wednesday*, first published in April 1930 and

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teacher and permanent intellectual antagonist, was to become one of the 'darkest angels' in Eliot's life when a shock of marital betrayal in a shared cottage in Marlow triggered a sequence of horrific moments that were to influence his poetry and criticism for the next thirty years'.

[36] Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. by D.D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 196.

[37] Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot*, p. 152.

[38] Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot*, p. 159.

[39] Barry Spurr, *Anglo-Catholic in Religion: T.S. Eliot and Christianity* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2010), p. 6. Spurr makes a clear distinction between the Anglo-Catholicism into which Eliot confirmed, Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. As he writes, 'The Anglo-Catholicism to which he adhered was nothing if not dogmatic in its keenness to affirm its Catholic credentials in the non-ecumenical, absolutist climate of international, pre-conciliar Roman Catholicism – but also, as the coinage suggests, it was conscious of its Englishness'.

[40] Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot - A Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 36.

[41] Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 19.

widely regarded as his 'conversion' poem, suggests the approach of personal crisis for Eliot. His denial of love and of the world, his despair at what he calls 'the "void" in all human affairs',[42] and the emptiness and confusion which he finds in his own experience, all propel Eliot towards his Anglo-Catholic faith. The final section of the poem, affirming his renunciation of life, love and the world, offers Eliot religious consolation and an understanding of the transcendent meaning of existence through his renewed sense of spirituality and faith, with the final petition 'Suffer me not to be separated'[43] sweeping Eliot back into 'world' time. John Kwan-Terry suggests that Eliot needs to 'save' the present through its connection to the past:

> The closing section of *Ash-Wednesday* shows that man is time-bound. Even as he aspires towards the Absolute, he remains trapped in the fragmented sphere of the this-worldly plane. Hence, he has to make 'sense' of history. [. . .] In Eliot's view the existence of a realm of Eternal possibilities will help us to save history from chaos: order can be achieved now.[44]

Writing in the wake of the 1929 Wall Street Crash and in the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Eliot's understanding of contemporary external political, economic and social events, counterpointed against his enduring internal and personal crises, gives *Four Quartets* an important sense of interplay between objective and subjective events, personal feelings and experiences, and the chaos of the world.[45] An awareness that in Beethoven's music and in Beethoven's attitude towards his own art – '*my art'* as he calls it in the Heiligenstadt Testament – Eliot might also discover 'order', as well as a way of finding transcendent meaning, is expressed in an unpublished lecture, where Eliot states as his objective:

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[42] Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot*, p. 160.
[43] {Citation}
[44] John Kwan-Terry, '"Ash-Wednesday": A Poetry of Verification', in *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, ed. by A David Moody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 132–41 (pp. 138–39).
[45] Schuchard (p. 3) suggests that Eliot's personal agony and tormented view of the world – the 'dark angel' of Schuchard's title – were 'at once his fury and his muse, causing and conducting the internal drama of shadows and voices that inhabit his acutely personal poems and plays'.

> . . . to write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it . . . poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem *points at*, and not on the poetry . . .[46]

He is aware that a poet, like a composer, creates his work from the fabric of his experiences, both cultural and personal: as he writes in 'The Music of Poetry', for a poet 'it is out of sounds he has heard that he must make his melody and harmony'.[47] The structure, rhythmic language, motivic cohesion[48] and formal design of music can imbue poetry with the 'transparency' Eliot describes, such that the meaning of a poem 'may be something larger than its author's conscious purpose, and something remote from its origins'.[49]

Eliot's interconnected sequence of poems, *Four Quartets,* was written between late 1935 and September 1942,[50] during which time not only did the world change significantly, but so too did Eliot's theology, making the poems into what David Soud calls 'a moving map . . . that changes as it unscrolls'.[51] The first poem, *Burnt Norton*, was developed from 'lines and fragments' which Eliot had discarded from his verse drama *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935).[52] In an article written for the *New York Times Book Review* in November 1953, Eliot recollected that 'These fragments stayed in my mind, and gradually I saw a poem shaping itself round them'.[53] Originally conceived as a self-contained work, the poem exhibits what Steve Ellis recognises as 'a circularity and wholeness which do not necessarily require any further completion'.[54] When the onset

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[46] Moody, *Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poet*, p. 130. The lecture was delivered in America in 1933.
[47] Kermode, *p. 112.*
[48] Motivic development is when melodic or rhythmic motifs or ideas are repeated and re-worked throughout the different structures of a musical composition.
[49] Kermode, p. 111.
[50] Ricks and McCue, p. 883.
[51] W. David Soud, *Divine Cartographies: God, History and Poiesis in W.B. Yeats, David Jones and T.S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 149.
[52] *T.S. Eliot 'Four Quartets': A Casebook*, ed. by Bernard Bergonzi (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 23.
[53] Bergonzi, p. 23.
[54] Steve Ellis, *The English Eliot: Design, Language and Landscape in 'Four Quartets'* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 51. Eliot returns in the fifth and final part of *Burnt Norton* to the spiritual and temporal impasse in the rose garden which he has explored in the first section, suggesting that,

of the Second World War prevented Eliot from pursuing his interest in writing for the stage – particularly in the wake of the somewhat mixed critical reception of his melancholy drama from March 1939, *The Family Reunion*[55] – he returned to the composition of lyric poetry. Subsequently reminiscing on how 'the conditions of our lives changed, [and] how much we were thrown in on ourselves in the early days [of the war]', Eliot recalls that *East Coker*, begun in October 1939 and completed in May 1940, 'was the result'.[56] The writing of *East Coker* transforms *Burnt Norton* from an 'ending' into a 'beginning', acting, as Ellis so imaginatively puts it, as 'a kind of tow-rope, pulling the first poem into the larger assembly'.[57] But the shape of the earlier poem, cast in five interconnected sections generated by a series of related motifs, and returning at its conclusion to the questions and ideas posed at the beginning, not only recalls the structure of *The Waste Land*, it also suggests the cyclical structure and motivic form of Beethoven's five-movement A minor String Quartet. Such a musical influence and inspiration might be detected in the subsequent completion of the entire sequence, since Eliot 'began to see the *Quartets* as a set of four',[58] writing *The Dry Salvages* between July 1940 and February 1941, and the final poem of the sequence, *Little Gidding*, between early 1941 and September 1942.[59] All four poems of the *Quartets* are linked by common themes of memory and remembrance, time and timelessness, love and loss, cultural tradition and history, and the sense of self in relation to the universe and the divine. As R.W. Flint writes, '*Four Quartets* related the poet to his time, and to the past, that "familiar compound ghost", in terms of the doctrine of love and self-sacrifice'.[60] Just as Pound's *Pisan Cantos* can be regarded as a sequence of autobiographical

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when originally published in 1936 as the concluding poem of Eliot's *Collected Poems 1909-1935*, he intended the work to stand alone as an 'ending' in itself (p. 51).

[55] Eliot described the play to Geoffrey Faber on 20 March 1937 as 'perhaps the most pessimistic thing he had ever written' (quoted in Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot,* p. 245).

[56] Bergonzi, p. 23.

[57] Ellis, p. 51.

[58] Bergonzi, p. 23.

[59] Ricks and McCue, p. 883.

[60] R.W. Flint, 'The "Four Quartets" Reconsidered (1948)', in *T.S. Eliot 'Four Quartets': A Casebook*, ed. by Bernard Bergonzi (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1969), p. 117.

reminiscences, a 'brilliant note-book held together by the author's personality, with poems scattered throughout', as Louis Martz observed in 1948,[61] *Four Quartets* is a similarly self-reflective work, the four poems united by Eliot's recollections of his own past, and his sense of being connected to cultural tradition and to the history and inheritance of his ancestry.[62] Time – past, present and future – and timelessness are conceptually resonant in both Pound's *Pisan Cantos* and in Eliot's *Four Quartets* (albeit, as we have seen, in different ways), and just as there are parallels to be drawn between Pound and Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, so there is a correspondence between Eliot's *Four Quartets* and the music of Beethoven's A minor Quartet. As Fuller declares, 'The analogy with Beethoven is not precise; it is fundamental'.[63]

The desire to reproduce in poetry some of the states of experience he heard in Beethoven's music is apparent in Eliot's use of structure and in the layers of meaning and thematic development he introduces throughout the poems of his *Quartets*. In his approach to form in the *Four Quartets*, as well as his use of recurrent themes, thematic development and in his transitions, Eliot seems indebted to the compositional style of Beethoven's late chamber music. The statement that, in Eliot's view, it is predominantly through the properties of rhythm and structure that he will profit most constructively from looking at musical parallels[64] reveals his awareness that these are the musical elements which are most strongly retained in the aural memory after hearing a piece of music, and are those which exert the most influence. The effect of Beethoven's music on Eliot's writing, Moody suggests, is in Eliot's success at 'getting the better of words' which is, he

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[61] A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet III The Tragic Years, 1939-1972* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 279. See footnote 33 in Chapter 3 of this study.
[62] Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot*, p. 258. At the beginning of 1940 Pound invited Eliot to collaborate with George Santayana on a book outlining the principles for the 'ideal' university, and Ackroyd suggests that Pound and Eliot were in correspondence during that period, indicating, perhaps, that Pound would have been aware of Eliot's ongoing development of *Four Quartets.*
[63] David Fuller, 'Music', in *T.S. Eliot in Context*, ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 134–44 (p. 140).
[64] See footnote 3 above, ' . . . I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure' (Kermode, p. 113).

declares, 'the essence of *Four Quartets*'.[65] Moody sees Eliot using words in his *Quartets* 'to make them mean what is beyond words; or, to put the same idea another way, to so transform the understanding of the world which is in its words that it will be perceived as the divine Word in action'.[66] Moody's analysis of Eliot's achievement in writing *Four Quartets* might equally be applied to Beethoven's musical achievement in his composition of the A minor String Quartet, where Beethoven can 'so transform the understanding of the world which is in its *music* that it will be perceived as the divine *Music* in action'. Certainly both Beethoven and Eliot were devoutly spiritual Christians and, although separated by more than a century, it is the depth of their faith which offers that 'reconciliation and relief after immense suffering' about which Eliot writes in his letter to Spender.[67] In their final creative years Beethoven and Eliot both underwent personal suffering, and yet they share a sense that music and poetry offer spiritual consolation; it is the convergence of their artistic expression which offers a fresh perspective on Eliot's late poetic style.

### *III Quartets in music and in poetry*

By 1818, Beethoven was probably stone deaf. Periods of ill health as well as lengthy legal wrangles with his detested sister-in-law over the guardianship of his nephew, Karl, were taking their toll, and it seems certain that Beethoven was coming to rely more heavily on conversation books to sustain day-to-day life. Although his deafness meant

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[65] A. David Moody, '"Four Quartets": Music, Word, Meaning and Value', in *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, ed. by A. David Moody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 142–57 (p. 147).
[66] Moody, '"Four Quartets": Music, Word, Meaning and Value', p. 147.
[67] Soud, pp. 22–23. Soud sees Eliot's conversion and his Christian faith as being central to his writing, especially in *Four Quartets*. He suggests that critics who view late modernist works as 'perforated and torn by the relation to history' (see Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999) p. 32) '. . . ignore the centrality of faith to Eliot after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism, and overlook the possibility that, as war approached and then arrived, Eliot might also have re-examined his theology, and hence his understanding of how Christians must inhabit history in the light of eternity'.

he could no longer perform in public, from 1819 he was preoccupied with completing both the Ninth Symphony in D minor and the *Missa Solemnis* in D,[68] and he began studying the music of Palestrina and J.S. Bach in order to explore their older, more contrapuntal styles to inform his choral writing.[69] In November 1822, Prince Nikolaus Galitzin, a wealthy music-lover and cellist from St Petersburg, commissioned three string quartets from Beethoven. The composer had already written eleven string quartets in which he had accomplished 'something fundamentally new',[70] but the late quartets baffled and even disappointed Galitzin and his cultivated musical circle in St Petersburg, who had been expecting works more in the style of Beethoven's earlier chamber music – and, as the Prince wrote, these new quartets 'were anything but that'.[71] Chua rationalises what he calls 'the disintegrative progress of the "Galitzin" Quartets' as Beethoven 'demolishing his Classical heritage before their ears'.[72] This so-called 'Classical heritage' of the string quartet medium, which appears to be collapsing in these late period 'Galitzin' Quartets, was developed first in the compositions of Haydn (who taught Beethoven) and Mozart, and Beethoven's earlier quartets betray a conscious awareness of this style. In his progressive compositional development of the structure and content of the string quartet, Beethoven is exploiting the tensions between equality and hierarchy, between strict and free styles, and between contemplation and disruption,

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[68] Stanley, pp. 12–13. This chronology provides as useful framework for establishing the outline of Beethoven's life and the sequence and dates of his compositions.

[69] Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) are regarded as hugely influential composers, especially in their use of counterpoint. Palestrina is seen as the epitome of Renaissance counterpoint and J.S. Bach as the pinnacle of Lutheran Baroque counterpoint. Beethoven had first studied counterpoint as a young man with his teachers Christian Neefe and, more importantly, Johann Albrechtsberger.

[70] John Daverio, 'Manner, Tone, and Tendency in Beethoven's Chamber Music for Strings', in *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. by Glenn Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 147–64 (p. 149). Beethoven published his first set of six String Quartets (Op. 18) in 1801, and a second set of three String Quartets (Op. 59), the so-called 'Razumovsky' Quartets, were published in 1808. Daverio regards the publication of these quartets in 'sets' of six or three with a single opus number as indicative of Beethoven's observance of eighteenth-century practice. Although the late quartets were all issued with individual opus numbers, the fact that Beethoven wrote three quartets for the 1822 Galitzin commission (the E flat Quartet Op. 127, the A minor Quartet Op. 132, and the B flat Quartet Op. 130, all completed in 1825) reflects a trace of this earlier practice of grouping chamber works together.

[71] Chua, p. 3. Quoted from Joseph de Marliave, *Beethoven's Quartets*, trans. Hilda Andrews (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928, reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 2004), 225.

[72] Chua, p. 4.

which were always implicit in writing for the ensemble.[73] Often likened to 'a conversation among intelligent speakers', the four-voiced texture of the string quartet was seen by Classical composers from the 1770s onwards as 'an ideal medium for the presentation of lofty musical ideas'.[74] But Beethoven's development of the genre advanced into new territory: experimenting with harmonic relationships, testing the bounds of motivic development, trying out stylistic innovations, and implicitly critiquing the medium almost to the point of self-destruction. As Chua observes, 'the music could easily undermine itself and alienate its audience. Thus Beethoven's quartets became increasingly paradoxical, representing both an extension and a negation of Classical heritage'.[75] In his evocation of historical models in the late quartets – counterpoint, fugue, dances from the Rococo, even strutting eighteenth-century marches – as well as in the use of sketchbook material from earlier in his career, Beethoven might be seen to be reviewing and re-evaluating not only his own history, but history itself. As Chua proposes, 'instead of being determined by history, the quartets themselves begin to manipulate history in ways that may re-interpret, idealize, or undermine it',[76] an assessment which is influenced by Theodor Adorno's judgement of the development of Beethoven's late style. Rose Rosengard Subotnik evaluates Adorno's analysis:

> The synthesis prefigured in Beethoven's second-period style turned out to be an impossibility. The third-period style, according to Adorno, clearly acknowledges this ultimate reality and is, for this reason, the most realistic of Beethoven's styles. By the last period, as Adorno understands it, Beethoven 'sees through the Classical [i.e. with its promise of synthesis] as the Classic-istic [i.e. with its false illusion that such a promise could ever be kept]. In essence, Adorno interprets the third-period style as a critique of this second-period one.[77]

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[73] Daverio, pp. 151–52.
[74] Daverio, p. 149. He quotes from Ludwig Finscher's 'theory of the string quartet' derived from his study of sources by Reichardt, Koch, Carpani, Weber and Schilling (note 12, p. 323).
[75] Chua, p. 5.
[76] Chua, p. 7.
[77] Rose Rosengard Subotnik, 'Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 29.2 (1976), 242–75 (pp. 250–51). The square brackets are given in the original.

Although Adorno describes music as 'a kind of psychoanalysis for the masses',[78] listening to Beethoven's A minor String Quartet provides, for Eliot, more than what Adorno dismissively calls 'the opportunity to feel something, anything at all'.[79] Beethoven's music, his mature compositional style, and in particular the interplay of individual instrumental voices within the string quartet texture, represent for Eliot a model for transmuting the present and for understanding his own personal history. Just as Beethoven reaches back into musical history, calling on the styles, structures and forms of the past to interpret the present, so in *Four Quartets* Eliot draws on literary tradition and on history – both personal and cultural – in order to find meaning in a conflicted 'now'.

Written in 1948 in the wake of the calamitous destruction of Germany by Nazism, Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music* analyses how two dialectically opposed musical styles, represented on the one hand by the 'progressive' Arnold Schoenberg and on the other by the 'reactionary' Igor Stravinsky, have their origin in societal change and development.[80] Yet Adorno also recognises that for Schoenberg and Stravinsky, and certainly for Beethoven, writing or composing 'late' in a creative career can lead to a contradiction between the subjective and the objective, the personal and the detached. As he writes in his essay *Beethoven's Late Style* (1937), 'in the history of art, late works are the catastrophes'.[81] Edward Said engages with Adorno's concept of 'late style', suggesting that 'for Adorno, lateness is the idea of surviving beyond what is acceptable and normal; in addition, lateness includes the idea that one cannot go beyond lateness at all, cannot transcend or lift oneself out of lateness, but can only deepen lateness.

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[78] Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1998), p. 50. The essay 'Commodity Music Analysed' was written between 1934 and 1940. Adorno is discussing what he calls 'emotional listening', where 'the function . . . of the standardized [sic] Slav melancholy in the musical consumption of the masses is incomparably greater than that of . . . Mozart or the young Beethoven' (p. 50).
[79] Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, p. 50.
[80] Adorno, *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, pp. 1–2.
[81] Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 126.

There is no transcendence or unity'.[82] In the expression of late style, the artist encounters the irreconcilable fact of death. Whereas Pound could not be reconciled to the possibility of execution after his arrest and incarceration in DTC in 1945, Eliot has achieved intellectual and emotional reconciliation by the end of his *Quartets*. Adorno's view that Beethoven does not achieve a 'harmonious synthesis' of the extremes of the personal and the detached, the subjective and the objective, but that 'as a dissociative force he tears them apart in time',[83] sheds light on Eliot's process of composition in *Four Quartets.*[84] Described as 'a profound and irreducible contradiction', Moody suggests that Eliot's self-reflective accumulation of memories, reminiscences, contemplations and cultural allusions, and his redefinition of the subjective and the objective, confronts us with 'Eliot's radical revaluations of nature and human society and history'.[85] In *East Coker*, Eliot captures the developing 'strangeness' and complexity of the world which advancing age brings:

> Home is where one starts from. As we grow older
> The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
> Of dead and living. Not the intense moment
> Isolated, with no before and after,
> But a lifetime burning in every moment
> (*EC* V 19-23)[86]

The *unheimlich* nature of the 'older' experience, where Eliot's 'world becomes stranger' as he moves further away from 'home', resonates not only with Adorno's belief in 'late works' being 'catastrophes', but also with the fragmented critique of Classical style exhibited in Beethoven's late string quartets. Earlier in *East Coker*, Eliot writes not of the 'wisdom' but rather of the 'folly' of old age:

> Do not let me hear
> Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly
> Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession
> Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.

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[82]Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 38.
[83] Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 126.
[84] For example, when reading the final poem, *Little Gidding*, we recall the very different sense of understanding and reconciliation than that which is evident in *East Coker*.
[85] Moody, '"Four Quartets": Music, Word, Meaning and Value', p. 142.
[86] Ricks and McCue, p. 191. All subsequent references to *Four Quartets* are from this edition, pp. 176-209.

(*EC* II 43-46)

Emphasised by the stuttering repetition of alliterative 'f' sounds ('folly', fear', frenzy'), Eliot confesses his own apprehension – or even horror – of being 'possessed' by another person, or people, or even by God. In his disastrous marriage to Vivienne, as much as in his aborted love affair with Emily Hale,[87] Eliot had learned that unsuccessful close relationships bring suffocating misery, and that maturing beyond middle age simply generates a developing 'fear of fear'.

Beethoven also struggled to reconcile his devotion to his art with finding love. He wrote in a letter dated 8 May 1816, 'I have found *only one* whom no doubt I shall *never possess*',[88] and even while he was working on the Galitzin quartet commission in July 1825 he expressed his despair, 'O God, *without a wife*, and what an existence'.[89] The inscriptions which Beethoven adds in 1825 to the third movement of his A minor String Quartet, having recovered from a bout of the serious illness from which he was to die two years later,[90] suggest that it is through composition and music that he finds spiritual comfort. At the opening of the *Molto adagio*, he writes: 'Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart' [Holy song of thanksgiving of a convalescent to the Deity, in the Lydian mode], calling attention to the spiritual, even

[87] Lyndall Gordon, *The Imperfect Life of T.S. Eliot* (London: Virago, 2012), pp. 228–77. Chapter 7 discusses Eliot's relationship with Emily Hale in detail. Eliot's letters to Emily Hale, which had remained hidden in Princeton University's archives for fifty years after Hale's death in 1969 (according to the wishes of both Eliot and Hale) were released in January this year: see https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jan/02/ts-eliot-hidden-love-letters-reveal-intense-heartbreaking-affair-emily-hale

[88] Maynard Solomon, 'New Light on Beethoven's Letter to an Unknown Woman', *The Musical Quarterly*, 58.4 (1972), 572–87 (p. 582). Solomon explores various theories regarding the identity of the woman, called 'Immortal Beloved' in an un-sent letter written by Beethoven on 6 or 7July 1812. The emphasis here is Beethoven's.

[89] Sylvia Bowden, 'Beethoven's "Distant Beloved": The "Only One"', *The Musical Times*, 151.1913 (2010), 23–42 (p. 28). Bowden finds motivic connections between songs from Beethoven's 1816 Lieder cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* (Opus 98) and the String Quartet in B flat (Opus 130) completed in November 1826.

[90] Barry Cooper, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 318 and 349. Beethoven died on 26 March 1827, aged fifty-six, from post-hepatitic cirrhosis of the liver.

religious nature of the music composed in the 'ancient' Lydian mode,[91] but also signifying the composition as a spiritual hymn of thanks for his recuperation. The second inscription, 'Neue Kraft fühlend' [Feeling new strength] comes at the beginning of the *Andante* section, a complete contrast in both metre, tempo and style, and probably indicative of his renewed vigour and optimism. Owning gramophone recordings of the A minor Quartet,[92] referred to in his letter to Spender, would have enabled Eliot to listen repeatedly – even 'inexhaustibly'[93] – to the unfolding themes and motifs which characterise the music of this central third movement. His reading of Sullivan's book on Beethoven would additionally have deepened Eliot's comprehension of Beethoven's artistic journey towards his late compositions and especially the last quartets, described by Sullivan as music which 'comes from the profoundest depths of the human soul that any artist has ever sounded'.[94] Knowing that Beethoven's A minor Quartet was composed at a time of spiritual and physical crisis for the composer, and for which music provided transcendence and resolution – affording both 'thanksgiving' and 'new strength' – would have been a lifeline towards the 'reconciliation and relief after immense suffering' of which Eliot writes in his letter to Spender.

Eliot elucidates in the final section of *East Coker* the dilemma facing the ageing artist:

> Old men ought to be explorers
> Here or there does not matter
> We must be still and still moving
> Into another intensity
>
> (*EC* V 31-34)

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[91] The Lydian mode was the fifth of the eight Gregorian, or church, modes in which plainsong was sung in the Middle Ages. It roughly corresponds to the natural diatonic scale from F-F, with the B natural preserving the 'raised' fourth, resulting in the 'forbidden' augmented fourth interval between the first and fourth degrees.

[92] The Léner Quartet from Budapest recorded Beethoven's A minor Quartet in 1924, as part of a set which included the Op. 131 and the Op. 74 quartets (the same set of recordings which is mentioned in Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point*). Between 1926 and 1936 the Léner Quartet re-recorded the complete Beethoven quartet cycle using microphones, instead of the older acoustic process, as part of the centenary celebrations, with the Op.132 quartet being recorded and re-issued in 1935. (See https://thebeethovenproject.com/exploring-the-beethoven-quartets-on-disc-many-paths-to-nirvana/, accessed 29 May 2020.) .

[93] See footnote 21 above.

[94] Sullivan, p. 147.

For Eliot, as for Beethoven, being 'still' yet 'still moving', resolving the dialectical tensions between the forms and styles of the past and present, necessitates being 'explorers', so that a fresh significance can be conferred on the 'intensity' of the future. Certainly, Sullivan asserts that 'Beethoven the explorer' is revealed in his last quartets.[95] Perhaps in *Little Gidding* we can find evidence of how poetry brought to Eliot some sense of relief for the suffering he endured through this 'exploration':

> With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
>
> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.
> (*LG* V 27-28)

This recollection of words from *East Coker* shows how recurrent ideas and motifs are, for Eliot, significant structural elements in the overall organisation of *Four Quartets.* The theme of this emotional, subjective 'exploration', bringing a deeper understanding of his artistic and human relationships (as well as of the cultural and historical context in which he is working), and which is first evident in *East Coker*, is brought full circle in the final part of the last of the *Quartets*. Moreover, it suggests that finding this sense of renewal in poetic language, and in the consolation in his faith, was of fundamental significance for Eliot. The parallels which can be drawn between Beethoven and Eliot, each searching for emotional, expressive, and cultural depth and context in their work through the use of recurrent and unifying cyclic motifs, form the focus of the next section of this chapter.

[95] Sullivan, p. 153.

*III Motif and repetition in Eliot and Beethoven*

From the start of his career as a poet and critic, Eliot sees the need for renewal and for 'a refreshment of poetic diction similar to that brought about by Wordsworth'.[96] The importance to Eliot of the revitalisation of poetic forms and language is demonstrated from his work on the earliest of the *Quartets*, where Eliot writes in the final section of *Burnt Norton*:

> Words, after speech, reach into
> The silence. Only by the form, the pattern
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.
> (*BN* V 3-7)

In suggesting that 'words . . . reach into / The silence', he shows that language, like music, can make a 'pattern' which confers form on the 'stillness', and it is through the continual re-working and re-transmission of such patterns and forms that language and music are renewed.[97] In 1917, in answer to Walter Pater's famous assertion that 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music',[98] Eliot wrote 'Yes! but not by being less themselves'.[99] Music's 'striving towards an unattainable timelessness . . . yearning for the stillness of painting or sculpture',[100] finds a parallel, for Eliot, in poetry's sense of transcending time through a reinterpretation of tradition. In *Little Gidding* he even paraphrases Mallarmé's notable line 'Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu':[101]

> Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
> To purify the dialect of the tribe
> (*LG* II 74-75)

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[96] Genesius Jones, *Approach to the Purpose: A Study of the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 44.
[97] See also Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry:* 'Eliot tries to recreate the effect of ritual's power to gather time through musical effects' (p. 79)
[98] Walter H. Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1888), p. 140 <http://archive.org/details/renaissancestud01pategoog> [accessed 9 May 2020].
[99] Ricks and McCue, p. 921. Quoted from *The Borderline of Prose*, printed in the *New Statesman*, 19 May 1917.
[100] Ricks and McCue, p. 922. Quoted from Eliot's introduction to Paul Valéry's *The Art of Poetry* (1958), translated into English by Denise Folliot.
[101] Ricks and McCue, p. 1021. The reference is also mentioned in Matthiessen, p. 192.

Interpreting Eliot's use of 'to purify' here as 'to refine', the correspondence to Beethoven's ideal of introducing a 'poetic element . . . into the old traditional forms'[102] – into the 'dialect of the tribe' – become clear.[103]

For both Eliot and Beethoven, remoulding the 'old' forms represents an essential reworking of history, and, like Eliot, Beethoven also re-works the structures and formal procedures of tradition in the A minor Quartet to find a new musical language. The only works which Beethoven completed in the last three years of his life were string quartets,[104] although he had plans for a Tenth Symphony, a Requiem Mass and even for an opera based on Goethe's *Faust*.[105] It was not until 7 May 1825, when he had sufficiently improved to travel to Baden to complete his convalescence, that Beethoven resumed work on the Galitzin commission.[106] The private première of the A minor Quartet took place on Friday, 9 September. The English conductor Sir George Smart, who happened to be in Vienna at the time, wrote of the first performance:

> This quartette [sic] is three-quarters of an hour long. . . It is most chromatic and there is a slow movement entitled 'Praise for the recovery of an invalid'.[107]

The sheer length of the work, and its intense chromaticism, impresses Smart as sufficiently noteworthy to be recorded in his diary, and he is also intrigued by the heartfelt dedication added to the third movement. In 1824, the year before he wrote the A minor

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[102] Angus Watson, *Beethoven's Chamber Music in Context* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), p. 222.

[103] Any interpretation of 'to purify' as meaning 'to cleanse' or 'to decontaminate', which might be freighted with abhorrent undertones of racial or ethnic purging, seems to be addressed in Eliot's Turnbull Lecture III (Johns Hopkins University, 1933) where he says, 'In looking at the history of poetry . . . the important poets will be those who have taught the people speech, and the people had in every generation to be taught to speak . . . this purification of language is not so much a progress, as it is a perpetual return to the real' (see Ricks and McCue, p. 1022).

[104] Paul Griffiths, *The String Quartet* (Bath: Thames & Hudson, 1983), p. 111.

[105] Oscar Thompson, 'If Beethoven Had Written "Faust"', *The Musical Quarterly*, 10.1 (1924), 13–20 (p. 15).

[106] Watson, p. 234. Watson quotes from Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*, p. 945. Shortly after starting work on the A minor String Quartet, Beethoven had once again become seriously ill. Treating him, Dr Anton Braunhofer, one of Vienna's leading physicians, wrote in Beethoven's conversation book for 18 April 1825, 'No wine, no coffee, no spices of any kind . . . then I will guarantee you a full recovery'.

[107] Robert Adelson, 'Beethoven's String Quartet in E Flat Op. 127: A Study of the First Performances', *Music & Letters*, 79.2 (1998), 219–43 (p. 237). Quoted from H. Bertram Cox and C.L.E. Cox, *Leaves from the Journal of Sir George Smart* (London: Longmans, 1907) p. 109.

String Quartet, Beethoven had envisaged a compositional process where a basic idea worked itself out 'in breadth, length, height and depth' until it 'formed a picture of the whole'.[108] His growing fascination with counterpoint and variation, which might be seen as a logical extension of a lifelong compositional obsession with what Chua calls 'motivic manipulation', also represents Beethoven's concern to bring unity to entire compositions, across all sections and movements.[109] Certainly the A minor Quartet is generated by a motif, a brief 'theme' of four notes which is described by Deryck Cooke as one of Beethoven's 'meta-motifs', since it appears in various forms in both the B flat Quartet and the C# Quartet.[110] The motif is re-worked and transformed to bring unity and cohesion across all five movements of the A minor Quartet, much as Eliot uses recurrent ideas, words and themes to bring unity to his *Four Quartets.* Explaining his idea of composition to Karl Holz, the second violinist in the first performance of the A minor Quartet, Beethoven declares the importance of breathing new life into old forms:

> To make a fugue requires no particular skill . . . But the [imagination] wishes to assert its privileges, and today a new and really poetic element must be introduced into the old traditional forms.[111]

Sir George Smart's observation about the length of the performance he heard draws our attention to the almost symphonic form in which the A minor Quartet is cast. Like each of Eliot's individual poems in *Four Quartets*, and like *The Waste Land* too, Beethoven's Op. 132 is written in five related movements:

I *Assai sostenuto – Allegro*
II *Allegro ma non tanto*
III *Molto adagio – Andante – Molto Adagio – Andante – Molto Adagio*
IV *Alla marcia, assai vivace – Più allegro – Presto –*
V *Allegro appassionato – Presto*[112]

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[108] Chua, p. 74.
[109] This motivic unity might be seen as process in which Beethoven was engaged from as early as the Third 'Eroica' Symphony (1804), and is certainly an unpinning characteristic of the structure of many late period works.
[110] Musical examples and a more extensive technical discussion of the parallels between the music of Beethoven A minor Quartet and Eliot's poems are given in Appendix VI.
[111] Watson, p. 222.
[112] I Always sustained – Fast; II Fast, but not too much so; III Very slow – At a walking pace [repeated]; IV Like a march, always fast and lively – Even faster – Very fast – [leading into] V Fast and passionate – Very fast. Watson (p. 237) sees the fifth movement starting with the final Presto; the Eulenberg miniature score of the quartet, edited by Wilhelm Altmann, designates the fifth movement as beginning from the Allegro appassionato.

Recognisable motifs link the movements together, but there are also more subtle ideas which Beethoven brings into the music, connecting across the entire composition, such as the displacement of accent, abrupt changes of tempo, style and form, and an overarching sense of the composition working as an integrated structure. In his essay 'The Music of Poetry', Eliot sees as analogous the use of recurrent themes in poetry and music:

> There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to different movements of a symphony or quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter'.[113]

In the same way that the opening theme of the A minor Quartet is used as an idea to generate material throughout the entirety of the work, so Eliot's opening lines of *Four Quartets* become a *leitmotif* which recurs in all four poems, bringing resolution to his reflections on time and history, to his personal memories, and to the recollections of his own life and ancestry, linked to places he has visited, explored and remembered. *Burnt Norton* begins:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.
>
> (*BN* I 1-5)

Repeating and modifying these same themes to conclude section one of the poem, Eliot transforms the idea of 'unredeemable' time into an outcome where 'one end', which is 'always present', reveals the artistic and spiritual completion which will eventually be reached:

> Time past and time future
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.
>
> (*BN* I 44-46)

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[113] *Kermode, p. 114.*

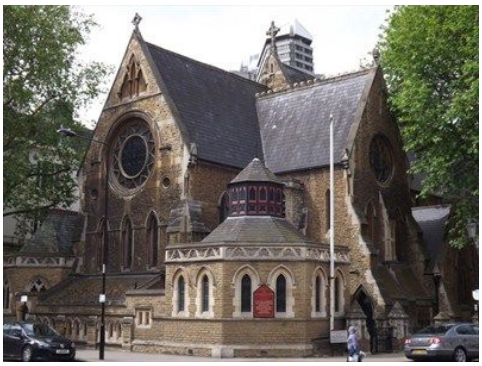
The theme of historical and personal 'time' is further developed in the second part of *Burnt Norton*:

> But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
> The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
> The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
> Be remembered; involved with past and future.
> (*BN* II 39-42)

Eliot is aware – 'conscious' – of 'the moment in the rose-garden', perhaps with Emily Hale,[114] but sees that consciousness as being distinct from chronological time. Remembrance from moment to moment acts outside the temporal laws of physics, so that the voices, sounds and images of the past can exist simultaneously. Eliot recalls being caught 'in the arbour where the rain beat', or in a typically English 'draughty church at smokefall'. Both memories rely heavily on the recollection of sound for their impact: the leaves which provide shelter in the arbour (maybe in the garden at Burnt Norton) resonate to the drumming of the rain; the wind echoes or rattles round the church – perhaps Eliot's own St Stephen's[115] – at 'smokefall', an image which suggests both the domestic chimney-smoke of a thousand London fireplaces *and* the country hearths of the Cotswolds.[116]

*6.1 Burnt Norton house and garden in Chipping Camden (Nancy Duvall Hargrove)*

[114] Gordon, pp. 260–65.
[115] St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, South Kensington, designed by maverick Victorian architect Joseph Peacock, was built in 1866-1867. Eliot worshipped here from the time of his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism, serving as Churchwarden for twenty-five years.
[116] Ricks and McCue, p. 917. Helen Gardner suggests (with Eliot's sanction) that 'smokefall' is 'the moment when the wind drops and smoke that had ascended descends'.



*6.2 St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, South Kensington, London (Church of England)*

These ideas connect Eliot not only to his own past, but to the deeper history of the land of his forebears and to his family line. In *East* Coker, he also remembers his family's origins:

> In succession
> Houses rise and fall, crumble and are extended,
> Are removed, destroyed, restored
> (*EC* I 1-3)

For Eliot, the 'house' is metonymic of his ancestry and of the whole village community, the motif of 'time past and time future' transformed into something more vivid, recalling not just the broad span of the centuries, but distinct moments beyond mere human temporality. Personal history, observes Eliot, is deeply interwoven with the history of the community, and of the country. Individual 'moments' contribute to the pattern of the whole – the wind loosening a window-pane, a field-mouse which 'trots' (*EC* I 12), indicating a comfortable familiarity with the house, a tapestry which displays some antique family crest. The 'tattered arras' (*EC* I 13) also evokes the threadbare bonds of social cohesion and unity made vulnerable in the aftermath of the First World War and by the economic Depression of the 1930s. Resonant with the biblical metre of Ecclesiastes,[117] Eliot connects not only with the intimate and the familial, but also with the communal, and also makes a more profound metrical connection with the spiritual history of faith.

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[117] Ricks and McCue, p. 930. Pound also echoes verses from Ecclesiastes, in his Canto LXXXI (see Chapter 3, note 71).

*The Dry Salvages* was written in late 1940, when enemy bombing of London was at its height. At the mercy of a tempestuous sea, Eliot considers humanity's place in time, influenced by this embattled perspective:

> Unhonoured, unpropitiated
> By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and waiting.
> (*DS* I 9-10)

Echoing themes of loss, hope, superstition, and a yearning for home reminiscent of the *Odyssey,* Eliot thereby connects the poem across time to the deep traditions of European poetry. He considers the contradictions of seeing 'time' as unyielding, incalculable and beyond human comprehension:

> Lying awake, calculating the future,
> Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
> And piece together the past and the future,
> Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
> The future futureless, before the morning watch
> When time stops and time is never ending;
> (*DS* I 40-45)

The idea that humanity might 'unweave, unwind, unravel . . . past and future' once again evokes the *Odyssey*, where Penelope unpicks – or 'unweaves' – the burial shroud she is making in order to delay the inevitable.[118] Envisaging humanity adrift like Odysseus and his crew, and at the mercy of history, its 'future futureless', humanity's hope 'when time stops and time is never ending' lies in a belief in the continuity and tradition of history:

> That the past experience revived in the meaning
> Is not the experience of one life only
> But of many generations
> (*DS* II 49-51)

In *Little Gidding*, Eliot brings his contemplation of time and the timeless back to the reality of the present:

> Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
> Is England and nowhere. Never and always.
> (*LG* I 52-53)

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[118] Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. by E.V. Rieu and D.C.H. Rieu (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 17–18. Book 2, lines 89-110.

The motif is then transformed at the beginning of the last section:

> What we call the beginning is often the end
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.
> (*LG* V 1-2)

Eliot inverts the transformed chiasmic motif of 'past and future', with 'beginning' and 'end' changing places between the two lines to emphasise the cyclic nature of time and of history, as well as of *Four Quartets* itself. The paradox which seems to be offered in 'the intersection of the timeless moment' and in 'never and always' in the first section of *Little Gidding* suggests that Eliot's unresolved struggle to reconcile time, history and eternity might reach some resolution in the fifth and final section of the last of the *Quartets*, where he accepts the apparent contradiction between history and time:

> A people without history
> Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
> Of timeless moments.
> (*LG* V 20-22)

Eliot's assertion of music's 'striving towards an unattainable timelessness'[119] suggests that he recognises in musical structures – and by extension in poetic ones too – an all-too-human desire to achieve some element of transcendent understanding through creativity. For Eliot, the act of denying history is a futile one, for 'a people without history / Is not redeemed from time'. It is only through the 'striving towards . . .' and the 'yearning for . . .' in music and in poetry that an understanding of the 'pattern of timeless moments', which make up our individual and collective histories, can be understood.

Eliot develops his opening *leitmotif* of 'time' throughout all the poems of *Four Quartets*. The motif of 'Time present and time past' is transmuted into a transcendent belief in 'That which was the beginning', resulting in 'here, now, always', in a process of almost musical thematic transformation. Parallels with Beethoven's ways of working through the implications of the opening motif in his A minor Quartet, equally developing an idea

[119] See page 201, footnote 100.

throughout all five movements towards its resolution at the close of the last movement, show how Eliot might have been directly influenced by the music of the Quartet. The opening four-note 'meta-motif' played in the opening *Assai sostenuto* passage, which begins the first movement (Ex. 1),[120] is used throughout the Quartet to generate related melodic and harmonic material, reaching a sense of cyclic resolution at the end of the final movement when the whole quartet plays a rising chromatic scale to achieve its final perfect cadence (Ex. 2).[121] This process of motivic transformation begins in the first movement *Allegro*, where a new theme, whose chromatic inflection recalls the motif which first generates the opening section, is developed as the first movement unfolds (Ex. 3). The subsequent four movements of the Quartet are also generated from this initial 'meta-motif' (Ex. 4-6), such that the underlying cohesion which Beethoven confers on the entire composition by means of this thematic interconnectedness would have been apparent to Eliot as he listened to his recordings. Keen to achieve that same sense of overall unity in his own *Four Quartets*, Eliot would have recognised how he could adapt a similar pattern, using the theme of 'time' to unify his *Quartets*, to interconnect and bring to resolution his reflections on time and history. Beethoven similarly uses an initial motif to unify all five movements of his A minor String Quartet, modifying its primary elements to generate a range of themes and styles which propel the disintegrative nature of his language.

Another way in which the A minor Quartet is linked to *Four Quartets* is in the juxtaposition of metrical stresses, since both Beethoven and Eliot displace and modify rhythmic pulse and accent to produce contrasting and unexpected effects. The opening theme of the second movement of the A minor Quartet demonstrates how repetition can destabilise

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[120] Illustrative musical examples and more detailed technical musical analyses are given in Appendix VI, to which references are given in the chapter.

[121] *Explorations in Schenkerian Analysis*, ed. by David Beach and Su Yin Susann Mak (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), pp. 89–90. Schenker's penetrative analysis of sonata form as a dialectical opposition between the dominant and tonic chords and keys suggests that sonata form works can be reduced to a dominant-tonic (V-I) perfect cadence.

rhythmic momentum, since the notes which are repeated across the bar line, as well as the inflected chromatic rising semitones, suggest a misplaced accent (Ex. 7). The most obvious displacement of the melodic accent occurs in the *Alla marcia, assai vivace* opening of the fourth movement of Beethoven's Quartet. The rhythmic stresses suggest that the music is in triple time, with a leading up-beat into the theme, but two silent beats interrupt the flow of the rhythmic/melodic pattern after the first phrase, disrupting the metrical accent and finally establishing the 4/4 time of the movement (Ex. 8). In *Four Quartets*, Eliot parallels this same sense of rhythmic dislocation by changing from more formalised lyrical metre into free verse, which Matthiessen describes as Eliot carrying his 'experiment with the prosaic virtually over the border into prose'.[122] The second section of *East Coker* begins in tetrameter:

> What is the late November doing
> With the disturbance of the Spring
>
> (*EC* II 1-2)

This lyric passage of seventeen lines ends with a vision of the obliteration of the world and the universe before Eliot dislocates the rhythmic metre with a new section in free verse – or, perhaps, in Matthiessen's 'prose':

> That was a way of putting it – not very satisfactory:
> A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,
> Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle
> With words and meanings.
>
> (*EC* II 18-21)

The first line of the new section (18), seems initially to maintain the rhythmic accent of the tetrameter (albeit that two four-feet lines are typographically merged into one), but the next line (19) completely subverts the rhythm with 'A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion'. In dislocating the lyric tetrameter, Eliot heightens the meaning of the text, illustrating his 'intolerable wrestle / With words and meanings'. A comparable contrast in accent and metre is found in the second section of *Burnt Norton*, where the

[122] Matthiessen, p. 180.

regular rhyme scheme and tetrameter of the first fifteen lines is changed abruptly into a much freer pattern:

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards: at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement.
> (*BN* II 16-18)

In spite of the change of metre, the contrasting parts of the poem remain fused by the motif of the stars and the heavens. The 'pattern as before' tracked by 'the boarhound and the boar' not only echoes Eliot's own words taken from *Choruses from 'The Rock'*,[123] but suggests images from Greek mythology such as Actaeon hunted by his own hounds, the ravaging Calydonian Boar, or the Erymanthian Boar hunted by Hercules, perhaps in turn connected to the Classical constellations implicit in Eliot's 'drift of stars'.[124]

Both Eliot and Beethoven also experiment with metre by suspending any strong sense of accent or regular rhythm. In *Four Quartets* Eliot achieves this in his sections in free verse, for example in the opening section of *Burnt Norton*:

> Other echoes
> Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
> Quick said the bird, find them, find them,
> Round the corner. Through the first gate,
> Into our first world, shall we follow
> The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.
> (*BN* I 17-22)

The typography affects the pace of the lines, with the slower, questioning 'Shall we follow?' immediately succeeded by the four short syllables in 'Quick said the bird', and the repetition of 'find them, find them' which mimics a bird's call in nature. The repetition of words can also suspend the rhythmic timing of the verse: we are forced to hesitate

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[123] Ricks and McCue, p. 916. The reference is to the line 'The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit'.

[124] Artemis sent a huge boar to ravage the countryside outside Calydon to punish King Oineus (see Homer trans. Martin Hammond, *The Iliad* (London: Penguin Books, 1987) p. 146); Hercules hunts and kills the Erymanthian Boar as his Fourth Labour (see Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Vol. II (London: Penguin Books, 1990) No. 126). The Constellation of Hercules in the northern sky is one of the forty-eight constellations listed by Ptolemy.

as we read the repeated word, coding a different meaning on each iteration, such as in the final line of Part II of *Burnt Norton*:

> Only through time time is conquered.
> (*BN* II 43)

This stand-alone line, which concludes the second section of *Burnt Norton*, seems not only to refer to the timelessness of remembered moments 'involved with past and future' (*BN*, II, 42) which immediately precede it, but to be indicative of 'time' both as process and idea, 'time' as stillness and 'time' as decay. The sense that 'time' contains within itself an innate 'timelessness' is also embedded within the repetition of the word 'time', so that it becomes self-conquering. In the central section of *The Dry Salvages*, Eliot repeats words to emphasise this sense of timelessness:

> I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant –
> Among other things – or one way of putting the same thing:
> That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray
> Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,
> Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened.
> And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.
> (*DS* III 1-6)

As well as piling up a confusion of contradictory prepositions in the final line here – 'up', 'down', 'forward', 'back' – the repetition of 'regret' in the fourth line implies a hunger for a future that can never be, a future implicit in the 'Royal Rose' or 'lavender spray' which were, or are, or which might be – impossibly – preserved between the ageing pages of a book 'that has never been opened', like a future which has never been realised. The capitalisation of 'Royal Rose' might indicate a connection to Charles I,[125] the 'lavender spray' also linked to royalty, memory, and serenity, on account of its purple colour. This links the central section of Eliot's 'American' *Quartet*,[126] mostly concerned with exploring

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[125] Ricks and McCue, p. 977. Charles I, executed on 30 January 1649, was regarded as a martyr by high Church of England believers (and, later, Anglo-Catholics) following the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, with some parish churches being dedicated to his memory. The feast day of King Charles the Martyr was removed from the official observances of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England in 1859 (see Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2003) p.3).

[126] Genevieve Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 140–41. Abravanel writes that close examination of *The Dry Salvages* reveals that '*Four Quartets* produces its particular little Englandism *through* its negation of a broader transatlantic framework'. She asserts that

his American history and ancestry and his memories of sailing off Cape Ann,[127] to an overwhelmingly English history, as well as to a search for 'the right end of action'.[128] Eliot recognised in his own work 'a kind of poetic fusion of Eastern and Western currents of feeling',[129] captured throughout this third section of *The Dry Salvages* in references to the Hindu God Krishna.[130] This perhaps suggests that Eliot is additionally exploring the Hindu concept of liberation, release, or 'mukti',[131] as a way of discovering – or establishing – that transcendent sense of time and timelessness in his writing. The pivotal third movement of Beethoven's A minor String Quartet achieves a similar sense of timelessness in the loss of strong accentual pulse in the music of the *Molto adagio* sections, particularly evident in the last of these three very slow contrapuntal sections which intersperse the two contrasting *Andante* sections, and which comprise the whole movement (Ex. 9). All three slow sections undermine any sense of rhythmic pulse, either through their timeless procession of crochet beats, or in the suspension of notes across the expected strong beat of the bar, which in turn emphasises the interweaving lines of the four stringed instruments. When the music does return to a more chordal, homophonic style, this strongly implies a vocal texture reminiscent of Renaissance or Baroque style, once again suggesting Beethoven's disintegration of Classical forms.[132]

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'Eliot resolves the dilemma between modern Britain and the United States by refusing them both, returning instead to a moment in colonial history when America was a part of Great Britain'. Alternatively, by using Beethoven as a musical model for *Four Quartets*, Eliot transcends the purely national nature of his 'dilemma' by appealing to a wider, European and international cultural framework.

[127] Ricks and McCue, p. 959.

[128] Ricks and McCue, p. 976.

[129] Ricks and McCue, pp. 976–77. Quoted from a note from Eliot to I.A. Richards, 9 August 1930.

[130] Ricks and McCue, p. 976. This section of *The Dry Salvages* is based on the famous dialogue between the God Krishna and the Pandava prince Arjuna from the Hindu text, the Bhagavad-Gita, a poem which Eliot called 'the next greatest philosophical poem to the *Divine Comedy* in my experience (see *Dante* (1929), p. 11).

[131] W. J. Johnson, *A Dictionary of Hinduism*, *A Dictionary of Hinduism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198610250.001.0001/acref-9780198610250> [accessed 11 May 2020].

[132] Michiko Theurer, 'Playing with Time: The Heiliger Dankgesang and the Evolution of Narrative Liberation in Op. 132', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 32.2–3 (2013), 248–65 (p. 252).

## *IV Form, Structure and Tradition*

Beethoven lived during the 'profound cultural transformation' of the French Revolution and its consequences,[133] and works such as the 'Eroica' Symphony No.3 (its dedication to Napoleon torn out by a furious Beethoven)[134] attest to the influence of such turbulent times on his music.[135] The one million French citizens who had died in the cause of the Revolution by 1802 were joined by a further million under Napoleon, and by 'untold more abroad' as war was exported across Europe.[136] But despite experiencing the consequences of war at first hand,[137] Beethoven was also inspired by the French revolutionary ideals of 'liberté', 'égalité' and 'fraternité', captured in the Ninth Symphony of 1824, as much as in his only opera, *Fidelio*, completed in 1805. Eliot also experienced the effects of war at first hand, particularly during the Second World War when he served as an air-raid warden on the roof of the Faber building in Russell Square. He later recalled:

> During the Blitz the accumulated debris was suspended in the London air for hours after a bombing. Then it would slowly descend and cover one's sleeves and coat with a fine white ash. I often experienced this effect during the long night hours on the roof.[138]

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[133] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 345.

[134] Nathan Waddell discusses the mythology surrounding the dedication of the Third Symphony in *Moonlighting*, p. 5. See also Stanley, p. 10.

[135] John Clubbe, 'The Creative Rivalry of Beethoven with Napoleon', *European Romantic Review*, 17.5 (2006), 543–58 (pp. 547–49). Clubbe suggests that Beethoven's deep admiration for Napoleon, notwithstanding the infamous 'undedication' of the 'Eroica' Symphony, substantially influenced his compositions. However, David Jordan proposes an alternative perspective on Beethoven's view of Napoleon, suggesting that Beethoven 'remained a resolute Napoleon-hater' (see David P. Jordan, *Napoleon and the Revolution* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p. 133).

[136] Doyle, p. 345.

[137] Having been persuaded to remain in Vienna by the promise of a generous income, guaranteed by three aristocratic patrons, Beethoven consequently found himself trapped in the city when it was besieged by Napoleon's Grande Armée in the late Spring of 1809. On the evening of 11 May, as French artillery pounded Vienna for four hours, he stuffed cotton into his ears against the din of exploding shells, in order to preserve what little of his hearing remained (see Jordan, *Napoleon and the Revolution*, p. 133). Cannon balls rained down on the city and explosions damaged the Kärthnerthor-Theater as well as the Wasserkunst Bastei near Beethoven's own lodgings (Jordan, p. 133).

[138] Ricks and McCue, p. 1002. There is apparently no record of Eliot's name in Faber's fire-watching register before 12 November 1942, by which time *Little Gidding* was already written, but he had undertaken such duties in Kensington, having 'enlisted' as an Air Warden in July 1940.

This personal familiarity with war, encountered not on the battlefield but as a civilian, is expressed most vividly in *Little Gidding*, where Eliot draws on what is clearly a deeply etched memory of a bombed and blazing London:

> Dust in the air suspended
> Marks the place where a story ended.
> Dust inbreathed was a house –
> The wall, the wainscot and the mouse.
> The death of hope and despair,
> This is the death of air.
> (*LG* II 3-8)

This is an evocative recollection of destruction and of the consequences for ordinary Londoners of the Blitz, where the bombing and intense heat not only consumed all the oxygen, leaving people breathless – the 'death of air' which Eliot so vividly captures – but which also resulted in a fine ash residue which hovered over the shattered ruins of the city. Later in the same poem, he writes a passage intentionally constructed 'to be the nearest equivalent to a canto in the *Inferno* or the *Purgatorio*, in style as well as content'.[139] Eliot's wish both to imitate Dante and to offer a direct comparison is clearly explained:

> The intention . . . was to present to the mind of the reader a parallel, by means of contrast, between the Inferno and the Purgatorio [no italics], which Dante visited, and a hallucinated scene after an air-raid . . . I borrowed and adapted freely only a few phrases – because I was *imitating*.[140]

Eliot attempts to find an 'approximation' to Dante's Italian *terza rima* in English,[141] using language which, he confirms, 'has to be very direct'.[142] Lennard observes that in these Dante-inspired lines from *Little Gidding*, Eliot replaces rhyme 'with a pattern of stressed and unstressed hyperbeats',[143] as illustrated in this passage:

> In the uncertain hour before the morning
> Near the end of interminable night
> At the recurrent end of the unending

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[139] Ricks and McCue, p. 1005. Quoted from *What Dante Means to Me* (in *Italian News*, July 1950, and *To Criticize* [sic] *the Critic*, July 1961).
[140] Ricks and McCue, p. 1005.
[141] John Lennard, *The Poetry Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 41–42. Lennard explains that Dante's linked tercets rhyming *aba bcb cdc* and so on are possible on account of the syllabic nature of Italian metre.
[142] Ricks and McCue, p. 1005.
[143] Lennard, p. 42.

After the dark dove with flickering tongue
Had passed below the horizon of his homing
While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
Over the asphalt where no other sound was
Between three districts where the smoke arose
I met one walking, loitering and hurried
As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.
(*LG* II 25-35)

John Hayward notes that 'the setting of this Dantesque section is a street in the Kensington district of London just before dawn and after a bombing attack. The narrator is on duty as an air-raid warden'.[144] The 'dark dove with flickering tongue' perhaps recollects the sight of aircraft dropping flares onto a ruined London as much as it reflects Christian imagery of the Pentecostal dove, connected in turn to an Emmaus road figure of 'one walking, loitering, hurried'. Eliot perhaps identifies himself as Dante, 'Midway along the journey of our life . . . in a dark wood . . . wandered off from the straight path'.[145] Writing *Little Gidding* in 1942,[146] when it seemed that the tide of the war was turning,[147] suggests that Eliot was not seeing the destruction of London as an *Inferno*-like act of repentance or punishment; rather, like the tongues of flame which descended at the first Pentecost, the fires of spiritual renewal might inspire a deeper understanding between nations.[148]

Eliot also alludes in this section to Dante's meeting with his former teacher, Brunetto Latini – 'some dead master' – and makes reference to Dante's imagined meetings with

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[144] Ricks and McCue, p. 1004. Quoted from John Hayward, Notes to *The Waste Land* and to *Four Quartets* for Pierre Layris's translations, 1950 (English, ts, King's College, Cambridge).
[145] Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy I: The Inferno*, trans. by Mark Musa (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 67.
[146] Ricks and McCue, p. 994. Eliot wrote to Frank Morley, his American publisher on 10 September 1942, 'I think that I may have finished *Little Gidding*'.
[147] P.M.H. Bell, *Twelve Turning Points of the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 103–6. The defeat of Nazi forces at the Battle of Stalingrad is recognised as a significant turning point in the Second World War since 'Hitler had staked everything . . . on Stalingrad and had lost' (p.106).
[148] Act 2: 1-11. Eliot would have known the passage from Acts where the Pentecostal 'tongues of fire' allowed the disciples to be understood by those who spoke in a range of languages.

the poets Guido Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel.[149] In 'the eyes of the a familiar compound ghost', Eliot may well not only be seeing influential characters from *The Divine Comedy*, but also those poets and contemporaries who have been influential on his own work, such as Pound, Yeats, Baudelaire and Laforgue,[150] which perhaps also reflects Beethoven's deliberate imitation of earlier musical styles in the A minor String Quartet. This conjunction between two worlds, whether between Baroque counterpoint and Beethoven's late Classicism, or between Dante's Renaissance Italy and Eliot's twentieth-century England, embodies Eliot's preoccupation with time – what he calls 'this intersection time / Of meeting nowhere' – both human and eternal. He elaborates this awareness later in the same section of the poem:

> For last year's words belong to last year's language
> And next year's words await another voice.
> [. . .]
> So I find words I never thought to speak
> In streets I never thought I should revisit
> (*LG* II 65-66 and 70-71)

It is as though he perceives the possibility that any differences between these 'two worlds become much like each other' might be subsumed in a transcendent cycle of time and timelessness. Freighted with multiple meanings, and linked by their semiotic interconnectedness, their inherited forms, historical etymologies and interpretations, words and language have a significance in representing such differences between past, present and future. Yet 'the Spirit unappeased and peregrine',[151] represented by the words and language which endow such significance, can wander freely across time and the eternal, any differences fused in Eliot's 'refining fire'.

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[149] The Provençal poets Guido Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel are frequently referenced in the work of Ezra Pound, with Cavalcanti being a importance point of comparison for Pound in *The Pisan Cantos* (see Chapter 3).

[150] Teodolinda Baroli, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the 'Comedy'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 176. Baroli sees four poets – Guido Cavalcanti, Guido Guinizzelli, Guittone d'Arezzo and Arnaut Daniel – as being of 'primary importance as Dante's vernacular masters'.

[151] The meaning of the word 'peregrine' here not only encompasses a sense of wandering or pilgrimage, but contains within it traces of its original meaning, 'foreign', which reinforces the significance of Eliot's line.

However, the parallels between Eliot and Dante extend beyond his imitation of the *terza rima* form, since Dante, too, lived at a time of conflict and instability.[152] Exiled from Florence in 1302, he spent the remainder of his life wandering from city to city, not only finding refuge in various friendly states but also cultivating his studies of literature and philosophy, 'matters useful to man's well-being and to his art'.[153] Eliot and Pound, themselves exiles,[154] would have understood Dante's status as an outcast and a wanderer, a position which allowed him, 'Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita',[155] both objectively to observe, and to make his own journey from *Inferno* to *Paradiso* into a universal pilgrimage for the ages. In *East Coker*, there is a conscious echo of Dante:

> In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
> But all the way, in a dark wood
> (*EC* II 39-40)

which links to lines in *Little Gidding*, where Eliot shares Dante's disillusionment:

> 'First, the cold friction of expiring sense
> Without enchantment, offering no promise
> But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
> As body and soul begin to fall asunder.'
> (*LG* II 76-81)

Eliot is aware of the failure of physical and mental faculties and of the unreal and *unrealised* promise 'reserved for age', which lie in the 'bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit', but through the spiritual connection he can make to cultural tradition and cultural belonging the importance of 'time' falls away, and his work becomes a part of a cycle of cultural renewal.

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[152] The political rivalry between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, factions which respectively supported the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, dominated armed conflict in Italy throughout much of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was a particularly long, deeply entrenched and bitter struggle in Florence.
[153] Alighieri, p. 33.
[154] Gabriel Josipovici, *What Ever Happened to Modernism?* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 187. Jospovici asks 'whether we see such rootlessness as pathological or as giving those who are imbued with it a certain vantage point, allowing them to see things which might otherwise have remained hidden'.
[155] Alighieri, p. 67. Canto I, line 1: 'Midway along the journey of our life'.

Beethoven expresses an awareness of the relevance of cultural renewal in his conscious imitation of earlier dance styles and forms in the A minor Quartet. The second movement, conventionally structured from a minuet and a musette, seems at first glance to follow the usual ternary pattern. However, these two eighteenth-century dances were completely outmoded by the time Beethoven composed his A minor Quartet, associated as they were with the vanished Rococo world of the French court. The 'aristocratic' minuet was also effectively overthrown by the Revolution, and in reviving this recognisably courtly dance Beethoven was 'forcing pre-revolutionary music upon post-revolutionary ears'.[156] The composition exacts a form of 'social estrangement', disconnecting the individual from the institutional at the same time as representing the radical social changes which were taking place in Beethoven's lifetime. Beethoven also undermines the logical tonal transitions between sections, further dislocating the innate harmonic anticipations expected in a minuet movement (Ex. 10), and exposing the stark social class distinctions represented by the deliberately disrupted minuet juxtaposed against the sentimentalised and static musette (Ex.11). This apparent trivialisation of obsolete forms and styles shows Beethoven manipulating tradition as a way of making a statement about the changed political, social and cultural order, where established structures have been demolished in order to make way for new forms, ideas and practices. Beethoven's remoulding of tradition therefore expresses the tensions which now exist between institutions, and between society and the individual.

Dance is similarly used by Eliot as a means of representing a lost world. The hamlet of East Coker in Somerset was home to the Eliot's ancestors from the fifteenth century until they emigrated to Massachusetts in 1671, and therefore it strongly symbolises his connection to English history and tradition.[157] The opening lines of *East Coker* focus on

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[156] Chua, p. 108.

[157] Ricks and McCue, p. 925. Walter Graeme Eliot notes in *A Sketch of the Eliot Family* (1887) that 'the little hamlet of East Coker . . . almost under the shadows of the fine old parish church, dating back to the fifteenth century, was the home for a century or more of the Eliot family,

the ways that superficial changes to the landscape – to buildings, spaces and materials – cannot weaken the fundamental connection to natural continuity:

> Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,
> Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
> Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,
> Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.
> (*EC* I 5-8)

As though he is 'hypnotised', he imagines that time dissolves 'in a fairy-like vision',[158] and he can witness the wedding celebrations, perhaps of his ancestors, taking place in the village. As a way of further illustrating his connection to tradition, Eliot paraphrases lines from Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke of the Governour* (1531) alongside verses from Sir John Davies's poem *Orchestra* (1596).[159] Where Beethoven imitates a pre-revolutionary French style, Eliot captures in the spelling and rhythmic stresses of this section the shifting feet and heaving steps of folk dancing:

> Lifting heavy feet in heavy shoes
> Earth loam, loam feet, lifted in country mirth
> Mirth of those long since under the earth
> (*EC* I 36-38)

Eliot conjures a world where music and dancing bring harmony to the world, where the honest rustic principles of those 'lifting heavy feet in heavy shoes' preserve the rituals of tradition.[160] The underlying pentameter also implies a connection to Shakespeare, as

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previous to their departure for America and liberty'. Eliot wrote in 1940 to R.P. Menasce that 'my family lived [in East Coker] from about the middle of the fifteenth century until 1671 when they went to New England'. Eliot adds: 'It serves, accordingly . . . as a place for a meditation on beginnings and endings'. Ricks and McCue also note that Eliot was 'inconsistent' about the date of his family's emigration, which Eliot (and Helen Gardner) also date to 1669. Eliot also admits that 'some of the verses are evocative of that village but it must be admitted that they would do equally well for any number of other villages in other parts of England'.

[158] Ricks and McCue, p. 933. Quoted from Eliot writing to R.P. Menasce in 1940.

[159] Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 42. Ricks and McCue, pp. 932-933. *Orchestra* was probably written some years before it was published.

[160] Susan Jones, *Literature, Modernism, and Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 248. Jones suggests that 'Eliot's engagement with dance provided him with an important ingredient for his poetry and verse drama'. Jeremy Diaper, *T.S. Eliot and Organicism* (Clemson, South Carolina: Clemson University Press, 2018) p. 26 also sees in 'Eliot's sense of disquiet regarding the lack of spirituality in the city' that 'his agrarian standpoint was formulated'.

well as to Davies's poem, where he, like Eliot, suggests that the rhythms of nature are echoed in the rhythms of music and dance:

> And in a daunce such measure to observe,
> As all the world their motion should preserve.
> (Sir John Davies, *Orchestra*, verse 17, lines 6-7)[161]

For Eliot, the matrimonial bond 'signified' through dancing and music helps forge the bonds which unify society:

> On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
> Of the weak pipe and the little drum
> And see them dancing around the bonfire
> The association of man and woman
> In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie –
> A dignified and commodious sacrament.[162]
> (*EC* I 25-30)

Eliot was determined to retain the 'antic spelling' copied from *The Governour*, in order to sustain the 'Renaissance flavour' of the passage in order to 'put the visionary scene at some definite historical period'.[163] Since for Eliot, 'the very nature of poetry is in part music',[164] his apprehension of music as a stabilising force in human society links his writing to a more overarching cultural tradition. Where Beethoven's ironic adaptations of outmoded dances in the second movement of the A minor Quartet indicate his intention to remould tradition, Eliot seems instead to be engaging in a process of renewal through assimilation.[165]

Beethoven approaches musical tradition in the central, third movement in a completely different way, exploring a more personal engagement with an earlier musical style and

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[161] Sir John Davies, 'Orchestra: Or, A Poeme of Dauncing', *Huntington Library's Copy of the 1596 Edition, STC Number 6360*, 2001, p. n.p. <http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/davies1.html> [accessed 8 April 2020].
[162] The passage from Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Governour* reads: 'In euery daunse, of a most auncient custome, there daunseth together a man and woman, holding eche other by the hande or the arme, which betokeneth concorde. (See Ricks and McCue, p. 933.)
[163] Ricks and McCue, p. 933. Quoted from R.P. Menasce in 1940.
[164] David Fuller, 'Music', in *T.S. Eliot in Context*, ed. by Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 134–44 (p. 141).
[165] In 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture', Eliot writes that 'the cultures of different peoples do affect each other', and have 'derived great benefit from their influence upon each other' (Kermode, p. 303).

tradition. In the development of his 'late' style, Adorno regards Beethoven as searching for a new language, cultivated from his assimilation of musical tradition:

> To the musical experience of the late Beethoven the subjectivity and objectivity, the roundedness of the successful symphony, the totality arising from the motion of all particulars [. . .] must have become suspect. [. . .] At this point he raised himself above the bourgeois spirit, of which his own *oeuvre* is the highest musical manifestation.[166]

In the late quartets, 'unity is transcended, yielding fragmentariness', through a process of 'abrupt, unmediated juxtaposing of bare axiomatic motifs and polyphonic complexes'.[167] The musical language of the late quartets is thus separated from the syntactic and temporal conventions of Classicism, becoming something entirely more problematic. In his adoption in *Four Quartets* of the four-voiced 'quartet' model,[168] and especially Beethoven's 'late' quartet model, Eliot deliberately aligns himself with this separation from convention through an assimilation and a re-working of tradition.[169] The fragmented approach to ideas, themes, motifs and language, as well as to structure and form, echoes Beethoven's compositional process, and liberates Eliot from being bounded by and in time.[170]

## *V 'Here, now, always'*

The relationship between past, present and future, and between historical and contemporary models, forms and language, is a central theme in Eliot's Harvard lectures

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[166] Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 151.
[167] Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 152.
[168] A. David Moody, *Tracing T. S. Eliot's Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 162–63. Moody believes that in Eliot's mind 'it is clear that . . . the themes and their inter-relations are in the foreground, while the instruments appear to be taken for granted' (p. 163).
[169] In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Eliot asserts that 'the *whole* existing order must be, ever so slightly , altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted. (Kermode, p. 38).
[170] Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 125. Adorno writes that Beethoven 'aims not so much to purify the musical language of its empty phrases, as to liberate these phrases from the illusion of subjective control'.

in 1932 and 1933, where Eliot contemplates the importance of external influences on creativity:

> Artistic creation is always a complicated turning inside out of old forms, under the influence of new stimuli which originate outside of art.[171]

The connection between art and personal experience is considered in Jed Esty's analysis of Eliot's *Four Quartets*, where he sees an 'overall allegorical pattern' in which 'the story of the poet's struggle to recover a workable sense of his position in time recapitulates the wider community's struggle to recover a workable sense of its position in history'.[172] Articulating an accepted post-war critique of Eliot's later work as 'the product of either an unfortunate Tory retreat into traditionalism or an exhausted personal retreat into Christianity',[173] Esty nevertheless views in Eliot's 'incipient provincialization of English culture' in *Four Quartets* the reinvigoration of 'cultural vitality and coherence'.[174] Positioned at what Esty terms a 'diachronic switchpoint of major historical transition',[175] he concludes that 'Eliot's complex response to imperial retrenchment thus marks itself as a paradigmatic moment in the long, slow recession of European universalism'.[176]

Yet, Eliot's admiration for Beethoven, and the presumed influence of his music on Eliot's writing, run counter to Esty's hypothesis of an overwhelmingly English provincialism evident in *Four Quartets*. Aligning himself with that sense of 'universality and

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[171] T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (London: Faber & Faber, 1933), p. 135. Eliot was Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University from 1932 to 1933. This quotation is taken, perhaps surprisingly, from Leon Trotsky.

[172] Jed Esty, 'Eliot's Recessional: Four Quartets, National Allegory and the End of Empire', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 16.1 (2003), 39–60 (p. 49). See also Jed Esty, '*Four Quartets* and the Chronotype of Englishness' in *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004) pp. 135-162), where Esty argues that 'the musicality of *Four Quartets* offers a new method to treat the old problem of literary impersonality . . . partly because historical conditions seemed to promise the revival of a native classical culture in England' (p.160).

[173] Esty, p. 39.

[174] Esty, p. 46.

[175] Esty, p. 47.

[176] Esty, p. 55.

transcendence'[177] so esteemed in the music of Beethoven, Eliot offers his poetry as a literary interpretation of that same perceived cultural universalism, standing as a bulwark against what he sees in the late 1930s as the danger presented by Nazism.[178] As the twenty-year Armistice signed in 1918 collapses into manifest conflict,[179] the effect of external events on Eliot's writing – the 'new stimuli' referred to above in the Harvard lecture – is reflected in the 'present moment of the past'[180] captured in *Little Gidding*:

> A people without history
> Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
> Of timeless moments.
>
> (*LG* V 20-22)

While Esty regards the final line here, 'History is now and England', as indicative that 'history can be transfigured from a mere sequence of events happening in England into a permanent pattern that can be called England', occupying what he calls 'the dialectical space of reconciliation between time and the timeless',[181] another interpretation might see Eliot focusing on the concept of a universal, commonly-held, European, Western culture through the lens of his own experience, understood through finding his own history.[182] As he concludes at the end of 'Tradition and the Individual Talent':

> The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but

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[177] Waddell, p. 177.

[178] Eliot writes in 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' that 'there are certain . . . common features in Europe, which make it possible to speak of a European culture' (Kermode, p. 304).

[179] Alexander Smith, 'The Literary Consequences of the Peace: T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and the Treaty of Versailles' (unpublished Ph.D., Columbia University, 2006), pp. 77–78. The Versailles Treaty of 28 June 1919, is described in Smith's thesis as 'Keynes's nightmare', which only produced a series of 'meaningless pronouncements', where the destruction of European civilization would inevitably be completed if the terms of the Peace were enforced'. The concept of 1914-1945 as a Second Thirty Years' War originated with Charles De Gaulle, in a speech made in 1946.

[180] Kermode, p. 44. From Eliot's 1919 essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'.

[181] Esty, p. 52.

[182] Eliot asserts his understanding of a common, European cultural identity in essays such as 'Dante' from 1929 and 'What Dante Means to Me' from 1950. His book *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber, 1948), for which Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, also emphasises the significance of a shared European literary and artistic heritage. In the face of German aggression during Second World War, asserting the distinction between German culture and the current perversions of Nazism is not only highlighted in Eliot's writings, but also in the recitals of Beethoven's piano music by Dame Myra Hess (a noted Beethoven interpreter) in her famous wartime National Gallery lunchtime concerts. (See 'Myra Hess Biography | History | The National Gallery, London' <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/history/the-myra-hess-concerts/myra-remembered> [accessed 6 May 2020].

> the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.[183]

What matters to Eliot is the rootedness of the present in – and through – history, and in its links to the past. Just as he refers to the 'turning inside out of old forms' as a way of realising artistic creation, so in *Little Gidding* Eliot describes finding transcendent meaning in the ties between past and present:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.
> (*LG* V 26-29)

The model of Beethoven's music, which also critiques and reinterprets historical forms, structures and modalities in order to re-make the present, exposes Eliot's inventiveness, since, as he writes, 'the music of poetry is not something which exists apart from the meaning'.[184] The styles and forms of the past similarly inform the music of Eliot's contemporary, Stravinsky, at different periods in his long career, and in old age he contemplates his own and Eliot's intentions in being connected to the past:

> Were Eliot and myself merely trying to refit old ships while the other side – Joyce, Schoenberg – sought new forms of travel? I believe that this distinction, much traded on a generation ago, has disappeared . . . Of course, we seemed, Eliot and myself, to have exploited an apparent discontinuity, to have made out of the *disjecta membra*, the quotation from other poets and composers, the references to earlier styles . . ., the detritus that betokened a wreck. But we used it, and anything that came to hand, to rebuild, and we did not pretend to have invented new conveyors or new means of travel. But the true business of the artist is to refit old ships. He can say again, in his way, only what has already been said.[185]

Eliot articulates this same thinking throughout *Four Quartets*, suggesting that Stravinsky is recollecting his own memory of Eliot's work.[186] Perhaps it is only in the act of 'rebuilding', using what Stravinsky calls 'the detritus that betokened a wreck', that art can

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[183] Kermode, p. 44.
[184] Kermode, p. 110. From 'The Music of Poetry', 1942.
[185] Igor Stravinsky, *Dialogues and a Diary* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1963), p. 30 <http://archive.org/details/dialoguesanddiar00stra> [accessed 23 March 2020].
[186] Igor Stravinsky, *Anthem (The Dove Descending Breaks the Air) for Chorus a Capella* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1962). The words are taken from Part IV of Eliot's *Little Gidding*. Stravinsky set the words from *Little Gidding* as an unaccompanied anthem in January 1962, eliciting Eliot to remark that 'Stravinsky could get more out of me that way than any man living' (see Mildred Meyer Boaz, 'Musical and poetic Analogues in T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* and Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*', *The Centennial Review*, 24.2 (1980) pp. 218-231 (p. 218)).

be saved, as though the act of recovering what Eliot see as 'fragments . . . shored against my ruins'[187] makes possible the recreation and reconstruction of culture. As Eliot writes at the end of *The Dry Salvages*:

> Here the past and future
> Are conquered and reconciled,
> Where action were otherwise movement
> Of that which is only moved
> And has in it no source of movement –
> Driven by daemonic, chthonic
> Powers. And right action is freedom
> From past and future also.
>
> (*DS* V 35-42)

Through the conquest and reconciliation of both past and future Eliot therefore finds freedom and meaning in the present, since 'past and future / Are conquered and reconciled'.[188] As Eliot determines that 'right action is freedom / From past and future', so Adorno recognises that Beethoven's late work 'still remains a process'.[189] In what he calls 'an ignition between extremes',[190] Adorno explains how, in his 'very late style', Beethoven unifies the subjective and the objective. This is how Eliot, in *Four Quartets*, reconciles his own self-contained expression with the patterns of history and tradition in a fallen world. In quoting from the mystic, Julian of Norwich[191] at the close of *Little Gidding*, 'All shall be well and / All manner of things shall be well', Eliot completes the cycle of his *Quartets*, but he also completes his cyclic journey, returning at the end 'heard, half-heard, in the stillness' to the garden where he began. As Beethoven's A minor Quartet also finds resolution in the final, simple chromatic ascent to the tonic at

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[187] Ricks and McCue, p. 71. Quoted from the last section of *The Waste Land.*

[188] Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000) not only sees that '*Four Quartets* can be read most simply as a sequence of more or less interrelated meditations on time and eternity, or on the presence of meaning within the apparent blind contingency of the world', but also suggests that 'the whole work appears as an exercise in the conscious putting into questions of the poet's own symbolic idiom' (p. 45-46).

[189] Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 126. This is in contrast to the 'principle of development as "doing", accomplishing something' discussed earlier in Adorno's chapter on Beethoven and society (p. 37).

[190] Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 126.

[191] Julian of Norwich (c.1343-1416), often called Dame or Mother Julian, was an anchorite and mystic who wrote (or dictated) the first book written by a woman in the English language, the *Revelations of Divine Love.*

the end of the final movement, Eliot too finds consolation in an ending where 'the fire and the rose are one'.

In the final chapter of *Putting Modernism Together,* Daniel Albright declares that, in the wake of the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression of the 1930s, 'the teeming of new artistic isms decreased dramatically . . .Communism and Fascism were sufficient isms to occupy artists' attention'.[192] Engaging with the formal and temporal structures of Beethoven's A minor Quartet enables Eliot to reconcile his poetic expression with the seismic shifts in the pattern of history caused by Fascism. Beethoven challenges the sense of music's forward linear motion through motivic and thematic repetition and allusion, by shifting and displacing the rhythmic pulse, and through the dislocation cadence points, all of which enable us to hear 'the past' as an experience 'in the present', and to encounter again in 'the future'. It is from music that Eliot adapts such semantic and temporal independence in composing *Four Quartets*, in order to achieve an 'unattainable timelessness'. Like Beethoven, Eliot is not just adapting and using tradition to say something new, he is also transgressing and remaking cultural boundaries and limits in order to remake tradition and culture for a destitute age. Begbie suggests that there is, perhaps, a link between 'the temporal extremities of Beethoven's late quartets and the extremity of his own impending death'.[193] Music, and the music of Beethoven's A minor Quartet particularly, provide Eliot with a new language of time – referential, temporal, eschatological – in which to articulate his anxieties about the end of culture, of tradition, of history, and, ultimately, of his own earthly existence.

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[192] Daniel Albright, *Putting Modernism Together: Literature, Music, and Painting, 1872-1927* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 291.
[193] Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 117.

## CONCLUSION

Exploring the influence of music and musical culture on Ezra Pound and on T.S. Eliot, and examining the effect which music has exerted – or might have exerted – on the composition of two of modernism's most significant poetic works, *The Pisan Cantos* and *Four Quartets,* seems an audacious enterprise. The intersection between poetry and music in the work of Pound and Eliot is well documented: Helen Gardner's *The Composition of Four Quartets,* authorised by Eliot himself, and analysing the influence of Beethoven on the poems;[1] John Xiros Cooper's interpretation of 'Music as Symbol and Structure' in both Eliot and Pound,[2] and his editing of *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra,* which explores broader musical influences on Eliot;[3] and Brad Bucknell's examination of *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics*,[4] are just four seminal studies, all simultaneously wide-ranging and detailed in their exposure of the close links between music, literature, philosophy, aesthetics, and cultural history. The question is, therefore: what can this study contribute to an already crowded field? The answers lie both in my illumination of the ways music is symbolic for both Pound and Eliot of the idea of free artistic expression, and in my detailed exploration of the fundamental model which music presents as a means to express that artistic freedom. Music is not, however, merely symbolic of free expression. It also represents in its form, structure, and fluid response to time and to temporality a way of expressing, when *The Pisan Cantos* and *Four*

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[1] Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978).
[2] John Xiros Cooper, 'Music as Symbol and Structure in Pound's "Pisan Cantos" and Eliot's "Four Quartets"', in *Ezra Pound and Europe*, ed. by Richard Taylor and Claus Melchior (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA.: Rodopi Editions, 1993), pp. 177–89.
[3] John Xiros Cooper, ed., *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[4] Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce, and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

*Quartets* were written, a response to the dangers posed by the rise of fascism and looming war. Music offers poetics a different answer to imminent dissolution and the end of time.

Weighing up the ability of music to go beyond words in elucidating abstract representations of 'meaning' has engaged philosophers and aestheticians since the time of Plato and Aristotle,[5] although questions about whether music has inherent 'meaning' (whatever that might be), about the extent to which music represents non-musical reality, or whether it has semantic content, are beyond the scope of the present study. However, it is clear that the very essence of musical language is that it is *not* characterised by semantic compositionality, and does not have a predetermined or predictable set of independent significant components. It is the inherent fluidity of music in terms of 'meaning' which makes it such an attractive model for Pound, Eliot, and other modernists in the first half of the twentieth century. In attempting to understand the consequences of the First World War, in confronting the political, social and economic crises of the inter-war years, and in facing the threat of renewed war, Pound and Eliot found in and through music a way of recasting their poetic language.

For Pound, a return to the origins of European poetry in the work of the troubadours, where music and words were not only indivisible but paralleled each other, showed the way to a clearer, more rhythmically flexible and authentic language. Different phrases, voices and repetitions carried over in the ear of the listener might act as an underpinning resonance, which echoes throughout the verse – a phenomenon which Pound

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[5] A useful resource for exploring what ancient Greek poets, historians, essayists, and philosophers wrote about music and its importance to social, moral, educational and aesthetic development is *Greek Musical Writings: Vol. I The Musician and his Art,* ed. by Andrew Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Peter Kivy, *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002) and Jenefer Robinson, *Music and Meaning* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997) both explore changing perspectives on the philosophy and aesthetics of music.

designated 'The Great Bass'. It is these slow vibrations, which, he theorised, were 'synthesised by the ear',[6] and were foundational to 'the whole question of tempo, and of a main base in all musical structure'.[7] Pound describes such 'poetic beauties' as a 'sort of recurring decimal',[8] and explains that imbuing his poetry with this fundamental resonance, linking tempo and sound, is part of his aim to 'desuetise (de-su-et-ise i.e. take the fat out of) current poetry'.[9] Through his study of extant troubadour manuscripts in libraries in Milan and Paris, Pound researched the innate connection which he believed existed in troubadour poetry between words and music, his transcriptions relying more on his own understanding and interpretation of the rhythm of the words than on the musicological theories of the time.[10] The resultant song editions, such as those captured in *Hesternae Rosae*,[11] approach a much more modern musical (and rhythmical) interpretation and demonstrate Pound's appreciation and understanding of troubadour style and repertoire. His sense of verbal polyphony, particularly in weaving a web of ideas, motifs, memories and reminiscences through time, creates a sense of temporal simultaneity which facilitates historical parallels. The pre-eminence of the human voice and of live performance in these songs/poems is also of huge importance to Pound in forming a bond with the authenticity of such a tradition, and it is this authenticity which he seeks to re-establish in underpinning the composition of *The Cantos* with the resonances, structures and phrasing of music.

Eliot encountered music differently. His experiences in Paris and London of experimental art-music in the work of Debussy, Satie, Ravel, and Stravinsky, and of a transmuted and re-worked American style in ragtime, jazz, and popular song, enabled

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[6] Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (London: Peter Owen, 1978), p. 73.
[7] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 73.
[8] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 238.
[9] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 253.
[10] As examined in Chapter 2 and Appendix II of this study.
[11] Walter Morse Rummel, M.D. Calvocoressi, and Ezra Pound, *Hesternae Rosae: Neuf Chansons de Troubadours Des XIIième et XIIIième Siècles Pour Une Voix et Accompangement de Piano* (London: Augener, 1913).

Eliot to transform his approach to 'traditional language' in a new way so that he could interpret, and perhaps try to understand, the anguish, grief and loss of the First World War. Eliot's adaptation of jazz and ragtime rhythms and cadences in his poetry might also have been a way for him to undermine contemporary feminised and restrictive social conventions. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot's use of abrupt changes in rhythm, shifts of tempo, fragmentation, and his repetition and transformation of motifs mirrors what Stravinsky accomplishes in his scores for *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*. But Eliot also connects his poetic style to the traditions of the nineteenth-century in his allusions to Wagner, and to more universal leitmotifs of sacrifice and metamorphosis. In juxtaposing primitive ritual and contemporary banality, elegy and triviality, lament and bathos, destruction and renewal, Eliot creates a complex interplay of ideas whose fluid structure achieves that 'unattainable timelessness'[12] which he believes music so distinctively possesses. In writing *Four Quartets,* Eliot draws on an understanding and interpretation of music which he sees manifest in Beethoven's A minor String Quartet, one of the six 'late quartets' in which Beethoven stretches and expands musical conventions of form, structure, and harmonic language.[13] For Theodor Adorno, the 'late style' so evident in Beethoven's final string quartets is expressed in the contradiction between the subjective and the objective. In his view, Beethoven does not achieve a synthesis of the personal and the detached in this late music: rather, as a dissociative force, 'he tears them apart in time'.[14] Similarly, Eliot achieves his redefinition of the subjective and the objective in *Four Quartets* through a reassessment and re-evaluation

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[12] *The Poems of T.S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 922.

[13] Beethoven's six so-called 'late' quartets are his last major completed compositions: Opus 127 in E flat (1825), Opus 130 in B flat (1825), Opus 131 in C sharp minor (1826), Opus 132 in A minor (1825), Opus 133, the *Grosse Fuge*, in B flat (1825) and Opus 135 in F major (1826). They are now considered to be amongst the greatest of all classical compositions, and have influenced and inspired many subsequent composers. Franz Schubert requested a private performance of Opus 131 before he died, asserting, 'After this, what is left for us to write?' (see Maynard Solomon, 'Schubert and Beethoven', in *19th-Century Music,* 3.2 (1979) 114-125 (p. 125).

[14] Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 126.

of a lifetime of accrued memories, reminiscences, observations, and introspections, set against a tapestry of cultural allusion. The fluidity and freedom of expression which seem so apparent in music enable Eliot to resolve the dialectical tensions between the forms and styles of past and present, and thereby to approach the writing of poetry in a new way. The rhythm, form and connotation inherent in this style of writing echo the experiments of Beethoven's late style, particularly those of the A minor String Quartet, and, like Beethoven, Eliot reframes the forms of the past to say something new in the present. He experiments with new rhythms, and destabilises metres; he adapts conventional poetic forms; he uses recurring motifs and themes to make connections between sections within individual poems, and to link the overarching sequence; and structures a verbal polyphony which echoes musical resonance. Fundamentally, he reconciles past and future, thereby finding meaning in the present. For Pound, threatened with the possibility of a death sentence, *The Pisan Cantos* are a way to confront a present reality which dissolves the distinctions between past and future, since the end is an ultimate suspension of existence. However, for Eliot, the sense of 'unattainable timelessness', which he strives to achieve in the present of *Four Quartets,* is grounded in his Christian belief in the promise of eternal life: past, present and future coalesce into an eternal timelessness.

Olivier Messiaen, composer of the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps,* written in the prisoner-of-war camp in Görlitz, and premièred there to an audience of camp guards and inmates on 15 January 1941, spoke about his conception of time and rhythm:

> Rhythm is, in essence, alteration and division. To study alteration and division is to study Time. Time – measured, relative, physiological, psychological – is divided in a thousand ways, of which the most immediate for us is a perpetual conversion of the future into the past.[15]

[15] Rebecca Rischin, *For the End of Time: The Story of the Messiaen Quartet* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 52. Rischin quotes from Messiaen's conversations with Claude Samuel in 'Olivier Messaien analyse ses oeuvres: "Quatuor pour la fin du temps"', *Hommage à Olivier Messiaen* (Paris: La Recherche Artistique, 1978), p. 31.

In capturing the fluid expressivity of music in their poetics, Pound and Eliot create an interconnected web of ideas, motifs, historic themes, memories, reminiscences, introspections, and characters, unified into verbal polyphony. The rhythm of the words and ideas produces – as Messiaen suggests – its own measured, relative, physiological, and psychological 'time'. It is this 'musicating' concept of time which permits Pound and Eliot to develop, in language, a different perception of past, present and future, drawing on tradition and both personal and cultural history to find meaning in a conflicted 'now'. The model of music becomes the fundamental structure through which Pound and Eliot, in their poetry, come to understand and transform experience, and the experience of time.

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## APPENDIX II

*Chapter Two: Pound and the rhythmic transcription of medieval monophonic secular song in the early twentieth century*

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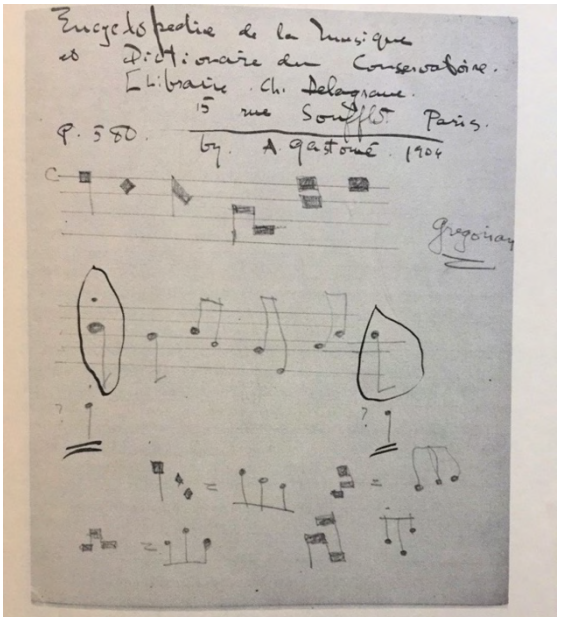
Pound's interest in the music as well as in the poetry of the troubadours seems evident from notes and sketches which he made during frequent visits to Paris. A photograph reproduced by Schafer in *Ezra Pound and Music* shows a page from one of his copybooks in which Pound is obviously teaching himself the basics of twelfth-century 'modal' musical notation.[1] The page is titled in ink: 'Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionaire *[sic]* du Conservatoire. [Librairie Ch. Delagrave. 15 rue Soufflot Paris. by A Gastoué 1906', and the page number, 'P.580', is added to the left.




A page from one of Pound's copybooks showing how he taught himself to read medieval musical notation in preparation for his troubadour transcriptions.

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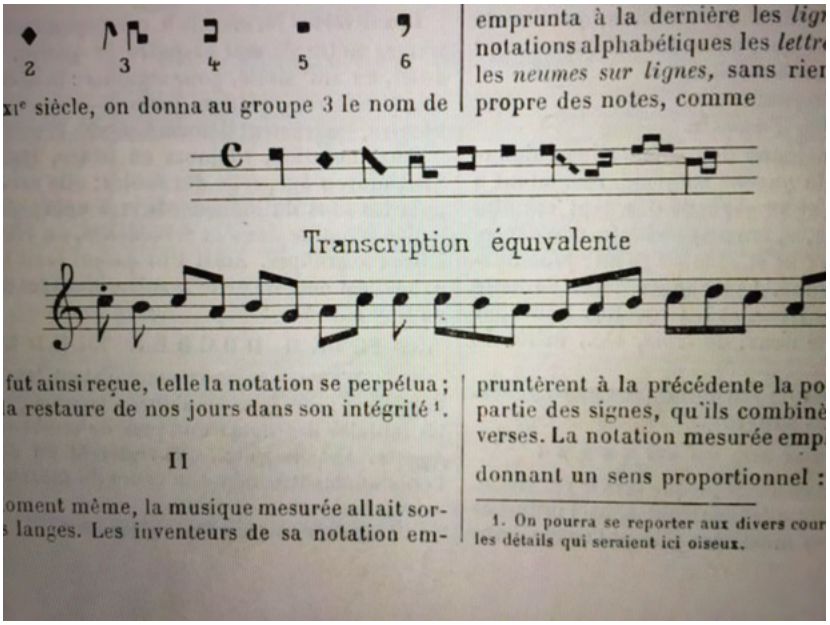
[1] *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. by R. Murray Schafer (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), p. 7. In spite of comprehensive searches in the Ezra Pound archives currently held at the Beinecke Library at Yale University, I have not been able to locate the original notebook from which this reproduction is taken.

From the notes made by Pound in his book, it is clear that he was consulting one of the prime reference works available at the time regarding the rhythmic interpretation of medieval notation, the *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire* edited by Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurentie, which was published in 1913. Section II, 'La Musique Occidentale', written by Amédée Gastoué, is dated 1906.[2]


2 3 4 5 6

XIe siècle, on donna au groupe 3 le nom de

emprunta à la dernière les *lig*
notations alphabétiques les *lettr*
les *neumes sur lignes*, sans rie
propre des notes, comme

Transcription équivalente

fut ainsi reçue, telle la notation se perpétua ;
a restaure de nos jours dans son intégrité [1].

II

oment même, la musique mesurée allait sor-
langes. Les inventeurs de sa notation em-

pruntèrent à la précédente la po
partie des signes, qu'ils combiné
verses. La notation mesurée emp
donnant un sens proportionnel :

1. On pourra se reporter aux divers cour
les détails qui seraient ici oiseux.

Although Pound seems to have been well aware of the arguments which were raging between musicologists at the beginning of the twentieth century about how to transcribe the rhythm of monophonic song, Pound's interpretation the rhythm of the notation of monophonic troubadour song gives a reading which is closer to a modern realisation, on account of his understanding of the metrical patterning of the words.

[2] A comparison between the original entry in the *Encyclopédie* and Pound's copy shows significant transcription errors in copying both the medieval notation and in the 'modern' version. The second two-note *binaria* ligature is transcribed a third lower than the printed original, giving the notes G-E rather than the B-G shown in Gastoué's article. However, in his notebook, Pound has correctly transcribed the relative spatial pitch relationships between the notes of the third and fourth pairs of notes, showing a step downwards from the A in the original to a G, rather than upwards to a B: of course, the absence of a clef on the roughly-drawn pencil stave in Pound's notebook makes it hard to define the accurate or intended pitch of his transcribed version.

Manuscripts containing the liturgical repertoire of the Île-de-France, centred in Paris on the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris and on the churches of Saint Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, were edited and published in the early twentieth century according to a 'modal theory' of rhythm consolidated by Friedrich Ludwig.[3] The French musicologist Pierre Aubry proposed that these triple-metre, 'ternary' rhythmic patterns captured by the six 'rhythmic modes' could also be applied to the French monophonic songs of the trouvères and he later wrote that his theory had been proposed as early as 1898.[4] This was a distinctly different approach from that of the distinguished German scholar and musicologist, Hugo Riemann, who had proposed a metrical patterns of four accents (*vier Hebungen*) derived from his study of Middle High German verse and the songs of the *Minnesinger*.[5] Another young musicologist, Jean Beck, followed Ludwig and Aubry in suggesting a rhythmical interpretation of secular troubadour and trouvère song which followed the ternary patterns of the liturgical Notre Dame repertoire.[6]

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[3] Friedrich Ludwig, 'Die mehrstimmige Musik der ältesten Epoche im Dienste der Liturgie. Ein mehrstimmiges Sankt-Jakobs-Offizium des 12. Jahrhunderts', *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*. Vol 19 (1905); *Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili* (Halle, 1910) and 'Die liturgischen Organa Leonins und Perotins', *Festschrift für Hugo Riemann*. (Leipzig: M. Hesse, 1909) pp. 200-213.

[4] John Haines, 'The 'modal theory', fencing, and the death of Aubry', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 6 (1997), 143-150 (p.145).

[5] John Haines, 'The Footnote Quarrels of the Modal Theory: A Remarkable Episode in the Reception of Medieval Music', *Early Music History*, 20 (2001), 87–120 (pp. 91–92).

[6] In 1905, Aubry and Beck met. The two researchers discussed their ideas, theories and discoveries; Aubry shared his facsimiles with Beck; Beck shared the 'key' to his modal method with Aubry. Later the same year, Aubry published an article, which not only drew substantially on Beck's original ideas for the modal interpretation of the rhythm of trouvère chansons, but which, in Beck's view, differed markedly from Aubry's own original interpretations. Beck accused Aubry of plagiarism. The feud between the scholars rumbled on, fuelled by Aubry's publication *Trouvères et Troubadours* in 1909: desperate for vindication from Beck's continuing allegations, Aubry submitted the dispute to independent adjudication by a panel of French scholars. Confident that they would decide that he was the originator of the 'modal' interpretation of the rhythm of monophonic song, Aubry was, instead, shocked and outraged when he was found guilty of plagiarising Beck's theories. Refuting Beck's claims, Aubry wrote an open letter to members of the jury in which he asserted his claim to be the originator of the 'modal theory' of rhythm: 'As early as 1898 . . . I had formulated the fundamental, essential, and new principle of the role of modal formulas in trouvère melodies.' Just two weeks later, on 1 June, Aubry wrote to the jury members once again, seemingly washing his hands of the whole dispute:

> I shall conclude the matter here, and, when I soon speak again of the troubadours and trouvères, it will be, I hope, unhampered by fruitless preoccupations with personal polemic.
>
> [Nous fermerons ici l'incident, et quand nous parlerons bientôt des troubadours et des trouvères, nous le ferons, j'espère, sans la préoccupation sterile des polémiques personnelles.]

The system of musical transcription known as ‘modal rhythm’, which was simultaneously formulated by Ludwig, Aubry and Beck in the first decade of the twentieth century, is an intrinsically rhythmical system and has no connection with the system of tonal ‘modes’ or scales: the rhythmic meaning of ‘mode’ is so-called from a secondary meaning of the term *modus*. The medieval theorist known to musicologists as Anonymous VII[7] defines *modus* in the following way:

> Mode in music is the orderly measuring of time in long and short [notes]; or, to put it another way, mode is whatever proceeds in an appropriate measurement of long and short notes.[8]

This ‘orderly measuring of time’ is usually defined by contemporary medieval theorists as a system of ‘longs’ and ‘shorts’ which result in six distinct triple-time patterns or metres:

| | ***Pattern of longs/shorts*** | ***Musical rhythm*** | ***Metrical equivalent*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | — ˘ | ♩ ♪ | trochaic |
| 2 | ˘ — | ♪ ♩ | iambic |
| 3 | — ˘ ˘ | ♩. ♪ ♩ | dactylic |
| 4 | ˘ ˘ — | ♪ ♩ ♩. | anapaestic |
| 5 | — — | ♩. ♩. | spondaic |
| 6 | ˘ ˘ ˘ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | tribrachic |

On 31 August 1910, Aubry was fatally wounded in a practice fencing match with Captain de Romilly while on summer holiday in Dieppe, dying within a few hours from what his doctors called ‘traumatic emphysema’. It seems that this was a case of suicide disguised as a fencing accident. Aubry seems to have deliberately ignored the usual protective measures which an experienced fencer would have taken, wearing his old, worn fencing jacket which clearly did not offer adequate defence against his opponent’s épée. The academic squabble between Aubry and Beck and the subsequent Paris ‘trial’ between the scholars claimed two victims: Aubry by *de facto* suicide, and Beck by humiliation and academic opprobrium, at least in the short term. Beck’s scholarly career in Europe was over and he emigrated permanently to the United States. In a final ironic twist, some 17 years later, Beck came to reject his earlier interpretation of the rhythms of trouvère and troubadour songs, coming round to a view that an isochronous interpretation instead of exclusively modal, triple meters were more likely, especially in music and poetry composed before the thirteenth century. Beck had finally come round to accepting Aubry’s view.

[7] Janet Knapp, ‘Two xiii Century Treatises on Modal Rhythm and Discant: Discantus positio vulgaris De musicus libellous (Anonymous VII)’, *Journal of Music Theory*, 6.2 (1962) pp. 200-215.

[8] Stevens, p. 423. ‘Modus in musica est debita mensuration temporis, scilicet per longas et breves; vel aliter, modus est quidquid currit per debitam mensuram longarum notarum et brevium’.

As Stevens points out, these definitions and rhythmic schemes are found in the work of medieval theorists whose main preoccupation is with the rhythmic interpretation of polyphonic music, particularly the polyphonic liturgical repertoire. Ludwig, Aubry and Beck each claimed that the application of the rhythmic modes to the music of liturgical sources, where the arrangements of the notational signs and symbols (i.e. the organisation of longs and shorts) determines the choice of mode, is very clear because this is principally melismatic music, where the voices are largely singing several musical notes to a single vocalised syllable.[9] However, with monophonic secular songs, where the words and musical notes are organised syllabically in the manuscript source, with each word and syllable notated against its corresponding musical pitch, the configuration of the notation offers no such obvious clue to the rhythmic interpretation of the music. Both Beck and Aubry speculated that the rhythm of the words might, in such cases, provide what Stevens calls 'the missing link in the procedure'.[10] The metre of the poem could, in their view, be understood from the rhythm of the words, and an appropriate rhythmic mode which fitted the verse could be used for the musical transcription. This might result in a variety of different rhythmic interpretations and musical realisations. The estampida[11] 'Kalenda maya', attributed to Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, is in the troubadour collection known as *R* and is reproduced below.[12]

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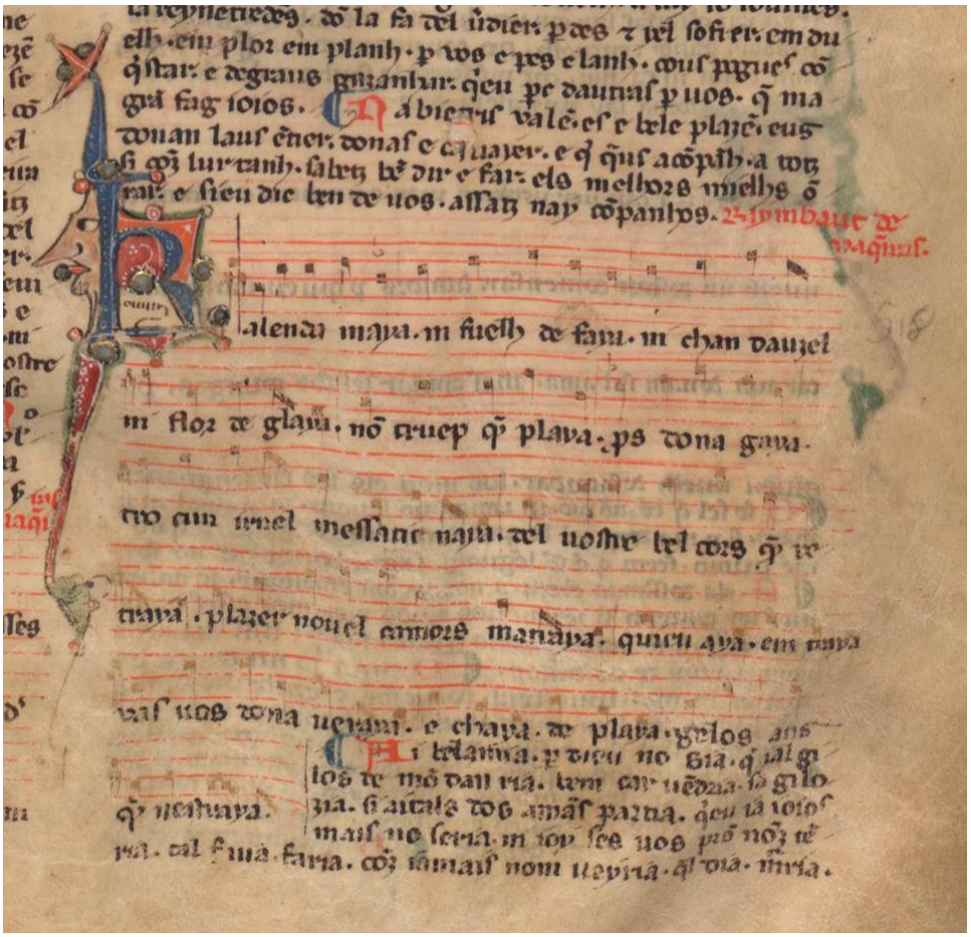
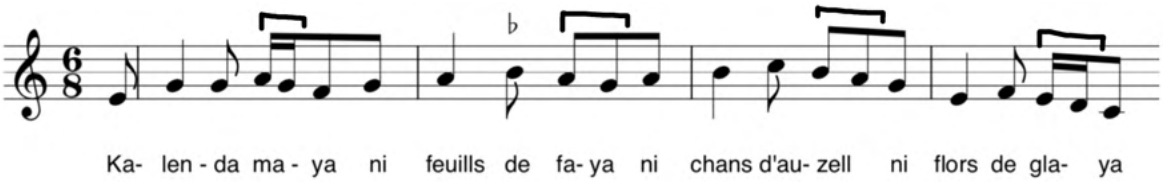
[9] Stevens, p. 424.
[10] Stevens, p. 424-5.
[11] The '*estampida*' or, in French, the '*estampie*' is a popular medieval dance- and song-form popular for both instrumental and vocal music. It is similar to the '*lai'* in consisting of a number of repeated sections.
[12] Troubadour Melodies Database catalogue reference 392009 (MS ***R***: France, Bibl.Nat.fond.fr. 22543, f.62r).

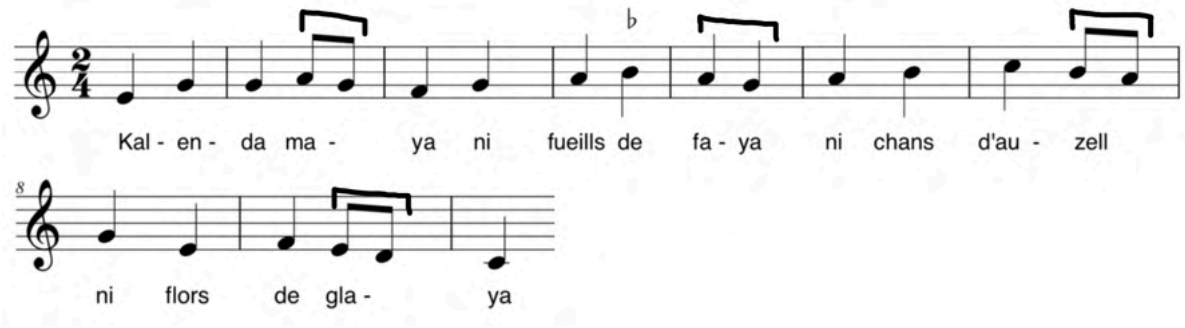


*'Kalenda maya' by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras (Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds français 22543, f. 62r)*

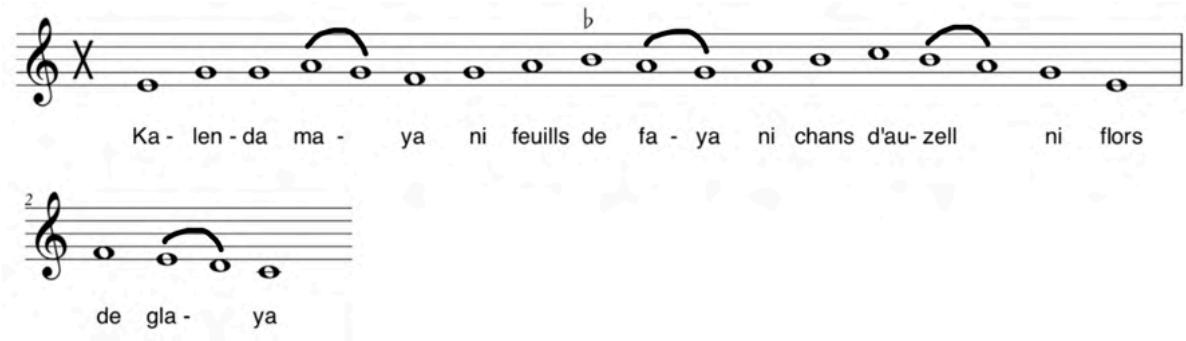
The notes are written on a musical stave of five red lines drawn above the words of the verse, more or less coincident with the syllables to be sung, but there is little discrimination in the musical notation between the notes, which are mostly shown as 'longs' (a square, filled-in note head with a short, descending tail on the right). A transcription of the notation into the first rhythmic mode would result in a version which used a series of long and short notes in a sequence which has a ternary rhythmic structure:



A transcription in more 'equal' notes would result in a performance where the rhythmic quantity of the notes is rendered more equally and where even the ternary 'perfection' of liturgical music might be replaced by a duple metre:[13]




This method of 'prosodized music', as Stevens puts it, is viewed much more sceptically by modern scholars. A more neutral approach to the rhythmic transcription of monophonic secular song is now routinely practised, with undifferentiated note-heads being used to show the pitches of the melodies above the verse-syllables.[14] Slurs are used to link notes which are written as 'plicas' or 'ligatures' in the original notation, to maintain the nature of the original word and syllable underlay:




[13] Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music 900-1600*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953), p. 96. Apel explains that the idea of a ternary note being considered 'perfect' and a duple one being considered 'imperfect' go back to the rhythmic concepts of the 13th century, when 'the ternary division was considered perfect because it consists of "beginning, middle and end". The dogma of the Holy Trinity also played some part in this concept and terminology.'

[14] Stevens, p.424-5 refers to both B. Stäblein, *Schriftbild der einstimmigen Musik,* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1977) and H.-H. Räkel, *Die musikalische Erscheinungsform der Trouvèrepoesie,* (Bern and Stuttgart: Paul Haupt, 1977) for more modern approaches to the transcription of the rhythm of monophonic song. Stevens outlines the case for an isosyllabic interpretation of monophonic secular song in the final chapter of *Words and Music*.

Recent scholarly editions use neutral note-heads which communicate, as far as possible, only the pitches of the sung notes, with slurs to show where notes might be linked in the original, thereby avoiding the vexed issue of a specifically ‘rhythmic’ interpretation.

## APPENDIX III

*Chapter Three: Pound's 'Pisan Cantos' and Messaien's 'Quatuor pour la fin du temps'*

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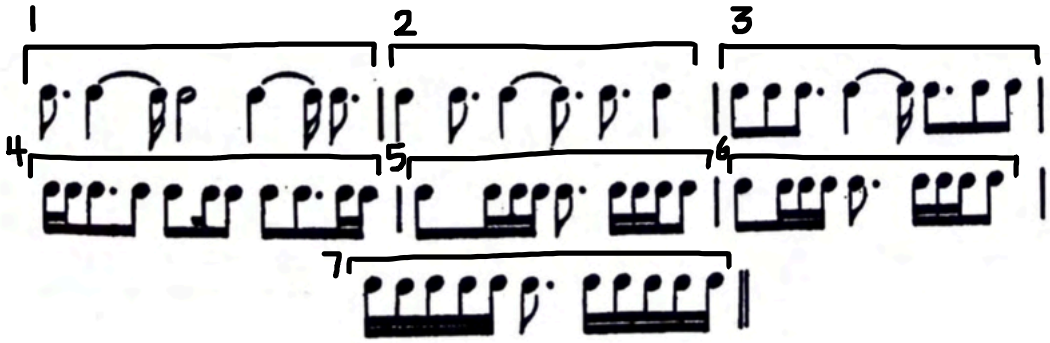
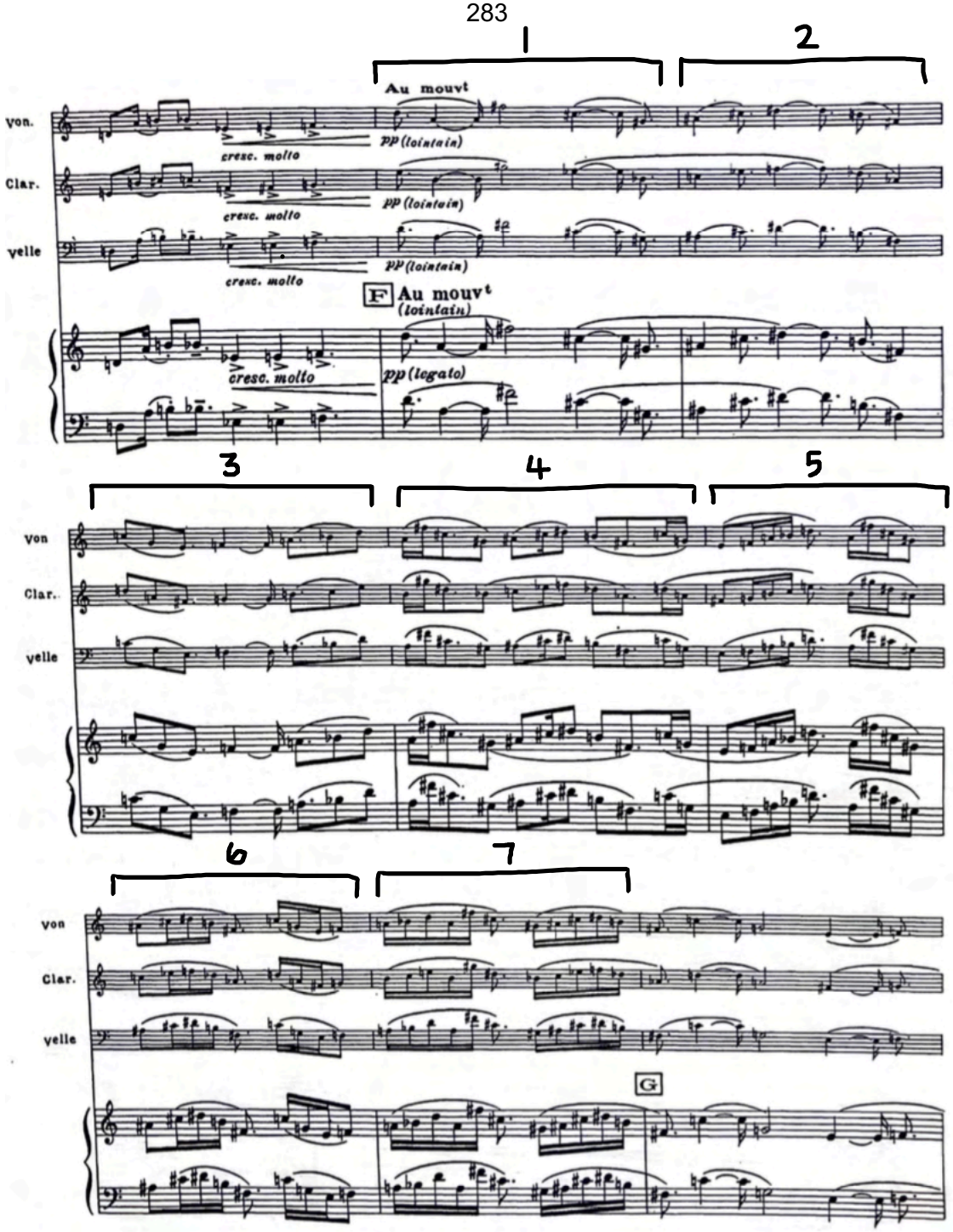
1.

Musical examples in Messiaen's own preface to the score of the *Quatuor* demonstrate how an added semiquaver (either as a note or rest, or as the lengthening of a given note) illustrate the 'added value' of the first of these three rhythmic principles. The second principle, of augmentation or diminution, shows how rhythmic values might be adjusted to be twice as long or as short, or how they might be lengthened or shortened by two-thirds or three-quarters; the 'non-retrogradable' rhythms may be considered as mirror-images, each one having a central pivot-point so that they can be read identically 'from right to left or from left to right', as Messiaen says, with the values remaining 'the same'. Although the palindromic organisation of the rhythmic units might suggest an underlying symmetry, thus implicating order and proportion, this is not discernible to the listener because of the irregular rhythms and the absence of tonal centre.

(a) Messiaen's 'non-retrogradable rhythms' are illustrated in the introduction to the score, where each bar of the rhythmic sequence forms a 'non-retrogradable' unit in itself:

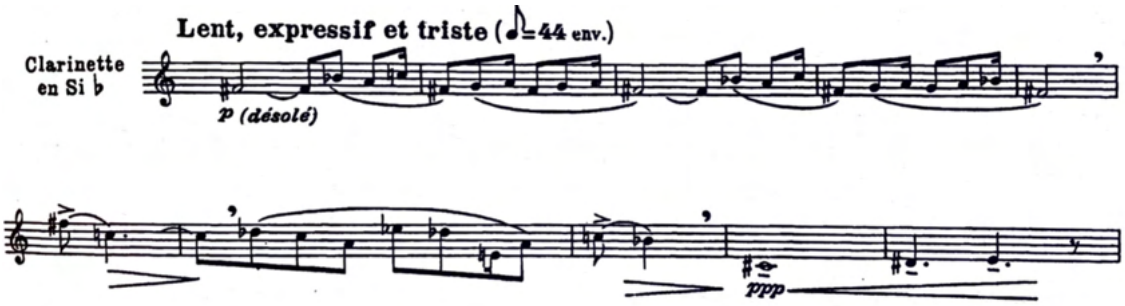



(b) These rhythms are used in movement VI of the *Quatuor* (from rehearsal letter 'F'). Here it can be seen that the examples illustrated in the Preface to the score are used in the music (bracketed 1-7). All four instruments play the same rhythm, and the same melody in unison octaves:


1
2
Au mouvt
von.
Clar.
velle
cresc. molto
pp (lointain)
F
Au mouvt
(lointain)
pp (legato)
3
4
5
von
Clar.
velle
6
7
von
Clar.
velle
G

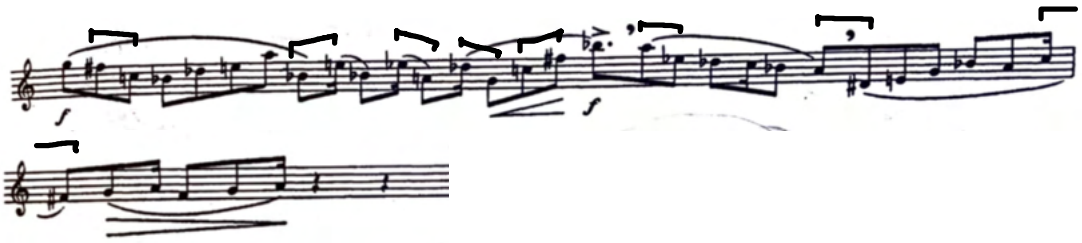
2.

The opening of movement III ‘Abîme des oiseaux’:



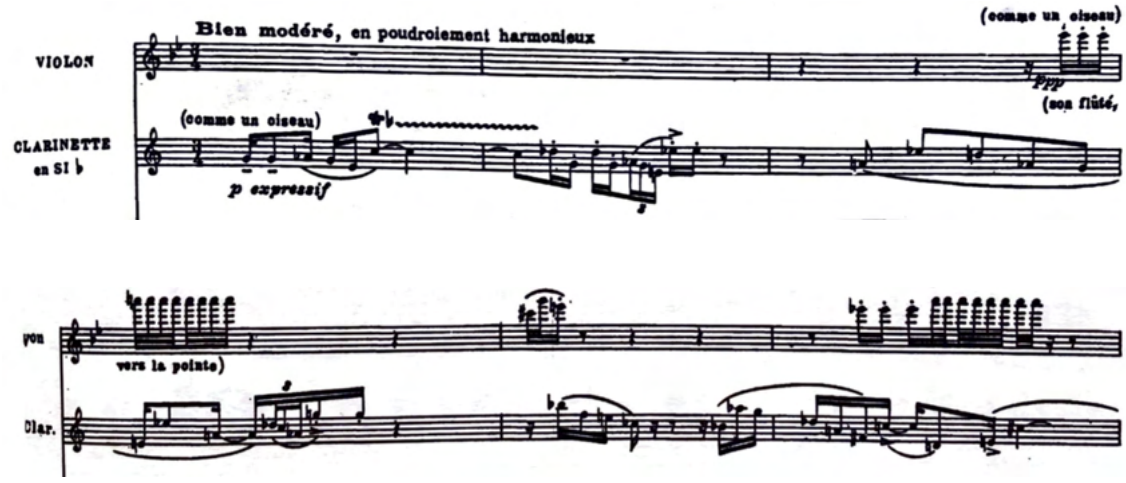

3.

The melody from bar 11, showing the incidence of tritones:



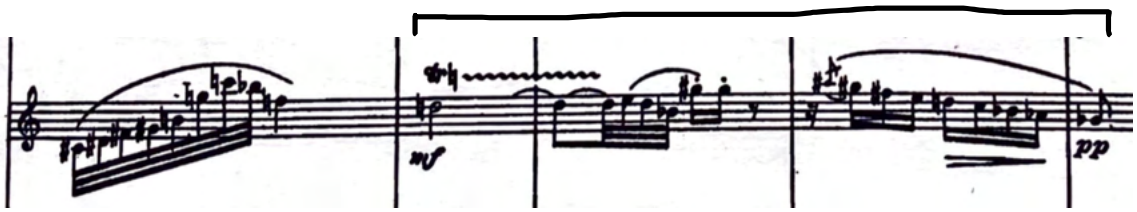
4.

The imitation of birdsong at the opening of the first movement of the *Quatuor*, bars 1-6. The clarinet imitates the call of the blackbird, and the violin is the nightingale, as part of the dawn chorus, ‘between three and four o’clock in the morning’, as Messiaen writes in the Preface (p. I):



5.

The first of the evocations of birdsong which intersperse the rondo-like fourth movement, ‘Intermède’, here performed on solo clarinet:



## APPENDIX IV

*Chapter Four: Eliot's encounters with music in Paris*

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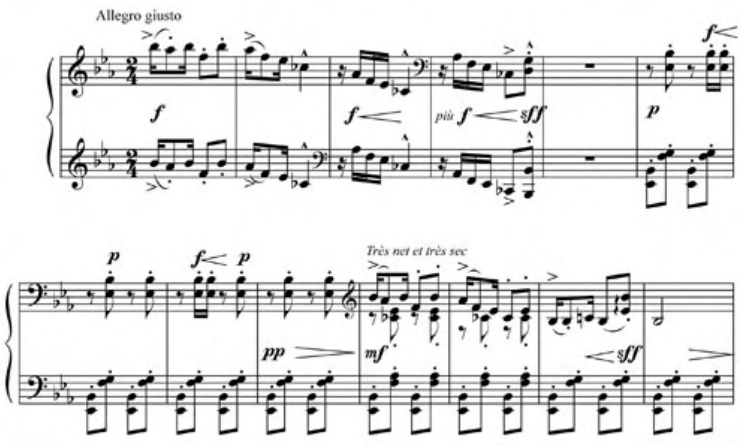
1.

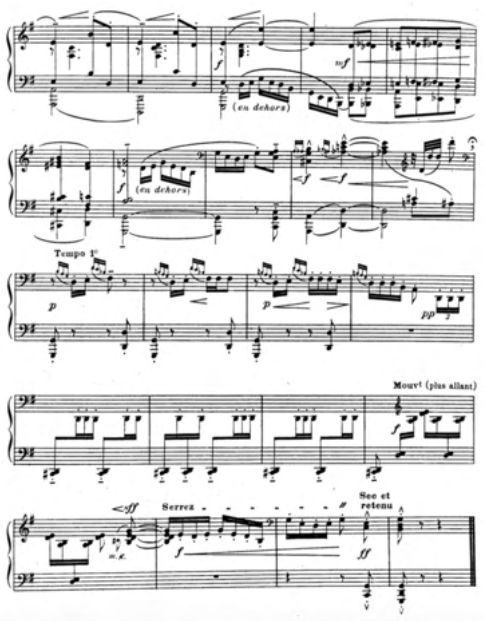
The opening of 'Golliwog's Cake-Walk', from the suite of piano pieces by Debussy, *Children's Corner* (1908).




The opening of Debussy's 'Golliwog's Cake-Walk' features not only the typically syncopated cake-walk rhythm in the first two bars, but goes on to capture the vamping, percussive accompaniment in the left hand, emphasised by additional off-beat quavers in the right hand, acting almost like a percussion instrument in a minstrel band.

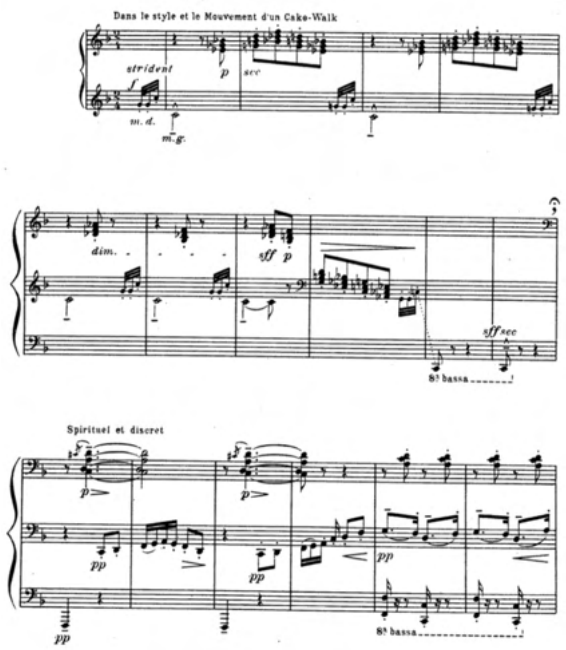
2.

Debussy, ‘Minstrels’, XII from *Préludes Book I,* the final page showing the parody of Wagner’s chromatic *Tristan* harmony, the jaunty banjo fills, and imitation drum rolls:




3.

Opening of Debussy’s ‘Général Lavine’, VI from *Préludes Book II*:



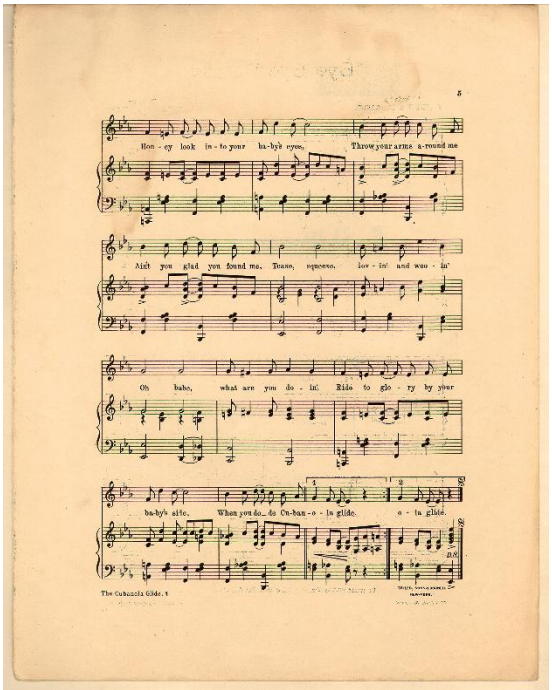

There is perhaps the indication that, in these piano pieces, Debussy is capturing acts which were familiar from the music hall:

> American commentators have assumed that Debussy had in mind a black-faced pair [presumably white performers in blackface]. There are other assumptions that Debussy, the circus lover, made minstrels of tumblers, gangsters, and clowns. Black or pasty white, they are no jauntier than Debussy's rhythms, as he converts them into oddities for the fingers. A suggestion of an old-time Broadway song, as well as a certain shuffling effect, are pointed to as corroboration of the notion that these droll fellows are of American antecedents.[1]

Certainly, the 'Général Lavine' character of Debussy's prelude was in all probability a 'real' performer, the vaudeville clown Edward Lavine,[2] described by McKinley as 'an amiable, shambling grotesque'.[3] He not only appeared in shows at the Théâtre Marigny in 1910 and 1912, but was also immortalised as a full-sized puppet at the Folies Bergère.[4]

4.

Harry von Tilzer's 1909 hit, 'The Cubanola Glide':




*Extract from the chorus of 'The Cubanola Glide'*

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[1] Oscar Thompson, *Debussy: Man and Artist* (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), p. 267.

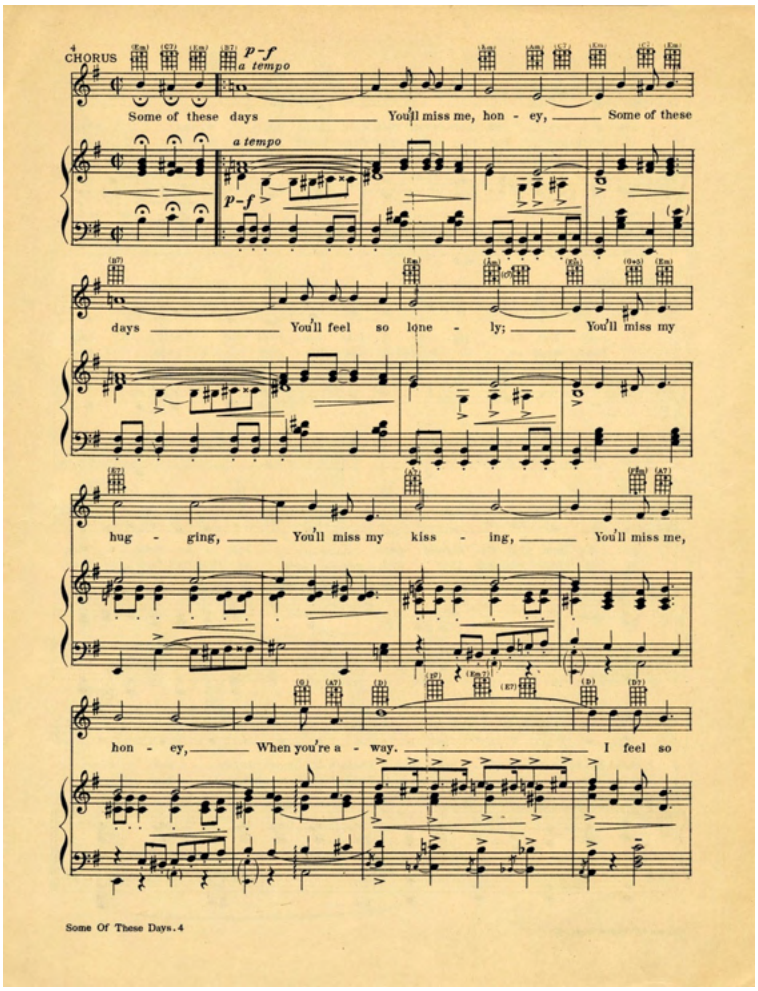
[2] Edward Lavine was born in New York City in 1879 and first found fame as a professional juggler on the Orpheum vaudeville theatre circuit. In 1910 Lavine toured in Europe, opening at the Marigny Theatre in Paris on 1 August. The Marigny featured predominantly American acts, catering not only for the American tourist trade – its programmes were printed partly in English – but also for French theatre-goers, who delighted in all things American. Lavine's act was rapturously received by the French press. On 13 August *Le Figaro* exclaimed, 'Where the devil does the redoubtable General Lavine get all his ideas? He is the hit of the show at the Marigny; the crowd turns out for him'. (Catherine Kautsky, *Debussy's Paris: Piano Portraits of the Belle Époque* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017) pp. 38-39).

[3] Ann McKinley, 'Debussy and American Minstrelsy', *The Black Perspective in Music*, 14.3 (1986), 249–58 (p. 257).

[4] Deborah Mawer, *French Music and Jazz in Conversation: From Debussy to Brubeck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 84–85.

5.

Shelton Brooks' song, 'Some of These Days':




*The chorus from Shelton Brooks' song 'Some of these days'*

The syncopation on the words 'You'll miss me' and 'Some of these' (bars 3 and 5) is completely characteristic of popular songs of the period.[5]

6.

[5] The repeating pattern of two quavers/two crotchets/two quavers which is a recurrent rhythm in the piano accompaniment offsets the held notes in the voice part, and the chromatic inflection in the vocal melody, for example on 'Some of these . . .' and 'You'll miss my . . .', also emphasises the wistful yearning of the lyrics (see bars 2, 4, 6 and 8 of the chorus printed above).

Evoking the Romantic sweep and unresolved chromatic suspensions and melodic decoration of Chopin's piano music is central to the poem 'Portrait of a Lady', written between February 1910 and November 1911.[6]

The speaker in 'Portrait of a Lady' reminisces about a piano recital, maybe a private one performed to a small group of invitees, where the works of Chopin were played:

> We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
> Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and fingertips.
> 'So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
> Should be resurrected only among his friends
> Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
> That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room.'

One of the ways in which piano manufacturers promoted sales of their instruments was through recitals given by well-known performers, often invited from Europe. An article in the *American Art Journal* dated 23 November 1889 commented:

> The demand for the pianoforte in the United States is largely due to performances by eminent virtuosi . . . if concert performances stopped for a year output would be halved.[7]

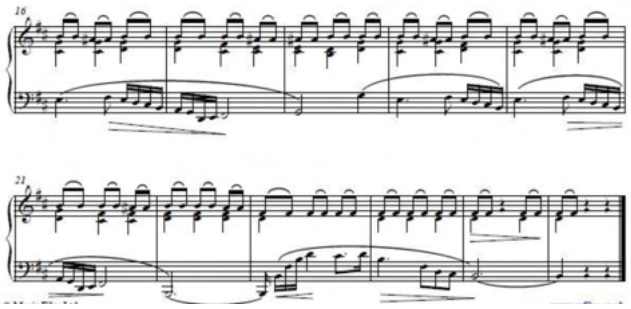
The final three lines of the last section of 'Portrait of a Lady' associate a musical cadence with dying:

> This music is successful with a 'dying fall'
> Now that we talk of dying –
> And should I have the right to smile?

The 'dying fall' is a reference to the opening lines of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night,* where Duke Orsino says:

> If music be the food of love, play on,
> Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken and so die.
> That strain again, it had a dying fall.

The significance of the melodic line having a 'dying fall' may well link back to the Chopin piano recital mentioned in the first section. Chopin's piano *Prelude No.6* (Op. 28) in B minor has repeated chords in the right hand, with a mournful bass melody played in the left hand, perhaps echoing the 'dying fall' of Eliot's poem:

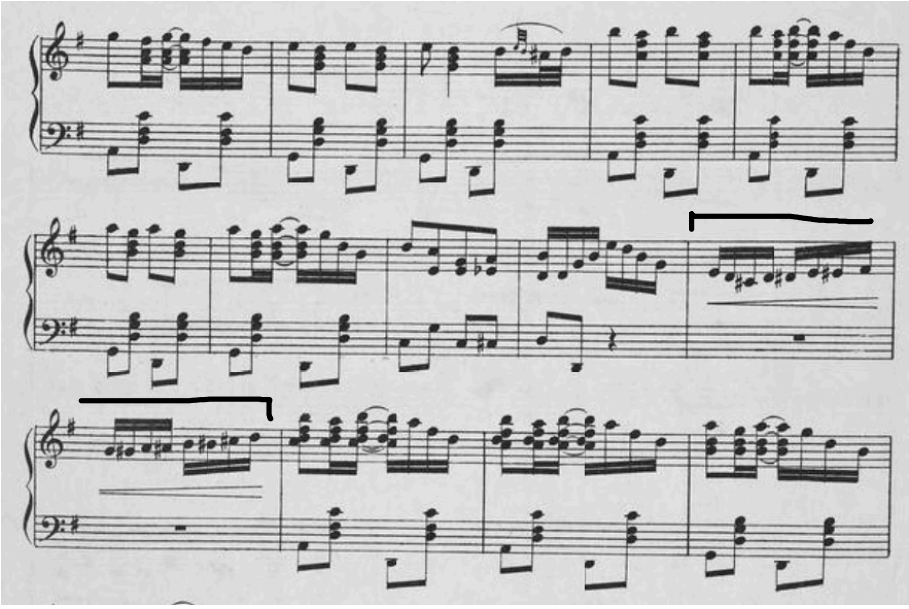


[6] Ricks and McCue, pp. 10–14. Subsequent references to the poem are from this edition.
[7] Ehrlich, p. 131.

The last four bars of the Prelude are a varied repeat the opening phrase, and this sense of bringing everything back to the start, of 'returning as before' as Eliot writes,[8] helps to reinforce the quasi-musical phrasing of the poem, which, like the *Prelude*, is in three distinct sections, connected by repeating images.

7.

Tom Turpin's 'Harlem Rag' (1897), showing the two-bar chromatic 'fill' in the right hand:



[8] Ricks and McCue, p. 13., Part III, line 1.

## APPENDIX V

*Chapter 5: Wagner and Stravinsky in 'The Waste Land'*

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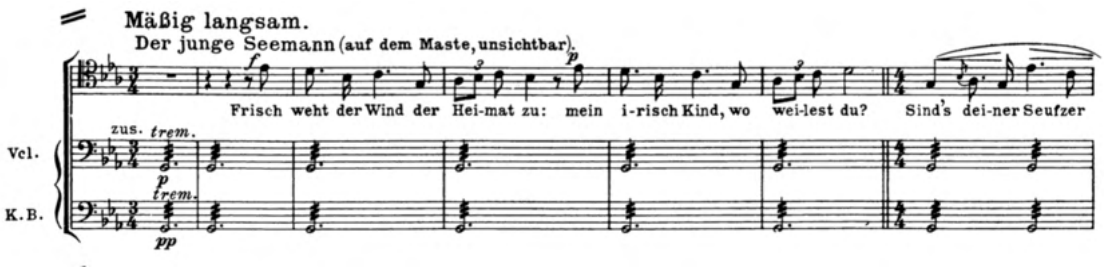
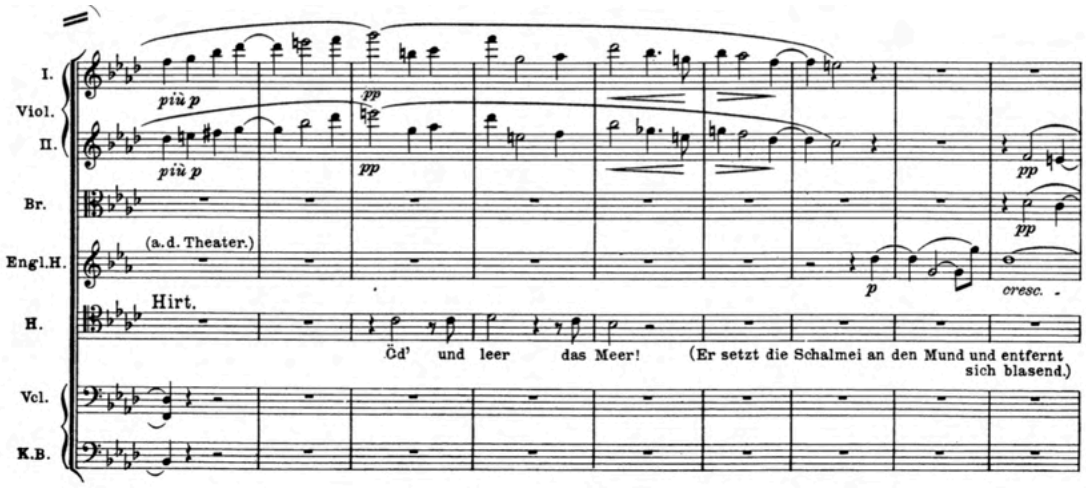
1.

In this excerpt from Act I of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*,[1] the foreboding of the young sailor's cry from the mast (off-stage in the performance) hints at the tragedy to come, heightened by the disturbing tremolando G in cellos and double basses:




2.

In Act III of *Tristan and Isolde*, a shepherd, set to keep watch, calls out that 'the sea is dull and empty':




Although there is some orchestral accompaniment to this passage, it consists of plaintive, high violins playing in thirds which rise, then fall, then rise and fall again, and which also echo the chromaticism of the famous 'Tristan chord'.

3.

The famous 'Tristan chord' from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde,* repeated three times as it modulates – and with growing intensity – at the very beginning of the Prelude to the opera:

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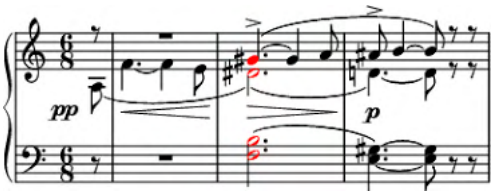
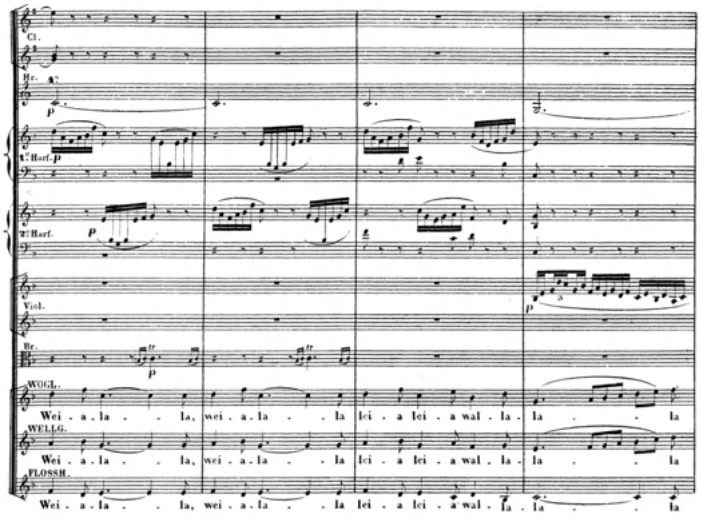
[1] Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973)

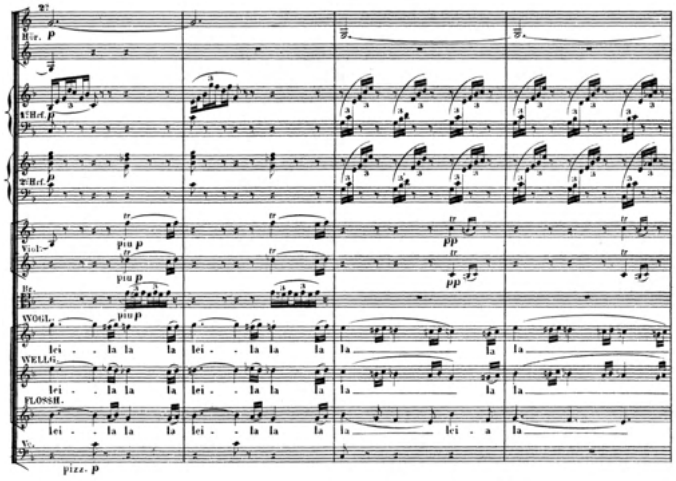



The harmonic progression seems never to be resolved, with the chord shown in red particularly disruptive to the sense of key, and thereby establishing the intense chromaticism which Wagner seems only to resolve in *Parsifal.*

4.

This is the 'Weialala leia' passage from the score of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*:




*Wagner, Act III, Part I of 'Götterdämmerung', the trio of Rhine-maidens*[2]

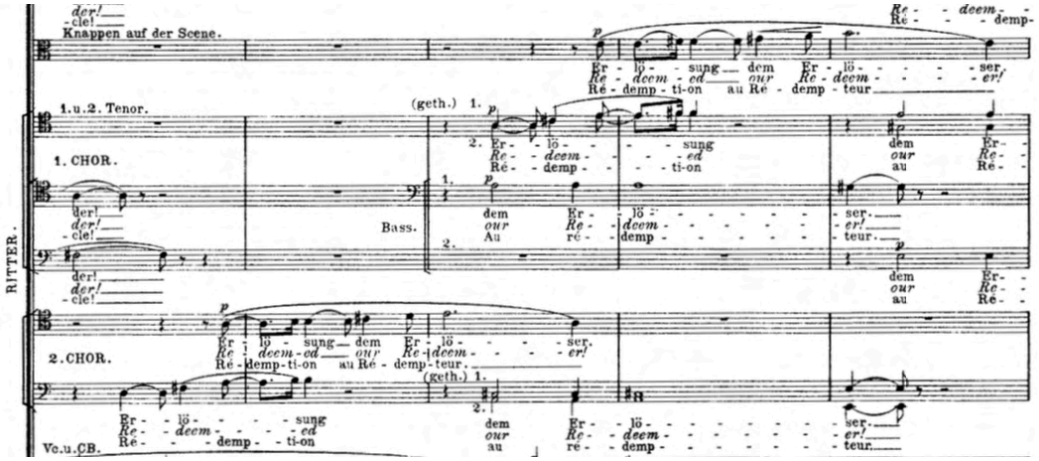
The vocal lines echo one another, but move in a synchronised, homophonic rhythm against the agitated flow of the rippling water written in the arpeggiated figures of the

[2] Richard Wagner, *Götterdämmerung* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982)

orchestra.[3] The Rhine-maidens seem remotely separate from the anxieties and concerns of the main characters in *The Ring*'s drama, in the same way that Eliot's Thames-maidens are disconnected, and then fade away into a final 'la la', as a mere distant echo of Wagner's music.

5.

The third act of Wagner's opera *Parsifal* closes with a redemptive version of the 'Grail' *leitmotif* which has appeared in the music throughout the opera. Here it appears in a re-worked version, with the rising phrases in the combined voices on the word 'Erlösung' confirming the final deliverance offered by the Grail, and through love:[4]

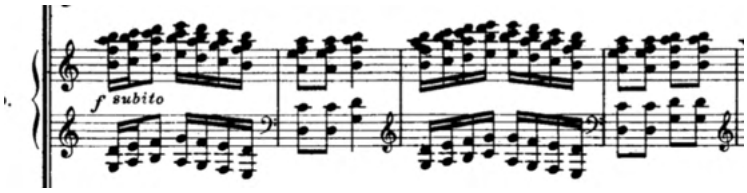



[3] Philip Waldron, 'The Music of Poetry: Wagner in "The Waste Land"', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 18.4 (1993), 421–34 (p. 433). Waldron suggests that 'Eliot scholars have tended to refer to the Rhine-maidens with excessive gravity. Flirtatious teasers, their singing here irresistibly fragments into giggling laughter and is hardly a doleful lament for lost gold'. However, Robert Donington, in *Wagner's 'Ring' and Its Symbols* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), offers a different interpretation of this musical passage, calling it a 'plaintive, beautiful trio . . . with its liquid, melody and limpid harmony', and suggesting that 'It is the old enchantment, the familiar pull backwards into irresponsible bliss, their perennial unconscious fantasy of return to the mother's embrace' (p. 246).

[4] Richard Wagner, *Parsifal* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986)

6.

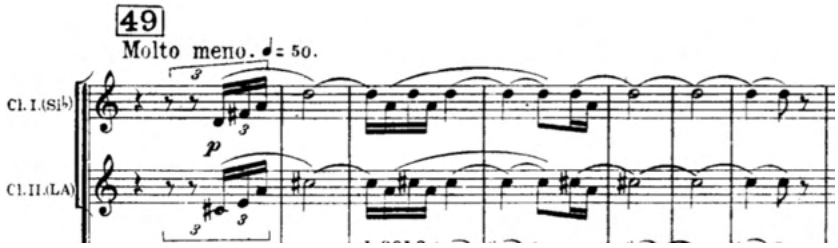
This section from the ‘Russian Dance’ in *Petrushka* illustrates the parallel motion of the chords in the piano part in the score:



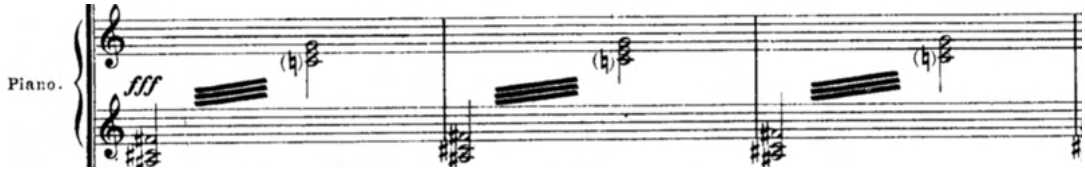

The pianist retains the same note patterns and fingering configurations in both hands, moving up and down between adjacent chords, and giving rise to unusual chord patterns (not unrelated to the compositions of Debussy, Satie, or jazz improvisors).

7.

a) The Second Tableau of the ballet, ‘Petrushka’s Room’, features two solo clarinets mournfully intoning Petrushka’s bi-tonal motif (Figure 49):[5]



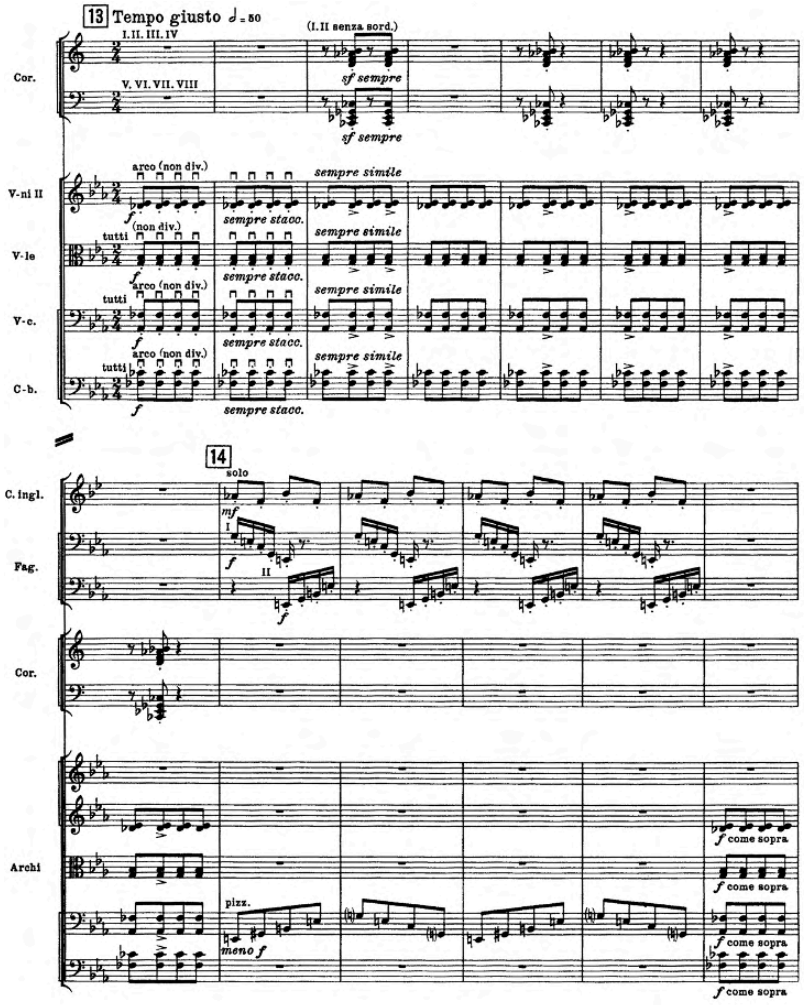

b) These same chords are savagely pounded on the piano in the following ‘Petrushka’s Curses’:




[5] Igor Stravinsky, *Petrushka* (New York: Norton, 1967)

8.

In the section of *The Rite of Spring* which Stravinsky entitles 'The Augurs of Spring – Dances of the Young Girls', the string section is treated almost like another percussion section:




The first eight bars of the score in this section are dominated by the strings playing dissonant chords with sudden changes of accent, emphasised by syncopated chords played by the eight French horns. The string players are instructed to play with repeated downward bow strokes, which not only emphasise the heavy chordal accents, but which also intensify the aggressive physicality of the live performance. A contrasting four-bar section featuring contrary motion arpeggios from bassoons and cellos, rhythmically contrasted, is played against an insistent four-note repeated motif from the cor anglais, interrupts the pounding string chords before they are resumed once again.

## APPENDIX VI

*Chapter 6: Eliot's 'Four Quartets' and Beethoven's A minor String Quartet*

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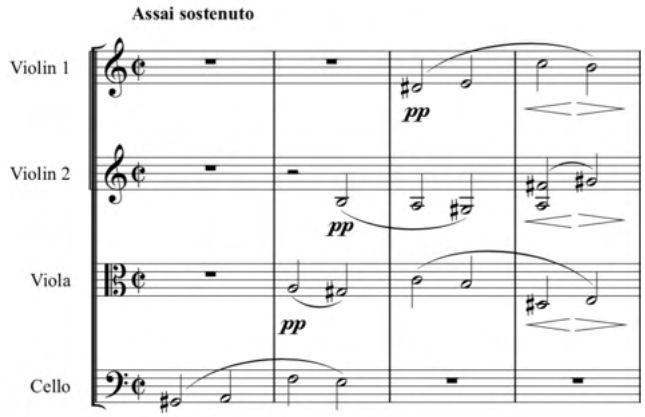
1.

Beethoven's A minor Quartet (Op. 132)[1] is generated by the interval of a semitone from its very opening, forming a motif of four notes which starts in the cello and is imitated in the other parts:

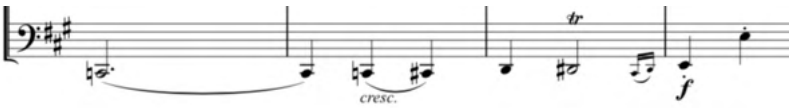



*Opening bars of the first movement (1-4)*

The four-note motif, G# - A, followed by a rising minor sixth to an F which then falls by a semitone to an E, initiates the eight-bar introductory *Assai sostenuto* [Always sustained] section.

2.

Beethoven works through the implications of the opening motif of his A minor Quartet to the close of the fifth movement:




*Cello part showing rising semitone sequence (bars 395-398)*

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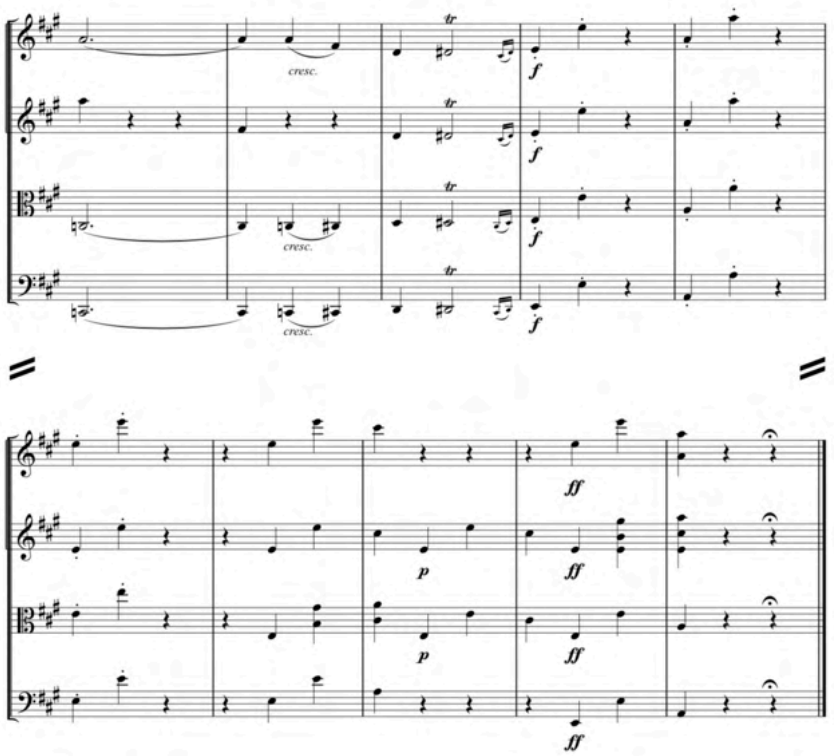
[1] Ludwig van Beethoven, *String Quartet in A minor (Op. 132)* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970)

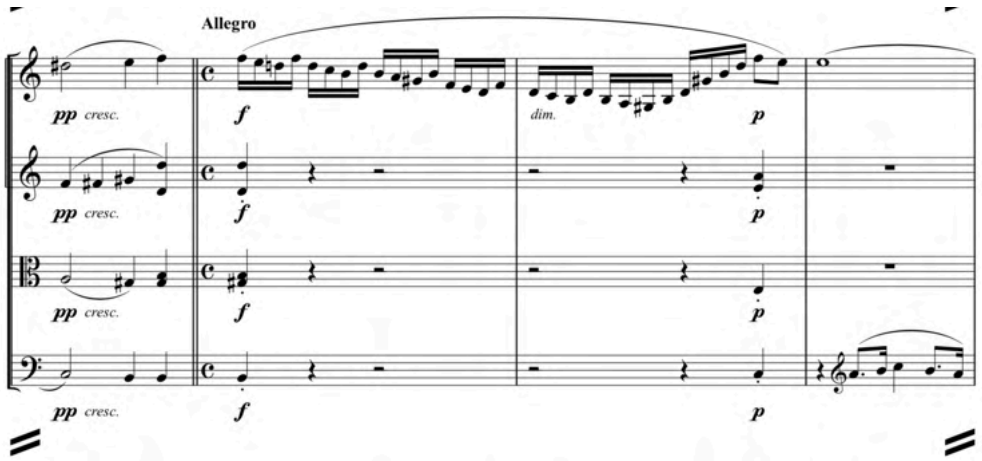


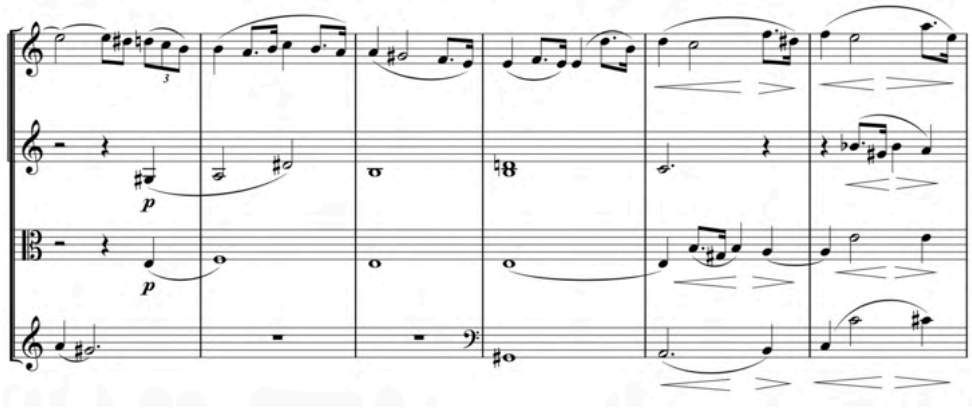

*The final bars of the fifth movement (395-404)*

The rising semitone G# – A which Beethoven introduces at the beginning of the first movement, and which is answered in the falling F – E completing the four note 'meta-motif', is finally resolved in the chromatic rising passage begun in the cello. All four instruments finally join the viola and cello in octaves (bar 397), leading to the emphatic dominant-tonic resolution E – A which concludes the Quartet. The perfect cadence, repeated three times at the conclusion of the piece, brings a sense of closure to the work and answers the initial question posed by the opening motif of the quartet.

3.

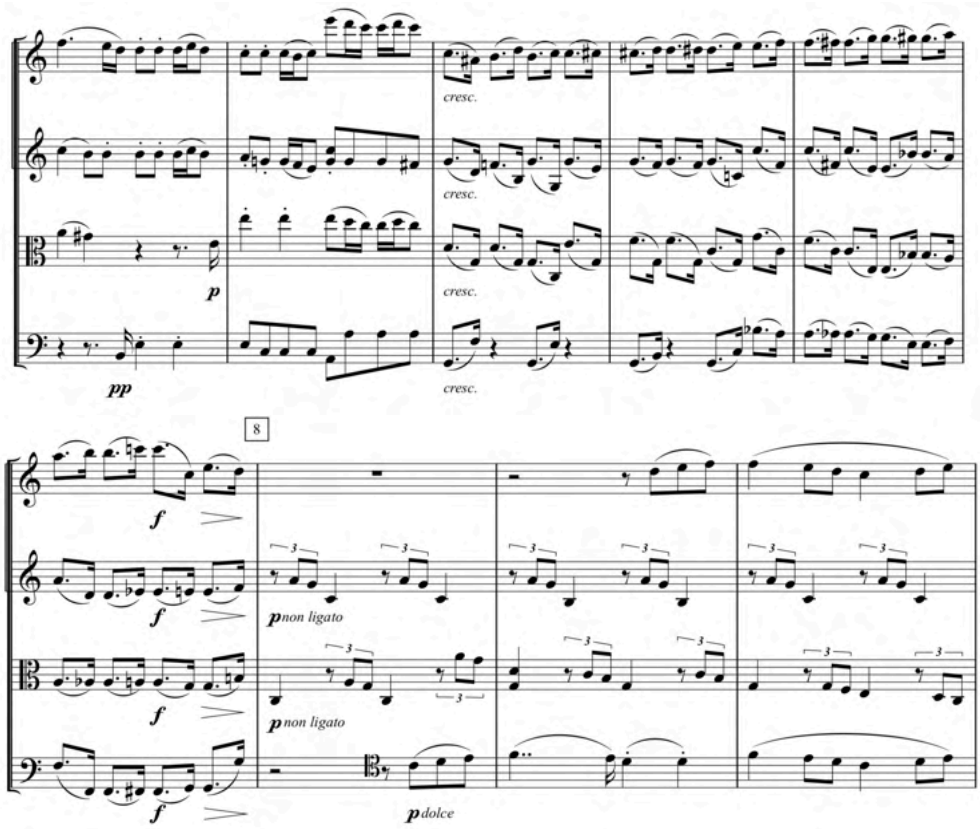
The first movement Allegro begins with a cadenza-like semiquaver passage from violin I, before the new theme, developed from the opening chromatic 'meta-motif', is played first on the cello, before being taken up by the other instruments.





*First movement Allegro (bars 9-18)*

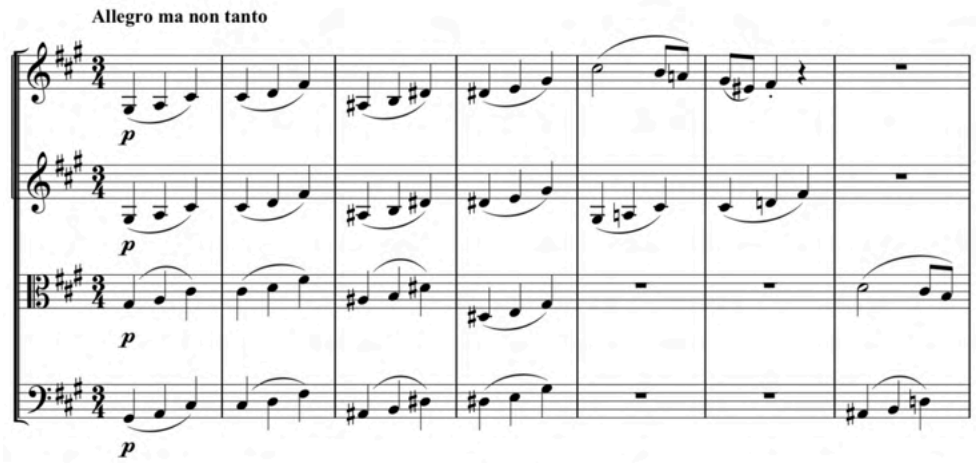
The dotted rhythm is used to develop more tension, enhanced by the contrary motion between the first violin and the cello, as the music progresses towards a new version of the Allegro theme, which enters in the cello against arpeggiated triplet figures in the second violin and the viola.




*First movement, development section (bars 153-161)*

4.

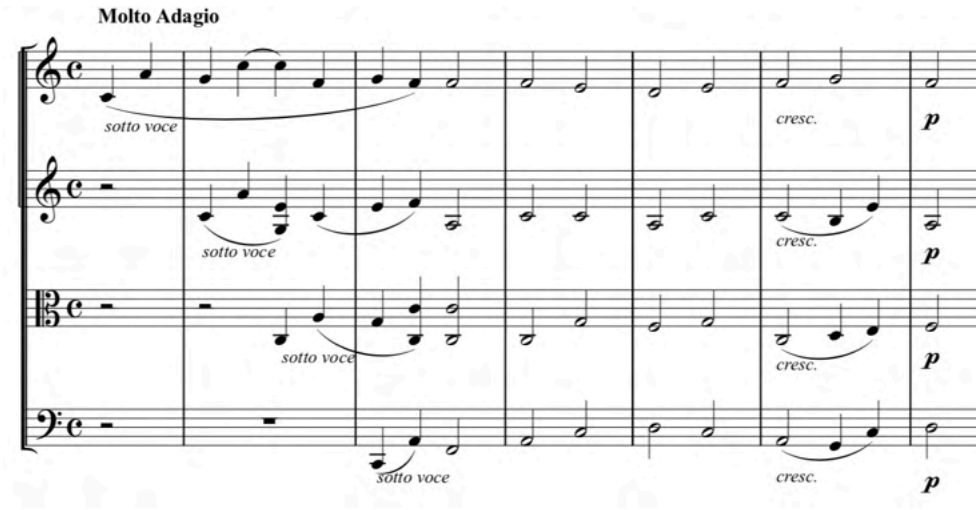
The second movement theme is also linked to the opening motif of the first movement through a rising chromatic inflection, emphasised by the repeat of the lower chromatic auxiliary note across the bar line in the antecedent phrase. The consequent phrase of the theme also mirrors the 'meta-motif' in its falling notes and in the chromatic rise at the end.




*Second movement opening (bars1-7)*

5.

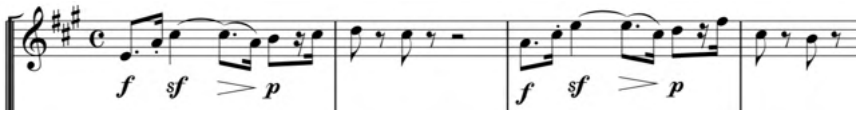
The theme of the third 'Heiliger Dankgesang' movement is also generated by the opening 'meta-motif', this time by the rising interval of a sixth, changed from a minor sixth in the original to the major sixth of the Lydian mode.




*Third movement opening (bars 1-7)*

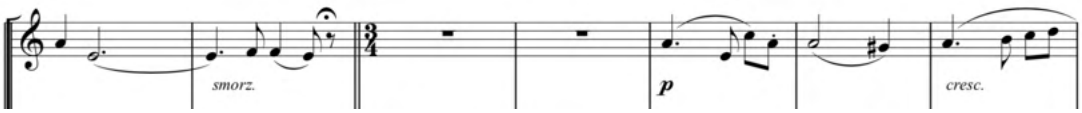
6.

The opening motifs of the fourth and fifth movements are also related to the quartet's opening 'meta-motif'




*a) Opening theme of the fourth movement, Alla marcia, assai vivace (bars 1-4)*

In the fourth movement theme, Beethoven again uses the interval of a rising sixth, but this time filled in with the interim stepping-note to produce an arpeggiated second-inversion tonic chord in the first violin. The chromatic inflection from the motif is preserved in the accompanying cello part.

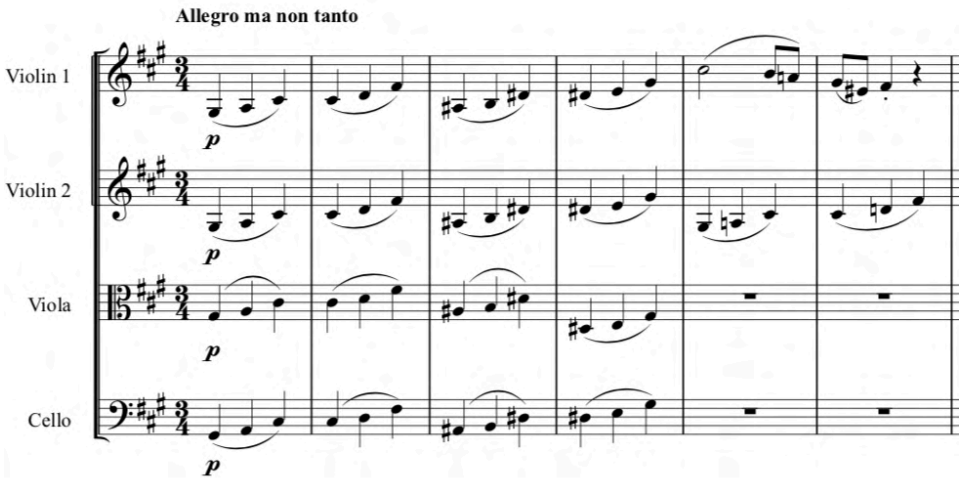



*b) Opening of the fifth movement, Allegro appassionato (bars 1-10)*

The combination of falling semitones in the second violin, minor sixth double-stopped chords in the viola, and a first violin theme which encompasses both the rising minor sixth interval and the chromatic inflection of the 'meta-motif' demonstrates once more how Beethoven unifies the entire Quartet through the use of motivic elements and thematic/motivic transformation.

7.

In the second movement, the repetition of the same note across the bar line destabilises the forward impulse of the tune:

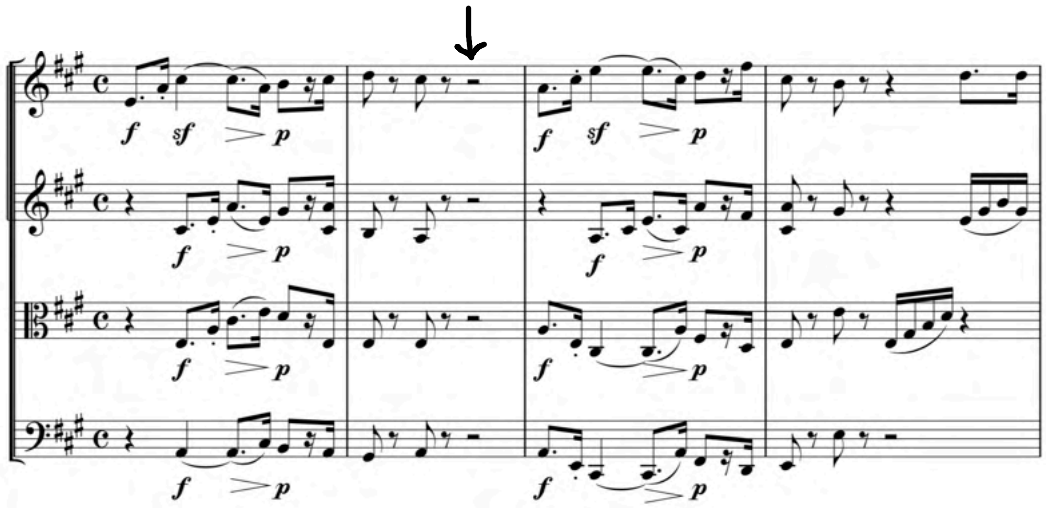



*Opening of the second movement (bars 1-6)*

The opening G# – A rising semitone is reiterated as C# – D, and then as A# – B moving to D# - E, played in octaves in all four instruments. However, it is in the repetition of the C# crotchets in bars 1 and 2 and the D# crotchets in bars 3 and 4 (see highlighted notes in the example above) that the rhythmic dislocation occurs, as Beethoven makes the music appear to stall or stutter for a moment on the unexpectedly repeated note. This opening two-bar theme with its repeated note is then used as the accompaniment for the new melody, played in the first violin in bars 5 and 6.

8.

The music sounds as though it is beginning with an introductory upbeat onto the strong first beat of what feels like a triple-beat (3/4) bar, but in fact the tune *starts* on the first beat, and it only properly establishes a four-beat (4/4) pulse at the end of the fourth bar, with an upbeat figure in the first violin leading into a much more predictable tune and rhythm. The rhythmic disruption is caused not only by the surprising placement of the melodic accents, which lead the listener to hear a triple metre, but also by the unanticipated silence of two beats occurring at the end of the second bar, completely dislocating the pulse.

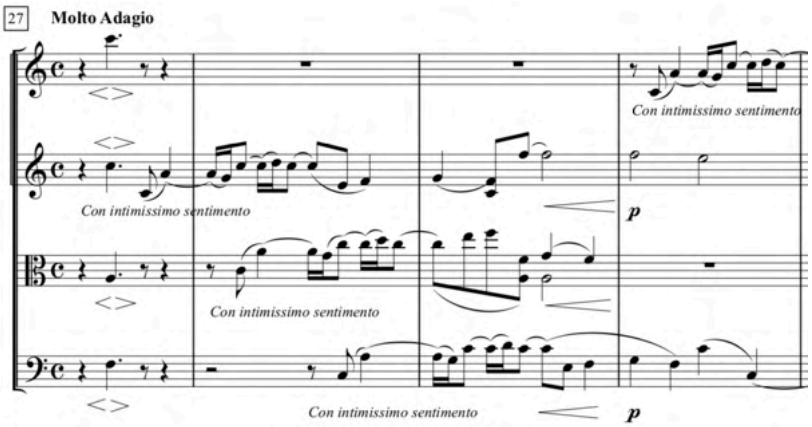


*Fourth movement opening phrase (bars 1-4)*

This makes the two empty beats at the end of bar 2 feel as though the periodic timing of the melody has been dislodged, leaving the listener uncertain about the pulse of the music. Beethoven repeats this rhythmic ambiguity in bars 3 and 4 of the melody, although semiquaver figures in bar 4 in the viola and second violin, on the third and fourth beats respectively, fill the silence which jolted the four-beat rhythm in bar 2. The dotted rhythm at the end of the fourth bar in the first violin now gives the listener the expected upbeat lead into the melody which begins in the fifth bar, restoring the predictable, four-beat pulse of the music.

9.

Beethoven puts a chord, dynamically emphasised, on the second beat, with the rhythm of the fugal theme being tied across the strong pulse of the bar-line.

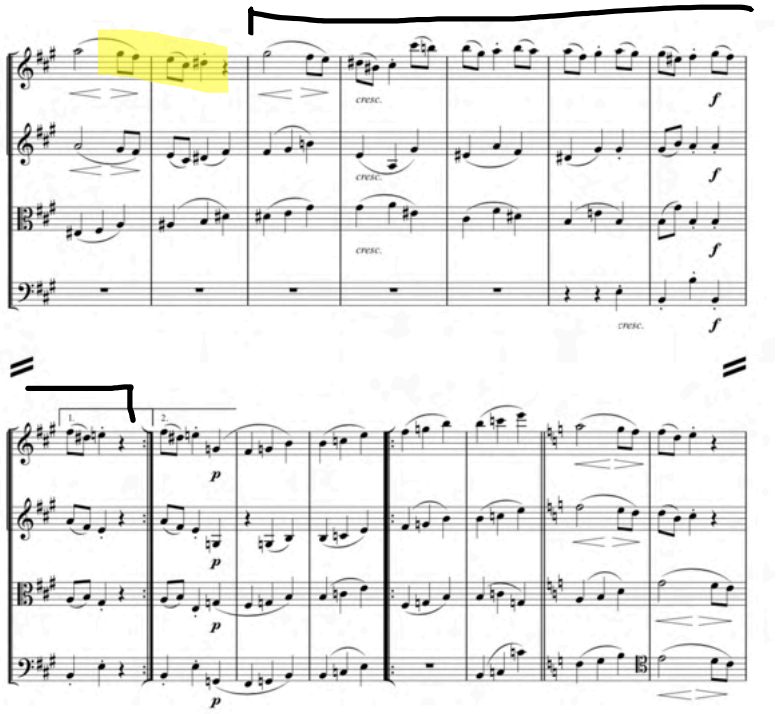



*Third movement, final section (bars 84-87)*

The musical effect of this is to suspend any sense of 'beat', so that for the listener the pulse of the music is much harder to detect.

10.

In the second movement, Beethoven disrupts the expected key relationships and logical tonal transitions between sections, for example, in the abrupt shift of key from A major into C major at the end of the second-time bar.

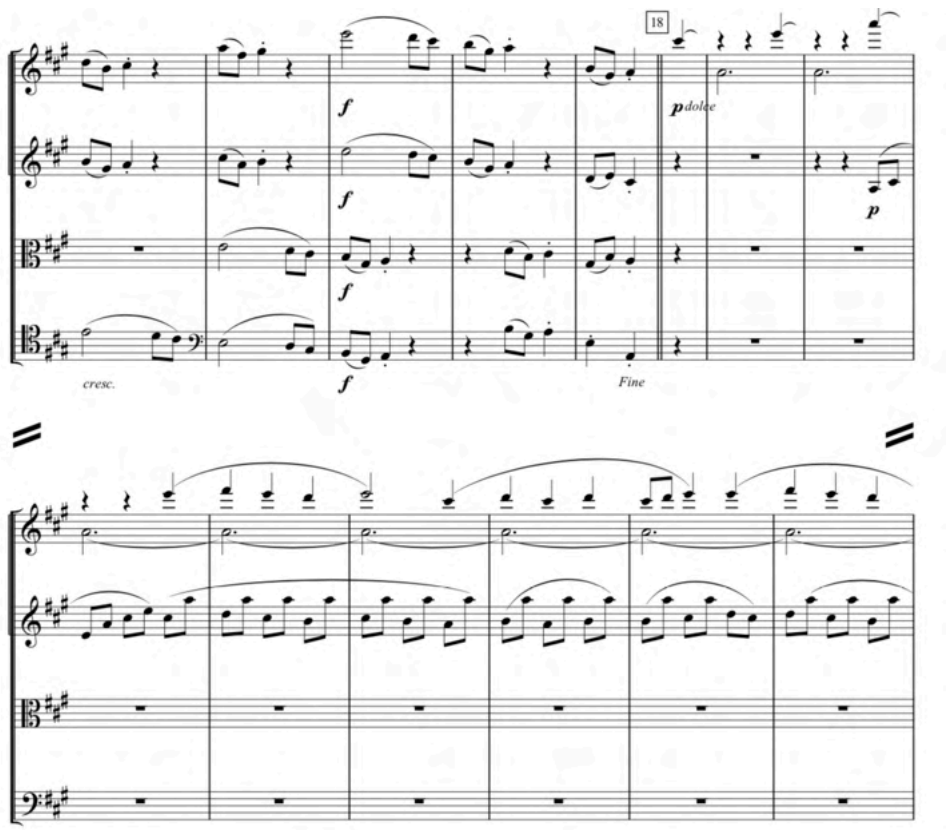



*Second movement minuet (bars 15-28)*

The pattern of four quavers and a crotchet (highlighted), which comprises the second part of the minuet melody, is repeated time after time to destabilise the strong triple accent. By compressing the two-bar phrase into a hemiola-like dominant/tonic sequence in the final six bars of the section (underneath the square bracket), Beethoven undermines the periodic structure of the minuet.

11.

The musette, which Beethoven juxtaposes with the courtly minuet, is a country dance played on the bagpipes, just as much 'an Arcadian fantasy'[2] as Marie Antoinette's *Petit Trianon*. The bagpipe drones are imitated by sustained open A-string notes which pervade the entire 'trio' section, tethering the music to a persistent A-major tonality:




*Second movement: last five bars of the minuet, leading to the musette (bars 115-138)*

The emphatic first note of the Allemande dance-form, originally played strongly on the first beat of the bar, becomes a light up-beat into the drone of the musette (see figure 18 in the musical example), almost as though, having wrong-footed the aristocracy in the minuet, Beethoven is now 'tripping up the peasantry'.[3]

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[2] Daniel K. L. Chua, *The 'Galitzin' Quartets of Beethoven: Opp. 127, 132, 130* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 261.
[3] Chua, p. 121.

12.

Some critics have noted the possible influence of Bartók's string quartets on the composition of Eliot's *Four Quartets.*

Bartók's music was broadcast by the BBC on the Third Programme throughout the late 1920s and in the 1930s: his First and Third Quartets were performed in concerts aired respectively on 7 May 1928 and on 12 February 1929, when Eliot may well have tuned in to listen.[4] Hugh Kenner and Genesius Jones both propose Bartók's String Quartets as potential models for *Four Quartets*, with Kenner writing that 'Eliot is reported to have said that he was paying attention chiefly to Bartók's Quartets, Nos. 2-6', while Jones favours the influence of the final Sixth Quartet (not begun until 1939 and only premiered in 1941).[5] Given that Eliot enjoyed attending concerts as much as he did the opera and ballet, it is likely that he would have heard performances of Bartók's chamber music at some time during the inter-war years, as well as, perhaps, on gramophone recordings. Pound might also be seen as a contributory influence on Eliot's acquaintance with Bartók's Quartets, since the Rapallo concerts organised by Pound introduced audiences to a rich variety of contemporary music, including, in the 1934-1935 season, Bartók's First and Fourth Quartets (1908 and 1928).[6] Pound also heard the New Hungarian Quartet performing Bartók's Fifth Quartet (1934) at the Venice Biennale of Music in 1936, writing to Tibor Serly that he might entice them to play in Rapallo for '500 lire and a night's lodging'.[7]

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[4] Jennifer Ruth Doctor, 'The BBC and the Ultra-Modern Problem: A Documentary Study of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Dissemination of Second Viennese School Repertory, 1922-1936. (Volumes I-III)' (unpublished PhD, Northwestern University, 1993), pp. 185 and 608.

[5] Mildred Meyer Boaz, 'T.S. Eliot and Music: A Study of the Development of Musical Structures in Selected Poems by T.S. Eliot and Music by Erik Satie, Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók' (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1977), p. 142. Boaz also quotes the reference to the influence of Bartók's Quartets 2-6 in Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot* (London: Allen, 1960) where he says in a footnote that he owes 'this information to Mr J.C. Hodgart of Pembroke College, Cambridge (p. 261). See also Genesius Jones, *Approach to the Purpose: A Study of the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964) p. 265.

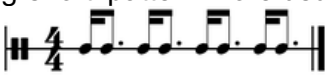
[6] A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet II The Epic Years, 1921-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 195.

[7] Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. by D.D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 282.

# APPENDIX VII

## GLOSSARY OF MUSIC TERMS

| | |
|---|---|
| chromatic | In a chromatic scale, each note is separated by the interval of a semitone from its adjacent note. Chromatic harmony is when sharps and flats are used to adjust the pitch of notes within the framework of the current key in order to introduce additional chords and keys (e.g. in Wagner's famous 'Tristan' chord). |
| diatonic | Within the traditional system of Western harmony, the pattern of a key is established by the combination of two tetrachords where the notes are separated by the intervals of two whole tones and a semitone (TTS), the two tetrachords themselves separated by a whole tone. This gives rise to the pattern TTSTTTS. Music which is said to be 'diatonic' largely preserves this obvious sense of key and tonality. |
| flat | The 'flat' sign indicates that the pitch of a note should be lowered by a semitone. In a key signature, it shows which notes should be adjusted throughout the entire piece (except where an accidental intervenes). |
| ligature | In music notation, a ligature is a symbol which indicates that two or more notes should be performed in a single gesture or phrase, and on a single syllable. Ligatures are particularly characteristic in the neumatic and mensural notation used in the medieval period. |
| Lydian mode | One of the original medieval Gregorian church modes, the Lydian mode has a raised fourth degree, e.g. F-F played on the white notes of the piano, giving a B natural where in a diatonic scale you would get a B flat to preserve the diatonic pattern. In the middle ages, the B natural would have been changed to a B flat by the process of 'musica ficta'. |
| mode | Inspired by theories of ancient Greek music, a mode in medieval church music refers to a scales which had a particular set of characteristics. In modern terms, we think of 'modal' as meaning music which has a flattened seventh. Modality is also characteristic of jazz. |
| natural | A sign in music which adjusts a previously sharpened or flattened note to its |
| pentatonic scale | A scale of five notes which is familiar in folk music and in jazz. |
| plainsong | The body of chant used in the Western church. Based on the system of church modes, the music features an unmetrical, highly flexible rhythm, which responds to the stresses of the words. |
| retrograde | In music this refers to a line which is the reverse of a rhythm or melody which has previously occurred. Although now usually associated with the serialism of Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, reversed patterns in music from an earlier period were called |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ‘cancrizans’ [literally ‘walking backwards’, from the Latin for crab]. Messiaen devises patterns which have a central pivot-point, so that they are the same forwards as backwards: ‘non-retrogradable’. |
| Scotch-snap | Also referred to as a ‘Lombard rhythm’, the pattern features a short note followed by a longer one, running counter to the ‘long-short’ pattern more usually followed in dotted notes, e.g.  |
| sharp | The ‘sharp’ sign indicates that the pitch of a note should be raised by a semitone. In a key signature, it shows which notes should be adjusted throughout the entire piece (except where an accidental intervenes). |
| syncopation | The stresses of the music run counter to the main beats of the bar. |
| whole-tone scale | A scale where each of the notes is separated from its neighbour by a whole tone (TTTTTT). This gives rise to a different sense of tonality, for example found in works by Debussy, Ravel and Satie. |