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Invisible Excess: Music and the Melodramatic Imagination

by

David Stuart Hayman

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Comparative Literature—Film Studies

Department of Comparative Literature, Religion, and Film and Media Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2002

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The undersigned here certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Invisible Excess: Music and the Melodramatic Imagination* submitted by David Stuart Hayman in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Comparative Literature—Film Studies.

Aniko Bodroghkozy

for A. Bodroghkozy

Adam Krims

David Gramit

02/11/01

On voit clairement ici les limites de ce matérialisme ambigu: bien loin qu'il prenne appui sur les branches les plus avancées de la science, son domaine privilégié demeure celui même où l'esprit scientifique n'a pu encore réellement pénétrer. Matérialisme para-, ou plutot pré-scientifique, et par là même nécessairement occultiste.

Here one sees clearly the limits of this ambiguous materialism: though it has long been supported by the most advanced branches of science, its privileged domain remains precisely that which the scientific mind has not yet been able to really penetrate. A para-, or rather, pre-scientific materialism, and thus even necessarily occultist.

Jean Ehrard, *L'idée de la nature en France à l'aube des Lumières*

Abstract

This thesis argues that instrumental music in melodrama—i.e. background or "nondiegetic" music—represents a paradoxical Western nostalgia with roots in Enlightenment discourse about "nature." The first chapter explores the musico-linguistic theories of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and their manifestation in his "lyric scene," *Pygmalion*; it then goes on to argue for the historical continuity of this musico-linguistic discourse with reference to a recent Hollywood melodrama, *Contact*. The second chapter explores a more problematic aspect of this discourse, namely its "whiteness": the use of instrumental music in conjunction with such racial stereotypes as the "noble savage" to address a perceived loss of "nature," where "nature" ultimately turns out to be some invisible essence of life with which a modern industrialized society can nevertheless feel itself to be in tune. The melodramas referred to—*The Indian Princess*, *Dances with Wolves*, and, in the conclusion, *The X-Files*—again suggest a historical continuity.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The correct pronunciation of the word "covert," so the language mavens tell us, is as though one were adding a "t" to "cover." This is a pronunciation seldom heard in North America these days; the only occasion it has ever seemed called for to me is in a passage from *Sense and Sensibility*, soon after Marianne is rescued by Willoughby. Eager to know more about him, she plies Sir John Middleton with questions; obligingly, he describes how Willoughby danced one night "'from eight o'clock until four, without once sitting down.' 'Did he indeed?' cried Marianne, with sparkling eyes, 'and with elegance, with spirit?' 'Yes, and he was up again at eight to ride to covert.'" (Austen 38). The long "o" favoured today in the pronunciation of "covert" seems to my ear completely out of place here, but the language mavens are fighting a losing battle against this pronunciation, especially since "covert" as a noun has dropped from use. The argument that "cover" and "covert" share the same derivation, and should therefore be pronounced the same, is of little or no interest to most people; what is of interest to them, and what I believe accounts for the current pronunciation of "covert," is what one might call its melodramatic etymology, which derives "covert" not by adding a "t" to "cover" but by adding a "c" to "overt." I don't think it's going too far to say that "covert's" long "o" rests on conceiving "covert" as the antithesis of the utopian state of openness and transparency embodied by "overt," even though the word "overt" itself may never be—overtly—paired with "covert" in any given phrase. I believe "covert's" long "o" is a product of the melodramatic sensibilities of popular culture, which, in the post-Watergate era, has been receptive to the view that we rarely encounter "truth" in its pure, primal

form, that what goes by the name of "truth" has been winnowed and filtered through the self-interested, reductive rationality of huge, secretive organizations, government, military, or industrial. (Rationality as the letter "c," if you like, with apologies to Wallace Stevens.)

The North American pronunciation of "covert" is just one example of why it is legitimate to speak of melodrama as "an epistemological and imaginative paradigm" (Gledhill 20) rather than as simply a hackneyed narrative genre. We may describe a person or event as "melodramatic," but this usually implies an incidental resemblance—reality has, for the moment, taken on the well-defined features of a melodramatic plot. The comparison implicit in "covert's" long "o," however, provides no such semantic security: the well-defined features of reality are themselves in question, a glass through which we see the "truth" darkly, rather than face to face. Melodrama, in this view, is not some debased form of tragedy, with extravagantly emotional characters and absurdly improbable plots; it is a manifestation of "the spiritualist imagination," an "effort to perceive and image the spiritual in a world voided of its traditional Sacred" (Brooks 11). For Peter Brooks, whose view this is, the process that has resulted in a "desacralized" world "was set in motion at the Renaissance, passed through the momentary compromise of Christian humanism, and gathered momentum during the Enlightenment" (Brooks 15); its "convulsive last act" was the French Revolution,

> the moment that symbolically, and really, marks the final liquidation of the traditional Sacred and its representative institutions (Church and Monarch), the shattering of the myth of Christendom, the dissolution of an organic and hierarchically cohesive society, and the invalidation of the

> literary forms—tragedy, comedy of manners—that depended on such a society. (Brooks 15)

Brooks' study, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, is focussed on the most significant and popular narrative form to emerge from this historical breach—melodrama—and on its pervasive influence among nineteenth-century novelists. Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, and James are his prominent examples, but he cites several others whose ambitions either "belong to the same [melodramatic] mode" (Brooks 198) (Dickens, Dostoevsky, Conrad, Gogol, Proust, Lawrence, Faulkner) or are specifically and diametrically opposed to it (Flaubert, Maupassant, Beckett, Robbe-Grillet). Melodrama is thus "a peculiarly modern form" (Brooks 14), in the sense that, like much modern (for Brooks, this means "post-Enlightenment") art, it feels "itself to be constructed on, and over, the void, postulating meanings and symbolic systems which have no certain justification because they are backed by no theology and no universally accepted social code" (Brooks 21).

The difference between a Balzac and a Beckett, in Brooks' view, does not lie in the existential dilemma they perceive themselves, through their writing, to be addressing; it lies rather in their respective responses to that dilemma—the melodramatist is not content to yield to a void of meaning; the void must rather yield to the melodramatist's desire for meaning. "Truth," for the melodramatic imagination, may be obscured, repressed, or ignored, but it still has a viable and valuable presence in the universe, and it is the melodramatist's task to invoke the "truth" with all the rhetorical means at his or her disposal, to clarify "the cosmic moral sense of everyday gestures" (Brooks 13-4):

> [W]hen the law—social, moral, natural, rhetorical—falls silent, a new

> form of enactment and demonstration, a new creative rhetoric of moral law arises to demonstrate that it is still possible to find and to show the operation of basic ethical imperatives, to define, in conflictual opposition, the space of their play. That they can be staged "proves" that they exist: the melodramatic mode not only uses these imperatives but consciously assumes the role of bringing them into dramatized and textual—provisional—existence. (Brooks 201)

Brooks' elucidation of the aesthetics and dramaturgy of melodrama turns on the insight that they exist to infuse the audience with the "promise that life is truly inhabited by primal, intense, polarized forces—forces primal and intense because they are polarized—that can be made manifest" (Brooks 205). The "mode of excess" of melodrama is thus a function of the perception that "truth," in a "post-sacred universe" (Brooks 33), is somehow denied a full presence in what we know as reality: if "truth" is in "excess" of reality, then a strict realism will be inadequate to represent it. Melodrama's "pure and polar concepts of darkness and light, salvation and damnation" (Brooks ix), its heightening of language and emotion, its dramaturgy of coincidences, confrontations, reversals, and recognitions, its full and frequent use of music, gesture, and mise-en-scène as significant registers of meaning, are all ways of pointing—are, indeed, always pointing—towards "the 'second drama' hidden behind the written drama" (Brooks 75), the "occult realm of true feeling and value" (Brooks 75) that transcends reality. Melodramatic discourse consists precisely of the postulation of this "covert" ethical and spiritual drama, and the narrative vehicle that makes it "overt," the crucible where reality is forged into a transparent medium for the "truth."

The Melodramatic Imagination, first published in 1976, was part of, and makes reference to, "a recent renewal of critical interest in the forms of popular literature" (Brooks x). This "renewal of critical interest" is no longer recent, and in the last twenty-five years it has expanded beyond literature to include all forms of popular culture. *The Melodramatic Imagination* has remained a point of reference for much subsequent scholarship about melodrama, however, because, though certainly not the first study to focus on melodrama, it was the first "to investigate melodrama on its own terms and take seriously its appeal" (Gledhill 29). This effort to understand melodrama qua melodrama has been particularly important to film theory, which, until Brooks' study,

> either valued melodrama only if it could be shown, through analysis of covert operations not available to its audiences, to be "symptomatically" ruptured; or critiqued the form as an instrument of the capitalist culture industries, which imposed on or mystified the mass audience. (Gledhill 29)

These restricted, Marxist-influenced views of melodrama were the product of a critical discipline that was, like melodrama itself, still struggling for scholarly acceptance; the tension between its own aspirations and the fact that melodrama, with all its pejorative—i.e. "feminine," commercial—associations and connotations, has been a pervasive influence in the development of narrative cinema made it a particularly problematic subject for film theory. The implication, for example, that the audience unable to "see through" the melodramatic "excess" of *Imitation of Life* [1959] to director Douglas Sirk's ironic commentary on American bourgeois culture was "likely to be female" (Gledhill 12), gave the first of the views quoted above "an implicitly misogynist edge" (Gledhill

12). The title chosen by the Tübingen Soap Opera Project for its ethnography of female soap opera viewers, not to mention the project itself, was a direct response to this patronizing attitude: "'Don't treat us like we're so stupid and naïve'."

But Brooks' work also stands apart from this sort of ethnographic, reader-oriented research, despite a shared willingness to accept melodrama "on its own terms": because his focus is on melodrama as a historically persistent discourse of transcendence, he is not concerned with its audience as a specific gender, class, or even nationality; and melodrama's cosmopolitan and enduring appeal makes its own argument for the validity of this approach. It does have its limits, however, and it is in Brooks' characterization of melodrama as a "drama of the ineffable" (Brooks 75) that I believe those limits are reached. One of the central features of the melodramatic mode is "the seeming paradox that the total expressivity assigned to gesture is related to the ineffability of what is to be expressed" (Brooks 10-11)—the more grandiose the gesture, the more fully meaningful it is felt to be, and yet the less is that meaning defined in any precise, articulate way. Melodrama has a distinct preference for non-linguistic modes of expression, for affect over articulation, and Brooks gives us an entire chapter on the importance of pantomime and the role of mute characters in its historical development and rhetorical repertoire. This analysis reveals a deeply nostalgic vein in melodramatic discourse, a desire to display, witness, and experience unreflexive, unmediated—"pure"—emotions:

> The use of mute gesture in melodrama reintroduces a figuration of the primal language onto the stage, where it carries immediate, primal spiritual meanings which the language code, in its demonetization, has obscured, alienated, lost. Mute gesture is an expressionistic means—

> precisely the means of melodrama—to render meanings which are ineffable, but nonetheless operative within the sphere of human ethical relationships. (Brooks 72)

The idea that the language code of the present is indicative of some post-lapsarian stage in human history is, Brooks argues, a product of eighteenth-century speculations on the origins of language; he refers, as examples, to those of the French *philosophes* Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, both of whom gave dramatic form to their theories in their efforts to reform—to "re-naturalize"—classical French theatre and opera. The value of these philosophical speculations for Brooks is that they do manage to cast some light on melodrama's penchant for unadulterated sentiment: cries, inarticulate words, and gestures are signs of "the language of nature, the language to which all creatures instinctively have recourse to express their primal reactions and emotions" (Brooks 67-8). They have a kind of instinctual priority over words, which, "however unrepressed and pure, however transparent as vehicles for the expression of basic relations and verities, appear to be not wholly adequate to the representation of meanings" (Brooks 56). Melodrama's "drama of the ineffable" reflects a desire to transcend the expressive inadequacies of language, to "get back" the emotional purity and plenitude experienced in the mythical *premiers temps* of the species. Melodramatic discourse, then, has pretensions to universality: when it invokes "natural" feelings it is, invariably, presuming to invoke "universal" ones. But just how "universal" is this nostalgia for "nature"? Is "nature" inevitably associated with some past condition or state?

These are not questions that Brooks, in his effort to rehabilitate melodrama as a critical term, is concerned to answer, but the rise of post-colonial studies, and the

subsequent awareness of how thoroughly the constitution of modern (again, meaning "post-Enlightenment") Western culture has been informed by imperialism, has made such questions unavoidable. Indeed, it is now something of an axiom in this field that "nature," as a trope of modern Western representation, is imperialistic to its roots, in the yearning for "roots," in the sorts of objects, images, and feelings that embody "roots"; its very conception and definition, as well as the contexts in which it is invoked, represent an imperialistic point of view: Tarzan must live in, and must live to master, the jungle of the imperialist imagination. As Frances Connelly argues, "it is only within the larger frame of a self-defined 'civilized' and 'rational' culture that artists can be 'primitive' and 'irrational'" (Connelly 114). The notion of a nostalgic, primal "drama of the ineffable" is inseparable from "the invention of 'primitive' art itself, a set of ideas (remarkably consistent and long-lived) forged primarily during the eighteenth century through vigorous debate concerning the origins and development of artistic expression" (Connelly 5). As Brooks makes a convincing argument for the relevance of eighteenth-century primitivism to melodrama's "aesthetics of muteness" (Brooks 62), and so at least opens the door to conceiving melodrama as a product of imperialist discourse, it comes as something of a surprise that he does not provide a similar argument in relation to its aesthetics of music, especially since he names music as the most important and influential sign of "ineffability":

> The emotional drama needs the desemanticized language of music, its evocation of the "ineffable," its tones and registers. Style, thematic structuring, modulations of tone and rhythm and voice—musical patterning in a metaphorical sense—are called upon to invest plot with

> some of the inexorability and necessity that in pre-modern literature derived from the substratum of myth. (Brooks 14)

Music both is, and is an ideal of, some fundamental register of meaning, and here Brooks himself falls prey to the same strain of nostalgia that he has, in his discussion of gesture, been attempting to open up to critical analysis. The irony is that Brooks had to hand the sources for an equally assiduous analysis of melodrama's musical aesthetics; unfortunately, he relegates Rousseau's *Pygmalion* to an endnote in his account of the history of the term "melodrama":

> Rousseau characterizes the play as "the kind of *mélodrame* most suited to the [French] language," in his 'Observations sur l'*Alceste* Italien de M. le Chevalier Gluck' [. . .] Rousseau evidently conceives of his *mélodrame* as a subspecies of opera, adapting the common Italian term for opera, *melodramma*. [. . .] Rousseau's use of the term, while belonging to a separate history, is not irrelevant to popular melodrama: since Rousseau believed French to be a language ill-suited to singing, in *Pygmalion* pantomime and mute gesture, rather than voice, accompany the musical line. *Pygmalion* indeed belongs to the problematics of language and gesture most fully argued in the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*." (217 n.14, italics original)

Brooks is not the first scholar of melodrama to feel the need to touch on *Pygmalion* and to quote from "Observations on 'Alceste'," the only text in which Rousseau explicitly discusses *Pygmalion*, but he goes further than most in suggesting a connection between *Pygmalion* and the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. The most

frequently quoted passage from "Observations on 'Alceste'," the passage which has apparently been taken to adequately elucidate the rationale behind *Pygmalion*, is Rousseau's claim that he had "devised a genre of Drama in which the words and the Music, instead of proceeding together, are made to be heard in succession, and in which the spoken phrase is in a way announced and prepared by the musical phrase" (Rousseau 1998: 497). But this passage is the culmination of a long discussion of the difficulties of combining music and language; quoted on its own, it elides the evident nostalgia of Rousseau's thinking, which can be summed up in the fact that combining music and language in some fashion is now necessary, whereas they once were one. The most significant passage from "Observations on 'Alceste'," to my mind, is Rousseau's characterization of *Pygmalion* as "a mean genre between simple declamation and genuine melodrama, whose beauty it will never attain" (Rousseau 1998: 497). Brooks is not entirely accurate in suggesting that Rousseau was "adapting" the term *mélodrame* to refer to *Pygmalion*; his use of *mélodrame* is always cognate with *melodramma*, i.e. a drama entirely sung. But it is accurate for him to say, with Rousseau, that *Pygmalion* was "the kind of *mélodrame* most suited to the [French] language," because for Rousseau the French language was "destitute of all accent" and "not at all appropriate for Music" (Rousseau 1998: 497). "Genuine melodrama," as he makes quite clear earlier in "Observations on 'Alceste'," is ancient Greek tragedy, because the ancient Greek language was "truly harmonious and musical, had of itself a melodious accent; it needed only to have rhythm joined to it in order to produce musical declamation; thus not only tragedies, but all poetry was necessarily sung" (Rousseau 1998: 494-5). This nostalgia for the "original" unity of music and language underlying the conception of *Pygmalion* is

indeed "not irrelevant to popular melodrama," and the purpose of the first chapter of this thesis is, in essence, to provide *The Melodramatic Imagination* with its missing discussion of *Pygmalion* and Rousseau's musico-linguistic philosophy, the discussion that Brooks thought belonged to "a separate history."

This elision of music is understandable: Brooks is a literary scholar, and music, though it may provide a metaphor or an ideal for writers like Balzac and James (and Brooks himself, for that matter), loses its dynamic presence in melodrama's transition from the stage to the novel. Also, if Brooks had wanted to expand on his statement that "*Pygmalion* indeed belongs to the problematics of language and gesture most fully argued in the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*," he would not have had the help of recent scholarship from the field of political science—the same scholarship informing the first chapter of this thesis—establishing the harmony between Rousseau's musical theories and his political philosophy. Nor would he have been able to turn to musicology for assistance, even though it is the only field to have given *Pygmalion* itself more than cursory attention—musicology has been the last and most reluctant academic discipline to endorse the study of popular forms. (Not that *Pygmalion* is exactly "popular"; in fact, it has been deemed to be of such minor interest for so long that I was unable to find an English translation.) An experience from my own music education can perhaps illustrate why musicology has been, until very recently, unwilling and/or unable to open its eyes and ears to popular culture. At a lecture given while I was an undergraduate in the late 1980's, a pianist, a specialist in the art of vocal accompaniment, was asked for his views

on the issue of transposition in song cycles.[1] The music theorist who asked this question (and who came to the lecture, I think, specifically to ask this question) believed that while the wholesale transposition of an entire cycle could be countenanced—because it preserved the cycle's structure of key relationships—the transposition of individual songs within a cycle could not—the structure of key relationships would thus be violated. The pianist agreed that the preservation of a cycle's key structure, if possible for the singer, was indeed preferable, but in all cases he would rather have singers violate the key structure than struggle at the limits of their range. The theorist then asked, rhetorically, whether all pianists should be encouraged to transpose sonata movements in order to make them easier to play, to which the pianist replied, somewhat impatiently, "Of course not." This brazen inconsistency reduced the theorist to a frustrated silence, and afterwards, not having quite grasped the point of this exchange, I asked him why the transposition of individual songs within a cycle should matter: all other things being equal, is there a meaningful difference between a performance of a song cycle that preserves the original key structure and one that does not? His answer was that, while the transposition of individual songs in a cycle can produce pleasing results in terms of the sound of the singer's voice, performers should not be playing to "the blue-haired ladies in the front row."

Although I did not realize it at the time, his answer perfectly summed up the

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[1] Transposing a piece of music into a different key from the one in which it was originally written is rarely done for classical instrumental compositions; one notable exception would be transcriptions, where a piece written for a particular instrument is transcribed for another which might not have the same range (for purists, transcription is a practice only slightly less dubious than transposition). Transposition is a frequent and accepted necessity for songs, however, simply because the voice is not a machine: all standard pianos have the same 88 notes, but the range of the human voice is not nearly as consistent.

ideological prejudices of traditional musicology: an appreciation of the sensuous surface of musical sound must yield to the intellectually rigorous apprehension of structure; the pleasures of "the blue-haired ladies in the front row" must be sacrificed to the formalist agenda of the (male) theorist in the back.[2] The music of melodrama, stage or screen, with its fragmented, often simplistic structures, its tendencies toward stylistic pastiche and the expression of unambiguous, unalloyed sentiment, and its subservience to a mass, commercialized medium, has not provided the kind of material with which one might demonstrate one's credentials as this sort of musicologist; hence, this sort of musicology has not provided much in the way of insightful analysis. Such analysis as it has provided has been hampered by its pretensions to an asocial, apolitical perspective: what is significant about *Pygmalion*, I believe, is its relation to Rousseau's nostalgia for "nature" and, beyond Rousseau, to the social, political, and racial dimensions of "nature" as a trope of "popular" melodrama. (These dimensions are the subject of the second chapter of this thesis.) Without these perspectives, *Pygmalion* is little more than an aesthetic curiosity, which is precisely how it has been treated by musicology.

I don't think it is a coincidence that, of the four monographs which constitute the central texts of film music theory (at least in North America), three were written by women, and none of these three is a professional musicologist.[3] They have therefore been able to approach film music from a position much like Peter Brooks' in relation to film

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[2] The gendered stereotypes underlying musicology's critical discourse are not unlike those of the Marxist-inspired views of melodrama quoted above; the difference is that musicology did not face a significant challenge to these stereotypes until the late 1980's and early 1990's. See especially McClary 1991.

[3] The claim for the centrality of these texts is not meant to marginalize the work of other film music scholars, but has to do with the fact that they are the major works addressing music in narrative sound film, the body of film at the centre of film history and theory.

theory; that is, unhampered by musicology's ideological baggage, although Caryl Flinn is the only one writing from an avowedly feminist perspective. It is also significant that the earliest of these monographs, *Composing for the Films*, by Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, was first published in 1947, while the other three came out only within the last fifteen years. The understanding of music in film has not benefited from the kind of sustained critical interest that the visual elements of film (cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, etc.) have received over the years; like film sound, film music has had to struggle for a place in a discipline dominated by the "ideology of the visible," the belief that the "mediating force of consciousness in the act of vision serves to objectify the information processed through it, while the act of hearing is more suspect because of its stronger connection to subjectivity" (Kalinak 1992: 24).

> [C]lassical film theory reproduces this bias, prioritizing the visual at the expense of the aural, and rendering problematic an uncritical adoption of its central and highly influential paradigm for the relationship between sound and image: the transcendent power of the image and the dependence of the soundtrack. (Kalinak 1992: 20-1)

As a result of this visual bias, as Kathryn Kalinak laments, "the vast majority of film students, undergraduate and graduate, will complete their degrees without ever formally studying one of the most powerful components in a filmic system" (Kalinak 1992: xiii). Thus occupying the blind—deaf—spots of both film theory and musicology, it's not surprising that film music has been considered "a neglected art,"[4] a neglect which Claudia

[4] Roy Pendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art. A Critical Study of Music in Films*. 2nd ed. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992.

Gorbman, Kalinak, and Flinn are all self-consciously addressing. (Flinn, typically much more self-reflexive than the other two, is self-conscious even about this self-consciousness.)

Composing for the Films, however, has no such historical or disciplinary lacunae to apologize for: written soon after Hollywood consolidated its musical conventions following the conversion to sound, it was the first—and for decades the only—critique of these conventions explicitly linking a musical aesthetic to a political ideology. *Composing for the Films* is an unusual work, in that it is both descriptive and prescriptive in intent—Adorno and Eisler are also arguing for an alternative film scoring practice—and in that it presumes its critique (and its alternative aesthetic) to be "objective" rather than "ideological." Few cultural critics today would be willing to defend a position of such transcendent "objectivity" as either possible or desirable; still, as Gorbman states, *Composing for the Films* "stand[s] out so strikingly against the general background of impressionistic film music criticism that any subsequent responsible work on music in film must take stock [of it]" (Gorbman 1987: 99). Both Adorno and Eisler studied with leading avant-garde composers of the day (Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg) and their musical sympathies (especially Adorno's) remained with this tradition. But their political sympathies were influenced by Marxism, and, like film theory in the early 1970's, they "critiqued [melodrama] as an instrument of the capitalist culture industries, which imposed on or mystified the mass audience" (see p. 5 above). Adorno and Eisler view Hollywood film music fundamentally as a drug, "intoxicating [and] harmfully irrational" (24), whose ultimate purpose is to provide the "amusement industry" (23) with a lot of happily complacent consumers; in this respect, film music is just "one aspect . . . of the

general function of music under conditions of industrially controlled cultural consumption" (20):

> [Motion picture music] attempts to interpose a human coating between the reeled-off pictures and the spectators. Its social function is that of a cement, which holds together elements that otherwise would oppose each other unrelated—the mechanical product and the spectators, and also the spectators themselves. (Adorno & Eisler 59)

A more detailed account of *Composing for the Films* appears in chapter 2, but some of the problems inherent in its critique should already be apparent: besides its patronizing view of the cultural savviness (and musical tastes) of the "mass audience," it cannot account for the differentiations based on gender and race that occur within that audience. If, as Adorno would claim, the "mass audience" is powerless to change the conditions of its own existence in the face of an all-embracing "ideology" of capitalism, why is it that some people in that audience (e.g. women, blacks) are more powerless than others (e.g. men, whites) and are represented as such in films? A much more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between producers and consumers of cultural products has developed in the last twenty-five years or so: yes, the pleasure principle mingles with the profit motive, but this does not mean that the pleasures derived by consumers are determined exclusively by producers (viz. "Don't treat us like were so stupid and naïve"). The fact that four-fifths of the films released by Hollywood today lose money (Cassidy 41) indicates that consumers are not the undiscerning gulls envisioned by Adorno and Eisler; at the same time, just because film studio executives can't afford to be complacent about identifying the pleasures of their potential audiences does not make

the pleasures of all audiences equal, or beyond reproach. If it is true, as Adorno and Eisler argue, that film music expresses a repressive ideology, then that ideology serves the interests of a significant portion of the "mass audience" as well as those of the "amusement industry."

The work of Gorbman, Kalinak, and Flinn, like that of Peter Brooks, should be understood within the context of the "renewal of critical interest" in the forms of popular culture that has occurred in the years since the publication of *Composing for the Films*. The distinctions between "high" and "low" culture still being enforced in Adorno and Eisler's work (evidenced by their advocating the use of avant-garde musical techniques over Hollywood's stock of Romantic and post-Romantic clichés) have given way to an appreciation of the constructed, ultimately arbitrary nature of such distinctions. "High" and "low" culture are equally products of cultural discourse, produce meanings in much the same ways, are often enjoyed by the same audiences, and though this should not imply that they have the same meanings or are enjoyed in the same way, for these critics the distinction between them has no *absolute* value. So when Gorbman, Kalinak, or Flinn do focus on the relation of "classical" Hollywood film scores to the post-Romantic symphonic and operatic tradition, it is not in order to make some kind of qualitative evaluation of film music, but in order to understand the constitution of Hollywood's musical conventions by musical and cultural discourses—why *these* conventions, why are they meaningful, and to whom? Ironically, the resurgence of film music theory in recent years owes a great deal to structuralism, though it is structuralism of a rather different sort from that which has dominated musicology: Gorbman's work, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, applies the principles of narratology to the study of the musical

conventions of sound film. The great advantage of the narratological perspective over the musicological with respect to film music is, of course, that it accepts the priority of narrative and the subservience to it of all other registers of meaning; it is a given, therefore, that in the absence of what a traditional musicologist would usually consider meaningful musical structures, the narratologist will find it much easier to focus on how music is a meaningful part of the narrative structure.

Unheard Melodies was not the first study of film to be influenced by structuralism and semiotics, but it was the first such study to recognize the rather obvious fact that music is contributing much more to the construction of film narratives than its marginalization within film theory would suggest, and to proceed to put music on a truly equal footing with the other signifying elements of film. As Gorbman says, "Image, sound effects, dialogue, and music-track are virtually inseparable during the viewing experience; they form a *combinatoire* of expression" (Gorbman 1987: 15-6, italics original). From this point, Gorbman works in two directions: towards an understanding of how music functions in relation to the narrative, and how it functions in relation to the audience.

> First . . . music serves to ward off the displeasure of uncertain signification. [. . .] It *interprets* the image, pinpoints and channels the "correct" meaning of the narrative events depicted. [. . .] Music, like the caption, anchors the image in meaning, throws a net around the floating visual signifier, assures the viewer of a safely channeled signified.[5]

[5] Gorbman is here borrowing Roland Barthes' concept of *ancrage*, which he originally developed to describe the role played by the caption beneath a photograph. See Barthes 1977b: 15-31.

> A second kind of displeasure that music helps to ward off is the spectator's potential recognition of the technological basis of filmic articulation. Gaps, cuts, the frame itself, silences in the soundtrack—any reminders of cinema's materiality which jeopardize the formation of subjectivity—the process whereby the viewer identifies as subject of filmic discourse—are smoothed over, or "spirited away" [. . .] by the carefully regulated operations of film music. (Gorbman 1987: 58, emphasis original)

Gorbman's elaboration of these themes should forever dispel the notion that just because music is "added" late in the production process of a film, it is therefore an "addition" to the meaning of the film. This sort of thinking, which "erroneously assume[s] that the image is autonomous" (Gorbman 1987: 15), has reduced the understanding of music's role in film to the rather simplistic paradigm of "parallelism" and "counterpoint": "Either the music 'resembles' or it 'contradicts' the action or mood of what happens on the screen" (Gorbman 1987: 15). Gorbman suggests that "If we must summarize music-image and music-narrative relationships in two words or less, *mutual implication* is more accurate, especially with respect to films of any narrative complexity" (Gorbman 1987: 15, emphasis original):

> The musical score's rhythmic, textural, and harmonic qualities, expressive via cultural musical codes, emphasize latent or manifest narrative content through a synergetic relationship with the other channels of filmic discourse. In emphasizing moods or feelings, in specifying or delineating objects of the spectator's attention, music enforces an interpretation of the

diegesis.[6] (Gorbman 1987: 32)

This is the sort of perspective on film music that can open it up to much more explicit ideological readings, but it seems to me that the potential for such explicitness, which exists at the theoretical level in *Unheard Melodies*, is not carried through in Gorbman's analysis of the score from the 1945 melodrama *Mildred Pierce*. Discussing the ending of the film, for example, she says,

> Not only has the couple [Mildred and Bert] been reunited, but, in the words of Pam Cook, the patriarchal system (which the plot had threatened to dismantle) has been reconstructed, and "under the aegis of the Law . . . ambiguity is resolved and the shadows dispersed by the light of the new day." I would suggest, again, that music has played a considerable role in the process. (Gorbman 1987: 81)

That last sentence is not one I would disagree with, but Gorbman does not provide a lot of convincing detail in support of it. When we first see Bert, in Mildred's first flashback, he is portrayed as both indolent and unfaithful, the epitome of the bad husband. His initial musical representation, however, blithely denies any of these deficiencies: his theme is a lilting, 12/8 melody in G major. I don't think we have to look too far to find an explanation for this apparent anomaly—Bert's behavior may be bad, but he is not bad at heart. (Being "true" at heart allows him to recognize the "true" character of his children, as Mildred does not.) Later, after Mildred asks him for a divorce, a minor-key version of Bert's theme plays as we cut to a shot of Mildred's restaurant, explicitly defining her

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[6] "Diegesis" refers to the story world of a film; elements of the viewing experience which are not, strictly speaking, a part of that world (like the background musical score) are "nondiegetic."

business ambitions as the cause of the breakup of the home. This sort of musical favouritism gives an air of predestination to Bert's "rehabilitation" at the end of the film: musically, he's been "true" from the start, which mitigates any sense we may have of a chastened transition from bad husband to good. Gorbman, however, simply enumerates the occasions when Bert's theme is heard:

> After the argument that culminates in their decision to separate, Bert's theme plays [sic] slowly, in minor, by a plaintive oboe, as a few last hesitating words pass between him and Mildred. Later repetitions of [Bert's theme] are heard as Bert comes to grant Mildred a divorce, as he comes to visit her after her marriage to Monte, and as Mildred thanks him for reuniting her with her prodigal daughter Veda. (Gorbman 1987: 94)

Her discussion of the children's theme goes into more detail, but neglects to mention how, in one early sequence, a "normal" diatonic version of the theme, associated with the "normal" Kay, is contrasted with an "abnormal" whole-tone version associated with the "abnormal" Veda. Through the music, Veda's perversity is made obvious early on to the audience, which only helps to point up the perversity of Mildred's continuing blindness to it. Similarly, at one point in the opening *noir* sequence the descending perfect fourth that appears at end of the second measure of Mildred's theme is altered to a descending tritone, which is then isolated and repeated fortissimo by horns and trombones as Mildred arrives at her home. The tritone, as every music student learns, was known in medieval times as the *diabolus in musica*, the devil in music, because it was considered a dissonant interval. Now, I have absolutely no evidence that the composer, Max Steiner, was actually thinking of this esoteric reference when he foregrounded the

tritone in this way, but the *noir*-ish composition of the shot and the *noir*-ish orchestration of the music together speak to an intention to impute devilishness of some sort to Mildred, even for an audience not up on medieval musical trivia. Gorbman is attuned in a general way to the fact that the music is "framing" Veda and Mildred for us, encouraging us to judge them from its own patriarchal perspective, but without these kinds of details I don't think we appreciate just how thoroughly it is implicated in this project.

It is on the strength of its theoretical exegesis, then, rather than its textual analyses, that *Unheard Melodies* has become a cornerstone of contemporary film music theory. But, as Gorbman herself says, "enumerating the semiological functions of film music does not help to confront an issue that keeps returning to haunt us: why is film music there in the first place, even in the most 'realist' film, in virtually all films abiding by rules of verisimilitude?" (Gorbman 1987: 4). This is indeed the crux of film music theory, and many explanations—historical, pragmatic, aesthetic, psychological, anthropological—have been proposed to account for music's presence in narrative film. All these explanations are valid to a certain extent, but if there is one flaw that unites them all it is their indiscriminate use of the term "music" when, with the obvious exception of the musical (which departs spectacularly from the realist aesthetic), the "music" they are talking about is almost invariably *instrumental* music. Like Peter Brooks, Gorbman sees "music [as] a highly structured discourse of sound: but its freedom from referentiality (from language and representation) ensures it as a more desirable, less unpleasurable discourse" (Gorbman 1987: 6). Not only is the desire for a musical discourse "free" from language and representation a highly nostalgic one, as I suggested above (pp. 7-9), it is also culturally and historically specific: before the late eighteenth

century, instrumental music in Europe was generally considered *less* pleasurable and desirable *because* of its lack of referentiality. I will describe the sea change in post-Enlightenment musical discourse in more detail in chapter 2, but I don't think there can be any doubt that what John Neubauer called music's "emancipation" from language in the eighteenth century is of paramount importance to understanding both melodrama and film music, and that the absence of this sort of historical consciousness has hampered film music theory no end in its efforts to answer its biggest "why?" The cultural yearning for an "unmediated" discourse, and the cultural valorization of instrumental music as the ultimate answer to that yearning, are not eternal, universal conditions of humanity; to assume, consciously or unconsciously, that they are is simply to perpetuate instrumental music's mystical, mythical status in modern (again, meaning "post-Enlightenment") Western culture, to succumb to that culture's most deeply embedded nostalgic desire.

Caryl Flinn, to her credit, is more conscious than either Gorbman or Kalinak of the ways in which "film music has been handed down to us as something ethereal, timeless, and deeply ahistorical" (Flinn 1992: 91), but her own historical researches into its nostalgic and utopian power go back only as far as nineteenth-century Romanticism (as exemplified especially by Richard Wagner), and she does not stress what a radical change the dominance of instrumental music represents in the history of Western culture. In this, she has a lot of company: even among cultural critics who appreciate that invisibility is the most potent achievement of power, the significance of instrumental music's invisibility—or rather, the significance of the ascension of invisibility as the most estimable of aesthetic goals—has often escaped notice. The freedom with which Brooks, Gorbman, and Kalinak use terms like "desemanticized" to characterize "music"

shows that they have failed to distinguish not just between instrumental and vocal music, but, more importantly, between pre- and post-Enlightenment conceptions of instrumental music. Without this crucial starting point, Gorbman and Kalinak both become mired in psychoanalytical theories about the role of the auditory realm in the formation of subjectivity. I have never found psychoanalytical explanations to be either useful or persuasive, and after reading Frederick Crews' "The Unknown Freud" (*The New York Review of Books* 18 Nov. 1993: 55-66), I am convinced that, as a lens into the human mind, Freud's pudenda-scope is functionally equivalent to a kaleidoscope. For those readers looking for a critique, on its own terms, of the idea that "we can begin to understand the origin of the pleasure of listening to music [as] a pleasure constituted by a desire for the imaginary (and lost) fusion with the mother" (Kalinak 37), I would direct them to Flinn, who argues that associating the "freedom" of the irrational and the pre-linguistic with a "feminine" psychological space does not make an articulate resistance to patriarchal power any easier. (She also argues cogently that the construction of film music as irrational and pre-linguistic—i.e. "feminine"—has contributed to its neglect by a film theory generally predisposed to value the rational, "masculine" realm of the visual.)

Since the publication of Flinn's and Kalinak's books in 1992, film music theory as a field has expanded modestly in size, but it is still beset with disciplinary difficulties, not least of which is the fact that film scholars and musicologists continue to have little methodological ground in common. Furthermore, an awareness that disciplinary paradigms may need modification in order to come to grips with film music seems to provide no guarantee that they will receive any; witness two articles written in 1990 and 1998 by musicologist David Neumayer. In 1990's "Film Music Analysis and Pedagogy,"

Neumayer appeared to have as acute a grasp of the challenge posed by film music to the analytical tools of traditional musicology as one could hope to find; to wit:

> Serious reinterpretation is required to make these tools fit for use in an art where authorship is often in doubt, where contexts constantly point outside the musical materials and their "internal processes," and where music is rarely continuous and is only one element—usually a subservient one—among several. (Neumayer 1990: 27)

It was astonishing to me, therefore, to find him in 1998 producing a Schenkerian analysis of Bernard Herrmann's score from *The Trouble with Harry* [1955] ("Tonal Design and Narrative in Film Music: Bernard Herrmann's A Portrait of Hitch and The Trouble with Harry"). For those unfamiliar with the term, Schenkerian analysis, the epitome of formalism in the study of tonal music, is based on the premise that all tonal compositions can be understood as the elaboration of a fundamental tonal structure, the *Ursatz*. As Neumayer noted in 1990, the presumption that such fundamental structures are necessarily a part of what makes music meaningful faces a fundamental challenge in film music: either this presumption is valid, in which case all the film scores (the vast majority, I would guess) lacking a demonstrable *Ursatz* would probably be judged to be of little value (which is precisely how musicology has tended to judge all film scores, *Ursatz* or no); or it is not valid, in which case it is an inappropriate method with which to analyze film music. Instead of reinterpreting the analytical tools of musicology, as seemed to be "required" in 1990, however, Neumayer has proceeded to focus on a score that can be analyzed by those tools with a minimum of reinterpretation. Rather than selecting a score where authorship is in doubt, he chose one by the composer considered

by many to be film music's greatest *auteur*, who refused to go along with Hollywood's usual division of labour and both composed and orchestrated his film scores himself. Further removing himself from Hollywood norms, Neumayer chose a score that Herrmann had also reworked into a concert piece; in other words, into a continuous, "self-contained" composition unencumbered by the film's "extra-musical" content. Even though it was composed (or at least arranged) last, Neumayer analyzes this piece first, then applies the evidence of its tonal design to the analysis of the actual film score.

Even if a film score is amenable to Schenkerian analysis—or, for that matter, to any other type of formalist analysis (e.g. set theory)—I think it is an extremely dubious proposition that this score will be any "better" or more meaningful for the audience than a score which is not. Neumayer refers to Gorbman's *Unheard Melodies* in the 1998 article, but I wonder whether he remembers the film composer's rule of thumb she quotes: "if music has been absent for more than fifteen seconds, the composer is free to start a new music cue in a different and even unrelated key, since the spectator/auditor will have sufficiently forgotten the previous cue's tonality" (Gorbman 1987: 90). The assumption that music's "internal processes" are logically and functionally related from first note to last is at the heart of the Schenkerian approach; if film composers can ignore this assumption with impunity—that is, without materially affecting the reception of the score—then I think it's fair to ask whether the Schenkerian analysis of soundtracks is telling us more about the formal training of certain composers and analysts than it is about the meaning of the music. There's no doubt that repetition (of rhythms, harmonies, melodies, timbres, styles, etc.) can be and has been used thematically in film, but the sense of unity thus created need not be related to any long-range tonal scheme. Looking

for a fundamental tonal structure encompassing all the cues in a film simply distracts us both from the broader cultural associations that film music is always invoking, and from its relationship with the all the other signifying elements of film—cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, dialogue, sound effects, etc.—that, like the music, are subordinated to the telling of a story.[7]

In 1990, David Neumayer wrote:

> Film places music in a new aesthetic environment that offers new opportunities to test theories of musical listening, hierarchical structure, or formal and tonal organization. It may also nudge music scholars into confronting more systematically and regularly some (admittedly complex) problems of intertextuality—which begin, of course, with the relationship of the film score to other elements of the film—as well as the impact of social and ideological constraints on both compositional design and aesthetic judgments. The insights gained can surely feed back into our understanding of concert and stage music in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (Neumayer 1990: 14)

The only part of this statement I would disagree with is Neumayer's claim that "Film places music in a new aesthetic environment." The claim at the heart of this thesis is that this "new aesthetic environment" for music predates film by more than a century, that it

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[7] When musical accompaniment in film or television is reduced, as it often is, to nothing but a bass pedal tone, how can Schenkerian analysis possibly provide any illumination as to its meaning? The application of Schenkerian analysis to film music makes me wonder whether Schenkerians are not a little like audiophiles: most people have a stereo system in order to listen to their record collection; audiophiles have a record collection in order to listen to their stereo system.

was already firmly in place in "popular" melodrama of the early nineteenth century, and that the function of instrumental music in this environment is rooted in Rousseauist discourse about "nature." The first chapter has three goals: to set out the relationship between music, language, and politics in Rousseau's philosophy; to show how this philosophy is given dramatic form in *Pygmalion*; and to argue that this musico-linguistic discourse is entirely relevant to our understanding of melodrama, from the Boulevard du Crime of post-Revolutionary France to Hollywood today.

The second chapter, like the first, can be understood as an attempt to provide a musical "accompaniment" to a preexisting work of scholarship; in this case, Richard Dyer's *White*. As I suggested above, "nature" is a highly problematic trope of Western culture: the nostalgic longing for some golden-age Arcadia predates the eighteenth century by hundreds of years, but in the eighteenth century, to simplify drastically, the perception that the world—particularly those parts of it inhabited by Europeans—was rapidly becoming "desacralized" gave a new urgency and prominence to discourse about "nature." "Nature" was "l'idée maîtresse du siècle" (Ehrard 18),[8] the "'ethical norm' of the Enlightenment. What was 'natural' must be 'good'" (Outram 48). There may have been nothing particularly new in the association of the "natural" with the "good"; what *was* new was the "discovery," in the course of Europe's imperialist expansion, of man as "nature" had intended him to be. Rousseau, of course, is the philosopher most closely associated with this new celebration of "nature," a celebration underpinned by such "living" traces of the "natural" man as the "noble savage." The "noble savage," in fact, is an essential figure for Rousseau in both his political *and* musical thought, which he

developed in the midst of the growing popularity of instrumental music in the eighteenth century. The specific role that Rousseau assigned to instrumental music in *Pygmalion*—to restore, in some measure, the depth and purity of feeling that words had lost—reflects the nostalgic desire of a culture self-conscious of its own "civilized" (i.e. "non-natural") status. From today's "enlightened" perspective it seems rather obvious that an image like the "noble savage" is a racial stereotype; it is altogether less obvious that instrumental music owes its exalted status in melodrama and film to the same discourse which has produced (or at least employed) such stereotypes. Where Richard Dyer is helpful is in showing how the "whiteness" of modern Western forms of representation is manifest not simply in racial imagery but in the unquestioned projection of a distinctive subjectivity, an epistemological position normalized as a universal ideal, which can situate itself among the objects of "material" reality while claiming to possess some invisible, "immaterial" essence transcending it. It is as a "white" rhetorical maneuver which "spirits away" the loss of "nature" (not to mention its own presence as rhetoric) that I think we can understand the role of instrumental music in melodrama, an argument made easier by the fact that the "noble savage" has been a stock figure of melodrama for close to two centuries now. As I hope to show, the appearance of this stereotype in *The Indian Princess* [1808] and *Dances with Wolves* [1990] makes the "whiteness" of melodrama's musico-linguistic discourse a little easier to see, but this discourse remains the same in its essentials whether such racial imagery is employed or not: instrumental music in melodrama functions as another "living" trace, an invisible connection between that still uncorrupted part of our being, our hearts, and the equally invisible "essence" of life.

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[8] "The master thought of the century."

Throughout this thesis, I will be approaching melodrama largely as Rousseau himself did, as rhetoric; that is, as a self-conscious discursive practice. The image of the composer as rhetorician, as "spin doctor," is not, of course, an image particularly congenial to the neo-Romantic discourse that continues to influence melodrama and Western musical culture more generally, a discourse that prefers to understand music as the product of unconscious rather than self-conscious forces. For all that he contributed to this discourse, however, Rousseau was under no illusion that music was somehow "beyond" rhetoric, and it is his demonstration that politics and music are *not* strange bedfellows that has made my research into this thesis such a welcome and fascinating revelation for me. This is not to say that Rousseau was entirely conscious of all the political dimensions of melodramatic rhetoric, nor that I am entirely conscious of all of them myself. It is simply that, by making music a necessary component of our earliest linguistic and social impulses, he incorporated a political dimension into it from the get-go. It is my hope that what follows will provide a better understanding of the melodramatic imagination, both on its own terms and in terms of its broader social and political implications. It is also my sense that a Rousseauist model for melodrama can go some way towards making film music and film music theory more accessible—less "covert"—to both film students and scholars, and can begin to provide more thorough and adequate answers to the whole issue of how narrative film creates an illusion of continuity between the "nature" of the self (both on screen and in the audience) and the "nature" of life: "Questions of how music affects the process of spectatorship, the creation of a spectator, and the perception of the film itself are not yet fully answered because such investigation, historically, has not been part of the concerns of film theory"

(Kalinak 1992: 39).

Chapter I

J.-J. Rousseau and the Voice of Nature

In the course of the eighteenth century, the term "melodrama" underwent a significant change in meaning: borrowed in mid-century from Italian to refer to drama that was entirely sung (i.e. opera), by the end of the 1780's it had come to mean "[a] type of drama, or section of drama, in which spoken words alternate with, or are accompanied by, passages of [instrumental] music that heighten their dramatic effect" (Shapiro 1986: 202).[9] Needless to say, this was not the last change in meaning: since the mid-nineteenth century, "melodrama" has signified much more than a rather obscure technique "that seeks a particular kind of balance between words and music" (Branscombe 116); in fact, the traits characteristic of melodrama as it is now understood—moral polarization, emotional excessiveness, dramatic hyperbole—have become so pervasive a part of popular culture that the term has lost any necessary connection to music. And this is also true, it seems to me, of scholarship about melodrama. By this I don't mean to say that the role of music in melodrama has been ignored: its presence as one of the constituent elements of the genre, its importance to the "emotional legibility" of the melodramatic universe, have been acknowledged. What is missing from current scholarship is not an understanding of music's place in melodramatic discourse so much as an appreciation of melodrama's place in musical discourse. After all, one could argue that melodrama in the

[9] Strictly speaking, this change took place in France: "mélodrame" was derived from the Italian "melodramma," and was imported directly into English around 1800 when the new *melo-drames* first crossed the Channel (and the Atlantic); "melodrama" itself did not appear, according to the OED, until 1809.

strictly historical sense is as pervasive today, if not more so, than "popular" melodrama—almost every mainstream film since the advent of sound has combined spoken words and instrumental music "that heighten[s] their dramatic effect." Yet the initial reaction most of us would have to this observation, I suspect, is that it renders "melodrama" in this sense useless as a meaningful description. I would like to argue, rather, that its meaningfulness has become invisible. We have become so thoroughly acclimated to the sound of music as a background to all sorts of activities, at all times, that we often take no more notice of it than a fish does the water it swims in. The phenomenon of "musical wallpaper" has not remained invisible, of course—it has been much criticized for blunting our musical and other, humanist sensibilities. What has remained invisible, however, is the fact that the most significant change in our musical sensibilities occurred long before the proliferation of recording technology. The change that paved the way for melodrama, for film music, for a music-saturated world, took place in the musical culture of eighteenth-century Europe, amid Enlightenment debates about music, language, and nature.

It was during the Enlightenment that instrumental music gradually usurped the place of vocal music as the dominant musical discourse of the West: the symphony, as musical form and performing force, and the public instrumental concert, for example, both have their roots in the mid- and late-eighteenth century. Musical instruments have been a part of Western culture since well before the Middle Ages, and interest in purely instrumental forms had been growing since the fifteenth century; but in the eighteenth century the intensity of this interest increased to the point that it challenged the model by which musical meaning had been determined. Since the late Renaissance, music, poetry,

painting, and sculpture had all been considered imitative arts, an aesthetic inspired by the Greek concept of mimesis. The idea that music could be "a medium for the stylized representation of reality" (Weiss & Taruskin 287) was more easily maintained when it was anchored to the words of a text, but even in the case of wholly instrumental music, which has no obvious objective referent, the imitative theory prevailed. The "doctrine of the Affections," which governed the composition of much Baroque music, both vocal and instrumental, was a rhetoric-based theory of music which had as its ultimate goal the imitation of human passions:

> During the Baroque period the composer was obliged, like the orator, to arouse in the listener idealized emotional states—sadness, hate, love, joy, anger, doubt and so on—and every aspect of musical composition reflected this affective purpose. While it was easier to appreciate it in music associated with a text, the aim in instrumental music was the same. (Buelow 800)

Though music is here associated, as it is today, with the arousal of emotional states, these states were objectified and highly conventional, and their arousal was attributable to the rational insight and craftsmanship of the composer.[10] The goal of the doctrine of the Affections was mimesis, not catharsis, edification, not ecstasy.

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[10] Although the doctrine of the Affections never coalesced into a single coherent practice, the belief that music should imitate the Affections was widely shared; as Buelow points out, it persisted well into the nineteenth century. One might even argue that it has persisted into the twentieth—the conventionalized categories of the silent cinema's musical encyclopedias represent a slightly cruder, though no less comprehensive, version of eighteenth-century attempts to catalogue the Affections. These encyclopedias evolved in response to the demands placed on theatre musicians by the new mass market for film, but they were in essence simply an extension of the nineteenth-century theatrical practice of using stock music as accompaniment for melodrama. Melodrama, of course, with its conventionalized conflicts and characters, has always

The difference between this Baroque image of the composer as rational craftsman, as much scientist as artist, and the Romantic image of the composer gripped by a mysterious access of inspiration is one measure of how much Europe's musical culture changed during the eighteenth century. From being predominantly vocal, imitative, objective, and rational early in the century, music had become, by its end, predominantly instrumental, expressive, subjective, and intuitive, a shift that has become completely naturalized during the ensuing two centuries.[11] In the Enlightenment, however, this change did not go uncontested, and it is this sense of melodrama as a product, in part, of a contested musical discourse that is missing from melodrama scholarship today. For melodrama in its technical, historical sense still can be a useful and meaningful description, I believe, particularly with respect to film and television melodrama, where the connection to the historical definition and the historical forms is audibly, though invisibly, preserved. But in order for that to happen we need to be able to see what was at stake when "melodrama" first became a term distinct from "opera," when the *melos* of melodrama began to imply instrumental rather than vocal music, unspoken depths rather than articulate artifice.

The Origins of Music

The story of modern melodrama begins with eighteenth-century speculations about the *Ursprache*, a stage of "primitive, pre-rational, and poetic language that was

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made—and still makes—extensive use of stock music.

[11] Mathematico-scientific approaches to *composing* music have not lacked for adherents, especially among the twentieth-century avant-garde, but these have had almost no effect on the popular *reception* of music, being generally regarded as ultra-rational and unnatural, the

musical and metaphoric rather than logical" (Neubauer 132) and that was superceded by the more rational and prosaic speech of the present day. In *The Melodramatic Imagination*, Peter Brooks draws on these speculations about linguistic genealogy to explain the role of gesture in the aesthetics of melodrama, seeing the "dramaturgy of gesture and inarticulate cry [. . .] as an effort to recover on the stage something like the mythical primal language, a language of presence, purity, immediacy" (Brooks 66). Indeed, it is not going too far to say that the entire melodramatic universe, like belief in the *Ursprache*, is motivated and sustained by a "dissatisfaction with the expressive power of language" that reaches "down into prerational psychic and historic depths in order to unearth buried modes of expression" (Neubauer 133-4). It is no coincidence that the man generally credited with conceiving and co-writing the first melodrama was also the philosopher most famously dissatisfied not only with the expressive power of language but with the entire Enlightenment ideal of man's intellectual and rational progress. Jean-Jacques Rousseau was an ardent and articulate exponent of the idea that the passions, not the intellect, had the determining role in the morality of individuals and the cohesiveness of communities. He was also a central figure in eighteenth-century French musical discourse, composing a popular comic opera, *The Village Soothsayer*, contributing articles on music to the *Encyclopédie*, and writing an influential musical dictionary. But the connection between his musical thought and political thought has not been explored extensively until recently, nor has its relevance to the genesis of *Pygmalion* and melodrama more generally. For Rousseau, however, as John Scott argues, music and language—or rather, a musical language, the *Ursprache*—were at the heart of his account

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antithesis of "inspiration."

of human history and his vision of a free human community, a view expounded not only in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* but, melo-dramatically, in *Pygmalion*.[12]

Although the *Essay* was not published until 1781, after Rousseau's death, it originated, as scholars discovered in the 1970's, as part of a famous French musical debate of the 1750's and reached its final form around 1763, the year after he completed the text of *Pygmalion*.[13] In 1752 a war of taste erupted among the intelligentsia of Paris over the introduction of Italian comic opera (*opera buffa*) into French cultural life. The *querelle des bouffons*, as it came to be called, while ostensibly concerned with the relative merits of French and Italian opera, eventually became what Scott calls "an epochal battle" (1998: 295) between France's greatest musician and one of the most influential figures in the history of music theory, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and Rousseau, newly famous for his prize-winning 1750 essay, *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts*. As Scott points out, the period between the submission of his *Encyclopédie* articles in 1749 and the writing of the *Discourse* was a crucial one for Rousseau—the *Discourse* was the first fruit of the insight that became the foundation of his philosophical system, that "man is good although men are wicked" (qtd. in Scott 1998: 287). By the time he wrote his *Letter on French Music* in 1753, the most explosive contribution to the *querelle des bouffons*, Rousseau had begun to incorporate music into a systematic attack on Enlightenment rationalism. The ideas which informed his ensuing dispute with Rameau, "rationalist and

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[12] The *Essay* is subtitled *In Which Melody and Musical Imitation are Treated*. Rousseau's initial title was *Essay on the Principle of Melody*.

[13] *Pygmalion* was not set to music until 1770 by Horace Coignet (apart from two Andantes composed by Rousseau) but it is clear that by 1763 Rousseau had indicated in the text where music should be inserted—by this point "the textual genesis of *Pygmalion* was indissolubly linked to the musical element" (Waeber 33. All translations of this text are my own).

. . . methodological Cartesian" (Neubauer 78), were shaped by and consistent with his broader philosophical project of that period, which by 1763 included the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* [1755] and *The Social Contract, or the Principles of Political Right* [1762]. The *querelle des bouffons*, then, at least insofar as these two opponents were concerned, was a debate that ultimately addressed the fundamental nature not just of music, but of man.

Simply put, music was evidence, for Rameau, of our aural nature, for Rousseau, of our moral nature. The foundation of Rameau's musical theory was the mathematical properties of a vibrating body—*le corps sonore*—to which we instinctively respond. Although it was certainly in keeping with the empirical tenor of the times, especially in its incorporation of the recent discovery of the overtone series, this sort of approach to music had an ancient lineage: the theory of music as a "harmony" of mathematical relations originated with Pythagoras and underpinned music's place in the medieval quadrivium, the four mathematical disciplines of the seven liberal arts. Rameau discarded the more mystical aspects of the Pythagorean model—the *musica mundana*, "the music of the spheres"—and used it instead to derive his own theory, a systematic approach to tonal harmony. It was a theory that still adhered to the doctrine of the Affections, with harmony, given this physical proof of natural primacy, the principal source of Affective meaning.[14] But beyond representing the Affections, music was above all a scientific endeavor

> that investigates a universal nature characterized by harmony and

[14] I have capitalized "affective" whenever it appears in connection with the doctrine of the Affections, in order to avoid confusion with modern usage. See n. 19 below.

> proportion and subject to rational human understanding. Indeed, for Rameau music is the "mother of the sciences," the best subject in which to glimpse the essentially harmonic or proportionate character of nature as a whole. (Scott 1998: 295)

In this view, man's responsiveness to music is analogous to the phenomenon of sympathetic vibration: just as there are instruments with sets of strings that are not touched directly by the musician but vibrate in sympathy with those which are,[15] so is the soul made to vibrate in sympathy with the harmony of nature by music, especially when that music is composed according to Rameau's harmonic theory. The "possession of an aural organ" (Scott 1998: 295) gives man the capability to resonate in sympathy with this natural harmony; musical harmony is an indication of our affinity with nature.

Rousseau, however, denied that a rational structure (i.e. harmony) was sufficient to produce meaningful music: though nature may have endowed us with the potential to make music, the meaningfulness of musical sounds had little to do with physical attributes, theirs or ours. Our state of nature, according to Rousseau, is a state of rudimentary, solitary self-completeness: apart from gestures and inarticulate cries, no communication with other individuals is necessary or even desired; immediate, physical needs are conveyed, and satisfied, immediately, physically. The springboard to the development of higher communication, musical and linguistic, is, paradoxically, the loss

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[15] The instruments with sympathetic strings that Western audiences would be most familiar with today are the stringed instruments of the Indian classical tradition, particularly the sitar; but this type of instrument was also a part of the Western tradition until the end of the eighteenth century (e.g. the baryton), when music moved into the concert hall. The sound of sympathetic strings can project only a short distance—without electronic amplification they cannot be heard in a large hall.

of this state of self-completeness, something that Rousseau says is accomplished by compassion, the ability to recognize and share the passions of a being like oneself, the desire to expand one's self-love to include another. Compassion is for Rousseau a "moral" passion, evidence of a "particular, conscious regard for . . . fellow humans" (Scott 1992: 699), in contrast to a generalized "physical" passion like lust. Compassion therefore requires imagination, the ability to think metaphorically—to see oneself in another—but not reason. When the need to communicate one's "moral" passion is sustained by constant contact with a group of "fellow humans," a natural process of adaptation takes place, governed by a faculty Rousseau calls "perfectibility" which develops a host of other faculties given to us "in potentiality" (qtd. in Scott 1997: 806). As Scott says, "Speech is one of the potential faculties whose actualization is itself perfectibility" (1997: 807). Though our linguistic potential is natural and universal, its actualization is a characteristic of society: "The birth of communication and the birth of community are simultaneous" (Scott 1997: 810).

Rousseau uses the verb *arracher*—to pull or tear up or out—to describe how speech is drawn involuntarily from the body by passion, unmediated by rationality in any way (*arracher* suggests that leaving, or being made to leave, the state of nature is the result of a spontaneous linguistic irruption). And, as is so often the case with Rousseau, a moment of passion unmitigated by rationality is a blessed moment of unity and plenitude—in contrast to Rameau, here unity and plenitude both precede rationality; they are not products of it. The first language is no exception: "cadence and sounds arise along with syllables, passion makes all the vocal organs speak and adorns the voice with all their brilliance; thus verses, songs, speech, have a common origin" (Rousseau 1998:

318).[16] Expressing in this fashion his "moral" passion, his *com*passion, for others, moral man is thus musical man, and vice versa: "susceptibility to the influence of music is what distinguishes those humans who have departed from the state of nature from those who have not" (Kelly 329).

Rousseau felt that with its "cadence and sounds" the first speech was not just musical but more specifically melodic, that a melodic voice had been wrenched from the body by passion, and that this voice would likewise induce, involuntarily, spontaneously, the same passion in those who heard it:

> The passions have their gestures, but they also have their accents; and these accents which make us tremble, these accents from which we cannot shield ourselves, penetrate to the bottom of the heart, bring it in spite of ourselves to the same pitch, and make us feel what we hear. (Rousseau 1959-95, 5: 378)[17]

This communication of passion is as direct and immediate as sympathetic vibration; but while Rameau's theory implied a physical affinity between music, man, and nature, Rousseau argued that melodic speech did not function as musical sounds so much as "moral" signs:

> The sounds of a melody do not act on us solely as sounds, but as signs of our affections, of our feelings; it is in this way that they excite in us the

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[16] The obscure phrase "passion makes all the vocal organs speak" is due in part to the translator's efforts to remain as close to the original French as possible; but what is important for Rousseau here, to put it in the terms I have been using, is the actualization of *all* the potential vocal faculties by passion. The difference between "all" and "some" of the vocal organs, and its importance for Rousseau, will become clearer below.

[17] All translations of this text are my own.

> emotions they express and the image of which we recognize in them. (Rousseau 1998: 323)

To restrict music to the mathematics of harmony, the physics of sound, was to deny its essentially metaphysical, metaphorical function—the imitation of the accents of passion in melody—and without this "moral" pleasure there could be no true musical pleasure.[18] The mere "possession of an aural organ" was not enough: "it is not so much the ear that carries pleasure to the heart as the heart that carries it to the ear" (Rousseau 1998: 324). The matter of the world is cold, uninspiring, uninvolving, as is any music based on its supposed harmonic properties (i.e. the properties of *le corps sonore*); the meaning of the world lies in feeling "a heart full of life throbbing and beating underneath it all" (Rousseau 1998: 324), and for Rousseau, that "moral" life was imitated by a form of speech in which melody and language were one.

But the ultimate goal of this "melodious language" (Scott 1997: 803) was to provide for a community the same sort of immediacy and unity of expression that gestures and inarticulate cries provided in the solitary state of nature. Just as an individual becomes a moral being through the expansion and expression of self-love, so a community becomes a moral society through the expansion and expression of a single will, what Rousseau called the general will, and this could only be accomplished through "[i]mmediate and univocal communication" (Scott 1997: 822). In his ideal society, each citizen would not be forced to conform to an external body of laws but would freely

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[18] I should perhaps explain that I use the term "metaphysical" to refer simply to that which transcends the "physical" world. For Rousseau, all the basic (i.e. "physical") needs of life can be satisfied in the absence of a cohesive human community; to step from the self-identity and self-completeness of the state of nature into the metaphorical domain of language is to step "beyond"

conform to an internal body of laws, laws so internalized within the body of each citizen that the wills of independent individuals could be harmonized into one general will. In such "a community of shared mores, customs, and opinions" (Scott 1997: 803), one would desire as all, all would desire as one; the general will would merely express "what everyone has already felt" (Rousseau, qtd. in Scott 1997: 823). For Rousseau, a legitimate state must have this "affective cultural basis" (Scott 1997: 803):[19] only a community which feels in concert can act in concert, and the collective harmonization of wills necessary for the expression of the general will cannot be coerced if the community is to be free. The problem of communication is thus fundamental to Rousseau's political philosophy, for it is only through language, a language which embodies the pleasures of compassion, a melodious, metaphorical language which "would persuade without convincing and depict without reasoning" (Rousseau 1998: 296), that a community of free individuals could come to know themselves as one, speak as one, will as one.

Ideally, a community so harmoniously united by "melodious language" would evolve organically the few laws necessary for collective self-rule. But Rousseau, who denied any inherent tendency towards "the actualization of our nature" (Scott 1997: 807), felt that people would likely remain "slaves of their senses" (Kelly 325) without the intervention and instruction of an authoritative figure he calls the Legislator. The Legislator's task is to introduce the institutions that embody the principles of political

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a world of strictly physical needs and into the metaphysical "excess" of life.

[19] The sense of "affective" Scott is using here is, obviously, different from the one I have used earlier in connection with the doctrine of the Affections. As I argued above, for a composer like Rameau there was no inherent contradiction between Affective meaning and rationality; while Scott is using "affective" in the modern, Rousseauist sense, referring to the *felt* aspects of human life, those which are specifically *not* subject to, or the product of, rational thought.

right and to gain the consent of the community to these institutions. This task presents him with two difficulties: first, he "begins by facing a situation in which he understands the principles of political right and the institutions which embody these principles, but his people . . . lack knowledge of either" (Kelly 322); second, enlightenment of the people in these matters, should it be successful, would not necessarily lead to enlightened behavior. There is a step between knowledge and action which, for a community to be free, must be left to the individual to take; the Legislator, therefore, cannot compel nor, given the passionate nature of the *Ursprache*, can he reason. Rousseau argues in *The Social Contract* that the Legislator in his task "must necessarily have recourse to another order of authority, which can win over without violence and persuade without convincing" (Rousseau, qtd. in Kelly 324).

The other "order of authority" is the concept of imitation: "A social human is, in his essence, a being open to imitation and, hence, to persuasion" (Kelly 332). As we have already seen, the imitation of the accents of passion in melodic speech is of fundamental importance in instilling fellow-feeling among members of a community; and, as the reappearance of the phrase "persuade without convincing" suggests, it is equally important for the Legislator. However, another, more visual order of imitation is also enlisted by the Legislator—the exemplary life, which presents the people with a model of virtue so desirable it will induce them to imitate it. One such model would be the Legislator himself: through his presence, gestures, and speech,

> he can make the multitude feel rather than see his soul. The perception of the legislator's soul secures consent for his institutions and a disposition to follow them. . . . [The] desire to imitate the great soul of the legislator . . .

will make the people "good and upright" citizens. (Kelly 325)

The Legislator must self-consciously make himself a political and moral symbol, the symbol of a "good and upright" citizen. Ultimately, he is a hierophantic figure, using visual and musical rhetoric to reveal to the members of his community the soul of their collective life—their essential unity and morality as a people, their general will—which transcends the lives of individuals. Like an artist, Rousseau argues, the Legislator persuades his people of the existence and desirability of moral truth by wrapping it in "sensible and agreeable forms" (Rousseau, qtd. in Kelly 324).

Today, Rousseau's musical theory seems a rather confusing mix of imitation and expression, mimesis and catharsis. His conception of music as the unmediated expression of passionate feeling survived the debate with Rameau to become the Romantic ideal for all the arts, not just music;[20] but his insistence that this expression should nevertheless be mimetic, that it should correspond unambiguously to external objects or ideas, seems to diminish the potential for transcendence that today is associated in particular with instrumental music. But for Rousseau, imitation was a concept that transcended music, as it were. Like Rameau, Rousseau had Greek precedents for his musical theory—in fact, ancient Greece provided him with an image of the ideal politico-linguistic community—but the influence in this case came from Plato rather than Pythagoras. Rousseau was just as adamant in his rejection of the new instrumental music as Plato was of the new music of his day: both felt that music which was not mimetic could have no "ethical and

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[20] Maurice Cranston has argued that Rousseau's responses to Rameau in the *querelle des bouffons* constitute "the earliest theoretical literature of romanticism" (Cranston 7). If this is true, then *Pygmalion*, the theatrical fruit of this theoretical literature, constitutes the earliest romantic work *per se*.

educational function. [. . .] imitation must be strictly enforced for social and political reasons" (Neubauer 23-4).[21] But whereas Plato saw artistic imitations as twice-removed from the "true" world, the world of the eternal Forms (the artist imitates sensible objects, which are themselves merely imitations of their ideal Forms), Rousseau saw artistic imitations as the only way to represent the "moral" world, a world that, unlike the eternal Forms, has no existence apart from its actualization within a body, biological or political. For Plato, mimesis can help to orient us to an order of good that exists independent of ourselves; the connection between imitation and ideal Form, even for abstract concepts like beauty or justice, is as direct as that between footprint and shoe sole. For Rousseau, mimesis can help us to realize a potential for good that exists nowhere but within ourselves, not by the direct imitation of some object or image, but by what one might call indirect or internalized imitation—that is, "objects and events in the external world [are] represented only by the emotional impact they have on us" (Neubauer 75). As Rousseau says, "[Music] will not represent these things directly, but will awaken the same feelings in the soul that are experienced in seeing them" (Rousseau 1998: 327). The amorphous "moral" tenor of Rousseau's metaphorical language explains his demand for such a powerfully expressive vehicle, one that actualizes *all* the affective faculties in order to reinforce the reference to something intangible, invisible. Hence his insistence that only vocal music ("melodious language") could be properly mimetic, for it is through the natural faculties of the body that we can obtain the fullest, most immediate access to the "moral" heart of life. Purely instrumental music, not being an imitative art, lacks a

[21] Rousseau's philosophical rejection of instrumental music is somewhat at odds with his actual practice as a composer, as his preference for orchestral accompaniment in his concerted works

"moral" voice.

The Ethic of Resurgence

But, again as is often the case with Rousseau, while "the musico-linguistic conditions for the creation and maintenance of a legitimate political community" (Scott 1997: 805) may have once obtained, we have fallen from our linguistic Arcadia. Music and language have become separated: language has become the tool of calculating reason; music, dominated by harmony rather than melody and, to a greater and greater extent, by instruments rather than the voice, has been "deprived of the moral effects that it used to produce when it was doubly the voice of nature" (Rousseau 1998: 331).[22] Some languages, in particular those of northern Europe, and especially French, are now so lacking in sonorous accents, Rousseau argued, that they are "totally unsuited for melodious song" (Scott 1998: 293): he concluded his *Letter on French Music* with the infamous phrase "the French do not at all have a Music and cannot have any; or [. . .] if ever they have any, it will be so much the worse for them" (Rousseau 1998: 174). Leaders rule by force, not persuasion, and, "as there is no longer anything to say to the people but, *give money*, it is said to them with placards at street corners or with soldiers in their homes" (Rousseau 1998: 332, emphasis original). Stripped of melody and poetry, language has become hostile to the very idea of a free, united community—no matter how loudly one speaks, one cannot be understood by an assembly of people. Sheer volume of sound cannot equal the power of a language in which "all the vocal organs

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(e.g. *The Village Soothsayer*) indicates. I will return to this discrepancy below.

[22] That is, when it represented both physical and metaphysical nature, pleasure and passion.

speak."

Rousseau, though, however pessimistic he may have seemed, believed that natural faculties may be obscured but are never entirely lost; the reasons for our musico-linguistic fall were historical, not inevitable or, indeed, irreversible. As Jean-Michel Bardez puts it, "Ontogenetic music [has been] deflected by phylogenetic processes": the "latent presence" of man's "internal music" has been "buried under centuries of conventions accumulated by the species and under years of apprenticeship in these same conventions by the individual" (Bardez 111-2[23]). Dissatisfied with the present, Rousseau looked to a pre-lapsarian past as a guide to a better future: "The philosophy of Rousseau is an ethic of resurgence. It is necessary to aid in the construction of artesian wells that will refill the springs of the present" (Bardez 112). One such artesian well was *Pygmalion*.

One might call *Pygmalion* an experiment in linguistic reunification and regeneration, the best imitation of the *Ursprache* the modern age can muster. Despairing of the musical inaptness of the French language, Rousseau turned to operatic recitative, in eighteenth-century opera the declamatory, almost speech-like interludes between the more dramatic and melodic arias, as a model for *Pygmalion*. Opera originated in Florence in the late sixteenth century as an attempt to reintroduce ancient Greek monody into music, to replace the complex vocal counterpoint of Italian madrigals with a sort of musical oratory: a solo voice, with minimal accompaniment, declaiming "in free rhythm, following the natural accent and flow of the words" (Grout 306). By the eighteenth century, recitative was all that remained of this effort to re-naturalize music by enhancing

melodically the "natural" rhythms of oratorical speech—opera had in the intervening years evolved into a vehicle for fantastic plots and elaborate visual spectacles, with arias often an occasion for vocal pyrotechnics. Recitative provided Rousseau with a concrete example of something that approached the ideal of naturally musical speech, although he appears not to have been aware that the originating impulse of opera—to re-naturalize music—chimed with his own musico-linguistic project, even down to the Greek model. For the Greeks, of course,

> all Poetry was in Recitative because, since the Language was melodious, it sufficed to add to it the Cadence of the Meter and sustained Recitation in order to make this Recitation altogether Musical [. . .] The Greeks could speak while singing; but among us it is necessary to speak or to sing—both cannot be done at the same time. (Rousseau 1998: 460)

Rousseau was particularly drawn to *recitativo obbligato* (in French, *récitatif obligé*), a type of recitative accompanied by orchestra, more dramatic, more melodic, and more expressive than *recitativo secco*, with its quicker, *parlando* style and drier continuo accompaniment. This is a passage from the entry on *récitatif* in Rousseau's *Dictionary of Music* [1767]:

> [*Récitatif obligé*] is that which, mixed with ritornellos and features of the symphony, *obliges* so to speak the singer and the orchestra towards each other, in such a way that they must be attentive and wait for each other. These passages alternating recitative and melody clothed in all the brilliance of the orchestra are what is most touching, most beautiful, most

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[23] All translations of this text are my own.

> vigorous in modern music. The actor, agitated, transported with a passion which does not let him say all, interrupts himself, stops, pauses hesitantly, during which the orchestra speaks for him, and his silences thus filled affect the listener infinitely more than if the actor said himself all that the music makes understood. (Rousseau 1959-95, 5: 1012-13, italics original)

Although Rousseau acknowledged the prevailing musical trend so far as to admit that "Today . . . instruments are the most important part of music" (Rousseau 1959-95, 5: 1059), he insisted that they provide a meaningless "physical" pleasure unless they accompany the voice, even if that voice is momentarily at a loss for words. Thus, despite the apparent enthusiasm for *récitatif obligé*, having the orchestra "speak" for the actor was, for Rousseau, a regrettable necessity: with "genuine" (i.e. wholly vocal) recitative an impossibility, "physical pleasure [must come] to the aid of the moral, and [make] up for the energy of the expression with the attraction of the Harmony" (Rousseau 1998: 450).

In "Fragments of Observations on M. le Chevalier Gluck's Italian 'Alceste'" [1778], he returned to the subject of recitative, arguing that "the accent of the language and the poetic rhythm" become less dominant and less coherent as the degree of passion increases, until finally "the riches of melody, harmony, and musical rhythm" (Rousseau 1998: 495) rush in where (modern) language fails to speak. And since French is no longer "naturally" musical, it would be "unnatural" to sing it at all, even as recitative; thus *Pygmalion*, a *récitatif obligé* with a text spoken rather than sung.

> Finally, when the violence of passion causes speech to be broken into by half-begun and interrupted words, due as much to the strength of feelings which do not find terms sufficient to express themselves as to their

> impetuosity, which makes them succeed one another tumultuously with a quickness without coherence and without order, I believe that only the alternate mixture of speech and of instrumental music can express such a situation. [. . .] Do exactly what is done in the obligatory recitative [*récitatif obligé*]: give to speech all the accent possible and suitable to what it expresses, and throw into the instrumental ritonelli [sic] all the melody, all the cadence and rhythm that can come to its aid. The silence of the actor then says more than his words; and these reticences, well placed and well handled and filled on the one side by the voice of the Orchestra and on the other with the mute acting of an actor who feels both what he says and what he cannot say, these reticences, I say, produce an effect superior even to that of declamation, and they cannot be removed from it without removing from it the greatest part of it [sic] force. (Rousseau 1998: 496-7)

Rousseau concludes, "this type of work might constitute a mean genre between simple declamation and genuine melodrama, whose beauty it will never attain" (Rousseau 1998: 497). By "genuine melodrama" he does not mean *Pygmalion*, which he called a "lyric scene," but opera; or, more precisely, ancient Greek theatre, which, because of the nature of the language, *was* opera.

A poor substitute for "genuine melodrama," *Pygmalion* nevertheless attempts, in twenty-five minutes, to represent, or reenact, Rousseau's primal politico-linguistic moment. This might seem like a difficult statement to square with the ardent prose that streams out of Pygmalion's mouth, accompanied by music from an orchestra of eight, but

it must be remembered that language for Rousseau is never simply about grammar and syntax; it is about the self-transcendence of "moral" passion, feeling one's unity with the "heart full of life throbbing and beating underneath" the physical world. Roughly the first third of the scene, up to the moment when Pygmalion says to the still stony Galathée "But you lack a soul," is a litany of his dissatisfactions with the expressive possibilities of his world: he feels "no soul or life" in his work, his city, his friends and colleagues, even himself ("I've outlived my talent").[24] What he does feel is an "ardour that devours [him] inside," an ardour for his greatest work, the statue of Galathée. He wants to give it, has given it, "every conceivable charm," and yet is still not satisfied; but when with much trepidation he tries to mend a perceived fault and feels "living flesh push away the chisel," he realizes that what is lacking, what will satisfy his "impetuous passion," is not some material improvement to the stone but the addition of a beautiful soul. It is therefore not madness, he tells himself, to love a statue, because he is "not in love with this lifeless marble; it's with the living being it resembles, the figure I see in it." In his longest single speech, he appeals to Venus—"divine essence, hidden from the senses but open to the heart! Soul of the universe, the secret principle of all life; you whose love brings harmony to the elements, life to matter, feeling to bodies, and form to all beings"—to make use of his excess of feeling to bring life to Galathée, to "let them [he and Galathée] share the fierce passion that consumes one without enlivening the other." To do so is not just to restore equilibrium to his inner life but to the universe—the extremity of Galathée's outer perfection and Pygmalion's inner passion have disturbed the natural order. His wish is granted before his disbelieving eyes, and Galathée descends from her pedestal, touches

[24] All quotations from *Pygmalion* are from my own translation. See Appendix.

herself, and utters her first word: "Me." She touches herself again—"This is me"—then a block of marble—"This is not me"—and finally rests a hand on Pygmalion, which he immediately places over his heart. Posed like this, her final words are "Ah! Me again."

In *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster describes Dostoyevsky's characters as being "round" characters, like those in most other novels, but, unlike those of most other novels, capable of extension, "to join with all the other people far back" (Forster 123). For Dostoyevsky, this extension reaches back to pity and love, to a universal affective dimension where one meets up with "the rest of humanity" (Forster 123). This idea of a here-and-now individual extending back to a pre-rational unity and plenitude provides a useful way of thinking about what it is that the non-verbal rhetoric of *Pygmalion* accomplishes for Rousseau. All twenty-five of the musical numbers from Horace Coignet's score (plus the second of the Andantes by Rousseau) are cued to what Rousseau calls "reticences," the verbal silences when instrumental music and gesture express those feelings that exceed the scope of modern language, and all but three are also cued to stage directions of varying degrees of explicitness (from "Tenderly" to "He throws his tools away disdainfully, then walks about dreamily, his arms crossed"). Some of the numbers seem intended to illustrate or enhance specific actions: #12, for example, begins softly in E minor, then, presumably when Pygmalion timidly taps Galathée with his chisel, resolves unexpectedly to a fortissimo $F^{\sharp 7}$ chord as he feels her "living flesh" push it away.[25] But all of the numbers, whether tied to a specific action or not, express

[25] The $F^{\sharp 7}$ chord is actually missing the third, but given the $A^{\sharp}$ that immediately proceeds it in the violin 1 part and Coignet's propensity for ending numbers with dominant seventh chords (half the numbers end with a dominant seventh chord in one inversion or other), $F^{\sharp 7}$ seems to be what was intended. This infelicitous voice-leading, which Coignet repeats twice in as many measures,

Pygmalion's subjective experience, his emotion or mood of the moment—fear, joy, discouragement, etc.—and they do so according to Rousseau's strictures on music. With the exception of a couple of brief instances of countermelody in the overture, all musical interest is focused in a single melodic line (played by the 1st violin, occasionally doubled by the 2nd violin or the oboe) with an entirely subordinate accompaniment filling out simple harmonies. The longer numbers are usually constructed from very simple motifs, the most basic elaborations of tonic chord tones, which are extended briefly in sequences, sometimes modulating, or at least beginning to modulate, before tailing off to an inconclusive pause: apart from the overture and #2, the second of the Andantes composed by Rousseau, none of the numbers ends on its ostensible tonic or even with a cadence.[26] The shortest numbers—9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 23-25—are two to four measures long and at times consist of little more than one chord resolving to another, again in an inconclusive way (e.g. #14: B^{dim7} resolves to B^{b7}).

Pygmalion has not received a lot of attention from musicologists, and such attention as it has received has had difficulty coming to terms with the fragmentary nature of its music, a difficulty exacerbated by Coignet's disregard for "traditional" compositional values like tonal continuity within and between numbers. But I think this

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could easily have been avoided had he not inexplicably left out the 2nd violin. It is indicative, however, of the haste with which the music was composed—Coignet and Rousseau seem first to have met on April 13, 1770, and *Pygmalion*, complete with music, was first performed on the 19th.

[26] The style of *Pygmalion*'s score, with its simple melodies and subordinate accompaniment, corresponds to a widespread trend towards greater accessibility and expressiveness in European music which began in the 1720's, and which was exemplified for Rousseau, of course, by Italian light opera. The instrumental equivalent was the *empfindsamer Stil*, or sentimental style, which itself often imitated *récitatif obligé*. The new audience for this less learned, more "natural" style has led one writer to call the *empfindsamer Stil* "the *style bourgeois*. Instead of being ornate, it is sometimes ostentatiously plain. It domesticates the Baroque [A]ffections, turning them into

difficulty reflects the ongoing influence of Rameau: though Rousseau's views (with the exception of his dismissal of instrumental music) presaged elements of popular discourse about music, it was Rameau, or at least his spirit, who triumphed in the academy. Musical analysis has until very recently been dominated by the most formidable and abstract of formalist methods, which has denied music "any kind of 'extra-musical' significance, any meaning beyond what is objectively *there* in the notes, the form or the structural relations that a competent listener should be able to grasp" (Norris 7, emphasis original). Being a "competent listener" here means being able to grasp music in precisely these formalist terms, a stance which denies both listener and music a meaningful social life. David Neumeyer, speaking about film music, has argued that traditional music theory

> has been concentrated almost exclusively on procedures in absolute music and is poorly adapted for use in more complex types of genres; a tradition is thus well-established which is, generally speaking, powerless in the face of a medium such as cinema. (Neumeyer 1990: 16)

Nicholas Cook has taken this argument a step further, and tried to show empirically that, while the formal structures of traditional music theory may be useful in understanding how composers conceived their music, they may not be relevant in understanding the perception or reception of that music by audiences (Nicholas Cook 204). To decide a priori that Coignet's music must have value according to the degree it manifests a rational structure, then, is to judge it by Rameau's standards, not Rousseau's. If, as Rousseau says, the "sounds of a melody do not act on us solely as sounds, but as signs of our affections, our feelings," then the only value that could be relevant in judging the music

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sentiments of the individual soul" (Grout 455, italics original).

of *Pygmalion* is its effectiveness in bringing our hearts to the same pitch as the passions it presumes to imitate. All that the combination of music and gesture must accomplish for Rousseau is to function as an effective, affective sign: by extending the individual character of Pygmalion back to "pre-rational psychic and historic depths," it joins him up "with all the other people far back," actualizing, or re-actualizing, dormant faculties of compassion and rejuvenating corrupted social sensibilities at the springs of nature.

The effect of the rhetoric of the character Pygmalion on Galathée is therefore exactly the same as that which the rhetoric of the play *Pygmalion* should have on the audience. Having been brought to life through an apostrophe to the "soul of the universe," Galathée utters four lines that signify her passage from "physical" to "moral" being: the spontaneous expansion and expression of self-love, the self finding itself immediately in the heart of another (a task no doubt eased by the happy chance that the heart in which she finds herself happens to be attached to the hands which made her). The stations of Pygmalion's passion—his self-completion through self-expression—represent the same basic movement but in an obviously more solipsistic and authoritative way. He is in fact the Legislator of his own embryonic society, bringing to life through his rhetorical power his greatest achievement as an artist: the beautiful, ideal image of his own great soul. Since the same thing could be said about Rousseau as the creator—the Legislator—of *Pygmalion*, it seems that the secret to transparency and immediacy in communication, the core of his political philosophy, is a community of one endlessly mirrored self: complete understanding and fellow-feeling are possible because one is always speaking and listening to the Legislator, whose great soul has been thoroughly, passionately, and universally embodied. What allows the Legislator to escape the charge of an epic

megalomania, presumably, is that his great soul does not represent merely personal values, however benevolently imposed, but is rather a medium for the hidden power of the "soul of the universe"—it represents nature, *our* nature.

An actual, physical return to a politico-linguistic Arcadia may be impossible, according to Rousseau, but what the example of *Pygmalion* implies is that the potential for a metaphysical, metaphorical return is always invisibly present: "the secret principle of all life" is always in excess of what can be known or created by the rational mind, and as long as we have some sort of immediate rhetorical access to this excess (however corrupt or degraded relative to the *Ursprache*) we can feel together "a heart full of life throbbing and beating underneath" any future. Rousseau presciently identified music as the most powerful rhetoric of immediacy in the modern West, the individual's pipeline to the universal through the affective depths of the self, and thus to a feeling of community and continuity with both past and future; but his views on imitation prevented him from whole-heartedly endorsing instrumental music as that pipeline. I don't believe that John Neubauer is entirely correct when he says, "Rousseau failed to see that musical forms without voice or imitation could have meaning" (Neubauer 102), but it's certainly true that Rousseau is inconsistent, even incoherent, on the question of whether instrumental music is meaningful independent of words, or only as a supplement to them. On the one hand, in the entry titled "Sonata" in *The Dictionary of Music*, he states that

> the word is the means by which music most often determines its object, the object whose image the music offers to us; and it's by the touching sounds of the human voice that this image awakens in the bottom of the heart the feeling that it must produce. [. . .] The symphony animates song

> and adds to its expression, but it does not replace it.[27] (Rousseau 1959-95, 5: 1060)

On the other hand, if, as in *Pygmalion*, music is specifically restricted to the moments when the voice is incapable of expression, then surely instrumental music must be more than a supplement to the voice. A situation where the orchestra can "affect the listener infinitely more than if the actor said himself all that the music makes understood" may, in Rousseau's view, ultimately reflect our post-lapsarian state, but it does not change the fact that some measure of independence from language has been achieved.

There is another way in which the orchestra may have been meaningful to Rousseau, and which would explain his enthusiasm for it in the entry on *récitatif obligé* and his insistence on it in his discussion of *Pygmalion*, both quoted above. An orchestra can be understood as "a community of people dedicated to achieving a degree of unanimity that is almost unimaginable" in everyday life (Traub 100)—it is, in a sense, a community that can consistently create the musical equivalent of the general will, literally and figuratively harmonizing the individual instruments into univocal expression. Being a wordless community (at least for the duration of a performance), its individual members are that much more anonymous, that much more easily harmonized. Although Rousseau's musical philosophy connects affective plenitude to the faculties of the individual voice, he seems to have had at least some inkling of how effectively the universal extent of the self could be implied when, at its fullest pitch of passion, it was "clothed in all the brilliance of the orchestra." The orchestra of *Pygmalion*, in fact, can be understood as the

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[27] "Symphony," at this point in the eighteenth century, was a generic term for instrumental music.

first and best embodiment of Pygmalion's great soul, long before Galathée is brought to life—it is a community already committed to the expression of his nature (which is, by extension, also its nature), and its music is thus exemplary, an invisible metaphor for the invisible heart of life. The uncanny advantage of the orchestra for Rousseau's ethic of resurgence—and which makes it, I believe, the most potent force in melodramatic discourse—is that it can offer the reassurance, not that this resurgence will happen or is happening, but that it has *already happened*, albeit metaphorically, metaphysically. The galvanizing of Galathée and her handful of lines ("Me." "Ah! Me again.") provide a visual-verbal equivalent within the world of the play for what the orchestra's music has already implied—the extension and expansion of the Self, the invisible affinity of all Selves, past and present, onstage and in the audience. Although the musical aggrandizement of the self is usually associated with post-romantic symphonic gigantism (Strauss, Bruckner, Mahler, et al.), I believe that in *Pygmalion* Rousseau is already exploiting the orchestra to just this sort of effect: the limitless affective dimensions of the self are implied by a univocal community of instrumental musicians. It is a small step from *Pygmalion*'s orchestra of eight to a Hollywood film orchestra of eighty.

Pygmalion and "Popular" Melodrama

I will take up these and other issues surrounding the use of instrumental music in melodrama at greater length in the next chapter. For now, it is enough to note that, whatever the inconsistencies of Rousseau's musical philosophy with respect to the meaningfulness of instrumental music, in *Pygmalion* he developed a musico-linguistic

discourse that proved to be highly congenial to the emerging bourgeois social order.[28] Theories of sonorous accents aside, Rousseau's argument that modern languages needed a musical supplement to "ground" them—or, more precisely, "re-ground" them—in the full meaning and expression they had once "naturally" had corresponded to a widespread sense that the language of everyday life had become inadequate or incomplete—"desacralized," as Peter Brooks puts it (Brooks 5). And the bourgeois belief, notwithstanding this "desacralization," in its (musical) connection to "nature," where "nature" means limitless affective depths rather than rational proportion and harmony, was something that Rousseau contributed to in no small measure, not just through his debate with Rameau and its theatrical and philosophical sequels, but through his popular prose works, like *Julie, or the New Heloise*, *Émile*, and the *Confessions*. By the early 1770's the text of *Pygmalion* had been translated, published, and performed outside of France, though often set to different music, and by 1781 new melodramas from other countries, principally Germany, were being performed in France. *Pygmalion* itself was given regularly by the Comédiens-Français between 1775 and the turn of the century. So, by the time the Manichaean moral universe of what we now recognize as "popular" melodrama emerged with the Boulevard du Crime of post-Revolutionary France, an affective narrative form employing an orchestra to represent the latent "musical" universe of the speech-bound self—and known already as "mélodrame"—had had a presence in European culture for some twenty years. Charles Taylor has argued that as Western

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[28] Like Rousseau himself, I am taking "bourgeois culture," here and in the next chapter, to be largely synonymous with "modern urban culture." Rousseau defined bourgeois society less in terms of the material conditions of its existence than in terms of its attendant spiritual ills, principally the "disunity of soul" resulting from its alienation from "nature" (see pp. 104-9

conceptions of the self have changed from the Platonic to the post-modern they have been "accompanied by (i) new forms of narrativity and (ii) new understandings of social bonds and relations" (*Sources of the Self* 105). For the bourgeoisie, which made the individual self "the measure of all things" (Brooks 16) and understood social bonds and relations in terms of sentiment, melodrama would be its pre-eminent new form of narrativity. What we already have in *Pygmalion* is a discourse that, to tweak Peter Brooks' famous term a bit, posits a "musical occult," the domain of affective communal values that has been obscured by the sundering of the *Ursprache*.[29]

The distinction that some music scholars have sought to maintain between *Pygmalion* and "popular" melodrama is therefore not justified, I believe. This is how Jan van der Veen's 1955 study, *Le mélodrame musical de Rousseau au Romantisme*, distinguishes between the two:

> We understand by melodrama not a dramatic genre of some kind but a musical technique, which seeks to unite in an organic and artistic way a spoken literary text—dramatic, epic, or lyric—and instrumental music which interprets and underscores the declamation. (1)[30]
>
> About 1800 a new fad spread through Paris: the literary melodrama. It consisted of plays of a rather vulgar taste, at once naïve and stormy, in which the most gripping scenes were sometimes accompanied by a modicum of instrumental music. (2)

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below). For more on his conception of bourgeois society, see Melzer.

[29] "We might say that the center of interest and the scene of the underlying drama reside within what we could call the 'moral occult,' the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality" (Brooks 5).

For a traditional musicologist like van der Veen, what ultimately makes "musical" melodrama a worthy object of study is its rather minor role in the history of Western art music, and the illumination it casts on certain works of certain canonical composers (Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, et al.). The way in which van der Veen, guided by the traditional aesthetic values of organic and artistic unity, narrows the focus of his study to the technical aspects of "musical" melodrama and characterizes its "literary" offspring as "plays of a rather vulgar taste" effectively blocks any consideration of the relationship between the two. Although he does discuss later nineteenth-century examples of "musical" melodrama (by later generations of canonical composers), he considers the essentials of melodramatic technique to have been established by 1830. Twenty years after van der Veen's study (ironically enough, the same year that Peter Brooks published *The Melodramatic Imagination*), the only challenge that Edward Kravitt can offer to this thesis is that the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century developments in melodrama (by Humperdinck, Strauss, Schoenberg, et al.) do not deserve to be dismissed so lightly; but the same aesthetic criteria and, consequently, the same effacement of popular melodrama are still in place:

> The melodrama had been created by Rousseau partly as a means of bringing a greater degree of realism to music. It flourished for a short period about 1800, then fell into relative disuse until the close of the nineteenth century, when it had its brief but brilliant revival. (Kravitt 571-2)

To judge *Pygmalion* by aesthetic terms alone—that is, to see it simply as an

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[30] All translations of this text are my own.

experiment in the relationship between words and music—is to drop the entire political dimension of Rousseau's musical philosophy from view, and to deny the connection between music and morality, rhetoric and politics, that continues to be a central concern of film and television melodrama today. These days, when the black-and-white morality typical of nineteenth-century melodrama is often tempered with grays (virtue is no longer irreproachably good, vice no longer irredeemably bad) or regarded ironically (with a kind of hip, self-conscious detachment), it seems more important than ever to recognize how invisible melodrama's other, older, morality has become. The persistence of melodrama's original discourse can be illustrated by the climactic scene in the movie *Contact* [1997], which replays Rousseau's primal politico-linguistic moment in much the same way we see it represented in *Pygmalion*.

The plot of *Contact* centres on Dr Ellie Arroway, a brilliant physicist who spends her time at various radio telescopes looking, as she says at one point with ironic defensiveness, for "little green men"—she listens for signals from space that might indicate the presence of extra-terrestrial life. Her work is regarded as ludicrous next to the "legitimate" (and, for the audience, incomprehensible) research conducted by her fellow astrophysicists, but in the world of the film it represents "good" science: it is shown to be distinctly unprofitable, both for Ellie's career and for a capitalist economy concerned only with the bottom line. The motivation for this rather quixotic and frustrating search is laid out for us at the beginning of the film: the opening sequence begins with a long backward tracking shot from earth to the outer reaches of the universe; as the image seems about to dissolve, the camera continues to track out from a young Ellie's eye. She is trying to contact someone, anyone, with a ham radio, and though the answer she finally

gets is from Pensacola, Florida, the opening shot makes clear the cosmic dimensions of her desire for long-distance communication. The radio slang "Come back," which Ellie constantly uses as an invitation to listeners to answer her, takes on enormous emotional resonance when her father dies of a heart attack: after the funeral, we see her again in front of her radio, trying to reach him and saying, poignantly this time, "Come back." From this devastating loss comes Ellie's intense need to understand her lonely existence in relation to some cosmic significance (she has no other family, apparently), and when the film catches up with her years later it presents us with a heroine with no meaningful social relations between the two poles of the individual and the universal.

The world of physics we encounter in *Contact*, then, is not the alienating body of arcane knowledge usually associated with advanced science. Ellie is not concerned, or is concerned only indirectly, with the usual scientific goal of adding to the store of this knowledge by exploring outer nature; she is instead interested almost exclusively in following her own inner nature, in a search for life grounded on intuition rather than on reason, in a search for the sense of connection with life that she had when her father was alive. Her wish is granted, of course, beyond all reason—she stumbles across a signal from the star Vega that transmits instructions for space travel, a machine is built according to these instructions, she eventually becomes its sole passenger, and when she finally arrives at Vega, the figure who approaches her assumes the form of her father. Thunderstruck though she is, Ellie reasons that the aliens must have downloaded her memories while she was in transit and then produced this illusion, and this is confirmed: "We thought this might make things easier for you." But even while this conversation is going on it is accompanied by the same music that we heard during the childhood scenes

with her father—a simple, diatonic melody with a chiming, music-box quality to it. So, even though her rational mind knows that what she is seeing is an illusion, the music and her tearful embrace of her "father" argue that her heart has at last experienced the feeling of connection—of contact—she has been trying so long and so desperately to recover.

More explicitly even than *Pygmalion*, *Contact* portrays Rousseau's primal politico-linguistic moment, the first moment of community and communication between the Self and the Other, as the Self encountering a metaphorical, metaphysical extension of itself, which is meaningful precisely because of the (musical) continuity it establishes, or re-establishes, with the plenitude of the Self's affective depths. This is what makes the end of the film so reassuring: as we watch Ellie sitting outside alone, staring up at the stars, accompanied once again by that chiming, music-box theme, we know that the gap between personal and cosmic significance, between inner and outer space, has disappeared, and that nostalgia for the past and hope for the future have become indistinguishable—the universe has "once again become the seamless web of signification" (Brooks 79). By the passion, against all reason, of Ellie's quest, by the very excess of her belief in excess, she was able to experience a metaphorical, metaphysical reunion with her father as immediately as though it were actual and physical. For Ellie—and, by extension, the audience—the future and, indeed, any Others of the future, can hold no terrors, for the feeling embodied by that music signifies the extension of the Self back to the heart of life, where the Self and the Other are one.

Rousseau's model of a just society is a collection of individuals unified by the universal embodiment of a single, all-encompassing metaphor for nature, their nature. That metaphor is culture, a metaphor that is meaningful precisely because it always points

beyond itself, back to nature. Although nature will always be in excess of any attempt at representation, culture can attempt to imitate the subjective feeling of being in contact with nature: by making a metaphor invisible as a metaphor, by driving rhetoric to the point of physical immediacy, any difference between nature and culture at an affective level is erased. From this subjective point of view, culture *is* nature—though we may *know* they are different, they *feel* exactly the same. With a few alterations, this summary of Rousseau's politico-linguistic philosophy could double as a description of the rhetorical strategies of melodrama. But what I hope to accomplish here, beyond establishing the relevance of Rousseau and *Pygmalion* to the genesis of "popular" melodrama, is to set out a theoretical framework for melodrama that can deal with music in a more precise and meaningful way. In the West, there is no cultural metaphor more effectively invisible as a metaphor than instrumental music—what better metaphor for the nature we can't see than the culture we can't see?—and, given the ongoing popularity of film and television melodrama, students of melodrama need to be able to challenge this invisibility more effectively. Rousseau's musical theories, despite and even because of their inconsistencies, are useful because they were formulated as a challenge to a different musical norm, and presented as part of a widespread public debate about the nature of music. With his challenge now substantially our norm, the theories he developed can perhaps tell us something about what it is we're listening to.

Chapter II

The Sound of Whiteness

Whiteness

As Rousseau himself recognized, all metaphors are culturally specific, determined by the local conditions of life: in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, the most important determining factors on language and culture are climate and geography—the harshness of northern Europe, the warmth and abundance of the south. And, as Rousseau also recognized, his politico-linguistic philosophy worked best for small, homogenous communities, where the internal feeling of universality associated with the metaphorical extension of the Self would encounter fewer external contradictions. But what happens when a large and aggressively expanding culture espouses a Rousseauist philosophy? What happens when that culture encounters Others who are not so obligingly adept as the aliens of *Contact* at morphing into the secret image of its heart's desire? How do such Others fare in an affective narrative form that grounds all meaning in a metaphorical, metaphysical expansion and expression of the Self? If the ultimate goal of culture is to collapse any affective distinction between itself and nature, then the more successful a metaphor is in concealing its cultural specificity—the more invisible it is as a metaphor—the less likely that any effective distinction between it and nature can be maintained. When nature, in its essence, is itself invisible ("the secret principle of all life"), such an invisible metaphor can be imbued with an aura of cultural transcendence, seeming so wholly unmediated, so free of conscious deliberation and manipulation—so "natural"—that it simply cannot be a mere rhetorical vehicle for mundane opinions and prejudices.

Having become a transparent medium for the power of "nature," such a metaphor would be invisible as a manifestation of the power of culture.

In other words, as surpassingly transcendent as a metaphor may appear, as resistant to local, determinate meanings as it, by its "nature," may seem, its invisibility exists only within and because of an entire regime of representation—a regime whose understandings of the self and the world are infused with the desire for transcendence. A narrative, for example, whose principal subject, implicit or explicit, is self-transcendence presupposes not simply a conception of the self, so that one may thus, self-consciously, recognize its transcendence, but a conception of self-fulfillment that, somewhat paradoxically, requires such transcendence. This is to say that, behind the narrative valorization of transcendence as a moral good, there lies what Charles Taylor calls "a given ontology of the human," "claims, implicit or explicit, about the nature and status of human beings" (*Sources of the Self* 5). The main object in revisiting Rousseau's politico-linguistic theories in the first chapter was to make explicit the ontological claims—claims about the nature of human language, history, social and political relations—that have remained largely implicit in melodramatic narrative since *Pygmalion*. As I suggested in the previous paragraph, however, the universe can be rather less accommodating to the universality of these claims than a melodrama like *Contact* would have us believe. Melodramatic discourse relies for its potency on the equation of the transcendental with the universal, whereas for a writer like Richard Dyer such an unproblematic equation is entirely typical of one culture in particular: white bourgeois culture.

The ideal of transcendence is certainly not exclusive to this culture—in one form or another it may indeed be a universal feature of humankind. What Dyer takes issue with

is the tendency for whites to construct and occupy a cultural identity that, from their own perspective, transcends absolutely the limits of culture, and for the power that sustains this illusion of transcendence to remain invisible to whites. For the past two centuries, Dyer argues, whites have been in a position to take their own "standards of humanity" (Dyer 1997: 9) as the standards of *all* humanity; thus armed against their own parochialism, whites "characteristically see [them]selves and believe [them]selves seen as unmarked, unspecific, universal" (Dyer 1997: 45). This power to efface one's culture in the conviction of its utter normality extends—"naturally"—to the realm of white representation and is, even in the absence of racist stereotyping of other cultures, evidence of its racial character. A text without explicitly racial themes or imagery can still be characteristically white because "whiteness," in Dyer's sense, is less about *what* one sees than *how* one sees: "There is a specificity to white representation, but it does not reside in a set of stereotypes so much as in narrative structural positions, rhetorical tropes and habits of perception" (Dyer 1997: 12). His notion of "whiteness," then, involves a cultural self-conception that at once constitutes and aspires to the goal of transcendent universality, and the rhetorical means—the invisible metaphors—by which to signify its attainment.[31]

Dyer's case studies focus on the representation of whiteness in film and say nothing at all about music, but it seems to me that much of what he says about whites—that they are "distinguished by that which cannot be seen" (1997: 24), by "something else

[31] There may be no logical or necessary connection between "whiteness," so defined, and white people; as Dyer points out, whiteness "is a position of such notable, albeit catastrophic, success in the world that it is one that many [non-white] people . . . may aspire to take up" (Dyer 1997: 39). For both Dyer's argument and my own, I believe it is enough that whites historically have

that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal or racial" (1997: 14-5)—is particularly suggestive of instrumental music in melodrama, that invisible, immaterial "something else" to the more "corporeal" domains of images and dialogue. Melodramatic discourse, as we have seen it expounded by Rousseau, convinces its audience through impassioned imitation rather than reasoned argumentation, impressing its "truth" on the body rather than appealing to the mind. But the body, for Rousseau, is simply a more reliable vehicle for communication than the mutable mind, a sort of rhetorical superconductor that can transmit and receive a suitably "melodious language" with no loss of affective intensity. Ideally, the body transcends itself in this very process, freeing the heart of the self for an immaculate communion with the heart of life. If both whiteness and melodrama are structured around this narrative of "perfectibility" (see p. 40 above), in which the individual transcends the limitations of a purely physical existence through the expression of a purely metaphysical cultural identity, then instrumental music represents the most perfect achievement of this expressive desire.[32] By "achievement" I mean both "completion" and "accomplishment": "completion," in the sense that instrumental music is the *ne plus ultra*, the "fundamental tone," of melodramatic rhetoric; and "accomplishment," in the sense that the ability of

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occupied this position most frequently and with the most security.

[32] This view of instrumental music is not one that Rousseau (at least philosophically) or many of his contemporaries would have endorsed. But as I argued above (pp. 57-9), the politico-linguistic project of *Pygmalion* would never have gotten off the ground, literally and figuratively, without instrumental music having achieved, on some level, independent expressive power, even if this power was not as thoroughly theorized or valorized as it would later come to be. Rousseau's practice in *Pygmalion* of restricting instrumental music to those moments when characters have been rendered speechless by passion, coupled with the transcendental trend of his musical thought, puts him much closer to romantic sensibilities about instrumental music than his adherence to classical theories of mimesis would suggest (see n. 21). As John Neubauer puts it, "Rousseau anticipated the mood, temperament, and predicament of the coming generations, but

instrumental music to function as a signifier of transcendence is due not to inherent qualities so much as to the discourse which has been able to turn them to this end. In what follows, I would like to argue for the "whiteness" of melodrama: the relationship between melodrama's invisible Arcadia, this communal identity that is "hidden from the senses but open to the heart," and the instrumental music that has become its most invisible metaphor, the most "perfect" means of providing a white bourgeois audience with intuitive reassurance about its own conception of, and connection to, "nature."

As I suggested above (pp. 59-61), bourgeois culture is in many respects a Rousseauist culture: "The ultimate binding force of the bourgeois social order, in contrast to the coercive apparatus of absolutism, [is] habit, pieties, sentiments, and affections" (Eagleton 1990: 20). Social values are embodied—"installed and naturalized" within the body of the individual (as "habit, pieties, sentiments, and affections")—so that "the sheer quick feel or impression of an object will be enough for sure judgement, short-circuiting discursive contention and thus mystifying the rules which regulate it" (Eagleton 1990: 43). It is precisely this thorough embodiment of social values that renders them invisible as social constructions—judgements arrived at intuitively seem to be spontaneous and "natural," not learned or coerced. They seem, simply, to be "normal." Dyer argues that it has been characteristic of whites since the eighteenth century to occupy just this sort of position, where white bourgeois values are normalized as "human" values, giving them a universal dimension, indeed, a transcendent dimension, so that what was written on the body becomes, to borrow a phrase from Douglas Sirk, written on the wind. Drawing on an argument made by David Lloyd, Dyer suggests that it was the philosophy of

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he championed the wrong musical means for their expression" (Neubauer 102).

Emmanuel Kant (himself influenced by Rousseau) which provided the ultimate rationalization of this movement from individual to transcendental values. Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, Lloyd says, suggests a "narrative of representation" (Lloyd 64) which moves "from the material particularity of the object to its formal universality," and which is doubled by "an identical movement from the peculiarity of a singular judgement to its representative universality" (Lloyd 65). This movement from "singular judgement" to "representative universality" is, in Kant's words,

> accomplished by weighing the judgement [. . .] with the merely possible judgements of others, and by putting ourselves in the position of every one else, as the result of a mere abstraction from the limitations which contingently affect our own estimate. (qtd. in Lloyd 65)

The existence of a public sphere, of shared values, of a general will, is predicated on each individual's embracing this narrative of "mere" abstraction and formalization; thus, the narrative of representation—moving from the material and particular to the formal and universal—is in fact the model for a narrative of human development in which, ideally, one becomes capable of "abstraction from the limitations which contingently affect [one's] own estimate," of being a disinterested subject of judgement, or what Lloyd calls a "Subject without properties" (Lloyd 64). Dyer argues that the attainment of this subject position (the Subject-without-properties) has become for whites "the mark of civilization, itself the aim of human history" (Dyer 1997: 39); it is, he says, the essence of whiteness, the invisible mark of difference from "other" people, those who, from the white perspective, are unable to transcend the contingent limitations of their bodies, their "culture." The narrative of development of whiteness, then, is one of

increasing "abstraction, distance, separation, [and] objectivity" (Dyer 1997: 38-9) culminating in the Subject-without-properties,

> the philosophical figure for what becomes, with increasing literalness through the nineteenth century, the global ubiquity of the white European. His domination is virtually self-legitimating since the capacity to be everywhere present becomes an historical manifestation of the white man's gradual approximation to the universality he everywhere represents. (Lloyd 70)

The "whiteness" that whites aspire to is a sense of self "whose center," one might say, "is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" (Campbell 1988: 89). "This may be thought of," Dyer says, "as pure spirit" (1997: 39), a "being that is in the body but not of it" (Dyer 1997: 14).

Whiteness and Instrumental Music

Just as the Subject-without-properties signifies a "civilized" perspective in relation to ethics and politics, so too in relation to music, particularly to the Romantic discourse which reconfigured instrumental music, explicitly as a "fine" art and implicitly, I would argue, as a "white" one.[33] Prior to the late eighteenth century, instrumental music in the West was often deemed a dubious vessel of signification, needing to be firmly lashed to something more stable—that is, to something independently meaningful, such as language—before it could be pronounced morally seaworthy (see pp. 45-7 above for

[33] "For it was in art that Europeans chose to see the clearest signs of mythologized self-justification" (Leppert 1987: 92).

Rousseau's version of this argument). By the end of the eighteenth century, aesthetic discourse had largely discarded this mimetic principle in favour of what Lydia Goehr calls "the *separability principle*" (Goehr 1992: 157, italics original), which valued not anchoring to but separation from "the world of the ordinary, mundane, and everyday" (Goehr 1992: 157). An object's "*aesthetic remainder*" (Goehr 1992: 166, italics original), those features which, transcending its everyday use or function, could effect its transfiguration into art, now determined its aesthetic value; and since instrumental music seemed to have so few of the features normally associated with everyday objects, let alone some everyday use or function, it was deemed to have "the most pure, aesthetic character" (Goehr 1992: 167). Resistance to referentiality, which had previously been considered instrumental music's greatest vice, could now be reinterpreted as its greatest virtue:

> If the experience of the beautiful was to be severed from the world of everyday concern, the object of contemplation could not contain any feature to threaten this severance. The success of aesthetic reception depended, in other words, upon the work of art's having no referential or external features. (Goehr 1992: 170)

Because there was no art form which seemed more lacking in "referential or external features," instrumental music went from a "generally low status" (Goehr 1992: 147) among the arts to the highest possible, the ultimate exemplar of what all the arts should now aspire to: not "particularized goals of a moral or religious sort" but the "ability to probe and reveal the higher world of universal, eternal truth" (Goehr 1992: 153).

Goehr calls "the *transcendent* move from the worldly and particular to the

spiritual and universal" the first claim of the new musical discourse; the second was "the *formalist* move which brought meaning from music's outside to its inside" (Goehr 1992: 153, italics original). Instrumental music was now adjudged to have its own internal coherence—what Hegel called an "abstract interiority of pure sound" (qtd. in Goehr 1992: 155)—that was meaningful independent of language. Indeed, in this new dispensation, language, "unable to transcend semantic specificity or particular cognitive content, could not constitute a universal medium as successfully as pure sound" (Goehr 1992: 155). With both its form and content freed from enslavement to the extra-musical, instrumental music was able to evoke, more powerfully than any other art, the extra-mundane: "The lack of intermediary, concrete, literary or visual content made it possible for instrumental music to rise above the status of a medium to actually embody and become a higher truth" (Goehr 1992: 154). Instrumental music, that is to say, seemed not merely to represent the transcendent, but to transcend representation, capturing "the very essence of emotion, soul, humanity, and nature in their most general forms" (Goehr 1992: 155).

These radical new conceptions of instrumental music corresponded to some profound changes in European musical culture. From its peripheral role as accompaniment to social events, instrumental music had moved to the centre of a new social event, the public concert, which placed unusual demands on its audiences: "Though the dance forms of earlier social events [were] absorbed into the purely instrumental compositions that [were] becoming the main focus of the concert" (Fitzgerald 121), listeners were required to sit in silence and attend to the music, rather than having it attend on them, as it were. The instrumental concert demanded a new kind

of listener, one who, by constructing "a new, imaginary body through which to realize the music" (Fitzgerald 126), could "appreciate the value and sublimity of the 'purely musical' experience" (Fitzgerald 121). It is not inappropriate to describe this sort of musical attendance as devotional: many of the emotions and behaviors associated with new aesthetic rituals like the concert had been transferred, minus their sectarian object, from religious worship; indeed, as Goehr argues, Romantic notions of art depended on, among other things, "the cessation of a religiously based society" (Goehr 1992: 157). A structure of worship remained, but one that transcended religious dogma by reaching out to the—"merely," "purely," ergo "universally"—human:

> The instrumental forms that are central to the bourgeois concert ritual give the impression of a highly elaborate language, capable of great expressivity, swift transitions of mood and coherent development over large stretches of time, all without specific semantic content. For the audience that listens together this provides an experience of natural harmonious attunement that does not impinge on the privacy or individuality of its members, a sense of common understanding that does not restrict the individual imagination and of communal worship that does not need to identify (still less name) its god. [. . .] Since the audience that gathered to listen to a concert had no readily apparent analogy to other social gatherings with particular, specifiable interests, it seemed to celebrate a consensus that was based on nothing more or less than its common humanity. (Fitzgerald 122)

With the advent of the concert hall and the public musical society, instrumental

music had a dedicated venue and a dedicated audience; the other new social institution that helped ensure its separability was the musical academy, which dedicated musicians to the art of "purely musical" performance. As a result of this sequestered specialization, very little of the process involved in producing instrumental music and musicians impinged on the concert-going experience. In fact, even today an audience at a traditional instrumental concert sees as little of the economic and social reality of music as an audience of *Pygmalion* would see that of sculpture: how the statue of Galathée or the instruments come to be is only vaguely defined, if at all; what is on display is the power of the demiurgic artist to breathe "sacred fire" into lifeless matter. An awareness of the years of training and practice required to master musical instruments, of the materials, labour, and expertise involved in their manufacture, is subordinated to—or rather, sublimated in—the illusion of naturalness and its corollary, the sense "that human making was truly fine when the product of the making looked as if it had *not* been made by human hands" (Goehr 1992: 160, emphasis original).

But the creation of the musical work as a clearly defined object of aesthetic contemplation posed problems for performers, especially with this demand that the work appear to transcend the conditions of its own creation. There was a (typically elite) suspicion that the inescapably flawed humanity of performers could subvert the transcendent ideal of humanity embodied in the work. From this perspective, the best performers were those who followed exactly the directions in the score, effacing their individuality as completely as possible in order to become a transparent medium for the music. This metaphorical invisibility was occasionally taken to literal extremes, as when "screens were built on the stage or sunken pits were constructed to render the performers

or the orchestra as a whole if not utterly invisible then significantly out of the way" (Goehr 1995-6: 8). The most important example of this tendency, particularly with respect to film music theory, is the hidden orchestra pit in Richard Wagner's Bayreuth Festspielhaus, built "to create the illusion that the music was mysteriously emerging out of the silence from nowhere—or from everywhere" (Goehr 1995-6: 9). Countering this thoroughly depersonalized performance ideal, though, was a more populist notion, in which mysteriousness and transcendence were embodied most notably in the emerging figure of the virtuoso (e.g. Paganini, Liszt). In the drama and spectacle of performance, audiences could witness the transfiguration not just of the musical work but of the entire concert event by the ineffable genius of musicians "fully socially and visibly situated" (Goehr 1995-6: 18).

As I suggested in referring to Bayreuth, it is to the first of these performing ideals that I think we must look for insight into melodramatic discourse (even when the second is incorporated into the plot of a melodrama; see pp. 100-1 below). If it is only a small step from *Pygmalion*'s orchestra of eight to a Hollywood film orchestra of eighty, as I argued above (pp. 58-9), it is because of the continuity of a musical tradition which seeks to convince us that we can transcend both ourselves and the instruments of our transcendence. Glenn Gould's enthusiastic endorsement of recording technology, though generally understood as radical within the classical music establishment, merely takes this aspect of Western musical discourse to its logical conclusion: his ideal listener-to-performer ratio is not the 2800-to-one of the concert hall, but the one-to-zero ratio of the living room, where all bodies involved in the production of music have disappeared (Gould 318). Musical instruments are simply the earliest of our musical machines, and

are thus, in this context, no different from the analog tape recorder or the digital sequencer—they can give us something of the same "sense of disengagement from biological [or, following Kant, contingent] limitations" (Gould 355). As Gould puts it, "Technology ha[s] positioned itself between the attempt and the realization; the 'charity of the machine' [. . .] ha[s] interposed itself between 'the frailty of human nature and the vision of the idealized accomplishment'" (Gould 354).

The whole economy of instrumental music since the mid-eighteenth century seems to me to imply a certain degree of excess, and a certain attitude about excess, in Western culture, for instruments and, by implication, instrumentalists are good for little else except making music: "Since instrumental sounds have so few uses outside of music, they help to bracket music (to a degree the voice cannot) as a territory apart" (Burrows 118).[34] Already physically invisible as sound, instrumental music became an ever more invisible metaphor as its separation from both the human body and the social body increased, and this, in an increasingly visually-oriented culture, dropped the veil of innocent mystique around it. It has indeed come to signify a "territory apart," a territory of pure *ur*-ness—*ur*-feeling, *ur*-spirit, *ur*-nature—that, though felt within the body, is beyond the body, beyond articulation, beyond "discursive contention." Schopenhauer's claim that music is pure Will, Pater's that "All art constantly aspires to the condition of music," each in its own way reflects the fact that by the nineteenth century, instrumental music had come to represent the apotheosis of white bourgeois aspiration—it seemed to embody the feeling of being a Subject-without-properties, "whose center is everywhere

[34] This is one reason, I think, why movie audiences are so easily able to distinguish background music from other film sounds—they know that instrumental sounds can signify nothing else

and circumference is nowhere."[35]

Whiteness and Melodrama

Richard Dyer's point in *White* of examining texts in which whites do not (explicitly) define themselves in relation to non-white people is important to his argument about the nature of "whiteness." It is, moreover, a point he makes against a background of scholarly work on texts in which whites do define themselves this way. I have not followed in his footsteps for a number of reasons. There is no background of scholarly work on music in melodrama, so far as I am aware, comparable to that which forms a counterpoint to Dyer's thesis. And, as I have noted below, material evidence of the historical continuity I am arguing for is limited: few of the oldest melodramas have survived with their musical scores. Whether this is a byproduct of the musical discourse that constantly desires to transcend its own materiality (the discourse described above, pp. 73-80), or of the aesthetic discourse that has traditionally considered the music of melodrama to be of negligible worth (due in part to its stock emotions and gestures, and the consequent borrowing and reuse of musical material[36]), or both, is difficult to say. In any case, whatever practical considerations have led to my structuring this argument around the stereotype of the "noble savage," the importance of such an image of the "natural man" to Rousseau's conception of our state of nature, and thus to his politico-

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except musical sounds.

[35] "Pater and Schopenhauer thus acknowledge that the 'condition' of music is less an aspiration of art than a desire for an embodied happiness that does not exist in material life but resides in the imagination" (Leppert 1993: 223).

[36] Incidentally, it now appears that the practice of using borrowed music in melodrama was inaugurated by none other than Rousseau himself: "The *Andante* from the overture of *Pygmalion* corresponds note-for-note . . . to *The Air of Dreams* . . . from [Rousseau's] *The Gallant Muses*"

linguistic philosophy as a whole,[37] makes it an appropriate means to highlight the "whiteness" of melodramatic discourse.

But before discussing the melodramas themselves, there is an interesting conception of Roland Barthes that seems useful to introduce here. This does not come from his most famous essay about music, "The Grain of the Voice," but from a passage about theatre in his autobiography, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*:[38]

> At the crossroads of the entire *œuvre*, perhaps the Theater: there is not a single one of his texts, in fact, which fails to deal with a certain theater, and spectacle is the universal category in whose aspect the world is seen. [. . .] Not believing in the separation of affect and sign, of the emotion and its theater, he could not *express* an admiration, an indignation, a love, for fear of signifying it badly [. . .]. His "serenity" was merely the constraint of an actor who dares not come on stage lest he perform too badly.
>
> Incapable of making himself convincing to himself, yet it is the very conviction of others which in his eyes makes them into creatures of theater and fascinates him. He asks the actor to show him a convinced body [un corps convaincu] rather than a true passion. Here perhaps is the

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(Waeber 35).

[37] See especially chapter 9 of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, which includes this significant footnote: "Genuine languages do not at all have a domestic origin; it is only a more general and more lasting convention that may establish them. The Savages of America almost never speak except outside of their homes; each keeps silent in his cabin; he speaks to his family by signs and these signs are infrequent because a savage is less restless, less impatient than a European, because he does not have so many needs and takes care to provide for them himself" (Rousseau 1998: 305n.).

[38] The "he's" and "him's" in this passage refer to Barthes; he's writing about himself in the third

> best theater he has ever seen: in the Belgian dining car, certain employees [. . .] were sitting at a corner table; they ate their meal with so much appetite, comfort, and care [. . .], with manners so perfectly applied to the food [. . .], that the whole Cook service was subverted: they were eating the same things as we were, but it was not the same menu. Everything had changed, from one end of the car to the other, by the single effect of a conviction (relation of the body not to passion or to the soul but to bliss [la jouissance]).[39] (Barthes 1977a: 178-9, italics original)

Conviction is for Barthes a utopian concept: it is the bliss of self-forgetfulness, the bliss of freedom from self-consciousness, from what Barthes elsewhere calls the "preoccupation with the *imago*" (Barthes 1985: 217, italics original), the image of oneself that one projects to others. What is interesting about this passage is that Barthes encounters the convinced body as a spectator, a spectator who quite self-consciously lacks conviction himself; yet even so merely witnessing the performance of conviction has a transfiguring effect "from one end of the car to the other."

A good deal of the scenario Barthes describes seems to me to be applicable to instrumental music in melodrama: what does a white bourgeois audience celebrate through such music if not a conviction about their own social body, their "claim to a spirituality and subjectivity that are universal" (Fitzgerald 122)? What is melodrama about if not conviction—not just moral conviction (i.e. in relation to good and evil), but

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person.

[39] For some reason, this translation adds "to pleasure" to this last parenthetical phrase when the French text has "rapport du corps, non à la passion ou à l'âme, mais à la jouissance" (Barthes 1975: 180). As pleasure (plaisir) and bliss (jouissance) are not synonymous for Barthes, I have

also Barthes' sense of conviction, what one might call "semiotic" conviction, that transfiguring sense of bliss that comes when "the separation of affect and sign, of the emotion and its theater," is erased, when the universe—or the sculptor's attic, or the Belgian dining car—"once again become[s] the seamless web of signification" (Brooks 79)? Just such a transfiguring sense of bliss is the goal of Rousseau's politico-linguistic philosophy: to become a member of his ideal community is to become, and to become part of, a convinced body, a "perfected" body, a body that, through "melodious language" and imitation of the Legislator, has actualized all its faculties in the (metaphorical) expression of its (metaphysical) nature (see pp. 39-45 above). The *melos* of melodrama, then, not only embodies the pleasures of compassion, but also the pleasures of conviction—the seductive triumph over self-contradiction, self-consciousness, self-doubt. Both actors and audience are enveloped in the transfiguring embrace of an invisible convinced body.

The Indian Princess; or, La Belle Sauvage, is not only "the earliest surviving play on the story of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas" (Hitchcock, n. pag.) but also represents the "only extant American instrumental music for melodrama before 1850" (Shapiro 1986: 202). Premiered in 1808, it had, according to its author, been "frequently acted in . . . all the theatres of the United States" by 1832 (qtd. in Scheckel 232), and was one of countless versions of the Pocahontas story that were in circulation during the first half of the nineteenth century. In this version, Pocahontas is moved to spare Capt. Smith from execution by her tribe, at the expense of her own life if necessary, but she does not

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emended the translation to drop "to pleasure."

do so because she has fallen in love with him (she calls Smith "My brother!" after she successfully prevails upon her father for clemency [Barker 30]). The man she eventually falls in love with is Capt. Smith's lieutenant, Lt. Rolfe, who has forsworn all European women as being too fickle and would rather "take a squaw o' the woods, and get papooses" (Barker 24). But as Susan Scheckel argues, both the dramatic intercession and the romantic interest are motivated by Pocahontas' "instinctively recognizing the superiority of Euro-American beliefs, values, and customs" (Scheckel 235):[40] her reaction upon first seeing Smith, before he has uttered a word, is "O Nima! is it not a God?" (Barker 26), and later on she says to Rolfe,

> O! 'tis from thee that I have drawn my being:
> Thou'st ta'en me from the path of savage error,
> Blood-stain'd and rude, where rove my countrymen,
> And taught me heavenly truths, and fill'd my heart
> With sentiments sublime, and sweet, and social. [. . .]
> Hast thou not heaven-ward turn'd my dazzled sight,
> Where sing the spirits of the blessed good
> Around the bright throne of the Holy One?
> This thou hast done; and ah! what couldst thou more,
> Belov'd preceptor, but direct that ray,
> Which beams from heaven to animate existence,
> And bid my swelling bosom beat with love! (Barker 52)

Replacing "preceptor" with "Legislator" would ruin the scansion of the line, but in all other respects this transubstantiation of "savage error, / Blood-stain'd and rude," into "sentiments sublime, and sweet, and social" follows a Rousseauist script for "perfectibility." By the time Pocahontas enters in Act 3.2 she has joined Smith and Rolfe

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[40] Pocahontas' embracing of Euro-American values requires a minor qualification: as Scheckel points out, *The Indian Princess* creates a distinct space between the evils of "savage" culture on the one hand and the evils of European culture on the other. Smith's final speech points towards the specifically American society that would take shape in, from the characters' historical perspective, the near future, and that did take shape in, from the audience's historical

as speakers of blank verse rather than prose, and later in that scene she becomes the only "savage" in the play to perform a solo vocal number ("When the Midnight of absence"). In other words—Rousseau's words—her embracing of Rolfe and, metaphorically, white culture "makes all [her] vocal organs speak" (see p. 41 above): "When the Midnight of absence," her lament for the absent Rolfe, is her most convincing display of "whiteness."

James Nelson Barker called *The Indian Princess* an "Operatic Melo-Drame" because he and his composer, John Bray, were adding something new—melodrama—to the more well-established tradition of the ballad opera: the score consists of twelve vocal numbers—songs and choruses—and eighteen instrumental cues.[41] The music is overwhelmingly diatonic and presents none of the "difficulties" of *Pygmalion*; despite this formal simplicity, however, the score very clearly distinguishes between "savages" and "whites." The overture, the musical summation of what we are about to see enacted on stage, gives us "savageness" as the minor mode, rudimentary, repetitive melody, unison octaves, and square, pounding rhythms; "whiteness" as the major mode, lyrical, flowing melody, full harmony, and graceful, lilting rhythms. The racial tropes and musical themes of the overture are recapitulated in the finales of Acts 1 and 2, by which point it has become clear that while "whiteness" embraces both men and women,

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perspective, the near past.

[41] "Even in pure melodrama of this period there were likely to be opening choruses or dances for each act and interpolated songs and marches" (Shapiro 1986: 203). As the printing of the music (particularly the titles) in this melodrama shows, the songs were intended to be sold separately from the score as sheet music and were accordingly protected by copyright. (*The Indian Princess* is exceptional, in that copyright was extended to include the instrumental interludes as well; most instrumental cues literally disappeared from sight.) In an early example of horizontal integration, the name and fame of the composer, primarily as a songwriter, were used to help sell the play, which in turn would help sell the songs. This practice extended right into the silent film era, when well-known composers, conductors, and soloists were used to draw audiences to theatres.

"savageness" is a predominantly male trait. The instrumental cue for Pocahontas' first entrance (Act 1.3) sounds entirely "white"—major mode, lyrical, lilting melody, full harmony—with one important exception: a two-bar interjection, in unison octaves, of a chromatic motif from the "savage" section of the overture.[42] The appearance of any chromaticism, even as brief as two bars, stands out like a sore thumb in this numbingly diatonic score, and when this same motif reappears in the warrior chorus at the end of Act 2, it is as accompaniment to the text "See the cautious Warrior creeping, / See the tree hid Warrior peeping." For Pocahontas' entrance, the rhythm of this motif has been altered slightly in order to fit with the rhythm of the rest of the cue, but it still serves as a musical flag, a subtle reminder of "savageness." Otherwise, this cue is an expression of the latent compassion of womankind, which awaits only the arrival of a "nobler soul" (Barker 25) to be actualized. When that "nobler soul" does arrive in Act 2, it is as a woman, not a "savage," that Pocahontas responds: as Smith says after his deliverance, "O woman! angel sex! where'er thou art, / Still art thou heavenly. The rudest clime / Robs not thy glowing bosom of it's [sic] nature" (Barker 30). Once she is introduced to Rolfe, her reluctant acceptance of a political marriage to the "fierce" Susquehannock prince Miami turns to outright refusal—having begun the Rousseauist journey from "physical" to "moral" being, she renounces the "savage" passion for violence, vengeance, and treachery in favour of the "white" passion for mercy, justice, and romantic love.

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[42] The "white" section of the overture is not completely devoid of chromaticism, but the way in which the chromatic notes are smoothly integrated into either the bass or an inner part as passing or neighbouring tones stands in stark contrast to the statement, invariably highlighted by unison octaves, of chromatic notes in the "savage" music. Chromaticism is conspicuously present in the "savage" section of the overture, Pocahontas' entrance cue, and the warrior chorus and war dance as a "typical" characteristic of "savageness"; it has no such presence or function for the whites.

The way chromaticism is used in "When the Midnight of Absence" signifies the completion of this journey. Bray, the composer, gives a hint of melancholy to the second line of the couplet "And the tender flower bends till return of the light, / Steep'd in tear drops that fall from the eye of the night" by shifting from B^b major to B^b minor, but he does not draw attention to the chromaticism with unison octaves—Pocahontas sings her D^b's over an Alberti bass. And, "when the lov'd-one appears, / Like the sun a bright day to impart," Bray celebrates by shifting back to B^b major (in the time-honoured romantic tradition, the beloved's absence or presence has an apocalyptic effect on nature). Like the other instances of the minor mode appearing in *The Indian Princess*'s "white" music (Larry's song in Act 1.2, the cue when Rolfe takes leave of Pocahontas in Act 2.2), the chromaticism here represents the stylized expression of amorous regret, a lover's lament. In the case of Pocahontas, however, it has the additional function of symbolizing her self-transcendence: the instrumental cue for her first entrance gave us her latent "whiteness"; "When the Midnight of absence" gives us a concrete vocal expression of that latent potential, its chromaticism purged of all suggestion of "savageness."

Susan Scheckel connects the popularity of the Pocahontas story in the early nineteenth century to "the vexed history of Indian-white relations and ongoing debates during the 1820s and 1830s regarding the justice and morality of American Indian policy": in contrast to plays that focused on "the dying Indian," the Pocahontas story "cast a much more positive light on [these] relations" (Scheckel 232).[43] She concludes:

> In bringing Pocahontas to the popular stage, James Nelson Barker enlisted

[43] 1830 was the year of the Indian Removal Act, which forced all tribes in the American Southeast to relocate to Indian Territory (what is now Oklahoma).

> the conventions of melodrama to produce a romanticized version of American history that resolved conflicts implicit in past acts of conquest [. . .] and defined national identity in terms that reinforced a sense of moral and cultural integrity. (Scheckel 241)

There can be no better way of resolving conflicts and reinforcing a sense of moral and cultural integrity than by demonstrating, à la Rousseau, that the (white) Self and the Other are, at heart, the same. Although *The Indian Princess* is a hybrid form rather than "pure" melodrama, I believe that the argument I have been making for the priority of instrumental music is still valid here, especially with respect to the construction of Pocahontas as a "true" woman, needing only the sight of the exemplary Smith to put a glow in her bosom. Her "whiteness," the latent presence of which was established by instrumental music in Act 1, is visibly, vocally displayed in Acts 2 and 3, and in the final chorus, as the overture has foretold, "the shrill war-cry of the savage man / Yields to the jocund shepherd's roundelay" (Barker 73): everyone, with the exception of the suicide Miami, joins in a paean to the "white" values of freedom, valour, peace, and love.[44] Music has helped to establish those virtues as natural and universal, their superiority inherently evident not just to the "belle sauvage" but to all the "*belles âmes*" (Brooks 75, italics original), onstage and in the audience, whose hearts are already harmoniously attuned to them.

Two hundred years later, "Indian" melodrama still plays a significant role in

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[44] "Roundelay chorus" is the actual name given in the text to the finale of Act 1, which recapitulates the "white" section of the overture. The criticism that Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler leveled at the opening title music of many movies could just as easily be applied to *The Indian Princess*'s overture: it "creates the illusion that the effect that is to be achieved by the

defining American national identity, and in the last ten years or so there has been no "Indian" melodrama more popular and successful than *Dances with Wolves* [1990]. "[T]he vexed history of Indian-white relations" is no less vexed, as Canadians well know, and the desire of whites to cast a positive light on these relations is no less evident.[45] With this desire, however, has come a certain regretful awareness of a guilty past, a recognition that brazen imperialism of the kind we see in *The Indian Princess* is no longer morally acceptable. While *The Indian Princess* offers whites a convincing answer to the question "Were we good missionaries?," *Dances with Wolves* offers an equally convincing answer to a seemingly more modest and conditional question: "Could we have been good stewards?" The hero of *Dances with Wolves*, Lt. John J. Dunbar, is a decorated white veteran of the Civil War, but, dissatisfied with the expressive possibilities of his own culture, he turns his back on it and attempts to find, to join, and ultimately to protect a more "natural" culture, that of the Sioux. *The Indian Princess*'s narrative of "perfectibility," from "savage error" to "sentiments sublime, and sweet, and social" is unchanged, but the cultural groups these values are attached to are reversed: it is the Sioux who evince a "particular, conscious regard for . . . fellow humans" (see p. 40 above), while the whites, according to Dunbar, are a "people without value and without soul."

All white characters in the film, with the exception of Dunbar and Stands-with-a-

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whole picture has already been achieved" (Adorno & Eisler 60).

[45] The Oct. 29, 2000 broadcast of the CBC radio show *Tapestries*, titled "Powwow Spirituality," addressed a related aspect of this problematic desire. Many natives are wary of the explosion of white interest in native spiritual practices, practices that were for many years outlawed by whites. Whites are now reaping the benefits (monetary and otherwise) of the native struggle to preserve this spiritual heritage, but there has been a much more qualified interest in their more "mundane"—not to mention politically and racially charged—struggles (e.g. land claims and

Fist, the white orphan brought up by the Sioux, are portrayed as being, at worst, ignorant slobs, racist goons, or candidates for the nut house; at best as negligent and "unenlightened." In scene after scene, the non-Dunbar whites prove themselves to be utterly unconscionable in their treatment of "nature": blind to its beauties, contemptibly mercenary, and needlessly destructive. The Sioux, conversely, are a warm, humorous, friendly people living in a state of uncorrupted purity, of primal innocence: they have no firearms, they have only just come in contact with whites, the forces of history have not touched them—all of which is at odds with historical fact. By 1863, the date when this story takes place, the Sioux had signed both commercial (1825) and political (1851) treaties with the U.S. government, and had been trading for and using firearms for at least a century. The Santee Sioux uprising against white settlers and its aftermath in Minnesota in 1862 affected the decisions of tribes throughout the Plains concerning white encroachment on their land. The entire development of the Plains Indian horse-riding cultures, beginning with the introduction of horses to North America by the Spanish, was never independent of contact, direct or indirect, with white culture.[46] The film's strategy of historical denial allows us the pleasant fantasy that it could have been possible—that, indeed, it is *still* possible—for an enlightened white man, if not thwarted by the benighted members of his own race, to immerse himself in the pristine waters of "nature" without fouling them.

"Nature" here means both the natives and the land: visually arresting, dramatically beautiful, infinitely spectacular, the two are conflated in the film, both visually and

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fishing rights).

[46] For these and other facts concerning the tribes represented in the film, see Fowler.

musically, in a utopian portrait of freedom and harmony. Although the score for *Dances with Wolves* does not link the natives and the land together by the repetition of a single musical theme, as other recent "Indian" movies have done (e.g. *Black Robe*—see pp. 96-100 below), the music associated with them is linked by sameness of style and orchestration: an emphasis on stately progressions of primary chords in the low brass, on noble, diatonic motifs in the horns, on exhilarating filigree in the strings. The music which accompanies Dunbar's journey to Ft Sedgwick has taken on a life of its own outside the film (in television ads, etc.), effecting the same evocation of pastoral Americana that has come to be associated with Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. The music of *Dances with Wolves* owes a great deal to Copland's ballet and film scores of the 1930's and 40's, as do most scores written for Westerns—*El Salòn México* [1936], *Billy the Kid* [1938], *Rodeo* [1942], scores for films like *Our Town* [1940], as well as *Appalachian Spring* [1944], all elevated a folksong-derived sensibility to the epic scale of symphonic music, and that style, in cinema at least, has become the most popular musical embodiment of white nostalgia for a simpler life amidst the grandeur of nature.[47] As Dunbar says in a voice-over after he and the Sioux have returned from a buffalo hunt, "The only word that came to mind was harmony." One of the simple, noble, powerful themes is playing, Dunbar is silhouetted against a glorious sunset, horses and people move leisurely across the prairie grass.

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[47] The populist style of Copland and others that emerged during the 1930's and 40's has its roots in, among other things, "the revived interest in national, popular, and folk expression" (Salzman 87) that first began around the turn of the century, in the desire to reach the new, larger audience available to composers through new media (recordings, radio, film, etc.), and in utopian ideals arising during the Great Depression. The latter, as Caryl Flinn explains, were "organized around the notion that collective identity—be it national, political, or cultural—could somehow be materialized through music" (Flinn 1992: 22).

Apart from the white army, the only discord in this harmonious vision is the Pawnee, the "hostiles" to the Sioux "friendlies." While the music associated with the Sioux and the land might be described as folkloristic tonality, *Dances with Wolves* exploits the "primitive" qualities of modality in order to represent the Pawnee: over a bass pedal tone (another musical trope which signals "Danger!"), the horns blare out a forbidding melody in the Dorian mode. We hear this music just after the Pawnee have killed and scalped Timmons, the wagon driver, and at this point we are led to believe that these are the Indians that Dunbar has been expecting to encounter at his post. All the traditional elements of the stereotype of "hostiles" are in place—the war paint, the unprovoked attack, the scalping, the yells of triumph, the "savage" music—and it is to this stereotypical portrait that the Sioux in the film are compared. The film's contention that the Sioux were being harried by an aggressive and violent Pawnee tribe is another fudging of the facts: it was the Pawnee, not the Sioux, who were classed as "friendlies" by the U.S. army; they were eventually driven, by encroachment, disease, and Sioux attacks, to cede all their land to the U.S. government and move to a reservation in Oklahoma. This effort to construct a Sioux tribe of almost virginal innocence is little more than an attempt to rehabilitate our own self-image in relation to natives by rehabilitating our own stereotype of the Sioux. No other tribe has populated film and television as frequently and ferociously as the Sioux, but from the moment Dunbar first sees their village, the "wild people of the Plains" are enfolded in the warm embrace of the film's nostalgic score; by the time they make their second formal visit to his post Dunbar is able to conclude, "Nothing I have been told about these people is correct. They are not beggars and thieves. They are not the bogeymen they have been made out to be." While

they may look as formidable as the Pawnee with their war paint on, the music assures us that they are not "savages" at heart—the fact that they are represented by tonal and the Pawnees by modal music tells us that they are indeed as "civilized" as we.

The Sioux are so civilized, in fact, that it is unnecessary for us to learn about their customs. When Dunbar marries Stands-with-a-Fist, Kicking Bird's speech about the obligations of a Sioux husband is completely effaced by the flute's sentimental love theme and Dunbar's sentimental voice-over. We do hear the Sioux singing and drumming prior to and following the marriage ceremony, but the ceremony itself is rendered entirely according to white cultural values. The marriage scene stands as a microcosm of the Rousseauist project of this film: the trappings may be "Indian," but the heart is our own (both Dunbar and Stands-with-a-Fist are, of course, white). Although we need subtitles to understand the Sioux language, we need no such help to understand their culture, for it is, in essence, our culture.

There is only one musical theme that is associated with a particular individual, and that is, not surprisingly, John Dunbar's theme.[48] Its most significant appearance in relation to the issue of stewardship is during the scene of Dunbar's cleaning up the area around his post. Dunbar walks over a rise on his way to get water and the camera tracks backwards to reveal the garbage littered across the hillside by the fort's previous (white) occupants. Even the creek is polluted: a dead deer stares back at him from under the water. Dunbar's theme begins to play, and we cut to shots of him collecting all the

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[48] Significantly, the music associated with the Sioux does not distinguish among individuals—it represents their collective spirit, as it were, which, because it is already "natural" and Edenic, does not have to display "the character of enterprise," the "dynamic relation to the physical world" (Dyer 1997: 15) that is typical of "whiteness." The Sioux don't face the same "struggle"

garbage and the carcass and burning them. This music, reminiscent of a leaping bugle call and played typically on the trumpet, speaks to our desire to redeem ourselves, to show that an individual can combat the collective mire, that we can, through our own efforts, return nature to its "natural" state. This is the music that we hear when Dunbar makes his solo charge on the Confederate line at the beginning of the film, ending the stand-off and redeeming a senseless battle, and it is also heard at the moment when a dying Timmons implores the Pawnee, "Don't hurt my mules." Up to this point in the film, Timmons has been an object of disgust, but by showing concern for his mules at the moment of his death he, too, is redeemed. It is this spirit of redemption, I believe, that helped make *Dances with Wolves* such a hit and garner it twelve Oscar nominations and seven awards, including best picture, best director, best cinematography, and best original score. Kevin Costner, the director and star of *Dances with Wolves*, has twice returned to the formula of an enlightened loner leading the last remnants of a truly "human" community to the promised land, but in both cases (*Waterworld* [1995], *The Postman* [1997]) the story unfolds in a distant post-apocalyptic future. Both of these films lack the sort of redemptive replay of history afforded by Dunbar's interaction with the great stereotypes of the frontier, something that may have contributed to their commercial failure.

As is the case with Pocahontas, Dunbar's potential to transcend the brutish habits and prejudices of his own culture, his inherent suitability for a "naturally" superior culture, is heralded by the musical score well before that potential is fully realized in the story. And, again as with Pocahontas, we watch this latent character first leap up in recognition of its "true" likeness (i.e. the "belles âmes" of the Sioux, especially Kicking

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to become "natural" that Dunbar does.

Bird), and then express itself in its "native" tongue (Dunbar masters Lakota almost as quickly and easily as Pocahontas does blank verse). This drama of actualization culminates in a voice-over after Dunbar and his arsenal of modern weaponry have helped the Sioux defeat the Pawnee:

> It was hard to know how to feel. I'd never been in a battle like this one. There was no dark political objective. This was not a fight for territory or riches or to make men free. It had been fought to preserve the food stores that would see us through the winter, to protect the lives of women and children and loved ones only a few feet away. [. . .] I felt a pride I'd never felt before. I'd never really known who John Dunbar was. Perhaps the name itself had no meaning. But as I heard my Sioux name being called over and over, I knew for the first time who I really was.

The prose is less purple than Pocahontas' speech to Rolfe (see p. 84 above), but the narrative of self-transcendence, from "physical" to "moral" being, from a meaningless life as a solitary individual to a meaningful life in an ideal community, is almost identical. Later, after Dunbar's marriage to Stands-with-a-Fist, Kicking Bird tells him, "of all the trails in this life, there is one that matters most. It is the trail of a true human being. I think you are on this trail, and it is good to see."

I think it's clear that *The Indian Princess* and *Dances with Wolves* are narratives both thoroughly white and thoroughly Rousseauist, in the sense that the moment of contact between the Self and the Other, Rousseau's primal politico-linguistic moment, turns out to be white culture negotiating two images of itself, one prehistoric, the other historic, through an exemplary figure who successfully (i.e. musico-linguistically)

transcends the physical and cultural differences between the two. The only difference lies in the location of the ideal politico-linguistic community, the direction in which the arrow of "perfectibility" points: from the imperfect past to the perfect present, as in *The Indian Princess*; or from the imperfect present to the perfect past, as in *Dances with Wolves*. In either case, as in *Pygmalion*, the instrumental music is there to nudge our own internal orientation in the right direction—long before the "oneness" of the Self and the Other has been demonstrated by and to the characters of the story, it has been implied to the audience by the instrumental music. Although the "whiteness" of melodramatic discourse is a little easier to see when the Other happens to be non-white, the narrative of "perfectibility" is implicit in *Pygmalion*: what is Galathée but a Pocahontas of stone? Rousseau's melodramatic "ethic of resurgence" looks to give meaning to life by dissolving the hard shell of history surrounding the heart of the individual and allowing the forces of unravished nature to flood in (or out); but no matter what the diegetic metaphor for "nature" happens to be—god, goddess, father, mother, "Indian," "white"—on the melodramatic compass of conviction, the nondiegetic instrumental music always points due north, towards whiteness.

I would like to turn now to two scenes from another "Indian" melodrama to expand on this last point. At first glance, *Black Robe* [1991], because it counters the nostalgic warmth and sentimentality of *Dances with Wolves* with such unsparing harshness, hardly seems like melodrama at all. Appearances can be deceiving, however: it deals with the question of white stewardship of nature in much the same terms as *Dances with Wolves* (an enlightened white man finds in native culture "the trail of a true human being") and it is, in its own way, no less nostalgic a film. The nostalgia here is for a world

in which we are subject to the unrelenting discipline of a stern and fearsome nature (a conflation, again, of the natives and the land), a world which demands full, spontaneous expression of our "true" mettle, where survival depends on being unfettered by "religion" and "culture." Both the title music and the love theme, in keeping with this "primal" conception of nature, are modal (interestingly enough, the Dorian mode), although, scored typically for strings and harp, they are less strident in character than the Pawnee theme from *Dances with Wolves*. What makes *Black Robe* a particularly instructive example is the way in which its Rousseauist narrative of "perfectibility" is elaborated through the use of instrumental music, within and without the diegesis. The melodramatic project from its inception has been about enlisting modern musical technology in the expression of "pre-modern" musical (for Rousseau, "moral") values; the mastery of musical technology that is necessary for instrumental music's discursive invisibility thus makes even the darkest melodrama a triumph of social incorporation. I am aware of no other film which reveals at once the paradox and the whiteness of this musico-moral drama as convincingly as *Black Robe*.

Fr Laforgue, the Jesuit priest at the centre of the story (which takes place in seventeenth-century New France), is constructed as a man completely cut off from "nature," from his "natural" self, and is therefore entirely unsuited to even begin to understand native culture. Not only has religion made him dogmatic and death-obsessed ("I do not welcome death as a holy man should"), but a number of flashbacks reveal that he comes from an upper-class or aristocratic background, with all its attendant snobbery and artificiality. As a foil to the "bad" Laforgue, the film gives us the "good" Daniel, whose function, like Dunbar's in *Dances with Wolves*, is to redeem white culture—in an

impassioned speech to Laforgue, he argues that it is the Algonquin who are "true Christians. They share everything and forgive things we would never forgive." Daniel's dress is much closer to native dress than is the soutane of the Jesuits, and he adapts without obvious difficulty to the native lifestyle: his digestion is unimpaired, unlike Laforgue's, and he is able to speak, smoke, paddle, hunt, and fight with the Algonquin. He also falls in love with Annuka, the daughter of the Algonquin chief, and it is the differences between their nondiegetic love theme and the diegetic music we hear during one of Laforgue's flashbacks that I want to focus on.

This flashback shows us a younger Laforgue, clearly prior to his taking orders, listening with his mother to a young woman playing the recorder. During the performance, his mother leans over to him and whispers that the young woman is "charming," "attractive," "modest," and "of such a good family," obviously trying to suggest that he would be making an excellent match should he choose her as his wife. The nondiegetic love theme is also played on a recorder, and a number of implicit comparisons and contrasts are being made here: the amateurish playing of the young woman versus the mature sound and flawless intonation of the professional nondiegetic instrumentalist; the visual reinforcement of the limitations of an individual musician working to produce music versus the sensation of unlimited possibility associated with the invisible labour of an undefined number of musicians (the nondiegetic recorder is backed by an orchestra of strings and harp); the rather harsh acoustic presence of the diegetic recorder versus the warm, ideal ambience of the nondiegetic music's acoustic

space.[49] The implication is that Laforgue, had he not become a priest, would have had to wind his way through a maze of class obligations, his sexuality, like the young woman's in the flashback, expressed awkwardly and laboriously through cultural rituals that maintain a "civilized" distance from the body, from "nature." As a priest, of course, he is required to eradicate his sexuality altogether, something that, in a further example of the perversion of "nature" by "culture," he has difficulty in accomplishing: he admits that he lusts after Annuka and flogs himself for his "sin of intent." Meanwhile, Daniel and Annuka follow immediately their instinctive sexual urges, the "natural harmonious attunement" of their hearts expressed wordlessly and effortlessly through glances and the nondiegetic love theme.

For me, *Black Robe* reveals with especial clarity the paradoxical white nostalgia at the heart of melodramatic discourse. In the flashback, music and musical technology (the recorder) appear as a highly visible metaphor, a symbol of the rationalization of passion,

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[49] There are also stylistic differences: the young woman in the flashback is playing, if I'm not mistaken, a sarabande (in any case, it is formalized dance music); the love theme is slower in tempo, very *misterioso* in character, and much simpler, harmonically, rhythmically, and melodically. The perception by a white audience that such "savage" music lacks elements associated with "cultured" music has not changed; what has changed is its attitude towards "culture." The presumption made by *The Indian Princess* and its audience—that this lack is a measure of the Indians' distance from the "natural" superiority of white culture—is reversed in *Black Robe* and other such films: "savage" music is still perceived to be lacking, but this is reinterpreted as a measure of white culture's presumed distance from a state of primal authenticity. This shift in the white attitude towards "culture" is particularly evident when one compares *The Indian Princess* with *Pocahontas* [1995], Disney's animated version of the same narrative. Musically, very little has changed—"savage" and "white" in *Pocahontas* sound much like "savage" and "white" in *The Indian Princess*. (Pocahontas' mantra, in the best melodramatic tradition, is "Listen to your heart, you will understand," sung to another musical trope of "primitivism," the pentatonic scale.) For Disney's Pocahontas, however, the figure of Capt. Smith appeals not to some latent spirit of womanly compassion, but to a latent spirit of adventure. (In the film, "adventure" is a category which transcends race and gender; in Pocahontas' case, it translates into an openness to racial and cultural difference.) And, rather than gratefully embracing white culture, she reconciles "white" and "savage" worldviews by marrying this spirit of adventure to her knowledge of and respect for the power of "nature."

of the oppression of all things "natural" characteristic of Laforgue and the culture and religion he represents. It is, in other words, a symbol of "culture," as the film understands it, of "culture" interposing itself between man and nature. But while the recorder is clearly—visibly—acknowledged as a mere "cultural" metaphor in Laforgue's case (it is precisely for his inability to transcend his own culture that the film criticizes him), there is no such acknowledgement in Daniel's. This, despite the fact that a far greater rationalization of passion and a much more complex technological process are required to produce the love theme: choosing the moments when it should appear, composing and orchestrating the music, copying the parts, rehearsing and recording with not just one but dozens of professional musicians, plus the synchronizing, editing, and other post-production touch-ups. It is through this process of "whitening"—this disengagement from all contingent and biological limitations—that the same musical instrument which signified the prison of "culture" in the flashback is rendered "transparent to transcendence" (Campbell 1990: 40) for its appearance in the love theme. The connection with "nature" feared lost by the interposition of "culture" is invisibly restored by the interposition of that same, now spiritually purified, culture—through the whiteness and "primitive" modality of the love theme, we have, metaphorically, slipped our own bonds.

Again, the presence of a racial stereotype makes the whiteness of all this a little easier to see, but the same deep-rooted tension between "culture" and "nature" structures melodramas that are far removed from the "primal" battleground of *Black Robe*. *Music of the Heart* [1999], for example, is the story of a (white) music teacher's struggle to preserve a place for violin lessons in the curriculum of a New York inner-city school, to preserve a place for (white) music in the hearts of inner-city children, a struggle which

culminates in a fund-raising concert at Carnegie Hall. The climax of the concert is Bach's Concerto in D minor for two violins, played by a group of her former and current students and a phalanx of guest virtuosos, including Isaac Stern, Itzahk Perlman, and Joshua Bell. The climax of the melodrama, however, comes a few seconds later, when she takes her bows: we cut from a shot of the audience's standing ovation to a close-up of her radiant face "clothed in all the brilliance of the [nondiegetic] orchestra." A music critic in the Carnegie Hall audience might conceivably describe the diegetic performance of the Bach concerto as "convincing" and "transcendent," but for the film's audience it is the nondiegetic orchestral music that *signifies* conviction and transcendence. (And, as is typical of melodrama, including *Pygmalion*, this triumphant moment fuses the personal and the professional: the music teacher receiving accolades in Carnegie Hall was, at the beginning of the film, a rather mousy housewife still emotionally dependent on a husband who had abandoned her.) The diegetic and nondiegetic music thus have very different metaphorical functions despite the fact that they are both rooted in the Western classical music tradition: as in *Black Robe*, the former is a visible metaphor for "culture," the latter an invisible metaphor for the transcendence of "culture."[50]

Whiteness and Nature

The diegetic metaphors for "nature" and "culture" in any given melodrama may have nothing to do with either "Indians" or music; movies like *Black Robe* and *Music of*

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[50] I would agree with David Neumeyer and James Buhler, therefore, that Caryl Flinn's decision to "consider diegetic and non-diegetic music together" (Flinn 1992: 12) is "[o]ne of the most curious aspects" (Buhler & Neumeyer 375n.) of her *Strains of Utopia: Gender, Nostalgia, and Hollywood Film Music*.

the Heart merely highlight distinctive features of the Rousseauist quest embodied by melodrama: the quest for self-completion through self-expression, by finding or creating a community wherein the Self can realize—can release—its "true" nature (i.e. its "moral" nature, i.e. its "musical" nature; see pp. 39-45 above). This *monde idéal*, as Rousseau would say, may comprise as few as two individuals, but once the politico-linguistic unity ("Me." "Ah! Me again.") of the Self and the Other has been established, that relationship serves as the exemplar for all others—and all Others. As even the brief selection of examples I have given here shows, the ideologies and subjectivities represented as "natural" within a melodramatic narrative can vary widely; and even when, as in *Pygmalion* and *Contact*, the same (in this case, white male) subjectivity is privileged, it can be privileged in very different ways (in the former as a votary of "nature," in the latter as a metaphor for "nature"). Claudia Gorbman's term "*mutual implication*" (Gorbman 1987: 15, italics original) is enormously useful here, suggesting as it does that the meaning, and meaningfulness, of music and narrative are never independent of each other or, by extension, of the interpretation(s) of a specific audience. But while Gorbman's work begins to move film music theory away from the visually-biased dichotomy of "parallelism" and "counterpoint," neither she nor the other scholars in the field have gone beyond the bounds of cinema to address the historical continuity of melodramatic discourse, as Peter Brooks does in *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Like Brooks' concept of the "moral occult" (see n. 29 above), nondiegetic instrumental music in melodrama functions not so much as a repository of specific bourgeois values as the expression of a bourgeois conviction about the nature of those values—the conviction, quite simply, that they are "natural."

For an increasingly secular and materialistic culture—or rather, for a culture that increasingly sees itself as secular and materialistic in relation to the past—"nature" has in large measure replaced what Brooks calls "the traditional Sacred" (Brooks 11) as the object of spiritual veneration and the goal of spiritual aspiration. The need to be convinced, beyond all reason, of the "naturalness" of one's life reflects the desire for a sense of continuity and belonging, in a culture that seems to have rationalized and institutionalized a profound indifference, if not downright antipathy, towards "nature." Melodrama exists as a function of that need, a means of reassuring ourselves that "nature" indeed doth beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. By design, if not by definition, therefore, melodrama always implies a critique of "culture," but a critique that ultimately registers as conservative in intent, the return to and reaffirmation of what are implicitly assumed to be "fundamental" values. The essential message of *Pygmalion* and, I would venture to say, every melodrama since, is that the voice of "nature" cannot be silenced; but the fact that "nature" is always given voice by the latest, and "whitest," musical technology redeems bourgeois sensibilities from even the harshest critique. Melodrama remains, after all, an ethic of resurgence, not revolution.

Although this ethic places Rousseau firmly within the Western tradition of utopian thought, his concept of utopia tends to emphasize the "immaterial" dimensions of life, so much so that he is probably better understood as "the fabricator of a eupsychia, an optimum state of consciousness, in a society whose material structures tend to fade into the background" (Manuel & Manuel 439). W. H. Auden's distinction between nostalgia and utopia provides an easy way to summarize the structure and workings of Rousseau's

eupsychia: nostalgia is associated with the ahistorical being of Eden, where "the contradictions of the present world have not yet arisen" (Auden 166); utopia is associated with the historical becoming of New Jerusalem, where those contradictions "have at last been resolved" (Auden 166). The key to the creation of a Rousseauist New Jerusalem lies in infusing a fallen world with the spirit of Eden; in other words, while utopia undoubtedly has its "material structures" (it is these structures that provide melodrama its arena of struggle), its status as utopia is dependent upon its "immaterial structure," its continuity of feeling with an imagined, ideal past—its nostalgia. As Stuart Tannock has shown, the nostalgic imagination typically advocates one of two attitudes towards the world: either a complete retreat to a more meaningful past, or the retrieval of elements that can invest the world with the meaningfulness of the past. It is this latter strategy, I believe, that characterizes the melodramatic imagination, even in resolutely backward-looking films like *Dances with Wolves* and *Black Robe*. While a melodramatic narrative may be located in an historical past, the elements that ultimately make it meaningful for its audience are retrieved not from that or any other historical past, but from "nature," which exists in the eternal present. As I have been attempting to show in this chapter, however, "nature," far from being some invisible aquifer of eternity, is a reflecting pool constructed according to the pleasures and preferences of the historical present.

Because the defining structural feature of melodrama's eupsychia is simply its transcendence of the "material" dimensions of culture, it has been able to incorporate almost any social, political, or aesthetic agenda, projected into almost any past, present, or future world; it is precisely because instrumental music, too, is defined by this same structural feature that it has come to embody the essential spirit of this eupsychia—and of

whiteness. Instrumental music is not, of course, unique to the West; what is unique to the West, or at least to the discourse which has produced and sustained melodrama for the last two hundred years, are the habits of perception which assign to the features of the world a "material" or "immaterial" aspect, and which, in valorizing the latter, place instrumental music beyond the pale of the former. For Richard Dyer, these habits of perception are a product of Christianity, of materialist conceptions of race, and of imperialism (Dyer 1997: 14ff.), all of which, I believe, have left their mark on melodrama. It's no coincidence that melodramas have visited and revisited the land of the "noble savage," for *Pygmalion* and the Rousseauist ethic of resurgence rely implicitly on the existence and discovery of these traces of humanity's "prehistory" for the renewal of a spiritually compromised society. I think Renato Rosaldo's term "imperialist nostalgia" can be applied not just to the spate of recent melodramas in which erstwhile "savages" are idealized as our better selves, innocent of the evils of civilization, but also to melodramatic discourse itself, which from its inception has assumed that at the bottom of every heart lie just such traces of our "true" nature—seeds of pure sentiment, awaiting only a little rhetorical rain to blossom in the desert of reason.[51] *The Indian Princess* and

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[51] Besides *Dances with Wolves* and *Black Robe*, some of the other recent films that deal specifically and nostalgically with the issue of Indian-white relations are *The Mission* [1986], *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* [1991], *The Last of the Mohicans* [1992], *Thunderheart* [1992], *Geronimo* [1993], and *Pocahontas* (see n. 50 above). Perhaps the most egregious (and certainly the most explicit) example of music's role in this imperialistic discourse comes from *The Mission*, when Fr Gabriel insinuates himself into the fearsome Guarnari tribe by playing a gorgeous melody on his oboe. "Clothed in all the brilliance of the orchestra," this melody embodies the essential benevolence of the Jesuits throughout the rest of the film, and was responsible for making a hit out of the soundtrack album. In a voice-over, Cardinal Altamirano concludes the happy scene of Gabriel's acceptance by the Guarnari with the claim that "With an orchestra, the Jesuits could have subdued the whole continent." We're back among the stereotypes of *The Indian Princess*: like Pocahontas, the Guarnari are instinctively attuned to Western musical codes and require nothing more than the arrival of a benevolent and, as it

Dances with Wolves are two sides of the same imperial coin: despite the criticism white culture directs toward itself in the latter, its harmonious attunement with the "great (white) soul" of the universe is in both cases resoundingly confirmed. The invisible excess of life is *always* in excess: the immaterial world can *always* redeem the material, the spirit the flesh, the *melos* the drama. The story at the heart of melodrama is still very much the story of the Incarnation—the Protestant version, that is, with the individual's unmediated experience of grace and the invisible fellowship of all believers—but now we aspire to enter the kingdom of "nature," and the bliss of conviction is our salvation.

In keeping with this line of thought, instrumental music, in melodrama's secularized structure of belief, can be understood as having a dual nature: to the materiality of the diegetic world, it is the nondiegetic, immaterial Other, while at the same time reaching out to embrace the characters and the audience in their communal Selfhood ("Ah! Me again"). It is both what we essentially are and what we essentially cannot be, both Self and Other, both present and past, both "culture" and "nature." It speaks of paradise regained, if only for a moment, of a self free at last to be itself—one fuller, deeper, richer Self. Of course, instrumental music's "natural" Selfness and its "mysterious" Otherness are, and always have been, utterly dependent on the worldview of the culture they are supposed to transcend, a culture in which the nostalgic desire for the experience of pure, unmediated feeling and the utopian belief that self-effacing technological mediation can deliver a suitable substitute are improbably yet inextricably

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happens, Catholic Legislator to unlock their economic, devotional, and musical potential. (The Cardinal is most impressed with the choir.) We are meant to condemn the rapacious slave traders for their role in the genocide of the Guarnari, but not the Jesuits—how could anything that produces such beautiful music possibly be bad?

intertwined.

Whiteness and the Classical Film Score

An anachronistic relationship between musical means and musical meaning is thus not an acquired but an intrinsic feature of melodramatic discourse—as I suggested above (pp. 96-7), it is a triumph of social incorporation, of naturalization, to make what is express some sense of having always been. Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, in *Composing for the Films*, their 1947 study of film music from Hollywood's "classical" era, are therefore quite wrong in attributing "this discrepancy between obsolete [compositional] practices and scientific production methods" (Adorno & Eisler 3-4) solely to the dastardly machinations of the entertainment industry. Like Rousseau, ironically, Adorno was an ardent critic of Enlightenment rationalism, in particular the narratives of representation and development I mentioned earlier (pp. 71-3 above). For Adorno, this process of abstraction and formalization has led not to a world united by transcendent human values but to a world in which all things, including human values, have become quantifiable, hence commensurable, hence exchangeable. So, while Rousseau sees the promise of unity and plenitude in the drive towards transcendence, Adorno and Eisler see Hollywood churning out a mass-produced facsimile of this promise in every film it makes. Instead of breaking the cold grip of reason, the irrationality of music is, in their view, being rationally exploited by the entertainment industry to keep an indolent and passive audience in a fool's paradise, the dupes of capitalism.

Although they share the goal of an unalienated community with Rousseau,

Adorno and Eisler are deeply suspicious of the ease with which a Rousseauist eupsychia is achieved: in contrast to Rousseau's catholicity, which generously ascribes "authenticity" to any music that makes us sigh, in relief and pleasure, "Ah! Me again," Adorno and Eisler are rather more puritanical, saying, in effect, "Authentic music does not seduce. It does not pretend to be anything other than what it is, musical tones organized according to the strictest objective criteria." Only music that is self-conscious about its status as a constructed artifact can faithfully represent the industrialized reality of film music; only music that eschews clichés and "associative automatism" (Adorno & Eisler 126) can keep the listener from succumbing to the saccharine charms of a commercial Orpheus. "Authentic" music, that is to say, could be neither invisible (discursively, that is) nor metaphorical—rather than creating the reassuring illusion of subjective immediacy, its objective mediation should lead the listener back from the "sphere of privacy to the major social issue" (Adorno & Eisler 11), i.e. the ideological oppressiveness of an industry whose every product comes with music advertising the ease and desirability of its own consumption.

For Adorno and Eisler, the illusion of subjective immediacy constitutes "bad naïveté" (Adorno & Eisler 130) about social reality, but their own naïveté about social reality reveals itself in their championing of the "advanced musical resources" (Adorno & Eisler 15) of the twentieth-century avant-garde as an antidote to the narcotic effects of the typical film score—an orchestra playing Schoenberg rather than Strauss will set us free.[52] To be fair to Adorno and Eisler, their prescriptions for better film music do not call for

[52] "[Richard] Strauss was one of the first to attempt to bridge the gap between culture and the audience, by selling out culture" (Adorno & Eisler 57).

the exclusive use of "advanced" resources; rather, they insist that "advanced" resources should be part of the repertoire film composers can bring to the "objective requirements of dramatic and musical planning" (Adorno & Eisler 85). Still, in suggesting how to use the musical tools of the cinema in a more ideologically effective way, their focus is clearly on "tones and their relationships, not [on] extraneous and relatively accidental recording techniques" (Adorno & Eisler 64), and the limitations of this uncompromising formalism have been exposed by the subsequent history of avant-garde music in American movies. By 1955, Hollywood film orchestras were indeed playing Schoenberg rather than Strauss, but both the twelve-tone title music of *The Cobweb* [1955] and the atonal accompaniment to the "chickie run" sequence in *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955], to take just two well-known examples, are incorporated into melodramatic narratives as metaphors for psychologically and socially disruptive states of being. Leonard Rosenman, a student of Schoenberg's who scored both these films, learned his lesson with his first Hollywood project, *East of Eden* [1955]:

> Since my concert works are of a highly complex dissonant nature, [director Elia] Kazan and I had something of a friendly disagreement at first. A bargain was made finally to score the children simply, and the adults in a dissonant fashion. (qtd. in Limbacher 87)

Adorno and Eisler would probably take a statement like this as proof not of any flaw in their method but that Rosenman, for all the "advanced" resources at his disposal, had not been astute enough to resist conventionality. Whether he was or not, the successful integration into film and television scores of twentieth-century musical experiments (avant-garde techniques, electronic instruments, etc.) that have only grudgingly been

admitted, if at all, to the concert hall argues that they've misjudged the degree to which an analytical discourse based on "tones and their relationships" is valid for melodrama. The function of the concert hall, as I argued above, is to separate music and its audience from the everyday world, a world that often seems (and sounds) disordered and unnatural; most patrons of symphonic music, and even many orchestral musicians, have little patience there for music that sounds "disordered" and "unnatural."[53] But put that same audience at the screening of a melodrama, a genre that exists to draw a line between "order" and "disorder," "natural" and "unnatural," and that same "disordered" and "unnatural" music is suddenly a highly apt metaphor.[54]

In fact, Adorno and Eisler are here assuming the mantle of Rameau in a latter-day *querelle des bouffons* (see pp. 37-8 above): though otherwise critical of Enlightenment rationality, they prefer the logic of "constructive principles" (Adorno & Eisler 33) and "structural significance" (Adorno & Eisler 17) to the metaphorical and metaphysical propensities of the melodramatic imagination. The appeal of formalism's "objectivity" for Adorno and Eisler is its presumed potential to break the spell of "ideology," capitalism's sybaritic succubus, whose aim is to dissolve all resistance to a state of compliant consumerism. But *Composing for the Films*' proscriptions and prescriptions,

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[53] The general lack of enthusiasm among film orchestra musicians for modern music was something that puzzled Eisler, who, alone among film music theorists, had hands-on experience of the entire process of film scoring and the conditions under which film musicians worked (having been the composer for a number of commercial productions in the 1940's). That a body of professional, highly-trained ears should be, by and large, as deaf as "ordinary," untrained ears to the "emancipatory" call of modern music suggests that Rousseauist discourse is proof against even the indoctrinating effects of a formal (and formalist) music education.

[54] It shouldn't be assumed, from the examples I've given above, that it always has purely negative connotations: "advanced" musical resources can be used, as they are in the television series *The X-Files*, to construct a conception of "nature" that "transcends" conventional categories of knowledge. See Conclusion below.

though ostensibly directed towards the betterment of socio-economic conditions, can also be seen as advancing an "ideology" of their own, the stern and learned asceticism of Modernism, whose aim is to "remasculinize" (McClary 1991: 18) a discourse tainted by the "lascivious prettiness" of late Romanticism and the feminine connotations of consumer culture.[55] One need look no further than the end of the "chickie run" sequence to see how much the Modernist aesthetic depends on the protection of the concert hall to sustain its "objectivity"—outside its walls, like a prophet without his beard, it seems rather more "subjective." Judy is standing at the edge of the cliff, seemingly about to follow her boyfriend's plunge onto the rocks below; Jim reaches out to her, and as her hand tentatively stretches back toward his, we hear short segments of her theme—it, like Judy herself, seems to be yearning for coherence. That coherence comes, naturally, when she finally grasps Jim's hand: his touch not only saves her physically but psychologically as well. To hear Judy's theme complete at this point, in all its glowing, tonal warmth, after a scene that equated reckless male bravado with abrasively dissonant atonal music, is to be reminded that no composer is ever truly "objective," no matter how "advanced" his compositional resources may be.

All this is not to say that Adorno and Eisler were wrong to be suspicious of Hollywood film scoring practices, only that their theoretical allegiances may have limited the productiveness of their suspicions. Melodramatic discourse is less a deliberate strategy on the part of the entertainment industry to "deceive . . . [the] listener in regard to the reality of everyday existence" (Adorno & Eisler 22) than it is a deliberate strategy on

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[55] The term "lascivious prettiness" comes from a 1920 review of Richard Strauss and his music by Paul Rosenfeld, quoted in Gould 95-6.

the part of the listener to confirm the existence of a reality behind, or beyond, the everyday. I would agree with Adorno and Eisler that melodrama and capitalism are intimately connected, but the connection is much more complex than the one-sided relationship they describe, in which the desires of individuals are utterly in thrall to the designs of industry. As I have been trying to argue in this thesis, melodrama since *Pygmalion* has been and continues to be a particular culture's response to its self-induced sense of alienation—it is this sense of alienation that melodrama's musico-linguistic structure is designed to remedy. The appropriation of this structure by the entertainment industry is undeniable, but in my opinion the group most subject to exploitation by melodramatic discourse is not, as Adorno and Eisler would have it, its white bourgeois audience, but the various Others sacrificed to that audience's insatiable appetite for self-redemption.

Because of the formalist bent of its critique, *Composing for the Films* gives short shrift to the other dimensions of film music's invisibility: the use of the orchestra and the techniques of post-production recording and editing are assumed to be ideologically neutral.[56] Again, as I have tried to argue in this chapter, they are not. When, within a typical film score, amateur playing or even the mistakes that professionals occasionally make are no longer heard; when the labouring bodies of musicians are no longer seen; when the symphony orchestra has replaced the often more limited accompanying forces

[56] Adorno and Eisler do draw attention to the fact that film music, as a result of the recording, editing, and printing processes, "undergoes far-reaching acoustic changes, its dynamic scale shrinks, its color intensity is reduced, and its spatial depth is lost" (Adorno & Eisler 86-7). Although this "neutralization" is in line with the general tendency of film composition to deprive music "in advance of the power to express the unfamiliar and unexplored" (Adorno & Eisler 37), they understand it to be a limitation of contemporary technology and not an "ideological" effect—there is an "inherent technological tendency to eliminate the neutralization factors," i.e.

of the silent film era and nineteenth-century melodrama as the cinematic norm; when the acoustic space of nondiegetic music is no longer identical with either the recording studio or the theatre, when it's a virtual space, designed by recording engineers, that places every listener in an ideal listening position—all these things, in one way or another, preach the good news of self-transcendence, of "perfectibility," of "whiteness." Not surprisingly, therefore, Adorno and Eisler have difficulty maintaining a distinction between the "collective energies" (Adorno & Eisler 36) they presume could be harnessed by truly "authentic" music, and the "sham collectivity" (Adorno & Eisler 23) promised by the classical film score:

> [The film industry] misuses the music in order to give a technically mediated factor the appearance of immediacy. This ideological function is so close to the true and genuine one that it is practically impossible to set up an abstract criterion for distinguishing between the objectively warranted use of music and its bad use for purposes of glorification. Likewise, the public and general attitude expresses both the human desire for music and the troubled need to escape, and no individual audience reaction can be subsumed under one or the other category. The only possible method is to determine in each individual case, on the basis of the function and nature of the music, to what extent it actually fulfills its mission or to what extent its humanity is used only to mask the inhuman. (Adorno & Eisler 121)

Although Adorno and Eisler are, to my knowledge, the only film music theorists to

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with "new improved recording techniques" (Adorno & Eisler 88).

suggest (at least through Adorno's work) a connection between film music and the Enlightenment, they, as many others critical of melodrama have done, completely discount the validity of the worldview behind that "Ah! Me again." Obviously, that worldview is not without its problems—as Renato Rosaldo argues, "imperialist nostalgia" uses "a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination" (Rosaldo 108). But it seems to me that a preoccupation with melodrama's sentimentalism often distracts critics from consideration of the seductive appeal of its structure, which can be trimmed of much sentimental excess without changing its essential philosophical premise; i.e. the metaphysical excess unifying all life.

There is one other issue I would like to address briefly before bringing this chapter to a close, and that is the relationship between the symphony orchestra and the "classical" film score. The bulk of serious film music scholarship, from Adorno and Eisler on, has focussed on the sound film scores of the 1930's and 40's, and with good reason: it was during this period that many of the conventions governing the use of nondiegetic music were established, conventions which have remained largely intact despite the subsequent incorporation of non-classical and, indeed, non-Western music into Hollywood film scores. But I believe that a better understanding of the presence and persistence of the orchestra as the Hollywood norm has been limited, again, by the restriction of film music theory for the most part to the field of film. Students of film history know by now that music, not speech, provided the impetus for the conversion to sound: one of the defining features of the "movie palaces" of the silent era, besides the size and splendour of the theatres, was accompaniment by a full-sized symphony

orchestra; when Warner Brothers began the initial conversion to the Vitaphone sound-on-disc system in 1926, it was solely to provide that same acoustical size and splendour for second- and third-run exhibition.

> There was at first no question of making "talking pictures." [. . .] An official statement prepared for Vitaphone underscored the Warners' appeal to smaller exhibitors: "The invention will make it possible for every performance in a motion picture theater to have a full orchestral accompaniment to the picture regardless of the size of the house." (David Cook 243)

While it's certainly true, as several film music scholars have pointed out, that the establishment of the classical sound film score owed a great deal to a population of expatriate composers, many of them Germans or Austrians, steeped in the post-Wagnerian orchestral tradition, the establishment of the orchestra as a symbol of cultural prowess and prestige had its roots in waves of Austro-German immigration a century earlier. It was this much larger group of immigrants who inaugurated classical music culture in much of America outside of the east coast, setting up musical societies, teaching and performing "at a time when their orchestral and operatic music was aesthetically and artistically dominant" (Shanet 438). In the period between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century, when the large urban centres began to sustain on a more permanent basis a body of musicians and listeners devoted to symphonic music, the make-up of both the orchestras and their repertoire overwhelmingly reflected this

Germanic influence.[57] Although the First World War (and, later on, the Second) led to a nationalistic reaction against German music and musicians, composers who came to Hollywood in the 1930's, whatever their nationality, came to a musical culture in which the orchestra and a predominantly Germanic style had long been associated with "cultivated" musical taste. I believe this "prehistory" of the film orchestra has as much to do with why we've become accustomed to hearing "the Vienna Opera House [in] the American West" (John Williams, qtd. in Kalinak 100) as do the contributions of seminal sound film composers like Max Steiner and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries had seen the establishment in the major American cities of full-time, full-sized professional orchestras offering a full season's worth of programming; the advent of recordings and radio brought orchestral music "home" to millions more. The first half of the twentieth century was the heyday of the orchestra in American cultural life, a time when Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Orchestra, to take just the most famous example, were a fixture on national radio for over a decade and sold millions of records. The meteoric growth of popular music in the 1950's and 60's pushed the symphony orchestra from this position near the centre of the national musical feast to a place somewhere near the edge of the table; but while the visibility (not to mention the viability) of the orchestra as a civic institution has been significantly lowered, the symbolic power of its sound has not.[58] Film composers and

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[57] Interestingly, until orchestras began to establish themselves as professional institutions towards the end of the nineteenth century, orchestral concerts in America were mostly an ad hoc affair, with performers drawn largely from the ranks of theatrical musicians, performers who, in all likelihood, spent much of their time accompanying melodrama.

[58] In comparison with the kind of civic presence orchestras had in the first half of the twentieth century, when "[e]very city proudly followed the fortunes of its home team" (Ross 2000: 98), the relative invisibility of orchestras today may have added an additional layer of mystique and

filmmakers today can still rely on a "mass recognition of the cliché quotient" (Gould 353) of the symphonic repertoire in preparing film scores, because Western audiences are exposed to an enormous amount of orchestral music in background form—on radio and television, in Muzak, and, not least, in other movies—and have "achieve[d] a direct associative experience of the post-Renaissance [musical] vocabulary, something that not even the most inventive music appreciation course would be able to afford them" (Gould 351). And, in an era in which we are swamped with electronically- and digitally-produced musical sounds, in which the economics of recording often dictate that a "*simulation* of interactive musical behavior" (Théberge 100, emphasis original) substitute for the spontaneous interaction of musicians, the symphony orchestra stands, more than ever, as a bastion of acoustic "authenticity," of unity in polyphony, its technological mediation even more invisible, its transcendent timelessness even more treasured. If Richard Pontzious's 1981 article "Symphonic Soundtracks are Making a Comeback" can be taken as representative, then the John Williams/*Star Wars*-led resurgence of orchestral film scoring over the last quarter-century has fed into the nostalgia of many whites for "*real* film music" (Pontzious, emphasis original), which they can encounter regularly, through video rentals, specialty cable channels, and CD's, in the classical film scores of the past.

Today's orchestral film scores continue to indulge the West's illimitable passion for "perfectibility," and it really shouldn't come as a surprise that this is true even of melodramas otherwise highly conscious (and critical) of Western imperialism—melodrama has always been a venue where Western culture expiates its sins against "nature," from the prosaic to the apocalyptic. Indeed, our original sin, the fount of our

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nostalgia to their sound.

misfortune, is that of being prosaic, of having lost the "melodious language" that flows from a "natural," and therefore idyllic, state of being.

> We pay tens of millions of people to spend their lives lying to us, or telling us the truth, or supplying us with a nourishing medicinal compound of the two. All of us are living in the middle of a dark wood—a bright Technicolored forest—of words, words, words. It is a forest in which the wind is never still: there isn't a tree in the forest that is not, for every moment of its life and our lives, persuading or ordering or seducing or overawing us into buying this, believing that, voting for the other. (Jarrell 319)

For Rousseau, melodrama represented a jury-rigged solution to the dilemma of a culture saturated with its own insignification ("words, words, words"); melodrama since Rousseau represents the cultural institutionalization of his jury-rigged logic: when words fail us, as they inevitably do, we can, by unearthing a little Otherness, still sound the full depth of our hearts. For the audience that feels awash in words, immured in words, "*real* film music" points towards that realm that is always beyond words—it is an invisible signifier, signifying invisibly, of the freedom from self-conscious signification.

Conclusion

In the preface to *The Indian Princess*, James Nelson Barker makes a maudlin appeal to "the ladies," attempting to "arouse [their] sympathies" in order to shield his play from the critics' "iron rod of rigour." "[I]f its faults be infantile," he concludes, "its punishment should be gentle, and from you, dear ladies, correction would be as thrillingly sweet as that the little *Jean Jacques* received from the fair hand of mademoiselle Lambercier" (Barker iv, italics original). This is a reference to an early episode in Rousseau's *Confessions*, in which, without saying exactly what the punishment was or what he did to deserve it, Rousseau describes how

> this chastisement made me still more devoted to her [Mlle Lambercier] who had inflicted it. It needed all the strength of this devotion and all my natural docility to keep myself from doing something which would have deservedly brought upon me a repetition of it; for I had found in the pain, even in the disgrace, a mixture of sensuality which had left me less afraid than desirous of experiencing it again from the same hand. (Rousseau 1945: 13-14)

Leaving aside this rather perverse identification with Rousseau's budding masochism, Barker's oblique reference to the *Confessions* provides a measure of the popularity of Rousseau and his ideas in early nineteenth-century America. Rousseau's influence on the Age of Sensibility and on the cultivation of sentimentalism—and *The Indian Princess* is nothing if not sentimental—is well known. What has remained much less well known, and what Barker himself was probably unaware of, is the fact that Rousseau's influence

also manifested itself in his use of the term "melo-drame" to describe the nature of his play.

Barker and his composer, John Bray, had probably never heard or even heard of *Pygmalion*, which, as far as I know, may never have been performed outside of Europe, and has been performed there only rarely since 1800; even the earliest "mélo-drames" of post-Revolutionary France, which Barker and Bray were imitating, may not have been influenced directly by *Pygmalion*. But with Rousseau, whose musico-linguistic sensibilities were already so ingrained in Euro-American culture that even a reference like Barker's is something of an unwitting testimony to his influence, one often has the sense of being in contact with some mythical wellspring of the Western imagination. Regardless of its inconsistencies, logical and otherwise, Rousseau's attempt to reconstitute some hypothetical *Ursprache*, the "melodious language" that originally accompanied man's earliest social stirrings, tapped into what is perhaps modern Western culture's deepest vein of nostalgia. Almost two and a half centuries after the *querelle des bouffons*, the Canadian Band Association newsletter *Fanfare*, a quarterly publication distributed to thousands of band teachers in Ontario, responded to impending provincial budget cuts with an article called "The Need for Music." I'm almost certain that no musicologist today would be willing to endorse this article's musical historiography, but then its author's ambition, much like Rousseau's, was not to be historically accurate but to lobby for the preservation of something whose loss, it was felt, could imperil the very essence of humanity:

> To build fires and shelters and to hunt with more than the hands and teeth were essential to the survival of a thin-skinned, relatively weak creature.

> To make music was to strike out beyond the bare exigencies of existence into a dimension unknown to the other inhabitants of the earth—that of the spirit or soul. ("The Need for Music" 14)

Like the swan of yore, Western musical discourse seems to become articulate only when the conditions that sustain its existence are threatened; otherwise, the less said, the better. Ironically, the threat that, in part, inspired Rousseau to articulate a musical philosophy—namely, instrumental music—has since come to embody that very philosophy, especially in its historical (or, more accurately, ahistorical) claims: instrumental music has metamorphosed into the metaphorical recapitulation of some invisible yet fundamental ground of being, which, because it "transcends" language, "transcends" history.

A "white" narrative of development is also implied in "The Need for Music," even though here "the other inhabitants of the earth" happen to be non-human rather than, as they were for Rousseau, non-white: "Making music ranks with making fires and using weapons and tools as one of the activities that initially separated human beings from the lower animals. It did more than anything else to set them apart as special, ascendant beings" ("The Need for Music" 14). Music is indeed a universal feature of humankind, but the incorporation of music into the story of nature's "special, ascendant beings" is not. Among the millions of people who saw *Dances with Wolves* there may have been those who thought that it "atoned" for the racism of the past, including melodramas like *The Indian Princess*—but then *The Indian Princess*'s audience probably thought the same thing about its representation of Pocahontas. Melodrama is forever atoning for something, because Western culture seems forever imbued with a sense of loss; but both the loss and the atonement reflect the standards of judgment of that culture—like Rousseau himself,

even in its self-criticism it is self-affirming, utterly absorbed in its own "perfectibility."

I have said very little, beyond a few scattered suggestions, about how instrumental music in melodrama helps to construct or express gender. That it does help to do so is beyond doubt—Pocahontas is as much an image of "natural" womanhood as she is of the "noble savage"—but I don't feel that anything productive would have been accomplished by turning this thesis into the musical equivalent of Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." There is no question that nondiegetic music can be used to project a patriarchal point of view, and that this can be true even of films that otherwise acknowledge the social impact of feminism: the producers of *Stella* [1989] must have presumed that, by granting their heroine her "right" to be a feminist, they were being faithful to today's "reality," but in a diegetic world full of "nurturing Fathers" her feminism is shown to be—and, musically, sounds—both anachronistic and destructive. *Stella*, a remake of *Stella Dallas* [1937], bears much the same relationship to its original as *Dances with Wolves* does to *The Indian Princess*; that is, both of the more recent melodramas acknowledge, implicitly or explicitly, the need for atonement, and both show the Enlightened Man to be the sort of "special, ascendant being" capable of transcending the sins of the past.[59] But to say that this is true of *all* nondiegetic music in narrative film is, as it was for Mulvey's argument about cinema's visual structures, an unjustified generalization—for all the *Rear Windows* [1954] and *Vertigos* [1958] out there, there's

[59] Cf. the scene in *Stella* where the "nurturing Father," Stephen, is introduced to his three-year-old daughter, Jenny, for the first time: Jenny whispers, in an awed, excited voice, "I have a daddy?"; Stella, who has tried to conceal this fact from her, looks chastened; Stephen gives Jenny a music box as a present; Jenny opens the box and it plays—what else?—her theme. Though he has never seen his child before, Stephen is so in tune with Fatherhood that he naturally gravitates towards gifts that play his daughter's nondiegetic music.

always a *Lady Eve* [1940] to trip you up. On the other hand, to separate "whiteness" from issues of gender and sexuality—to assume that "whiteness" is somehow "prior" to gender and sexuality—as I have done throughout most of this thesis, may seem like an unjustified generalization itself: as Richard Dyer says, "Race and gender are ineluctably intertwined, through the primacy of heterosexuality in reproducing the former and defining the latter" (Dyer 1997: 30). My own justification for focussing on "whiteness" is that, with all due respect to the fact that "white women do not have the same relation to power as white men" (Dyer 1997: 30), it's not too difficult to find movies like *Music of the Heart* which employ Rousseauist rhetorical strategies to construct their female protagonists as heroines of "whiteness." Nevertheless, some further elaboration of the intertwining of "whiteness" and gender in nondiegetic music would seem to be in order; and so, by way of conclusion, I would like to discuss one of the most popular and successful television shows of the 1990's, *The X-Files*.

The X-Files may seem like an unusual choice because, if it has been categorized at all, it has generally been as science fiction (Bellon 137-8), not melodrama; some scholars have even lauded it as "postmodern," in that it not only subverts "the previously dominant aesthetic of series television" (Kellner 161), but the very idea of "truth" as a single, self-consistent body of knowledge. But *The X-Files*, it seems to me, brings us full circle to the theme of "covertness" with which I began this thesis: not only does the show endorse a post-Watergate view of government as an agent of evil in the world, but it also is a prime example of how the same fundamental challenge to Enlightenment rationality established in *Pygmalion*—nature always exceeds science; feeling and intuition always trump reason and logic—can be embodied in a show that, especially in its early seasons,

deliberately sought to distance itself from everything deemed to be "melodramatic." The success of *The X-Files* may in fact provide some insight into how melodramatic discourse has sustained its vitality in the period since about 1850, when "melodrama" first began to acquire the pejorative associations that cling to it today. Melodrama has always had to adjust to changing standards of "realism" and "excess," but the way in which *The X-Files*' producers initially defined "melodrama" as its standard of "excess" while simultaneously employing traditional melodramatic structures and rhetoric suggests that, rather than subverting "the previously dominant aesthetic of series television," *The X-Files* has "covertly" reaffirmed melodrama as that dominant aesthetic.

As in all "true" melodrama, the worldview of *The X-Files* represents a challenge to the visually-dominated rationality of the West, a rationality that many today seem to find restrictive, if only to their imaginations: "The Truth is Out There," uncontained and unforeseen by science, by logic, by conventional wisdom.[60] This may simply be another form of imperialist nostalgia, though with no specific Other to idealize—there is only the fervent hope that in the crevices of this hard-wired world there is still life enough to quicken one's sense of mortality and morality, that "culture" has not so thoroughly insulated us from "nature" that we cannot open a door onto the unknown. Not surprisingly, *The X-Files* has incorporated numerous racial stereotypes, including the "noble savage," into its exotic panoply of Otherness; but, as I suggested with respect to the "Indian" melodramas discussed above, the use of these stereotypes is only the tip of the iceberg of its "whiteness." Our (white) agents of truth in this occult world are Fox

[60] "The Truth is Out There" appears at the end of the main title sequence of (almost) every *X-Files* episode (it has been replaced, very occasionally, by other mottoes, such as "Trust No

Mulder and Dana Scully: as FBI agents it is their job to arrive at a certain kind of truth (and closure), but the cases they investigate invariably reveal, though never with any conclusive proof, another kind of truth (which often resists closure); the affection, trust, and respect that has developed between the two attests to a third kind of truth.[61] In a significant twist, Mulder, the "soft" scientist (he has a BA in psychology), is the believer, the man harmoniously attuned to the world beyond science and rationality, for which he is a persuasive advocate; while Scully is the "hard" scientist (BSc in physics, MD in forensic pathology), the skeptic, the voice of rationality, of scientific (and, not coincidentally, bureaucratic) protocol, of, when all else is lacking, common sense. They are often actively thwarted in their investigations by representatives of a vast shadow government, which, in order to maintain its own power, conspires to expropriate and exploit the military/scientific potential of the x-files (the name given by the FBI to these unusual cases), and to cover up both its own existence and that of the supernatural, paranormal, and occult phenomena encountered by Mulder and Scully. In fact, the very outlandishness of all this helps to keep the agents in check—the threat to their credibility, particularly when any "proof" they've uncovered has either vanished or been secretly removed or destroyed, is used to rein in their desire to broadcast the "truth."

The scope of this outlandishness was also felt to be a threat to the credibility of the show among viewers, and *The X-Files*' producers were, during its early seasons, very conscious of the need "to ground the show in a reality-based situation":

> To make it convincing, you make it believable. I felt that the characters

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One").

[61] The "investigator role [is] a classic version of the subject without properties, seeing and

> and the investigative process had to be really believable, so I set out to do just that. Credible, believable characters and credible, believable situations dealing with incredible and unexplainable phenomena.[62] (creator Chris Carter, qtd. in Vitaris 22)

David Nutter, a director and producer during the show's first two seasons, explains further:

> The audience needs to pull for the characters and root for them. If the audience believes in the situation, if they can look in the mirror, and say, "That could be me," or "I can believe that happening," then you'll get them to care about who they're watching, and they'll follow them anywhere. (qtd. in Vitaris 30)

Making "excess" a believable extension of "reality" is a classic—if not *the* classic—condition of melodrama, but "melodrama," as it is popularly understood, is precisely what the show's producers were trying to avoid: "it was necessary to avoid falling into the trap of making the more affecting sequences 'too melodramatic'" (Vitaris 30).[63] The need to establish an affective bond between the audience ("Me") and the world of the

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listening, but not interrogatively seen and heard" (Dyer 1997: 221).

[62] *The X-Files* has an informal scientific consultant, a professional scientist, who helps keep the show's scientific jargon grounded in reality—unlike, say, any of the *Star Trek* series. This helps to sell the fantasy—the fantastic takes off from the "real" limits of science, whereas on *Star Trek* the science is part of the fantasy.

[63] Cf. casting director Lynne Carrow: "Because our subject matter is so extraordinary, we have to go under the material. Sometimes if a person is naturally very flamboyant, they have to bring their flamboyancy down, because it will look too big and it will become melodramatic on camera. You have to go under the line, you have to bring everything down. It's very minimalist. But by making it so small and true, then you can accept these extraordinary concepts which are presented in the script. It's very hard for some actors who have continuing roles on local television shows or have acted a lot on other television shows which employ a much more melodramatic style of acting. We have to talk to the agents and I coach the actors that it's got to

characters ("Ah! Me again") without falling into the "trap" of "melodrama" is indicative of the tension between *The X-Files*' fundamentally melodramatic narrative structure, and past and present forms of melodrama that have been coded as "feminine" (e.g. soap opera, "chick flicks"). This sort of "overt" melodrama was in many ways the show's anti-value—its overly sentimental, overly dramatic, overly feminine Other—and its negative presence affected creative decisions in all areas of production. It seems to me that the effort *The X-Files* initially made to finesse the "feminine" connotations of melodrama can be mapped onto its negotiation of the boundary between "realism" and "excess": the point of the "realism" was to re-naturalize—in effect, to "re-masculinize"—subject matter that had been dismissed by the "masculine" discourse of science as untenable, ultimately to re-masculinize melodrama itself. By the start of its fourth season, however, *The X-Files* had become "a worldwide craze, with marketing tie-ins, personal appearances that turn into near-riots, and a constant Internet frenzy" (Wolcott 1997: 76), and this success has led to something of a "relaxation" in its antipathy towards "melodrama." The transformation of the show's nondiegetic music in the period between the pilot episode and the release of the feature film version after the fifth season reflects this "relaxation" and provides the opportunity, I think, to observe melodramatic discourse reinventing itself.

Like the other melodramas I've discussed, *The X-Files*' diegetic world can be understood as a visual-verbal confirmation of what has been implied by its nondiegetic music;[64] and since the narrative trajectory of nearly every episode tends to confirm

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be very simple and small, otherwise it's going to just look really silly" (qtd. in Vitaris 35).

[64] "Perhaps nothing is more representative of the show's atmosphere than the title theme, a

Mulder's intuitive leaps rather than Scully's rational hypotheses, it's not too difficult to guess which character's worldview has been "clothed in all the brilliance of the orchestra." In terms of the strategy of re-masculinization, this meant creating nondiegetic music that could provide the necessarily irrational yet suitably masculinized Other to the image track, making musical excess seem unexcessive, invisible, "natural." This is how the show's composer, Mark Snow, describes the two most striking features of creator Chris Carter's original conception of the music:

> The main thing he wanted to accomplish was he didn't want much, if any emotional, melodic music. He basically wanted atmospheric, sustained, moody flavors. [Describing the "temp track," the sample score put together by Carter:] There was a ton of music, and there were a lot of short cues with breaks. I thought one of those things would have to go. Either it would be fewer cues, but longer, or less total music. So what evolved from that was the first option: a lot of music—more than would normally be used for a TV show. (qtd. in Rule 34)

A lot of music, consisting of a small number of long, "non-emotional," "non-melodic" cues, has been a standard feature of *The X-Files* since the pilot episode. Of the forty-three minutes of actual screen time in its hour-long time slot, it is not unusual for thirty or more minutes to be accompanied by nondiegetic instrumental music, giving it more music than any other drama on television and more than many two-hour movies. The long musical cues frequently flow over scene changes, running athwart the diegetic action, sometimes

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neutral yet hauntingly eerie tune whistled over a pulsing arpeggio and sustained deep chords" (Vitaris 79).

for an entire act; eight, nine, ten minute cues are not unusual.[65] The continuous or near-continuous accompaniment, together with the lack, very often, of close synchronization between nondiegetic music and diegetic events, help to convey the encompassing impassiveness of paranormal and supernatural forces; but they also, not coincidentally, help to distance *The X-Files*' music from traditional "melodramatic" scoring techniques, especially the "excessive" synchronization between music and action (known as Mickey-Mousing), which was expressly forbidden by Carter (Rule 36).

The composer whose music Carter initially chose as the model for *The X-Files* was Philip Glass (Rule 28), one of the most famous exponents of "minimalism," a school of composition developed in the 1960's by Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Glass, and others. Minimalism

> features reiteration (or as Peter Hamel puts it, "constant regeneration")—long, sustained tones, repeated rhythmic, melodic, and/or harmonic patterns, cells, or phrases, or the like—that creates relatively static "drawn-out" qualities. For the most part, the [. . .] main composers of this style prefer prolonged sublety [sic] as an aesthetic ideal over dialectic drama. (Heisinger 434)

Some of the early examples of minimalism were created entirely by layering sounds (not necessarily "musical" sounds) recorded on loops of audio tape, but minimalist pieces written for acoustic musical instruments achieve the same sort of a trance-like effect: "the typical combination of intellectualization, pattern perception, slow change, and inner

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[65] Like other hour-long television dramas, after the opening "teaser" and the main title sequence, every *X-Files* episode is divided into four "acts," each about ten minutes long.

rhythm suggests a music that pushes into relatively unexplored areas of consciousness" (Salzman 186).[66] Minimalist music often lacks many of the elements associated with more traditional tonal music, elements, like functional harmonic progressions and sustained, lyrical melody, that tend to provide a sense of musical teleology and, with their final resolution, a more resonant feeling of completeness. In *The X-Files*, the impersonal reiterations of minimalism function as a musical metaphor for a diegetic world that simultaneously transcends both "rational" and "melodramatic" teleology, in which events and (especially in the case of the unstated, unconsummated romance between Mulder and Scully) emotions resist any easy resolution. Snow generally constructs these minimalist textures using either the Aeolian or Dorian modes: both modes feature minor thirds and sevenths; the Aeolian also has a minor sixth. In the West, minor modes have typically been associated with the "darker" emotions (and races: cf. the use of minor modes in *The Indian Princess*, *Dances with Wolves*, and *Black Robe* above), the "cooler" ones (since jazz's rediscovery of modality in the 1950's), or the more "authentic" ones (since popular culture's rediscovery of folk music in the 1950's).

Snow calls much of his music "nebulous, free-flowing murk" (qtd. in Rule 36): these dark, musical moodscapes represent "nature" as an invisible fog, seeping and oozing in from everywhere and nowhere, surrounding us, threatening to breach the body's defenses without warning, without our even being conscious of its presence; it

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[66] It often happens in *The X-Files* that there is repetition of one pattern or cell without the sort of dense layering typical of minimalism; the more appropriate term to describe this would probably be "ostinato." Ostinatos have a long history in Western music, from the passacaglias of the Baroque to Stravinsky's *Sacre du printemps* [1913], whose evocation of "primitiveness" still echoes in shows like *The X-Files*. Minimalism employs ostinatos—in essence, each voice in the layered texture is an ostinato—but what is important to understanding the music of *The X-Files* is that it always evokes the "non-emotional" affective terrain associated with minimalism even if

helps to draw us into the otherworldliness of the show, where death is not death, where the ultimate threat is not to our lives but to our identity as human beings. It is like a presentiment of what the Other, the unknown, threatens us with: "the Other is *everywhere*" (Jones 83, italics original), in the form of monsters, mutants, aliens, energy fields, microbes, etc., etc., etc., all with an almost unlimited power to invade our bodies, to expropriate our souls, to convert us into fodder. To be sure, "nebulous, free-flowing murk" is not the sort of music that, on its surface, provides the easy "Ah! Me again" identification typical of other melodramas I've discussed; its purpose is rather to throw a shroud of alienation over our all-too-human world, to let the echo of chthonic song seep through the cracks of "culture." But, much like the music of *Black Robe* (see pp. 96-100 above), this "unsentimental" metaphor for "nature" still represents a nostalgic, "white" point of view—it is primitivism for "a self-defined 'civilized' and 'rational' culture" (Connelly 114), offering the same sense of immediate contact with the "truth," the heart of darkness beneath a specious veneer of modernity. Though not "excessive" in the manner of traditional "melodramatic" scoring, it nevertheless functions as melodramatic "excess," as the "truth" that transcends any rational or scientific standard of proof.

The Rousseauist project of self-transcendence is still in place, then, but it is self-transcendence for our times: with no "unknown" spaces or peoples left on the earth, our own bodies can still provide us with a fertile "territory apart." The body in *The X-Files* has been transfigured into something beyond our ken, a fantastic, vitalistic organ teeming with embryonic impulses which, with a mutation here, an anomaly there, can burst forth into grotesque bloom. As Linda Bradley puts it, "Ultimately, that which we call alien in

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it doesn't strictly mimic its techniques.

The X-Files involves a separation of the body from the 'self' and imagined as Other" (Bradley 151). *The X-Files*' audio-visual rhetoric is really just an attempt to turn the body into a biochemical version of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus (see p. 78 above): "The show's eroticized alienation effect derives from a projection of visceral innerspace onto the world at large" (Bradley 159). The pervasive sense of Otherness the music suffuses us with represents the vicarious transubstantiation of our own corporeal "Otherness," giving us the exotic thrill of imagining that, despite all appearances to the contrary, "we are not who we are" ("Ice").[67] But it is, once again, to the "charity of the machine" (see p. 80 above) that I believe we owe this effect: comprehensive sound design of this sort in a weekly television production would not be possible without the interposition of the latest in musical technology—in this case, electronic and digital technology[68]—which outstrips the timbral resources of any purely "musical" ensemble, however large and varied, and eliminates the laborious and time-consuming processes of notation, rehearsal, and recording.

Since its debut in 1993, *The X-Files*' "signature" sound has become more conventional, less "minimalist," as the show has grown in popularity, a trend that culminated in the "classical" orchestral soundtrack composed for *The X-Files: Fight the Future* [1998], the feature film version released between the fifth and sixth seasons. From the restricted collection of sounds it employed for the first season or so—synthesized versions of a violin section, piano, and harp, a variety of percussion instruments ("African

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[67] "Risk-free identification: that is music" (Clément 9).

[68] Snow creates all the show's music himself using a Synclavier (a combination synthesizer/ sequencer), a lot of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) and other electronic gear (in essence, digital "libraries" of musical and non-musical sounds), a mixing board, a computer, and

drumming or ethnic third-world stuff" [Snow, qtd. in Rule 36])—*The X-Files*' music has gradually established an expanded orchestral palette (strings, woodwinds, brass, timpani), an expanded use of melody, and a generally more "dramatic" presence, in addition to "all these great samples and electronic sound-design things": "Musically, the show has evolved from being more ambient, sound-design, supportive music to really getting into some melodic music in a dark, Mahleresque style" (Snow, qtd. in Vitaris, et al. 47). Although planning for the film began as early as the second season, and some of the leitmotifs that appear in the movie were introduced in the last episode of season five, it's more likely that the shift to predominantly orchestral scoring was a function of the show's consistent aspiration to cinematic quality in all areas of production, rather than of a specific desire to prepare its audience for the impending "real" film score:[69]

> People are used to seeing the best of the best, they've seen all these fabulous features like *Alien* and all of these special effects. If you've done a bad television version of it, I think the show would have become a laughingstock.[70] (co-executive producer R. W. Goodwin, qtd. Vitaris 37)

The challenge for the show's producers in making a film version of *The X-Files* was to make its characters intelligible to novice viewers, people who would not be familiar with the complicated back-story of the "mythology" episodes,[71] while at the same

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a VCR.

[69] Snow composed the film score on the same equipment he uses to score the television show (see n. 68 above); that score was then transcribed into traditional notation, the parts copied, and the music—apart from the "super-effecty [sic] stuff" (Rule 42)—recorded with an 85-piece orchestra.

[70] The television show is actually shot on film stock at aspect ratio 1.78:1, then cropped to Academy aperture (1.33:1, the standard for television) for broadcast.

[71] All *X-Files* episodes fall into two categories: "stand-alone" episodes in which novice *X-File* viewers would not be hampered by their ignorance of previous story lines; and "mythology"

time advancing the "mythology" narrative, in "epic," big-screen style, for its fans. I believe this was partly why Snow departed from his usual method of scoring to label characters, especially the villains, with leitmotifs.[72] Catherine Clément's comment that music "attributes a past to the text, a memory" (Clément 21) is particularly apropos here: Snow was drawing on the techniques of film scores past in order to help orient the non-fan audience. The Cigarette Smoking Man, for example, has appeared regularly on the television show since the pilot, but he has only gradually emerged out of the "murk," as it were, to become the prince of darkness; the first time we see him in the film, however, he is accompanied by a leitmotif fit for Darth Vader or the Nazis—even *X-File* illiterates would know that they are looking at a portrait of pure evil. But by far the most important leitmotif in the film was the television show's title theme, which was subject to typical transformations and re-orchestrations as it accompanied many different scenes (secret meetings, chases, etc.), including a lush romantic version for the famous near-kiss between Mulder and Scully. Using the show's theme as a leitmotif seems to have been motivated by the idea that many non-fans, having encountered it in some fashion in the horizontally-integrated media-place even if they never watched the show, would be able to identify it, and identify with it, more easily. (*The X-Files*' theme has achieved the status of near-instant recognizability.)[73] What is ironic about the near-kiss scene is that

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episodes, which revisit a continuously developing story arc and rely on viewers' detailed acquaintance with a complex back-story.

[72] It's not too difficult for an attentive listener to pick out certain sounds or even longer cues that have been used more than once in the television show (which is entirely typical of melodrama), but *The X-Files* does not carry over associations between a specific cue and a specific character from week to week: there are "no themes for Scully or Mulder or other characters" (Vitaris, et al. 47).

[73] There have been CD's released of music from and music inspired by the television show, as well as of the movie soundtrack.

the show's usual practice of "underplaying" its "shipper" moments with minimalist music was scrapped in favour of full-blooded romantic scoring (again, recalling traditional film score tropes),[74] even though the movie revolved around a suspense/action plot with little of "the intimacy and stifling paranoia that made [*The X-Files*] such a unique television presence":

> More than anything else, this movie points out how the relationship between the partners has become the most important element of *The X-Files*, because the plot is now virtually one big MacGuffin; it could be anything, as long as it puts our heroes in peril and drives them towards confessions and decisions. (Vitaris, et al. 51)

Interestingly, the movie soundtrack is much less pervasive than the music for the television show—it does not attempt to immerse us in a wall-to-wall musical soundscape. Snow explains that "In a feature, you don't need the constant reminder that something's going on, with accents and music all over the place" (qtd. in Vitaris, et al. 48). Attending a film means coming to a dedicated venue, with its huge screen and surround sound, and sitting in undistracted darkness. The television show, by contrast, is normally viewed in a domestic setting on a much smaller screen, and, even without any other distractions, is regularly interrupted by commercials, each with its own musical accompaniment (though this distraction is mitigated, at least in the case of *The X-Files*' more devoted fans, by the fact that episodes are frequently taped and viewed repeatedly, the commercials being

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[74] "Shipper," as a noun, is fan shorthand for the fans whose primary interest in the show is "The Relationship" between Mulder and Scully; as an adjective, for the moments that consummate the shippers' belief in a romance that transcends consummation—and which is better for that transcendence.

skipped over). Also, the television show's signal is cropped at the low and high end for satellite transmission, reducing the range, detail, and depth of the sound. *The X-Files* seems to—or perhaps has to—rely more on the encompassing, invasive qualities of sound itself to enhance and project the world depicted on the small screen; hence the omnipresent acoustic fog that emanates invisibly from the television to permeate the viewing experience.[75] Although this practice may represent something new in relation to "the previously dominant aesthetic of series television," *The X-Files* certainly hasn't challenged "white" habits of perception—given the nostalgic, "primitive" nature of the music, the way acoustic "excess" envelops visual "reality" here brings to mind a passage from *Composing for the Films*:

> The human ear has not adapted itself to the bourgeois rational and, ultimately, highly industrialized order as readily as the eye, which has become accustomed to conceiving reality as made up of separate things, commodities, objects that can be modified by practical activity. [. . .] Ordinary listening, as compared to seeing, is "archaic"; it has not kept pace with technological progress. (Adorno & Eisler 20)

Whether one believes that the ear has "not adapted" to technological progress, or that it has in fact thoroughly adapted itself to the nostalgia of an industrialized, bourgeois culture, depends on which side one takes in the *querelle des bouffons*—that is, whether one believes, with Rameau, that the pleasure music gives us is the result of the "objective" physical qualities of sound or, with Rousseau, that "it is not so much the ear

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[75] "[W]hereas an object loses its three-dimensionality when represented in the photographic image, the recorded sound, considered as a volume of vibrating air waves, remains three-

that carries pleasure to the heart as the heart that carries it to the ear" (Rousseau 1998: 324).

The seasons following the release of the movie have continued both with the (synthesized) orchestral scoring and with the occasional use of *The X-Files*' theme as a leitmotif, though the latter now seems to be oriented more exclusively towards providing audiences with what Jody Berland calls "the pleasures of media competence, the instant recognition of the code that is, must be, made for us" (Berland 36). The "shipper" versions of *The X-Files*' theme, with their warm pop harmonies, regular rhythms, and lyrical phrasing (e.g. "How the Ghosts Stole Christmas"), could not be more different from the electronic eeriness of the original. If there was any doubt about what is now the "true" centre of *The X-Files*' universe, it has been dispelled by the reappearance of scenes like the near-kiss in the movie: "The Relationship," the show's most potent and popular source of melodramatic affect, has been trademarked by "The Theme." The goal, presumably, is to reward fans for their familiarity with the show by bathing their viewing experience in the same pleasurable affect as Mulder and Scully's relationship ("Ah! Me again"); as a commercial strategy, it's not dissimilar to the rash of product placements that have infested the show in the last few seasons (although in this case the producers seem to be taking advantage of its success to sell itself rather than something else). More importantly, perhaps, the contrast between the original theme music and the "shipper" versions is representative of the two poles of melodrama, the poles of "realism" and "excess," that *The X-Files*, from its inception, has constantly been attempting to balance. As the show has grown in popularity that balance has changed, in its music as in other

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dimensional after mechanical mediation" (Levin 57).

dimensions of the show; but, whether it was intentional or not, one effect I think the growing conventionality of the nondiegetic music has had is to institutionalize *The X-Files*' re-masculinization of the melodramatic "ethic of resurgence."

I have refrained from suggesting any direct correlation between the strategy of re-masculinization and its appeal to a specifically male audience because it's clear that, even for *The X-Files*' early "cult" audience, no such easy correlation has ever existed.[76] Where there does appear to be a very strong dividing line, however, is between the tastes of the "cool people" (Wolcott 1997: 76) who were first attracted to the show and those of the millions of "mainstream" viewers who began to tune in during its second and third seasons: a sense of disaffection and disappointment, evident in Vitaris, et al. and from my own perusal of Internet fan forums, set in among the show's early fans as *The X-Files*' melodramatic nature became more "overt." The show's producers, if not covert "shippers" themselves, have certainly grasped the value of catering to the "shippers" who seem to make up the bulk of its current audience. But I believe it is still legitimate to speak of *The X-Files* as a re-masculinization of melodramatic discourse, especially if we think of the way in which the "white" prerogative to at once define and inhabit normality, and to project itself beyond it, is embodied—in exemplary, Rousseauist fashion—in the characters of Mulder and Scully.

It may be true that *The X-Files*' gender role reversal has provided a new model for gender parity in television, but I think it is also true that traditional concepts of gender are still being "covertly" enforced within a very conventional melodramatic dramaturgy. Mulder's openness "to the feminine in his nature and to nature at large" (Wilcox &

Williams 104) may have alienated him from the institutions and discourses of "traditional masculine power" (Wilcox & Williams 117), but this is because "traditional masculine power" is shown to be out of tune with the "true" nature of the cosmos;[77] by transcending the limitations of that power, Mulder shows himself to be a "special, ascendant being," an Enlightened Man, a latter-day Pygmalion:

> I want to believe so badly in a truth beyond our own, hidden and obscured from all but the most sensitive eyes, in the endless procession of souls, in what cannot and will not be destroyed. I want to believe we are unaware of God's eternal recompense and sadness, that we cannot see it is truth, that that which is born still lives and cannot be buried in the cold earth, but only waits to be born again at God's behest, where in ancient starlight we lay in repose. ("Closure")

With Scully, however, one often has the sense that her success in achieving "traditional masculine power" has alienated her not just from the "true" nature of the cosmos but from her "true" nature as a woman.[78] Her tentative forays into "the occult realm of true feeling and value" (Brooks 75), when she "opens up" to "extreme possibilities," always

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[76] For more on gender politics within *The X-Files*' fan culture, see Susan J. Clerc.

[77] Mulder's sense of futility in the face of the seemingly omnipotent shadow government is a recurring theme of *The X-Files*; it is also a recurring theme of melodrama: "Melodrama always sides with the powerless" (Vicinus 130).

[78] Scully's "latent" maternal instincts were especially evident in *The X-Files*' stab at maternal melodrama, the two-part episode "A Christmas Carol" / "Emily": Emily, a young girl, is a product of the government conspiracy, made in vitro from one of Scully's stolen ova (see n. 79 below) and alien DNA, and incubated in a surrogate mother. In the first part of the episode, Scully attempts to adopt Emily, professing that she is ready to rethink her priorities, including her commitment to the FBI and the x-files; in the second part, when it becomes clear that Emily cannot survive without further medical intervention by the conspiracy's doctors, Scully chooses to let her die. As one might imagine, this scene is soaked in melodramatic affect, and in later episodes Scully has had spontaneous "visions" of Emily—accompanied by the "angelic" sounds

seem to provide a greater—melodramatic, emotional, erotic—charge: she is the battleground where rationality and normality struggle with the "truth," a spiritual struggle that is often inseparable from, and crucial to, her struggle for survival. For Mulder, who can always quote some precedent from the x-files, the unknown is never completely unknown; but, again and again, Scully is forced to confront the limits of her own knowledge. Neither she nor her scientific ethos have been proof against the "truth": in almost every episode the "truth" assaults her beliefs and, not infrequently, her body; it has insinuated itself inside her, invaded her. ("The truth is in me," she says to Mulder in "Momento Mori.")[79] At the end of the show's seventh season, Scully, mysteriously and against all odds, became pregnant, but the anxiety (stretched out through the entire eighth season) that surrounded the unknown nature of the fetus—alien, human, hybrid . . .?—mobilized one of "the great narrative dilemmas of whiteness" (Dyer 1997: 30), i.e. rape. (The season finale put to rest this anxiety by revealing that the father was—"Ah! Me again"—Mulder.) The rape scenario only made explicit what has been implicit from the beginning: the pairing of femininity and rationality has been crucial to the construction of Scully as the show's sign of virtue, the "perfect" body to be threatened (and then saved) in its melodramatic refutation of science and rationality. If Scully is the character who defines and inhabits (white) normality, then Mulder is the (white) character able to project himself beyond it, an extension and expansion of himself supported—and increasingly conventionalized—by the nondiegetic music.

The arguments of those who suggest that *The X-Files* is "postmodern" (Lavery, et

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of a wordless children's choir—that recapitulate her traumatic sense of loss.

[79] In the show's second season, Scully was abducted by the government conspiracy, all her ova

al.; Kellner) are weakened, to my mind, by their conspicuous reliance on one episode in particular, "José Chung's *From Outer Space*," as a confirmation and culmination of the show's alleged postmodern tendencies. This episode is unquestionably one of the funniest and best-written, of any television series, that I have ever seen, but the idea that its self-mocking quotations and portrayal of "truth" as an epistemological illusion are representative of *The X-Files* as a series is, frankly, ridiculous. True, the "truth" about the government conspiracy is nearly impossible to establish with any degree of certainty—each new "mythology" episode has the potential to radically alter our perspective, adding new players, putting old ones in a new light—and true, many of the cases Mulder and Scully investigate remain unresolved and, it's implied, unresolvable. But the claim for "postmodern ambiguity and undecidability" (Kellner 167) in *The X-Files*' representation of "truth" is based on a narrow conception of the sorts of "truth" we're looking for: there's little doubt, at this point in the show, about the "truth" of "The Relationship"; and if my argument about *The X-Files* as melodrama is valid, then the *frisson* of ambiguity and undecidability it induces is the product not of some "postmodern" sensibility but of a profoundly nostalgic one.

Douglas Kellner applauds *The X-Files*

> for attempting to engage otherness, to challenge societal normality and rationality, and to open itself to what it calls "extreme possibilities," which appear in a postmodern register as radical otherness and as an exploration of cultures and beliefs that are marginal to mainstream vision. (Kellner 168)

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removed, her DNA tampered with, and a mysterious computer chip implanted in her neck.

He then goes on to criticize the show for its use of racist stereotypes, without realizing that the "good" Otherness and the "bad" Otherness are products of the same white nostalgia, which, through the nondiegetic music, permeates nearly every frame of every episode. And if "*The X-Files* is a prototypical example of postmodern pastiche" because of its "postmodern blend of the traditional and the contemporary" (Kellner 165), then melodrama has been "postmodern" longer than postmodernism has been around, "a site of generic transmutation and 'intertextuality'" (Gledhill 18) since the nineteenth century. (If I understand Kellner rightly, *The Indian Princess*, with its "implosive mixing" of "traditional" ballad opera and "contemporary" melodrama, could qualify as "postmodern.") *The X-Files* is thus not "post-postmodern" (Reeves, et al. 35), but further evidence that melodrama maintains itself by tying the post-modern to the pre-modern: "if realism's relentless search for renewed truth and authentication pushes it towards stylistic innovation and the future, melodrama's search for something lost, inadmissable, repressed, ties it to an atavistic past" (Gledhill 31-2).[80] The diegetic manifestations of Otherness we encounter from week to week may or may not be convincingly "realistic," but I think it's fair to say that the success of *The X-Files* as a series signifies the undiminished vigour of melodramatic discourse: across the country and around the world, millions of people tune in hoping to see stone come to life, and to learn that their secret self, lost these many years, is still out there, alive and awaiting its rediscovery. What makes this solipsistic voyage of rediscovery even more paradoxical and questionable is the part played by the strategy of re-masculinization, the subtle ways in which

[80] The title of the movie version of *The X-Files*, *Fight the Future*, is perhaps as apt an aphorism for the paradoxical aims of melodramatic discourse as one could hope to find.

melodramatic discourse has "covertly" reinvigorated itself not by altering the ethic of resurgence in any essential way, but simply by "de-feminizing" it.

The desire or need to understand one's life as "natural" is a normalizing impulse; it is also, it seems to me, a spiritual impulse, in that the "natural" life, or at least the life deemed to be properly "natural," is thus a life imbued with the aspect of eternity—the sense that, in essentials, we are living now as we have always lived, that life and the living of it are replete with all that they always have had and should have. This impulse, or something like it, may well be a universal feature of humankind, but the fact is that no individual anywhere conceives of "nature" or of a relationship to it that is completely independent of the culture of which he or she is a part. What I hope to have shown in this thesis is how instrumental music in melodrama, as it has moved from the eighteenth century to the twentieth, from theatre to film and television, has consistently expressed a paradoxical bourgeois nostalgia, a complex accommodation to the pace of change in the wake of the social, scientific, and industrial revolutions of the eighteenth century: one's alienation from "nature" can be overcome, metaphorically if not literally, by the same technology which brought it about. Modern acoustic musical instruments,[81] recording technology, computers, synthesizers, and other electronic and digital musical equipment, all were or still are products on the cutting edge of technological innovation, and all have been used in melodrama to create that profound, and profoundly Rousseauist, feeling, untarnished by equivocations and qualifications, of some primal connection to "nature." Rousseau himself embodied this paradox: explicitly opposed to instrumental music in his

[81] By "modern acoustic musical instruments" I mean instruments whose design reflects the acoustic demands of the concert hall, e.g. string instruments altered to take more tensely strung

philosophical writings, he nevertheless deliberately employed an orchestra not just in *Pygmalion* but in other concerted works as well. Similar arguments to Rousseau's were advanced in the twentieth century against both recording technology and electronic instruments; in both cases it's as though the critics who denounce musical technology side with Rousseau *philosophe*—it's dehumanizing, distancing us from immediate, physical contact with "nature"—while popular culture seems as blithely certain as Rousseau *musicien* that musical technology is, to borrow a phrase from Joseph Campbell, "transparent to transcendence" (Campbell 1990: 40). What has made technological innovation so congenial to popular culture has been the resulting mystification surrounding the creation of music—whether it's an eighteenth-century violin sonata, or a Wagnerian orchestra in the hidden pit at Bayreuth, or Mark Snow churning out the score for another *X-Files* episode on his Synclavier, once musicians close their mouths the process whereby they produce music becomes that much more internalized, that much more invisible. This, coupled with the already internalized and invisible conditions of its reception, has helped to make instrumental music the West's great language of interiority and universality—a song of the self that, without words, is a song without boundaries, without limits. For industrialized, capitalized, computerized white culture, it is the most potent incarnation of the Rousseauist belief that the invisible "essence" of life is always in excess of the individual's rational apprehension of life—that, despite all evidence to the contrary, we are still one, still human, and still free.

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steel rather than gut strings, wind instruments with bigger bores, etc. See n. 15 above.

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Appendix

PYGMALION,
Lyric Scene[1]

CHARACTERS
Pygmalion Galathée

INSTRUMENTATION

violin 1	viola	oboe	horn 2
violin 2	violoncello	horn 1	bassoon

Scene: Tyre
[Overture: Allegro assai (vln 1 & 2, vla, vcl, ob, 1 & 2 hns)—Andante—Presto (vln 1 & 2, vla, vcl, ob, 1 & 2 hns)][2]

The theatre depicts the attic of a sculptor. To the sides are blocks of marble, groupings, and unfinished statues. At the back is another statue hidden under a pavilion of light, shiny fabric, decorated with fine netting and garlands.

Pygmalion, leaning on his elbows, sits dreaming with a sad and anxious mien; then, rising suddenly, he takes from a table the tools of his art, gives a couple of desultory taps of the chisel to one of his unfinished statues, steps back, and gazes with a discontented and discouraged air.
[1). Andante]
[2). Andante]

PYGMALION
There is no soul or life there; it's nothing but stone. I'll never do anything with it.

[3). Allegro maestoso]

Oh my genius! Where are you? My talent, what has become of you? My fire is out, my imagination is frozen, the marble is cold in my hands.

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[1] This translation is based on the text for *Pygmalion* in Rousseau 1959-95, 2: 1224-31.
[2] I have given the tempo marking for each number which has one as well as the orchestration, which is, except where I have indicated otherwise, 1 & 2 vlns, vla, vcl. The musical numbers have been inserted in the text according to the directions in Horace Coignet's score.

Pygmalion, you can't pretend anymore to be divine: you're nothing but a common artist . . . . Vile instruments which no longer create anything glorious, do not dishonour my hands anymore.

He throws his tools away disdainfully, then walks about dreamily, his arms crossed.
[4). Andante]

What have I become? What strange revolution has taken place in me? . . . .

Tyre, opulent and superb city, your shining monuments of art no longer appeal to me, I've lost the pleasure I took in admiring them: the discourse of artists and philosophers has become insipid; the talk of painters and poets has no attraction for me; praise and fame do not lift my soul; the accolades of the guardians of posterity do not touch me; even friendship has lost its charms.

[5). Andante]

And you, youthful subjects, masterpieces of nature, which my art dared to imitate, which pleasure drew me to follow incessantly, you, my charming models, who set me ablaze with the fires of love and genius, ever since I surpassed you, you are indifferent to me.

He sits and looks about him.
[6). Andante]

Held in this attic by an inconceivable spell, I don't know what to do here, and cannot leave. I wander from group to group, from figure to figure. My chisel, weak and uncertain, no longer knows its guide: these crude projects, still in the early stages, no longer feel the hand that once had animated them.

He rises impetuously.

It's over, it's over; I've lost my genius . . . . still so young, I've outlived my talent.

[7).]

But what is this ardour that devours me inside? What is in me that seems to burn me up? Why, as I languish here bereft of talent, do I feel these emotions, these flights of impetuous passion, this insurmountable anxiety, this secret agitation which torments me and for which I cannot find the cause?

I was afraid that the admiration of my own accomplishment had caused the absent-mindedness which I brought to my work; I have hidden it under this cloth . . . . my profane hands have dared to cover this monument to their glory. Now that I cannot see it,

I am sad and heedless.

It will be so dear to me, so precious, this immortal work! When my dead spirit produces nothing great and beautiful and worthy of me, I will show my Galathée, and I will say: Here is my work! Oh my Galathée! When I have lost everything, you will remain, and I will be consoled.

He approaches the pavilion, then retreats; comes, goes, and stops several times, sighing as he gazes at it.
[8). Andante]

But why hide it? What do I gain by it? Reduced to idleness, why do I remove the pleasure of contemplating the most beautiful of my statues? . . . . Perhaps there is still some fault which I have not noticed; perhaps I could add more ornament to its finery: an object so delightful should have every conceivable charm . . . . Perhaps it will reanimate my sluggish imagination. I must see it again, examine it afresh. What am I saying? Eh! I have not yet examined it: I have done nothing but admire it.

He goes to lift the cloth, then lets it fall as though frightened.
[9). Andante]

I don't know what emotion I feel in touching the cloth; fear seizes me; I believe I am touching the sanctuary of some divinity. . . . Pygmalion, it's a stone, it's your work. What's the problem? In our temples we serve gods made of the same material, and by the same hand.

Tremblingly he lifts the cloth, and prostrates himself. The statue of Galathée is poised on a very small pedestal, but raised up on a platform of marble formed by several semi-circular steps.
[10). Andante: 1 & 2 vlns, vla, vcl, 1 & 2 hns]

Oh Galathée! Receive my homage. Yes, I was mistaken: I wanted to make you a nymph, and I made you a goddess. Even Venus is less beautiful than you.

Vanity, human weakness! I cannot weary of admiring my work; I am drunk with pride; I love myself in what I have made . . . . No, nothing as beautiful has appeared in nature; I have surpassed the work of the gods . . . .

So many beauties came from my hands? My hands have touched them? . . . . My mouth was able to . . . . I see a fault. This garment covers too much skin; more must be cut away; the charms it contains must be shown to better advantage.

He picks up his hammer and chisel; then, advancing tentatively, he climbs hesitantly the platform of the statue that he seems afraid to touch. Finally, with the chisel raised, he

stops.
[11). Allegro]

What trembling! What turmoil! . . . . I hold the chisel in an uncertain hand . . . . I cannot . . . . I dare not . . . . I will ruin everything.

He encourages himself; and finally, placing his chisel, he gives it a single tap, and seized with terror, he drops it and cries out.
[12). Andante: vln 1, vla, vcl]

My God! I felt living flesh push away the chisel! . . .

. . . . Vain terror, mad blindness! . . . . No, I will not touch her; the gods frighten me. No doubt she has already ascended to their ranks.

He considers her afresh.
[13). Maestoso]

What do you want to change? What new charms do you want to give her? . . . . Ah! It's her perfection that is her fault . . . . Divine Galathée! Less perfect, and you would lack nothing.

Tenderly.
[14). Largo con espressione]

But you lack a soul: your figure cannot do without one.

With still more tenderness.
[15). Lento]

The soul to animate such a body must be beautiful!

He pauses for some time. Then, sitting down again, he says in a slow, altered voice:
[16). Andante: 1 & 2 vln, bsn, vcl]

What desires dare I harbour? What insane wishes! What do I feel? . . . . Oh heaven! The veil of illusion falls, and I dare not look into my heart: I would upset myself too much.

Long pause in profound dejection.
[17). Andante]

. . . . This is the noble passion that leads me astray! It's because of this inanimate object that I may not leave here! . . . . Marble! Stone! A hard, shapeless mass worked with iron! . . . . Lunatic, come to your senses; keep your whining to yourself; see your error, your

folly.

. . . . But no . . . .

Impetuously.
[18). Allegro]

No, I have not lost my mind; I'm not eccentric; I blame myself for nothing. I'm not in love with this lifeless marble, it's with the living being it resembles, the figure I see in it. Wherever this adorable figure might be, made of whatever material, and by whatever hand, she will have all the wishes of my heart. My only folly is to discern beauty, my only crime to be sensitive to it. That is nothing to be ashamed of.

Less lively, but always with passion.
[19). 1 & 2 vlns, vla, vcl, 1 & 2 hns]

Streaks of flame seem to shoot forth from you, set my senses alight, and return with my soul to their source! Alas! You remain cold and unmoving, while my heart, burning with love, would take leave of my body to give its warmth to you. In my madness I believe I can escape myself and give you my life and my soul. Ah, that Pygmalion might die to live in Galathée! . . . . What am I saying, oh heaven! If I were she, I would not see her, I would not be the one who loved her. No, Galathée, live, that I might not be you. Ah, that I might always not be you, always want to be you, see you, love you, be loved by you! . . . .

Transport.
[20). Adagio]

Torments, wishes, desires, rage, impotence, terrible love, fatal love . . . . Oh! All of hell is in my tumultuous heart . . . . Powerful gods! Beneficent gods! Gods of the people, who know the passions of men! You have worked so many miracles at the slightest urging! See this statue, see my heart, and be just and deserving of worship!

With more moving enthusiasm.
[21). 1 & 2 vlns, vla, vcl, bsn]

And you, divine essence, hidden from the senses but open to the heart! Soul of the universe, the secret principle of all life; you whose love brings harmony to the elements, life to matter, feeling to bodies, and form to all beings; sacred fire, divine Venus, through whom all is preserved and reproduced unendingly! Ah! where is your balance, your generous strength? Where is the law of nature in the feeling I have? Where is your invigorating warmth in the emptiness of my vain desires? All your fires are concentrated in my heart, and this marble remains as cold as death; I am dying from its utter lack of life. Alas! I'm not waiting for a miracle; it exists, and it must end; the natural order is

disturbed, nature is offended; return order to her empire, bring back her fair courts, and dispense equally your divine influence. Yes, two beings do not share the plenitude of all things. Let them share the fierce passion that consumes one without enlivening the other. It was you who shaped with my hands these features, these charms which await feeling and life. . . . Give her half of mine, give her all, if necessary, it is enough that I live in her. Oh you who deign to smile at the homage of mortals! That which has no feeling does you no honour; extend your glory with your works. Goddess of beauty, spare this affront to nature, so that this perfect model might be the image of that which is not.

He returns to himself by degrees with assurance and joy.
[22). Amoroso: 1 & 2 vlns, vla, vcl, ob, 1 & 2 hns]

I return to my senses. What an unexpected calm! What unhoped-for courage revives me! A mortal fever fires my blood: a balm of confidence and hope rushes through my veins: I feel reborn.

Our feelings of dependence thus sometimes serve to console us. However unhappy mortals are, when they have invoked the gods they are more at ease . . . .

But this unjust confidence deceives those with insane desires . . . . Alas! In the state I'm in one appeals to anyone, and no one listens. Hope which deceives is more insane than desire.

Ashamed of my madness, I dare not contemplate any longer the cause. When I want to raise my eyes to this fatal statue, I quiver with new emotion, trembling suffocates me, a secret fear stops me . . . .

Bitter irony.

. . . . Eh! Look, you wretched man! Be bold; you can dare to look at a statue.

He sees the statue move, and turns away, seized with fear, his heart wracked with pain.
[23). Andante]

What have I seen? My god! Is it what I think I saw? Colour in the flesh . . . . light in the eyes . . . . movement even . . . . It's not enough to hope for a miracle; to complete my misery I have seen one . . . .

Extreme dejection.
[24). Andante]

Misfortunate man, it's over . . . . your delirium is in its final stage, your reason has left you just as your talent has! . . . . Have no regrets, Pygmalion! Its loss will cover up your disgrace . . . .

Lively indignation.
[25). Allegro]

It's too much for the lover of a stone to see things.

He turns around, and sees the statue move and descend on its own the steps he used to reach the pedestal. He throws himself on his knees, and raises his hands and eyes to heaven.
[26). Allegro con sordini: 1 & 2 vlns, vla, vcl, 1 & 2 hns]

Immortal gods! Venus! Galathée! Oh, the magic of a frenzied love!

GALATHÉE *touches herself, and says:*
Me.

PYGMALION, *transported.*
Me.

GALATHÉE, *touching herself again.*
This is me.

PYGMALION
Ravishing illusion which reaches my ears, ah, never leave my senses!

GALATHÉE, *takes several steps, and touches a block of marble.*
This is not me.

Pygmalion, following all her movements in a frenzy of emotions he can barely contain, listens to her, observes her with such avidity that he has difficulty breathing. Galathée approaches and looks at him. He rises hurriedly, opens his arms, and gazes at her ecstatically. She rests a hand on him; he starts, takes her hand, places it over his heart, and covers it with ardent kisses.

GALATHÉE, *with a sigh.*
Ah! Me again.

PYGMALION
Yes, lovely and delightful object, yes, worthy masterpiece of my hands, my heart, and the gods . . . . it's you, you alone: I have given you all my being; I will live no more except in you.