UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Critical Acts:

Modernist Subjectivities in Women's Writing on Performance

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Doctor of Philosophy by Publication

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postgraduate research degree of the University of Winchester.

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Dedication

This thesis is for Robin Hicks for raising the importance of the women.

Abstract

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Critical Acts: Modernist Subjectivities in Women's Writing on Performance

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This thesis situates and gives voice to women's experiences of the performing arts between the 1890s and the 1940s through examining articulations of subjective aesthetic response in a range of critical writing. It addresses ways that women writers on performance were developing innovative approaches to capture and convey lived experiences as spectators and auditors dynamically on paper. Women's commentaries on performance were both creative works and cultural documents which expressed feelings about and attitudes around particular artworks and contributed to debates about the socio-cultural purpose of art through a variety of literary forms. A range of case-studies highlights women writers who wrote from interdisciplinary mindsets and analyses writings by Rosa Newmarch, Israfel (Gertrude Hudson), Irene Mawer and Velona Pilcher as transformational for the provocative ways they shared experiences of music, dance and theatre with readers, encouraging active involvement rather than passive absorption. The writings are re-evaluated as 'critical acts' because of how they challenged established forms of reporting and commentary in their exposure of individual authorial and wider socio-cultural perspectives incorporating vital and imaginative questioning, confession, parody, polemical writing and attempts at ekphrasis. Evidence presented argues that it is the 'modernist' nature of the subjectivities informing and constructing the various modes of writing these women developed that defines this creative-critical work as avant-garde because of the ways it sought to capture and represent the experience of performance as a live event. Recognising subjective reception as significant and researching the networks which gave rise to it and in which writings were read, enables the intersections between the history of ideas, cultural politics and the sociology of taste to be examined. In turn, this sheds new light on the idea of music, the relevance of theatricality, and the power of the performing body as presences rather than absences from cultural history.

Keywords: Reception, subjectivities, performative writing, creative criticism, musicology, performing arts, British modernism, modernist women, critical act, theatre historiography

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Appendix 2: Purkis, C. (2004) 'You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music': Gertrude Hudson's Fictional Fantasias. In: Fuller, S. and Loessef, N. (eds.) *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*. Farnham: Ashgate, 197-254.

Appendix 3: Purkis, C (2011a) Movement, poetry and Dionysian Modernism: Irene Mawer's experiments with 'dance words'. In: *Free Verse, Free Dance: Embodied Sense in Motion* Ailamazian, A., Idlis, J. Sirotkina, I. and Venediktova, T. (eds.) Moscow: Faculty of Psychology of the Moscow State University, 70-80.

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The Context Statement

Section One: Introduction - research scope

1.1. The central idea of the research, its aims and key arguments

The research embedded in this thesis was stimulated by a fascination with modes of experimental writing responding to the performing arts between the 1890s and the 1940s from across a range of literary genres and published as journalism, editorial commentary, impressions, prefaces, essays, programme guides, autobiography, testimony, memoir, and appreciations. As a constituent part of the wider reception of the arts in this period such work by selected writers not only provides a record of their own, and in places audience, reactions to examples of works in public performance, but also illustrates debates concerning the nature of innovative contemporary commentary brought into play in content dealing with the activities of performers, composers, conductors, and companies. It has also been driven by the recognition that subjectivities have been underrated or ignored in historical accounts of these activities resulting in women's contributions to this central industry of arts appreciation being under-researched.

The thesis exposes and maps both the potential and limitations of words in attempts to express moments from live performance and in recollections and anticipations of events. Through investigation of examples, it traces and analyses various creative ways developed by women working in modern times to express response and ascribe meanings to arts in performance. This thesis presents several published interpretations of a body of female critical writing accompanied by an explanation of their combined significance. The publications selected highlight issues concerning translations of performance experience into words and interpret a range of engagements with performance. They are re-evaluated as approaches to the aim of this thesis: to situate and give voice to women's experience through aesthetic response and to interrogate the nature of modernist subjectivities active in their writing.

The various case-studies presented through the publications are reviewed here in terms of a revival of interest in overlooked British female writers who, in the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century period, explored their reactions and observed and recorded collective responses to music, dance and drama displayed as part of the industry of modernist culture. The historical writings which are the material for research evidence the change of subject which they presented. Rather than a focus on the art under

consideration as object, attention was paid by these writers to experience of the art, making the object of study people who expressed subjectivities in public texts. That shift has informed the commentary in the publications. By refocussing on the perceiver, spectator, auditor, including, explicitly the writer of the text and implicitly audience and readers, these writings widened the scope of meaning-making. Discussions explored relationships between the literary approaches, the modernity of the artworks and attitudes to production, consumption and interpretation of the arts in the 'modern times' between the 1890s and the 1940s. The intention in this thesis is to not only recover a wider range of written texts evidencing personal perspectives created by writers active in the 1890s to 1940s than has hitherto been accessible, but to argue for the significant influence of subjective aesthetic response in shaping and promoting the performing arts in culture.

The central idea of this thesis is that the identified women writers were developing creative literary approaches to capture and convey their own lived experiences dynamically on paper. Their ambitions were to capture ephemeral, personal and communal audience experience, dimensions evasive of representation in words. Analysis of the texts has suggested how personal responses, feelings and opinions were also being encouraged in readers through the literary styles to stimulate participants in culture to confront the challenges of representation for themselves. Creative approaches arose from their experimentation with literary ways to express subjectivities which expanded the scope of verbal expression and demonstrated its ability to represent performance experience in new ways. These attempts were historically significant, not only as documentary evidence of women responding to the arts and publishing successfully, but as a female contribution to the spirit of challenge that characterised modernist cultural activities.

The perspective I have applied to women's critical reception relies on valuing these forms of writing as possessing literary merit, recognising how their methods of articulation liberated readers from existing notions of criticism and were successful at communicating new thoughts about performance. The thesis identifies aspects of these writings as challenging established forms of reporting and commentary in their exposure of individual authorial and wider socio-cultural subjectivities through incorporation of vital and imaginative questioning, confession, parody, polemical writing and attempts at ekphrasis. The analysis proposes it is the 'modernist' nature of the subjectivities informing and

constructing the various modes of writing developed by these women authors that defines this creative-critical work as avant-garde.

Examples selected from women's writing on performance constituted and conveyed experiences of arts in performance using personal standpoints. The thesis argues that the writings of particular women should be read as consciously subjective in several ways: they engaged with authorial subject positions and attitudes to contemporary productions and performances of works; they recognised and identified perspectives, feelings, and emotions unique to the time in events observed; they explored means of expressing covertly and overtly personal and autobiographical experience from their various ways of participating in culture. The argument for the revaluing of these responsive writings is drawn out of and responds to the selection of examples with a view to showing how the literary styles inscribed their critical work with an actively creative rather than passively responsive character.

In summary, the nature of the written responses to performance identified and analysed within the publications are connectable by the initiatives shown by these female authors to try to capture the experience of the perceiver/spectator/auditor and the essential liveness of performance in words. The texts that have formed the material for study are arguably definable as a unique genre of writing specializing in exploring subjectivities in the interests of designing and delivering forms of creative reception to match their authors' aesthetic experiences. The central idea of this thesis threaded through the publications, the arguments expressed within the title and scrutinised intertextually through the unifying themes, serve to open connections between current thinking about modes of response to the creative arts and these past responses.

1.2. The submission: overview and structure

This submission for Doctor of Philosophy by Publication brings together a set of peer-reviewed articles and chapters from a special issue, book series, conference proceedings and several edited collections framing them through an explanatory evaluative context statement which is intended to provide an intellectual consolidation and overview. Eight publications are re-presented and evaluated thematically in relation to the central idea and the discursive argument stemming from it. The publications are a sub-set of a range of outputs from a research journey of two decades pursued during employment as an established Principal Lecturer in Performing Arts at The University of Winchester. The Appendices carry abstracts of each publication explaining their individual aims and multi-

faceted content as stand-alone outputs and reproduce each one. The order in which the publications are presented matches the development of this thesis and the intellectual decisions made in the research process concerning inter-textual unifying themes rather than the chronology of my research career. So as not to interrupt the flow of this context statement these can be read before or after, since quotations are included throughout which draw attention to specific passages. Together these publications evidence a sustained interest over time in how writing can or cannot, may or may not, represent aesthetic experience and effectively articulate response or 'meaning'.

Although assembled retrospectively, the publications brought together do not form an artificial construct. It is worth noting that the two publications on the musical writing of 'Israfel' (Gertrude Hudson) were written first (2001; published 2004) and last (2018; published 2019), so my engagement with her writing punctuates my start and end points. The later revisiting of Hudson's work delving deeper and back into past discovery also reflects how my enthusiasm for the attitudes and interests within the historical material has deepened over time. The dialogue between these publications at either end of the chronological frame of the production and completion of this thesis not only indicates how my own thinking is leading into extended intellectual territory of continuing relevance to cultural history and to the developing field of research into the history of performative writing, but also shows the value and currency of what I have achieved as a defining contributor to the field of creative reception studies and initiator of debate within it.

This context statement charts and consolidates an interdisciplinary research project which makes a unique contribution to knowledge. The project has examined previously unexplored writing from several disciplines; recovered writers who combine and compare art-forms; interrogated how artists have used one art form to explore another, experimenting with innovative use of words, and situated these achievements in women's history and in the context of modernist studies. This overarching statement brings together perspectives drawn from scholarship situated in cultural history; journalism and literary studies; creative writing; musicology; dance; theatre, and art history. It offers a critical synthesis which explains the contribution and currency of my work on creative approaches to the broad field of reception studies and creative criticism, which I locate within Performance Studies whilst making links to cultural histories of modernisms and periodical studies.

In 'Chronologies', *Section Two*, I introduce two research contexts: my own and that of the women I have studied. Articulating how the publications together demonstrate the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, and the systematic acquisition and understanding of the body of knowledge informing and accompanying them, requires the clarification of the two timelines from those contexts. First, I outline the chronology of my developing intellectual interests in women writers, various modernisms and varieties of subjective aesthetic response which led to the publications, narrating the research journey. This frames the selected publications against the backdrop of the intellectual interests and explorations from my career. Secondly, I establish the historical contexts of the writers and their publications and explain my perceptions of involvements with modernism relating to the publications.

Section Three provides the conceptual framework which connects the publications intertextually, clarifies the meaning of the title and explores key concepts within two unifying themes: 'Critical Acts as creative performative reception', and 'Subjectivities, gendered aesthetic response and cultural value'. Examples from the publications are connected to these themes to show their resonance. *Section Four* constructs a narrative through the publications to trace the thread of the central idea which builds on this framework of concepts articulated in the themes. This shows how women's critical writing on performance was both creative text and cultural document which expressed modernist subjectivities about and around particular artworks and contributed to debates about the socio-cultural purpose of art in uniquely new ways. The discussion extricates some examples of connections between the approaches to this central idea from across publications and explains how the idea was progressed from each publication to the next. To evidence 'creative text' and how this 'expressed modernist subjectivities' the discussions of each publication also highlight various dynamic forms of writing and interpersonal literary techniques developed by these women writers as identified in the arguments of the publications. Having drawn together the eight publications, the research journey and the overarching thesis, this research as a whole is then assessed in *Section Five* for its contribution to and enhancement of knowledge. This conclusion clarifies that the publications have defined a productive area of research and expresses how the process of preparing this doctoral submission has fostered a deeper comprehension of the purpose of the research.

The statement overall presents a clear claim for originality in the way that my research over two decades has defined a history of 'critical acts' within cultural contexts embedded

in ‘modern times’ characterised by contemporaries and historians in various and changing ways as periods of aestheticism and modernism. This history is related to new literary approaches to ‘creative criticism’ and ‘performative writing’ which have emerged recently and are growing in influence. I propose that contemporary critical response can benefit from past models from the imaginations of such forgotten writers - those I have studied, and also others ripe for investigation - who have been unjustifiably ignored.

Section Two: Chronologies

This section reviews intellectual moments from my career that built this research. Initially, it outlines the evolution of the thesis and its underpinning, linked to practice-based teaching in the performing arts. Following this, historical realities from the publications are outlined to record what is known about the lives of the women writers, how they worked, what successes they achieved and whether they had any influence. This is a consolidation of what is included within the publications, with relevant additions from work by other scholars which help to address the significance of involvements with modernism and to consider how far that notion is useful in situating and understanding these writers.

2.1. Re-examination of the research journey

When I delivered a paper re-introducing Gertrude Hudson's extraordinary and comic pronouncements on 1890s musical culture at the 'International Conference on Nineteenth-century music' (2000), the impetus for the publication ''You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music': Gertrude Hudson's Fictional Fantasias' (Purkis, 2004), I was still engaged in trying to complete a DPhil thesis for the English Faculty at Oxford University: 'Eros and the Modernist Impulse in British and German Culture 1890-1905'. I discovered the work of 'Israfel' when looking into interdisciplinary arts and decadence and found *The Dome* in the Bodleian Library. This connected to interests I already had in documentations of memory located in witness accounts of performance, such as Edvard Munch's recollection of the pianist and writer Stanisław Przybyszewski in the 'Black Pig' Tavern in Berlin in the 1890s which I absorbed from *Modernism 1890-1930* (1976) by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. That example ignited a passion for cultural history which had been stirred by being able to access Przybyszewski's writings on music, eroticism, and philosophy in English translation in the Brotherton Library Leeds University the year before and which had led to the formulation of my first DPhil proposal for Oxford University. The Faculty of English welcomed my interdisciplinary experience and mindset.

An intensive research journey began towards the focus on reception presented now in this thesis. Its development was nurtured by an important reversal in thinking away from investigating context around key works and away from personal readings of works out of context and with a requirement for objectivity - approaches I had been educated in. Looking back at the book my Oxford supervisor Christopher Butler was writing at that time

- *Early Modernism: Literature, Music, and Painting in Europe 1900-1916* (1994)- referenced in Purkis 2010, I note his expression about the 'changing framework of ideas' or 'conversation' amongst artists and critics (Butler, 1994: 16, 24) which was adopted to convey that 'subjective concepts to articulate and inspire stylistic change in modernist work in all the arts … in turn both conspired with and provoked audiences' transferring between works of art and cultural discourse, and vice versa (Purkis, 2010: 8). Productive conversations were taking place, but a sticking point in my original DPhil conception resulted from the need to identify examples to examine against thematic backdrops. The definition of an example was not critical or cultural commentary (and certainly not anecdote, impression, memory, opinion, which at that time were commonly considered of insufficient substance, weight, or authority), but artworks.

Finding my own late twentieth-century response increasingly irrelevant as I became enmeshed in historical sources, I wanted not to offer my own readings of artworks and instead to draw attention to the significance of past responses to understand how works had signified then in order to understand the connections between aesthetics, creativity, and the erotic and to sense, even inhabit, the cultural history as real. I planned to treat selected artworks as constructive and not reflective. A way to argue successfully in the cultural historical sub-field of literary studies seemed to be to venture deeply into context and to acknowledge that specific circumstances and groupings of people were worth exploring to find the 'discourses that exist behind, beyond, and around the text at hand' (Rado, 1997: 5).

A breakthrough came in my British Council funded semester to the Humboldt University East Berlin in 1986. Professor Gunther Klotz understood that I was researching historical resources which I would then interpret and suggested to recognise the value of other participants in the cultural 'context', the world of the arts whom he termed them 'Kulturträger': the carriers of culture or agents, the people who are commentating on cultural scenes and events, interpreting the arts, and transferring, transmitting, and translating ideas. Despite this realisation of a way forward, the vastness of the material became overwhelming. Everything became overly 'macro'; context as text proved too hard to manipulate into completion. I was only able to make progress when I turned inwards into the 'micro' - where in fact things had started - then take connections back outwards. The publications presented here and the conference papers that nurtured them, are evidence of this and apply some aspects from my original framework and thematic conception. I had already spent time writing for publication on specific historical

topics. Material from my incomplete DPhil went into an article for *Les Lettres Européenes*, the encyclopedia for the European Union funded project. I wrote articles collaboratively, acting as an assistant to a project on Rudolf Laban, and became a specialist in Weimar culture and *fin-de-siècle* Austria producing articles on opera. This accumulation of knowledge of 1920s and 30s European and American emigree culture became invaluable background to my project on Pilcher. It is perhaps not surprising that producing a thesis by publication became the outcome of postgraduate studies from this context.

The term 'critical act' emerged and became key to my developing interests. Working with adult learners encouraged me to find value in subjective responses. I became part of the British 'Critical Musicology' group which shared 'a concern with critique, including a critique of musicology itself' (Scott, 2010: ix); my contributions raising feminist perspectives at various conferences were welcomed. I started using creative-critical, performative and autoethnographic approaches. This context lay within my work when I remarked, for example: 'Hudson's work is not only stimulating as historical curiosity; it is also a provocative exemplification of proto-postmodern musicological interests' because 'the overriding concern is how to interpret – discuss, describe, represent, depict, re-enact, and perhaps 'embody' – music using words' (Purkis, 2004: 207).

A link between my research identity and my attraction to women writers with wide interests who were independent thinkers exercising creative freedom is also apparent. Their roles as interpreters of the performing arts mirrored the tasks in my occupation as a continuing education programme organiser and Lecturer in Music and the Arts in Performance working in the community in Hampshire and Dorset, picking up other jobs writing reviews and previews and programme notes. These historical women pursued what seemed to be personal paths. In my research process, I found much published work that had not been commented on; the lack of attention to the material interested me, because I like to make my own connections and to find out why. Subsequently, at Winchester, writing and teaching a range of interdisciplinary modules developed a multi-dimensional mindset. It expanded my understanding that creativity is manifest in physical practice and words in ways far beyond what would have been the case had I remained in literary or music studies. Key theoretical perspectives - performativity, phenomenology, and postmodernism - discussed collectively and applied to making and to writing which co-produced making and meaning, brought new insights to historical interests.

I planned to continue publishing on women writers and performance in modernist contexts and pursued some work on Vernon Lee which is unpublished. My research into Irene Mawer expanded my line of thinking into Dance Studies and connected to postmodern approaches to writing such as essays by Susan L. Foster and Vida Midgelow. It was initially difficult to spark interest in her writing in others, and at the time I was not quite at the stage of my research to connect past and present confidently to dance scholars. I presented a paper within the project 'Pioneer Women: early British modern dancers' at the University of Surrey. As a result of speaking again on Newmarch at 'Russia in Britain: 1880-1940' I made a contact which took me, and the emerging Mawer work, to Moscow, where the connections between 'Free Verse and Free Dance' across time and space proved much more fruitful.

Locating and reflecting on Pilcher's critical writings has been quite involved, as I have had to reconstruct an archive. The central idea of this thesis maps onto each of the three of my publications on her career and onto as yet unpublished papers on her literary approaches. I joined a new network about intercultural exchange and women writers based at the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in the Anglistik department where I had had my first academic post. Taking advantage of the German approach to a rather long nineteenth century, I was able to draw together a comprehensive introduction to Pilcher as itinerant writer and disseminate insights into her networking activities between American and European theatre (Purkis 2016), following up on a paper given at the British Association of American Studies. Publication opportunities surfaced at the centenary of World War One. In 2015 the opportunity arose to bring together the trend for uncovering new dimensions of the war with Pilcher's writing for newspapers and magazines. The resulting publication (Purkis 2017) connected the genre of 'Literary Journalism' into several types of writing relating to the research for this thesis.

My involvement with the Tate 'Sublime Object' project came about by invitation from a curator with whom I had worked at the Open University and at Southampton University. This offered me an opportunity to utilise thinking from my DPhil work which crossed with her interests around eroticism as *topos* and attitude and how ideas translated into works or stemmed from response, including that of Hudson. I was ready to publish more on Hudson, who had featured in conference papers in the years before. There was a significant change to my perspective on the gendered dimension in the writing due to my developed understanding of queer politics and performance from connections with the 'Queer Modernism(s)' group and new work, such as Philip Ross Bullock's reflection on

Newmarch's lived experience as a "queer" female individual', prompting deeper questioning of symbolism, visualisation and quixotic positioning in Hudson's writings (Bullock, 2019: 109). It was fruitful to revisit 'Israfel', to grapple with her complex conflicting thoughts which questioned contemporary criticism. The commission to write for the 'The Edinburgh History of Women's Periodical Culture in Britain' volume on *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1890s-1920s: The Modernist Period* also enabled me to revisit Newmarch, mention Pilcher and suggest that further research into women's networks is needed since recent textbooks on musical criticism lacked this material. At the last minute I was proactive about getting Purkis 2019 listed in the bibliography of *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism* (Dingle, 2019: 765). This is important because if academic work slips between fields since it deals in a genre of writing that is, and is also not, criticism, it can be difficult to get the research and interpretation noticed.

2.2. Contextualisation of writers' biographies, works and involvements with modernism

The histories of these four women writers can be related to several different contexts and there are a range of variously inflected histories in which their writing can be situated. Fitting this broad range of types of writing into different cultural historical networks, whether of people or ideas, or both, helps expose the purpose and impact of the work.

Seven of the eight publications have an explicit focus on writings by four women: Gertrude Hudson (Israfel); Rosa Newmarch; Irene Mawer and Velona Pilcher, but the various studies also make connections to the work of two others: Violet Paget (Vernon Lee) and Ruby Ginner, and refer to more: Emily R. Daymond; Katharine Eggar; Elsie Fogerty; Hulda Friedrichs; Ursula Greville; Eva Mary Grew; Marie Harrison; Emily Frances Holland; Alice Emily Keeton; Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser; Louise Liebich; Christabel Marshall (Christopher St. John); Annie Patterson; Oliveria Prescott; Marion Scott; Constance Smedley (Mrs Armfield); Ethel Smyth; Christina Struthers; Rebecca West (Cicely Isabel Fairfield); Annie T. Weston; and Virginia Woolf. The publications include some biographical context on the writers, including what information is generally known or has been possible to discover. Those also active as artists and educators had additional influence on their times and this supported their historical record because women's history about the arts has responded more to those active as creative artists than to those active as agents in culture.

Due to the lack of awareness in the public domain about the various women writers at the time of preparing the publications, there is an amount of wider contexualisation in each which served to introduce them to readers. Anne Fernald has encouraged just such 'a renewed attentiveness to biographical sources in literary criticism, one in which critics return to biographical sources as crucial context for the literary responses'. My research has coincided and contributed to the 'historicist turn' that Fernald pointed out has 'enabled and coincided with the new modernist studies' (Modernism/Modernity PrintPlus, 2017: online [Accessed 13 July 2021]). The effect has been that rejection of the biographical along with the personal is no longer expected as it once was in a field previously defined by a lack of interest in people, and especially in women's lives and also excluding anyone connected to modernism who was not a creative artist. Those days have gone.

This thesis is not a study of influence, but the publications indicate some overlapping networks. Several of the additional women connected to one or more of the main authors. For example, Smedley's conversations with an Aunt, her 'princess series' from the St. James' Gazette reprinted in *The Boudoir Critic,* was parodied by Gertrude Hudson, and Smedley was also the founder of the Lyceum Club Piccadilly of which Hudson and Pilcher were members, but at different times. Hudson was in her mid-thirties in the late 1890s meaning she was born in the early 1860s and a contemporary of Paget (1856-1935) and Newmarch; Pilcher was dining at the club in the mid-1920s and her membership was listed in various directories of authors published at that time. Smedley's secretary at the Lyceum Club was Mrs Phyllis Whitworth who started the 300 Club (a theatre subscription series) and she featured the Ginner-Mawer dancers at a fundraiser she organised for Crosby Hall. Smedley also knew Paget who connected to Newmarch through their friendship with the singer Mary Wakefield, whose biography Newmarch wrote (Maxwell, 2007). Another connection in their network constructs a possible link between Newmarch and Pilcher across the generations. Marion Terry, the actress sister of Ellen was also a close friend of Wakefield and was present at Ellen Terry's funeral where she could well have encountered Pilcher (Rachlin, 2011:177). Smyth knew St. John and they both knew Woolf. Mawer also published an article in *Theatre Arts Monthly* volume IV (July 1930); Pilcher published 'A Star Turn' in the same volume (December 1930) (Purkis, 2016: 78-79).

Many of the women on the list (Purkis, 2019: 89) were recognised as specialist commentators on the contemporary arts in their time and some have received critical attention from historians. Beyond a lack of interest from the mid-late century, there were

also dismissals of some of their work as outmoded and irrelevant before recent revivals of interest. Bullock represents an example of this from J.A. Westrup, an establishment musicologist, eminent critic and editor, decrying Newmarch's programme notes (which would have been prominent in his youth) in 1963 (Bullock, 2009: 132). But as well as actively writing and publishing, these women had various positions in their time which invested them with an authority, gave them a following and enabled them to impact culture variously as agents, patrons, educators and promoters.

Gertrude Hudson (dates unknown) was a writer of short stories and essays, some of which were reproduced in concert programmes, an assistant editor on *The Dome* during the 1890s and then edited her own magazine *The Acorn* (1905). Although it appears Hudson toyed with her own amateurism if commentary on this is seen as autobiographical, she was a widely-published professional writer but in a context where women's status and expectations were changing (Purkis, 2019: 81-82). The various beautifully-produced collections made of her articles indicate that she had a following beyond the ephemera of print journalism. These books were well-reviewed for a writer of creative non-fiction essays and short stories in that time. The language and content of largely positive contemporaneous reviews also evidence the effective communication of her unique style. Hudson's comedic approach largely resisted hostilities as her work could not easily be branded 'decadent' when it parodied key tropes and texts associated with what was seen as a decadent movement. Her pseudonym also sidestepped the 'new woman' designation at least in public, although I did connect her to this grouping's experimentation with meta-fictions in the simultaneity of her telling stories and theorising (Purkis, 2004: 198). The only other scholar of Hudson, Margaret Stetz, who has considered her writing from another perspective, has argued that Pre-Raphaelitism, an extension of continental European Romanticism continuing into the 1890s and an early form of aestheticism, was a liberating force for Hudson's gender identity and the 'aesthetic tourism' expressed in her travel writing. She argued that Hudson 'used imperialism as a way to develop a legitimate aesthetic space … in the male-dominated world of Victorian art criticism' (Stetz, 2005: 182).

In Purkis 2019 I shared all the historical evidence known about Hudson's life, and, as she self-identified as not a critic, I discussed her as a 'lady journalist'. To highlight Hudson's unique approach, I quoted Fuller's observation that musically-active women were usually outside establishment boundaries because they were rarely a part of any establishment, agreeing with her proposition that because they 'had less to risk' this actually supported

‘women’s capacity for innovation’ (Fuller, 2007: 255; Purkis, 2019:87). In Hudson’s case her publishing contracts seemed to have allowed her freedom to experiment with alternative forms of responsive writing. This emphasis on innovation raises the question about how the context of aestheticism in which Hudson was publishing related to emergent modernism, bearing in mind that until the 1990s, nineteenth-century writing was seen from the perspective of the mid twentieth century as very old-fashioned and not experimental. The edited collection that radically altered the view of women’s participation in the cultural movement aestheticism and re-evaluated its connection to modernism was *Women and British Aestheticism.* The editors demonstrated that women’s writing had become neglected due to the impact of the first histories written by men – the many male modernist writers who had ‘disavowed’ its importance. They argued that since scholarship on aestheticism could be ‘reformulated to include women’, so feminist criticism could be ‘reworked to include aestheticism’ (Schaffer and Psomiades, 1999: 12-13). As the essays in the collection demonstrated a number of the women researched continued to find relevance in the ideas of aestheticism, finding it a ‘rich resource for the production of art’ and arguably ‘an alternative tradition’ with which to ‘combat high-modernist misogyny’ (Schaffer and Psomiades, 1999: 4). In Purkis 2004 I referenced Stetz’s contribution about ‘gendered dialogue’ in contemporary discussion about the nature of aestheticism from which ‘much of the female side of this exchange has been lost’ because of the lack of attention to women’s writing in magazines and indicated the contribution of my work to changing that conversation (Stetz, 1999: 30; Purkis, 2004: 210).

Irene Mawer (1893-1962) was a teacher of natural movement, mime and acting, running her own school and also employed at others training teachers and performers, working as a performer mime and poet-actor - and adjudicator at festivals and competitions, as well as a published writer. I was the first person to publish on Mawer’s writings on dance, although Fiona Mackintosh included the Greek dance work in her study of Greek performance in the modern world. Karl Toepfer has built on these publications, focussed on movement style, and summed up Mawer as an androgynous mime artist also claiming that she and Ginner were radical feminists at the time of World War One (Toepfer, 2019: online [Accessed 20 June 2021]).

Velona Pilcher (1894-1952) was a theatre director of four London theatres between 1927 and 1952, a patron of artists and playwrights, translator, conduit between cultures, author and printer of programme notes, articles, plays and unpublished books. In 1927, she was described as a ‘Diogena’ and ‘world pilgrim in quest of plays’ by the well-known critic J.T.

Grein in a feature on the Gate Theatre Studio (Purkis, 2016: 81). She displayed her prodigious knowledge of European and American drama in programming and publicity. She was praised as a writer by the editorial team at *Theatre Arts Monthly*: the chief female editors Edith J. Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder and the assistant editor the renowned American critic John Mason Brown, and by colleague on Time and Tide, Christopher St. John (Purkis, 2011b: 123).

Rosa Newmarch (1857-1940) was a lecturer, editor, a leading authority on Russian culture, author of descriptive notes, guides, prefaces, articles, books and poetry, and a crucial figure in the development and success of London musical life. She pursued a successful writing and lecturing career between the 1890s and the 1930s. I was the first scholar to revisit Newmarch's work with an early twenty-first century perspective and looked at her work for its literary creative qualities rather than to assess her achievements or to connect her to great male composers' histories. Even when she was 65 years old her approach was still described as 'zealous' and 'so clear' that 'the listener or reader has no other course but to agree'. In the review of her lectures on 'Czech-slovak music' in *The Musical Times*, where these comments appear, her individual approach is also appreciated as advantageous to others:

> She is not a professional critic … has not to form rapid judgments, to weigh the scales of appreciation in a hurry. Hers it is to allow music to soak in until she has captured its very essence, and then to give us the benefit of her impressions (H.E.W., 1922: 870-871).

Bullock, Newmarch's biographer, summarised her cultural presence in a recent article in terms of her 'lived experience' as an example of a 'visible form of social autonomy for British women in the first three decades of the twentieth century' (Bullock, 2019: 114, 109). Newmarch's 'Confessions of a Programme-writer' printed in *The Chesterian* (1928) illustrated her own sense of this autonomy, a retrospection that also suggested the reader may decide what she is: 'I believe I may claim to have been the first woman analyst, programmatist, annotator – what you will; every term for a profession seems equally clumsy' (113). In terms of her relationship with modernism, Bullock viewed her as an Edwardian but one who 'played a crucial role … in shaping aspects of England's modernity' (Bullock, 2009: 37).

Newmarch, Hudson and Lee were active from the 1890s with Newmarch and Lee continuing to write and publish into the 1930s, but Hudson's public work ceased before World War One (reasons unknown). Pilcher and Mawer were active later publishing

mostly in the inter-war years. This presents two phases for involvements with modern culture and 'modernist' ideas. At the end of *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (2002), Emma Sutton acknowledged the power of the cultural shift in the 'modernist resistance to 1890s aestheticism' and the negative conceptualisation of that decade shown, for example, in perceptions of its 'naïve emotionalism' (Sutton: 199). Rachel Teukolsky also expressed this construction of transition as the 'typecasting' of British modernists who 'tended to frame the traits of their ancestors as everything they wanted to reject' (Teukolsky, 2009: 5). The domination of that attitude within so-called high Modernism's inbuilt processes of historicization did not match the realities for some of those writing across the centuries, nor what can be read in their works. As revisionist historians including Teukolsky have noted, there is evidence of proto-modernism in *fin de siècle* approaches to the arts because there was some 'continuity between the Aesthetic values of the Victorians and the Moderns' (6). Sutton expressed this in another way in terms of an 'interplay between Modernist words and nineteenth-century notes' she extracted from Woolf's critique of Wagner within fiction comparing this to Katharine Mansfield's relationship with nineteenth-century musicality explored by Delia da Sousa Correa in the same volume (Sutton, 2013:145).

Under the influence of the 'new modernist studies' 'decadence' and 'aestheticism' as cultural ideas have become more closely connected together and emphasis placed on looking forward rather than back. Elisa Glick has considered their 'play' and avant-garde qualities looking into how 'queer desires, experiences, and ways of seeing are articulated'. From my research I can see evidence for her depiction of 'both decadent and aesthetic strategies [as] elaborations of an essentially modernist project that aims to show how … art makes life' within the work of my four main writers (Glick, 2014: 325). The long nineteenth century is another way of expressing the connection; looking at first wave feminist history as a continuous journey is another.

The literature of the reassessment of modernisms and feminisms from the 1990s was influential on my choice of writers and approaches to their work. There has been further expansion since of scholarship on women's lives and the production and consumption of the arts. It is noticeable recently that there has been a clear trend to identify women with modernism and also an evasion in some of the recent publications drawing together women's writing in a period so often called 'modernist'. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Women* billed itself as an introduction to 'women's modernism' in its brief marketing commentary which also stated that 'women played a central role in literary

modernism'. Women are listed as 'theorizing, debating, writing, and publishing' in the introductory jacket text, but nowhere does it suggest that the women were actually 'modernists' as a result of these involvements. Instead, 'key figures in women's writing 1890-1945' will be discussed. It appears rather a publishing decision to label women by the content under discussion. This collection revealed the shift away from simply identifying women and slotting them into trajectories of modernisms as it aimed 'to understand women's modernism in its own terms' (Linett, 2010: 3). The introduction promised a spectrum of women writers in a 'world of expanding possibilities' confirming that chapters would 'demonstrate the major role played by women writers in producing modernism' with mention of the 'tilling of "fresh fields"' and that the women featured 'revolutionized literary art' (14). There is no overt identification of a genre of women's critical writing in this volume, although Maggie Humm's contribution includes assessment of critical writing on visual culture discussing female film and art critics which I connected to my analysis of Pilcher's style (Purkis, 2017: 78).

The research process of this thesis has convinced me that women's history no longer needs to define itself against and within terminology that does not really fit. Reassured by the feminist work expanding women's place in literary and cultural modernism suggesting that inserting women 'back' into history was a worthwhile activity, I had believed that an expanded notion of modernism would welcome women's voices, and this is the spirit in which I promoted Pilcher in my publications as a 'lost' modernist whose recovery makes a difference to British theatrical modernisms. Rado had cast the early twentieth century period as 'a crucial field for feminists to return to by recasting the period as one in which issues of gender become central to the aesthetic and cultural project of modernism itself, supplying much of the movement's creative drive or energy' suggesting that we needed to recognise many modernisms (Rado, 1997: 12). In reviewing Purkis 2003 and Purkis 2004 I remember how I was also influenced by scholars who had questioned the insertion of women into modernism. Rita Felski had preferred to think that 'modernism is only one aspect of the culture of women's modernity' and had not advocated describing all products of the early twentieth century as modernist as it was too vague a term, whilst stressing that gender was a vital aspect of modernity and aiming to integrate women into the canon (Felski, 1995: 25). This had responded to Bonnie Kime Scott's re-visioning of modernism caught 'in the mesh of gender' as 'polyphonic, mobile, interactive, sexually charged' (Scott, 1990: 4).

Women's modernism needed to be considered differently if women were automatically marginalized by the attention to central themes relating to male experience, such as war. Women's writing on war, suggested Janet Wolff, might be 'at least as innovative as that of men' but 'simply does not *count* as "modernist"' (Wolff, 1990, 56). It was, though, 'possible to question this categorization, and to show how many women…were formulating the specifically female experience of modernity' (61). Recent work on modern dance, a history indissolubly connected to feminine culture, offers some support to the idea that modernism carries an exclusionary after-taste even when its net has been extended. Preferring to use 'Avant Garde' as a noun, my editor from Purkis 2011a dismissed modernism as a defining concept because even the search for a definition of it was misguided seeing as it can be related to so many different expressive forms (Sirotkina and Smith, 2017: 5). It was reassuring to know that other scholars were not depending on modernism to define and navigate history featuring women.

In my publications, I have tended to use the adjective 'modernist' more than the noun 'modernism' and tried to deal with vagueness by specifying context clearly. For example, I connected 'modernist' to 'engagement' meaning involvement when I defined Mawer's 'brand of interdisciplinary artistry and "natural" improvisatoriness' which I argued 'should be placed alongside other forms of early modernist engagement with the revelatory potential of words connected to, and shaping, performance' (Purkis, 2011a: 80). I sought to define what constituted her involvement with modernism which I decided for my title was 'Dionysian' because I wanted to relate her writing and a Ginner-Mawer school performance to the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Alexandra Carter and Rachel Fensham in *Dancing Naturally* decided that modernity was too contested a 'problematic historical periodisation' to be useful and avoided modernism in discussing contexts pertaining to Mawer's work, which also indicated the currency of opinion that not everything happening in modern times needed to be modernist (Carter and Fensham, 2011: 8). Susan Jones' in-depth look at *Literature, modernism, and dance* (2013) also dealt in Nietzsche and his fascination with dance; her approach supports my notion of 'modernist engagement' rather than labelling Mawer's writing or her practice as modernist. But in tracing this into the English context of dance training and ideas, she mentions Ginner but not Mawer. Edward Ross Dickinson brought in modernism by discussing 'modernist arts community' but was otherwise comfortable with the term 'modern dance' in *Dancing in the Blood: Modern Dance and European Culture on the Eve of the First World War* (2017). It is very helpful to see an approach that advised readers

how ‘modernism and modernity’ can pose questions to assist with understanding ‘modern dance’ but is not persuaded that these terms must define the practice (Dickinson, 2017: 7).

Section Three: Conceptual framework and inter-textual themes

This section concerns the meanings of theoretical and explanatory concepts used in the thesis and their place in the publications. I explore the thesis title and how it expresses a framework. This explanation underpins the title referring to theorisations drawn from some of the primary and secondary reading referenced within the publications. To explain the development of the thesis, I then elaborate how the central idea is threaded through the set of publications, linking the concepts to the key arguments and the analyses in the publications to enable connections between the publications to become explicit.

3.1. Critical Acts as creative 'performative' reception

A critical act is a term which I use to express a range of meanings. I have used it without explanation in publication, for example, responding to Hudson's 'Fantasie Impromptu' on Chopin (*Impossibilities*) showing how, in my reading, she 'prioritized creativity' and 'embraced the possibilities of the critical act' because of how she wrote in other texts about 'verbal virtuosity' (*Ivory, Apes and Peacocks*) and 're-creation' in words (*Musical Fantasies*) (Purkis, 2004: 217). I decided that Hudson was also instructing her 'readers more about their potential role in the critical act than offering a comprehensive analytical model' (Purkis, 2004: 216). I immediately followed this remark with a reference to the critical act as something that is done to music, in other words criticism has acted upon the music, because Hudson was interested in 'writing on, rather than writing about music' (Purkis, 2004: 217). Underpinning this was a core idea inspired from Margaret Miner's reading of Baudelaire's 1861 essay (which she took care to impress on her readers is not a work of music criticism) 'Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris': 'to superimpose…writing so directly onto music that the two might become fused' (Miner, 1995: 1-2). Baudelaire's essay is quoted in my article on music and the sublime (Purkis, 2010: 5). 'Writing on performance' is a form of words I adopted because it seeks to express that the writing adds onto the performance with a new layer of experience. This idea was developed by reading about and identifying examples of 'performative writing' to develop students' writing practice in creative devised performance projects.

The word critical marks an association with a process of evaluation but also expresses a challenging reaction. An act is active not passive, and results in something happening because something has been actively done. Response in writing is active not passive even if it is reactive; such writing can consciously and deliberately recreate an experience stimulated by being in the presence of art for the reader. In so doing, it also acknowledges

a role for receivers of the writing within the text by means of further critical acts. The term also represents a meaning drawn from the experience of a performed moment or event – something that has happened, occurred, been made and relied on the writer attending in public, rather than relating to the experience of something that has been privately read, viewed, or played. It is dependent on an individual or a group. The 'act' of criticality expressed stirs and provokes readers of the text to engage, so it is far more than a passive report or review. Critical in this term refers to the expression of opinion especially where there is a sense of a turning-point or a crisis. So, the type of writing defined as a critical act fits well into the modernist period as modernism has conventionally consistently been defined in terms of confrontation. I had not read Edmund Feldman's article 'The Critical Act' (1966) nor Evan Watkins' book *The Critical Act: Criticism and Community* (1978) prior to writing either the publications or this contextual statement. Those theoretical explorations into aesthetics and politics from male American scholars in the period from the mid-1960s to the later 1970s which pulled on the literary theory of the preceding decades, are resonant with my usage - the anti-formalism of Feldman and the Marxism of Watkins – and might have contributed, but it does not seem especially relevant to respond to them belatedly.

A writer or maker is highly invested in their criticality towards the world, and they deploy their sense of criticality, which comes from their subjective understanding, to analyse what they think is a significant sign of change or that something needs to change. The term can thus also be applied to the processes involved in making a work of art, to express the critical message that may result from a creative act, so a work of art is often a critical act. In this criticality an artist may express what they believe art to be, what its purpose is and how it relates to 'life', society, nature, desire, or any other concept. If all art is a form of critique, commenting verbally or non-verbally, comprehensibly or incomprehensibly, using representation or abstraction, artworks do or enact something in taking up a position towards life. Just as theatrical performance can construct different realities and propose alternatives to an audience, so a piece of writing can reconstruct an actual or fantasy experience. Musicologist Lawrence Kramer has expressed meaning itself 'whether in music, image, or text' as 'a product of action' and 'like a gesture' (Kramer, 2003: 8).

Furthermore, writing constructs and reveals identity. A work of art or a piece of written critique is not an example of a *topos*, but they are the expression of it. Writing a critical act means representing contemporary experience, in or from a moment and thus fits responding to performance particularly well because a critical act is also a form of

performance. Various constructions of ways to 'perform' critical acts upon specific works and experiences display a range of interactions which move beyond 'criticism' and 'reception' towards a definition of creative writing. In seeking to encapsulate or transcribe performance directly for readers such texts can become art in their own right. I also explored George Steiner's position against criticism which questioned whether anything meaningful can be said about the arts. Steiner's vision of a 'city of the primary' in *Real Presences* presented a world in which all secondary literature would be banned because culture can exist without it (Steiner, 1989: 17). Removing the association between these women writers and the act of criticism and simply discussing all their writing as art would be unhelpful because it would not enable this creative reception to be demarcated and studied.

In summary, a 'critical act' is defined as a response which consciously makes something/does something/produces something/results in something. Inspired by the experience of a work of art it may remain connected but that does not necessarily make it less valuable or 'secondary' and it might attain the status of art itself as it is a new 'primary' text. Applied to thinking about writing, this distinction depends on the attitude of the writer and the reader. In Barthesian terms such texts are 'writerly' or open, as the reader is expected to bring something to them and to interpret them actively, rather than 'readerly' or closed, aiming to convey information in ways that resist multiple interpretation and are written to suggest a closed encounter with the reader. In Roland Barthes' theory, elucidated in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), all texts are a process of making meaning and can be designed to encourage more or less involvement or interpretation by readers. Ronald J. Pelias' descriptions of 'performative writing' build on the 'writerly' sense that multiple flexibilities in style will respond to the 'multiple realities' in ways people see the world. Performative writing 'takes as its goal to dwell within multiple perspectives, to celebrate an interplay of voices, to privilege dialogue over monologue (Pelias, 2014: 13). The word 'performic' is sometimes used to contrast with 'performative' and helps clarify what performative writing is.

In Matthew Reason's discussion of theatre reviewing, performic-ness is identifiable in 'resolved statements that assert their knowingness through both style and the substance of the language' (Reason, 2016: 250). The 'performic sphere of written criticism' is, he says, 'one directional', but the 'performative' is the sphere of 'not-yet-knowing' and 'manifest through contingent, unfinished thinking'; it is multi-directional. Conversations are a prime example because they extend performance, embracing 'the contingent and

unfinished nature of theatrical experience' (250). Reason sees a problem in performance reviews if they become performances in their own right in the sense that they become 'their own acts of presentational theatre' encouraging only a passive reaction. However creative, there is a danger if the language used is 'literary, structured, edited and drives towards closure' (244). The type of critical-creative responses advocated by these current practitioners are potentially more fluid and experimental than writing published between the 1890s and 1940s, but the ideas suggested in these new ways of thinking about writing as active and creative have been provocative in my reading of historical texts by women, responding to the collaborative aspect at the heart of performative writing as conversation.

Reading feminist criticism has helped me to build my perspective. Writing in the collection *Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory* originally published in 1975 in the context of second wave feminism, Dorin Schumacher emphasised how critical writing is 'an artistic process in the sense that through it, the critic actually creates the meaning of a text'; it is 'a product of active, interpretive, assertive reading that itself creates meaning' (Schumacher, 1989: 30). Elizabeth Grosz's *space, time, and perversion: essays on the politics of bodies* (1995) brought a new formulation of texts drawing on various postmodern theories. The book has a chapter on 'Architecture', which resonated with Steiner's city of artists mentioned above, and its opening called simply 'Thinking' began with two quotes that were inspiring. First, Deleuze 'To think is to create – there is no other creation' and second, Foucault '[M]odern thought … is a certain mode of action':

> It would be good to dynamize thinking, to think of a text … as a thief in the night. Furtive, clandestine, and always complex. It steals ideas from all around, from its own milieu and history, and, better still, from its outside, and disseminates them elsewhere. A conduit not only for the circulation of ideas, as knowledges or truths, but also passages from one (social) stratum or space to another. A text is not the repository of knowledge or truths, the site for the storage of information … so much as a process of scattering thought, scrambling terms, concepts, and practices, forging linkages, becoming a form of action. A text is not simply a tool or an instrument; this makes it too utilitarian, too amenable to intention, too much designed for a subject. Rather, it is explosive, dangerous, labile, with unpredictable consequences. Like concepts, texts are complex products, effects of history, the intermingling of old and new … of thresholds and becomings. Texts, like concepts, do things, make things, perform actions, create connections, bring about new alignments. They are events – situated in social, institutional, and conceptual space (Grosz, 1995: 125-126).

Grosz, following Deleuze, supported thinking about written texts from the creator's perspective and the way she gave texts identities which were actively formed as

expressed above, linked to ideas about the performance of language, expression of subjectivities and performativity I was also reading in Judith Butler. These influences merged into my work on women's subjective aesthetic responses and stimulated new thoughts about how the language could be seen to 'act' as the gendered subject produces itself in and through discourse. This focussed attention on writers' adoption of personae and theatrical methods is present in Pilcher's use of asides and commentary suggesting directions which appeared to stage the self (Purkis, 2011b: 122; Purkis, 2017: 202). It is also in evidence in moments where Hudson put into practice her unique vein of parody relating to Walter Pater that is actually a form of homage to him, for example, how she puts into practice 'perpetual weaving and unweaving' of her critical personality (referencing Pater's 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* 1873), wanting to appreciate and be appreciated but depreciating the critical role. Describing her preoccupation with the critic as a 'weird fascination' she expresses how she would be delighted to take his place' being 'eminently suited for it' in one essay of *Musical Fantasies* (1903) and yet a few pages earlier in another essay she stated that she did not wish to apply her genius to music criticism 'to explain music as a critic would'. Through these exchanges across several essays, the gender of the critic in question shifts and the ideal critic is described as a 'charming feminine person who is ever under the influence of someone else' (Purkis, 2019: 80).

3.2. Subjectivities, gendered aesthetic response and cultural value

I consider the concept 'subjectivities' to encompass the state of being accompanying senses of identity, personal perspectives, self-centred responses, self-awareness, searching for the self, individuals positioning themselves within social groups. A literary ability to position oneself in language results in acts of communication which, according to Geoffrey White, 'create subject positions linking speakers (or authors), texts, and audiences (real or imagined)' (White, 2000: 496). Aesthetic responses are formed by and therefore result from subjectivities and so any 'critical act' is imbued with individuality. But collective identities are built from personal narratives, 'stories that (re) contextualize experience in ways that resonate with larger histories' (White, 2000: 503-504). The inflection which designates subjectivities as 'modernist' in my title connects back to Bradbury and McFarlane's definition of modernism as:

> the art consequent on the disestablishing of communal reality and conventional notions of causality, on the destruction of traditional notions of wholeness of the individual character, on the linguistic chaos that ensues when public notions of

language have been discredited and when all realities have become subjective fictions' (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1976: 27).

I cited this in Purkis 2004 where I linked genre innovations in the transition 'between Victorianism and the twentieth century' to modernist 'notions of realities' (Purkis, 2004: 208).

Subjective responses were encouraged by subjective experiences and even by attempts to represent 'subjective states' which I discussed in Purkis 2010. My aim was to explore 'the nature of the subjective aesthetic experience in which nineteenth-century visual artists were engaged when the sublime and music became twinned in their imaginations'. Just as in painting I discussed that, in the example of Whistler 'the qualities of tone, line and shape were tools for communication of subjective states', so in Purkis 2003 I had discussed how Newmarch used visualisation as part of her literary technique, suggesting 'her subjective response to music sometimes incorporates visual images' and that this was at times 'a visualised physical, even erotic, response' (Purkis, 2003: 12-13). Hudson also used the figure of an artist to explain music as painting which I quoted in Purkis 2010. In the short story 'Two Fine Flowers of Celticism (Encores)' in *Impossibilities* a painter is possessed by music but is unable to complete a painting, but when he goes to see Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* he has a vision of the mouth of music and can return to his queer image, a female Orpheus (Purkis, 2004: 203).

The title also suggests that a woman's interests, approaches and activities may ally a female sense of self and her perspectives with what is claimed as new, innovative or avant-garde. As Jayne E. Marek has commented 'there may be important connections between modernist innovations and qualities that have often been seen as "female" attributes' (Marek, 1995: 16; Purkis, 2004: 208). Innovative writing may reflect, construct or adopt perspectives from modernist thinking or techniques and absorb them into writing, without this making the woman writer herself necessarily definable as a 'modernist'. This is of course a way of evading labelling particular women active in a culture as 'modernist' which can suggest others are not. As discussed in Section Two, it cannot be assumed that everyone active in the arts between the 1890s and 1940s was modernist because the period of time can be defined in that way. Binckes and Snyder reflected this in their introduction to the volume in which Purkis 2019 appeared when they reminded readers that there are 'continuing questions about "modernism" as a term of classification' (Binckes and Snyder, 2019: 8). I have avoided classifying the writings I have explored as 'modernist', although produced by women in 'modern times' because I

have not undertaken this body of research to seek to expand any grouping of ‘canonical modernist women’ (10). Pulling together this research involving women working in various phases of the *fin de siècle* and ‘modernist period’ in the context of related scholarship on women’s modernism - already discussed - made me aware how labelling can objectify authors in such a way to restrict analysis. ‘Modernist subjectivities’, then, has also been chosen as a term to suggest the impact of modernism and that it was, or can usefully be historically constructed as, a touchstone for many women active in the reception of their contemporary culture, in its association with ‘innovation, both politically and aesthetically’ (Warden, 2016: 5).

Writing on performance, expressed as a critical act produced by an individual, is only culturally significant if others want to publish and read it. Its value is then dependent on a social context supporting or not obstructing its dissemination. Music historian Sarah Collins has addressed the value of types of writing, commenting that in the early twentieth century ‘the differences between serious scholarship, music criticism and the tradition of essayism were less distinct’. She has regarded such critical writing as forming a ‘critical tradition’ in and from which historians can track ‘cultural response’, which, in her work, enables reflection on ‘ideas *about* music or ways of evaluating music’ rather than ‘compositional development’ (Collins, 2019: 12). This is a laudable aim, but all kinds of writing are not treated the same, which Collins’ use of the word ’serious’ betrays. In my discussion of Newmarch I raised the ‘assumption that music appreciation is lightweight compared with technical and therefore more scholarly musical analysis and theoretically informed criticism’ and linked that to the absence of attention to the work of British female critical writers on music (Purkis, 2003: 18). Although some in musicology were defending it as an interconnected field at that time women’s contributions to this critical tradition were not being generally valued and Newmarch with her gendered ‘musical thought’ and subjective opinions was a victim of that neglect (Purkis, 2003: 17).

I have raised some issues about the cultural value of the work these writers were producing in my publications. Subjectivities can be seen to ‘play out’ in what is recorded about the identities and roles adopted by and ascribed to these women writers. These identities and roles have affected the reception of their work. For example, I used Stetz’ explanation from her work on Hudson (2005) that opportunities for women journalists increased by 1900 and applied this to the addition of Hudson’s regular contributions to *The Dome* at the point it became a monthly (Purkis, 2019: 86). The large number of contributions by ‘Israfel’ indicate the work was appreciated for what it was, as she was

part of a pool of writers who did not appear to have specific critical briefs. Stetz argued that less attention was paid to the gender of the writer when there was more opportunity, but it is clear from Stetz' knowledge of the publishing industry that Ernest Oldmeadow promoted Hudson's work for its artistic and commercial value. Although her gender was known in literary circles, readers would not have known and I show in Purkis 2004 and Purkis 2019 that she constructed both a gentleman's and an androgynous even 'queer' persona in essays using different voices. Reviewers usually regarded her books as products of a masculine imagination.

The career of Newmarch shows clearly there was a place for intellectual educated women in the long nineteenth century. The field of dance, mime and movement was dominated by women, and especially teaching. Feminine dance had always had a strong masculine following, exemplified in the publishing career of Mawer's second husband Mark Perugini, writer about dance. Pilcher appears to be successful as she produced a lot of articles, but she had unfinished projects and it is apparent from her unpublished biography that planned books did not find publishers or were never completed due to some loss of confidence, even illness. This is unusual in the context of the very many books about theatre produced for enthusiasts in the early to mid-century and equally might indicate her writing style became too high-flown through over-embellished mannerism or opinions that were unmarketable (Purkis, 2011b: 131).

The ideas of woman and femininity are connected to the arts by several of the writers, and this appeared to energise written responses which brought out gendered aspects. Arguably, it is in women's writing that we see a greater exploration of modernist subjectivities than in men's writing, and I have discussed this in evaluating women in critical roles rather than jobs as critics. Mawer designated 'Poetry' as she in her poem of that title (Purkis, 2011a: 79). Music's frequent designation as female is present in the visual arts representations of the sublime (Purkis, 2010: 6). Hudson contrasted the sun and the moon, linking herself to the moon, often described as female, and which she said 'believes almost exclusively in subjective art'. I contextualised this with a remark from music critic Edward Baughan whose work Hudson appears to cross-reference, from *The Monthly Musical Record* in 1901 that these were 'days where subjectivity has gone mad' (Purkis, 2019: 81).

It seems a big step from an awareness of femininities by writers, the display of subjectivities in published work and a self-consciousness about critical subjectivities, as

shown by Hudson here, into the sphere of an embryonic 'feminist criticism' paying attention to women and their perspectives. But this is only the case if history, historiography and theory are regarded as inhabiting separate spheres. All of the writers were out in public contexts where growing numbers of other women were present as audience and as performers, so dancing, performing music, concert-going, travel and even war service were part of new feminine worlds. Even where the context is overwhelmingly masculine, such as the First World War and the aftermath of the war which featured in Pilcher's work, a woman's perspective can still come through; this is also part of that phase in the revision of modernism initiated by Susan Gilbert and Sandra Gubar in *No Man's Land* (1987) which brought women into defining spheres of modern experience where they were previously assumed to have no voice worth hearing. Whether feminine subjectivities can be seen as modernist links to whether, and how, these were valued. Susan Lanser 's perspective 'so long as female subjectivity remained marginal, so too were the writings that represented it', although at the same time 'modernist representations of the "feminine" by men' were valued, remains pertinent (Lanser, 1992: 105).

In 'Subjectivities: A Theory of the Critical Process', Schumacher saw it as a political question when the 'critic-as-artist' subjective approach originated by Oscar Wilde is set against a belief that there is a neutral approach based on scientific objective evaluation seen as neutral as anyone in theory could perform it. Schumacher suggested that if feminist critics defended a subjective stance then they could be criticised for a lack of criticality and for their failure to be analytical: 'While the male critic may be free to claim the role of critic-as-artist, the female critic runs different professional risks if she chooses intuition and private experience as critical method' (Schumacher, 1989: 30). Further to this, Schumacher explained how the masculinist model of criticism depended on man being seen as self and woman as other. A feminist critic, she said, assumes a female self or finds a self or notices its absence and disrupts this model (33). Thinking has moved far from this position and feminist critics now do not accept male criticism is objective at all, if they ever did. Nor do many other scholars, such as Kramer who was highly critical of these 'principles' which he maintained 'were violated almost as often as they were upheld' and offered a fulsome explanation of subjectivities to clear away some 'misconceptions surrounding postmodern musicology' and to argue the case for their place at the heart of 'cultural musicology' (Kramer, 2003: 6).

In Purkis 2003 I had referred rather to Suzanne Cusick's assessment of the hierarchy in musicology based on a reliance on objectivity as an approach to musical knowledge with

which to control subjective experience of music (Cusick, 1999: 480; Purkis, 2003: 16). A powerful recent example is provided by Laura Hamer's detailed assessment of the impact of prejudice in male reviews of women's performance - gendered criticism which is 'anything but objective' - in 'The Gender Paradox: Criticism of Women and Women as Critics':

> We must approach reviews of female musicians with caution … Reviews of women draw upon a long tradition of gender duality. They tend to position women and their music as Other. They are informed by discourses which make strong assumptions about gender and genre, and understandings of creativity as being intrinsically male. They only capture a small amount of women's musical activities (Hamer, 2019: 276).

I have chosen to include past and recent perspectives across my period of research as it is a way of logging that build-up of prejudice against the kind of writing I am exploring which had historically prevented it being treated as culturally valuable leading to its loss from historical scholarship. That cultural moment when I was trying to move towards completing my first doctoral thesis on the theme of the erotic coincided with an extremely complex time in intellectual gender politics. Modernist studies were on the cusp of major change in how women's writing was treated and acknowledging this is essential background for recalling the rise in new thinking about women as artists, critics and other participants in decadence, aestheticism and modernism which happened from this point.

Section Four: Narrative track of the central idea of the thesis through the publications highlighting literary techniques

'Leader of Fashion in musical thought': the importance of Rosa Newmarch in the context of turn-of-the-century British styles of music appreciation (Purkis, 2003) re-evaluated Newmarch and emphasised her importance to musical appreciation as a cultural industry. This essay redressed the emphasis on her as a facilitator, interpreter, and enabler of others and reclaimed her as an original thinker, arguing that 'her "artist-critic" persona is as deserving of attention as is her "musicological-academic" writing' (Purkis, 2003: 5). I became attracted to researching Newmarch's writing for how it was communicating as much as what she was saying to her contemporaries because her name kept appearing, she had been prolific with great influence and yet had barely been studied. In tandem with my readings of Hudson, happening at the same time, I noticed her mindset was creative and that how she applied it was instrumental to her approach towards educating others. She avoided professional criticism of the reviewing type and favoured personal reading because criticism was not necessarily useful to the public. Although the editor and reviewers treated this article as a re-assessment of her in gendered terms that was only an aspect of the purpose. There is more to Newmarch's achievement than to confine her approaches to a context of gendered music criticism. What I was interested in were her attitudes to criticism, explanation and meaning. This article raised several aspects seminal to this thesis and used key terms that inform it, notably, 'critical acts' and 'subjectivities.' What Newmarch was doing was challenging the role of current criticism and interested in making music accessible because 'not all criticism is useful to the public' (7). I was interested in who Newmarch was writing for and decided these were 'listeners who were more susceptible to their subjectivities' (8). I looked into how Newmarch balanced 'author-centred with reader-centred meaning' (9) and used the terms 'self-reflexivity' and critical temperament' suggesting that Newmarch wished to develop these qualities in listeners (11).

The article had a decisive conclusion that is carried on into other publications, that verbal interpretations of music were as important as other musical activities and that writing was another form of 'creative involvement and self-expression' (19). It also cross-referenced to Purkis 2004 which was in press, making a link with Hudson's work and connecting my discussions about the changing nature of criticism and the shift towards the promotion of 'individual response' to 'foster the listener's sense of their own individuality' (11). I developed a line of argument about Newmarch's suggestions to her readers which I

summarised as advocating 'the listener's sensuous abandonment to their own reverie' bringing in an erotic association which I located in some of her programme notes for listeners (12). That is something in common with some of Hudson's responses. I also highlighted a way of writing designed to draw readers in, such as asking them questions (14). Newmarch had an agenda to develop taste and guide readers. Mawer also demonstrated her teaching credentials in all of the books I discuss. She expressed the motivation to help others find the words to 'experiment with writing for expression through the medium of dance' (Poetry and the Dance: 7; Purkis, 2011a: 80). Newmarch championed pleasure as an important part of appreciation as much as it was about education. Likewise, Mawer wanted readers to enjoy dance through poetry and poetry as dance and was herself a poet. I also discussed Newmarch as a poet and suggested that Pilcher's two lists of types of plays – those that were wanted and those that were not - were presented in words 'almost like poems dancing on the page' in 'All Work and No Play' (1929) (Purkis, 2011b: 128).

'You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music': Gertrude Hudson's Fictional Fantasies (Purkis, 2004) considered Hudson's fictionalised critical writing which confronted musical experience through fantasies which are a form of writing on music and exposed Hudson's meta-textual autobiographical voice which was simultaneously theorising what writing can do at the same time as writing. Where writing tries to represent music and to interpret – 'discuss, describe…depict, re-enact, and perhaps "embody" – music using words', Hudson proposed several scenarios for what can happen as characters possessed by music enter into musical experience in a variety of ways, some of which prove impossible. I suggested that Hudson's aim with *Impossibilities: Fantasias* was to address how performance can defy writing when I interpreted a comment in the essay 'Orpheus in Hades' in the collection about a pianist Delamor that 'performance may be capable of divorcing itself from the possibility of having any critical act applied to it' (Purkis, 2004: 214) as Hudson had the pianist declaim that 'the maddened pen can convey nothing' (Hudson 1899: 19). Additionally, I argued that the '*Impossibilities* fictional essays/short stories revealed how Hudson took on the challenge of Wilde's declaration that the critical act was inherently creative' and that music reception 'could operate at various levels of understanding, from hearing to "becoming"' (Purkis, 2004: 207, 206, 213). I quoted Hudson's use of the term 'subjective' as an adjective she applied to music when explaining how music is the model for verbal interpretation because it is 'so subjective and sympathetic' (Israfel *Impossibilities*: 131;

Purkis, 2004: 217). My summation of her achievement in the *Impossibilities* essays stated that 'these examples from fiction and criticism' embraced 'the possibilities of the critical act' (Purkis, 2004: 217). I described this also as a 'drive towards a performative kind of writing' which I saw as 'the motivating force behind the content' of *Impossibilities* (Purkis, 2004: 218).

In *Movement, poetry and Dionysian Modernism: Irene Mawer's experiments with "dance words"* (Purkis, 2011a), I discussed how mime artist and natural movement teacher Mawer wrote poetry to interpret dance and inspired by dance. This publication analysed Mawer's fascination with using words as art and in her teaching as interdisciplinary practice. My interest stemmed from the discovery of Mawer's book *The Dance of Words* in a second-hand bookshop. I then discovered limited archival sources at the University of Surrey including a complete typescript which had been sent to the publishers just before Mawer's death and included this as a source as it was intended as public facing. Mawer's way of connecting words and dance is juxtaposed against the performance history of Mawer as a dancer. First, her method of writing poetry depended on her body to help her construct rhythms. Secondly, her 1925 book on which the paper is based is a creation from a performance which had the same title.

Linking the Ginner-Mawer school of performance which responded to Nietzsche and his notion of Dionysian spirit, I connected his aphorism from *The Gay Science* about books and dance, which at the time I also featured in teaching to reinforce to performing arts students how scholarship could be part of a creative practice. I argued that Mawer, who had read Havelock Ellis' *The Dance of Life* (1923) which responded to Nietzsche, recognised that words could connect to and shape performance if they were acknowledged as dancing, with 'patterned words' being a form of dance (Purkis, 2011a: 73). The conclusion of this article expressed the central thread of this thesis because it raised the question directly from Mawer's thinking about whether words had the potential to shape dance, and if dance could be shaped by words: 'Poetry is not just to be danced to or a reflection of the dance in words. Rather, poetry becomes a form of inscription: writing "on", and "as", dance' (Purkis, 2011a: 80). My reading was that Mawer allied the function of words to that of music, which often accompanied dance, but argued that Mawer showed how natural movement ideas challenged this when she expressed that verse speakers performing with dancers might *become* the music. This gave a deeper meaning to Mawer's suggestion in her own poem, 'Poetry', for dance to *be* poetic and links her thinking back into aestheticism and to the idea of *ekphrasis.*

The Mawer article also linked on from the research into Newmarch because both women were writing to educate the public. Mawer published several other books which I also quoted from to establish the pedagogic context of her suggestions and models. In *The Art of Mime* (1932) she expressed her view that 'words take on a new form of life' through mime. This article also connected to the discussion of the sublime in musical art published the year before (Purkis 2010), which discussed how one art form (visual art) is analysed for how it was expressing views on another (music). Here in Purkis 2011a, Mawer's definition of mime as 'thought in movement' is also about translation of ideas between art forms. I quoted Mawer's hope from *The Dance of Words* (1925) that the book could 'help articulate the thoughts of some who see beauty, but who cannot translate their thoughts in words' (ix; Purkis, 2011a: 74). I concluded with reference to her final book *Poetry and the Dance* which encouraged experimentation 'with writing for expression through the medium of dance' and was directed into the future, written in response to requests from former pupils then teaching (7; Purkis, 2011a: 80).

The three publications about Pilcher are grouped together. It makes sense to draw these together because there are some overlaps between her literary works and her contexts: Purkis 2011b focused on her early-career work on the London theatre scene and networks in the mid to later 1920s; Purkis 2016 looked more closely back into the early 1920s and forward to the later 1940s focussing on her writing and her mid-career theatre management; Purkis 2017 focuses on all her journalistic war writing with some cross-reference into her creative theatre work and over her full career span because of the way that wartime experience pervaded her mentality.

Velona Pilcher and Dame Ellen Terry 1926 (Purkis, 2011b) addressed Pilcher's writing but is also a publication introducing Pilcher back into history and within a book reconstructing the impact of the circle around Terry. The impetus was one of Pilcher's articles in *Theatre Arts Monthly* 'Ellen Terry' which was the way in to rediscover her relationship with Terry and the circle around Terry's daughter, Edith Craig. As a result, much of the essay is an examination of the network surrounding Craig that Pilcher encountered in her association with Terry's home in Smallhythe Kent and likely benefitted from in the developing of her ideas about theatre practices, knowledge of contemporary plays, theatrical philosophies, and feminism. The Pilcher article hinted at conversations that had been held as if offstage; the immediacy and intimacy of its style was designed to draw readers in as other guests to this family intimacy (Purkis, 2011b: 122). Pilcher's presence is palpable as she comes alive as the writer in her study and shares a recollection of physical reaction with readers, as if

she is writing them a personal letter: '(How one's heart thumps against the ribs even in the solitude of the study, remembering such entrances)' (122). Her openly personal confessional style also led to her interpreting events she witnessed surrounding theatre as theatrical. In the Terry recollection she coins the phrase 'acting as audience' for Terry applauding Susan Glaspell's *The Verge* performed by the Pioneer Players but being applauded herself as a celebrity (122). This publication had a very precise defined starting point that led to a deeper understanding of a person's involvement with and contributions to shaping modernist cultural trends and taste in bringing a personal experience of a greatly admired public figure still in action as an artist and personality to wider attention.

Discovering Pilcher's writing style after having explored Newmarch and Hudson really moved my interest in women's construction and articulation of their experience from subjective perspectives forward. My observation was that Pilcher's journalism was of significance as much for its style as its content, it 'was moving into a different realm from that of many other contemporary commentators and was itself creative writing' (Purkis, 2011b: 130). This is what attracted me, although her undocumented presence in scholarship on London theatre also made me determined to pursue her story. I am the only person to address Pilcher's work as a critic. There had been little knowledge of her journalism, aside from a mention, misspelling her name, in *Women in Film: An International Guide* (Kuhn and Radstone, 1991: 158). I referred to reception history specialist Susan Bennet's call for critical work such as Pilcher's to be taken much more seriously:

> Notwithstanding the predominance of male reviewers and critics, women have written extensively on the theatre – often with a significant audience for their writing – and a more thorough knowledge of their commentary on the theatrical productions of their own historical moments would open up our histories to a wider range of accounts not just of the plays themselves, but, more crucially, of what these reviewers see in these productions (Purkis, 2011b: 129-130; Bennett, 2003: 78).

Based on the extent and reach of her writing, I argued that Pilcher affected reputations and influenced what was being produced in experimental theatres in the 1920s-40s and reinforced that this was a significant role, especially as she programmed the internationally renowned Gate Theatre Studio from 1927 into 1929 as a co-director and later set up Forty-Eight Theatre and the Watergate Theatre Club (Purkis, 2011b: 130).

Velona Pilcher's Promotion of an Intercontinental Avant-Garde (Purkis, 2016) is concerned with how Pilcher's journalistic work and activities in managing theatres contributed to

exchanges of ideas within interwar intercontinental theatrical relations. I analysed selected examples of her writing on and as performance looking at how its awareness of internationalism transferred and cross-fertilised British, American, and European intellectual and theatrical ideas. I wanted to bring the breadth and unique voice in her writing about performance for various publics to a wider readership and resituate her in modernist networks. This chapter highlighted how Pilcher's work made a significant 'contribution to the interplay of innovative thinking and practice across distinct national avant-gardes after World War One, which cross-fertilized to produce those nationally-inflected internationalisms that formed the intercontinental theatrical avant-garde' (88). Reconsidering it as part of the body of work for this thesis raises a question about what the investigation of European-minded half-American Pilcher and her attempts at internationalising British theatre-goers offers about how modernism is perceived as a historical phase in the British context. Warden is clear that there was a 'British avant-garde theatre' (Warden, 2012: 5) and I followed her in tracing how the Gate Theatre Studio in particular was a site of 'cross-fertilization' which Pilcher contributed to shaping (Purkis, 2016: 72), but yet the efforts of Pilcher and the women she collaborated with (Judith Wogan at The Grafton and Elizabeth Sprigge at The Watergate Club) were rejected by many in the press as high-brow, and Pilcher was overlooked in the history of modernism in British theatre in being excluded from Norman Marshall's account *The Other Theatre* (1947).

Key to this chapter was examination of Pilcher's literary approaches and the expression of subjectivities I regarded as a means she used to facilitate readers to share her experiences; they were armchair travellers and she was bringing her perspective of the world of interwar theatre to them in Britain and North America: 'By demonstrating theatrical techniques in the writing style of her critical work, she extended the scope of reviewing, blurring the boundaries between critical and creative writing, constructing writings of artistry that moved beyond mere commentary' (73). This was an opportunity to provide a comprehensive introduction to Pilcher's theatre and film criticism for a wide range of magazines and newspapers, none of which has been considered in accounts of the European interwar modernist scene. Regarding innovative qualities of Pilcher's literary style, there is more to discuss of relevance to this thesis in her articles on Barbette 'A Star Turn' (1930) and 'Suggia' (1931) than space allowed. For instance, in 'A Star Turn' Pilcher was doing more than replaying through looking. I called this a 'creative reinscription', a re-establishing of the experience which 'aimed at literally bringing the embodied moment of

performance into the writing'; 'the persona of the performer in action' is recreated for the reader. In Pilcher's words, referring to Barbette, the female impersonator, as: 'she conjures us to look at her, flirting with the fingers, luring with the eyelids, wooing us with attitudes that flow towards us'. The 'embodied moment' is recreated by the physicalisation and the sexual allure as perceived and desired by Pilcher, who says Barbette is 'wooing us with attitudes that flow towards us weak as breaking waves' (Purkis, 2016: 78-79).

Pilcher expresses a queer subjectivity shown in the surprise ending presented as a shock, that Barbette is a boy. She presents herself in a destabilized state as if overcome by the waves. But queer subjectivity should not be seen as merely reactive, according to Grosz; it is an active subject position in this article (Hall and Jagose, 2012: 194). A member of several alternative and lesbian women's circles, Pilcher was a cross-dresser and lived a life detached from men (Purkis, 2011b: 124). She called herself a 'Theatermensch' on a 1928 BBC broadcast and placed herself in an international fellowship of theatremen (Purkis, 2016: 85). In her journal, recorded by Sprigge, for example, she compared herself specifically to Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Dantchenko from the Moscow Art Theatre (Purkis, 2016: 83).

When I came across the contemporary term 'literary journalism' I could see that this was not a new approach and could be applied to Pilcher's writing. I wanted to follow on from Purkis 2016 which had included brief references to various writings but had had a different agenda and had not provided space for much in-depth analysis of her literary style. The University of Lorraine project offered an ideal opportunity to test out how Pilcher's writing might find a place in the history of literary journalism. The resulting volume reinforced the unease about the 'literary' journalistic approach to dealing with war reporting and evaluation of experience which had grown under censorship. Finding that Pilcher could now be retrospectively appreciated in a new context was very encouraging because this deepened my analysis which was published as *Velona Pilcher's literary excursions in the 'theatre of war' 1918-1947* (Purkis 2017).

Crucially my involvement with a group of academics from across Europe working on connections to modernist arts reinforced how my work on modernist subjectivities was relevant to shared interest in re-inserting marginalised voices back into the narrative of the history of experience. The metaphor of 'borderland' frequently 'used to delineate the territory of literary journalism' fitted Pilcher's wartime environment at an American

hospital just behind the front line and her role as a recreation hut manager which placed her in a mediating directing the consumption of entertainment was relevant to the aspect of her subsequent writing concerned with communication and sharing experience (Purkis, 2017: 178). This chapter also explored how the aftermath influenced and inspired Pilcher to construct discourse in which both memory and subjectivity played a significant role. I traced a transition from objective reporting into subjective creative literary forms over a period of nearly three decades focussing on writings which evoked war, many of which dealt also in theatrical metaphors (writings produced during the same period she was also reviewing experiences of performance discussed in Purkis 2016) above). Pilcher utilised a range of different literary languages in these writings over time. For her, theatre represents the possibility of constructing alternative realities after the horrors of war which she witnessed, and the presence of war pervaded her creative-critical writings on theatre which also connected to her playwriting.

Examples considered how she recreated in her use of language a sense of the physical experience sometimes in the moment and at other times through memory viewing the event as theatrical performance, offering readers a theatricalized perspective. Her eyewitness accounts reported from her perspective and her memoirs are re-imaginings laden with autobiographical gestures, questioning, confession, internal monologue. The war acted as a catalyst for her to produce challenging imaginative writing which resists genre definition as only journalism. This chapter on the developing style in Pilcher's war journalism over nearly thirty years showed how theatrical metaphors supported her experimentation with words and 'shifted her writing from a literary into a performative mode' (Purkis, 2017: 204). Called simply 'The Theatre of War' Pilcher's article published in *Theatre Arts Monthly* 1925 reads as if it were written in 1919, which it might have been, but it stated 'seven years ago'. She is literally and metaphorically walking away from war and there is an explicit sense of the resurrection of the body that becomes hers again. The 'we' in her language is a shifting first-person plural pronoun, because it initially refers to her mind and her body, and then refers to herself and others because she wants to impress that she is alone. I explained that physicality was 'omnipresent' and that the writer appears to be acting: 'my feet my body's feet! — were thudding good, good, good, good'. There is an impression of ecstatic performance and as 'good' becomes 'God' a religious dimension is apparent and perhaps a hint of the French silent film *J'Accuse* (1919) which she would very likely have seen in Paris or later in London at the time of writing the article perhaps with her friend C. A. Lejeune. 'Playgoer's Peace' also published

in *Theatre Arts Monthly* the following year and reprinted with Purkis 2017 is an extraordinary poetic rendering of physical and emotional feelings where the cenotaph stone is witnessed being erected and imagined as the body of the dead and those living who are grieving the dead: ‘People have emptied their lives into this stone, It is like a single mass grave’ (Purkis, 2017: 184). In Pilcher’s voice, the stone is brought to life and in this moment ‘Theatre has been born’. The onlookers participating emotionally in the act of remembrance are ‘playgoers’; they are ‘passionate’ and ‘act as audience to our own passion-play’ (Purkis, 2017: 184). The full text and ‘contextual gloss’ is provided. A wood engraving by Blair Stanton-Hughes, not reproduced, illustrated the text (Purkis, 2017: 181-185).

‘A Theme with Many Variations': Gertrude Hudson, Musical Criticism, and Turn-of-the-century periodical culture (Purkis 2019) placed women’s music writing into that connected literary sub-field of journalism and periodical studies. My essay considered a different selection of prose writing by Hudson from that in Purkis 2004. I was more interested now in how her writing style combined theorisation with observation, commenting on the process of what she was doing and how she saw her role. I used the expression ‘critical act’ in a section sub-heading to convey how she took up a position interpreting her view of two aspects marking her as an outsider from the conventional critical role positively - amateurism and cosmopolitanism – to convey how these aspects were core to her authorial persona (Purkis, 2019: 84). I commented how Hudson’s body of writing beyond the short story collection *Impossibilities* I wrote about in 2004 is notable for its aim to refine critical sensibilities in the reader, modelling this through attempts to recreate a ‘verbal music’ (82), deploying an ‘impressionistic model of writing’ which ‘offered an alternative to the fact-based journalistic reporting assumed to be underpinned by educated judgment’ (80).

I analysed Hudson’s use of a Paterian-derived impressionistic aesthetic deployed to discuss the significance of voice and audience, and how the writing navigated shifting politics of place and gender in which music is an active presence within the writing prompting attempts to break free from conventional critique. This essay also demonstrated how Hudson’s mode of writing both explicitly and sub-textually connected musical experience to other art forms using an insider artist’s voice. If music is constructed as feminine and interpreters as masculine and Israfel is not a critic, according to Hudson’s formulation, then she is a musical writer. As the editors highlighted in their introduction music is ‘a medium active within the writing, rather than simply being described by it’

(Binckes and Snyder, 2019: 75). This merging of receiver and art was discussed first in Purkis 2004 where I commented on Hudson's verbal virtuosity in expressing 'reception as an embodied act' after quoting from 'Irresponsibilities, I: Paderewsi (An Afterthought)' concerning a Chopin recital: 'our entire being merges into our art-sense' (Israfel, 1899: 108; Purkis, 2004: 212).

Writing this 2019 essay significantly shifted my thinking on Hudson because the research process revealed her personality to be more complex and I decided that 'Israfel' was not necessarily a male persona just because the contemporary press noted that and because she referred to gentlemen and also ladies and comments from differing perspectives; Israfel now appeared to me as gender-fluid. To my mind this fitted totally with her quixotic and comic style and 'cross-dressing performativity' which I discussed (Purkis, 2019: 88). Hudson leaves open her position as a responder by presenting many variations: is she an audience member, an expert, a critic, an amateur, a musician? to become complicit in her marginalisation, or rather that of her persona, the allegedly amateur enthusiast. As Annegret Fauser commented in her afterword to Weliver and Ellis 'the musical amateur is not without power' and this could be a key to the success of Hudson's parodistic style (Fauser, 2013: 225). Linda Hutcheon has written about this type of 'intertextual bouncing between complicity and distance' with which I would argue Hudson becomes complicit in her marginalisation; it seems both constructive and destructive (Hutcheon, 2000: 32).

Listening for the Sublime: Aural-visual Improvisations in Nineteenth-Century Musical Art. (2010) explored subjective aesthetic experience through depictions of musical experience in paintings and interpretations of visual arts engaged with music discussing how these encountered 'the sublime' in different ways. It investigated how the concept of the sublime formulated in Romanticism featured and functioned in critical perception of music through Decadence and into Modernism, deploying these terms as they were being used to demarcate phases in art. I argued that understanding the past 'taste for particular sorts of music, how that taste was defined and notions of what music itself signified, and to whom, are meaningful to any discussion of thinking about the sublime in the later nineteenth century', and that the '*topos* and techniques of music, explored in and through painting, delineated the sublime itself as a concept in the control of the receiver as much as the creator of art' (Purkis, 2010: 8). I suggested how encounters with music aurally and music as an idea through the interpretation of visual art could be formulated as 'acts' – events, happenings, moments - even with the historical intertextuality of the eighteenth-

century concept of the sublime which played into the decadent sense of the sublime is confronted with a postmodern sense of the notion of the sublime. I was interested in Judy Lochead's evaluation of the sublime in relation to feminism from her perspective as a musician, particularly how she reconnected the notion to poststructuralism and rejected Jean-Francois Lyotard's masculinist and imperialist view:

> In the early years of the twentieth century the aesthetic category of the sublime was largely dismantled as a sluggish legacy of Romanticism. Revived in the second half of the twentieth century, it played a significant role in poststructuralist philosophy and in various writings about postmodernity (Lochead, 2008: 66).

My argument to try and connect past to present in this article was to track the idea of the sublime across time by relating the then recent re-installation of Gustav Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze* (originally 1901 and on the cusp of Lochead's suggested dismantling) for a new audience. The Tate Liverpool installation was based on past reception but also presented the work for consumption in a new context which would renew the experience whilst powerfully combining art and music with the benefit of modern technology to enhance the sound production. Lochead had talked about a re-gendering of the sublime and feminists from the 1980s and 90s who had appropriated and 'reshaped the concept as a means to value and sanction the artistic practices of women' (Lochead, 2008: 67). I applied her objection to the continuing use of the concept of the sublime set up in opposition to the beautiful and pointed out that the effect of this could shore up the evasion of 'subjective aesthetic response'. The sublime was not very useful a concept for trying to understand consumption when filtered through postmodernism which constructed it as masculinist and controlling of responses. Yet the Beethovenian 'heroic sublime' was different; it was a way to allow the individual to merge with the universal and this is what I suggested in my conclusion could be retained and added to the dimension of postmodernism. My re-reading was not based on a postmodern sublime but a transfer of meaning-making from artist to receiver through participating 'interactively' (Lochead, 2008: 71; Purkis, 2010: 9). Furthermore, in the *Beethoven Frieze* it is 'women who lead the perceiver or listener into an ideal state' (Purkis, 2010: 9). In this article, I also quoted Brad Bucknell's assessment from his comparison of literary modernism and musical aesthetics, that 'the move towards music seems part of a tension within modernism itself which seeks both to abolish and preserve its romantic past at one and the same time' (Bucknell, 2001: 3).

The various notions of the sublime that confronted the visitor to the exhibition set up by the Tate Britain project 'The Sublime Object' (2007- 2010) and Tate Liverpool's exhibition 'Gustav Klimt: Painting, Design, and Modern Life in Vienna 1900' (2008) retained that sense that there is an overwhelming impact on the individual even in the very different historical contexts for the reception of the arts from various forms of display. This publication highlights the importance of aesthetics to the thesis and also discusses how one art form is used to construct meaning in another using examples of critical response twinned with contextual historical explanation. I concluded that for some perceivers the experience of encountering art compels active response arguing that this can be constructed into the nature of the art as an aesthetic intention to support audiences becoming participants in making meaning. This publication also foregrounded historic female critical response in the way it was shaped by me and designed around my own sense of how to fit together musical paintings from the broad span of the Tate exhibition and the theme of the sublime in music, articulated visually from the perspective of artists and visitors from different times. It also referenced Hudson and has supported the investigation of this thesis into constructions of meaning in the way it considered the trope of the sublime as an aesthetic response to the world and to the 'experience of being in the world' which I argued is an act open to any spectator to enter as a participant, whether artist or critic (Purkis, 2010: 1).

The incorporation of Beardsley's drawing from *The Yellow Book* in this article (Purkis, 2010: 4) can be related to the emphasis given to listening by Newmarch and also Paget (Lee), as can the other images of listening women. Whilst it may appear that the listeners are overcome and that this is a satire there have been many readings. This image is also referenced obliquely by Hudson in 'Buggins at Bayreuth' which is a first-person narrative describing being in Bayreuth making the narrator 'an audience member rather than a critic, and the text reads in places like a diary or letter' (Purkis, 2004: 201). Are these eroticised women really prevented from indulging their passions by the context? Seeing some figures in profile and looking around also serves to bring the viewer of the drawing into the scene, suggesting that joining in might be an option. Overwhelming sexual sensations appear rather to have stupefied these exhausted, if richly attired, femmes fatales and enervated the token intellectual bald-headed male, feminized by implication of his location amongst them. Sutton has suggested that some of the attendees were perhaps more interested in the reactions of others at this site of 'erotic tension' than the stage action which is not made visible by Beardsley (Sutton, 2002: 99). Contrasting the

images of listening discussed in Purkis 2010 with the discussions of Newmarch and Hudson's agendas vis-à-vis fostering consumption, shows how many different perceptions of private and silent response there were in this period. For example, Newmarch's concern for 'making the intuition, feeling and imagination of the music resound in the listener' may be responsive to what is going on here (Purkis, 2003: 15).

Section Five: Conclusion - contribution to knowledge

This thesis produces several achievements which impact upon understanding the role of modernist subjectivities: (1) recovering of historical evidence of consumption across a range of types of texts and publications which increases understanding of diversity informing experiences of the arts, (2) paying attention to women as leading proponents of personal aesthetic response which identifies how, when and where women critics and commentators were influencing the nature of the literary territories dominated by men, (3) theorising, exemplifying and politicising what was distinctive about women's writings on performance, articulating their challenge embodied in their subjectivities, (4) connecting to the work of other scholars to define the place for and highlight the value of this type of literary investigation of performing arts context and how it illuminates the history of meaning-making.

5.1. Evaluation of the thesis in its field of research

The location of this thesis is in Performance Studies, but the research draws on and resonates in other disciplines and sub-fields: musicology, dance and theatre history, creative writing, literary and cultural history, women's history and gender studies. Each publication has a context within the disciplines. Purkis 2003 was in musicology and gender studies; Purkis 2004 was in the emerging sub-field of 'music and literature' and gender studies; Purkis 2010 was in interdisciplinary cultural historical studies and art history; Purkis 2011a in dance history, the 'sub-field' of dance and literature' and gender studies; Purkis 2011b in theatre history and gender studies; Purkis 2016 in comparative literature, cultural history and gender studies; Purkis 2017 in journalism studies; Purkis 2019 in literary history, gender studies and periodical studies.

The currency of my thesis today comes alive in the context of what I see as a revival of 'creative criticism' in Britain. Stephen Benson and Clare Connors, who produced *Creative Criticism: An Anthology and Guide* (2014), mark the last four decades as a timespan in which an 'internalised' approach - when a text 'becomes part of you, its idiom weaving itself into the fabric of your own response' - has surfaced as a reaction to the domination of practical criticism or close reading in academia (Benson and Connors: 4). It is interesting how this timing tracks exactly to the beginning of my emerging interest in women's critical writing and my discovery of Hudson. This book provides a pertinent definition linking to the notion of 'critical act' explaining how creative writing applied to criticism is a different activity from just creating text: 'Creative Criticism, in short, is writing which seeks to do

justice to what can happen – does happen; will happen or might not happen – when we are with an artwork'. They explain that a moment of encounter with resultant writing is the 'writing out' of an event. This is writing which acknowledges the 'event as the matter of language'; creative criticism 'is a response in writing to the encounter' (5-6). It also 'admits the possibility that words will do things, rather than merely recount what they have done or what they might or should do' (11). Criticism is secondary in many of the accounts of its purpose that informed how it was perceived as a certain kind of activity for audience and readers to make meaning as objectively as possible. Their argument uses T. S. Eliot's influential theorisation of the bases for appropriate critical judgement from 'The Sacred Wood' (1920) to explain why criticism had been perceived as dependent on a work of art which in contrast is self-sufficient. Although I think their approach to Eliot is insufficiently nuanced because depersonalisation did not mean a denial of creativity or emotion, the idea that criticism is a secondary not a primary activity and as such must be about something other than itself is certainly different in creative criticism aiming to produce new 'primary' responsive text (Benson and Connors: 23-24). Benson and Connors do not look back to any female modernists for inspiration. They refer to history but their aim is not to construct a lineage. For example, there is reference to Romanticism, such as the view of Friedrich Schlegel who defended criticism as art but this is only used as part of a chequerboard of quotations with his view refracted through a theory text from 1980; the examples for students to use as models and to learn to recognise the genre are all from my lifetime (post 1961).

Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes (2016) also evidenced this renewed interest in creative-critical approaches, offered an overview of the current field and looked to the future. The introduction asked: 'What is standing in the way of criticism being more widely perceived as an artistic practice? The mantle of the expert traditionally associated with it? The binary evoked between the artist and the critic whose work is seen to exist only parasitically in relation to the artist's and whose efforts are perhaps defined by opposition to those of the artist as being more coldly analytical?' (Radosavljević, 2016: 8). Other research methods in Performance Studies equally acknowledge the importance of reflective writing in the discipline for all types of practitioners. Writing is a creative practice used in making all kinds of work and also for recording experience. *Research methods in Theatre and Performance* is influential in the discipline for its overview of methods linked to the expanding diversity of the field. The chapter 'The Question of Documentation: Creative Strategies in Performance Research' noted the growth in

importance of 'personal writing' which is now 'accepted as a mode of documentation' (Kershaw and Nicholson, 2010: 179, 182). The discussion argues that previously a 'subjective stance' only had a place in an 'interpretive methodology' (165), but now subjectivity is seen as 'vital' for the reader (179). Drawing on Philip Auslander's perspective on 'liveness' as the core of performance, this chapter suggested: 'the researcher can regard documentation as a dynamic phenomenon, at once bound up with yet standing apart from former liveness and capable of performing its own presence' (164).

Documentation of performance is complex to those who do not believe a live event can ever be captured. I noted some ways of dealing with absence in Hudson - what is 'impossible to express' (Purkis, 2004: 217) - and in Pilcher – when the war is over but residues still retained in the body experiencing life of the post-war era (Purkis, 2017: 184).The suggestion in Kershaw and Nicholson that documentation can take the form of memorialisation or be another occurrence in a different format relates to my notion of the 'critical act' which produces something else, creatively distinct from what it is responsive to. This can be observed in Pilcher's 'Playgoer's Peace' (1926). Her re-enactment in words of the experience at the cenotaph envisions not only how she felt the stone come to life through the audience but reformulated the entire event as a passion play (Purkis, 2017: 184-185). The creative strategies involved in documentation suggest a further link to this thesis by the viewpoint that 'documentation is performative in that it functions on its own terms', suggesting new approaches are born from subjectivities and individual responses (Kershaw and Nicholson: 167).

This thesis takes the debate about women's role in modernist culture and the arts beyond whether women were performers, playwrights, composers, painters, poets, storytellers. Since I started my research a lot more attention has focussed on securing a place for performance history in modernist studies. Women's performance history is in the process of being substantially reclaimed by theatre, music and dance historians. Representations of women, performers, playwrights, composers, dancers and stage practices feature regularly but female critics and commentators still receive far less attention. My work has considered 'those who do the observing, chronicling and critiquing rather than the object of their musings' and this has a place alongside those who have assessed the ways creative women were challenging the status quo as librettists, musicians, actors, composers, playwrights and arts managers (Dingle: 3). Maria DiCenzo originated a useful discussion of how critical discourse in theatre reviewing and first wave feminism

intersected in the reception of modern drama which contributed to a revival of interest in women critics through her editorial role in Jackie Jones' series *The Edinburgh History of Women's Periodical Culture in Britain* series (2017-2020).

For all the breadth of other collective scholarly projects, such as *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Women Writers* (2010), it is only very recently that a place for women's reception is evident. Women writing on performance do receive attention from other scholars, such as in Stetz's work on Rebecca West and Susan Jones on female dance critics and modernism which appear in volume three of the Edinburgh series along with Purkis 2019. Purkis 2016 fits into the context of volume 4 in which Catherine Clay, one of the editors along with DiCenzo, remarks how 'the agency of women as producers as well as consumers of media' in the 1918-1939 period was 'testament to women's central role in postwar transformations of modern life and in redefining public discourses' (Clay, et al., 2018: 2). I have also published in volume 5, and although that work is not included in this submission it takes women's writings on performance in a different direction enlarging mid-twentieth-century women's history and gender studies which has tended to lack a performing arts dimension. Although some of the research processes have been challenging, especially before digitisation or where sources are not online, and because of the precision needed in citing sources, it has been productive to publish in the context of the interdisciplinary dialogue of these volumes, and I concur with the assertion of the editors of the preceding volume relating to the 1890s-1920s Binckes and Snyder that magazines 'offer an unrivalled resource through which to "make sense" of the modernist enterprise…due to the insights they provide into…the "cultural conflicts"…through which a certain outline of modernism was shaped' (Binckes and Snyder: 7). Other work related to my approach in this thesis is appearing, such as Kate Smorul's imaginative and detailed analysis of Djuna Barnes' 'performative journalism'.

The alignment of modernist studies and reception history is ongoing and presents opportunities for further exploration. Whereas Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis expressed confidence that musicologists and literary scholars could develop that 'prominent strand' in reception history in alliance with cultural history, as it was already in its 'second wave', Collins has since expressed that 'for all its interdisciplinary potential' the 'field of literary studies known as "modernist studies" on the one hand, and the vibrant debates about musical modernism within musicology on the other, rarely interact' (Weliver and Ellis, 2013: 8, 11; Collins, 2019: 11, xiii). Conversely, scholars in dance and theatre studies find the nexus with the new modernist studies productive since modernist

studies have become 'wider and more inclusive' and centred in cultural production (Burt and Huxley, 2020: 4). Further to the challenge in consolidating multi-disciplinary cooperation, extending knowledge of women's work in reception history and proving its significance, is dependent on progress in defining a 'feminist modernist studies'. Although there is a new journal *Feminist Modernisms,* its editor has stated: 'We have not yet witnessed an intensive large-scale exploration of gender and modernism in literature, art and cultural studies'. Furthermore '[F]eminism/gender rarely serves as a point of entry into the new modernisms, yet critics continue to do important feminist work', but 'taking gender/the body/women as a point of entry might expand and/or completely alter current definitions of modernism' (Laity, 2018: 1). Suzanne Hobson has also commented how: 'Recent years have been stocktaking of the achievements of feminist modernist studies since its beginning in the 1980s and 90s (Hobson, 2020: 497). This thesis contributes to this process of expansion in the ways it suggests points of connection and a multiplicity of locations for resonance.

Purkis 2016 and Purkis 2019 expanded the approach implicitly present in Purkis 2003 and Purkis 2004 away from studying women as individual pioneers to reflecting on their networks and the micro-histories they were involved in. I made collectivity more explicit in highlighting Marina Camboni's *Networking Women* methodology (2004) (Purkis, 2016: 86-87). By bringing the names of other British women music critics into the conclusion of Purkis 2019, I directed attention towards a band of women's writing largely absent from recent music criticism projects in the UK and argued the 'fields of music history, periodical, and literary studies could all benefit from a wider range of women's voices being heard' (Purkis, 2019: 89).

5.2. Value and originality of the research

The publications which make up this thesis are valuable in several ways. First, they have reinstated forgotten women commentators on the performing arts and began a project of recovery which has gathered momentum. Secondly, the emphasis placed on these women's writings as 'primary' creative work rather than merely responsive 'secondary' criticism has drawn attention to women's participation in an actively creative way across a substantial period of time which constructs this work as a genre and potentially a tradition. Thirdly, they have located women in public discourse and intellectual spaces in which new thinking about the role of the arts was being debated, received, and shared. Fourthly, the emphasis the publications have placed upon these written aesthetic

responses and their literary innovations has focussed attention on forms of writing which have received far less attention compared to other forms of writing by women and other activities creative women have engaged in, such as compositions, plays and choreography which can stimulate other scholars to broaden this topic.

This contextual statement has extended the publications with perspectives from other scholars relating to the nature of critical response to the performing arts in the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century period published between 2003 and 2019. Reviewing the theoretical underpinnings of this research, over the period in which the various publications have appeared, and adding in later perspectives to emphasise its currency, has enabled a deeper reflection on how the investigations into past practices can be linked to emerging critical practices. As I suggested first in Purkis 2003 'opportunities have opened up for reappraising the roles all forms of writing play in the historical understanding of music' (a remark which can be extended to the other performing arts) (Purkis, 2003: 18). Theorisation of the nature and role of subjectivities in writing on performance now is accompanying the growth in experimental personal writing and can be supported by knowledge and enhanced understanding of what was previously ignored and forgotten about literary responses to the arts in performance produced between the 1890s and the 1940s.

This thesis has argued that the production of opinion, representation of experience and sharing of knowledge is an 'act' which is performative in the sense that it creates a new product which reflects and constructs cultural meaning. Revisiting the work of women writers on the performing arts as a collective discourse also extends the notion of reception because of the range of outlets and forms these women published in, and because they were not considered professional critics doing only certain kinds of reviewing and reporting roles. Their works place new emphasis on what and how the performing arts meant as they were experienced in this wider range of contexts. My analyses have also placed emphasis on women's participations in culture and recognised women's presence as important, and especially when it is openly memorialised within the traces they left in writing about intangible heritage. My work is a vital contribution to preserving intangible modernist heritage through the tenacious attention it has paid to micro-histories of consumption for which it had been assumed there were limited sources. Through the approaches taken, the interpretations from research findings and by extending knowledge of the sources available to study European modernist performance and the arts in the modernist period in greater depth, this thesis is a central source for

reinvestigating past efforts to recapture the cultural meanings of the performing arts in their moments of lived experience.

In conclusion, my assessment is that these publications alter the narrative of cultural modernism and performance histories by extending the scope of texts and contexts. Reading the production of creative-critical writings as primary texts and not merely as secondary evidence of cultural background reduces the power of conventional narratives focussed on identifying a series of innovative works to canonise. Mindful of 'Mind the Gap! Modernism and Feminism' (2017) and Urmila Seshagiri 's reminder that 'the process of canon-formation—and deformation, and reformation—constitutes the simplest and yet the most complex act in feminist scholarship about modernism', I have succeeded in finding a way through an impasse caused by the multiplicity of alternative directions within my interests in modernism (*Modernism/Modernity* PrintPlus: online). What I have learned is that what constituted modernist performance is illuminated as much by subjective assessment from contemporary cultural commentators as it is spotlighted by particular artistic examples. It should not be assumed that the value placed on art and definitions of innovation bestowed by historians is authoritative when there were voices that were simply not heard. There is a danger in accepting historical judgment on works of art without interrogating it and in perpetuating the study of the same voices and achievements over generations.

Critical acts are present within criticism, creative works, and the various combinations that this thesis has begun to identify. Analysing 'critical' writing reveals the writer as the interpreter and can be more about the subjectivity of the author than the experience of work in performance that they are writing about. This offers more, not less, to study. Just as theatrical performance can construct different realities and suggest/propose alternatives to an audience, so a piece of writing can construct a separate, albeit connected, experience. Such commentaries layered onto artworks in performance are a strong counterweight in arguing for the refiguring of modernism as a creative and experiential event more than a movement, concept, or period of time. These writers were involved in the marketing of modernisms and the perpetuation of its notions of fashion, challenge, and innovation. Fostering appreciation, they were promoters of taste, influencers, navigators of their own and others' subjectivities. Recognising subjective experience as important and researching the networks which gave rise to it and in which writings were read, enables the intersections between the history of ideas, cultural politics, and reception to be interrogated differently, shedding light on the idea of music,

the relevance of theatricality, the power of the performing body as presences rather than absences from cultural history.

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Abstracts

Abstract 1

Article. Purkis 2003.

Title: 'Leader of Fashion in musical thought': The Importance of Rosa Newmarch in the Context of turn-of-the-century British Styles of Music Appreciation.

Abstract.

This article re-evaluates Rosa Newmarch in the context of music criticism and commentary, recovering and emphasising her importance to the musical appreciation movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It identified examples of the gendering of Newmarch's voice and cultural presence which it linked to the foregrounding of subjective response to music in the period, despite the apparent dominance of objective approaches to music. It sparked reclamation of Newmarch as a facilitator, interpreter, and enabler of others, evaluated her as an original and creative-critical thinker and advocated reconsidering her artist-critic persona as equally deserving of attention as her musicological-academic writing. Arguing that Newmarch's mindset, attitudes and application of ideas were creative, this study looked closely at her uses of language to highlight ways in which she avoided formalistic 'criticism' in favour of personal reading which she promoted as more useful to building public capacity to interpret contemporary music.

Abstract 2

Book chapter. Purkis 2004.

Title: 'You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music': Gertrude Hudson's *Fictional Fantasias*.

Abstract.

This chapter considers short fiction which confronts musical experience through scenes invoking performance which expanded explanations of the power of music in creative ways. It highlighted the unusual comic innovations of the meta-textual potentially autobiographical response of an overlooked writer, Gertrude Hudson (voiced through the pseudonym 'Israfel Mondego'), who simultaneously theorised what writing might do as well as commented about, around and on music. Where writing tries to represent and to interpret music using words, Hudson proposes a number of scenarios for when characters,

whose identities are overcome by music, enter into musical experience, attempting to embody it. I argue that the *Impossibilities: Fantasias* stories respond to Oscar Wilde's challenge that the critical act is inherently creative and analyse how they explore reception differently from music criticism. My analysis demonstrates constructions of meaning which occur in various forms and exposes attempts which are unrealisable to express musical experiences in potentially other ways.

Abstract 3

Article. Purkis 2011a.

Title: Movement, poetry and Dionysian Modernism: Irene Mawer's experiments with 'dance words'.

Abstract.

This is a study of a twentieth century English interdisciplinary performance practice in which poetry interprets dance, can be danced to, and becomes a dance-form. Mime artist, natural movement teacher and director Irene Mawer used words in and as creative practice to express conjoined bodily and intellectual expression. Historical documentation, published creative and explanatory work and unpublished memoir and reminiscence highlight her key innovations. Poetry for performance and to be read inscribed writing "on", and "as", dance. In the mid-1920s, *The Dance of Words* was a performance and the title of a book. This recognition of how words might themselves dance was significant in its revelatory potential exploding the contemporary reception of words as performed pattern and performing text. Following her development of 'Dionysian spirit' in ensemble dance-work from the interwar years, Mawer attempted to articulate a new relationship between the creative and non-verbal and critical written commentary which has been underexplored.

Abstract 4

Book Chapter. Purkis 2011b.

Title: Velona Pilcher and Dame Ellen Terry 1926.

Abstract.

This chapter introduces and addresses the journalistic writing of Velona Pilcher and was the first ever published assessment of her work and career as a theatre director (manager) as history. It approaches Pilcher's creative commentary on contemporary performance

through detailed analysis of her 1926 evocation of Ellen Terry, based on intimate observation of specific historic scenes. The chapter's aim is also to examine the network surrounding Edith Craig that Pilcher encountered at Smallhythe Kent, one location for Craig's mother Terry's sphere of influence. New in Terry studies, this chapter reclaimed Pilcher as a prominent woman writer on performing arts in the interwar years in her contributions to *Time and Tide* and *Theatre Arts Monthly*. Analysis of Pilcher's writings which relate to this involvement began to identify her literary style for its way of drawing in readers to share in the theatricalised moments she interprets from events she had witnessed.

Abstract 5

Book Chapter. Purkis 2016.

Title: Velona Pilcher's Promotion of an Intercontinental Avant-Garde.

Abstract.

This chapter is a comprehensive introduction to Pilcher's interwar theatre and film criticism for a range of magazines and newspapers. As a case study of one individual's journalistic work and activities managing theatres it considers in detail how exchanges of ideas building interwar intercontinental theatrical relations were constructed and can be traced in critical commentary. The research into periodical literature reconstructs evidence which contributes to historical understanding of the interplay of innovative thinking and practice across distinct British, American, and European national avant-gardes after World War One. Selected examples of Pilcher's writing on performing arts identify how strongly internationalist networking featured in critical reception which contributed to the transference and cross-fertilisation of intellectual and theatrical ideas. Key to this is examination of her literary approaches and her expression of subjectivities to facilitate readers to share her experiences in the ways a theatricalized writing style performs for her audience of readers.

Abstract 6

Book Chapter. Purkis 2017.

Title: Velona Pilcher's literary excursions in the 'theatre of war' 1918-1947.

Abstract.

Pilcher authored a range of writings inspired by World War One. Both wartime experience and the aftermath of war influenced and inspired Pilcher to produce imaginative writing in which both memory and subjectivity played a significant role. In this chapter, a transition from objective reporting into subjective creative memoir is traced in writings which evoked war and frequently deployed theatrical metaphors. Performative presence underpins an emerging literary approach to journalism and represents the possibility of constructing alternative realities after the horrors of war which she witnessed. The presence, through re-evocation, of war also pervades her subsequent creative-critical writings on theatre and affected both the outcomes and processes of her playwriting. Examples of specific texts consider how Pilcher embodied experience through memory representing this in terms of theatrical performance. This chapter argues that Pilcher offered readers dramatic recreation in which they might situate themselves encouraging engagement through autobiographical gestures, questioning, and confessional internal monologue.

Abstract 7

Book Chapter. Purkis 2019.

'A Theme with Many Variations': Gertrude Hudson, Musical Criticism, and Turn-of-the-century periodical culture.

Abstract.

This chapter considers a range of prose writing by Gertrude Hudson which combines theorisation about the production of critical meaning and playful and imaginative creative responses engaging with performances of musical works and characteristics of composers and conductors. It evidences in detail the context in which Hudson was challenging attitudes to women writing critically, revealing its complexities, and seeing these within Hudson's self-construction as, variously, androgynous, male, queer, cosmopolitan and amateur. Examples are given from her writing where she shares experience aiming to refine critical sensibilities in the reader, action which she privileged over the provision of factual content to demonstrate mastery of specific knowledge. I analyse Hudson's use of a Paterian-derived impressionistic aesthetic to identify and debate the significance of voice and audience. In writing which navigated shifting politics of place and gender music is an active presence within the writing prompting attempts to break free from conventional critique.

Abstract 8

Article. Purkis 2010.

Title: Listening for the Sublime: Aural-visual Improvisations in Nineteenth-Century Musical Art.

Abstract.

This contribution to the Tate Sublime project explores subjective experience of music as keynote of the sublime through past-to-present engagement as a means to understand and re-interpret artworks through interdisciplinary connections. Long nineteenth century depictions are discussed as encounters with ideas of 'the sublime' and in the context of how such ideas also featured in critical perception of music. Selected visualisations of music relate the eighteenth-century concept into decadent interests. Layers of reception suggest a shared sense that the sublime overwhelmingly impacts the individual. In questioning how far the sublime can be a concept in the control of the receiver as much as the creator of art I discuss circumstances in which staged encounters, inflected with postmodern notions of the sublime, renew historical art in contemporary adapted installation which can compel perceivers to respond actively, and are powerful ways of enabling audience to become participant in renewing and remaking meaning.

Appendix 1

Purkis, C. (2003) Leader of Fashion in Musical Thought: the Importance of Rosa Newmarch in the Context of turn-of-the-century British Styles of Music Appreciation. In: Horton, P. and Zon, B. (eds.) *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, 3 (2003), 3-19.

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PART ONE
Issues of Gender

CHAPTER ONE

'Leader of Fashion in Musical Thought'

The Importance of Rosa Newmarch in the Context of Turn-of-the-Century British Music Appreciation

Charlotte Purkis

In 1911 an article in the *Musical Times* surveyed the career of Rosa Newmarch (1858–1940), then in her early fifties. It indicated three key reasons for her attainment of 'distinction' and 'recognition' in the contemporary musical world. The author, 'M', praised Newmarch first for 'the eloquence, penetration and lucidity of her programme notes', secondly, for her abilities as a 'critical biographer and historian', and last but not least, for the way she brought 'a poetic temperament to bear on all her literary tasks'.[1] Newmarch's contributions to British cultural life had been received with enthusiasm for some years. Between 1900 and 1904, for example, on the occasions of presentations of her papers on 'The Development of National Music in Russia', the Vice-President of the Musical Association Charles Maclean had described her not only as 'so complete a mistress of her subject' but had also commented how 'her services to our English musical literature' were 'becoming very considerable'.[2] Today Rosa Newmarch's name continues to feature significantly in biographical studies of late nineteenth-century musical personalities, for example, in Arthur Jacobs's work on Henry Wood and David Brown's on Tchaikovsky.[3] There have been several calls for a substantial biography, for example, by Alfred Boynton Stevenson, the author of a recent article,

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1 M, 'Mrs. Rosa Newmarch', *Musical Times*, 52 (1 Apr. 1911), p. 225. Judging from the pose in the accompanying photograph and the lack of other sources, the article appears to have been based on a personal interview.

2 *Proceedings of the Musical Association, Twenty-Sixth Session, 1899–1900* (London: Novello & Co., 1900), p. 72; *Thirtieth Session*, 1903–1904 (1904), p. 71.

3 Arthur Jacobs, for example, in *Henry J. Wood: Maker of the Proms* (London: Methuen, 1994), commented how Newmarch became 'the great educator of the British public in Russian music', calling her a 'pioneer British musicologist' and citing the 'authoritative' nature of her writings (p. 58) as well as her 'versatility' (p. 304).

'Chaikovski and Mrs Rosa Newmarch Revisited'.[4] In 2001 four of her books were reissued by Best Books.[5] In spite of this resurgence of interest, there has been little scholarly evaluation of Newmarch in her own right. Although she features significantly in a number of biographical studies of those great male contemporaries whose musical careers she dedicated considerable time and effort to promoting, the full range of her achievements continues to be obscured.

In recent decades a 'traditional' evaluation of Newmarch's work has become established which continues to reinforce the assessment made at the time of her death. In 1940 obituaries had presented her predominantly as what we recognise today as a musicologist. The *Monthly Musical Record* simply records: 'Newmarch, Rosa Harriet. Translator and writer on Russian music.'[6] The *Musical Times* lists a selection of her books, editions, translations and articles within its brief appreciation but in such a way as to separate this body of work from the rest of her output, which it then further subdivides by distinguishing what it terms her 'utility writings' (programme notes for the musical public) from her poetry 'at the other end of the scale'. Concluding comments again foreground her more academic work, which it calls 'authoritative' and reflective of 'specialized knowledge'.[7] Although H.C. Colles and Peter Platt in their 1980 *New Grove* article highlight her 'analytic' work as official programme writer to the Queen's Hall orchestra from 1908 until 1927 for the way it demonstrated her 'great sympathy with every kind of high artistic aim',[8] by the 2001 edition of *New Grove* the sense of a creative individual at work has effectively been bypassed. Greater emphasis falls on her academic work, for example by the use of such expressions as she 'did much to further', she was 'a source of information', she 'took up the cause' and 'showed great insight and sympathy with'.[9] Although there is mention of the impact of Newmarch's work on musicians and on composers, there is no explicit reference either to her approach to the interpretation of music or to her role in the formation of British musical taste.

In short, far greater emphasis has been placed on Newmarch's importance as a facilitator than on her role as original thinker. This works to the detriment of furthering understanding of late nineteenth-century British musical culture because it is in and through her own words and the

4 *Inter-American Music Review*, 14/2 (Winter–Spring, 1995), pp. 63–78.
5 *The Russian Opera; Jean Sibelius*; *Tchaikovsky: His Life and Works*; and *Henry J. Wood* (Living Masters of Music).
6 70 (May 1940), p. 90.
7 81, no. 1162 (May 1940), pp. 233–34.
8 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 13, p. 165.
9 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 17, pp. 807–8.

method and context through which she shaped these that her creative ideas were expressed, rather than in those translations and editions of the words of others in which she merely mirrored the talents of composers, conductors and other authors. This is not to imply that Newmarch's knowledge and expertise – demonstrated, for example, in her role as 'midwife' of Russian culture for British audiences – is in any way unimportant, or that there was no connection between the spheres in which she worked, but rather that her 'artist-critic' persona is as deserving of attention as is her 'musicological-academic' writing.

In this connection, it is highly significant that several of Newmarch's contemporaries attributed her critical talents and her popularity amongst her audience to a thoroughly creative mind. Although the closest she got to musical performance was to accompany song recitals with lectures and to have several translations from the Russian set to music by Elgar,[10] in the 1904 discussion at the Musical Association meeting her new book on Henry Wood was applauded as 'a very brilliant performance'.[11] Much later Henry Wood's own comment, that 'Mrs. Newmarch's analytical notes still attract me, for they are not merely a synopsis of the works she treats, but are beautiful specimens of English literature', is also indicative of how her work was considered to be intrinsically creative.[12] Furthermore, in summarising her life story in the *Musical Times* of 1911, 'M' commented how 'she was … always moving in a musical atmosphere, both executive and critical', and this contextual observation strengthened the remark that 'poetic temperament' pervaded all forms of her writing.[13] Moreover, in the brief overview of her overseas connections in the same article, 'M' quotes from an interview with Newmarch conducted by M. Charles Chasse in May 1908 in the *Bulletin Français de la Société Internationale de Musique*. Referring to her poetry – she published two volumes: *Songs to a Singer and Other Verses* (1906) and *Horae Amoris, Songs and Sonnets* (1903) discussed here – 'M' stated: 'the role of interpreter has not been enough for her; for she also has her own song, and the sorrowful cadence of "Horae Amoris" has revealed to the public a soul which "sees life through the curtain of music, and music through the curtain of life"'.[14]

10 1914 choral songs: 'Death in the Hills', 'Love's Tempest' and 'Serenade'.

11 Discussion following Rosa Newmarch's lecture 'The Development of National Opera in Russia (Fourth Paper)', in *Proceedings of the Musical Association, Thirtieth Session, 1903–1904* (London: Novello & Co., 1904), p. 71.

12 Henry J. Wood, *My Life of Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), p. 232.

13 M, 'Mrs. Rosa Newmarch', p. 225.

14 Ibid., p. 226. Almost the same compliment is paid by James Douglas in his review of *Songs to a Singer and Other Verses* in *Throne*, cited in an advertisement at the back of Newmarch's *Poetry and Progress in Russia* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1907), p. 271: 'Her temper is rare. She is one of those who see life through the veil of music, and music through the veil of life.'

By the time of the appearance of *The Russian Opera* (1914) Newmarch was heralded by the *Daily Sketch* for occupying 'a peculiar position with regard to music in this country' because 'she finds herself to be quite a leader of fashion in musical thought'.[15] The originality of her contributions, both to thinking about music and to thinking musically, was perceived to lie in a set of interconnected approaches to listening. These created appreciation as an art form and can be summarised as follows. First, just as performers and conductors are interpreters whose actions construct musical meaning, so listeners are themselves involved in a chain of response to the musical conceptions which originate with composers; secondly, music should be responded to with one's whole being; thirdly, technical analysis can be unhelpful if it serves to inhibit the development of such reception. While it is fair to say that Newmarch herself might not have thought of the style of music appreciation she exhibited in her programme notes and review articles as either particularly innovative or aesthetically 'primary', that is, as itself art, her many references to the critical act and to the responsibility of the interpreter vis-à-vis the audience's response are acutely self-aware. As such these references, which are woven into every different type of commentary on music which she practised, reveal her aims to be inseparable from her interpretative approach to music in performance and are crucial to understanding her unique way of approaching the appreciation of music as a listener, placing her as an equal amongst the audience of her readers.

Newmarch's view of her writing, specifically with regard to programme notes, as quoted in the *Musical Times* 1911 article, provides clear evidence of her aim to stimulate an appreciation of contemporary music:

> In writing of a new work, I make it a principle to avoid *criticism* of a kind which might in the smallest degree check or cool the enthusiasm of the public who are not yet familiar with it. On the other hand I think the 'programmist' is more than justified in pointing out what strikes him, or her, as characteristically beautiful in a work. This may seem one-sided, but in reality it effects the right kind of balance. Most people are capable of some sort of carping criticism for themselves. But to point – with due discrimination – to the things which seem lastingly beautiful in a work can do no harm, and must do good. I think the lack of balanced appreciation is one of our worst faults as a musical nation. I only mention this because, little as I concern myself with the ephemeral criticism which withers during the day – or the night – according to whether it appears in a morning or an evening paper, I have noticed a tendency to fall foul of some of my programmes because I have tried to set some details in a poetic rather than prosaic light.[16]

15 Advertisement for *The Russian Opera* in the back pages of Rosa Newmarch's *The Russian Arts* (1916).

16 M, 'Mrs. Rosa Newmarch', p. 227.

Observations that Newmarch made elsewhere about audience expand the picture of her emerging motivation and provide evidence of her reputation as an authority on public taste. In a 1928 retrospective, *A Quarter of a Century of Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall*, she discussed how, at the time of the opening season of 1895–96:

> there was a growing public which, deprived of operatic nourishment and satiated with what the Handelian legacy provided, desired something more adventurous and sensational in music. An omnivorous and uncritical generation, perhaps, but one which craved for living forms, energetic movement, colour and passion, and the genius of race. Only in modern orchestral music could this awakening hunger for a vital, secular art, find satisfaction at that juncture.[17]

Rather than blowing her own trumpet as programme-note writer, Newmarch laid the laurels implicitly at the feet of the programmer-conductor, Henry Wood, by going on to say: 'the first series of Promenade Concerts comprised forty-nine concerts, and if anyone doubts the rapid education of public taste effected by these Concerts, let him compare the programmes of 1895 with those of two or three years later.'[18] Earlier in the book's introduction she had commented that: 'It is hardly too much to claim for these concerts that they have been the greatest educative power in music that we have had in this country.'[19] There is no doubt that, although her modesty prevented explicit mention, readers of this commemorative booklet would have associated Newmarch's own widely acclaimed 'analytical programme notes' with this observation.

More can be gleaned of her attitudes to the critical act from the introductions she furnished to her translated and edited biographical studies as well as her many journalistic pieces. In 1912, for example, in a review article of recently published British writings on music aimed at the encouragement of British composition, entitled 'Chauvinism in Music', which discussed Hubert Parry's *Style in Musical Art* and Cecil Forsyth's *Music and Nationalism* among others, there are significant subtextual references to the effect that not all criticism is useful to 'the public' – a group at whose door blame is most consistently laid for lack of appreciation of native composition at the turn of the century, and the people at whom she is targeting her work:

> Loud are the complaints that native work is neglected in our concert-rooms, and still more in our homes, yet when a novelty of British manufacture is produced the criticism it evokes … is often of a very

17 Rosa Newmarch, *A Quarter of a Century of Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall* (London: Baines & Scarsbrook, 1928), pp. 7–8.
18 Ibid., p. 8.
19 Ibid., p. 5.

> perfunctory kind, and fails entirely to help the public to form any sound criteria as to the national music about which they are expected to show increasing enthusiasm.[20]

She went on to propose that 'the critical energy, which is largely wasted in worshipping one artist and advising another, might be very helpfully employed in laying before the public some clearer and more definite conclusions as to where we actually are moving, and where we can move, in the matter of a national school of music'.[21]

Newmarch's preoccupation, however, was not the promotion of native British music, but the elevation of the profile of foreign music in Britain. A crucial aspect of this process was the cultivation of British taste to respond to the humanity in all music, however unknown and unusual, regardless of cultural-political boundaries. Time and again in her writings she commented that her work was not geared towards the needs of the music profession, but to those of a wider public. For example, in her 1906 edition and translation of Modeste Tchaikovsky's *Life and Letters of Peter Illich Tchaikovsky*, she wrote 'not so much [for] the needs of the specialist' as for 'those of that large section of the musical public whose interest in Tchaikovsky has been awakened by the sincerely emotional and human elements of his music', disengaging thereby, by implication, those listeners who were more susceptible to their subjectivities from music 'specialists' who were not.[22] Furthermore, in her foreword to her 1910 translation of Vincent d'Indy's *César Franck*, she discussed admiringly and at length the critical practice of the French writer Camille Mauclair, in whose work 'so many aspects of the art are treated with such delicate perception and from a standpoint all too rare – from that of the worshipper of Music rather than Musicians', a comment which again revealed her advocacy of the listener as enthusiastic pleasure-seeker.[23] By 1914, in her own book, *The Russian Opera*, she disclosed her admiration for the writers on, rather than the analysts of, the music she had been translating and editing: 'Too much technical analysis has been intentionally avoided in this volume. The musician can supply this deficiency by the study of the scores mentioned in the book … the average opera-goer will be glad to gain a general view of the subject, unencumbered by the monotonous terminology of musical analysis.'[24]

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20 Rosa Newmarch, 'Chauvinism in Music', *Edinburgh Review*, 216/441 (July 1912), pp. 95–96.

21 Ibid., p. 97.

22 Modeste Tchaikovsky, *The Life and Letters of Peter Illich Tchaikovsky*, ed. and trans. Rosa Newmarch (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1906), p. xi.

23 Vincent d'Indy, *César Franck*, trans. Rosa Newmarch (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1910), p. 6.

24 Rosa Newmarch, *The Russian Opera* (London: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914), p. x.

Yet, in keeping with her wide knowledge and the increasing sense of authority accorded her by other commentators (such as those who discussed her Musical Association lectures), Newmarch could not avoid speaking – and being seen, as her career developed – as a specialist. This is particularly noticeable in the forewords to her books, which reveal a guiding, prescriptive attitude towards the development of public taste. In the foreword to her edition and translation of Karel Hoffmeister's *Antonín Dvořák* (1928), for example, she referred to the problematics of reception in surveying public and critical reaction to Dvořák in England since the 1880s. Her remarks make clear her attitude to a responsible didacticism, which should be a feature of the contemporary critic-impresario's make-up:

> The decrease in Dvořák's popularity is not easily explained. There seems no reason for such a distinct reaction. With every composer, even the greatest, a wholesome and necessary process of elimination is bound to set in after the first indiscriminate acceptance by the public of almost everything he wrote. Our ways with music are the ways of the satiated owl with a mouse. But they are not so perfectly regulated, being a matter of chance rather than digestion. In modern life there are too many arbiters of the composer's destiny: the shifting taste of the public and the critics, commercial considerations, sometimes even the lack of a powerful patron to see him safely established. Too often it happens that the few works which 'draw' are kept bright by use, the rest of a musician's lifework is arbitrarily consigned to the scrap-heap.[25]

It is noteworthy that, despite her consistent rejection of the need for technical skills to appreciate music, Newmarch intentionally introduced musicological knowledge. In the way that she presented much as fact, particularly when discussing the composer's intentions, she remained bound to the problem of how to balance author-centred with reader-centred meaning, a topic which dominated late nineteenth-century debates about the nature of musical criticism, specifically the power of the critic and his or her attitude to the composer's intentions. Three key attitudes lay at the root of established critical practices. The first was that ethics and aesthetics were interconnected, as expressed, for example, in the Revd Hugh Reginald Haweis's *Music and Morals* (1871). The second was that critics were educated and thus more capable than amateurs not only of describing compositional methodology in technical terms but also of evaluating performance on behalf of other listeners; this view characterised the majority of contemporary reviews and guidebooks to musical understanding. The third was that the meaning of musical works, and

25 Karel Hoffmeister, *Antonín Dvořák*, ed. and trans. Rosa Newmarch (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1928), p. xii.

therefore their interpretation, had been inscribed by the composer. Examples of this are W.J. Henderson's comment in *What is Good Music: Suggestions to Persons Desiring to Cultivate a Taste in Musical Art* (1901), where he explained how the composer 'says to the hearer, "Listen to my music and feel what I have felt"',[26] and Edward Baughan's insistence that, in spite of new tendencies being pursued by 'gushing' amateurs, 'the spectator in musical composition is the composer'.[27]

During the 1890s writers became interested in foregrounding the role of listening in the construction of meaning. Gertrude Hudson and John Runciman, both of whom contributed articles to *The Dome* and *The Chord* – journals which Newmarch may have read because of their interdisciplinary scope – discussed and demonstrated the power of the critic and his or her relationship to the composer's intentions.[28] In a provocative article in the *Fortnightly Review* of 1894 Runciman set out the current debate about 'Old' and 'New' criticism, defining 'Old' as 'impersonal' and 'New' as 'avowedly personal'. Following another writer from the *Magazine of Music* the previous year, Runciman went on to declare that 'since all criticism is at bottom expression of our own thoughts and feelings, let us frankly talk about ourselves!'[29] He stated his own summary of this position thus:

> Here I am, endowed with certain faculties, cultured to a greater or less [*sic*] extent; the question for me to decide is not whether the artist I am criticising produces a result the same as or different from that produced by certain dead-and-gone worthies, whom you call authorities, 'standards of taste,' and what-not, and for whom I care not one jot, but whether the result gives or does not give me pleasure! ... In the case of the new method, everything depends upon the critic ... all genuine criticism ... is autobiographical.[30]

In his *Old Scores and New Readings* (1899) Runciman stated that what he valued most of all was 'the record, the impressions of a fully-endowed man, with full technical knowledge and a most sensitive aesthetic sense, in the presence of great music'. Such criticism would, he said, 'open a new world to our view'.[31] In other words, it was the human qualities exposed in the music by the nature of the listener's response which made such criticism 'new'. Writing about the shortcomings of Schumann as

26 (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 116.
27 (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 116.
28 For further information on Gertrude Hudson see my forthcoming essay in Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff (eds), *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
29 John F. Runciman, 'Musical Criticism and the Critics', *Fortnightly Review*, 62 (July–Dec. 1894), p. 173.
30 Ibid., pp. 173–74, 175.
31 John F. Runciman, *Old Scores and New Readings: Discussions on Musical Subjects* (London: At the Sign of the Unicorn, 1899), pp. 12–13.

critic in *The Dome* in the same year, Runciman further clarified that 'the highest kind of criticism, the only criticism which has a permanent value and does not die with its subject … is the criticism in which … the writer … recounts the effect of the subject upon his own soul … The critic holds himself as a kind of mirror'.[32] This self-reflexivity had been linked by Clifford Harrison in *The Lute of Apollo* (1896) to Walter Pater's influential 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* (1873), with its recognition of critical temperament as 'that strange, perpetual, weaving and unweaving of ourselves'.[33] Harrison's formulation was that music 'not only speaks to us, but it is, in a sense, our own voice. We find in it a perpetual self-expression.'[34]

Newmarch's desire to foreground individual response and foster the listener's own sense of individuality, either through the encouragement of moments of contemplative silence – at least in the mind – or by assuming empathy between herself and her reader, illustrates the key trait of this new critical position. For example, in *The Concert-Goer's Library of Descriptive Notes*, a compilation of her analytical programmes for the Queen's Hall concerts between 1908 and 1927, there are many asides in the descriptive passages about the music which exemplify this new critical thinking, such as the comment on Sibelius's *Oceanides*, Op. 73, that the work 'needs no musical analysis'.[35] Moreover, with regard to William Walton's overture *Portsmouth Point* she expressed the view that music appreciation need not depend on extra-musical notions or a technical analytical approach, but the music might simply 'be enjoyed as pure music': 'Nor is there any need to dissect its form; it is better to swallow it in one exhilarating draught.'[36] And in her note on Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* she declared that 'Each individual listener will make his own interpretation of the symbolical meaning of the work.'[37]

At the time of Debussy's death in 1918 Newmarch reflected on her experience of listening to his *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Paris in 1902, presenting in the *Contemporary Review* a very personal perspective. Although she admitted she had not appreciated the work as music-drama,

32 John F. Runciman, 'Robert Schumann: An Impertinence', *The Dome*, 3/9 (July 1899), p. 234.

33 Cited in Eric Warner and Graham Hough (eds), *Strangeness and Beauty: an Anthology of Aesthetic Criticism 1840–1910*, vol. 2: *Pater to Symons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 31.

34 *The Lute of Apollo* (London: A.D. Innes, 1896), p. 153.

35 Rosa Newmarch, *The Concert-Goer's Library of Descriptive Notes*, vol. 5 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 91.

36 Ibid., p. 97.

37 Ibid., p. 26.

she depicted a self-revelatory moment which had come over her while listening: 'I remember that I sat night after night letting this cool, silvery liquid music slide over me, often without once opening my eyes upon the stage … The music was like the voice of a friend telling me an old romantic tale in subdued accents.'[38] Significantly making reference to a contentious topic of her time – the reception of programme music[39] – she manifested her predilection for the listener's sensuous abandonment to their own reverie by saying that, although the work 'appealed to me as a kind of vocal and instrumental symphonic poem', she had 'no further use' for the programme 'once visualised', perhaps because 'I knew Moussorgsky's music long before I heard Debussy's opera.'[40] Broadening out to an observation on the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, she consciously drew her readers into her frame of mind, referring to Debussy's secret spell 'to which we gladly yield ourselves', attempting surreptitiously to match the creative process by which such a spell is cast with the use of a carefully chosen quotation from a scholarly source: 'No definite and rigid forms are imposed upon our will, but the music acts as a mediating power, leading us almost imperceptibly to a revelation of nature's mysteries, until the listener', to quote M. Albert Bazailles, '"sees himself in soughing woods" and "hears himself on winds that pass", and is lost in ecstatic reverie'.[41]

In Newmarch's literary style her subjective response to music sometimes incorporates visual images, such as this citation from Bazailles. Not only was it a tendency of the time to invoke the experience of music in paintings, but marrying verbal depiction to image provided a means of enhancing programmatic reading of the music concerned.[42] Such moments in Newmarch's writing recall another manifestation of her creative nature, since she had been a student of painting for two years from the age of nineteen and in 1897, after her marriage, she had travelled to Russia, where she had worked under the art critic Vladimir Stasov at the Imperial Public Library.[43] Her developed artistic sense continued to reveal itself in her subsequent musical writings, where cross- and interdisciplinary connections between the aural and the visual senses operated

38 Rosa Newmarch, 'Debussy', *Contemporary Review*, 113 (May 1918), p. 539.

39 See, for example, William Wallace, 'The Scope of Programme Music', *Proceedings of the Musical Association, Twenty-Fifth Session, 1898–1899* (London: Novello & Co.), pp. 139–56.

40 Newmarch, 'Debussy', p. 539.

41 Ibid., pp. 540–41.

42 See Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Aspiring to the Condition of Painting in Britain 1860–1900', in Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon (eds), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, vol. 2 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 252–77.

43 'Obituary', *Musical Times*, 81, no. 1162 (May 1940), p. 233.

from both directions: painting to music and music to painting. In her 1906 study, *The Russian Arts*, she highlighted in several of her analyses of paintings how images seem to 'perform', and peppered her reading with suggestive remarks to assist her readers' perception. Thus music became a key to the appreciation of painting and informed its conceptualisation as a sensual act.[44] Although her impressionistic appreciation of, for example, Vladimir Makovsky's 'Roussalkas' is not musical as such, she did comment on the image as if it were performed to the viewer, emphasising thereby a physiological response. Not only did she observe its 'wild and wayward procession of white, nude bodies, interlaced in almost frenzied movement, moving like a mist-wreath over the surface of a moonlit mill pond', but she concluded with the comment that the Roussalkas figure in operas as well as other art forms.[45] Later she used the concept of improvisation to convey an impression of Ivan Aivazovsky's 'The Ninth Wave': 'It is difficult indeed to believe that these stirring plein air performances are merely memorizings of hoarded themes rather than improvisations.'[46] The Roussalkas reappeared in her vision of Ivan Shishkin's 'A Birch Grove', where she developed an anthropomorphic reading:

> The charm and mystery of the forests; the serried ranks of pines in all their gothic grace; the fretted canopy of birch branches, casting dancing shadows, and letting through glittering flecks of light upon the pearly whiteness of their trunks; the moist mossy patches beneath the trees, where here and there a vivid red fungus shows like an elfin light; eerie pools where once Roussalkas disported in the moonlight – these are the only allurements it has to offer. But then it is endlessly fascinating to watch the gradual transformation of the birch woods, throwing off their nunlike veils of silver-grey, as spring advances, for one of misty green, and shedding their summer beauty in spangles of palest gold, during the brief glory of a Russian autumn. And all this coquettish robing and unrobing is carried on amid the unchanging, dignified sobriety of the pine forests. What wonder that these two kinds of trees – eternal types of masculine and feminine beauty – are endowed in the folk lore of the North, with almost human attributes and individualities?[47]

This kind of visualised physical, even erotic, response revealed how her mind worked, and the approach was carried into some of her musical notes, where the aural and the visual combine very effectively. Her way of asking questions of her audience, as at the end of the last quotation,

44 For further reference to contemporary contextual discussions of 'Musicology through the Arts' see Bennett Zon, *Music and Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century British Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 25–69.

45 Rosa Newmarch, *The Russian Arts* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1906), p. 141.

46 Ibid., p. 193.

47 Ibid., p. 197.

served to draw readers in as if she herself were performing her interpretation and inducing the audience to join in with her suggestions, which is why some of the observations seem deliberately titillating. A musical example of this is her reading of Sibelius's *Oceanides*, which according to her 'records sensitive, individual impressions of an awakening sea stirring under the cold lips of the wind at dawn … Oceanus stretches his night-benumbed limbs, tingling with returning remembrance of his potency, and the music swells to a grand climax …'.[48] Further evidence of erotic associations with music are revealed in her comment on the changing nature of popular taste effected by Wood, in which she emphasised the pleasure involved in the act of consumption, associating food and sex with Wood as the generous host: 'At last the "ideal model" has changed. A young and hot-headed generation has asked for new sensations in music … The Queen's Hall Concerts furnished a banquet, and Mr Wood has been our Amphitryon. We have had our reaction, or, as some consider, an orchestral orgy.'[49]

Another method of encouraging the listener/reader's personal engagement can be seen in her tendency to assume universalising qualities in the music. This is shown in the passage about Tchaikovsky's *Pathetic Symphony* which was cited in the 1911 *Musical Times* article with the comment that she sought 'to lay bare the underlying poetic bases of the music':

> Tchaikovsky gives utterance to thoughts and problems that lie deep down in every thinking mortal … The experiences which inspired Tchaikovsky in this Symphony are identical with our own; even if we rarely allow them to ripple the surface of our life, they agitate its depths in a blind, unconscious way. Therefore when we hear them expressed with such piercing and intimate feeling, Tchaikovsky's music seems to us less a revelation than a startling emanation from our own innermost being.[50]

In praising Henry Wood as a conductor Newmarch embarked on a long discussion of the importance of interpretation, making a number of remarks that would be surprising in a male author of the time. Her comments are applicable as much to a listener trying to understand music as to Wood's role as a conductor:

> I confess I do not understand the attitude of those people who see a danger to their art in this question of individual interpretation. Their case seems to be this: that the world now goes to hear the virtuoso, not the composer. But since it is an absolute condition of musical art

48 *The Concert-Goer's Library of Descriptive Notes*, vol. 5, p. 91.
49 Newmarch, *Henry J. Wood* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1904), p. 16.
50 M, 'Mrs. Rosa Newmarch', p. 227.

> that it must reach us through two mediums of communication – the instrument and the performer – how can it be otherwise? A musical work without a performer has the same half-reality of existence as an unborn infant. Some one must bring it into the world – must compel it to utter those sounds which are the proclamation of life itself.[51]

Further on in the discussion she returned to this birth metaphor, making the interpretative act bodily, like a mother's role; but in talking about the act of breathing interpretation into music, her emphasis may have been rather to construct the male – in this case, Henry Wood – as God-like:

> So, whatever pedants and conscientious objectors may say to the contrary, the really great interpretive artist is the one who can infuse the most of his soul's fire and his heart's blood into the silent and inanimate body of an unperformed score. He must wake it to existence with his own life, and urge it to fulfilment with his own breath until it palpitates and responds, 'Be thou, spirit fierce, My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!'[52]

Several uniquely feminine aspects to Newmarch's discourse suggest that her gendered response to music may have been more witting than unwitting, since earlier she had by implication criticised male commentators, saying: 'As a rule, the complaints against individual interpretation in music come from those whose emotional gamut is very limited in compass, and whose emotional tone is of the thinnest quality. Such people are as out of place in the concert-room as those of low physical vitality are in the football field.'[53] In 1904 women would not have been on a football field, so her use of the metaphor appeared to point to the inadequacies of male listeners. Another more flippant example is her comment on Wagner in the preface to *César Franck*, where she referred to the way he 'knitted up the Beethoven traditions and wedded symphony to the drama'.[54]

Newmarch's approach to music was not merely recreative or investigative, it was concerned with making the intuition, feeling and imagination of the music resound in the listener. These aspects are associated more with the artistic side of music-making than with the reception of music in twentieth-century thinking, but in her writing, although she was in many key respects 'scholarly', Newmarch shunned the notion that musicality could be trained and that it should be based on knowledge rather than instinct. In a sense her work resisted the discipline of musicology as it was developing by the end of her life, into what Suzanne Cusick has recently described as 'a hierarchy of musical thought over the various musical practices … with

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51 Newmarch, *Henry J. Wood*, pp. 94–95.
52 Ibid., p. 47.
53 Ibid., p. 45.
54 *César Franck*, p. 7.

musicology at its apex, controlling through an objective approach to musical knowledge the subjective experience of music as creation, physical and social practice, emotional and sensual pleasure'.[55] For Newmarch, although music in her experience and recommendation was sometimes above or beyond analysis or discussion, it was never 'autonomous', since it was the sensual power of the music and its ability to speak to the listener which characterised its human qualities. Writing of Elgar's Symphony in A flat in a programme note, she commented: 'there is hardly a spiritual or mental condition which music cannot echo and reflect, the musician who continued to write that kind of purely geometrical and objective music that expressed nothing but itself would be in the position of the painter who still clung to the limitations of the Byzantine iconographers'. Her response to composers, such as Elgar in this work, who, 'admitting … the futility of writing music which does not set its hearers seeking for any inner meaning at all', did not write consciously programmatic works, was to turn to psychology for explanation, and here, still writing about Elgar, she clarified that the sense that words cannot express the music is not due to 'autonomy', but 'the utterance of thoughts and feelings for which words seem inadequate … the work now before us seems to have a clear, but wordless, psychological programme'.[56]

Similarities between Newmarch's preoccupations with musical meaning and the European critical scene are worth pursuing in order more fully to appreciate the radicalism of her position with regard to 'embodied' reception,[57] notably Hanslick's concerns in *The Beautiful in Music* (1854), translated and published in English in 1891. Although Newmarch's linguistic skills would have enabled her to go to the original source, she may also have known the writings of Violet Paget, who, writing under the pseudonym Vernon Lee, contributed a review article on Hanslick's music entitled 'The Riddle of Music' to the *Quarterly Review* in January 1906, in which she traced its response in Edmund Gurney's *The Power of Sound*. Hanslick's antipathy to the destruction of musical beauty by analysis rings a bell in the work of Newmarch, and although his work has been most consistently championed for its rejection of feeling-based theories of music, many moments in his discourse acknowledge 'the role of psychological states in music and also [imply] that these states may be associated with something like a body'.[58] As

55 Suzanne G. Cusick, 'Gender, Musicology, and Feminism', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 480.
56 M, 'Mrs. Rosa Newmarch', p. 228.
57 See also Suzanne G. Cusick, 'Feminist Theory, Music Theory', *Perspectives on New Music*, 32/1(Winter 1994), pp. 14–26.
58 Fred Everett Maus, 'Hanslick's Animism', *Journal of Musicology*, 10 (1992), p. 280.

Fred Everett Maus has suggested, passages like the following seem to be 'at odds with the author's explicit assertions' but 'can lead to many important insights' about understandings of music in the late nineteenth century which should not have been ignored for so long: 'Thoughts and feelings run like blood in the arteries of the harmonious body of beautiful sounds. They are not that body; they are not perceivable, but they animate it.'[59]

Ultimately Hanslick regarded the agent of music as the composer, not the listener. According to Lee, Hanslick demonstrated that 'whatever its coincident powers of suggesting human emotion, the genius of a composer is manifested in the audible shapes, the musical monuments which he builds up in the soul of the listener'.[60] Newmarch, interested as she was in the composer's autobiographical resonance in his music, proposed rather that the listener assume the active role of endowing music with the power of expression so that within the listening experience emotional suggestiveness is at one with the music and its meaning. Whether music was, as for Hanslick, independent from material nature, or a matter, as for Newmarch, of interpretation which the listener/reader alone could really 'give birth to', it was Newmarch rather than Vernon Lee who was perhaps the more radical thinker. She never appeared intimidated by the power of music and she did not share Lee's fear of the penetrating force of the demonic power of music, which, it could be argued, afflicted Hanslick too. Where Newmarch is useful, then, is in providing contextualisation for accounts of musical experience grounded in the social realities of listening; where Lee is useful is to trace links between these points of view through focusing on psychological aesthetic questions and their physiological impact. Addressing the concerns of both these women writers on music enables Hanslick's arguments to be revealed in greater complexity, in terms of contemporary debates in Britain, thus adding a gendered dimension to the retrospective speculation and justification which Maus's rereading generates.

Newmarch's 'musical thought' has suffered from critical neglect in the decades since 1940: her gendered critical voice and the subjectivity embodied in her personal responses to music as well as her dedication to musical appreciation for the general public have largely been ignored. As the 1911 *Musical Times* article on Newmarch makes clear, before the First World War she was a serious force in British musical life. Moreover, by 1915, according to Edmondstone Duncan in *Ultra-Modernism in Music*, prejudice against women's involvement in the arts was 'fast

59 Ibid., and Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), p. 82.

60 Vernon Lee, 'The Riddle of Music', *Quarterly Review*, 406 (Jan. 1906), p. 209.

becoming obsolete'. Although he saw a composer, Ethel Smyth, as the leader in what he calls 'this category', his comments could be applied to the growing band of women writers on music:

> In every department of music there are signs that women's ability is gradually gathering to a great issue. All honour then to those pioneers who carve a fresh outlet for such energy, familiarising the public with a new idea, thus making the efforts of generations to come, easier and more acceptable.[61]

Yet late nineteenth-century women's contributions to the reception history of contemporary music have received little attention to date from music historians, even from those specifically concerned with the participation of women in musical culture of that time. It is surprising that women were not recognised for their critical abilities when they were fully appreciated for their abilities as performers, since both activities involve interpretation.[62] The work of British female critical writers on music has been notably absent from discussions of that interconnected 'musicological' field comprising aesthetics, theory, history and criticism, which circumscribes the 'creative' one of composition and performance. Over the same period of time there has been an assumption that music appreciation is lightweight compared with technical and therefore more scholarly musical analysis and theoretically informed criticism. The case of Rosa Newmarch informs and complicates historical investigations of music and gender and music criticism because the nature of her writing, her sphere of interest, and the attitude she, and others, adopted with regard to the purpose of her work involves historians in the interrogation of their own intellectual premises.

In the last two decades a postmodern fluidity has affected the boundaries of musicology, informing, for example, Bennett Zon's recent decision to use this modern term to connote all the disciplines involving writing about music.[63] In this context opportunities have opened up for reappraising the roles all forms of writing play in the historical understanding of music. Central to any reassessment of the application of literary modes of expression to the comprehension of musical meanings is the recovery of a fuller understanding of the creative dimension of such

61 Edmondstone Duncan, *Ultra-Modernism in Music* (London: Winthrop Rogers, 1915), p. 113.

62 See, for example, Havelock Ellis's discussion in *Man and Woman* (1894, p. 326): 'there can be no doubt whatever that if we leave out of consideration the interpretive arts, the artistic impulse is vastly more spontaneous, more pronounced, and more widely spread among men than among women', cited in Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (eds), *Women and British Aestheticism* (Charlottesville, Va. and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 34.

63 *Music and Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century British Musicology*.

expressions and their significance both in late nineteenth-century and in late twentieth-/early twenty-first-century 'postmodern' contexts. The role of writings such as Newmarch's in challenging the dominant nineteenth-century view that verbal interpretations of music were secondary in importance to other forms of creative involvement and self-expression may prove vital in this connection.

Appendix 2

Purkis, C. (2004) ‘You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music': Gertrude Hudson's Fictional Fantasias. In: Fuller, S. and Loessef, N. (eds.) *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*. Farnham: Ashgate, 197-254.

'You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music': Gertrude Hudson's fictional fantasias

Charlotte Purkis

During a violin recital by virtuoso Lyona Testore, related in Gertrude Hudson's short story 'Episode Extraordinaire', Tom, a 19-year-old student describes his reaction to her playing in terms of the suspension of his 'spirit's consciousness'. Defining this moment as 'like a divine electric shock' and the music as 'not like any other music I have heard', the character continues in imaginary dialogue with readers – taking particular care to distinguish them from Philistines in conjecturing that:

> You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music (and what the Philistines might have called it I don't know!); its divine personality – hers – danced along the whole snowy range of the arts, laughing mockingly at us from each peak. For her tone had the warmth and light and colour, and the eloquence of madness, and the beauty of herself.

Subsequently, Tom is unable to converse with his cousin Celia, who assumes he has 'not sufficient intelligence to appreciate good music' during the interval which he defines to himself (and readers) as 'that blessed period when Israfil is silent'.[1]

This brief extract from the interrelated episodes Hudson published as *Impossibilities: Fantasias* (1897) reveals the crux of her thinking about music. It is a key passage not least because here Hudson makes the only direct reference of the book, and indeed of all her writing, to the Archangel of music which inspired her pseudonym – Israfel. The passage

[1] Israfel Mondego, *Impossibilities: Fantasias* (London: H. Henry and Co. Ltd., 1897) 99–100 [hereafter *IF*]. The spelling 'Israfil' here would seem to be deliberate. There are no errors elsewhere in the book. It may match Sarah Grand's usage in *The Heavenly Twins*, discussed below.

is also crucial for two other reasons: first, it identifies in a single moment a clear formulation of music's power over the listener; second, the explanation of this moment points to the existence of another layer of discourse through which Hudson simultaneously constructs a vision of herself as a writer on music.

On the one hand, Tom's attempt to explain what happens to him when listening to music suggests that music is an analogue for ecstatic spiritual experience necessarily beyond words, hence the need for other analogues – 'beauty or poetry or passion'. On the other hand, his explanation demonstrates how the meaning of music is dependent upon interpretation by both performers and listeners. Only performers capable of imprinting themselves onto music in a state of ecstatic 'madness' can reveal meaning to listeners who must themselves be equipped to respond from their innermost soul. The way that music was thought to have a personality as a result of the performer's communication of the 'beauty of herself', alongside the reference to an imaginary reader apparently seeking to describe the experience, presupposed just such a correlation between performer and receiver. As a result, in *Impossibilities* as a whole, both types of interpretative role are explored as creative, and in places constructed as interchangeable.

Hudson was one of few women writers of her time who explicitly theorized the nature of writing at the same time as telling stories.[2] The narrative focus of the seven interconnected prose pieces that make up *Impossibilities* is the representation of musical experience. The emphasis on criticism within this theme exemplifies the second reason why the 'Episode Extraordinaire' moment is so crucial to understanding Hudson's relationship with music. By mirroring her own critical-creative literary mission in her interrogation of literary practice, through fantasizing about its potential to construct ways of uniting with musical experiences bodily and synaesthetically, Hudson incorporated a meta-textual autobiographical voice into her fiction.

Impossibilities (1897): Intentions, outline and reception

Hudson's fascination with the reception of music through its associations for and with characters was by no means unique in late

[2] Ann Heilmann discusses 'the use of meta-fictional elements' in the works of some New Woman writers of the 1890s that 'are peopled by artists struggling to find time and space for their work, who reflect on their conception of what (feminist) art should/could look like'; Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000) 67.

Victorian literature, but what was unusual was that she formulated and expressed her engagement through different types of prose. As only one of her books was ostensibly fiction, it is thus unlikely that Hudson would have considered herself a 'fiction writer'. Since her writings also demonstrate a profound scepticism with the established socio-cultural role of 'music critic', it is also unlikely that she would have considered herself a critic, although in much of her writing in which she invokes herself she depends upon the designation.[3] Hudson's writing is provocatively situated at the boundaries of established literary fields. This is apparent not only from similarities between her stylistic approach and those of a number of contemporary creative and critical writers,[4] but from the ways in which, in several of her stories, characters make this explicit by debating the nature and purpose of such boundaries. The degree of her success at avoiding classification was reflected in a rather negative review of *Impossibilities* in *The Academy*. Critical aspects are treated as essential even though the review is published in the magazine's 'fiction supplement' section:

> This book is a little literary lark. But the jest is rather one-sided. No real human being, with passions, temper, and a will, can limit himself in all the emergencies of life to the vocabulary of the concert-platform. If his creator insists on so restricting him, he becomes automatic, incredible.[5]

Impossibilities was Hudson's first book publication. As a whole the collection falls into the category of 'fiction' because a story element predominates over passages of intellectual reflection on music. The main characters are all active in the world of music-making as critics, writers, poets, recitalists performing music, or poetry to musical accompaniment, and there is a painter inspired by music. The tone adopted is one of an episodic rendering of a set of experiences. Early on in the book Hudson comments: 'A plot … is as terrible as a tune. Divine

[3] A notable example of this is an article which is in part a self-parody, 'The Music Critic (A Depreciation)' in *Ivory, Apes and Peacocks* (New York: M. P. Mansfield and A. Wessels; London: At the Sign of the Unicorn, 1899) [hereafter *IAP*]: 'I yearn to be a musical critic' (227); 'The critic is hopelessly prosaic and incurably modern … Of all tired hedonists, surely the critic is the weariest! He really ought not to be permitted to criticise habitually, he ought to have every other week off – a blessed rest for his overworked appreciative faculties. And, indeed, I should be delighted to take his place. I am eminently suited to it, for I combine in one insufferable personality the savage brutality of the journalist and the cynical flippancy of the litterateur. So does the critic!' (232).

[4] For example, Ada Leverson, Ouida, Vernon Lee (Violet Paget), Una Ashworth Taylor, Alice Meynell, Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater.

[5] [Unsigned], '*Impossibilities: Fantasias*. By Israfel Mondego. (Henry and Co.)', *The Academy* 51, fiction supplement (19 June 1897) 18, 20.

orchestration is the only thing admissible.' She goes on to target John Lane's influential Bodley Head series in this connection saying that this 'is the fact that the "Keynotes" have failed to grasp, but they as a rule do not understand counterpoint'.[6] The chapters are in some respects free-standing, but there are a large number of deliberate yet subtle cross-references, perhaps Hudson's 'counterpoint'. Although the last chapter has a subtitle – 'Encores' – the connections between chapters are insufficient to assume a musical patterning of the 'rondo' or 'theme and variations' types. The most useful analogy is Hudson's own reference to the book as a 'dream'.[7] In terms of the book's form, this designation matches not only the drifting, stream-of-consciousness atmosphere of the text, but also its haphazard mapping of internal links; in terms of its content, the dream comparison suits its future-oriented tendencies. The opening and penultimate chapters – 'Orpheus in Hades' and 'Rhapsody' – are constructed on the theme of Orpheus in the underworld and frame four intervening pieces: 'Buggins at Bayreuth', 'The King's Daughter', 'Episode Extraordinaire' and 'Fantaisie Impromptu'. The conclusion, 'Two Fine Flowers of Celticism (Encores)', features an Orphic denouement.[8]

In 'Orpheus in Hades' (chapter 1), we are introduced to Tristram Delamor, a pianist and composer engaged to Dolly Girner, who likes cycling. During discussions of music and poetry in his music room, he also flirts with writer Beatrice Logrolyan, 'a charming little girl, Celtic and capricious', the sister of Leo, a poet. She has just had an essay on contemporary musicians turned down, but Tristram believes she is the only person capable of recognizing his 'Divinity as Artist' (*IF*, 11). Tristram visits Mark Markby, a successful musical critic. The rest of the chapter takes place at Dolly's family's 'At Home' where Tristram takes up with another woman, a reciter, Jeanne Rossignol. She performs a Leo Logrolyan poetic transcription accompanied by Tristram at the piano, after which he escapes with Markby. They despair of the whole 'At

6 This is a slightly confusing observation since George Egerton's *Keynotes* (1893), which had initiated the series, also downplayed plot, invoking music as a metaphor for exploring the emotional motivations of women characters in a series of moments.

7 At the end of 'Rhapsody', Orpheus, speaking in the first person while standing at the gates of Nirvana asking for admittance as a journalist, declares: 'I have written a dream called "Impossibilities" ' (*IF*, 157).

8 Hudson's fascination with the Orpheus legend is likely to be linked to *Impossibilities*' interests in 19th-century poetry. John Purkis discusses how 'to "descend into the underworld" is to plunge into the depths of the mind, and to try to listen to its strange and difficult utterances' and how for several such poets 'the abyss is the source of creativity – or *potential* creativity'; John Purkis, *The World of the English Romantic Poets* (London: Heinemann, 1982) 149.

Home' experience, making reference to the decadence of the Romans and the Greeks and suggesting that the occasion was, for them, the 'Hades' of the chapter's title. Next morning, Jeanne continues to pursue Tristram, calling to collect her mislaid sheet music. She creeps up on him playing Brahms and recites a Leo Logrolyan 'Rhapsody':

> All my thoughts fly on lightning wing
> To thee – and sing and drift and dream
> In moving music of the sweetest stream
> That springs as fire from the cold keys to thee,
> Incarnate west wind of the wild Tone sea,
> My Lord the King!

To the question, 'And what do you call that?', Jeanne answers 'Orpheus' (*IF*, 33), using Leo's 'Rhapsody' as a link to Hudson's penultimate Orphic story, 'Rhapsody' (chapter 6). This chapter's epilogue also refers forward to 'Fantaisie Impromptu' (chapter 5), when Brother Ambrose, making his only appearance, hears 'the magic torrent' of Chopin's piece of the same name 'from the open window of a cell' (37).

'Buggins at Bayreuth' (chapter 2) is a first person narrative describing being in Bayreuth. The narrator is an audience member rather than a critic, and the text reads in places like a diary or letter. There is commentary on all types of Wagnerites as the narrator asks, 'Is Wagner a passion or a fashion?' and identifies with them. There is a reference to Phil May, who 'alone could do [the Wagnerians] justice' – a character who appears again as the first person narrator of the following chapter. The chapter reads as if Hudson herself is writing as 'Israfel', rather than any of the characters, although it would make sense if it were Phil May. There is a strong association between the pseudonym and this chapter in its epigraph, lines from Swinburne's 'The Triumph of Time' (*Poems and Ballads*, 1866):

> An armed archangel, whose hands raise up
> All senses mixed in the spirit's cup.[9]

In 'The King's Daughter' (chapter 3), a passage Phil is writing from a piece called 'The Incurable Wound' is quoted, referring to 'the problem of Wagner' and thus to Nietzsche. It reads like one of Hudson's own essays:

> There must be a solution to the problem of Wagner. But there is none in this life. And the wonders of our own diction, glowing with crimson life, burning with tawny passion, dying in a purple haze of tears wherein shines steadfast the star of self-satisfaction, foretells a brilliant future, as the ardent sunset the glorious tomorrow. (*IF*, 73)

[9] *IF*, 40. On p. 48 the second line is cited again in discussing the conductor Mottl's direction.

This seems to be a clear reference back to the Bayreuth experience and expresses sentiments at the heart of Hudson's whole artistic mission. Bizarrely in 'The King's Daughter' we are told that Phil May has a housekeeper called Mrs Buggins. This chapter introduces two new characters, pianists Max and 'The Russian', and brings back Beatrice, Markby and Leo for further discussion about music criticism. Beatrice and Phil go on a bicycle ride and continue their conversations by the light of the moon.

'Episode Extraordinaire' (chapter 4) begins with Tom Vallay at a lesson with his piano professor, who eulogizes on the importance of reading literature – Swinburne, Heine and Rossetti – in order to develop artistic temperament. Tom has overdone this with the result that 'he is [*sic*] too much colour, he has not enough sense of form' even for Chopin (*IF*, 95). Later he compares Lyona's playing to Swinburne's line, 'A delight that repels, a desire that reposes', and feels 'absolutely subjected to its personality' (100). There is also a reference to the Orpheus theme when he is asked to accompany Lyona for the next month: 'I would tour with you through Hades, with pleasure!'(102). Tom develops a deep erotic passion for Lyona and her music, so much so that he desires to paint her, not as Orpheus (as had already been done and was, he feels, too depressing), but as a succession of other male icons: Vanderdecken, Elagabalus and 'above all, as Tristan, with those lines of Logrolyan's at the foot of the picture: "The mouth is music …" ' (112).

'Fantaisie Impromptu' (chapter 5) is an essay on Chopin, but begins with a reflection on Elagabalus, 'whose purple robe has descended down the centuries on Chopin'.[10] The spirit of Chopin's composition and of the essay is summed up in the observation that Chopin 'is the most subjective of all the composers; he can be induced to express almost anything' (*IF*, 122). Explicit links between Romantic music and literature are made as Chopin is compared to Shelley. The connection between music and eroticism is also emphasized, asking: 'Of what use is love but as a soul for art?' The relevance of this chapter for understanding the collection as a whole is revealed in the comment: 'Chopin's beauty is ever troubled. L'amour de l'impossible is shed through all his soul of music' (123). In addition, there is a clear link to the Swinburne quote pertaining to Israfel from chapter 2: 'Chopin has many things in common with Swinburne. I always feel that the B minor sonata is the musical equivalent to the "Triumph of Time" ' (127–8).

The sentiments of 'Fantaisie Impromptu' underpin 'Rhapsody'

[10] Elagabalus was a Roman Emperor (204–222) and high priest of a phallic-oriented cult who liked to dress as a woman, was also bisexual and a ruler of megalomaniacal tendencies.

(chapter 6), the most dream-like section of the book. In the first person, Orpheus narrates a sociable stroll through Hades 'with the person I love best', described as 'a man of intellect and passion' seen 'whenever I look into clear windless water, or perchance gaze into a mirror' (*IF*, 136). Hades is a desirable location with roads which are very good for cycling. It is the place 'where Chopin wrote all his nocturnes' (135), where 'Grieg wrote nearly all his things' and where dwell other such 'lovers of the impossible' and 'pursuers of the unattainable' – who are 'very much alive' and who worship Buddha (137). Orpheus's mission is to reach Nirvana and to be admitted as an artist. 'Myself and I' converse until Buddha allows Orpheus across the river, where he encounters Eurydice. Orpheus is a pianist, who also writes from the standpoint of 'sheer vacuity of intellect'. He 'has already attained the nirvana of mediocrity', defined by Eurydice as 'that divine summit of journalism' (149). Following Orpheus' recital on the ghost of a piano, Buddha challenges his use of 'tone-words', building up to a final confrontation at the gates of Nirvana. There Orpheus claims, as the author of *Impossibilities*, to be more than a journalist. Unfortunately, Buddha dismisses this as rubbish, saying he should have stayed at home to write it.

The concluding 'Two Fine Flowers of Celticism (Encores)' deals in the consequences of this rhapsodic journey, linking back to the identification of musical experience with spiritual ecstasy. The protagonist is a painter without a name, depicted as losing 'consciousness with the thought of music' . He goes to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* for inspiration when he cannot complete his painting (*IF*, 163). The twin themes of spirituality and silence within musical experience from 'Episode Extraordinaire' resurface:

> As he heard the divine first orchestral sighs of 'Tristan,' he shivered – they held a spirit. As the music rose, passion of love, passion of death, he saw the face, the mouth of music. His soul dilated, intoxicated with beauty, as the last dying molten notes stretched passionate arms to silence. (165)

The artist returns to work, 'possessed of music' (166).

In part 1 of this chapter, 'Prelude Passione', the artist's work is a portrait of music referred to as 'languishing Orpheus', represented as a woman because the painter has told us 'music is feminine' and 'music became his only picture' (161). Back in 'Episode Extraordinaire' a connection had been made between Lyona and Orpheus:

> Lyona … was never happier than when she was understudying Orpheus. A great painter had painted her as Orpheus in Hades, in the grey underworld where the blood-red poppies raised listening heads as he passed … She had that irresistible strange beauty known in modern art – a face that seems made to rouse passion. (110–11)

Part 2 of this chapter, 'The Death of Albine', had been anticipated in 'The King's Daughter' where Beatrice advised Phil to 'beware of adjectives' in his writing: 'Many writers poison their style with superabundant sweetness of those flowers of speech, like Albine in [Zola's] "La Faute de l'Abbe Mouret", who committed suicide by asphyxiating herself with the perfume of flowers' (*IF*, 89). The portrait we had thought to depict a female Orpheus is received by Albine's lover as that of a man: 'Pretty, but looks an awful beast … I don't believe in fellows who don't cut their hair' (167). Albine, described as 'decadent in her tastes' (169), does not specify gender, but thinks of the image as an 'opiate poppy … The hair is the gold poppy of dreams. The mouth is the red poppy of sleep. The face is the white poppy of death' (167). The 'original of this portrait', now referred to as 'he', is a musician who 'had a theory that music is an audible flower' and attempted to 'transcribe the perfumes of flowers into music' (167). Albine is turned into a Eurydice figure, seduced by the musician's flower arranging at his recital. She calls to 'Thanatos' – 'intoxicated with death himself', she imagines him leading 'her softly to the grey sweet underworld … where sleep is king' (171). In reinscribing the Orphic journey of 'Rhapsody' in this way, Hudson seems to be suggesting that readers, like the characters in this 'encore', might envisage themselves merging with the archetypes she has explored. Readers are prepared for this challenge by the final words of Orpheus to Eurydice: 'I am absolutely self-centred; it is indeed a grand thing to be in love with yourself. For you may idealize yourself in many forms … you may put yourself in Hades as Orpheus … O! There's no limit to your possibilities' (156).

Notable in Hudson's *Impossibilities* is her referencing of fashionable aestheticist literary interests, indicated by epigraphs from other writers that suggest influences of those writers' ideas. As well as the Swinburne references already mentioned, the book as a whole is prefaced with the introductory verse from Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). This choice might have been Hudson's way of drawing attention to her deliberate eclecticism:

> When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
> He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;
> An' what he thought 'e might require,
> 'E went an' took – the same as me!

The first and last chapters are headed with quotations from Oscar Wilde.[11] Although on one level Wilde had little to say specifically on

[11] 'The world is changed because you are made of ivory and gold. The curves of your lips rewrite history' (*IF*, 2), quoted from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890); in *The*

music (and compared to the attention he gave to the other arts, nothing at all to contribute to discussion of compositional strategies), his notion of criticism as a creative act was without a doubt a huge influence on Hudson. This is apparent from the fact that ideas and approaches from Ernest's and Gilbert's debate in 'The Critic as Artist' (*Intentions*, 1891) can be traced directly in *Impossibilities*.[12] One example, where music is a reference point, is Wilde's concern that the lowly status of the critic may continue 'because the best he can give us will be but an echo of rich music, a dim shadow of clear-outlined form'.[13] Furthermore, the origin of Hudson's title even becomes apparent from Ernest's musings on the overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser*:

> It speaks to me of a thousand different things, of myself, it may be, and my own life, or the lives of others whom one has loved and grown weary of loving, or of the passions that man has known, or of the passions that man has not known, and so has sought for. To-night it may fill one with that … *Amour de l'Impossible*, which falls like a madness on many who think they live securely and out of reach of harm, so that they sicken suddenly with the poison of unlimited desire, and, in the infinite pursuit of what they may not obtain.[14]

In his dialogic essay, Wilde posed provocative questions about the orientation of current critical tendencies by projecting a new identity for criticism of the future. This 'highest criticism' should share in the function of literature, creating 'from the rough material of actual existence, a new world that will be more marvellous', in effect then turning the role into a creative one and leaving 'nothing for the critic to do'. There is a very close relationship between Hudson's view and Wilde's manifesto as propounded by Ernest:

> Criticism of the highest kind … treats the work of art simply as a starting-point for a new creation. It does not confine itself … to discovering the real intention of the artist and accepting that as final … for the meaning of any beautiful created thing is, at least, as much in the soul of him who looks as it was in his soul who wrought it. Nay it is rather the beholder who lends to the beautiful

Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, new edn (1966; London and Glasgow: Collins, 1983) 165. 'This is the golden book of spirit and sense, / The Holy Writ of Beauty; he that wrought / Made it with dreams and faultless words and thought' (*IF*, 160), quoted from Wilde's comments on Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1877); [signed notice], *The Speaker* (22 March 1890) in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. M. Seiler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1980) 233.

[12] Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist' in *Complete Works*, 1009–59. For further discussion of Wilde's 'The Critic as Artist', see the chapter in this volume by Joe Law.

[13] *Ibid*. 1026.

[14] *Ibid*. 1029–30.

> thing its myriad meanings, and makes it marvellous for us, and sets it in some new relation to the age, so that it becomes a vital portion of our lives.[15]

When in Hudson's 'Episode Extraordinaire' Tom and Lyona discuss the relative status of music-making and criticism, their conversation is redolent of Wilde's 'Critic as Artist' thesis. For Tom, who perceives the critic and the musician as 'natural enemies', making music substitutes for the inadequacy of words. He concurs with Lyona that reading and writing are very problematic activities in the musical sphere. Lyona declares how she actively dislikes reading about music and much prefers making it: 'I hate reading … When I play, I can choose my own sentiments more or less, I can subject the significance of the music to my pleasure: but when I read, I have to take whatever the author gives me' (*IF*, 115–6). She does, however, concede that if she were to take up writing she might override this problem and provide herself with 'sympathetic literature', that is, things she would herself care to read about music (116). Lyona's view of the critical writer thus comes over as less hostile than Tom's. For her, critics dominate her time because 'this is the age of the executive artist … Creation is the lowest branch of activity, execution is several grades higher, criticism is the crown'. In keeping with the futuristic bent of the entire collection, the conversation concludes with a tantalizing suggestion: 'The artist shall consort with the critic at the millennium, not till then' (117), revealing that the current context is not one in which this is yet feasible.

The *Impossibilities* stories reveal how Hudson took on the challenge of Wilde's declaration that the critical act was inherently creative. Throughout the book, she seems to goad her readers to engage with difficulties that are thrown up when confronting existing conventions. The ways her characters revel in grappling with these difficulties convey her fantastic suggestions of routes to aestheticized ways of living. Hudson's frequent recourse to terms with enigmatic associations, such as 'the impossible' and 'the unattainable', together with the designations of many of her writings as 'fantasias', is typical not only of an aesthetic striving to express what seems beyond reach, but also of aesthetic revelling in the sensations provoked by such a pursuit in the absence – the assumed improbability – of consummation. In this spirit, although 'the unattainable' is evoked as being tantalizingly close (for example, in 'Rhapsody', the way that one might simply bicycle off into the underworld), the realizations Hudson presents are curiously incomplete. There is a sense that her fantasies cannot become realities, and this

[15] *Ibid*. 1029.

serves to bind the reader back into the paradox of what is impossible. Perhaps this is what *The Academy* critic found unconvincing when defining the stories as, 'a series of tales in which no one character is for a moment alive, in which nothing particular happens, in which no person loves, suffers, or even dies'. Although the review conceded that stylistically the book was interesting, referring to 'Mr. Mondego's … clever juggling with words, together with some startling effects in the juxtaposition of preciosity and slang', it concluded rather negatively: 'the author probably has amused himself more than the result of his freak is likely to amuse anybody else'.[16]

Arguably, today *Impossibilities* is less of interest for scenarios and characterizations intended for contemporaries who might appreciate its aestheticist bent. Its interest now lies rather in the way its conversations serve as vehicles for revealing, both explicitly and implicitly, thoughts about the nature of music and creative impulses inspired by its reception. Yet, Hudson's work is not only stimulating as historical curiosity; it is also a provocative exemplification of proto-postmodern musicological interests. This is because the overriding concern is how to interpret – discuss, describe, represent, depict, re-enact, and perhaps 'embody' – music using words, not only within fiction but also in other forms of writing, specifically music journalism and travel memoirs. Hudson's articles from a range of journals were subsequently collected for re-publication in *Ivory, Apes and Peacocks* (1899), *Musical Fantasies* (1903), *Travel Pictures* (1904) and *Lotus Leaves* (1908). This non-fiction work is fascinating, both for the way in which musical reflection overlapped with travel writing and for revealing how, for Hudson, all forms of narrative about music involved crossover between perceived realities and projected fantasies.

The fact that Hudson published no more fiction after *Impossibilities* does not mean that that mode of writing ceased to be relevant to her concerns. The limited critical interest and rather negative reception of this collection may have influenced her decision to concentrate on non-fiction. Her later writing, with which she achieved a higher profile, continued to address many of the same ideas about music raised in these stories and followed through aspects of the stylistic experimentation. Reviewers preferred these writings to *Impossibilities*, though focusing on form and style at the expense of content and message. In 1899, for example, *The Dome* carried an advertisement for *Ivory, Apes and Peacocks* which cited *The Dundee Courier*'s view that 'the book is altogether a delight … Ruskin might have written some of it, and its

16 [Unsigned], *The Academy* (12 June 1897) 20.

literary art is about as fastidious as Pater's … Very rich, very delicate, and very unusual'.[17] Furthermore, in 1900 a reviewer in the American journal *The Dial* called Israfel 'that pleasantly fantastical essayist and virtuoso of iridescent phrases' and identified 'him' as 'essentially a stylist, an executant of brilliant verbal fantasias': 'Readers who care for "Israfel" … will like this … very much'.[18] In the same year *The Chord* quoted from *The Glasgow Herald* that *Ivory, Apes and Peacocks* was 'undeniably clever and interesting'.[19] In *The Academy's* review of *Musical Fantasies* in 1903, Hudson was again praised for her deployment of language, described as 'florid, rhapsodic, dithyrambic'.[20] Despite this emphasis on literary style, the themes running through Hudson's work of the late 1890s, as much as her mode of expression, revealed the continuation of that productive dialogue between non-fictional critical writing and fiction which had initially been constructed in *Impossibilities*' deliberate mixture of prose, poetry, drama and fantasy.

Contextual links

1. Literary genre

At the turn of the twentieth century, the types of writing that Hudson worked with – fiction, critical writing, travel memoirs and autobiography – were all undergoing revaluation in contemporary practice and debate. Analysis of experimentation with literary genre is integral to the way this period tended to be identified as transitional between Victorianism and the twentieth century, with the result that genre innovations came to be regarded as prophetic of Modernist notions of realities as 'subjective fictions'.[21]

In an early retrospective of the aesthetic and intellectual life of the period, which dominated historical perception for a considerable time, Holbrook Jackson summarized the contemporary view as optimistic with respect to the future: 'Everybody, mentally and emotionally, was running about in a hundred different directions' with the 'rising

[17] *The Dome* 2/4 (January 1899) 79.

[18] [Unsigned], 'Ivory Apes and Peacocks' [*sic*], *The Dial* 29 (1 July 1900) 18.

[19] 'Advertiser', *The Chord* 3 (Lady Day, 1900) iv.

[20] [Unsigned], *The Academy and Literature* (14 November 1903) 542.

[21] Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, eds, *Modernism: 1890–1930* (London: Penguin, 1976) 27. Jayne E. Marek comments that 'there may be important connections between modernist innovations and qualities that have often been seen as "female" attributes'; Jayne E. Marek, *Women Editing Modernism: 'Little' Magazines and Literary History* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1995) 16.

generation' feeling 'as though it were stepping out of the cages of convention and custom into a freedom full of tremendous possibilities'.[22] Helmut Gerber later discussed how, during this period, the short story in particular 'reflected the impact of many extraliterary forces that made for experimentation and change'. He cited the example of Arthur Symons' *Spiritual Adventures* (1905) in considering musical influence, commenting how their semi-autobiographical nature placed them 'like Pater's *Imaginary Portraits*, on the borderline between the short story and the essay'.[23] More recently Lyn Pykett has discussed the redefinition of fiction both in terms of 'a stratification, fragmentation and diversification' of the literary market, in which the 'enormous increase of journals and newspapers was particularly significant', and in terms of the feminization of fiction. On the one hand, there were 'New Woman' writers experimenting with 'impressionistic, allegorical, and visionary forms in their attempts to represent female interiority'; on the other, there was a masculine backlash causing the 'appropriation of the discarded feminized form of domestic realism'.[24]

Male aesthetes and women writers who were variously definable as 'New Women' or 'female aesthetes', according to the degree of their self-conscious politicization and their orientation within the sphere of high art, favoured the short story, essay and poem over that major literary form of Victorian commercial success, the three-decker novel. Elaine Showalter has suggested that many of these women authors have been overlooked due to both this preference and to the publication of their work predominantly in little magazines.[25] That fiction was a powerful tool with which to shape manifestos for change was apparent from widespread negative reaction, both critical and popular, to women's literary voices, associating the New Woman with the 'Decadent'.[26] Margaret Stetz has discussed how much of the female side of the debate about aestheticism was 'lost' because of its appearance in magazines, commenting that feminist pronouncements are most often

22 Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1913) 31.

23 Helmut Gerber, ed., *The English Short Story in Transition* (New York: Pegasus, 1967) xii.

24 Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995) 71.

25 Elaine Showalter, ed., *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-siècle* (London: Virago, 1993) viii.

26 For a full discussion of distinctions between the terms 'New Woman', 'Decadent' and 'female aesthete', see Talia Schaffer, 'The Women's World of British Aestheticism', chapter 1 of *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville and London: The University Press of Virginia, 2000).

'embedded in fiction rather than in the more obvious vehicle of essays'.[27]

Hudson's subtitle for *Impossibilities* – *Fantasias* – identifies it with aestheticism. Talia Schaffer regards the fantasia as one of two dominant modes of aestheticist writing that attracted women:

> [Aestheticism] relied heavily on formalist experimentation, and it imagined other realms for female identity, realms that could range from the unconscious to the geographically and temporally remote.[28]

Schaffer points to the desire of many women who identified themselves with aestheticism to describe what was supposed to be indescribable; they situated this desire in 'the unreal space of "dream" or "fantasy"' wherein 'authors found themselves free to depict a wide range of behaviours' and 'to create alternative visions of women's lives'.[29] The rhetoric used in fantasias also signalled that 'the story was adrift in time and space'.

Bizarrely, alongside her anti-naturalistic exploration of the underworld, Hudson's domestic setting of much of *Impossibilities* in 'idealistically charming drawing rooms' was also typical of the fantasia, because of aestheticism's concern for beautiful objects. By employing the mannerisms of staged drawing-room conversation in both the outdoor and indoor scenes of *Impossibilities*, Hudson also entered the territory of contemporary dramatists, specifically the tragi-comic Wilde and Strindberg. She did so by combining realism with parodistic hints of the newly fashionable, quasi-psychological posturing, in particular through chameleonic gendered positionings of her key characters. Hudson thus worked more dramatically than narratively, as Wilde had done a few years earlier in constructing his heroine Salome as a type. On the one hand, he presented a textual image of a masculinized *femme fatale*, and on the other, a meta-textual representation of the (male) artist's soul. Hudson's stance reveals, once again, her homage to Wilde's theory of creative criticism written just before *Salome* – specifically his suggestion that 'the method of the drama is his … He may use dialogue … that wonderful literary form'. 'By its means he can both reveal and conceal himself, and give form to every fancy, and reality to every mood'.[30]

Schaffer has discussed how the other dominant mode of writing in

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[27] Margaret D. Stetz, 'Debating Aestheticism from a Feminist Perspective' in *Women and British Aestheticism*, ed. Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999) 30.

[28] Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, 49.

[29] *Ibid*. 50–51.

[30] Wilde, *Complete Works*, 1046.

female aestheticism was epigrammatic comedy, analysing the work of Ouida (Marie Louise de Ramée) in this connection and showing its influence on male writers, notably Wilde. Schaffer's summary of Ouida's key stylistic traits, resulting from her combination of fantasia and drawing-room comedy, is useful in positioning Hudson's writing on music in relation to literary aestheticist trends:

> Where the fantasia describes history, the comedy depicted modernity; its characters wear the latest fashions, talk about the most recent gossip, often allude to controversial living personalities, and show themselves ultra-modern in their sensibilities. Thus the figures in the fantasia represented men and women as they supposedly once were, but the drawing room comedy represented men and women as they could be.[31]

2. Writing about music

Hudson's writing in two 1890s journals in particular – *The Chord*, edited by John Runciman, and *The Dome*, of which she was the assistant editor of the New Series[32] – provides evidence of the interaction between her ideas, their mode of execution and the development of music criticism. In 1899 *The Academy* reviewer acknowledged the impact of Hudson's work for *The Dome* with the remark: 'The new musical criticism is full of surprises.'[33] At the end of the Victorian era, the field of music criticism split into what Runciman termed the Old and New criticism.[34] In 'The Gentle Art of Music Criticism' he distinguished these as follows:

> The distinction between the New and the Old consists not in absolute knowledge on the one side and blank ignorance on the other but, in this: that the adherents of the Old theory conceive of criticism as reporting, while the others aim at the production of literature, with music as its subject matter.[35]

The roots of the 'Old' criticism were nourished by the belief that critics are educated and thus more capable than amateurs of describing compositional methodologies and evaluating performance. 'Impersonal criticism' – which did not interfere with the composer's meaning, present only in the music itself – had been regarded as superior to the 'avowedly personal' mission of the new school.[36] *The Dome* and *The Chord*

31 Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, 56.

32 Both published by The Unicorn Press.

33 [Unsigned], 'Ivory, Apes and Peacocks', *The Academy* (19 August 1899) 172.

34 John F. Runciman, 'Musical Criticism and the Critics', *The Fortnightly Review* 62 (July–September 1894) 171.

35 John F. Runciman, 'The Gentle Art of Music Criticism', *The New Review* 73 (June 1895) 622.

36 Runciman, 'Musical Criticism and the Critics', 173.

became sites for the practical application of ideas that went against these views, in particular the notion that criticism was merely concerned with reviewing. Runciman's view was that 'the highest kind of criticism, the only criticism which has a permanent value … is the criticism … in which … the writer … recounts the effect of the subject upon his own soul … The critic holds up himself as a kind of mirror'.[37] The 'new' critic should, according to Runciman, also have a literary gift, because 'to express personal feeling requires powers similar in kind … to those of the poets and great prose-writers', whereas writing musical gossip in police-report style did not.[38] By 1899, *The Chord* went so far as to declare that 'the public has shown a marked preference' for its kind of writing as against the 'fatuous, unimaginative, inartistic kind'.[39] Earlier that same year, Hudson had referred explicitly to 'these days of the association of Music and Literature'.[40]

Several features of Hudson's writing, however, identify her as belonging only partially within this new criticism camp. In spite of critical traits she clearly shared with Runciman, there were differences between their approaches to representing experience. Runciman wrote from the perspective of a specialist informed by anecdote to bring the topic alive, ruminating, for example, on music and colour.[41] Hudson, on the other hand, wrote from the perspective of audience and herself within it. For example, in the first article of her 'Irresponsibilities' series in *The Dome*, she writes about a Chopin recital performed by Paderewski, reflecting on the spirit of the occasion and how 'our entire being merges into our art-sense', thereby illustrating reception as an embodied act.[42]

Impossibilities, which preceded these examples, was a significant staging-post in the development of Hudson's approach. This can be seen from the way that her experiment in fiction continued to be a formative presence. In a few key moments of *Impossibilities*, Hudson had fantasized, within specific narrative contexts, about ways of going even further into musical experience than could be achieved through

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[37] John F. Runciman, 'Robert Schumann: An Impertinence', *The Dome* 3/9 (1899) 234.

[38] Runciman, 'Musical Criticism and the Critics', 174, 178.

[39] As the essay 'As Others Don't See Us', presumably by Runciman, went on to explain: 'It will be readily admitted by everyone nowadays (though it would not have been admitted five years ago) that the reviewer should know something of art criticism and of literary criticism;' *The Chord* 3 (December 1899) 57.

[40] Israfel, 'Chestnuts (A Study in Ivory)', *The Dome* 2/4 (January 1899) 33; reprinted in *IAP*, 206.

[41] John F. Runciman, 'Noises, Smells and Colours', *The Musical Quarterly* 1 (1915): 149–61.

[42] Israfel, 'Irresponsibilities, 1: Paderewski (An Afterthought)', *The Dome* 3/8 (June 1899) 108.

descriptive representation of music using external referents. She did this by suggesting consequences that might result from the absorption and internalization of music during acts of listening.

Fiction and criticism

Impossibilities can be read as a text explaining Hudson's theory of how music reception could operate at various levels of understanding, from hearing to 'becoming'.[43] Although this theory was imagined through an outcome that merely played with words, the fictional representation of stages and types of reception reflected reception as a process which, ultimately, might liberate itself from words. Hudson's *Impossibilities* is 'about music' and 'about writing'. Hudson linked music and writing by creating fiction about criticism and fiction as 'criticism'. Criticism is explored as a range of activities: reviewing, writing about music, writing inspired by music and writing on music.

In the seven stories, Hudson consistently uses the terms critic and criticism pejoratively, often aided by sarcasm. At Bayreuth, for example, Buggins tells us how 'you may always tell the musical critic by his "God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear; the rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know" sort of expression' (*IF*, 45). The music critic is 'a fact to which one cannot shut one's eyes … a peculiarly obtrusive animal', by which, Hudson implies, people are taken in, because 'we pay far too much attention to facts nowadays'. Unless they use their imaginations, such people – critics and the philistines who respect them – will themselves be 'naturally reduced to facts' (47).

Towards the end of the book, in 'Rhapsody', Orpheus and his alter ego briefly discuss the conventions involved in speaking about music, sparked off by the mere mention of Chopin's Sonata in B minor.

> 'Don't be so technical,' said myself, fastidiously, 'it spoils the mise en scene. What on earth – I mean in Hades – is the use of word-painting Buddha if you're going to put in a lot of beastly technicalities?'
>
> 'I'm very sorry,' I answered meekly … 'It is so hard to explain oneself without resorting to technicalities.'
>
> 'Who wants you to explain yourself?' he asked, crudely. 'Explanations are abominable. Far too definite; nothing in Hades is ever explained.' (138)

[43] See Wilde, 'Critic as Artist', *Complete Works*, 1041, which discusses how the 'critical spirit' of the future might provide the individual with access to 'the contemplative life, the life that has for its aim not *doing* but *being*, and not *being* merely, but *becoming*'.

Hades itself, the character of Buddha within it and the plot – the journey to Nirvana – have all just been evoked by associations of actual musical works, suggesting that an alternative way of responding to music is to allow it to paint tone pictures. According to Orpheus, parts of Wagner's *Parsifal* are 'the nearest approach to Nirvana, I know', and a picture of Buddha is conjured up by the last bars of Schumann's Fantasie in C major. Composers known in Hades are evoked as physical and spiritual aspects of that state of being which the place symbolizes. Grieg, for example, 'understands the pursuit of the unattainable', and his music presents a 'picture of the Scandinavian sentiment … A glimmering, desolate desert of snow; crystal silence, pierced by a far away golden cry – lost–lost–lost!'. Svendsen, the Slav, 'has l'amour de l'impossible for his leit motif' (139).

Near the start of 'Orpheus in Hades', Markby, a 'most successful man', who 'spends his time in alternate vivisection and manufacture of cloying adulation in a neat paragraph', defends the 'Old' criticism by challenging Delamor:

> In your last recital, you violated several sacred traditions connected with the works of Chopin. You have a reprehensible tendency to obtrude your personality on that of the master whom you profess to interpret. You impose your own spurious individuality on that of a matchless tone poet. (*IF*, 16–17)

Delamor's earlier statement acknowledges the performer as interpreter at one with the music: 'Mine is the secret of personality … I do not merely play notes. I play on thought and emotion, on every complex chord of beauty and passion' (5). Later, the pianist comments that he plays Schumann's *Carnaval* 'in my own particular style – of which the maddened pen can convey nothing' (19), thus hinting that performance may be capable of divorcing itself from the possibility of having any critical act applied to it.

In the fantasy world of *Impossibilities*, and beyond in the contexts of her other work, Hudson was unusual in knitting fiction about music and criticism of music together. Using the same threads in her fictional and non-fictional writing, Hudson embroidered her ideas about criticism with the motif that it is by means of its performance that music lives; the acts of music reception and representation are enlivened because they are released from the domination of composer and score. In her work overall, Hudson proposed a range of models for the interpretation of music using fictional performers, writers on music and other audiences as her mouthpieces, as well as sharing her own responses to living performers and conductors. In *Impossibilities*, a number of dimensions of Hudson's investigation into what music is capable of becoming and

doing to people are encompassed by this theme. In several chapters Hudson explores the interaction between performance and words, describing the act of crafting words and making them perform by featuring the recitation of poetic renderings inspired by or inscribing music.

In 'The King's Daughter' we are introduced to these ideas through a critical debate on the nature of originality and what it means to be modern. Phil and Leo are writers depicted as attempting to struggle free from conventions into those new literary territories for which Beatrice Logrolyan is being fêted. Phil presents himself in the first person as 'a poet decadent' who combines 'erotomania with decency'; he cannot find a publisher for his poetry, and so is 'compelled to pander to the taste of the ignorant mob, and write prose' (*IF*, 61). Leo is another unpublished poet who writes in 'the modern style' (67). In his view:

> What we moderns chiefly lack is originality. We are too sensitive to impression. Our minds are like the photographer's plate. We are too well informed to originate; we are so full of other people's ideas that we have no space for our own … Passion helps originality, in a measure. For passion has a certain spontaneity of extravagance that instinctively finds fantastic forms of expression … Also, we moderns pay far too much attention to technique. (76)

Leo proposes to Phil that 'personality' is the 'means to success', although he himself does not possess it and fills the gap with egotism (78). The ensuing scene provides an illustration of this in action: after a bicycle ride, Phil, having mused with Beatrice on the nature of the 'angelic sex' and on what it means to be just such a 'spiritual hermaphrodite', composes a prose nocturne following her suggestion that he express his thoughts to the moon, a symbol for womanhood equated with music (83–4). From the type of literary representation of musical experience given, acting upon this advice is presented as a means of releasing the critic's artistic temperament, liberating the character – and implicitly the reader – to think and be different: 'And lo! I found that to write in this way is mighty easy. And the reverence that I had unto the "prose poets" withered and died' (89). The emphasis of both the narrative context and the nocturne itself is blatantly erotic: the two lovers lie under the trees at sunset, Beatrice already in mind as 'a strange passionate theme in the forest symphony'. Through the metaphor of woman as music, the implied act of lovemaking and the nocturne become one:

> When the shadows lengthened and the fiery sunset lay at the point of death, I watched the coming of Night in the forest. Beautiful as the chord of the seventh was she … She came in the key of E flat with violet shadows. A melody of stars in B flat sparkled out in

> mosaic upon her harmonies, stretching ethereal strings of light across the wide bow of heaven … As the year was at summer, the strings were dominant, the wind softly subjective. (88)

A particularly fascinating dimension of this exploration of new literary methods is the secrecy surrounding Beatrice's own writing. The fact that she has composed her own literary nocturne is of great interest, considering that Hudson is herself a woman exploring possibilities for writing about music. Before the discussion between Phil and Leo, we have already been told of the publication of Beatrice's transcription, of music into words, of Grieg's 'Ich liebe dich' in the collection *Scarlet Leaves*. Yet her poem is not shared with us, being concealed both by a literary device and also, in the plot, by Phil. Phil, to whom the book is passed, 'politely but firmly refused to read it aloud' because he is a 'sensitive man'. Leo reads the nocturne out loud 'with serenity', but the reader is denied any more knowledge than Phil's remark 'Isn't it rather?' (*IF*, 66). Earlier in 'Orpheus in Hades', we gain some insight, but witness only Beatrice's process, not her product. Beatrice is defiant about not being a music critic, referring to her style in this way: 'Rapture happens to suit my literary style; I have a copious flow of adjective and an unbridled imagination' (8). There is one further hint of what Beatrice's nocturne might be like. Talking about Tristram as a personality, she says: 'You are in the key of G, you know … You are the incarnation of an Icelandic legend – some beautiful despair for which men cast away life, and love, and honour, to follow into the white death incomprehensible, unattainable.' Unlike Phil, whose nocturne encompasses Beatrice, Beatrice's response to Tristram is left, as it were, suspended. Although here she references poetry rather than music, she concludes her reverie: 'I was only thinking out a paragraph for my nocturne in "Scarlet Leaves"' (25).

'Fantaisie Impromptu' seems poised to provide an example of critical writing to fulfil the nature of the criticism of the future, as discussed by Tom and Lyona in the previous chapter. However, this chapter tells readers more about their potential role in the critical act than offering a comprehensive analytical model. Crucially, it seeks to identify the type of audience to which Chopin's music, the subject of this 'rhapsody' in words, appeals:

> It takes a peculiar temperament to interpret Chopin. One that is tired of life and desirous of the unattainable, that has a sense of humour and a good deal of humbug about it … he does not demand intellect so much as a fine sense of colour of his exponents. (126)

According to Hudson, the music itself suggests what this audience – the lovers of the impossible and pursuers of the unattainable – should do

with it: '[Chopin] is more to be felt than to be understood' (126). Responses from ' the decadents' are criticized by Hudson for the way they have sought out 'the strangest meanings', because these meanings are preoccupied with the past – its 'passionate desires wrought into living breathing dreams' (127). Hudson's preferred response to Chopin is curiously imprecise, but its very ambiguity fits with that tendency of *Impossibilities* merely to suggest rather than to dictate alternative agendas. The tantalizing remark that Chopin's music 'dreams of that which never has been, never shall be, never could have been; which to every properly constituted being spells the heart's desire' (123) is summed up by the comment: 'It is impossible to express Chopin' (129). According to Hudson, the way forward lies within the music itself. Chopin 'may express himself without limit, without fear of being understood' (130). The scope of the musician is applauded and the art form praised for its freedom: 'What perfect scope … for self-expression has the musician! He can say anything, he may say anything … All other arts are chained and shackled – music is free!' (130).

Music then is the model for verbal interpretation: because it is 'so subjective and sympathetic', it is the 'perfect art' and 'the listener may interpret it as he will' (131). This is demonstrated, without any specificity, by the concluding comment of the chapter: 'Ah! soul of seduction! (It is permitted to weave a cadenza into the last bars)' (131). In a later article on the piano recital, Hudson explained that when she confronted the 'cool white tones of the piano' they defied analysis, causing 'the ravished pen to pause spellbound on the verge of adjective', because they were, for her, 'the essence of music' (*IAP*, 197). She also clarified the link between the performance of music and critical interpretation, declaring: 'Verbal virtuosity is its own excuse, – pardonable as the pyrotechnical tone-journalese displayed toward the end of a recital' (*IAP*, 198). Furthermore, in *Musical Fantasies* she also commented that 're-creation … is quite as desirable as creation … as happily we are not all the same … so is it not better to adopt the composition and do your own best by it?'.[44]

In these examples from fiction and criticism, embracing the possibilities of the critical act, even where these are proposed rather than delivered, prioritized creativity. By exploring the relationship between these two aspects of involvement with music, both in theory and in practice, Hudson revealed her interest in ways of writing on, rather than merely writing about, music. Margaret Miner has identified this as a literary characteristic traceable in Baudelaire, Pater and Symons, which

[44] Israfel, *Musical Fantasies* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Kent, 1903) 197.

aimed 'to superimpose … writing so directly onto music that the two might become fused' in order to erase distinctions between reading about music and listening to it.[45] This drive towards a performative kind of writing is the motivating force behind the content of *Impossibilities*. Hudson's later critical work reveals the development of a greater understanding of such writing. For example, in her review of Pater's *Imaginary Portraits*, she eulogizes his achievements as follows:

> His words seem just to 'effleurer' his meaning in a wholly musical manner … with him, language gains the elusive grace and significance of music … Pater's prose is of all English prose the nearest akin to music – I do not mean in actual sound, but in spirit.[46]

Music and the scripting of personal identity

Hudson's construction of a complicated meta-textual exploration of identity through the conversations and activities of her cast of aesthetic types seems intentional. Heilmann has noted the tendency for New Woman fiction 'like women's autobiography' to construct, by doubling or multiplying the character of the protagonist, 'a collective female identity while foregrounding an individual subject(ivity)'.[47] That ambition to become an 'artist-critic' of the future, highlighted in 'Fantaisie Impromptu', would seem to echo Hudson's own life in music:

> We that read between the lines learn strange things. Not till we hold the invisible ink up to the fire of our own passion, and let its fierce radiance shine through, may we decipher the pale, dead characters, and tell the world of love and death! (*IF*, 124–5)

No historical or anecdotal evidence appears to exist concerning Hudson's motivation for adopting the pseudonym 'Israfel'. In a non-fiction source of the period, Arthur Edward Waite's *Israfel: Letters, Visions and Poems* (1886), a link is made between Israfel and the notion of the impossible. In an introductory passage, Waite states: 'We have looked upon the face of Israfel, and it has become to us a mission, a revelation, a high and holy hope. I stand before thee boldly, and declare that having seen Israfel, we are set utterly apart from all the world, and the life that we led in the past is for ever more impossible to us'.[48] Waite's

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45 Margaret Miner, *Resonant Gaps: Between Baudelaire and Wagner* (Athens, GA, and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995) 1–2.

46 'Imaginary Portraits (Frozen Music)', *IAP*, 254–5, 265.

47 Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction*, 75.

48 Arthur Edward Waite, *Israfel: Letters, Visions and Poems* (London: E. W. Allen, 1886) 10.

location of 'the impossible' in the future, once the spell of Israfel has been felt, resonates in Hudson's *Impossibilities*, in that she links Israfel the spirit to elements of her stories that are future-oriented.

The appearances and associations of Israfel in other mid- to late-Victorian literary sources help relate Hudson's perspectives to ideas about music then in circulation. References in *Impossibilities* to the archangel from Swinburne's 'The Triumph of Time' point to him as a significant source. It is equally likely that inspiration came from the continuing popularity of Edgar Allan Poe. His poem 'Israfel' describes a heavenly spirit, referred to as male, under whose spell other voices become mute:

> If I could dwell
> Where Israfel
> Hath dwelt, and he where I,
> He might not sing so wildly well
> A mortal melody,
> While a bolder note than this might swell
> From my lyre within the sky.[49]

For Poe, who himself used Israfel as one of his pseudonyms, the figure symbolizes that search 'however despairingly, to emulate the ideal beauty of the afterworld' and to connect with it through music.[50] Thus, from these sources alone, the name 'Israfel' can be equated with the spiritual, carrying associations of poetry, passion and beauty, elements 'Episode Extraordinaire' identifies as the core of musical experience. Poe's emphasis on how mortals would sing more beautifully if they were to enter into Israfel's celestial state resonates clearly with Hudson's visions of unattainable, yet pursued, goals, and is consistent with Tom's 'suspended spirit's consciousness'.

Such association between real and spiritual worlds had achieved prominence through two popular late-Victorian novels which Hudson probably knew and which incorporated musical aspects in both plots and metaphors. By well-known women authors, each novel developed narrative content from the figure of an angel-poet whose identity is mirrored in character constructions. Marie Corelli's popular first novel, *A Romance of Two Worlds* (1886), presented spiritual enlightenment as the product of mystic theory. Poe's poem features explicitly in the thought process of the heroine in what is in effect an episode on a

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[49] John H. Ingram, ed., *The Complete Poetical Works and Essays on Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe* (London: Frderick Warne and Co., 1888) 98. There were several versions; this one, the last from 1845, was first published in England in *The Raven and Other Poems* (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1846).

[50] Kenneth Silvermann, *Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1992) 72.

supernatural journey as she improvises on the piano during a thunderstorm, catching 'the unwritten music of nature, which always appeals most strongly to emotions that are unspoilt by contact with the world'.[51] Also apparently influenced by Poe, Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) features in ways crucial both to plot and underlying meanings the metaphor of the chiming bell, in the introductory 'Proem', and the name of 'Israfil', in Book IV, 'The Tenor and the Boy: An Interlude'.[52] *The Heavenly Twins* was a phenomenally successful novel, immediately 'reviewed, talked of, discussed wherever one went'.[53] In 'Proem', the Cathedral bells' chimes affect the Morningquest residents in a multiplicity of ways: functioning as a metaphor for 'art' itself, the sound's meaning becomes complicated by its reception. This sets the tone for the story. When the Tenor, referred to as 'Israfil' by Angelica (the female twin and a violinist masquerading as 'the Boy') hears the sound after two years of ascetic living, he 'felt as if the world had stopped, and all the life in it had been resolved into a moment of intense self-consciousness, of illimitable passionate yearning for something not to be expressed'.[54] This impact becomes crucial to the way the relationship between the two characters is treated.

A strong sense of ambiguity permeates Hudson's work in that she, like Grand, played with gender, 'performing' male and female character parts and concealing herself behind an androgynous identity. Her pseudonym and her literary manner frequently led to the assumption that she was a man, expressed for example in this review of *Impossibilities*: 'For the first few pages of the book you wonder whether the writer is quite sane; then you come to the conclusion that he is a genius.'[55] Hudson may also have felt freer to express her sense of humour in a masculine incarnation, since, as *The Cornhill Magazine* commented, at that time women's humour was 'frequently suppressed' whereas in men it was 'cultivated and fostered'.[56] In a review article entitled 'Music and Literature', Hudson referred to this dominant trend, commenting on 'our masculine

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[51] 'Death by Lightening', *A Romance of Two Worlds* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1886) vol. 2, chapter 6, 194–5. See also 'A Symphony in the Air', vol. 1, chapter 8; and the chapter in this volume by Sophie Fuller for further discussion of this novel.

[52] Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins* (1893); ed. C. A. Senf (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

[53] Marilyn Bonnell, 'The Legacy of Sarah Grand's The Heavenly Twins: A Review Essay', *English Literature in Transition* 36/4 (1993) 476.

[54] Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*, 371.

[55] *The Birmingham Gazette*, cited in an advertisement in *The Dome* 2 (Midsummer Day 1897) following 108.

[56] Nancy Walker, 'Susan and Tish: Women's Humour at the Turn of the Century', *Turn-of-the-Century Women* 2/2 (Winter 1985) 50.

flippancy' and that 'women (dear things!) always take themselves too seriously', complicating these observations by declaring that 'she' was 'one of a despicable minority of the impossible sex' within the audience (*IAP*, 270).[57] In *Impossibilities* Hudson's humour illuminates several discussions about gender, music and interpretation. Tristram is seen through Beatrice's eyes as 'looking something between an archangel and a cab-runner' (*IF*, 17), having taunted that he is 'ridiculously effeminate' as she propounds the benefits of sexual reversal (6–7). Tristram is later confronted by Jeanne, disturbed that 'she can't be a thorough woman' because she has 'a faculty of abstract appreciation'; he helpfully informs her that she is an angel (35).

Hudson's pursuit of 'apparently incompatible positions', shown in her predilection for crossing genre boundaries and her fascination with the hermaphroditic state, allies her with that tendency, discussed in recent studies of British aestheticism, for women writers to have been empowered but yet erased from its history.[58] The label '*fin-de-siècle*' with its overtones of decadence stuck uneasily to women in a period when feminism first gained ground. Socially, the age seemed regenerate rather than degenerate as far as women's development was concerned: opportunities were 'to be fought for, boundaries to be re-drawn, categories to be renamed'.[59] Schaffer's and Psomiades' recent work has traced comprehensively how in the late-Victorian era 'decadence defined itself against the feminine and the biological creativity of women'.[60] Schaffer has gone on to argue convincingly that 'to conflate decadence with aestheticism' is to give 'decadence's masculinist assumptions and male coterie a disproportionately large role in our critical consciousness'.[61]

Little factual evidence exists about the life of the enigmatic Gertrude Hudson.[62] What is known is that by 1905 she was editing her own music journal, *The Acorn*, in which she signed some of her own contributions

57 Hudson is discussing a Clifford Harrison recital at the Steinway Hall. Interestingly, in *The Lute of Apollo* (London: A. D. Innes and Co., 1896), Harrison had written that music 'not only speaks to us, but it is, in a sense, our own voice. We find in it a perpetual self-expression' (153); thoughts that are not irrelevant to deciphering Hudson's critical positioning.

58 Schaffer and Psomiades, *Women and British Aestheticism*, 1–3.

59 Juliet Gardiner, ed., *The New Woman: Women's Voices 1880–1918* (London: Collins and Brown, 1993) 1.

60 Schaffer and Psomiades, *Women and British Aestheticism*, 198.

61 Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, 6.

62 Some library catalogues confuse her with the American writer James Gibbons Huneker, because he also published an *Ivory, Apes and Peacocks* and was similarly fascinated by 'decadence' and modern music.

'G. H', while also continuing as 'Israfel'. Unpublished letters from Ethel Wheeler, a member along with Sarah Grand of the literary grouping of 'The Lyceum Club' for women,[63] disclose that Hudson was probably in her mid-thirties in the late 1890s and hint that she was an occasional visitor to Alice Meynell's circle, along with Runciman, Wilde and Symons.[64] The impact of these connections can be felt in that 'imaginary portrait' which Hudson constructs through her writing. This sense of her identity may depend as much on fantasy as reality, on subjective experience rather than objective truth. Yet there are frequent references in Hudson's non-fiction which point to real sources for her inspiration. As well as the literature she might have read, performances she witnessed are traceable. Yet, Hudson's responses to music can stand alone, because they provide a significant contribution to ideas about music in late-Victorian Britain: they challenged amateurs to think about listening as self-expression and to live life in the spirit of art.

In a provocative article on 'The Amateur' published in *The Dome* (1899), Hudson mused on what made her fellow audience members tick, identifying several different types of respondent:

> those who love delicate physiological dissipation and the massage of their nerves; those who are curious of exquisite sensations and strange musical effects; those sheep of Fashion who follow their leader whithersoever she goeth; and some few of those finer souls who take music as they would take opium – music is their second life.[65]

The chapter 'Rhapsody' in *Impossibilities* contains a moment of active drama that relates directly to the key question Hudson would pose two years later in 'The Amateur': 'Does that music which steals on your senses like the perfumes of strange exotic flowers till you feel psychologically sick, – does it produce any effect on the musical amateur?' After Orpheus tells Eurydice that her possibilities are limitless, Eurydice falls to the ground as she approaches Nirvana, tears handfuls of scented flowers up by the roots and exclaims: 'I feel as if I were listening to a Dvořǎk symphony' (*IF*, 156–7). Her performance does more than represent her emotions; it is an act of embodiment that transforms her life. This moment stands as the climax of *Impossibilities*' musical 'finale' and informs the 'encores' in which flowers become the

63 Founded by Constance Smedley.

64 Paul West, 'The Dome: An Aesthetic Periodical of the 1890's', *The Book Collector* 6 (1957) 160–69.

65 Israfel, 'The Amateur', *The Dome* 2/6 (March 1899) 258; reprinted in *Musical Fantasies*, 213. The article is slightly revised for *Musical Fantasies*: 'second life' becomes 'dream-life', and 'amateur' becomes 'amateurs'.

sensual means for both creation and reception as they are 'translated' into music. In another *Dome* article from 1899, Hudson clarified this connection between her fictional Eurydice and the amateur listener, elaborating on this metaphor:

> I think there is a wide field for comment left untilled on the hither side of Criticism, somewhere about Weissnichtwo. Here is a little barren space between professional Knowledge and unprofessional Indiscrimination where the dilettante may sow his folly gladly, and bring his flowers of fancy … to fragrant imperfection.[66]

66 Israfel, 'Chestnuts (A Study in Ivory)', 31.

Appendix 3

Purkis, C (2011a) Movement, poetry and Dionysian Modernism: Irene Mawer's experiments with 'dance words'. In: *Free Verse, Free Dance: Embodied Sense in Motion* Ailamazian, A., Idlis, J. Sirotkina, I. and Venediktova, T. (eds.) Moscow: Faculty of Psychology of the Moscow State University, 70-80.

MOVEMENT, POETRY AND DIONYSIAN MODERNISM IN BRITAIN:

IRENE MAWER'S EXPERIMENTS WITH "DANCE WORDS"

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In an unpublished book by Irene Mawer held at the National Resource Centre for Dance at the University of Surrey, England, Mawer recalled being "swayed physically by the impact of …verse, whether the subject be suitable for 'dancing' or not" and reflected on what, to her, it means, and had meant, to feel this way.[1] Mawer's book, *Poetry and The Dance*, is part memoir and part resume of her practice and teaching of choric dance.[2]

What was Irene Mawer's involvement with words and how did this relate to her work in those non-verbal practices in which she excelled as a performer? Why, as a successful mime artist, and movement teacher, was she so fascinated by words? What was the nature, range and significance of her engagement in her time?

In July 1916, when Mawer first collaborated with Ruby Ginner, the concept of "verse dancing" was initially aired in public. Considered a "novel act" in which Ginner performed as "the dancer" and Mawer as "the voice", reviewers observed how the dancing was a superimposition rather than a realization, and thus not especially successful at offering anything innovative beyond a means to open up the appreciation of poetry for those to whom the performers' style appealed.[3]

In her later reflection upon the 1920s period in which her creative experimentation with verse rhythm and dance flourished, Mawer

[1] Mawer Irene. Poetry and The Dance, unpublished MSS, Bice Bellairs Collection, National Resource Centre for Dance archive, University of Surrey, England, UK, c. 1962 [hereafter PAD].

[2] She tried to publish this work by the end of her life, in the 1960s, but unsuccessfully.

[3] Ginner and Mawer had met in the early years of the First World War and formed their school in 1916.

discussed the context for innovations in theatre dance, in particular in terms of the rising profile and standards of ballet. She commented how her work with Ginner took place in "schools, Training Colleges, social organisations, and Repertory theatres", saying: "it appeared that the poetic spirit must find its expression in education and experimental groups, rather than in commercial theatre".[4] Comparatively little attention has been paid hitherto by historians to the intentions and achievements of Mawer, but a newly published book by Mark Evans *Movement Training for the Modern Actor* (2009) proposes that Ginner's work is historically important for theatrical movement training, in particular her approach to Delsarte. Opposing the kind of free expression of Duncan, Dalcroze and others, says Evans, Ginner with Mawer sought a version of the "Greek ideal" grounded in a sense of nature larger than could be displayed through representing, or embodying personal sensation, sentimentality and even immorality. Thus the idealisation promoted by the Ginner-Mawer training led to physical practice notable for its grace, expressiveness and flexibility, capable of enabling "unity of body and mind". Ginner and Mawer's innovations represented "an important English presence in a field dominated by continental practitioners".[5] Their work forms a link between the better known influences of Duncan and Laban, and, as such, it should receive greater acknowledgement.

Ginner and Mawer's response to the revival of the Greek arts in the beginning of the twentieth century acknowledged nineteenth-century, aesthetic fin-de-siecle and "modern" influences. They placed particular emphases upon experiments which interested them, and their interests reveal the impact of their studies with Elsie Fogerty — the founder of Central School of Speech and Drama, London. This is because they utilised many examples from her teaching. Ginner recalled in her retrospective 25 year "Jubilee" article in 1936[6] how as a student in 1911 she had become aware of the "old Greek choric dance" and gradually came "to see possibilities of its revival on lines that would become suitable

[4] PAD: 83.

[5] Evans M. Movement Training for the Modern Actor. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. P. 49.

[6] The Link vol. 2/2, March 1936. P. 5.

to modern conditions and the modern physique".[7] She desired to go beyond the Greek impersonations of the post-Isadora Duncan brigade of popular imitators, although she acknowledged that Duncan's actual methods were living on in the training schools of her pupils in New York and Paris.[8] For Ginner's intention was to go back to the practice of the "great age of Greek tragedy" when "the footwork of dancing was closely adjusted to the metric feet of verse itself".[9]

Later, in *Gateway to the Dance* (1960) Ginner commented upon the role of words, amongst many other aspects: "The ancient Greek dance was not only a decorative art, it was full of dramatic and emotional power. Every gesture had a clear intention, could be translated into words, and used to interpret the choric poems — the Hellenic dance was speech made visible".[10] When Ginner was a student of Fogerty she had first become involved with the revival of Greek drama. A remarkable day at the Scala theatre was recounted by Mawer in *Poetry and The Dance*. The day had featured a performance of Swinburne's *Atalanta* in his presence and Mawer's view was that this "was to have a greater significance in the re-uniting of poetry and the dance than either he or she (Fogerty) could have imagined".[11] Ginner was the actor-dancer in this production, leading the chorus. Mawer was also a Fogerty pupil, and then assistant, who shared Fogerty's Greek chorus classes with Ginner.[12]

The Dance of Words — a performance which became the title of a book — was given for the first time at the Shakespeare Summer Festival, Stratford, August 13th 1925. This was made up of the following: rhythm of simple dance movements, Greek frieze forms, nature rhythms, Phyrric Song, A Greek Prayer and A Funeral Song. Further lecture demonstrations took place in 1926 and 1927. *Jackdaw's Review* reported that: "Miss Mawer is to be congratulated on presenting her old-new thesis with

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[7] Ibid., p. 4

[8] Ginner R. The Revived Greek Dance: Its Art and Technique. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1933; 3rd enlarged edition 1944. P. 12.

[9] See: Fogerty, The Link 1936, vol. 2/2, p. 9.

[10] Ginner R. Gateway to The Dance (1960), p. 19.

[11] PAD: 65.

[12] Both contributed to Fogerty's posthumous memoirs, Fogie, which were collated and edited in 1967 by another pupil Marion Cole.

real distinction and sincerity". The author commented how Mawer may have reversed the order of things: "for I cannot suppose that the Greeks wrote poetry to interpret the Greek dance; rather they devised dance to interpret poetry", showing that she was suggesting poetry about dance was as important in her exploration as poetry to dance to or to accompany dance.[13]

In *Poetry and The Dance*, Mawer recollected her mode of composition, doing so partly to record this but also as a way of encouraging future practitioners: "It may interest would-be authors to know that they were written by the simple method of performing the steps and gestures round the dining table in my Cornish cottage, and then writing down and polishing the words I had improvised while moving".[14]

Mawer claimed that the Ginner-Mawer approach had no precedent as no "word-rhythms" specifically for dance interpretation existed. In *The Dance of Words* (1925) she published a wide selection of what reviewers called "dance-poems" and/or "poem-dances" perhaps because, as she said in her foreword, "I have used the expression 'word rhythm', though I should prefer to write 'poem' seeking to establish dancing to verse as an art".[15] Mawer also used the term "patterned words" whether expressed as verse or prose, saying that "poetry" can be nature-rhythm as well as found in silence.[16] Her approach is quite practical seeking to aid teachers in her method, seeking "to show to dancers that every movement which they make can be used as an interpretation of speech rhythm of some kind", and to incite verse speakers to "realise that they can become not only the voice of the Poetic Word, but a music for the inspiration of all that is most beautiful in the dance".[17] Mawer also philosophized about dance and words consistently alongside her explanations of Revived Greek Dance ideals: "Indeed the more we study the art of dancing to verse the more tempted we are to feel that the rhythms of dance and of words are the perfect complement of each other. Each follows the rhythm

[13] Feb 6, 1926.

[14] PAD: 81.

[15] Ibid., p. ix.

[16] Mawer I. The Dance of Words. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1925. P. ix, and also in The Link 1931.

[17] PAD: 13.

of human thought and emotion, the instrument of each is physical, and they share one inspiration, the spiritual vision of the human soul".[18]

In 1925 it was not the written words static on the pages that Mawer wanted to act as inspiration alone to the dancer; it was the spoken word — the recitation of poetry alongside performance. Thus *The Dance of Words* offered free verse rhythms which could be used to build up "a vocabulary of word and action which could be applied to the more advanced interpretations, and dance techniques".[19] For Mawer the "technical association between poetic form and lyrical and dramatic movement" had been in the mind of the Greeks: "Poetry, to the Greeks, was not something of which books are made, to

be read in the study, or, at most, spoken by the motionless choirs or solo voices, whose lonely diction is not meant to move hearers to passionate movement. Poetry was to be heard in the full flood of speech and song, and watched as it lived in the movements".[20]

In the Foreword to *The Dance of Words* Mawer made "no claim… that, by the publication of these word-dances, anything is added to that great art of the dance, which I so reverence". "Rather", she announced, "do I send out this book in the hope that it may help to make articulate the thoughts of some who see beauty, but who cannot translate their thoughts in words".[21] Not every poem was intended to be suitable for dancing to. The range of aspects of the relationship between words and dance are: poems inspired by movement, particular poems seeking to capture the spirit of dance; poems for interpretation as dance; words for inspiration — to generate or inspire movement; words/poetry as accompaniment, even recitation with, dance; poetry based on techniques/ the lines inspired by movement; words which bring the intellect into harmony with the body.

In her better-known book *The Art of Mime* (1932) Mawer re-emphasised her profound attraction for and connection of her practice to words, going further than the writing of a book rather than merely practising as a Mime using words to explain and describe a wordless art form:

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[18] The Link, Jan 1931, vol. 4 no. 1. P. 14.

[19] PAD: 81.

[20] PAD: 21.

[21] Mawer, 1925, p. ix.

> Then the question of the loss of words. Were this a true accusation, I should be the first to condemn my subject, of all forms of art perhaps the one I love best of all is that of poetry and the music of the spoken word. But far from finding that mime deadens the appreciation of words, I have always found that it makes words far more alive. Mime should always be practised as "thought in movement" and the expression of words in movement; so that by it words take on a new form of life.[22]

Ginner in her book *The Revived Greek Dance* (first published 1933) discussed the importance of Mawer's book to the re-establishing of the Hellenic ideal essential in the modern conception of Greek dance in the context of its post First World War "revival".[23] Later, by the revised third edition of her book in 1944, to the context of world-weariness and mental and physical exhaustion of the body during the Second World War. In her book Ginner responded to the prevalent belief that the arts had become separated and needed to be re-unified, inspired by a model of the Hellenic arts as a unity of body and soul. Seeking not to "imitate slavishly the ancient art, but to imbibe its spirit, finding therein an inspiration to create something which is needed in the art and education of to-day",[24] Ginner wrote about Mawer's *Dance of Words* book as an "invaluable aid" in this process. Interpretation of words was not the dancer's task or resultant art (just as true dance was not mere interpretation of music), said Ginner, rather the dancer rendered another art form, from a "sincere reading" of it. This was because the arts harmonized through their rhythms: "the dancer's rhythm achieves a union with every other art; the dance can be allied to music, poetry, painting, and sculpture".[25] Just as in interpreting music the dancer "dances the emotions of the spirit", in words "he will find that intellectual quality of movement which binds together the whole".[26] The other arts were there to help the dancer to "express the rhythms of the living soul", and to enable the goal of creating

[22] Mawer, 1932, p. 205.

[23] The Link, vol. 2/2, March 1936, p. 5.

[24] Ginner, 1933, p. 68.

[25] Ibid., p. 59.

[26] Op cit.

a vision of the artist's own spirit: "The most exquisite expressions are those when the spirit only makes the song, and the dancer moves in a beauty of silence akin to the silence of the stars".[27] Thus, for the dance to stand completely alone is the ultimate goal, because then it can be "most faithful to its inmost inspiration".[28] This statement becomes even more meaningful in the context of Mawer's commentary on mime and its relationship with words, and also because she believed that mime was "the art of the philosopher and the psychologist".[29]

After the Royal Albert Hall display by the Ginner-Mawer school on March 14th 1936, *The Dancing Times*, whilst commenting that the "mass effect" was "very fine" appeared to complain about the inadequacy of the expression of the Dionysian element: "The young ladies of the A.T.R.G.D.[30] sadly lacked the fire and spirit required for the Dionysian dances but it has always been a mystery to me why this essentially educational form of dancing should attempt to copy the Bacchic orgies with their very unpleasant hidden meanings".[31] Was the apparent fear of the Dionysian in 1936 due to the post-World War I context? Since dark forces had been unleashed resulting in destruction, anarchy and libidiniousness, so now was there a desire to avoid anything too disturbing?

Furthermore, in 1960 in the foreword accompanying Ginner's *Gateway to the Dance,* Professor Cawadias expressed similar views, albeit in another context of social unrest with new forms of liberation on the agenda particularly for women, saying: "Ruby Ginner, by insisting on pure Greek dancing has rendered a great service to the art and has stopped it from deviating towards Dionysian disorder and acrobatics… her revival of Greek dancing is an education in beauty. Her theories are founded on the true balance of the physical and psychical parts of man... and upon reverence and restraint".[32]

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[27] Op cit.

[28] Ibid., p. 162.

[29] Mawer I. The Art of Mime: Its History and Technique in Education and The Theatre. London: Methuen and Co., 1932. P. 205.

[30] The Association of the Revived Greek Dance. The Link was the magazine of the association.

[31] "The Sitter Out". Dancing Times, April 1936. P. 3.

[32] Cawadias, in: Ginner, 1960, p. vi.

Ginner's own statement in her section on "Dionysian Dances" seems contradictory: "Of all the dances of ancient Greece the Dionysian or the Bacchic dances were the most tempestuous, the most passionate, the most emotionally exciting".[33] She is describing the past and imagining what the dancing would have been like, rather than commenting upon revived versions, but she includes a photograph of "Dance of Maenads in a bacchanalia" which is of her own dancers.[34] [SHOW IMAGE] with a description as follows:

> Through rhythmic movements they released the whole physical being… and achieved an emotional excitement and delirium and danced themselves into a state of trance. The… Bacchic dances were an exaggeration from the normal, which showed itself most in tremendous… bendings of the body, and violent backward movements of the head. The dances were made up of whirling movements of great speed, leaping steps… a breaking up and changing of rhythms, an apparent absence of order and design, and in contrast to these, slow voluptuous, sexual movements.[35]

For Ginner and Mawer the Dionysian was an experience accessible through the performance of Greek tragedy, which Ginner wrote "exploits and expresses", reinvigorating people through contact with "a force that we recognize as raw, irrational, large, and… crucially… at a deep level fundamental to what we are really all about". Ginner and Mawer were aware of Nietzsche, whose works had been available since the early part of the century in English translation. Their knowledge was consolidated through contact with the works of Gilbert Murray, Jane Ellen Harrison and Havelock Ellis, introduced to them by their teacher Elsie Fogerty.

Ellis was a psychologist, sexologist and cultural commentator who published a range of well-known books in Britain in the early twentieth century and has even been termed the English Freud. He promoted the Nietzschean belief that dance is soul-revealing. In *The Dance of Life* (1923) he made this explicit, saying that "Nietzsche, from first to last, showed himself possessed by the conception of the art of life as a dance, in which

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[33] Ginner, 1960, p. 55.

[34] Ibid., p. 61.

[35] Ibid., p. 59.

the dancer achieves the rhythmic freedom and harmony of his soul".[36] Ellis' book preceded the publication of the texts from Fogerty, Mawer and Ginner which the argument of this paper draws upon, so it is a relevant backdrop of the context in which their thinking and practices developed.[37] Later, it was listed as recommended reading in *The Link* magazine by October 1931.

Ellis crucially also expressed a key role for audience. He followed Nietzsche's conception of life itself as a dance, and the belief that experiencing dance can be transformative: "Even if we are not ourselves dancers but merely the spectators of the dance we are still… feeling ourselves in the dancer who is manifesting and expressing the latent impulse of our own being".[38] This seems important to the wider social aims of Ginner and Mawer's work.

In *Poetry and the Dance*, Mawer defined herself in the 1920s as: "I was not then, and never have been, a dancer".[39] Did she then consider herself a poet, or a movement artist preferring not to take on the associations of the term "dancer"? The statement dated November 21st 1962 sent to the publishers with her last manuscript listed all her memberships and achievements. These seem to identify her more within the field of drama than of dance.[40] She was clearly proud of her poetic efforts and the way that they served her intentions as an artist; she was also a self-critical writer, acknowledging in *Poetry and the Dance* that she was only proposing the re-publication of those writings from *The Dance of Words* which had proved successful and could continue to be useful.[41] One of Mawer's poems, included in *Poetry and the Dance*, is even called "Poetry" and speaks of the activities and solace of being poetic, referring

[36] Ellis H. The Dance of Life. London; Constable and Co. Ltd., 1923. P. 61.

[37] The Link anthology October 1931 (vol. 4 no. 4: 73) cited Ellis' *The Dance of Life*; Mawer referred directly to Ellis in *The Art of Mime* as did Fogerty in *Rhythm* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1936). Fogerty also cited Nietzsche "The art of Life is a dance in which the dancer achieves the rhythmic freedom and harmony of his soul" (1936, p. 226).

[38] Ellis, p. 60-61.

[39] PAD: 81.

[40] Member of the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama, The Guild of Drama Adjudicators, G.D.A. (hon) lecturer to the British Drama League, Director of Drama The Ginner Mawer School of Dance and Drama, Author of 'The Art of Mime'.

[41] PAD: 81.

to poetry as a "she"[42] responding perhaps to Fogerty's statement in *The Speaking of English Verse* published two years earlier than *The Dance of Words* "We think of poetry as an attitude to life itself".[43]

As her colleague and co-performer Ginner reiterated the merits of Mawer's "verse-interpretation by dance" in her own texts.[44] The "moving to words" promoted by *The Dance of Words* will result from moving to the "exquisite poems for this particular form of practice", that of "The Fundamental Lines", and the book encourages students to write their own words for these exercises, Ginner claimed.[45] "If the expression be sincere…the dance will become the beauty of the soul made visible".[46] In her later book *Gateway to the Dance* 1960 Ginner again explained the method of working in a chapter on "Choric Dancing" using non-technical terms. She spoke of the "value of the interpretation of verse by movement" lying "in the fact that it gives significance to every step and action, and showing the dance to be a dramatic art" with "movement and speech united as one" as in the ancient Greek theatre.[47] But Ginner reduces Mawer's whole collection to one function — poems to be danced to. This was not the full extent of Mawer's vision for the purpose of those written words she had so carefully collated. Ginner by 1960 had placed dance in a more servile position to the poetry, saying that "the movement must not interfere with the meaning of the verse, but rather add to it and enhance the rhythm. The dancer must seek to create the picture that was in the poet's mind, to make his words visual".[48] This reduced the range of interrelationships that Mawer herself envisaged and worked with. Because Ginner's book was published and Mawer's book from the same juncture — the early 1960s — was not, the breadth and flexibility of Mawer's intentions became overshadowed.

By the early 1960s what did Mawer in her unpublished work reflect that the poems she reproduced — in hope that future generations would

[42] PAD: 224-225.

[43] Fogerty, p. vii.

[44] Ginner, 1933/1944, p. 59.

[45] Ibid., p. 147.

[46] Ibid., p. 148.

[47] Ginner, 1960, p. 203-204.

[48] Ibid., p. 208.

benefit — were for? The summary sheet provided for the prospective publisher of *Poetry and The Dance* states that the poems therein are "suitable to interpretation in movement". Her claim is that: "In a re-uniting of poetry and the dance, perhaps a virtue is to [be] found that may strengthen both arts to express the vagrant spirit of man as he enters new worlds of time and space. Lest his speech should become a series of formulae and his body a machine, may he retain the vitality of both by renewing the timeless Dance Of The Spoken Word".[49]

But the book overall was intended to be more than this. *Poetry and the Dance* was "intended as a guide to all dancers, speakers and those who would experiment with writing for expression through the medium of dance",[50] in "the hope that poets will write for this medium".[51]Although it was not published, Mawer's teaching established many of her practices with pupils, some of whom were the future generation of dancers and educators.[52]

In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche referred explicitly to that "dancing in all its forms" which should be present in a "noble education". Nietzsche's explanation of this as "dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen — that one must learn how to write?" is redolent in the creative practice of Irene Mawer.[53] Combining dance and words seemed to be for her part of that Dionysian state of perpetual becoming which she thought was the essence of an artist. The meaning and purpose of poetry for Mawer was not merely utilitarian. Poetry is not just to be danced to or a reflection of the dance in words. Rather, poetry becomes a form of inscription: writing "on", and "as", dance. Mawer's brand of interdisciplinary artistry and "natural" improvisatoriness — as it developed hand-in-hand with the "revived Greek dance" — should be placed alongside other forms of early modernist engagement with the revelatory potential of words connected to, and shaping, performance.

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[49] PAD: 104-105.

[50] PAD: 7.

[51] PAD: 113.

[52] See the NRCD, UK website concerning the AHRC funded project "Pioneer Women" which has conducted a series of interviews with former pupils from the Ginner-Mawer school.

[53] Nietzsche Friedrich. Twilight of the Idols, trans. by Ludovici. London, 1911. P. 59.

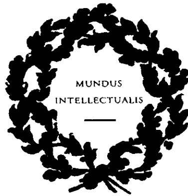
Appendix 4

Purkis, C. (2011b) Velona Pilcher and Dame Ellen Terry 1926. In: Cockin, K. (ed.) *Ellen Terry, Spheres of Influence.* London: Chatto and Pickering, 119-132.

ELLEN TERRY, SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

EDITED BY

Katharine Cockin



LONDON
PICKERING & CHATTO
2011

10 VELONA PILCHER AND DAME ELLEN TERRY (1926)

Charlotte Purkis

Ellen Terry's *Memoirs* invoke the presence of the American thespian Velona Pilcher in her sphere during her later years. They recall the same scene on the evening of Christmas day 1925 that Pilcher herself was to capture in the article 'Dame Ellen Terry' published in 1926 in *Theatre Arts Monthly*, the influential American arts magazine to which she was a regular and valued contributor.[1] The commentary added to the *Memoirs* for their publication after Terry's death by Christopher St John and Edith Craig described Pilcher as a 'young writer' and one of those 'lonely people who wouldn't otherwise see a turkey or a pudding' whom Terry had urged her daughter Edith Craig to invite.[2] The letter inviting her had come from St John: 'If you are not otherwise engaged we hope you will come here on Christmas Day about 6.30 to 7, and have some din-din and dindon [turkey]. No-one will be here except Ellen T. Edy, Tony and self.' The intertwining of experiences of that 'merry little gathering' in the upstairs flat at 31 Bedford Street within the *Memoirs* captures one of several known historical points of contact between these two theatrical women.[3]

Connections are also traceable through evidence of Pilcher's contacts with Terry's two children, Edith and Gordon Craig. Although the quotation from the end of Pilcher's article describing the actress dancing was added subsequently by St John, it is very likely that Terry would have known of the original article because as well as her contact with Pilcher, in the same issue there was a letter from Gordon Craig.[4] In examining Pilcher's place in Terry's circle, this essay offers some new insights into women's contributions to avant-gardism in the performing arts in Britain, notably in the period of Terry's final five years.

In her 1926 article Pilcher revelled in making a claim for her place within Terry's sphere. Her account is written from inside knowledge, strongly implying that she was 'one of those intimates who often see' Terry.[5] Pilcher drew in readers through a confessional style: 'And I think this is how we playgoers of today feel

in the presence of this high and gracious player of the past; before Her Highness we are all grateful guests. We adore.'[6] The article also presented a strong sense of living history and permanence with the sentiments expressed about the regal nature of 'our queen-mother of the theatre':

> That Dame Ellen Terry still walks above the earth with us, enters our playhouses, bows to our salutations, is part of us the public, sits with us as audience, sees what we see upon the stage, shares our aspirations for the life of the theatre, and is, along with us, a living London playgoer ... this is our proud inheritance, a splendid privilege that is ours by right of birth.[7]

Thus Pilcher connected herself to this heritage. Although outwardly American by virtue of her upbringing, her accent, her experiences of life and the theatre, she was in fact born a Londoner to an English father.[8]

The article begins by establishing that Pilcher was the guest at Smallhythe in the moment in 1926 which set the scene:

> Early one March morning Spring stepped into the garden of a cottage in Kent and performed a wonder for a guest who stood upon the threshold looking along a lane of six little cherry trees standing barely root deep in shallow snow. Behind one's back shouted and spluttered a fresh fire noisily greeting its daily ration of young tree's trunk.[9]

Pilcher goes on to evoke the path along which Terry would walk in precious and religious overtones:

> A shaft of strong sun came down from heaven like an annunciation ... and lo! living pearls poured upon the ground ... all the trees dropped jewels into the earth's lap. And nearly every evening when warm weather has come to this countryside to stay, Dame Ellen Terry – just such a lovely lady – does walk along this path ... It is pleasant to be meekened, and made a worshiper, before some exquisite accident in the life of the earth; to be so grateful for a wonder performed that we want to say grace.[10]

Nina Auerbach has commented on St John's evocation of Terry's 'mystic presence in terms of worship'.[11] The latter's description of Terry's last stage appearance in Walter De La Mare's *Crossings*, reported in the *Memoirs* a few years after Pilcher's article, sought to capture Terry's 'earthliness purged away by time' with 'the spirit of beauty' filling the audience 'with a strange awe'; 'A long sighing "Oh!" arose from them all, and the sound was a more wonderful tribute than any applause I have ever heard'.[12]

Pilcher's article is significant for two further reasons which link to the celebrity status conveyed on Terry. Firstly, it foreshadowed aspects of the public response which greeted Terry's demise in 1928. Secondly, it highlighted those depictions of her charm dominant in the culture of the day. The operation of Terry's status and image in Pilcher's tribute resonated with the press atten-

tion which met her death.[13] A key aspect was the emphasis on her continuing girlishness. Such commentary as that of the well-known critic St John Ervine established her image in gendered terms as he recalled the last time he saw her act, at a charity matinee at the Palace Theatre in Cambridge Circus:

> She had promised to 'do something' that afternoon, but as she entered the theatre, I felt certain that she would not be able to keep her word ... But when the time for her 'turn' came, she went through the pass-door on to the stage, and as she emerged from the wings, she was transformed. Her fragility and old age dropped like a shawl from her shoulders, and she tripped lightly on to the centre of the stage, as lightly as if she were a girl again, and an extraordinary air of youth and vivacity invested her ... After she had finished the speech she must have spoken hundreds of times, she gave a deliciously funny imitation of a stupid young man dancing with a girl. That was the end of her 'turn,' and she tripped into the wings, still young, still gay, brought back to life by the very odour of the stage.[14]

In defiance of outward signs of deterioration, Terry's youthfulness became a defining commonplace in verbal depictions of her old age which lent her image a sense of immortality.[15]

Pilcher also depicted Terry as a 'player of the past', but one who can still come to life in the present as described in the final dancing scene:

> Dame Ellen Terry began to dance; silently once around the table she danced – slowly, stately, delicately, pouring beauty from her bones, bearing her years like a burden of long-stemmed lilies, moving like a blossom of snow blown down to its rest on the ground – and then silently passed again out of the door.[16]

Although Terry was still alive, the ending of the article is valedictory. Terry's presence is revived in a flash through this dream-like moment experienced by the group late at night which depicted her as a 'pre-Raphaelite figure drawn back into life by music and mirth'.[17] Another defining notion was her association with the beauties and glories of nature. Pilcher, following Matthew Arnold, declared how her 'love of fun ... is of the spirit' and a 'radiant response to all that touch her is the miracle of her personality today'.[18] Both of these aspects are tied together in this passage:

> 'Yes, but, my dears, don't be too solemn!' – Dame Ellen would say if she should overhear us, and she'd prick the black bubble of our melancholy with some sunny thrust of wit, and laugh merrily to see it melt. For if the shadow of age comes fearfully into the vision of the young who watch, freezing the heart, freezing young blood, making the heart heavy with icicles ... it comes to her majesty with the sweet naturalness of all things in nature, and it is only a change into another sort of lovely life ... Or if now and then by chance you should happen to say something sensible, and say it simply, she will open her eyes wide to look at you, as a child looks at something for the first time, and you will receive an understanding that passes understanding.[19]

There is a religious dimension to the way that Pilcher presents her interaction with Terry, as if some kind of wordless benediction is being bequeathed.[20] The hint at her imminent passing, her change into 'another sort of lovely life', that is her movement towards Heaven, or beyond, reinforces this sense. Moreover the association of an instinctive connection between Terry as creature of nature and the frozen, melancholy young, with whom Pilcher identifies herself, also suggests the possibility, even necessity, of salvation for those who like Pilcher had seen active service in the First World War and remained war-wounded. Perhaps her reinforcement of pervasive notions of the dominant Victorian ideologies associating nature and femininity earlier in the article when she depicts Terry suffused onto the outdoor stage of her home territory is also a seeking after older certainties and traditions.

Theatrical interactions between Terry and her children, and thus between Pilcher and the family, are present within this article, through the device of incorporating recollection of a prominent moment in each of the Craigs' careers. The reporting of these moments reflects the role that Terry played in supporting her children's contemporaneous interventions into the world of theatre in their different ways. Concerning the occasion of Gordon Craig's speech at the opening of the International Theatre Exhibition, 1922, Pilcher commented upon how Terry and G. B. Shaw, who had been 'sitting chair to chair on a platform and whispering and giggling, and nodding their heads with mirth, like two ancient jesters shaking clown sticks at each other', fell quiet when Gordon Craig began to speak.[21] The impact of this remark is strengthened by Pilcher's confirmation that she had been at the event too, and that she had felt overwhelmed in the presence of '[t]hese two we know we love'. She reports how when they came into the public place, the audience for the event rose to their feet to 'applaud in a sort of frenzy of thanksgiving. (How one's heart thumps against the ribs even in the solitude of the study, remembering such entrances)'. Pilcher, by using 'we', put her readers with her in the moment and went on to construct a greater intimacy with them by stating twice: 'what is more, we saw them together. Yes. We saw them both.'[22] Recalling Terry's presence in the audience for Edith Craig's production of *The Verge*, Pilcher coins the phrase 'acting as audience' to describe Terry's behaviour.[23] Not only had Terry accepted the applause from the crowd, 'our long tribute', but she 'begged us with wide gestures please to watch what the others were going to do, and attend only to the play'.[24] By means of this recollection Pilcher here elevates her status to that of a family insider, manifesting her unique position in bearing witness to these events. Her depiction of Terry's actions constructs a spiritual as well as physical incarnation of the old actress' honoured 'greatness'; as she acknowledged the crowd they were in a state of quasi-religious awe.

Pilcher's partner from 1944 until her death, the writer Elizabeth Sprigge, recorded in her unpublished biography 'L'Idiote Illuminee: The Life and Writ-

ing of Velona Pilcher', how it was through Christopher St John that Pilcher had, by 1923, come to know Edith Craig, and then Terry. This biography, written in the years after Velona's death in 1952, utilized Pilcher's journals, correspondence, other remaining papers, memories from conversations and her library of published works, all of which Sprigge had access to but which now are mostly lost. Even without Sprigge's interpretation of events, based on then surviving correspondence between the two, it is apparent from the juxtaposition of St John's and Pilcher's writings in the new weekly review *Time and Tide* that they were associates.[25] *Time and Tide* was established in 1920 in the drive for progress following the First World War.[26] Its political engagement was expressed in the emphasis placed on the social function of culture. This question from the founder Lady Rhondda's autobiography would likely have struck a chord with Pilcher: 'The old ideas had failed us, but what exactly were the new ones that were to save us?'[27]

Pilcher's first article in October 1921 was of the Grand Guignol London season, and this linked her context again to that of Edith Craig because of the involvement of Craig's friends Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Casson, whose achievements are highly complimented by Pilcher.[28] According to Sprigge, St John and Pilcher met at a party given by Lady Rhondda at the end of 1922. By this time 'Velona's original outlook and provocative style had brought her to the centre of London's theatre life'.[29] She was also travelling all over Europe in these years, and presenting insights from these experiences to the public through her many articles for a range of journals and papers. St John was very supportive of her younger colleague and wrote to her on 20 April 1923: 'I am writing to one of the directors to ask her to use her influences to keep you permanently. You are too good to be lost. If I only could retire (commerce forbids) I would beg for you to be my successor.'[30] Although Pilcher and St John sometimes 'fiercely differed', Pilcher 'never failed to appreciate [her] scholarly mind'. Sprigge's account based on Pilcher's memories is that the two debated their conflicting views with huge enjoyment, both in person and in writing.[31] 'Dear Pilcher' was accused teasingly by St John as being unable to lose her 'anti-English snobbery'. This must be a reference to her enthusiasm for wider European innovations as far as theatre was concerned. Pilcher is also presented as having frequently challenged Craig on production issues, and this is likely to have been due to her vast knowledge of avant-garde European production ideas and techniques developed from personal experience on her many travels at this time. A play – Henri Gheon's *Le Debat de Nicolazic* (1922) in French – inscribed 'Velona Pilcher' is in the Smallhythe library. It may be that Pilcher lent it to Craig, or St John, or that she simply left it there on one of her visits.[32]

Pilcher and Craig would seem to have had much in common. Discussions of lighting particularly fascinated Pilcher, and she would also have been interested

in the community and little theatre movement which absorbed Craig, since these were strongly represented in *Theatre Arts Monthly*. In particular, Craig must have relished Pilcher's accounts of her life as a theatre director during the time of her association at the Gate, 1927–8.[33] They would undoubtedly have exchanged notes since Craig had been a successful director of Leeds Art Theatre in the mid-1920s.[34]

Pilcher thus became a frequent visitor to Smallhythe, one of those who 'motored from London' adding to the lively atmosphere recollected by Eleanor Adlard.[35] By this date Pilcher may have been a cross-dresser. Passenger lists of a voyage on 2 June 1923 from Liverpool to Boston describe her as: 'Sex male (not accompanied by husband or wife)'.[36] She seems then to fit into extant accounts of the Barn theatre parties and events of the early 1930s as an established part of Craig's circle of female and lesbian friends.[37] Sprigge summed up this period of Pilcher's growing friendship with the circle at Smallhythe:

> All the American in her responded to the agedness of the Tudor cottages, as her loneliness to the teeming life of relatives and friends gathered round Ellen Terry, and her artistry to the genius of the old actress and that of Gordon Craig whom she met from time to time at his mother's.[38]

On one of her journeys in 1926, Pilcher travelled with her American friend Hallie Flanagan, keeping her company in Moscow in October 1926, a sojurn which formed part of Flanagan's Fulbright scholarship tour. Pilcher is described by Joanne Bentley, Flanagan's step-daughter and biographer, as the 'amusing and easygoing Velona' who had 'made a good traveling companion'.[39] It is a pity that Pilcher's presence is not even implied anywhere in Flanagan's published account, *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre*.[40] But nor is Flanagan mentioned within Pilcher's articles based on that visit.[41] Flanagan had earlier met Gordon Craig in Copenhagen and he had suggested the sort of book she should write about her experiences, and even a title, *A Passionate Playgoer*.[42] It is likely she would have discussed this when she subsequently met up with her friend.

According to Bentley, Craig thought she should aim for 'impressionistic sketches of people, places, and theatres, and Flanagan took his advice'.[43] But when she had finished the Copenhagen chapter and sent it off to Craig, she became 'distraught when he replied that her words about him were sentimental and untrue'. Craig's opinion was that in striving, apparently, to emulate his own literary style, Flanagan's communication had become muddled. Whether this was the case or not, Bentley's account is that Flanagan took his remarks very much to heart and confided in her friend Pilcher. Pilcher's reply, in Flanagan's papers, exhorted her not to mind too much what Craig thought and to go ahead and publish because many others would benefit from the insights in the book.[44] But Flanagan did revise, apparently to Craig's satisfaction.

Pilcher's 1926 article confirmed the presence of the group of women at Craig's final Pioneer Players production of Susan Glaspell's *The Verge*, at the Regent Theatre, 29 March 1925. Earlier in their history, the Pioneer Players had been at the forefront of avant-garde experimentation with their 1916 production of Glaspell's *Trifles*. *The Verge* had first been performed by the Provincetown Players, of which Glaspell had been co-founder in Massachusetts in 1921. It is interesting to note that there had been plans for the company to come on tour to London at this point. Pilcher's knowledge and experiences of American theatre, captured in several of her journalistic outputs which reached beyond the scope of the *Theatre Arts Monthly* readership, was one of few conduits building English understanding of American modernism on the stage in the 1920s. Although Glaspell, in particular, was appreciated in England, many reviewers struggled with the intellectual challenge of her works.[45] The association with the Pioneer Players would also have reinforced the fact that here there were new political ideologies for audiences to confront.[46] Pilcher wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* on 29 March 1923 about the Provincetown Players in previewing the O'Neill cycle coming to the Strand Theatre recalling her season's subscription to the company back in 1917. 'Almost always there was something by Susan Glaspell', she wrote, and then in brackets reminded readers: 'Her "Trifles" by the way, was produced in London by the Pioneer Players several years ago'.[47] In a preview interview about *The Verge* in the *Yorkshire Post*, 3 March 1925, Edith Craig may have been referring to conversations had with Pilcher when she expressed 'the opinion of many Americans [that] Susan Glaspell is one of the most important of contemporary American dramatists' and 'in the opinion of almost all she vies for first place with Eugene O'Neill'.[48]

Pilcher became a director of the Gate for its third season, having hitherto been a follower of the experimental taste of the Gate 'salon', which had opened in 1925 with another Glaspell play, *Berenice*, first on the bill.[49] Glaspell's *Trifles* was also produced at the Gate on 12 April 1926, ten years after the Pioneer Players' production, but just before Pilcher was involved with the programming. But the Gate's new production of Evreinov's *The Theatre of the Soul*, which opened on 19 October 1927, definitely lay within the period of Pilcher's directorship. Edith Craig's 1919 production by the Pioneer Players of this play is mentioned on the programme note written by Pilcher.[50] Maggie Gale has noted how the Gate and the Pioneer Players were highly significant examples of the type of theatre-producing societies and small private theatres which blossomed in the inter-war period and which shared the 'ideological premise ... to keep theatre fresh and new, to provide a platform for experiment and to combat the monopoly of the West End managements'.[51] In writing of the popularity of Glaspell in England, Barbara Ozieblo has commented how at that time 'prestigious avant-garde institutions such as ... the Gate Theatre performed Glaspell's plays'.[52]

On 22 November 1927 the renamed Gate Theatre Studio opened in its new building at 16a Villiers Street. This was subsidized by the whole of Pilcher's existing capital. In her desire to go into an equal partnership with Godfrey, whom she hugely admired, calling him the Gate's Stanislavski, Pilcher even loaned him *his* half of the finance.[53] *Maya*, by Simon Gantillon, produced by Godfrey, ran to 53 performances and was a major success for the new venture. The production starred Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in the lead.[54] She was also a friend of Edith Craig.[55] A ticket for the performance on 22 November 1927 annotated 'St John' was found at Smallhythe as well as a programme, suggesting that she actually attended.[56] Another member of the *Maya* cast was Margaret ('Peggy') Webster, the daughter of Ben and Mary Webster, junior members of Irving's Lyceum Theatre company, and an American family. Margaret's mother May had been one of Terry's young protégées; and 'Peggy' was one of Edith Craig's, having been brought up in the flat above St John and Craig in Bedford Street.[57] Margaret played the part of a fruit seller.[58] In her family history she recalled the atmosphere at the Gate's tiny auditorium underneath the arches at Charing Cross Station and in particular the 'coffee and wonderful oatmeal biscuits' alongside its dedication to experimental Continental dramas.[59]

The picture drawn from documentary evidence and autobiographical testimonies by Katharine Cockin of London theatre clubs in the 1920s and '30s is of their identity as alternative even 'oppositional spaces' which Edith Craig and other friends would have relished.[60] Under Pilcher's influence the Gate as a 'studio' rather than 'salon' shifted its focus to that of a cultural centre and became a social space to meet, talk and read, with journals and refreshments on offer.[61] Gordon Craig's *The Mask* was on the list of publications available for perusal by members.[62]

The artist Paul Nash provides another point of contact between Pilcher, Edith and Gordon Craig during the 1920s. Nash, initially an acquaintance of Gordon Craig,[63] had joined Edith Craig in the League of Arts Dramatic Circle in October 1922. Nash had already been praised publicly by Gordon Craig in *The Times* for his design work on display at the 1922 International Theatre Exhibition: 'The best model is by an Englishman, Paul Nash'.[64] In 1925 Nash moved from Dymchurch, between Folkestone and Rye, where he had been based since 1921, to live near Smallhythe, at Oxenbridge cottage, Iden, near Rye. When Pilcher did not stay at the Priest's House, Smallhythe, Sprigge recounted, she lodged at The Bell in Iden. Some correspondence between Nash and Pilcher has survived.[65] One letter, dated 13 February 1928, concerns Nash's support for Mary Eversley, whom he wrote was temporarily assisting Edith Craig, and thanking Pilcher for his request to find her some further work.[66] This resulted in Eversley working as the assistant stage manager to Joan Mowbray on the pro-

duction of *Six Stokers who Won the Bloomin' Earth* by Elmer L. Greensfelder, produced by Peter Godfrey on 5–28 July 1928.[67]

Evidence of other connections between Nash and Pilcher exist which consolidate links to both of the Craigs. In January 1926 a woodcut by Nash was printed in *Theatre Arts Monthly*.[68] The illustration to Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* Act III was the only print he ever had reproduced in that publication and the timing coincides with when he is known to have had contact with Pilcher. This journal, which Pilcher was strongly connected to throughout the 1920s and in which she regularly published, also carried an article by Gordon Bottomley on 'The Theatre Work of Paul Nash' in January 1924. Furthermore, an article by Nash himself came out in December 1930, 'I Look at the Theatre', which referred to Edith Craig.

The establishment of a 'Gate Theatre Press', noted on the playbills of the 1927–8 season, was another of Pilcher's innovations. Her enthusiasm for woodcuts stemmed from the art sessions she had enrolled in at Leon Underwood's studio in the early 1920s, and were fuelled by her continuing friendships with artists whom she had met there: Blair Stanton-Hughes, Gertrude Hermes and Henry Moore. Pilcher's championing of the form and its application to illustrate theatre programmes and publicity also links her to Gordon Craig's practices. The press operated from Old Cheyne Cottage in Eastcote, Pinner, which Pilcher purchased using the inheritance from her godmother, Mary May Emery, who had died earlier in 1927, and here she printed the last seven of the nine playbills for the 1927–8 season. The first two had been from the Golden Cockerel Press, for which Nash had illustrated a book in 1928.[69] In the same period, Nash was considering setting up his own textile printing workshop at Iden.[70] And also at this time one of Nash's pattern papers was used for the cover of the deluxe reading version of *The Searcher*.[71]

Pilcher writes about her time at the Gate in her article 'All Work and No Play', published after Terry's death in *Theatre Arts Monthly* in 1929.[72] This is an important article for a number of reasons. Having worked at the Gate for over a year, Pilcher argued from experience that playwrights were not writing for the theatre. Declaring herself not only as an 'unsuccessful playwright' but also 'an unsuccessful play-reader', her self-deprecating tone was ironic but would have stemmed from some lack of confidence since she was encountering difficulties in her association with Godfrey: 'for of course if I weren't also one of the shipwrecked wheelwrights I should also be composing plays instead of criticising them', precisely what she was doing.[73]

Pilcher's desire for a playwright's theatre brings back to mind the ambitions of the early days of the Provincetown Players. Their building on Macdougal Street, New York, which Pilcher had frequented, was called the Playwright's Theatre.[74] She wrote as follows about what she calls her 'adventure' at the Gate:

> It became my adventure last year – for a year – to help direct an ambitious small theatre in London, and to choose the season's plays. As we happened to open with a little piece called Maya, kindly lent us by Monsieur Gantillon, we became so immediately famous that before many months were over nearly all the plays ever written came posting to that playhouse to be read with a view to production, and were regretfully returned ... ninety per cent of the plays submitted belonged ... forlornly to the past... All playwriting, but no play ... modelled on the well-made manner from which the rest of the theatre world is trying to get away.[75]

She spoke of 'the four prison walls that the ungrateful writer set up for himself all over again' – this is even when there is a flash of inspiration in the text. In this article Pilcher drew up two lists, one of the sort of plays which were not wanted and another of those which were. Her words are almost like poems dancing on the page:

> One
> Drawing room dramas
> Slices of society scandal
> Problem plays of provincial proportions
> Family affairs of domestic dimensions
> One-act precious pieces
> Plots about Who has been sleeping with Whom
> Poetry plays, good or bad, by poets too proud to be theatrical
> Novels (usually called *A Drama in Three Acts*)
> Tea-party pieces all talk, talk, talk
> And
> Talk, *Talk,* TALK by students of Shaw.
> Two
> Four years of World War
> Fraser's *Golden Bough*
> Epstein's bronze Madonna
> The Prose of D. H. Lawrence
> The Thought, as far as it could reach, of
> *Back to Methuselah*
> *The Mask* of Gordon Craig
> Einstein and the scientists
> The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
> The dramatic dancing of the Diaghilev Company
> The Outbreak of Peace.[76]

This 1929 article related to the content of a broadcast that Pilcher had given on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) third programme on 21 November 1928, concerning the future of theatre as she saw it, in a prestigious series entitled 'Aims and Ideals of the Theatre'.[77] *Theatre Arts Monthly* carried a report about the programme in June 1929 saying that Pilcher had 'said some extraordinarily invigorating things', and included extensive quotation:

> The newest and youngest aim in theatre is *to be theatrical*. We who belong to the fellowship of theatre that is called The New Movement wish to be theatre-goers, not playgoers. We ask to be called theatremen – not players, playwrights, painters or producers. Our ideal is the *theatrical theatre*[78]

Sprigge reported that Pilcher had advised listeners to 'be guided by *Theatre Arts Monthly* and *The Mask*' and to support 'the little experimental theatres', home of 'theatrical theatre'.[79]

That Pilcher's influence on the Gate continued into its fourth season, the period when considerable professional difficulties prevented her from continuing to work alongside Godfrey, is revealed in an interview he gave to A. T. K. Grant published in the magazine *Drama* in July 1928. The attitudes and expressions in Godfrey's responses recalled Pilcher's phrases, almost as if she had been there in the interview. Equally though, Pilcher's analysis in 'All Work and No Play' could also have resulted from conversations she had had with Godfrey as his colleague. Highlighting European and American experimentalism, Godfrey criticized the English theatre as 'behind the times', saying: 'It is different in the States. There the theatre is much more alive; they are ... anxious to do something new and not content with the old derivative stuff ... The theatre should never be merely drawing-room life'. Finally, he talked about the future: about the essential role film would play and the composite art form that theatre should become.[80] Pilcher's journalism in the 1920s extended to writing film reviews, and her own interest in film shows in some of the experimental techniques she was exploring as she wrote *The Searcher*. Godfrey went on to make a name for himself in Hollywood.

Smallhythe provided Pilcher with solace in the difficult years of 1928 when 'Velona had seen the rise and fall of her ambitions as a theatre director and was in the throes of litigation with her one-time partner'.[81] The latter years of Terry's life were incredibly productive ones for Pilcher, in spite of the issues emerging at the Gate. Although Pilcher determined to achieve success with her creative writing, completing *The Searcher*, arranging for its publication and securing arrangements for its premiere at Yale University, she continued with her established work as a critic and reviewer, affecting reputations and influencing what was being produced. Susan Bennett has recently reminded theatre historians of the formative role of this discourse, saying that such 'knowledge and perception' as Pilcher expressed 'plays a significant role in what becomes theatre history'. The work of female writers, in particular, has been overlooked:

> Notwithstanding the predominance of male reviewers and critics, women have written extensively on the theatre – often with a significant audience for their writing – and a more thorough knowledge of their commentary on the theatrical productions of their own historical moments would open up our histories to a wider range of

> accounts not just of the plays themselves, but, more crucially, of what these reviewers see in these productions.[82]

A further significance was that Pilcher's journalism was moving into a different realm from that of many other contemporary commentators, and was itself creative writing. Edith Isaacs, previewing the 1926 volume of *Theatre Arts Monthly* in which the Terry article appeared, had declaimed passionately about Pilcher's talent. Indeed, the way that Pilcher approached and interpreted life events as theatre and wrote herself openly into her texts made her writing itself 'performative', and thus her readers potentially also players.

Sprigge's narrative of Pilcher's domestic contributions to Terry's last years at Smallhythe refers rather to some rather haphazard, but green-fingered gardening which was much appreciated by St John and to regular tennis matches between the two:

> she would read and write, walk, talk and garden, enjoying the busy dedicated lives of this circle and most of all the unfailing inspiration of Ellen Terry. It was rather as if, having joined some small esoteric group, Velona still returned from time to time to the cathedral to worship.[83]

The archive from Smallhythe documents evidence of Pilcher's friendship and involvement. In an undated letter, probably from 1927,[84] 'Barney' – Hilda Barnes, Terry's carer – wrote to Edith Craig about her mother's agitation from no longer owning a car,[85] saying that she wished to learn to drive so that she (Barney) could drive Miss Pilcher's car.[86]

Sprigge has recorded Pilcher's recollections, drawn from memories still cherished twenty years later, of driving Terry up to town, and how Queen Mary had even waved at them from her garden in the Mall![87] She sums up the strong attachment of her motherless friend as follows:

> All Velona's memories of Ellen Terry were magical and poetic. She saw her not only as a goddess of the Temple where she herself so devoutly worhipped, but also as a spirit of the English countryside which had won her heart. And in some way too this wise and wonderful old English actress took the place of her godmother, the wise and wonderful old American philanthropist. Velona was romantic about these two rare beings, and when a few years later they died within twelve months of one another, she mourned the two of them together.[88]

In 1928, Pilcher, whom St John recorded had turned up by chance on 19 July, remained present for the duration of Terry's death and aftermath.[89] She then stayed behind at Smallhythe after the funeral cortege left for London. Sprigge's biography offers further text than has hitherto been accessible in retellings from Pilcher's 'The Marvellous Death of Ellen Terry' (the 'Chronicle' as St John termed it in the *Memoirs*):

> 'Smaller than ever was Small Hythe as I stole back into the deserted garden. So small. Dead quiet. Quiet as the grave.' Left alone, with her old yellow dog, to think not only of Ellen Terry but of 'a great old lady of my own who died in the distance,' and to look at her own small life of the theatre and dedicate herself again to truth, admonishing herself in Ellen Terry's voice, 'don't be too solemn, child,' and to realise that she had 'learned more of the great nature of the theatre from the marvellous death of Ellen Terry even than from her own life'.[90]

In the aftermath of *The Searcher* Pilcher, in some distress following the 1930 London production, returned to her grieving process to complete and seek publication of her account. St John referred to it in the *Memoirs* as unlikely ever to be published, 'I fear, for the reasons that it abounds in allusions meaningless to a reader unacquainted with what took place at Smallhythe in these days'.[91] St John must then have known of the reaction and rejection of Isaacs for *Theatre Arts Monthly* which Sprigge recorded as having been in 1931, three years after the funeral, because of the reference to its embellished literary style: 'She thought parts of the article were better than anything Velona had written but deplored "that trick of assonance which is becoming a mannerism, and the rhapsodic exaggeration of simple things whose rhapsody is their own simplicity"'.[92] But St John's verification of the value of the piece in the *Memoirs* has assured it, and Pilcher, a permanent association with Terry, because it was 'a precious record to us who were there. We recognise its truth.'[93]

Pilcher's friendship with Terry continued to impact on her life even after death. Not only did she spend several years mulling over this second article, she was also influenced by the atmosphere of the buildings and nature at Smallhythe in the choices she made about where and how she lived. Later, in the 1940s, she even considered turning the barn at her own farm, Shotters, into a theatre.[94] And after her first bout of cancer treatment in 1946, when she was in a happy phase believing herself cured, Sprigge has recounted Pilcher having had a startling dream in which, she recalled, 'I was in the theatre and joined others calling for stars ... Ellen Terry came and kissed me!'[95] Perhaps this was the prompt for Pilcher to resume contact with the Smallhythe community?

Pilcher was reunited with Edith Craig, St John and their partner Tony Atwood on 27 February 1947 at the 'Actor's Church' in Covent Garden on the occasion of Terry's centenary memorial. She then continued to attend this event on an annual basis for the rest of her life.[96] Sprigge, present on that occasion, recalled how Pilcher 'was welcomed by them as a kind of prodigal son' and how her response became 'tremulous with so many old memories revived, so many old contacts renewed'.[97] These remarks suggest that something could have occurred in the relationship between Pilcher and this group and that this may have contributed to her breakdown and withdrawal from the world of the theatre between the early 1930s and this later point of reconnection.[98] Fortunately

Edith Craig, who was to die soon after, had made it, against some odds, to what seems to have been an unanticipated and joyful reunion. Sprigge also recalled how on a European tour in 1950 Pilcher additionally re-met Gordon Craig, apparently by chance as he sat with their friend Marc Chagall outside a café in Vence. Sprigge described how they joined the men at their table: 'and how then we all talked!'[99] This may have been welcome respite for Craig who was leading a solitary life in Vence, claiming not to like visitors, according to Michael Holroyd's retelling, yet aware he was very much alone.[100]

It can only be speculation as to whether Terry and Pilcher conversed often, what might have been said and how they expressed themselves. But it is clear that Terry was present on occasions when Pilcher would have been in animated discussions with both St John and Craig: certainly at Christmas 1925 and probably also before and after, during Terry's last five years. The range of their points of contact seem to indicate the relationship was two-way, with Pilcher likely to have fulfilled more than the role of a merely obliging driver, and Terry likely to have been, on occasions, more than a distant icon.

At opposite ends of their careers, Ellen Terry, as Edwardian 'grande dame', and Velona Pilcher, as modernist 'theatre man',[101] inhabited and embodied distinctive theatre worlds. Nearly half a century apart in age, both were strong believers in the contemporary world. Pilcher's anecdote of Terry's attachment to the Christmas present from Edith Craig and St John of Stanislavski's *My Life in Art* – 'she is seldom to be seen alone or abroad without that big book under her arm' – confirmed her enthusiasm for remaining current.[102] Terry's role with the Pioneer Players and her designation as a 'freewoman' are frequently cited as examples of her advocacy for new developments in the theatre. Pilcher had emphasized in 1926 how Terry 'shares our aspirations for the life of the theatre'.[103] This is in keeping with Terry's own words on the last page of her autobiography: 'I am afraid that I think as little of the future as I do of the past. The present for me!'[104]

46. I refer here to staging and playwriting practices spread in early twentieth-century European theatre, stemming from Strindberg's Intima Teatern in Stockholm and the *kammerspiele* movement in Germany: 'a form of representation and playwriting which restricts the forms of expression allowed, the number of actors and the audience, the amplitude of themes': see the voice 'théâtre de chambre', in P. Pavis, *Dictionnaire du théâtre: termes et concepts de l'analyse théâtrale* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1980). The translation is mine.
47. 'We tried to give certain scenes the quality of a sacred picture, and we surrounded the space of the performance with a golden frame, in order to highlight the convention necessary to this play' (J. Variot, 'Les décors de *L'Annonce faite à Marie*', in Claudel, *Oeuvres Completes*, vol. 9, pp. 265–8, on p. 226; the translation is mine). In the 1912 French production, the scenic pictures were framed also through the movement of the lateral canopies, which enlarged or reduced the performing space according to the various scenes.
48. P. Claudel, 'How My Plays Should Be Acted', *Theatre Arts Magazine*, 1:3 (May 1917), pp. 117–18.
49. W. Archer, *Star*, 11 June 1917; he returned to this idea some days later in *Sketch*: 'The lepers' cave was a great piece of work, exhibiting, no doubt, the influence of Gordon Craig' (W. Archer, *Sketch*, 20 June 1917).
50. See Cockin, *Edith Craig*, 'The Long Shadow or Ellen Terry had a Daughter', pp. 6–27.
51. Gandolfi, *La prima regista*, 'Con la Purcell Operatic Society: protagonista assente', pp. 65–71.
52. From *Review of the Week*, quoted in Craig, *Gordon Craig*, p. 124; the italics are mine.
53. *Sunday Times*, 14 June 1917.

10 Purkis, 'Velona Pilcher and Dame Ellen Terry'

1. *Theatre Arts Monthly* had been founded in 1916 and was renowned in the first half of the twentieth century for introducing its readership 'to modernist ideas and practices in European and American drama and the theatre'. F. H. Londre and D. J. Watermeier, *The History of North American Theatre* (New York: Continuum, 1998), p. 300.
2. *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, p. 324.
3. E. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee (The Life and Writing of Velona Pilcher)' (unpublished MS, n.d.), p. 34. The manuscript was completed after December 1957 when her daughter moved into a house in Blisland, in which location Sprigge commented that she was writing part of this book. Permission to quote from this source has been kindly granted by Elizabeth Lumley-Smith, granddaughter of Elizabeth and goddaughter of Velona, and also sanctioned by Adrian Yardley, on behalf of the Edmund Rubbra archive at the Guildhall School of Music, London, where a copy survives. I am grateful to Drs Ewan Jeffrey and Steve Nicholson for their help in locating this invaluable text.
4. E. G. Craig, 'A Letter from Genova', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 10:10 (October 1926), pp. 712–15. The letter concerns a Shakespeare issue that *Theatre Arts Monthly* had published and proposes a Goethe issue, an American issue and a dance issue. Copies of various issues of *Theatre Arts Monthly* remain in the library at SMA.
5. V. Pilcher, 'Dame Ellen Terry', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 10:10 (October 1926), pp. 674–9, on p. 678. The article was later republished in R. Gilder, H. R. Isaacs, R. M. MacGregor and E. Reed (eds), *Theatre Arts Anthology: A Record and a Prophecy* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1950), pp. 261–5.
6. Pilcher, 'Dame Ellen Terry', p. 675.
7. Ibid., pp. 675–6.

8. Velona Bissell Pilcher was born in 1894 in London to an American mother – Julia Velona Bissell – and an English father – William Pilcher. After the early deaths of both parents, in separate incidents, she was returned at age six to the United States where she was brought up by her aunt alongside two cousins. After the First World War when she served at the Front with the Stanford University Women's Unit, Velona travelled in Europe and then re-settled in England.
9. Pilcher, 'Dame Ellen Terry', p. 674.
10. Ibid., pp. 674–5.
11. N. Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. 195.
12. *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, p. 308.
13. See Kazmier, 'Her Final Performance', which provides an extensive discussion of the media aftermath in 1928 and the ways it reinforced dominant Victorian ideologies of gender and nature.
14. St J. Ervine, *The Theatre In My Time* (London: Rich & Cowan, 1933), pp. 92–3. Interestingly, Pilcher incorporates reference to Ervine into her article ('Dame Ellen Terry', p. 675).
15. An example of this is in St John Ervine's accounts of meeting Terry 'I have a happy recollection of the only time I met Miss Terry. She was old and blind and near her death, but her heart was as young as ever ... her lovely eyes were dim, but I didn't cry because her lovely heart was still bright' (*The Theatre In My Time*, p. 91).
16. Pilcher, 'Dame Ellen Terry', p. 678.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 677.
19. Ibid., pp. 676–7.
20. Sprigge has commented that whenever Pilcher 'wrote of Ellen Terry she painted a religious portrait, though not a solemn one, and always set it in a background of that Kentish countryside' ('L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 66).
21. It is interesting that Christopher St John reviewed this exhibition in 'The International Theatre Exhibition', *Time and Tide*, 3:27 (7 July 1922), pp. 642–3. In that article she is a strong advocate of Gordon Craig: 'It is impossible to over-estimate his influence. If Craig had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him. Someone had to begin. Something had to happen before the desire for a change in the theatre became conscious ... I know that Gordon Craig can handle the human element in theatre design; other artists lack the faculty or the opportunity.' She also quotes Craig's introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition: 'It is ideas which we have brought to the theatres, not merely sceneries and pictures' (pp. 642–3).
22. Pilcher, 'Dame Ellen Terry', p. 675.
23. Pilcher also went on to discuss Terry acting in the audience on one of the Duse's last appearances.
24. Pilcher, 'Dame Ellen Terry', p. 676.
25. Indeed, the 'we' may even refer to Pilcher and St John among the audience members.
26. J. Dowson, 'Interventions in the Public Sphere: *Time and Tide* (1920–1930) and *The Bermondsey Book* (1923–30)', in P. Brooker and A. Thacker (eds), *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Vol 1: Britain and Ireland 1880–1955* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 530–51, on p. 531.
27. Viscountess Rhondda, *This Was My World* (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 301.
28. V. Pilcher, 'The Grand Guignol', *Time and Tide*, 2:43 (28 October 1921), pp. 1031–2.

29. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 31.
30. Ibid., p. 32.
31. Ibid., p. 33.
32. ETEC EC-H403 play, SMA.
33. The ETEC Gate Theatre file contains a leaflet about the Gate Theatre Studio with Pilcher's name printed on it about the 1927 season and suggests plays to be chosen from certain authors, including Gheon and Glaspell. EC-PAG 125/06/8, C63, BL.
34. Management roles building on this experience in commercial London theatres, however, were not forthcoming for Craig, who was working as a freelance director at this time. See Cockin, *Edith Craig*, p. 160; and also Holledge, *Innocent Flowers*, p. 156.
35. Adlard (ed.), *Edy*, p. 145.
36. Passenger lists accessible from the National Archives, Kew, and available at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ records/ passenger-lists.htm.
37. Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, pp. 532–4. See also A. Thomas, *The Story of the Barn Theatre 1929–1989* (Stone-in-Oxney: for the author, 1989).
38. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 33.
39. J. Bentley, *Hallie Flanagan: A Life in the American Theatre* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 76.
40. H. Flanagan, *Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre* (London, Bombay and Sydney: George G. Harrap & Co., 1929).
41. V. Pilcher, 'The Theatre of the Revolution', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 11:4 (April 1927), pp. 258–72; and V. Pilcher, 'Red Square', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 11:11 (November 1927), pp. 837–41.
42. Chapter 4 of Sprigge's biography is entitled 'A Passionate Playgoer'. It incorporates discussion of the trip to Moscow.
43. Bentley, *Hallie Flanagan*, p. 79.
44. Ibid., p. 94.
45. B. Ozieblo and J. Dickey, *Susan Glaspell and Sophie Treadwell*, Routledge Modern and Contemporary Dramatists (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 80–1.
46. M. B. Gale, *West End Women: Women and the London Stage 1918–1962* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 49.
47. *Daily Telegraph*, 29 March 1923, p. 13.
48. Holledge, *Innocent Flowers*, p. 147.
49. A flyer for this production is in ETEC 125/04/2, C 14/2, SMA, as well as a brochure about the Gate salon 1925–6 season: ETEC 125/04/2, C 14/1, SMA.
50. See A. Smith, 'Nikolai Evreinov and Edith Craig as Mediums of Modernist Sensibility', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 26:3 (August 2010), pp. 203–16.
51. Gale, *West End Women*, p. 48.
52. Ozieblo and Dickey, *Susan Glaspell and Sophie Treadwell*, p. 80.
53. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', pp. 53–4.
54. See H. Grime, 'Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies: Twentieth-Century Shakespearean Actress' (PhD thesis, University of Winchester, 2008); and also H. Grime, 'Ethereal from the Waist Up and all Welsh Pony Down Below: Re-examining the Ethereal Body of Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies', *New Theatre Quarterly* (forthcoming, 2011).
55. Some correspondence from Edith Craig is in the Ffrangcon-Davies archive currently on loan to the University of Winchester.
56. ETEC EC-D342, BL.

57. R. A. Schanke and K. Marra discuss the links with Edy and her bohemian companions: 'During Peggy's early years, three strong-willed, accomplished women emerged as role models for the young girl: May Whitty, Edith Craig, and Sybil Thorndike ... May Whitty had little personal time for her daughter. Her mothering was sandwiched between professional engagements and her many committees for the war effort during World War I. Edith Craig played an enormous role in the young woman's development, since she and her bohemian companions ... lived in the redbrick Victorian multidwelling at 31 Bedford Place [*sic*] near Covent Garden where the Websters resided on the top.' *Passing Performances: Queer Readings of Leading Players in American Theatre* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 221. See also M. Barranger, *Margaret Webster: A Life in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004).
58. *The Stage Year Book* (London: Carson & Comerford, 1928), p. 232.
59. Webster, *The Same only Different*, p. 305.
60. Cockin, *Edith Craig*, p. 154.
61. The Grafton Theatre, managed by Judith Wogan, of which Pilcher was also listed as a director in 1930, took a similar approach, as did the Watergate Theatre Club which she opened with Elizabeth Sprigge in 1949, and which even had a restaurant.
62. Similarly in 1930 the Grafton Theatre, where *The Searcher* was performed, offered access to *The Mask*.
63. Nash attended the 'Dinner to Mr. Edward Gordon Craig' at the Café Royal Sunday, 16 July 1911, chaired by William Rothenstein, and Terry was also present; see Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, p. 458. Causey puts the first meeting between Craig and Nash as 1913; see A. Causey, *Paul Nash* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 120.
64. 'Theatre Craft: The Exhibition at Amsterdam. Example For Great Britain', *The Times*, issue 42942, 30 January 1922, p. 8, col. A.
65. Later Eversley assisted Edith Craig at the Barn Theatre Memorial Festival, Smallhythe, 1934. For further details, see Cockin, *Edith Craig*, pp. 159, 173.
66. Transcribed by Anthony Bertram in October 1976 for Tate archive; originals held at the Victoria and Albert National Art Library, Ref. 86.x.27 35/7.
67. Gate Theatre Studio playbill, 'Six Stokers Who Own the Bloomin' Earth', by Elmer L Greensfelder, Victoria and Albert Theatre Museum.
68. On p. 65; reprinted in J. Greenwood, *The Wood-Engravings of Paul Nash* (Woodbridge: Wood Lea Press, 1997), p. 97.
69. J. Tellier, *Abd-er-Rhaman in Paradise* (Waltham St Lawrence: Golden Cockerel Press, 1928).
70. Undated letter in Victoria and Albert Museum, cited in S. Lambert, *Paul Nash as Designer* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1975), p. 7.
71. Curwen's specimen book of pattern papers had four contributions by Nash. I am grateful to Susan Doncaster for her attentiveness and experience in identifying this link to Nash.
72. V. Pilcher, 'All Work and No Play', *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 13:7 (July 1929), pp. 506–16.
73. Ibid., p. 509.
74. E. Aston, *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre* (London and New York, Routledge, 1995), ch. 8: 'The "Prisonhouse of Criticism": Susan Glaspell', p. 109.
75. Pilcher, 'All Work and No Play', p. 510.
76. Ibid., p. 516.
77. No script seems to have survived of Pilcher's broadcast in this series in the BBC written archives.
78. Editorial, *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 13:6 (June 1929), p. 396.
79. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 72.

80. A. T. K. Grant, 'The Gate Theatre Studio: An Interview with Mr. Peter Godfrey', *Drama*, n.s. 7 (1928–9), pp. 38–9, on p. 38.
81. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 67.
82. S. Bennett, 'Decomposing History (Why Are There So Few Women in Theater History?)', in W. B. Worthen and P. Holland (eds), *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 71–87, on p. 78.
83. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 66.
84. The letter, filed in sequence after the two referenced below, which is dated 20 August, seems to imply that she had by then succeeded in learning.
85. ETEC EC-Z3,057a, BL.
86. ETEC EC-Z3,054, p. 4, BL.
87. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 34.
88. Ibid., p. 36.
89. This may or may not be the correct version of events, since Edith Craig was recalled on 17 July from her work in London. If Pilcher had also known Ellen was ill and had come especially, rather than by chance, this reveals that the relationship was very close and that she would have been welcomed.
90. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', pp. 70–1.
91. *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, p. 336.
92. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 68.
93. *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, p. 336.
94. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 174.
95. Ibid., p. 149.
96. No record has been found of any involvement in either the Terry fellowship meetings or memorial dinners. I am very grateful to Susannah Mayor and Paul Meredith at Smallhythe for their extensive searches for traces of Velona Pilcher.
97. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 164.
98. No programme or text of the Grafton Theatre London production of *The Searcher* has been found at Smallhythe, nor any brochures about that theatre. There were friendship and professional links between some of the management and cast and both the Pioneer Players and the Arts League of Service but there remains no evidence of Craig or St John's attendance or interest. Eleanor Elder is the main link person between all these groups, and there is connection through Edmund Rubbra, the composer of the music to the play, and through the involvement of Margaret Morris.
99. Sprigge, 'L'Idiote Illuminee', p. 194.
100. Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, p. 564.
101. The term Pilcher had used in the 1928 BBC broadcast.
102. Pilcher 'Dame Ellen Terry', p. 678. This copy of *My Life in Art* published 1924 is preserved in the museum at Smallhythe.
103. Ibid., p. 675.
104. Terry *The Story of My Life*, p. 372.

Appendix 5

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Intercontinental Crosscurrents

Women's Networks
across Europe
and the Americas

Edited by

JULIA NITZ
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Velona Pilcher's Promotion of an Intercontinental Theatrical Avant-Garde

This essay explores how a re-examination of the writings and activities of a little-known Anglo-American writer, theatre director, and patron of the arts can enable renewed understanding and interpretation of the relationships between European and North American theatrical cultures after World War One. Velona Pilcher (1894–1952) was a significant contributor to the development and promotion of the intercontinental theatrical avant-garde, which emerged between the two world wars from a network of interactions across the continent and the oceans. Through a range of artistic, journalistic, and managerial work, undertaken from her base in London, Pilcher promoted transnational artistic networks to audiences in Britain and the U.S. Her public persona, outputs, and achievements consistently exemplify engagements with intercontinental dialogues at the point where the long Nineteenth Century merged into Early Modernist culture.

The discussion that follows of Pilcher's participation as a writer on and of performance, and as a co-director with various responsibilities at two interwar London cultural venues, provides an example of how the career of an individual can reveal the operation of a theatrical culture and the characteristics of a cultural sensibility at given moments. This investigation is structured through the presentation and analysis of two distinct areas of activity from the 1920s to the early 1930s. First, Pilcher's journalistic writings are evaluated in terms of content and form to consider the nature of her writings, the means used to communicate her ideas, and the impact of these ideas on her readers. Second, Pilcher's participation in theatre management and practice is tracked to examine and determine how she provided opportunities for artistic networking that constructed the conditions for interactions between theatrical innovations from different national sources to actually take place through productions of contemporary texts in performance on London stages.

Claire Warden's recent study of *British Avant-Garde Theatre* considers British culture alongside overseas innovations discussing interactions between avant-garde tendencies in the intercontinental sphere in terms of

"dialogues" across cultures rather than among defined "groupings" of people. Resisting viewing the avant-garde as a "homogenous category" or a series of movements or -isms, Warden addresses the emergence and development of experimentation by highlighting and evaluating moments when people from different national contexts in mainland Europe and America came together as an audience with shared experiences crossing boundaries of nation, class, and genre (7). As Warden points out, British theatre was a place for cross-fertilization between European and American experimentation. Warden's "pliable understanding of the avant-garde as concerned with leading, challenging and changing" allows her "to bring together disparate groups and figures and create a real sense of a British avant-garde" (5). The picture that results from this approach is of a mobile avant-garde sensibility with radical momentum. Maroula Joannou has emphasized mobility as a key characteristic of women's participation in constructing Modernist culture, and this is highly relevant to Pilcher's circumstances (1–2). There is also a resonance between Pilcher's creative development and Edward Said's formulation of itinerant intellectualism, which led to a shared "critical consciousness" such as that formative of the agenda of the early twentieth-century avant-garde. His figure of a traveler willing to "go into different worlds" and using a "variety of disguises, masks and rhetorics" can be tracked in Pilcher's life story (404).

Velona Pilcher played a significant role in transferring American thinking and creativity into European culture, and in cross-fertilizing British with American and European intellectual and theatrical ideas. Evaluating Pilcher's contribution demonstrates that it is essential to move beyond the Anglo-American perspective that has tended to dominate transatlantic studies of Early Modernist culture—not only because the input of continental European thinking by Pilcher is prominent in her work, but also because her work is representative of the character of the creative outputs from artists and thinkers who travelled to serve in the Great War and thus experienced continental Europe, leading to a cross-fertilization of ideas and communities in the aftermath of the First World War.

Pilcher was born in London to an English father in 1894. Her maternal family was American, and Pilcher was brought up from 1900 in the U.S. After Great War service in France 1918–1919, where she had run a recreation hut in an American military hospital as a member of the Stanford University Women's Unit, Pilcher undertook further study in Paris at the Sorbonne. Pilcher's life continued to be international in scope although London became her home base in 1921 when she transferred her studies to Leon Underwood's Brook Green School of Art. In the following three decades Pilcher's activities were rooted in British cultural life although she travelled

regularly to continental Europe and returned to the U.S. several times. Through the 1920s and early 1930s, Pilcher pursued the journalist's career that she had begun as a child, contributing regularly on film and performance to British and American newspapers and magazines. She also continued creative writing and authored *The Searcher* and *A Play of Light* (published in the first two of several issues in *The Island* journal in 1931). Pilcher retained the American friendships made in her youth and built new ones in Britain through her theatrical activities. In this period these relationships included her roles as co-director with Peter Godfrey of the Gate Studio, Covent Garden, 1927–1928, and as co-director of the Grafton Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, with Judith Wogan, 1929–1930. After World War Two, she returned to theatre management, developing the Forty-Eight Theatre Company at the Anglo-French Arts Centre in Hampstead with Elizabeth Sprigge and David Tutaev in 1948–1949. Subsequently, she opened and ran the Watergate Theatre Club with Elizabeth Sprigge, Jane Drew, and Elizabeth Denby from 1949–1952.

Pilcher's Journalistic Writings

This investigation of Pilcher's writings seeks to identify cross-currents between the various nationalist approaches to notions of the avant-garde that developed in the 1920s, looking particularly at moments on which Pilcher reflects and on cultural practices she interprets. The focus of the analysis is on Pilcher's awareness of internationalism as regards the perspectives she brings to reviewing the contemporary arts. Pilcher was more than a critic; she developed creative imaginative writing that moved away from reportage towards literary journalism. Of particular interest is the way that she wrote about the European innovations she had witnessed for readers in both Britain and America, because the subjectivities she expressed allowed her readers to share in these experiences. By demonstrating theatrical techniques in the writing style of her critical work, she extended the scope of reviewing, blurring the boundaries between critical and creative writing, constructing writings of artistry that moved beyond mere commentary.

Pilcher wrote for newspapers and magazines reviewing and commenting upon contemporary theatre and films she saw across Europe and America between 1921 and 1926. Some were daily papers, including the *Daily Telegraph, Manchester Guardian*, and *Observer*; others were the *Weekly Westminster Gazette* and other more specialist weeklies with a smaller circulation, such as the British political feminist journal *Time and Tide*, the *Landmark*, a British-based monthly magazine of the English-speaking union, and

the London independent trade film paper the *Bioscope* as well as the *Challenge*. There were also cultural magazines with a wide circulation: the American *Theatre Arts Monthly* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the British weekly illustrated paper *The Graphic*. By the early 1930s, she had abandoned writing for these publications and contributed only to the smaller specialist arts quarterly *The Island*, produced in London by Leon Underwood's Brook Green School of Art group.

Into the 1920s, journalistic writings reminiscences creep in quite often from Pilcher's American youth, for example, memories of time spent in the Greenwich Village theatre world and other articles reflect back on her participation in the Great War in France, but her focus in the interwar writings is on continental arts and theatrical experiences of her intense period of overseas travel as well as on London theatre and film. Because she was publishing on both sides of the Atlantic, Pilcher's writings collectively can be read as an important conduit for the transfer of knowledge from Europe to Britain and America. Examples from her range of writings on performance demonstrate how knowledge and information about theatrical events in other locales was conveyed to readers at a distance. For example, in 1922 she described for American readers of the *Christian Science Monitor* the "invasion" of Oberammergau when "every half hour from Munich brought hundreds of Americans" to watch the famous passion play staged there (Pilcher, "Passion Play Series" 6).

Pilcher's film criticism was one vehicle in which she displayed her knowledge of continental European connections to British and American culture, and in which she discussed British-American interactions in the development of the film industry. Pilcher showed her approval for the programming of new foreign pictures in a number of articles in *Time and Tide*, such as "Films for the Fastidious in 1923," an end-of-year round-up of her twelve top films. Apart from one English picture, *Love, Life, and Laughter,* these examples were American, German, Swedish, and French. Of these, Pilcher considered the Germans as the masters, and she waxed lyrical over Fritz Lang for the grandness of his ambition in *Destiny*: "Such brave challenging [. . .] is worth honouring" (35). She also cleverly cross-references her admiration for German film acting with her passion for German stage expressionism, chastising readers for their apparent lack of interest: "But watch carefully all the acting in all six of these German pictures [. . .]. O you incredulous ones who still do not believe travellers' tales of the vigour of the young German theatre!" (35). According to her partner from the mid-1940s,

Elizabeth Sprigge, the author of an unpublished biography[1] produced with access to Pilcher's journals and letters, Pilcher "observed that it was to America's honour and advantage—because of the good influence on her own films—that she showed German pictures sooner after the war than England did" (44).

Another article in *Time and Tide* published in early summer 1924, "The Theatre of the Outer Audience," a title that referred to audiences "of other races" (451), pursued more fully the theme of international theatre. On the one hand, Pilcher conveyed to readers her opinion that theatre in foreign languages could be appreciated by those who did not speak the relevant language because of the strengths of non-verbal dramatic qualities. Her article focuses on a London performance of the Yiddish Art Theatre of America:

> Seeing the Yiddish Players at the Scala last week, thinking about them, remembering the Vilna Troupe last year, remembering many other players that I have listened to without understanding their language [. . .]. All this has brought me to the brink of the dizzying admission, the most reluctant admission, that if the emotions of the play before me are acted with spirit and sincerity by players of stock alien to mine, I've not the slightest desire to understand the words in order to understand the players. The less I know the language the greater my enjoyment. (Pilcher, "The Theatre of the Outer Audience" 450)

For Pilcher this view was encapsulated in "the fervour with which actual blood and body can express foreign ways of feeling" (450). Her own "most remarkable experience" was the Berlin Volksbühne production of Ernst Toller's *Masse-Mensch* (450). On the other hand, as the article develops, Pilcher reveals a different perspective, drawn from her detailed knowledge of performances of the same plays in different national contexts as she deliberates how much more compelling have been the productions performed by native actors. A further example given is that of *The Insect Play* by the Czechoslovakian Capek brothers, which in 1923 had its English premiere. Referring to that production in English, in comparison with the Czech performance, which she must have seen based on her remarks, Pilcher complains: "How little all its speeches availed once the tortuous twentieth-century gargoylism that mounted them in Prague had been smoothed with eighteenth-century English polish. Only in that Ant scene—the one scene modelled on the original—where the shouted sentences were as inarticulate as they had sounded in Czech, did one feel again the stress of the Prague performance" (451). Her recent visit to Prague, as reported in the *Manchester*

[1] "L'idiote illuminée: The Life and Writing of Velona Pilcher," located in the Edmund Duncan Rubbra archive in Special Collections at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Guardian ("Prague and the Theatre" 16), also led to Pilcher's only piece in the more popular illustrated *Graphic*, where she took the opportunity to inject a continental awareness into the ongoing debate and appreciation for the London production of Shelley's *Cenci*, popularized by Dame Sybil Thorndike in a starring role. In this report, Pilcher shares elements of Karel Capek's production with Cubist décor by Josef Capek with British readers.

The largest body of Pilcher's writing from the 1920s that demonstrates her internationalist perspective was published in the American magazine *Theatre Arts*. This monthly was a vital channel for crossover between the English-speaking world and other theatre cultures and was at the forefront of intercontinental intellectual and artistic traffic concerned with new trends.[2] *Theatre Arts* was at its most influential during the years of Pilcher's career, and from the mid-1920s she became a key contributor to it, advocating strongly the new trends she witnessed in European theatre in a swath of articles read in Britain and America. There was a London correspondent and office and British subscribers. Pilcher's contributions traversed topics including circus, music-hall, and site-specific recollections in a variety of prose forms, from academic scholarship and autobiographical memoir to travel reminiscence and theatre review.

Her first article as a regular contributor was published in October 1924 and described in great detail the Burmese dancing for the British Empire exhibition held at Wembley. She noted that their travel "across the seas" was "quite as in medieval times, when the theatre was even more international than it is today" (Pilcher, "Dancing from Burma" 673). Pilcher is unabashed in presenting herself to readers as an expert analyst of style and meaning, and even suggests she is better informed about their heritage than the dancers themselves. Alongside her scholarly interest, Pilcher also conveys how she has been bewitched by them:

> No doubt these Burmese dancers would be amazed if I told them some of the things I had read in books about the sacramental and sacrificial rites with which their dancing once identified [. . .] And I am sure they would be shocked if I told them how in their booth they revealed that their art had been born in a temple; and how I thought I saw moving in their movements all the elemental passion of that superstitious ghost-worship that is still practiced in Burma, and all the sophistication of the Buddhism that overlays it [. . .] (675–76) These dancers from Burma have shown us more of their heritage than they are aware of. (678)

[2] Its founder, Sheldon Cheney, evaluated it at the time in his book *The Art Theater* (1925) as an important reference work for any student and as a "source of inspiration and knowledge," because there was no "important, progressive project" that did not fail "to find description in its pages sooner or later" (276).

Pilcher's interpretations were widely sought after by editors, perhaps due to an upbringing and accent that caused her to be considered more American than English as well as her time living in France. Sprigge comments that "Velona's interests at this time were as varied as her movements" (38).

Pilcher took a particular interest in English popular culture and could write about it from both an outsider and insider perspective. For example, she discussed the tradition of 'The Elephant and Castle Melodrama' in the June 1925 *Theatre Arts*, an article noted elsewhere in the issue for the benefit of American readers as covering the "working class pleasures" of music hall, movies, and the melodrama (Brown 752). In "The Children of Skelt" in 1925, she also wrote about old play bills she had researched in the British Library, and in 1926 she contributed "The Variorum Stowe," a long article on the history of theatrical versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* "a drama [. . .] that in half a century had strolled half way round the world" (226). This article made reference to American, English, Irish and Scottish sources Pilcher had discovered in the New York Public Library. Another popular subject she covered was the persona of the aging actress Ellen Terry, who was well-known on both sides of the Atlantic. Her account was based on Pilcher's personal contact with Terry in the last years of Terry's life.[3] Pilcher's tone is one of meek adoration as she witnesses the genius actress fading gracefully amongst the aged English Tudor cottages in the Kent countryside while simultaneously retaining her vivid presence on the London scene. Pilcher positions herself as an insider by birthright with the playgoers of London, claiming, "this is our proud inheritance, a splendid privilege that is ours by right of birth" ("Dame Ellen Terry" 675–76).

Many of Pilcher's other contributions fit very well the suggestion made by Andrew Thacker in volume II of the *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, that American Modernism championed continental Europe for representing a "beacon of aesthetic freedom to be aspired to" and promoted the European avant-garde because it was suspicious "of certain English aesthetic models" (6–7). *Theatre Arts Monthly* favored European innovation over any British models for contemporary theatre, and this may explain why she emphasized the wider European dimension even in reports on British activities and productions, such as can be seen in the 1929 article "All Work and No Play," her critique of the perilous state of English playwriting. Chansky and Brino-Dean, specialists on early twentieth-century American theatre history, attest that *Theatre Arts* aimed to inspire a new generation of theatre makers: "The audience [. . .] as well as the artist, had an active and creative role to play" (383). Although their assessment does

[3] For fuller details, please see Purkis 119–32.

not explicitly discuss Pilcher, her writings exemplify their argument, particularly as she depicts theatre practice, targeting readers to become involved in the subject of her reports, inciting them to also become the audience, through her eyes, of theatrical innovations, and even to see the world itself as theatre.

Pilcher's snapshot of "The Theatre of the Revolution" in Moscow is one of several examples where her writing style blurred the "boundaries between the autobiographical and the social, and between the critic and the common viewer," demonstrating an approach identified by Maggie Humm as a particular characteristic of Anglo-American Modernist women's writing (148–49). Witnessing events in Russia alongside Hallie Flanagan, who also wrote an account of her experience in *Shifting Scenes*, Pilcher was particularly inspired by the attentiveness of the Russian audiences. Her writing draws readers in, enabling them to witness the Russian scenario: "And now, Comrade Reader, come; come out of the square and into the crowded street and enter with me into the Meierhold Theatre itself [. . .]. WE have seats in the front row [. . .]" (266). Her article on "Red Square" constructs anyone present at the scene as involved throughout the day of the parade, but she places herself and her readers outside as onlookers: "A Dark roar rises from the throats of the city's citizens—opens the gates of memory this morning, unrolls like a strengthening storm round the four walls of Red Square. A husky human roar. Hear! Hear how she gathers! [. . .] Hear her and observe her" (837). It is the anniversary of the revolution and all the workers "turn players" and parade in costume. It is a "spectacle whose audience is all acting, for there are no spectators of today's performance—unless you count one or two stray strangers like myself, chance onlookers standing a little apart" (838).

In 1923 Pilcher published several reviews in the *Christian Science Monitor* on performances and performers she had seen in Prague, Budapest, Vienna, and Berlin. In her various *Time and Tide* articles, she also commented on specific performers. But her portraits in *Theatre Arts* were for a more international readership, and increasingly her approach was to turn both English and American readers into a responsive and empathetic audience for international theatre. For example, her 1930 article "A Star Turn," on the American female impersonator, high-wire performer and trapeze artist Barbette, whom she saw perform in Paris, is a creative re-inscription of Pilcher's experience aimed at literally bringing the embodied moment of performance into writing. She directs the attention of Anglo-American readers in such a way as to encourage them to feel present in the audience. Pilcher introduces Barbette through the persona of the performer in action, declaring how "she conjures us to look at her, flirting with the

fingers, luring with the eyelids, wooing us with attitudes that flow towards us weak as breaking waves" (1035). The responsive and consciously 'performative' language Pilcher was developing by the early 1930s was unusual for its construction of embodied visceral engagement through re-envisioning conscious interplay between perception and artistic creation. Her article on the celebrated Portuguese cellist Guilhermina Suggia in *The Island* (1931) provides a further example. By means of a writing style that mixed subjective confession, autobiographical memoir, and imagined collective engagement, Pilcher's discourse is about the writer as much as the performer, and is also reflective of the ability of writing to respond to and engage with performance.

Pilcher's Dramaturgical Work in London

Pilcher's contributions to developing alternative non-commercial London theatre demonstrate her commitment to the promotion of international Modernisms in the arts. Her managerial activities as patron, literary manager, and artistic co-director involved the actual construction of real creative spaces where artists could network with one another. The Gate Theatre built and retained a crucial place in the history of British theatrical Modernism. Mick Wallis's assessment, that under Godfrey's management this studio "pioneered the international theatrical avant-garde in London" is typical (170). In fact, Pilcher and Godfrey together produced at the Gate "one of the most remarkable programmes ever seen in a single season by any one theatre," as Norman Marshall evaluated it in his 1947 retrospective of the early twentieth-century art theatre, *The Other Theatre* (45). According to Marshall, the theatre aimed to give Londoners "a chance of seeing the amazing experiments that were being made in the theatre all over Central Europe and America just after the war" (50). In 1927–1928, the Pilcher and Godfrey season comprised the following program of plays: Paul Green, *The Field God*; H. P. Plumstead, *The Admiralty Regrets*; Nicholas Evreinov, *The Theatre of the Soul;* Simon Gantillon, *Maya*; Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*; Georg Kaiser, *From Morn till Midnight*; Jean Cocteau, *Orphee*; Robert Nichols and Jim Tully, *Twenty Below*; Ossip Dymov, *Nju*; and Elmer Greensfelder, *Six Stokers Who Own the Bloomin' Earth.*

The 1929 article in *Theatre Arts*, "All Work and No Play," provides evidence of Pilcher's Gate Theatre Studio experience from 1927–1928, particularly of a key aspect of her work as Godfrey's co-director, which was advising on the plays being produced. Pilcher's selection responded to the internationalism and modernism of her outlook. This reflective article was

written when the venture was going well; by the time it appeared, however, the partnership had folded.[4] Pilcher explained that the theatre's success led to the arrival of a great many unsolicited playscripts. She seems to have embraced enthusiastically and expertly her increasingly demanding role with its hands-on dramaturgical engagement, arguing that what the experimental theatre must do if it is "determined to produce modern imaginative plays in an imaginative way" is to "go forth among the nations and catholically choose the most splendid pieces that are here, there and everywhere, to be found" ("All Work and No Play" 512). Her co-director echoed this belief in an interview in *Drama* magazine, where he explained that the theatre was "a laboratory of ideas" and praised the pioneering spirit in America in comparison with the English theatre's "lack of enterprise": "There the theatre is very much alive; they are a pioneer country and anxious to do something new" (Grant 38).

To *Theatre Arts'* readers, Pilcher sustained the cosmopolitan credentials she was associated with:

> Let us not speak, if you please, of patriotism. For my part, I abhor the word; it is abomination; it is confusion; it is sin. There is no place for patriotics in any theatre's policy of plays. And as for nationalism, it is nothing, as all artists know. But listen, please; I had to learn something that went against the grain of my brain last year, and it was this: Internationalism is not enough. ("All Work and No Play" 512)

She went on to stress the need for plays in the voice of a nation and a people. Known for her advocacy of foreign plays in the programming she influenced at The Gate, here Pilcher argues for playwriting of an equivalent caliber to be written in English. She had clearly moved away from the arguments she had made in May 1924 about Toller's *Masse-Mensch* in *Time and Tide* as well as the view that theatre can speak to audiences regardless of verbal text and their ability to understand the language ("The Theatre of the Outer Audience" 450). Now she contends that playwrights (by implication including herself, described as "an unsuccessful playwright") need to be inspired by these international plays to speak for themselves and thus develop nativist Modernism ("All Work and No Play" 509). Her manifesto here, as expressed in the article, seems to follow from a strong dissatisfaction with English texts received at the playhouse in comparison with the more exciting writing she was promoting from abroad.

[4] According to *The London Gazette*, the partnership had broken down by September 11, 1928, and was legally dissolved "by mutual consent" on December 11, 1928 ("Advertisement of Cancelling" 8284).

The significance of The Gate and its internationalist outlook has more recently been re-evaluated by Jozefina Komporaly in *The Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*. Komporaly's assessment confirms this theatre's long-established historical reputation as "one of the most daring institutions of the inter-war British theatre scene," which took "risks in introducing new work from continental Europe and America to British audiences, and thus went against the grain of dominant indigenous cultural policy" (129). Although her evaluation of the theatre's mission is appreciated, Komporaly does not notice Pilcher's role. However, in the autumn of 1927, the well-respected theatre critic J. T. Grein of the influential and widely-read *Illustrated London News* had promoted the new Gate Studio and Pilcher's role as the ideal "Diogena" for Godfrey because she "has been a world pilgrim in quest of plays." This Grecian label surely referred to her well-informed philosophical outlook as well as identified her as a cosmopolitan world-citizen. Grein reported that Pilcher had a "formidable" list of plays already selected and representative of "a kaleidoscope of modern progress, which, but for the Gate theatre, might take years to penetrate to London" (192).

In spite of the omission of any reference to Pilcher, Komporaly does investigate the studio theatre thoroughly as "a translation powerhouse on the inter-war British stage" (129). She establishes that the Gate's importance was to enable the European avant-garde to have a voice in Britain, since by the time the Gate opened, the avant-garde had already happened. Britain had been reluctant to embrace the -isms of the European stage, and The Gate redressed this situation. In such a context, the Gate's stagings gained "major cultural importance" (131): "Overall, the Gate wanted to give as accurate a picture of European and American theatre at a given moment in time as possible and endeavoured to include the latest contributions to the dramatic avant-garde" (133). Furthermore, the Gate Theatre and its "agenda of intense European presence" (136) "played a central role in introducing innovative and/or controversial European and US plays to Britain, and in this respect, was in unison with practices in Europe" (135).

Pilcher also took care of the artistic environment of the London venue. She ensured that the cafe bar area of the private theatre club displayed magazines for browsing, including *Theatre Arts Monthly*. Her commitment to the latest trends in visual arts was also highlighted through her commissioning of imaginative wood engravings for the programs, particularly from Blair Stanton-Hughes. She encouraged artists to meet there and displayed art at the Gate in conjunction with a local gallery. This was a forward-looking model for the London theatre scene of that time. Publicity clarified the intentions of the directors for developing the venue: "The Gate Theatre has now an international reputation and remains the only advanced theatre in

England" (Subscriber's Leaflet). The approval expressed by Edward Gordon Craig in the October 1927 issue of the *Mask* indicates appreciation for the partnership of Pilcher and Godfrey, which was reaching wider continental art circles. Craig published correspondence signed "C. L.," which drew attention to an open letter from Pilcher and Godfrey seeking membership and laid out the attractions:

> In the new Gate as in the old, there is a Coffee Bar and Foyer always open to Members of the Studio after 4.30 p. m., and where playgoers meet and talk theatre before and after the performance. Theatrical magazines—The Mask being always prominent—weekly reviews and new books about the theatre and its allied arts are on hand for the use of Members. Writing materials will be available, and refreshments are sold at very moderate prices. (163)

Craig encouraged subscribers from abroad to help financially and to act as sponsors even if they could not visit the theatre: "All cheques should be made payable to The Gate Theatre. Don't for God's sake forget that. Write the cheque now. Write it for £ 100 and you'll feel awfully fresh and jolly. What's £ 100 to you? You needn't go and see the plays, you know" (163). In April 1928, *Theatre Arts* also encouraged Americans on vacation to travel to The Gate as one of several experimental theatres on an advised European itinerary (Isaacs, "The Audience on the Road" 296). Both of these examples show that the venue was being promoted toward wealthy individuals already committed to the arts. The reputation of the Gate as "highbrow" was challenged by Godfrey, who is reported by A.T.K. Grant, remarking: "We have had excellent support ever since we started [. . .] but there are still a large number of people in London who think that we are highbrows. We are not [. . .]. We are enthusiasts" (38–39).[5] In her contemporary study, Komporaly has defined the Gate's audience as "a unique community of a small but very discerning public" (138).

Pilcher's assessments of international theatre were put before audiences in program notes. She signed the programs 'V. P.,' and with each play took care to detail the international performance and production history of the texts and to explain briefly the context. She also made evaluative comment in introducing plays. For example, with reference to the new American play by Elmer Greensfelder, *Six Stokers Who Own the Bloomin' Earth*, she notes that "Odd things happen in this piece, queer things are heard, and many strange sights are seen—for example, angels appear, a ventriloquist speaks

[5] The reputation as highbrow was consolidated in the court case that was pursued against Godfrey and Pilcher in 1928 for allegedly offering public performance of plays that had not been approved by the Lord Chamberlain; in this case, they had to defend their private club status.

and a giant performs. Peter Godfrey will produce this play in a 'Constructivist' setting with a Cinematographic Commentary. This will not only be the first experiment of its kind at the Gate, but the first in London" (Pilcher, "Elmer Greensfelder").[6] The outward-facing public engagement documented for the theatre shows Pilcher to have been very well-informed and confident. For example, on the program for the October 19, 1927 performance of Evreinov's *The Theatre of the Soul*, she connected the Gate to a string of theatre venues in other European cities in explaining the recent history of the text and showed ambition for producing additional plays by him at the Gate (Pilcher, "Nicolai Evreinov"). Pilcher's commentaries consistently foregrounded theatrical events elsewhere that were in the vanguard of experimentalism. For example, on the Evreinov program, Pilcher contextualized the play through a brief resume of the playwright's career in Europe and America, stating that he is "like so many Russian theatremen, producer, dramatist, and critic"; she also mentioned another play, *The Chief Thing*, and its international credentials as "recently performed in Italy, France, and Germany; last year The Theatre Guild did it in New York [...] and next year The Gate hopes to do it in London" (Pilcher, "Nicolai Evreinov").

In her journal, Pilcher explained how Godfrey was The Gate's Stanislavski "senior director and producer of plays, and all that is done on the stage is in his complete control," whereas she was "the Gate's Dantchenko, selector of plays, and all that is done in the name of literature is in her complete control" (Sprigge 54). Her reference to famous Russian practitioners working at the Moscow Art Theatre harks back to her admiration for that institution which she had experienced and also exudes the self-confident optimism she expressed through her work at this theatre at the start of their partnership. This comment, although privately expressed, is a significant marker connecting her theatre work to the ideal of an international community of 'theatermen', pursuing theatrical theatre, which she went on to advocate confidently and publically in a British Broadcasting Corporation broadcast in November 1928.

On November 16, 1928, Velona Pilcher was considered enough of a key figure on metropolitan London's cultural scene that she was invited to speak on her "Aims and Ideals of the Theatre." The talk was part of a series curated by the distinguished establishment critic James Agate and regularly featured other major leaders of British theatre throughout the winter. Agate had become a key supporter of both The Gate's international programming and its experimental strategy at the point Pilcher became involved with the

[6] Programs are housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum Theatre Archive, London.

management. He had exhorted his *Sunday Times* readers to support the productions; his respect for their endeavor must explain why Pilcher was selected to speak on the BBC. *The Radio Times* listeners' magazine promoted the intercontinental perspective of Pilcher's talk in its coverage of the "little art theatre" movement, commenting that this was what the movement was "called in America" ("Aims and Ideals of the Theatre"). The talk targeted at a British audience was also listed in *Le Figaro* because the radio station could be tuned in to by audiences in northern France ("Chronique du T.S.F."). It identified Pilcher with a type of experimental theatre that, in its view, "definitely does not aim at the support of the general public, but offers a small group of students of the drama an opportunity to see interesting dramatic experiments unlikely ever to be produced on the commercial stage" ("Aims and Ideals of the Theatre"). A few evenings later, The Gate showed Eugene O'Neill's play *All God's Chillun'*, and its program note expresses a similar identity for non-commercial alternative theatre. The words sound like Pilcher's, although there is no stated author; although she had now left the theatre to Godfrey to manage alone, it is likely that she had prepared the Autumn season, and written the program notes, ahead: "The Gate Theatre itself belongs to the little theatre movement. It respects the playwright, who is the first theatrical craftsman, and seeks to offer him his creative hearth. It even respects the critic, who can interpret the theatrical movement if he will" (Pilcher, "Eugene O'Neill").

American avant-garde theatre activists regarded grassroots amateur activity as a sign of the renewed vitality in the American theatre, which followed from the thousands of local 'little theatres' building public participation. The 'Little Theatre' movement was one of the key foci of *Theatre Arts Monthly*, which regularly reported on it, and Pilcher was an advocate of this early twentieth-century trend. In Britain, the little theatre movement was similar to the one in America and comprised civic amateur groups and art theatre clubs, like The Gate, which relied on subscriptions rather than ticket sales. As members of a club with access to the theatre, the audience members were encouraged to mingle with the artists through a variety of informal means, such as taking refreshments alongside actors; the players received very small compensation or performed free of charge, due to the different performance opportunities this unique theatre offered and because the audience was considered to be so appreciative. The Gate program also followed practices in Europe by producing controversial contemporary plays as a way of challenging commercialism (Komporaly 135–36). It is a key example of that "other theatre" described by Marshall as "an immensely vital and progressive group of rebel theatres and play-producing societies" (14).

No script for the broadcast survives or appears to have been published,[7] but extracts are quoted in a favorable June 1929 editorial by Isaacs in *Theatre Arts*. In the regular editorial feature "The Great World Theatre," the event was announced as "Velona Pilcher defines Ideal Theatre" alongside comment that she was one of the series' "distinguished theatre people" (395). According to the report, the "New Movement" she espoused in theatre crossed national borders, and Pilcher had spoken of this movement invigoratingly as a "fellowship" of "theatremen" whose ideal was the "theatrical theatre" (396). This was explained as "a creative combination of significant shapes, sounds, rhythms, movement, light and shadow, mime, and dramatic speech" characteristic of a "world exploring the fourth dimension" no longer "confined behind a conventional fourth wall" (396–97). Sprigge adds that Pilcher "pointed out that the exciting current productions of Central Europe and the United States were commented on not in the theatre pages of the English press but only in the news columns," and notes that "she begged her audience to support the little experimental theatres [. . .] in order that 'real' as opposed to 'realistic' theatre should be achieved" (72–73).

Sprigge reports that Pilcher largely abandoned journalism at the end of the decade because she was working very hard on her own playwriting. Pilcher was deeply committed to the success of a drama *The Searcher*, based on her World War One experiences and published in England and America in a 'reading version' in 1929. This play became the focus for personal creative exploration of the theatrical trends witnessed across Europe and America. In *The Bookman*, Hermon Ould acknowledged its varied technique as "the fruit of her extensive study of changing theatrical forms in Europe and America" (44). And in the April 1929 *Theatre Arts*, Isaacs promoted it as a "tremendous opportunity for expressionistic production" ("The Great World Theatre" 238). *The Searcher* was first performed in the U.S. on March 20, 1930. Pilcher, however, was busy preparing for the 'world premiere' of the play at the Grafton Theatre and did not travel to the U.S. to see this performance. It was a lavish cinematic production using all the facilities at the disposal of the brand new Yale University Theatre, and with sets inspired by the Stanton-Hughes engravings from the reading version. An exchange of letters between Pilcher and the designer, Donald Oenslager, survives, which shows that she was aware of the Yale production, but since this was a private university event there was no acknowledgement in the British press, and no apparent influence on the London Grafton production, which was being prepared simultaneously.

[7] Some of the other talks were published in *The Era*.

Sprigge confirms that “it had been the intention to present *The Searcher* at The Gate when the right moment came” (81); but Pilcher needed to find a new theatre after the break with Godfrey. An American heiress, Mary Oliver, put up some of the money, and, in December 1929, Pilcher was invited to become one of the directors of the new Grafton theatre on Tottenham Court Road run by British Arts League of Service associates. There was wide international coverage of the opening of this new little theatre, which featured her play, on 29 May 1930. Newspapers in Australia and Singapore reported on it and so did the provincial British press; back in the U.S., the Grafton production even received a mention in the paper local to Yale, *The Hartford Courant* (“Female Journey’s End Bows”). Previews and reviews coincided with commentary about the theatre itself. Horace Shipp wrote supportively in *The Sackbut* comparing the theatre with ventures “in America and on the Continent” where “some of the most aesthetically important things belong to such small beginnings,” and he noted that the Grafton had a “somewhat Continental scheme of allying a café to its activities” (29–30). G. E. Fussell in *The Dancing Times* recognized “some influence from the more modern movement in the Continental Theatre, and especially the so-called Expressionist Theatre” in considering the décor (379). Pilcher appeared to have had quite an influence on the approach and atmosphere of this new little theatre, although her contribution in 1930 lasted only a few months.

Conclusion

Examining Pilcher’s role as a conduit for the transmission of American and European ideas across cultures through her writing and in the traces remaining of her management activities makes only a partial contribution to recovering her importance. She was an extremely well-connected figure with a large personal network of friends and associates across artistic communities. Reconstructing Pilcher’s participation in the European avant-garde as part of several connected micro-histories of artistic and theatrical institutions through re-establishing and re-examining her networks will enable a foregrounding of those connections that shaped theatrical culture and can lead to further investigation of its particularities. Re-establishing and re-examining Pilcher’s networks in more detail would enable re-consideration of the significance of several sets of under-researched multi-disciplinary groupings and exchanges within the history of transatlantic modernisms (such as the international network of contributors to *Theatre Arts Monthly*).

Future studies of Pilcher's role might also focus on her social presence. It is probable that a fuller picture can emerge from documents in a range of world-wide collections to evidence that, between the wars, Pilcher was involved in a host of diverse activities. Kate McLoughlin's approach as editor of a recent collection, *The Modernist Party*, suggests a further angle for investigations of Modernism as the product of intellectual and social networks sustained by individuals who related and were connected to others in largely undocumented ways. Seeking to move further than existing Modernist network studies—beyond little magazines and printing presses, coteries and salons, bookstores and publishing houses, tea-shops and restaurants—McLoughlin argues that "the party is often a forum for testing the relationship of the individual to other people" (2). She comments on the conviviality, creativity and playful theatrical qualities of such a Modernist party, as "extending patronage, forging creative alliances (and *mésalliances*), sparking productive disagreements, and enabling knowledge transfer" (9).

A range of other models in network studies underpin my approach in researching Pilcher's cultural participations. Durao and Williams's *Modernist Group Dynamics: The Politics and Poetics of Friendship* builds on Raymond Williams's influential idea of cultural 'formations' and demonstrates how historiographical methodologies inform Modernist studies in such a way as to support re-interpretation of overlapping career and private circles, expanding independent biographical subjects into a more dynamic field of network studies. Marina Camboni's European/American networking project is also concerned with developing wider approaches to historicising women's careers. The case studies in *Networking Women: Subjects, Places, Links Europe-America: Towards a Re-writing of Cultural History, 1890–1939* offer ways of re-interpreting overlooked women to also move beyond reconstructing them as individual pioneers. Here, selected public figures are acknowledged, rather, as "historical actors and cultural agents" (285). Camboni approaches their role in the era as relational and is concerned less with where such women fit into established groups than with "the continuous give-and-take between people and their languages as well as between intellectual, artistic and material products" (10). Following this conception, Pilcher's presence in inter-war culture can be identified as more important than her works. It is as an active participant in emerging Modernisms in those intellectual and physical spaces in which notions of the avant-garde were being debated, received and displayed, that Pilcher's historical place will most usefully be re-established.

Rather than presenting one network around Pilcher, placing her at the center and situating her at various moments within cultural dialogues reconnects her with many of the networks already identified as significant in

the history of the interwar years. What the preceding examination of interwar culture through Pilcher's career clearly demonstrates is that the range of theatrical activities she pursued with such energy and commitment contributed to the interplay of innovative thinking and practice across distinct national avant-gardes after World War One, which cross-fertilized to produce those nationally-inflected internationalisms that formed the intercontinental theatrical avant-garde.

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Appendix 6

Purkis, C. (2017) Velona Pilcher's literary excursions in the 'theatre of war' 1918-1947. In: Griffiths, A., Prieto, S. and Zehle, S. (eds.) *Literary Journalism and World War I: Marginal Voices*. Nancy: Éditions PUN – Université de Lorraine, 181-206.

Velona Pilcher
Excerpt

"Playgoer's Peace"
Theatre Arts Monthly, vol. 10 (1926), 742–45

A STONE stands in the heart of a city. Pale, solitary, still; a stone inanimate. Dead. Beneath it no bones lie; the shaft holds nothing within its breathless breast. It simply stands. Commemorate. Mute reminder of the mortification of man's body, memorial of the supreme humiliation of man's brain.

But one day every year this cenotaphal stone becomes a stage and before its monumental tragedy Theatre is born.

This is the morning of that day in November when all the clocks of all the countries of the Great Kill point Time's bony fingers – fleshless fingers jerking out minutes in derision, cocking-the-snook at our shame – toward the inevitable hour. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of every year of our life left. And as the pointing fingers move remorselessly, the men and women of this city move in hundreds and thousands and hundreds of thousands toward the common meeting place; move like a congregation gathering in calamity, thousands of thousands of mourning men and women passing through the streets of asphalt low between the buildings, out of the private houses into the public places, millions of men and women gathering together to keep the Silence of the stone. A slaughter stone. An altar stone. An image of the stone we each of us carry within us lodged against the life, settled like sediment so close to the heart that every deep breath drawn stops short

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against it. A sepulchral stone whose deadly pallor we must face today, though minds crack as we advance. A sacrificial stone. Confessional. Communicate. To its terrible embrace we come, we come, knowing we tryst with tragedy, yet mysteriously impelled this morning to come, to close together, to keep covenant with the crowd. Millions of members of one gigantic audience, we are moved by one emotion – we are rivers in spate sweeping to fathomless waters – we are mountains melting – we are living lava….

At last we stand still.

Still as stones ourselves now, waiting for the inexorable hour, we stand before this shapen thing pouring out our souls in death, emptying our lives into this uncompassionate breast, pouring our passion down its sides, bathing this trunk in a libation of our own heart's blood, breathing into it, breathing our own lives into it until Lo! – we bring this thing to life. Cenotaph lives! Like the Crucifix in a Christian passion-play, like the Altar centering an Aeschylean trilogy, like the Image animating the ritual of some ancient Mystery – Cenotaph lives. We, the devout audience, playing our part this morning, are performing a miracle; with the breath of our imagination we are giving life to the body of this stage of stone raised in the circus of a city, and Theatre is being born…. While our own bodies faint. Inspiring the stone, we expire. Inspiriting this altar, our separate spirits swoon as the crimsoning pillar drinks our own limbs' blood as we stand now, an audience inanimate, awaiting the inexpiable hour, the hour of our extremity. Close upon us it closes, as we stand dying; forefinger crosses the thumb on the nose of the clock as we stand shamed; and the seconds drip their drops of time as our hearts bleed white while the beating of the pulse is thinning, fainting, lessening, swooning, utterly dying away…. Now we are dead, done. Are we not gone? Yea, we are indeed, altogether ended. We are but still things lying deep as death under bosoms of mountains – we are sands resting in fathomless fathoms over old sinful cities – we are but stones that the seas sweep over….

God! (The Silence strikes.) *God! God! God!* Eleven times it must strike. *God! God! God!* (Seven times it has struck.) *God! God! God!* (Ten strokes are tolled.) *God!*

And who calls on God?

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The heart.

The human heart. Huge hammer strokes of the heart thunder through the Silence, great crashing strokes go shrieking across the cities that hated and screaming across the countries that killed; relentless sculpture strokes shattering, unshaping, reshaping, crushing the bones, bursting the breast, scattering the senses; beating brains into one brain and bodies into one body and veins into one vein until the breasts break open, bones fall away, bowels boil, flesh is consumed, and there is only in all the world one single living organ. One Heart hammering in one Body. Alive! Hugely alive. Rhythmically magniloquently moving with one emotion, singing out strokes in a passionate protest against death, every stroke a statement of life, a protest against the destruction of life, a confession of the sin committed against life, a celebration of the holiness of life, a statement of the unity of life….

The Silence ceases.

But Theatre has been born. In such an hour was she first born, and before just such a stone. A phallic stone.

And now we move away and break the Body back into its million members and withdraw into our separate selves and depart again to our private places. But purged. Because we have experienced Theatre. Strengthened. Because we have functioned fully, and for two minutes of eternity we drew a deep and unimpeded breath of life. And so it comes about that once every year at the intolerable hour of tragedy we who are passionate playgoers act as audience to our own passion-play, and know a kind of peace.

Contextual Gloss

Pilcher's article depicts the war as "the Great Kill," emphasizing her belief in pacifism, as she talks of the killing as "our shame," and the new memorial in London, the Cenotaph: "one day every year this cenotaphal stone becomes a stage and before its monumental tragedy Theatre is born." Not only is the stone monument with its "deadly pallor" an image for her of the dead stony heart "we each carry within us lodged against the life, settled like a sediment," but a thronging crowd features again, as it had in other wartime pieces, as a dominant image.

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The stone is not only sacrificial, it is confessional, something that people come to communicate with and which has a "terrible embrace." The theatre metaphors come back: this crowd is a "gigantic audience," and, she writes drawing her readers in, using again the religious imagery read earlier: "We, the devout audience, playing our part this morning, are performing a miracle." As in her *Theatre Arts Monthly* article, "Theatre of War," from the year before, there is resurrection through the stone, created by the power of the people themselves. People have emptied their lives into this stone. It is like a single mass grave: "Still as stones ourselves now, waiting for the inexorable hour, we stand before this shapen thing pouring out our souls in death, emptying our lives into this uncompassionate breast, pouring our passion down its sides, bathing this trunk in a libation of our own heart's blood, breathing into it, breathing our own lives into it until Lo! – we bring this thing to life." Fierce collective remembrance of slaughter brings the stone to life and with this she declaims that "[t]heatre has been born." Theatre is now a metaphor for life itself. It is also a public act. The mourners have become one symbolic body through the stone, resurrected as a group. The theatrical dimension suggests perhaps only a false contrived life awaits but in Modernist terms theatre was becoming seen as a means to construct alternative realities. The theatrical experience has been purging for the audience writes Pilcher: "And now we move away and break the Body back into its million members and withdraw again to our separate selves and depart again to our private places. But purged." Such people as these she declares to be "passionate playgoers" who "act as audience to our own passion-play." And as a result, they "know a kind of peace."

"Playgoer's Peace" also prefigures aspects of Pilcher's creative text published in 1929, which she was working on in the latter part of the 1920s: *The Searcher* drama. In these mid-career writings, the war was not a physical site but located within the body of the narrator; the individual voice and its suffering is significant even in the narrative concerning the crowd in this example. Thus liminality – physical and intellectual – can be seen to pervade Pilcher's constructions of the war because of the presence of binary oppositions on a threshold: life / death, trenches / tents, outdoor / indoor, presence / absence, dead / alive. For example, her

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concern is for the about-to-be-resurrected heart of the corpse: "and there is only in all the world one single living organ. One Heart hammering in one Body. Alive! Hugely alive." Constructing opportunities for empathy is a feature of her literary style. Rather than voicing "I" and "you" or "we" she expresses through plural "Is." A writer can use "I" with the potential to stand in place for many "Is" rather than meaning that they all become "we." Pilcher invites her readers to take a perspective, with a space constructed for another to perhaps see themselves. This is a change from how she writes in her early war reportage, which although subjective in terms of its personal reminiscence, is much more conventional in what it aims to deliver: conveying an account, local color and detail.

Writing which offers readers opportunities to engage in such a way as to consider their own identity is writing which seeks to act to shape the self, or other selves, perhaps by inscribing an experience for readers onto their perceptions through careful open questioning, or through poetry which offers a puzzle for the reader to interpret. In this article, Pilcher's writing plays with mind / body, cognitive / affective and subjective / objective dualisms. Featuring "lived experience" she highlights what Ronald J. Pelias has pointed to in his formulation of "performative writing" as "iconic moments that call forth the complexities of human life" (Pelias 12).

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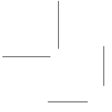
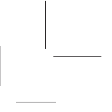
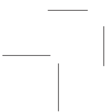
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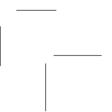

Velona Pilcher's Literary Excursions in the "Theatre of War," 1918–1947

Charlotte PURKIS

The war journalism of Velona Pilcher offers a significant example of how literary journalism emerged from the post-war replaying of experiences of war, which had initially been written about in a documentary way during the war itself. The transition from reportage, which provided information to absent readers, into evaluative reflection which, by contrast, was far more subjective, is traceable in Pilcher's work between 1918 and 1947. Serving in the Stanford University Women's Unit from 1918 as the ''Miss Red Cross'' who ran the recreation hut at the hospital at Bazeilles-sur-Meuse, Pilcher witnessed the latter days of the Great War and its immediate aftermath just behind the trenches of the front line at first-hand.[1] These experiences had a profound impact on her. Resonances from the war continued to invade Pilcher's post-war work, shaped her frame of reference and informed the pacifist identity of her subsequent writings. The presence of war is perceptible within those creative-critical writings on theatre which she developed from the 1920s–1940s, which anticipated her play *The Searcher* (published 1929 / performed 1930), and her body of writing exemplifies a cross-over from journalism into creative writing.

1. "Members of Women's Unit of Relief are Announced," *The Stanford Daily* 53. 5 (Apr. 1918): 1.

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There has not yet been any scholarly exploration of Pilcher's war journalism, and only limited attention has hitherto been paid to her other creative work and arts journalism.[2] The discussion which follows identifies her as a forgotten writer who experimented with creative literary styles in ways which locate her within Anglo-European Modernism. Her work is ripe for recovery and this essay contributes by relocating her unique perspective in the existing body of known writings by women on the war. It also functions as an introduction to Pilcher as a female writer of the interwar years positioned in the borderland between literature and journalism, which is a frequent metaphor used to delineate the territory of literary journalism.[3] The designation "literary excursions" of my title reflects Pilcher's creative experimentation with various types of writing which also enabled her to target particular agendas and to seek to match these to literary styles she was developing rather than to simply report facts and opinions. It is the remembering and memorializing of war rather than reporting or reflecting it which Pilcher captured through creative expression characteristic of a new literary type of journalism. On the one hand, Pilcher's journalistic writing from 1918–1919 contributed to that growing body of Great War representations, on the other it also represents a mental journey of coming to terms with experience which fostered imaginative response in more consciously creative outputs. Reviewing her earlier work to trace this gradual emergence of subjective reflection requires awareness of the literary creativity of her later work. Pilcher's desire ultimately to reach beyond reportage and to embody experiences as if theatrical performances encourages the reading back upon her work of literary traits which disclose that creative literary identity which pervaded all of her mature post-war writings. These writings are definable as "literary journalism" since they provide what Norman Sims has identified about the form, in terms of "the intimacy, subtlety, and artistry" needed "to understand the times" in which she lived (Bak and Reynolds 90). Pilcher not only writes about herself, and self-reflexively, but also increasingly

2. For some further introduction and analysis please see my chapter "Velona Pilcher and Dame Ellen Terry," *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011).

3. It is deployed in Jan Whitt's *Settling the Borderland: Other Voices in Literary Journalism* (2008), for example.

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for others whom she invites into her account. The literary tenor of her journalism is also characteristic of what is termed "performative writing" in critical response to theatre. Roland J. Pelias has constructed a framework for the characteristics he perceives in that type of art writing in his recent *Performance: An Alphabet of Performative Writing* (2014). The theatricalization of her perspective on the war is pervasive in the 1926 article from *Theatre Arts Monthly*, "Playgoer's Peace," which has been chosen as a defining example of Pilcher's creative–critical response to memorializing the war. The analytical commentary of the source text which follows below discusses the application of these ideas

Outline: Journey from Reportage to Literary Journalism

This essay initially considers the documentary journalism written by Pilcher when she was in her twenties and discusses how it contributed to collective reminiscence. These early writings on war from her period of service are autobiographical. It appears to have been a requirement for her to provide first-person accounts reflecting the war from her perspective in those articles she sent back to Stanford University for the alumni magazine *The Stanford Illustrated Review*, which was being read by funders of the Women's Unit for Relief in France that she had been accepted into. Attention is also drawn to stories of those who did not write their own accounts which are captured through Pilcher's observations of other people in the war situations which she recounts. Pilcher's texts conform to reader expectations by reporting on what she had been sent out to achieve, but using the term reportage to characterize her work carries connotations of literary reportage moving from the documentary account by means of literary techniques towards the territory of literary journalism. By the end of her year abroad, her article "Roads that Lead to Metz" reveals that she has become a powerful figure in her own narrative to the extent that she is not even ashamed to admit to looting for souvenirs. Momentarily relieved from her key role as recreation manager alongside her other duties as canteen helper, nurse, driver, mourner and searcher, and free to roam at the moment of Armistice, she became merely a tourist hunting for souvenirs.

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Examination of Pilcher's journalistic writing from the mid-1920s into the early 1930s follows and discusses how she continued to engage with the war. It was the darkness of war which remained a preoccupation and regularly resurfaced, and particularly in Novembers, with several memorial articles published to coincide with anniversaries of the Armistice throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s. However, a sense of the renewal of life also comes out. The simultaneously critical and creative complexion of Pilcher's post-war writing marked a change of direction from her wartime reporting. Emphasis is placed on the originality of her writing due to its frequent engagement with theatrical metaphor. In "The Theatre of War" Pilcher is a storyteller as she recounts a metaphorical journey marching away from the war. Storytelling has been identified by Eisenhuth and McDonald as the best aspect of literary journalism for its impact on the construction of "compelling narrative" which "celebrates detail, explores the perspective of the characters and taps into themes that are universal and thereby endure" for effective re-creation of real events (41). Other examples of Pilcher's work can be read as "performative" writing because of the ways she used textual devices which were "writerly," that is, which enticed readers – as receivers of and respondents to her vision – to participate in remembrance and to take up their positions, sometimes quite literally, as envisioned in "Playgoer's Peace." This approach characterizes her work as "literary journalism" due to the ways she has re-imagined her responses subjectively for her readers which extend the scope of journalistic response to the conflict. With the war an event in the past but a memory in the present, documentary response after the war concerned feeling, memorialization and grieving, and thus moved from reporting to a different kind of engagement. Hartsock's conceptualization of literary journalism fits with Pilcher's post-war work, in particular the attention he pays to the "writers' subjectivity and the motivation to narrow the distance between subject and object" (198). Pilcher's approach is akin to Hartsock's identified "increased engagement of the subjectivity of the journalist" which, in serving "to engage the subjectivities of reader," characterizes literary journalism (247).

As this essay demonstrates, there is a clear strand of self-consciousness liberation from conventional journalism running through her later war-

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inflected reminiscences. Pilcher's subjectivity grows through her writing career such that she is far more a creative writer than a reporter. She had tried reporting, reviewing and also scholarly writing for an educated readership before reaching her maturity as a writer. Aspects of all of these earlier articles can be considered in their connection to the discipline of literary journalism. For example, whenever Pilcher was documenting or otherwise engaging with lived external reality she showed awareness for the extraordinary aspects of what was apparently ordinary. As a reporter concerned to deliver her eyewitness accounts in an authentic voice, she always seemed conscious of realities in the plural; she was often polemical whether pleasing or challenging her readers; she was never seeking to be objective in the use of any external or concealed objective voice. This fits with John Carey's discussion of eyewitness accounts which "have the feel of truth because they are quick, subjective and incomplete, unlike 'objective' or reconstituted history, which is laborious but dead" (xxix).

Biographical Sketch

Velona Pilcher was a well-educated, upper-class Anglo-American who started writing and publishing as a child. English parentage on her father's side could have contributed to her desire to actively support the British against the Germans when the USA decided to enter the Great War by volunteering for war service. Pilcher had lived in England until she was six, so she felt European as well as American. Pilcher's decision to work with the Stanford University Women's Unit was likely also influenced by her Godmother, the philanthropist, Mary M. Emery of Cincinnati, a relative from her mother's side. Pilcher was working for one of the Emery charitable causes in Greenwich Village, New York, in 1917 when she decided to join up. At the same time she was also studying at Columbia University's School of Journalism (1917–1918), and had other newspaper experience behind her, so she was suited to become a correspondent for the unit. Alongside this, her connection back to Stanford, where she had studied 1915–1916 with the convenor of the Unit, Edith Mirilees, from the English department, contributed to her selection for this very select

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unit of Stanford women members and alumnae sent to France.[4] She was a successful candidate for a rare opportunity. According to Lydia Poon, entry into the group would have been nearly impossible for most of the undergraduate population because candidates were recommended; they needed to have French proficiency and also sufficient personal means to undertake voluntary service.

Reportage

The Stanford Illustrated Review, Stanford University's alumni magazine, which reported on the formation of the Unit, was the location for publication of Pilcher's articles from France.[5] In the articles she sent back to Stanford as part of her duties, she was not writing on behalf of the Unit as such, as it had disbanded on arrival with members scattered to a range of posts and locations contrary to expectations. These articles offer as much an autobiographical account of Pilcher's personal journey, as evidence of what some members of the women's unit did in the war. The expectation of the purpose of her articles is revealed in editorial comment, such as: "When a unit worker confesses to sixteen hours of work a day and then is good enough to share her experiences in such an entertaining letter the contributors to the Unit Fund will realize the worth of their investment!" ("Stanford Cheer" 140).

In this article, "Stanford Cheer at The Front," for example, readers also hear propagandistic language coming from Pilcher, who refers, to "perfectly equipped and luxuriously moving US ambulance trains" seen as far superior to all the other modes of transporting the wounded that eventually come on line as the numbers of wounded mount up. Some phrases used respond to the mission of the funders sending out these women.

4. Members are featured in "Stanford Women Ready and Waiting," *Stanford Illustrated Review* 19.7 (Apr. 1918); "Members of the Stanford Women's Unit" [photos], *Stanford Illustrated Review* 19.8 (May 1918): 300–1; "Women's Unit," *Stanford Illustrated Review* 19.9 (June 1918): 336; "On the Four Winds of France," *Stanford Illustrated Review* 20.1 (Oct. 1918): 10–11, 27–28; "Je Suis Prête," *Stanford Illustrated Review* 20.2 (Nov. 1918): 80–81.

5. She does not appear to have been a correspondent for the American Red Cross in any official capacity because no published articles by her have been located in any of their wartime publications. This lack of evidence appears to contradict what is stated in a number of literary year books from her lifetime which included Pilcher.

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Pilcher writes that "It is a great privilege" and makes self-reference to her role as "a queen bringing riches from Heaven," and further refers to how she is recognized as a Californian from "God's country," the land of Sunkist oranges. The men are referred to as "always … so brave and uncomplaining" (140). The American effort is rewarded because the men "appreciated and needed" the hot chocolate she provides, and having been ill herself (with influenza) and able to observe from her bed the efficient management of the hospital, she declares reassuringly to readers: "Any mother who has a daughter nursing over here may well share her pride with the boy at the front." All the "hominess" "so strange and far away" noted when she was sick with influenza is "oh! So well worth fighting for" (141).

The Armistice

In her article "Roads that Lead to Metz" (19 November 1918), Pilcher reports on the scene beyond the hospital just a week after the end of the war, on crossing the dismantled front line and reporting eventually on the scene in Metz just half an hour before the arrival of the French. There is a sense of release in Pilcher's writing, as she recalls departing for "roads that have been calling me for months" (190). Readers are reassured that life goes on: "the roads were still white and fair." The poplars remained in No Man's Land "still guarding a road of France – a road leading toward Metz." Because of the way she then describes these, her association with the side of the French victors becomes clear: they are proud, beautiful even when mutilated, still reaching high, leaning "Franceward." The victory has achieved something "by the signing of an Armistice – the whole thing was laid bare – and harmless." Pilcher records for readers what she saw for the first time after war was over, specifically showing that she had a sense of the greater war beyond the detail of her own lived moments. This exemplifies how her subjective voice was used to engage others in a wider war experience: "It was then that I really saw, for the first time, the mechanism of war" (190). She describes in graphic detail the camouflage fences and the impact on the community, which had effectively also been placed in a trench. She brings the moment into the minds of readers back home, who, like her,

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had never seen this scene of the effect of the war on local people's lives: "It was then, too, for the first time, that I saw trenches and dugouts."

In this article, Pilcher brings her experience of the impact of the conflict very directly to her readers, who she assumes to have been "reading and talking for four and a half years" about the war (190). Having set off on foot, Pilcher and her female companion are picked up by a variety of drivers, including "a jolly group of aviators, in a Ford," "a British truck driver," and French and U.S. trucks (190). Whilst some *poilus* (a term of endearment for the French infantry) looked at them "dully – others, seeing women, nodded and smiled." Her description of luncheon at a café identifies them as glamorous "conspicuously American-like," "the only women present" and that they were "surrounded by dozens of bedecorated French officers" (190)! By day two of her "French leave" (190), after a night spent somewhere not revealed, Pilcher assumes a protected position as the chauffered passenger of a U.S. colonel. This enables her to go looting in the French chateau of Baron Wangen, which had become a German HQ. The site apparently remained untouched until Pilcher started to collect her souvenirs, if her account is accurate in the way she conveys the scene: "I picked up a cigarette case – and gave in to the American souvenir-hunting spirit immediately…." A touch of humor implies that it is alright for her to be doing this and telling Americans back home that this is acceptable behavior: "In addition a German helmet was slung over my shoulder, and as I struck the road again next morning for home, I was greeted with shouts by every Yankee I passed. But they all understood." These remarks identify Pilcher as American – they could all see she was in Red Cross uniform. The shouts are presented as encouragement of her actions. Her participation is being acknowledged and presented as appropriate for a victor.

In keeping with this reading is Pilcher's note of a sign in German "No peace without victory." This reference conveys to her readers a sense of the alienation of the German presence, and of her separation from the conquered due to a comment about her apparent lack of knowledge of the German language: "so they translated it to me, who knew no German" (191). It seems unlikely that Pilcher was as ignorant as she claims here. Her observations of the villages on the way to Mars-la-Tour reinforce

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this "otherness" surrounding things German, and identifies her position with that of the Allied victors. In this borderland, houses are described by her as "French-like" imprinted with German street names and notices, showing that they had been invaded. There is a significant moment where Pilcher spots a lone German soldier – a "foot traveller" wearing their "long faded green coat and pan-cake hat," and, although she speculates about politely taking him captive herself, thus again allying herself with the victors, they drive on. There is a point where her attention is drawn to the different graves by the road from Mars-la-Tour to Metz, and here she disrupts the propagandistic tone of her observations. On the one hand: "Everywhere were statues erected to fallen heroes." On the other: "And in between … would loom the graves of fallen Germans." She notices these are "in fields bare and peaceful," but: "Strangely enough these graves were separate, standing out alone" (191). This moment can be related to Jean Gallagher's thesis concerning the propagandistic writing of Edith Wharton "and her female contemporaries," which is that due to their gendered gaze "the seeing female subject as eyewitness writer and as reader can disrupt the unified subjectivity that war propaganda aims to develop" (18). The Germans are always referred to in the article as "Boche" and "Hun," derogatory terms. Pilcher sees some beauty in their graves, commenting how "the iron cross shone" (209). By the end of the article, she questions whether the French arrival in Germany is as "conquerors or deliverers" (209).

Pilcher also comments in her observation on the grinning black face of a "darkey" and names the 92nd division, the National Army unit based in Kansas formed from African American soldiers from all states, noting from her colonialist perspective as a member of the American upper class, how this made "the incongruity the more." This face, which "peered" out of a "carven doorway" (191), is depicted as also alien in the context of this French village reinforcing her perception of the whole area as teeming with strangers. Pilcher conveys a clear impression of refugees and prisoners as well as the soldiers she identifies from various ethnic groups, and seems to rejoice along with the people of Metz with their "childish, primitive curiosity for a sight of these strange people from overseas," that is, the Americans, who were not yet allowed to enter.

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Pilcher is a privileged entrant into this world, and so she is a witness to the wild cheering instead for other "blackmen" than the Americans – Algerians in French uniform and the Moroccans, as she calls them (192). At this conclusion of her account, she seems mixed up in the confusion she reports from the Metz residents who have seen lines of Hun and now are seeing the march of the French down their street. She reports the locals' nervous "whispered mutterings" behind the overt shouts of "Vive la France": "où sont les Americains?" (209). This is the moment she makes a theatrical reference, as if it is still all a pretence: "As I stood, watching and listening, I had the same depressed feeling that an actor feels when, despite the fact that his audience cries and laughs in the proper place, he senses that there is something wrong" (209). Not only is there joy to report back directly to the American readers, but seemingly prosperity is poised and ready to return in Metz, instigated by the Allied victory. Her observation is that the inhabitants of Lorraine have had it easier than she expected: there are warm clothes and white sugar, for example. And to add to this, there is already peaceful rapport. "Boche" are seen chatting and mingling, they are not being treated as the enemy by these people. No sooner has she seen the girls of Lorraine dancing the Marseillaise in native costume than she encounters hordes of German-speaking children. A question is left in the air for readers as in Pilcher's mind – what was now the role of the French – were they the conquerors or the deliverers? The complexities of this corner of the front line are thus brought to mind but camouflaged through a spirit of joyous multicultural celebration. Her theatrical mind-set shows that she perceived people as actors in a drama. In "Roads that Lead to Metz" the previously warring groups she encounters are not mixed up in complex simultaneously-occurring situations which must have been the reality of that moment, but they are related as a series of tableaux vivantes, one by one in their self-contained realities.

Travelogue

If this example of Pilcher's war writings is treated as travelogue, rather than as documentary news reporting, it is open to consideration as a literary text rather than just a journalistic report because it conveys

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transformation. Pilcher fully adopted a persona recognized in Susan L. Roberson's theorization of a travel writer as a "journeying self" (10). From this moment at the end of the war and subsequently in her post-war recovery, Pilcher was an itinerant pleasure-seeker pursuing her passion for European avant-garde theatre and this is shown in her many interwar writings on the performing arts.[6] Norman Sims has written of the male Modernist writers John Reed, John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway, who "advanced the literature of war reporting as literary journalism by using the techniques and perspectives of travel writers" as a result of extensive European travel and noted also that there was "a cohort of others" (*True Stories* 88). Pilcher was one of these others who deployed journalism to bear witness to her extensive schedule of travel and as a mode of autobiography. In this period her writing shows that gaining of "new powers, new insights, skills, and identities" that Roberson has identified as typical of American women's travel writing (221).

Memorial Re-imaginings

Pilcher's war journalism reveals no dissonance with male accounts of war, with military or more "real" witness reportage from the battlefield; this is because she is not aware of it. Pilcher does not select, she simply reflects what she observes. Hers is no totalized vision of factual realities; she focuses on small things and emotional realities. But in her subsequent mid-career reflections back on war, there is far more problematization and memorialization with life and death discussions and a political voice; the literary memoir articles from the 1920s challenge notions of truth about the war which her experiences and reactions to them had opened up. Pilcher's memoirs are less mere memories and more reimaginings. However, there is a strong sense that she is writing for the past more than the future, because her memories are grounded in the past war and its trauma and grief. Even where she builds in resurrection narratives there is no explicit narrative of any

6. For further context please see my article "Velona Pilcher's Promotion of an Intercontinental Theatrical Avant-Garde," *Intercontinental Crosscurrents,* ed. Julia Nitz, Sandy Petrolionus and Teresa Schoen (Heidelberg: Universitaetsverlag Winter 2016).

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new world that may come. Perhaps this is because Pilcher saw it as up to the reader to construct their own new world through their own coming-to-terms?[7]

The content of the 1918 "Roads that Lead to Metz" reappears and is reflected back on in Pilcher's 1925 article for *Theatre Arts Monthly*, "The Theatre of War." Pilcher became a regular contributor to this prominent American magazine, distributed and read also in Europe. She makes connections from her war memories to the world of the theatre which suggests, perhaps, that one of the ways she had coped with war experience was to view the whole context as staged and unreal. As manager of the recreation hut at the hospital, she would have been daily confronted with the reality / fantasy opposition. Pilcher's article "The Theatre of War" (1925) concerns memory but of a coming back to life; something that could not be reflected upon until later. Remembering the moment at the end of the war in the "Roads that Lead to Metz" Pilcher here constructs a resurrection story. It is a particular morning in November 1918 "unlike so many more others" because "we were coming back to life." Switching from the construction "I" to "we" is significant in her post-war writing. It is apparent from that earlier article that she was not alone but with Betty Andrews, a companion remaining from the broken-up Stanford unit, but the journey portrayed is Pilcher's alone.

To the 1925 readers, however, the "we" might be assumed to be others reading who had also experienced war, but the start of the article in fact reveals the "we" to be "my body and I" and the presence of anyone else at that moment is now denied: "My body and I were walking alone along a crooked road in France in the middle of November seven years ago, and my feet – my body's feet! – were thudding … good, good, good, good … as they crunched the wet crust." This is the writing of a storyteller with a captive audience. Physicality is omnipresent – the writer is an actor performing, re-enacting. Her body seems independent in a way but then seen to be under the control of the mind as if the body were dead, then

7. It was only after what she saw as the failure of her play *The Searcher* in production (1930), when she felt that the devil had been reawakened by the re-creation of the war and invaded the theatre, that she could begin to look beyond in a new way. That process is explored in an unpublished biography written by her partner Elizabeth Sprigge, who tracks this metaphorically as a journey from darkness into light.

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resurrected to new life. There is a religious dimension coming through in the ecstatic performance style animating Pilcher's writing. "Good" becomes "God," and the last phrase of this first paragraph is written as if in a parable: "Then I arose, and took up my body, and we walked on very swiftly along the miraculous road."

Pilcher's main purpose in this article is to unpack the metaphorical notion of "theatre of war" and to relate this to her creative process. The emphasis on walking becomes a means to construct a place alongside her for the reader. Unlike "Roads to that Lead to Metz," where we have been told she was not alone, here she is, but readers remembering and grieving can stride alongside, if they are ready for the challenge she poses. Recently there has been a strong interest in walking as a means for contemporary performance artists to generate autobiography by using physical experience to stimulate conversation which can become text. Words arising from specific moments which have been felt and lived connect to a poetic rather than intellectual impulse to create a representation of the experience in words. Thus Pilcher's brief but fascinating article incorporating a pilgrimage away from the war perhaps inscribes what Barbara Green has described as an autobiographical gesture which has become a spectacular form of confession. Her analysis of early 20th-century female spectacularity observed subversive meaning in the actions of the suffragettes, but Green's notion of confession is a broader idea applicable to the crossing of generic borders blending the documentary with the performative, supporting dramatic display as self-representation. Is Pilcher's feminist identity being produced here through her decisive earth-shattering walking in that No Man's Land which has remained in her imagination? It is more certain that her spirituality is being presented as newly awakened and ready for a new world. The re-imagining of this article foreshadowed what was to become her play *The Searcher,* and as her biographer Elizabeth Sprigge remarked, much of her journalism was a preparation for that 1929 playtext and its condemnation of war, with the exception of "Playgoer's Peace," which Sprigge identified as "a forerunner of her second, never finished work for the theatre, A Play of Light" (50).

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Post-war Reflections and Armistice Days

Pilcher's article for *The Guardian*, "The Eleventh Hour," 11 November 1924, is an extremely subjective autobiographical piece. Pilcher is alone in her memories and talks of the day to come. Published on Armistice day but written before, the reader is carried by Pilcher through her process of transition into the events from previous years' Armistice commemoration days. The article responds to a report she had made to *Stanford Illustrated Review* entitled "A Regular Day at a Red Cross Hut," where she had written of crowding as a characteristic element of war experience and in which she had also recounted the story of hot chocolate distribution for the first time (140). In 1924, Pilcher writes of wanting to be alone and not be back in a mass, with what seems to be a note or theatrical aside to herself: "I shall not keep the silence with the crowd in the street to-morrow. Let me be alone." After recounting some memories, by part two of her article she does depict herself there standing in the street: "I ask why I have come." With this statement she is perhaps assuming that readers may be thinking should they or shouldn't they join in the memorial events for another year – this is now six years after the end of the war. Her questioning perhaps resonates with readers, and with social compulsion to remember and to stand up and be seen to be remembering: "Why does one keep covenant with the crowd? It's orders. Army orders. That army of men and women passing and passing and passing the window on route to the common meeting place is a spate. Who shall stand still against it?" This rhetorical question is provocative. Not only is the sea of bodies a "living lava," but to be alone, she suggests would mean not being able "to balance brain or body." After some religious incantation, she is one with the crowd. But also defiant: "… the silence is coming. We feel our bodies stiffen against each other as we stand, flank to flank, poised to receive pain. Then I find my hand is raised, clenched in protest and blame" (18). Catching sight of another face, perhaps implying that her sense of protest is being met or could be met by the reader, Pilcher returns to her memory of a personal interaction with an individual from the enemy, with whom she exchanged a similar moment of contact. Disobedience lies at the core of this article but compliance is the greater pull.

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The Interplay of War as a Theme and Drama

In a July 1929 *Theatre Arts Monthly* article entitled "All Work and No Play," Pilcher discusses contemporary play-writing and how to produce "modern, imaginative plays." Such new plays should reflect key aspects of the modern age and prominent on her list are "Four years of world war" and "The Outbreak of Peace" (516). Pilcher's use of language to champion new writing also reveals the influence of the background of war. Here she declares that the experimental theatre must "go forth among the nations" speaking never of patriotism. War has impacted her thinking to the extent that she has become an internationalist. "For my part," she declares, "I abhor the word [patriotism]; it is abomination; it is confusion; it is sin … nationalism … is nothing, as all artists know" (512). Alongside this content, it is the polemic about writing woven into this article that becomes interesting when reading Pilcher's work from the perspective of literary journalism. Using language with battle imagery, such as "side," "honour and glory," "enemies" and "assault," Pilcher declaims as follows where she believes the future of new writing will lie, and there is a clear resonance between her poetic text here and the agenda of literary creative–critical writing:

> Words! Words?
> Why certainly. Words.
> Big words. Brave words. Words are what are wanted. Not talk, no. Nor parts of speech unrelated to the art of writing. Nor amateur reporting. But words of worth, wit and splendour….
> Far from weakening the writer, to forbid weak words is to strengthen his style, to make mere reporting unnecessary, to sustain in every way the importance of what is said. It is for this that the theatrical theatre has been busy about getting its liberty. Words that have wings, language that is proud and beautiful, with tang and sting; too strong to suffer weakness and too swift to stop and chatter – that is what players and producers and playgoers of today are praying for. (514)

Creative Journalistic Response to War: The Early 1930s

In 1931 even after what she perceived as an unsuccessful run of her play *The Searcher*, when it might be assumed that she would therefore

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leave her dark visions of the field hospital behind, Pilcher produced another commemorative article for *The Island* magazine. This publication was the product of an artistic collaboration of a group of Leon Underwood's pupils and associates edited by Josef Bard. Pilcher's opening paragraph evokes a highly emotional mood for the remembrance commemoration that year and interweaves lines which are a poem, set apart in italics:

> The heart is hard this morning, hardened to hold the dead weight of this hour. Only a moment and the silence starts falling. *Hold hard, the hurt is coming.* The hairs of the earth are erect with frost, as if they too were frightened; each leaf of grass is listening, stiffened against the sun. *Stand still, the hush will be heavy.* Firm as the field underfoot must the memory be maintained for these two minutes. Ready? Steady. *Listen hard, the hush is here.* (25–26)

Time stands still, and the hour is "dead." The earth is seen as a body; this earth then comes alive with ghosts: the ghosts are of the war horses. The next use of italics in the text is for the sound made by the horses: "nay, nay, nay, nay" (26) and then this call is responded to religiously: "yea, yea, yea, yea" (27). Pilcher's vision of ghost horses, in which a "little hill of a horse" that is a grave is prominent, turns into another field she is looking at at this moment of remembrance: "For this field whose frost is melting has become the field of memory, a green field, a battlefield, a field of only green graves growing, and no breast breathing any notes" (27). Pilcher responds now to the field of the moment: "The way a beast of the fields, and he a horse, walks over this land with his life in his limbs while in foreign fields the friends of our flesh lie fallen – this simple sight seems the saddest thing on earth this morning, and the most wonderful thing in the world" (27). A cinematic vision of four horses follows after the moment of yea-saying response, perhaps recalling the movie *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), which she had previously reviewed in *Time and Tide.* As a result, there is a hugely affirmative ending to her article, evoking shaking laughter and joy, again of the earth's body: "the ribs of the sunshine are rocking with laughter" and this is followed by a prayer to end *"teach this heart not to harden, but to heal"* (28).

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Further Post-war Resonance after World War II: The Mid-1940s

Later in 1947, Pilcher published an article "Testament of Theatre" in *Theatre Arts Monthly* in which Great War reminiscence continues to resonate.[8] It connects a post World War II moment back to World War I through an epiphany sparked by a liminal reflection stimulated by permission to travel once more now war had again ended:

> one bright and liberating morning I crossed the Channel once more, at long last, after all these islanded years so full of enslaving events…. As a wandering writer about theatre I had gone from Paris to London in the early twenties, in those other years when a war was just over and its survivors were asking their way back to the arts of peace. (45)

With a neat reference to Jean-Paul Sartre's play *Huis Clos* (1944), Pilcher declares: "now tomorrow is today and today is yesterday. Everything is the same. I have stepped straight into *Huis Clos*" (45). Reflecting "[o]n which side of time, at the end of which war?" in a way similar to the mise-en-scene of her play *The Searcher*, which had been deliberately obtuse concerning which side of the war was being represented, Pilcher connects artistic and philosophic tendencies from both times: expressionism to existentialism (47). Comparing the similarities she observes in theatre programming, observing the posters for the Grand Guignol as similar to the fashion in the immediate post-war of World War I, Pilcher declares: "Is the same. Just the same." Then she moves her text into poetry, which relates to that transition she herself had made in her writing style at the end of that earlier war:

> The same as what?
> Where are we? When are we? Where were we?
> Suddenly the circles have doubled and redoubled and closed in on
> themselves in a truly Grand Guignol manner and I am caught again
> in that cage of recurring movement, trapped in the terrible
> continuum of both space and time. (45)

8. The use of the term testament resonates with Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* (1933), which was widely known; it may also reflect upon Pilcher's illness with cancer at this time and a sense that things needed to be set down and righted somehow. The religious dimension of the term is also significant to Pilcher's construction of life as a pilgrimage.

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Conclusion

Pilcher's work offers a challenge to the history of journalism because it is difficult to place in terms of writing genres. As she became a more published writer and spread her articles across a wider range of journals and magazines, Pilcher seemed increasingly to be writing for herself because of the confidence apparent in her writing style. This is a hallmark of literary journalism, according to Mark Kramer, because of the power that lies in the strength of such an "individual and intimate voice" (29). Although Pilcher developed empathic space for others, it is her ecstasies, mental reveries, bodily passions and furies that are released and challenge conventions of journalism. And yet, her writing also seeks to raise questions in her readers. Increasingly, questioning is abstracted and allied to her passion for Gurjieffian spirituality, also a preoccupation of other intellectuals and artists of her time; this has the effect of making her writing quite "high-flown." The war acted as a catalyst for the liberation of Pilcher's writing from documentary critical reporting to imaginative writing capable of allying experience, aesthetics and belief. Her most "literary" journalism ultimately combined these dimensions fueling that desire to experiment with new ways and with words which had exploded during World War I. Recollecting and revisioning the war shifted Pilcher's writing from a literary into a performative mode. The representation of war as a presence rather than just a theme enabled her creative work to respond to alternative spiritualities, questing through the use of words to inhabit new states of consciousness.

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Appendix 7

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The Modernist Period

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'A theme with many variations': Gertrude Hudson, Musical Criticism, and Turn-of-the-Century Periodical Culture

Charlotte Purkis

Gertrude Hudson was a female writer and editor active from the mid-1890s to the late 1900s. Her colourful writings for multidisciplinary arts and general-interest magazines as well as for specialist music journals deployed intensely subjective, dialogic, even confrontational modes of writing to challenge established modes of music criticism. Hudson's writing explicitly connected music and the other arts exploring ways to enable readers to fine-tune connections between musical experiences, poetry, visual arts, and architecture, merging Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde's notions of aesthetic criticism with her own distinctive voice. Hudson's work is preoccupied with the nature of musical response by contemporary audiences and music's presence in global culture. Her essays range from portraits of performers, composers and performances of musical works, location pieces about audiences and music-making from London venues, and her travels and unusual commentaries on animals. All these topics show an enthusiasm for combining observations of her world with musical evocations in a range of sites and contexts. Hudson's writing offers unique subjective manifestations of topical debates, from the apparently passive position of a spectator and travelling consumer. Her reflections both witness the development of musical criticism as outsider and show us its reshaping as insider. As an observer specialising in celebrity culture in the 'classical' music world, she is both gossip and autoethnographer.

This chapter seeks to re-situate Hudson within literary and musical networks. In so doing, it continues the investigation from my earlier exploration of Hudson in *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (2004) looking now at her prose writing as critical theorisation and critical act. Examples of Hudson's well-informed witty rhetoric around musical preoccupations from the popular culture of her time demonstrate how the development of this unusually personal musical voice in conversation with other arts was stimulated initially by the journal format of the *Dome* for which she first produced essays. As Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker comment in the introduction to *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, such multidisciplinary formats encouraged 'tentative, exploratory, and dynamic' forms of writing which often challenged 'settled assumptions' (2009: 3). The *Dome* is best known as a literary magazine of the late 1890s, but articles on music were included reflecting its original subtitle: *A Quarterly Containing Examples of All the Arts*, and remained in its subsequent monthly subtitle: *An Illustrated Magazine and Review of Literature, Music, Architecture and the Graphic Arts*. Hudson's involvement with the *Artist*

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(July 1902) and the *Musician* consolidated her involvement with the Arts and Crafts Movement. The *Acorn* (1905–6) deepened this interdisciplinarity in keeping with her enthusiasm for the Wagnerian ideal of the total-work-of-art and sustained an 'Arts and Crafts model of expressive creativity' into early modernism (Hart 2009: 129).

Musical Criticism and Periodical Culture

By the 1890s, the growing numbers of magazines, journals, and periodicals were able to support a diversification of critical response applied to music. 'Hundreds of articles and books on the theory and practice of musical criticism were published to regulate, reform and professionalize the industry and to lend musical criticism substance and authority,' according to Paul Watt (2018: 2). Musical criticism was welcomed not only in the daily press and the established specialist musical press, such as the *Monthly Musical Record*, the *Musical Standard*, the *Musician*, and the *Chord*, all of which Hudson wrote for, but also found an audience in other print media which covered arts and culture as a significant part of the growing leisure industry. There was an increase in educational literature supporting appreciation which encouraged writing on music beyond technical treatises, history, and biography traversing into territories concerned with meaning. Jeremy Dibble and Julian Horton consider the wide realm of intellectual thought underpinning developments far beyond reviewing in their new edited collection. The literary and art magazines Hudson wrote for, such as the *Dome* and the *Artist*, offered a sphere for experimentation in the relationships between opinion and fact, and the *Outlook: In Politics, Life, Letters and the Arts* welcomed her topical observations upon music in locations, which suited ephemeral weekly publication; they also extended the mindset of readers through armchair travel. Although her output was relatively small, Hudson was quite widely promoted as a writer of note. Reviews of, and references to, her writings appeared across the British and American press. Yet she now receives little recognition as a significant presence in turn-of-the-century culture.

The fact that Hudson has not yet found a place in the history of musical criticism is not helped by her denial of a critical role, the quixotic ways she expressed this, and her reputation for 'essays attacking critics generally' (*Daily Telegraph* 2 June 1899: 5). Hudson was not employed by any journal or newspaper in a critic's role, but commissioned to produce essays for enthusiasts. In her writing she clearly revels in being a 'virtuoso in passion,' an expression fitting both the performer she reports on and herself as writer witnessing impassioned performance and seeking to recreate it verbally (*Dome* Oct 1899: 227). Hudson enacted a caricature of a conventional male critic while constructing a different persona for herself as a creative-critical writer. In 'The Musical Critic (A Depreciation)' she confirms the 'weird fascination' she has always had for the critic, whom she yearns to be although typically critics are all similar: 'When you have read one of him you have read all of him . . . roughly speaking he is unanimous' (Hudson 1899: 228). Paradoxically, she then identifies him as 'also various': 'He is a theme with many variations.' Hudson goes on to suggest she can compose and play within the range 'from the most fantastic foolery and the dullest sense' (Hudson 1899: 229), noting that 'many of them are very charming essayists, and write us pretty little rhapsodies and reveries on Wagner' although 'sometimes they drown themselves in a sea of words' (Hudson 1899: 230). Furthermore, the 'hopelessly prosaic and incurably modern critic' 'really ought not to be

permitted to criticise habitually'; when in need of rest 'for his overworked appreciative faculties' she 'should be delighted to take his place' being 'eminently suited for it, for I combine in one insufferable personality the savage brutality of the journalist and the cynical flippancy of the litterateur' (Hudson 1899: 232). This proposed role swap questions who is able to be a critic, who is not, as well as what sort of person would wish to be, confirming that there were different types of critics. In 'The Pianoforte Recital,' Hudson identified her 'extraordinarily supple genius' which she could 'but rarely restrain . . . from turning paradoxical somersaults' (Hudson 1899: 198). Stating that she does not wish to deploy this genius to explain music as a critic would, she confirms her ideal is to revel in the sound world, going beyond the fruitless task of the critic who 'burgeoning forth into passionate platitude' and sounding 'all the dictionary's deeps for the *mot juste*' . . . 'fail to find it' (Hudson 1899: 198). She prefers to criticise critics for what they leave out of consideration. It is creative people – performers, composers, and conductors – whom she depicts in moments of release from conceptual understandings underpinning criticism. This is the type of true interpreter she aspires to be: 'One day my soul, sharpest with academic vinegar, was fed with lovely sugary art' (*Dome* July 1899: 107). Such a responder becomes a vision of 'critic as humbug' – the standpoint expressed in her appreciation of Henry Wood (*Dome* Aug 1899: 76). The 'ideal humbug, the ideal critic' is able to see 'what isn't there' and is a 'charming feminine person who is ever under the influence of someone else': 'but it needs a fine, oh, a delicate! sympathy to apprehend the non-existent.' For example: 'Show him an October sunset dying redly behind a lattice of flaming, fantastic leaves, and he will see Tchaikowsky' (76).

It is not surprising that Hudson's pieces featured opinions on musical criticism, nor that this exploration coincided with her attempts to define herself. Discussions of various camps, arguments over the meaning of terms such as review, appreciation, impression, analysis, and, of course, how best to effect critical judgement, appeared regularly in periodical literature. The *Chord* magazine's reprinting of reviews as part of its self-marketing strategy in the back of Volume 2 (Sep 1899) summarises many key themes in the debate. From this lengthy and informative digest, it is interesting to extract what is praised, for example, 'very modern articles dealing with topics of the hour,' 'pages of vivacious musical criticism . . . far removed from the sober futilities of the outworn fashion,' and, 'no taste for reporting' (Sep 1899: 81–2). Hudson's impressionistic model of writing offered an alternative to the fact-based journalistic reporting assumed to be underpinned by educated judgement. Evidence that the position taken by the *Chord* was under attack can be found in Oldmeadow's defence 'As Others Don't See us' in Volume 3. Although he does recognise that Dr Charles Maclean is not being 'unfriendly,' the author of this unsigned article (presumably John F. Runciman, the editor), rejects the 'mainly aesthetic essayism' tag, the meaning of which 'we can only vaguely guess at,' saying: 'we make bold to tell Mr. Maclean that the public has shown a marked preference for the kind of writing that appears in THE CHORD . . . to the fatuous, unimaginative, inartistic kind of writing which he appears to like' (Dec 1899: 56–7).

'Each school of critics has its battle-cries,' declared E. A. Baughan, as he reflected on the possibility of 'perfect criticism' (*Monthly Musical Record* 1 Mar 1901: 363). And a few months later in the same journal he queried 'a certain clever essayist' criticising

critics for being jaded and over-tired of music – something he had claimed (Aug 1899: 172), which was likely Israfel's source for depreciating the critic – and went on to complain that 'We live in days where subjectivity has gone mad' (Dec 1901: 266). In 1902 Baughan became vocal against 'poisonous appreciations' which he had located in some 'old magazines' (perhaps the *Dome*?) 'articles evidently meant for the musical amateur' (*Monthly Musical Record* May 1902: 84). He recounts himself sitting next to a comfortable matron listening to Tchaikowsky's Pathetic Symphony and then derides writers who hang 'decadent theories and invertebrate picturequesness of language' onto music, encouraging writing 'on a subject apart from music itself' (*Monthly Musical Record* May 1902: 85). A few years later J. H. G. Baughan, brother of Edward, attacked Miss A. E. Keeton, who published on music in the *Morning Post*, the *Musical Standard*, and the *Fortnightly Review* and this exposed how the literary nature of some writing on music continued to prompt its exclusion from the field of musical criticism proper: 'Musical people – we do not mean those literary people who have *acquired* a taste for music – are not interested in lengthy, padded-out criticism. What interests them is sound illuminating judgment conveyed in as few words as possible. They absolutely refuse to be humbugged by skilful language alone' (*Musical Standard* 22 Feb 1908: 115).

Hudson's Networks and Publishing Career

Hudson, who wrote under a pseudonym 'Israfel,' remains an elusive figure. However, she was embedded in a series of literary and publishing networks. In their exploration of *Modernism's Print Culture* Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey have commented how 'even small presses and magazines shared the vision of modernism as an international artistic community,' as did the groups frequenting literary salons (2016: 9). Hudson was a member of the literary circle of the Lyceum Club for women alongside Alice Meynell, and regular attender at her literary salons where she would have encountered Oscar Wilde through Ernest J. Oldmeadow (proprietor of 'At the Sign of the Unicorn' press, editor of the *Dome*, and musical critic of the *Outlook* 1900–4), and also Arthur Symons. Indeed, Hudson seems a potent example of the type of creative critic praised in the latter's *Dramatis Personae* (1925) which echoes in T. S. Eliot's referencing of Symons's attitude in 'The Perfect Critic' (*Athenaeum* 9 and 23 July 1920). Hudson was also connected to the Bedford Park set surrounding the Yeats family. She published alongside W. B. Yeats (*Dome* Apr 1899), referred to his evocation of music in poetry in 'Ysaye (An Impertinence)' (*Dome* May 1900), and as editor included him in the *Acorn* which she produced with artists George and Hesba Webb at the Caradoc Press, Priory Gardens. Symons and Oldmeadow both had musical interests, and as editor Oldmeadow brought in two other writers on music: Vernon Blackburn, another friend of the Meynells who became his subeditor on the weekly Catholic *Tablet*, wrote on music for the *Fortnightly Review* and was also music critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and Runciman, music critic of the *Fortnightly Review* as well as editor of the *Chord*. As a frequenter of concerts and opera to inform her writing, Hudson would have had companions amongst audiences, and the Lyceum Club likely provided further contacts with other musical members. Ella D'Arcy of the *Yellow Book* coterie was also her advocate because correspondence exists with John Lane, in which she encourages him to support Hudson and 'to undertake the publication of *The Acorn*' (Windholz 1996: 129).

Intersecting with Hudson's journalistic career are seven books which navigate through established and niche companies. In 1897 the London firm H. Henry and Co. issued her first book: the short story collection *Impossibilities: Fantasias*. Holbrook Jackson notes in his survey *The Eighteen Nineties* (1913) that Henry was one of the publishers associated with the 'new literary movement' and what he considered the 'high journalism' of the decade (45). Then *Ivory Apes and Peacocks* (1899) appeared 'At The Sign of the Unicorn' in London, and simultaneously in a joint edition with M. P. Mansfield and A. Wessels in New York. This was at the same time as Hudson was most active at the *Dome*; two chapters were essentially reprints, and others were original. Oldmeadow also published *A Little Beast Book* (1902) of animal appreciations from the *Dome*. Hudson also published in the American *Monthly Musical Record and Review* and articles were reprinted alongside essays from the *Dome*, the *Chord*, and the *Artist* (music supplement) in *Musical Fantasies* (1903). That came out using identical typeface to the Unicorn press with Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co. Ltd, the largest wholesaler of books in England at mid-century which underwent further expansion in 1890–1. They also published *Travel Pictures* in 1904, a prose collection including essays from the *Outlook*. By 1908 she had moved to David Nutt, known for foreign bookselling, appropriate for *Lotus Leaves from Africa and Covent Garden*, a collection including essays from the *Acorn* and the *Musician*. The fact that many of Hudson's periodical essays were gathered into collections aids understanding now of her importance, because reviews of these books identify their contemporary appeal. And, as the *Outlook* commented, *Lotus Leaves* 'is another volume of collected pieces which may be said to deserve a more enduring form' (29 Feb 1908: 869). Parts of *Musical Fantasias* were also included in the Boston Symphony Orchestra's programme books for the season, for example, 'Dvorak' (1900) and 'Wagner: In a Liqueur Glass' (1901).

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Israfel the Incredible: Performing Paradox

Hudson is not only significant as a writer on music, but notable for the content and style of her literary output. The 1903 collection – *Musical Fantasies* – was admired both for the 'remarkable . . . soundness' of its 'musical criticism' and as 'a marvel of words' and the reviewer expressed high praise for 'the incredible Israfel' for exposing 'critical truth' (*Outlook* 14 Nov 1903: 425–6). The *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* highlighted Hudson's self-declared 'verbal music' (1903: 25) and recognised the collection as proposing something new in criticism:

> One would not recommend it as a text book for a young ladies' boarding school, but it might have a refreshing effect upon the highly intellectual, non-emotional critic, who is too apt to regard a full score as he would a mathematical essay. (11 Nov 1903: 4)

Margaret D. Stetz has commented on Hudson's 'need to distance herself from the increasingly controversial and reviled figure of the New Woman' (2004: 174). The beginning of Hudson's literary career coincided with the vitriolic debates that followed the translation of Nordau's *Degeneration*, and with Wilde's trial and its repercussions. It is well known that the latter inflamed prejudices toward independent

artistic women. Nordau's anti-Wagnerian views were also influential, and Hudson remained committed to Wagnerism through her writing career. Despite G. B. Shaw's promotion of an alternative perspective in *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), which defended the heroines as role models, the prevalent view was that 'Wagner's female supporters and protagonists were characterized both as New Women and as *femmes fatales*' fundamentally negatively (Sutton 2002: 96). Perhaps Hudson was inspired by G. B. Shaw's posing as a decadent in his music reviews of the 1880s and 1890s? Stetz's view, that Hudson's pseudonymous cloaking enabled her to 'appropriate a gentleman's freedom to be read and reviewed as a prose artist' (2004: 174), which builds on Talia Schaffer's search to determine the interrelationships between all *fin de siècle* women writers and artists and variously defined propagandist subgroups of 'female aesthetes' and 'new women' (2000: 11), supports Hudson's survival in publication through this difficult period.

Hudson's persona is an ambiguous construction. Assumed by most critics to be a man, due to 'several overt phrases' 'set forth as masculine,' what we are given is actually a masquerade (*Glasgow Herald* 22 Apr 1899: 9). Hudson's exploration of femininities and masculinities is contradictory and plays with her audience. In his discussion of Victorian sexual politics and their intersection with musical aesthetics Derek Scott argues that although a gendered vocabulary was consistently deployed to questions 'about the nature of music, its purpose, and whether it had a predominantly masculine or feminine character,' such terms were 'first used as metaphors in musical criticism, not as biological truths' (1994: 91, 95). Claims that 'Israfel' was a male voice, and publishers' decisions to quote these claims in advertisements, draws attention to the late Victorian perception that male subjects could best command verbal language to dominate the feminine language of music. This is consistent with Scott's analysis which draws upon evidence of musical meanings constructed as representing threats to effeminise men. Hudson often references gentlemen and ladies within narratives, for example in 'Music and Literature,' the essay concluding *Ivory Apes and Peacocks*, where women are referred to as 'them' foregrounding the masculine voice: 'Indeed, the whole entertainment breathes a gracious air of femininity, which is humanising and elevating to our masculine flippancy' (273). Here, Hudson is able to stress the positive nature of feminine characteristics and engagement, while playing with gendered designations.

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In 'Chestnuts: A Study in Ivory,' Hudson discussed the Polish pianist Paderewski's appeal even when playing 'chestnuts' (a term for standard repertoire). Hudson literally waxes lyrical, comparing herself to the moon and finding an analogy between the pianist's touch and moonlight (*Dome* Mar 1899). This is an interesting allusion to Wilde's play *Salome* (1891) with its location of sexual desire in the moon. For Hudson: 'The moon is all temperament and personality, she puts her own ivory interpretation upon the world' (Mar 1899: 33). She connects the ivory keys played by the male performer to the 'silver sheen' of the moon who with 'her pale mystical glamour . . . in her own far-off divine way, is quite an egoist, and believes almost exclusively in subjective art' (32). Hudson becomes political in drawing comparison to the sun. It is the moon that 'transcends the sun'; the sun 'has no personality at all' (ibid.). The description begins to sound like her view of the musical critic: 'he is deplorably deficient in personal hypnotism, he conceives of an "object as in itself it really is"' (33). In this passage, she also proposes that a 'mere musician (pardon me!) cannot appreciate' 'the complex luxuries'

of Paderewski's playing, but 'the romantic hedonist who has had a liaison more or less with each of the Arts . . . can better understand this lyric loveliness' (32).

Hudson's conscious feminisation of music and musician in several of her portraits of composers, such as in 'Grieg: A Study in Silver' follows this moon analogy through. She imagines the 'kittenish' male Norwegian composer as 'Pierette' 'charmingly dressed . . . in silver' with 'pale gold hair' whose 'dainty little pieces always suggest a witty woman' which on the surface seems merely satirical, but there is more going on (*Dome* Apr 1899: 54). It is in autobiographical moments that readers are presented with deliberately camp queering in Hudson's response to the music of favoured male composers, such as in the twist added to her *Musical Fantasies* reprint of 'Chopin' (*Dome* Oct 1899). While commenting on 'his feminine love for musical embroidery' she expostulates, 'For the life of me, I cannot cease to decorate Chopin with little verbal satin bows of a pleasing cherry tint' (1899: 230; 1903: 58, 64). Elsewhere, Hudson refers to her pen as female declaring it 'ravished' ('The Pianoforte Recital,' in Hudson 1899: 197), and then writing of 'Dvorak' in *Musical Fantasies* notes how the intoxicated nature of his music is 'so contradictory and unexpected' as to 'throw any well-broken hack-pen clean out of her stride' (94). This is either suggestive of a role reversal, making the man the muse and the woman the interpreter, or it is proposing a doubling of the pen and music itself and the controller/disguiser of the pen as male. Since Hudson is emphasising subjective impression as reality, following her reliance on Paterian aesthetics, the vision of the world she constructs seems to be a queered/feminised one, albeit written by a 'female' pen.

Whether this playful subtextuality enabled Hudson to bypass external definitions and achieve success because she offered a unique alternative to male music critics, other female aesthetes and New Women writers in the marketplace becomes obscured by the very features which attracted her supporters: satire and flamboyance. Some contemporary critics seemed dazzled by the style of her work, unable to assess where, if anywhere, new insights lay in her responses to music. Analysing examples of Hudson's 'brilliant impressionistic extravaganzas . . . coruscating with wit' (*Birmingham Post* cited in the *Acorn* 'Advertisement' section 1905) underlines that her writerly performativity is her way of confronting the dilemma at the heart of music's ineffability. This was expressed in aims such as that embedded in 'A Richard Strauss Festival' 'to bridge the yawning gulf between tone and speech with a rainbow arch of verbal music' (1903: 25). As an example, in 'The Pianoforte recital' she compares the 'verbal virtuosity' stemming from her 'ravished pen' to 'the pyrotechnical tone-journalese displayed at the end of a recital' (Hudson 1899: 197–8). As critical response in words follows a musical event, Hudson's own form of display can be seen as attempting equivalence.

Combining Amateurism and Cosmopolitanism into Critical Acts

The lack of appreciation of a multidisciplinary artistic perspective by the dominant voice of the male musical establishment led to literary critical approaches being undervalued as criticism professionalised and musicology developed as a discipline. In championing interpretation over judgement, Hudson's goal was to refine critical sensibility rather than master factual knowledge. A Hudson trait was to incite the reader/ordinary

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listener to find or make their own sense of 'critical truth.' Revisiting her comments on amateurs affords the opportunity to question how her creative-critical approach matched the needs and desires of her non-specialist but musically informed audience members and enthusiastic readers. Hudson shows her preference for the amateur over the critic, in her conclusion to *Musical Fantasies* (1903), based on a reprinted *Dome* essay 'The Amateur' (Mar 1899): 'The amateur . . . can enjoy art quite simply . . . he need not cast about in his mind to . . . show how clever he is – as a critic must. . . . he can really appreciate it. His mind is not blunted by Understanding or warped by Education' (*Dome* 1899: 258).

In reflecting upon the amateur essayist, Hudson suggests an insider perspective noting 'whole-hearted self-admiration': 'How he enjoys and insists on your enjoying his work!' (259). But is she genuinely self-deprecating, or merely playing with her readers, knowing that women were often allied with amateurs? Is she looking to something in what is regarded as amateur sensibility that she admires over so-called 'professional' established criticism? Commenting on Tchaikowsky, reprinted again in *Musical Fantasies*, initially published in the *Chord*, she pits the critic with 'a trained judgment and a clear knowledge of the music and of the fitness of things,' 'a gentle and conventional soul' 'all out of tune with Tchaikowsky's,' against a vision of a 'savage and superficial listener, unblinded by Education' (*Chord*: 1 May 1899: 43). This untrained, by implication amateur, enthusiast has a cosmopolitan outlook and is much more appreciative. By the end of the essay, Israfel is using 'us' and 'we' to explain Tchaikowsky's appeal based on how 'his intimate confession of his inner self . . . moves us,' contrasting this unanimity with her assumed readers with her analysis of the complaints from critics refusing to deal with him (47).

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Hudson is very explicit concerning those who were unable to appreciate the exotic dimension which saturated the contemporary music from Europe which was most popular. London was the key global centre hosting foreign performers and composers and the taste for novelties was very well developed by the turn of the century. The world of contemporary music took its listeners beyond the borders of England. Her fascination for the exotic fits with the sensory dimension of musical experience and in embracing 'escapist fantasy' in many of her essays she is opposing the actions of 'leading male figures' who were 'attempting to establish a national, masculine music' in the 'British Musical Renaissance' movement by 'upholding values of empire and eschewing associations linking music to ideas of the foreign and the feminine' (Fuller 2007: 7). The addition of cosmopolitanism as a literary characteristic connected to the theatricality embedded in her persona. Hudson did not inhabit international ideas and ideals of others, she rather absorbed impressions and reworked them in her own image. For example, Hudson desires to bring the world back to England, as in 'A Wagner Fantasy,' in the first volume of the *Acorn*. Imagining Tristan lying on his couch in the courtyard of his castle in Brittany, she declares: 'I would like to ship Dieppe castle over to the coast opposite' because the 'romantic loneliness of the Sussex downs' is 'entrancing'; the scenery of Normandy and Sussex is 'the kind of scenery that should frame Tristan's castle in Brittany' (1905: 151). Rebecca Walkowitz's argument that: 'In the early twentieth century, the term "cosmopolitan" was attributed to artists who seemed to invent identities rather than inhabit them and to work that dramatized this process of invention' provides a useful explanation for Hudson's approach (2006: 22).

Locating Hudson as a *Fin de siècle* Lady Journalist

Over the period this volume is concerned with 'the profession of the critic or writer was in the ascendant'; yet, the 'increasingly versatile critic,' 'both a generalist and a specialist . . . rarely a woman' (Watt 2018: 111). Women were expected to inhabit roles that responded to the association of music with the feminine. For example, it was natural to consider a performing woman reproductive. As the *Musical Standard* remarked in a column on 'Women and Originality': 'Very many question women's domain in music,' going on to advocate that the 'woman who chooses to inspire rather than write has chosen the better part' (15 May 1902: 171). Yet, the *Musical Standard* (June 1895), actually gendered music criticism as female in an editorial responding to Runciman's 'Women as Musical Critics' (*Monthly Musical Record* 1 Mar 1895) likely by its editor E. A. Baughan (also the musical reviewer of the *London Daily News*). In the context of the task of recovery of the female critical voice it is fascinating that such gendering occurs in contemporary debate about what was lacking. Current criticism – referred to as a 'cloud of dust that obscures the real weakness of musical criticism as she is wrote' – was not presented by Baughan as in a good state (Watt 2018: 118). Watt's view is that Runciman had been inconsistent in his attitudes, on the one hand praising women producing 'genuine musical criticism, that is, literature with music as its subject-matter,' for their 'crisp lightness and sparkling humour' suggesting that he often wished 'that ladies replaced some of the male critics,' but on the other hand complaining women were not showing they could discern music's qualities as well as men (1 Mar 1895: 49). Runciman was also reporting – on a lecture given to The Society of Women Journalists by Sidney Thomson, music critic of the *Star*, which had largely avoided discussing women even in a 'room full of ladies' – and observed simply 'whatever conclusions we may here reach' women will go in for musical criticism or not, as they, and not as I, will' (ibid.). Attempting to clarify what is necessary for women to succeed in theory, Runciman does allow the possibility for women to enter this domain in practice. He includes sensitivity to music and 'sanity of judgment' as necessary qualities, although he doubts women's capacity to discriminate is developed enough. He looks forward to their 'delightful, original and valuable literature about music' (1 Mar 1895: 50), but also warned: 'Lastly, and nearly but not quite chiefly, she must be mistress of her pen and "a style"' yet be careful not to build a style from 'affected tricks and mannerisms' (1 Mar 1895: 49). By 1904, however, writing on 'What is a Musical Critic?' Runciman falls back on the stereotype: 'What is wanted for a musical critic is, first, a thorough musician, a man who is educated, has read, can write, has enough imagination, and dares to say bluntly what he has experienced. The criticism of such men is worth reading; but as for the other stuff the less we have of it the better' (*Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 2 Jan 1904: 11). Some women found a way around the limitations imposed by assumptions of male superiority. Fuller comments on the frequent use only of initials by women composers: 'Leaving one's gender ambiguous was a sensible move in a world where women's work was so automatically regarded as second-rate' (2002: 91). Stetz identifies anonymous and pseudonymous publishing as the key way women circumnavigated restrictions in the context of 'the burgeoning number of periodicals inspired by the aesthetic movement . . . eager to fill . . . issues' without worrying about identities (2004: 175).

This analysis is consistent with Hudson's work for the *Dome*: she did not publish in the five quarterly issues (1897–8), but once it was monthly her work featured regularly and additionally to those of the regular male writers.

Linda Peterson's comment, in her exploration of genres emerging in the burgeoning nineteenth-century periodicals marketplace, that writings in the forms used by Hudson – essays, reviews and travelogues – enabled both 'the modern woman of letters and her new self-constructions,' helps us to understand Hudson's position and manoeuvres in publishing culture (2009: 4). Hudson adopted a Poe-inspired nom de plume 'Israfel' for her late nineteenth-century periodical articles in the *Dome* and the *Chord* and her collections. But for the *Acorn* 'quarterly' of which two volumes only were produced, she made a change and published as 'G. H.' (on music) alongside 'Israfel' (travel pictures). Her twentieth-century travel writing for the *Outlook* appeared under the pseudonym; her music writing appears to then cease. Hudson initially adopted a full name 'Israfel Mondego' in 1897 for her first book. This surname surely echoes Israel Zangwill's character of that name who appeared as a singing celebrity in his satirical story *The Bachelor's Club* (1891). It cannot be that Zangwill is cross-referencing Hudson, since publications by her prior to 1891 have not been found. This borrowing is in keeping with Hudson's eclectic approach to contemporary culture, and also explains the masculine aura surrounding the androgynous first name. She briefly used a different surname 'Feist' for 'Jeypore' (*Dome* Dec 1898), identifying herself as one of the Maharajah's snappy little dogs. Her article 'Liszt: A Rhapsody' in the *Chord* (Mar 1900: 32–5) is published simply under 'I.'

In referencing Edgar Allen Poe's archangel of resurrection from his poem *Israfel* (1831), Hudson seems to propose retaining Romanticism in the aesthetic movement. In that poem, Poe expressed his ideal vision of the art of poetry through the image of an angel symbolising artistry. Israfel's singing bridges the real and the ideal by means of art, and thus the human artist aspires to the angel. Into Hudson's adoption of this spirit was bound huge admiration for Pater; her desire to mirror music in language references his terminology. For example, in 'Imaginary Portraits' she connects Pater's 'joys' 'ivory, apes and peacocks' to the name of the book collection the essay appears in and emulates his style as 'frozen music' (Hudson 1899: 264). She eulogises 'the music of Pater's thought,' his 'verbal symphonies' (Hudson 1899: 260), admiring his analysis of music's capacity for the 'absolute annihilation of fact, the infinity of expression' (Hudson 1899: 263). Hudson's 'ideal criticism' extended notions from Wilde and A. C. Swinburne in promoting literary approaches to all art forms and built on Pater's vision of music as a pre-condition of creativity. Furthermore, Hudson argues that because Pater's prose is at odds with journalism, hers is a literary as well as musical approach. In declaring Pater's diction 'a haven of rest from the fierce vitality of journalism,' she positions subjectivities against perceived objectivities, and herself resists definition as a 'lady journalist' (Hudson 1899: 253).

From her wide knowledge of women in music in this period, Sophie Fuller observes that 'Women were rarely part of the musical establishment and often stood far outside its boundaries' and also notes how this position supported women's capacity for innovation: 'They had less to risk in their exploration of what had previously been regarded as the province of dry scholars or dangerous aesthetes or decadents' (2007: 255). Interpreting 'Israfel' now, knowing hers to be a veiled female voice, maps Hudson onto

Fuller's thesis. But it is too simple to say that such gender concealment evades recognition of the woman's voice in the 'professional patterns and opportunities' of criticism and 'to undermine female authority,' as Meaghan Clarke discusses with respect to art critics (2005: 22). Potentially, it is rather Hudson's cross-dressing performativity that assists us reading her work so as to open up deeper explorations into emerging modernisms. Could it be Hudson's queer perspective rather than assumed masculine voicing that attracted those positive responses to her work which relished its challenges? One example is the praise for 'Irresponsibilities III: Henry Wood' (*Dome* Oct 1899) as the 'best thing' forthcoming in the magazines with quotation of her comments on the 'majestic impetus' Wood gives to music's 'splendid wave-like forces of hysteria' while noting provocatively his 'womanly' pathos and the 'dainty' touch of his art in responding to Tchaikowsky (*Outlook* 19 Aug 1899: 94).

Hudson was supported in her androgynous/queer critical persona by Oldmeadow. It can be assumed from the intersections between the two writers that he was promoting 'Israfel' through arranging or authoring favourable anonymous reviews. Perhaps Oldmeadow, who also wrote sometimes under a female pseudonym, was willing to risk betraying Hudson's disguise in referring to *Musical Fantasies* as a 'wanton volume,' using an adjective typically used of a woman (*Outlook* 14 Nov 1903: 426). Further evidence that this may be the case is enhanced by the lack of a personal pronoun. There is no 'he,' only 'Israfel' in inverted commas every time the name is used, and thus gender is avoided. Being taken usually for a gentleman helped Hudson avoid such extreme derision as had been directed against lady journalists at the start of her career. Paula Gillett has researched late Victorian attitudes exhaustively and concluded that 'discussions of women's creative deficiencies continued into the pre-World War One era' (2000: 26). Even just after the end of the war in a context responding to women's rising emancipation, and after Hudson had ceased publishing, patriarchal attitudes persisted. When J. Swinburne lectured to the Musical Association on 'Women and Music,' he informed his well-educated audience that 'musical women often tell stories well, and have generally other masculine traits, which goes to show that music is a male faculty' (*Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 46th Sess. 1919–20: 33).

Other Women Writers on Music

In the 1903 issue of the *Outlook*, referred to earlier, the favourable review of *Musical Fantasies* juxtaposes comment on two other examples of 'Music in Print' that are defined to have 'strutted or gambolled or minced from the press.' Israfel is praised as the gamboller. Commentary on the third book *About Music and What it is Made Of* by composer Oliveria Prescott serves to draw attention to the existence of other women writers on music. The reviewer derides Prescott's grasp of history and criticism as 'astonishing.' There is also disapproval that she mistakenly allows personal experience to dominate critical work, which is surprising in the light of Hudson's tendency to do this (14 Nov 1903: 426).

J. Swinburne's declaration, recorded in the *Proceedings of the Musical Association* that 'There has never been a woman critic' showed that he had not done his research adequately and was choosing to be unaware of the quite large number of women active in publication (28). Educational opportunities for women, changing

attitudes from some editors, growing involvement in editing, and the founding of feminist journals, mark this out as a period of significant change. Fionnuala Dillane has researched Hulda Friedrichs's 1890s interviews with music-hall performers for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in *Women and Journalism at the Fin de siècle* (Grey 2009). Friedrichs was a member of the Lyceum Club for women founded by Constance Smedley who contributed 'In defence of modernity' on the British musical renaissance to Hudson's *Acorn*. The fulsome career of another Lyceum member, Rosa Newmarch, has been evaluated by Philip Ross Bullock in several publications and in my own research discussing her fostering of listening. Little is known about Emily Frances Holland who reviewed 'the literature of music' in European languages for *Musical Opinion and Musical Trade Review* (1896–1900). Christina Struthers, Edinburgh University music graduate, wrote for the *Monthly Musical Record* and was cross-referenced in the *Musical Standard*. Marie Harrison, editor of the society supplement of *Vogue* until 1910 also wrote regularly in the *English Review* on 'Current Musical Topics.' Annie T. Weston wrote for the *Music Student*; Emily R. Daymond, Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser, and Annie Patterson also worked actively as music writers. Mrs Franz (Louise) Liebich was commissioned by Newmarch for her 'Living Masters of Music' book series but her many articles for the *Musical Standard* are concealed through her husband's name.

Two women writing widely on the arts used male pseudonyms like Hudson. Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) wrote several articles and a book *Music and Its Lovers* (1920). Christopher St John (Christabel Marshall) wrote for the *Lady*, and her regular *Time and Tide* columns which included assessment of Ethel Smyth's operas are evaluated by Catherine Clay, and Amanda Harris deals with the dedicated promotion of women composers in that journal alongside new trends in European feminist criticism. Smyth wrote for the *Musical Standard* and the *English Review*, as well as for the *Contemporary Review*, *Country Life*, and the *New Statesman*. Another *Time and Tide* author, Velona Pilcher, who also contributed essays on performers to *Theatre Arts Monthly* and the *Island* (including on the cellist Suggia who also attracted Virginia Woolf) is contextualised in my work on the avant-garde between the wars. Emma Sutton and Adriana Varga consider Woolf's prose writings ranging from street music to Wagner.

Ursula Greville was the only female committee member of *Musical News and Herald*, contributor to the *Musical Quarterly* and the *Dominant* and edited the *Sackbut*, a magazine which promoted British contemporary music, from 1921 to 1934. Katharine Eggar wrote regularly on 'Women's Doings in Chamber Music' for the *Music Student* and co-founded with Marion Scott 'The Society of Women Musicians' (1911). Scott was a well-connected musician, active as a specialist writer into the 1930s on *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, the *Sackbut*, the British *Musical Times*, and the American daily *Christian Science Monitor.* In the 1920s Eva Mary Grew contributed her wide knowledge of historical topics to the *Sackbut*, The *Etude*, the *Contemporary Review*, *British Musician and Musical News*, and *The Musical Quarterly*, adding *Musical Mirror and Fanfare: Music, Radio and the Gramophone*, *The Musical Times*, *Music and Letters*, and the *Chesterian* from the 1930s to 1940s. The extensive critical work of so many women remains underacknowledged in spite of the recent surge of publication about music criticism. The fields of music history, periodical, and literary studies could all benefit from a wider range of past women's voices being heard.

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Appendix 8

Purkis, C. (2010) Listening for the Sublime: Aural-visual Improvisations in Nineteenth-Century Musical Art. *Tate Papers* 14, 1-12 [online].

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Listening for the Sublime: Aural-Visual Improvisations in Nineteenth-Century Musical Art

Charlotte Purkis

The late nineteenth century saw the development of a new aesthetic of decadence and the beginnings of modernism. Charlotte Purkis explores here music's capacity to reveal the contradictions that emerged in understandings of the sublime in this period.

This paper explores the nature of the subjective aesthetic experience in which nineteenth-century visual artists were engaged when the sublime and music became twinned in their imaginations. This subjective experience is considered as an aesthetic response to the world and to the experience of being in the world. In nineteenth-century thought it became a way of perceiving that depended upon a certain understanding of music, which placed it apart and above all the other arts.[1]

Arguably, music can be seen as the 'keynote' to the sublime. The keynote of any piece of music is the fundamental tone to which music 'resolves'. But by the 1890s, within British culture, the term had come to denote, more controversially, newness. This was due specifically to John Lane's Bodley Head series called 'Keynotes', which, together with its companion series of books known as 'Discords', stood for literary tendencies that were consciously anti-bourgeois and relished the pejorative designation 'decadent'. These John Lane books, by George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne) and others, were constructed and received as challenging in their style and content, appearing to revel in displacing moral and literary certainties.

Just as the paradoxes and contradictions set up by such texts and the debates surrounding them identified double-edged ambiguity as a key characteristic of late nineteenth-century thinking, so, too, certain musical works, and the critical controversies they provoked, were crucial to contemporary reception of programmatic narrative arts. An ideological battleground between defenders of absolute music (instrumental compositions with generic titles or numbers, exhibiting purely musical methods and techniques of composition, for example, symphonies) and supporters of programme music (evocatively titled instrumental works with associations with other art forms and extra-musical experiences, emotions and sensations, for example, symphonic poems and opera) was established in the mid and later nineteenth century.

These differing perspectives have since permeated accounts of how musical style developed during the years when Romanticism became seemingly confused and exhausted.[2] As tonality was regarded as entering into a state of 'crisis', newer music inevitably became classified as degenerate compared to the relative purity of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classical canon. The contemporary commentator Max Nordau's 1895 diatribe against contemporary culture, *Degeneration*, was typical in this respect, and his book became a classic compendium of the trends of his time. Recently, the renowned pianist and writer on music Charles Rosen has commented that Nordau's claim that all modern art was 'produced by moral degenerates' is part of 'perhaps [the] oldest continuing tradition' of classical music. As the 'displacement of one music by another' is 'an eternal part of history', so complaints and laments about the loss of past perfections are an inevitable consequence.[3]

There was not necessarily more sublime music in the nineteenth century than later, but notions of the sublime were particularly significant in critical discussions then and informed artistic practice. Nineteenth-century musical enthusiasms are identifiable from concert programmes and the publication of salon music, as well as from reviews and references in novels. How far British taste

connected to philosophical aesthetic thinking on the sublime can thus be assessed in the various ways in which contemporary musical compositions were discussed.

Felix Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*, also known as *Fingal's Cave*, embraced the drive towards the programmatic and the narrative within early to mid nineteenth-century music, using the tonal idiom colouristically and atmospherically. Mendelssohn encountered the island of *Staffa* in a storm. The resulting music can be 'read' as drawing upon his experience of the island and its cave. The music recalls the amazing acoustics of the place with resounding crashing waves, a sense of powerful climax as the waves strike the cave in the storm, the rising and falling of the sea followed by moments of deep calm, and the soaring echoes of seagulls. This type of reading of the self back into nature is still current, and many commentators, particularly in notes about recordings, refer to the philosopher Edmund Burke's passion for nature – astonishment, suspense of emotion, even horror in the awe with which body and mind are filled, revealing the listener, like the perceiver and like Mendelssohn himself, overwhelmed yet exhilarated. Writing of Mendelssohn's musical landscapes, the academic writer Thomas Grey has dwelt upon the accepted 'pronounced visual orientation to Mendelssohn's cultural background', that is, the fact that he was also an amateur artist. The influence of this exploration of visual art, Grey notes, has 'long been perceived as an influence on his musical production', and notably on the *Hebrides Overture*, which 'evokes the heroic sublime tradition of Ossianic painting from the Napoleonic era'.[4] For another recent writer Michael Steinberg who has made a study of the role of music in nineteenth-century cultural life, Mendelssohn's music embodies aspects of the natural world yet constructs these into 'a metaphoric landscape of inner life'. The *Hebrides* seems to set a physical scene, but its overriding musical power lies in its sweeping melody and thus its vision is of 'absolute' not 'programmatic' music. Just as a Romantic landscape is not merely a depiction of the external world but is 'a way into inner nature', so this work 'engages a scene' and 'is born as music'.[5] To Steinberg, the big melodic string theme liberates the music from mere mimesis; this melody functions dramatically in the work, as a musical not merely representational voice.[6]

The way that the work seems explicitly evocative of nature recalls discussion of Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony* ('Pastoral', 1808). As an expression of feeling about being in the countryside, rather than as an illustration of the rural, Beethoven's symphony seems to go beyond the absolute into the realms of the programmatic: the emotions expressed are responsive to the experience of nature. The music depicts both a storm and the sensation of being in a storm. The genre of the symphony, an example of 'absolute music', was strongly associated with the sublime after the critic E.T. Hoffmann's famous 1810 review of Beethoven's*Fifth*. Hoffmann, who opposed programmatic music (and ignored the 'Pastoral' Symphony), appreciated the solemn grandeur of the heroic he identified in the *Fifth*, and referenced the 'monstrous and the immeasurable' and the 'level of fear, horror, revulsion, [and] pain set in motion by Beethoven's music'.[7]

The impact of the notion of the sublime within critical perception of music showed particularly in the privileging of the non-associative qualities of music. Hoffmann's identification of sublime qualities became a key descriptor for expressing the impact of emotion in abstract terms. Although there is much 'programmatic' narrative music in the later nineteenth-century, 'tone painting' as a compositional technique was openly disparaged by many critics for whom abstract instrumental 'absolute' music remained the ideal.

J.M.W. Turner's painting *Staffa, Fingal's Cave* (fig.1) was exhibited in 1832 and Mendelssohn's overture was performed in London in the same year, a fact that has led to the two works being seen as linked historically.[8] Many of Turner's images show a tendency to dissolution and project the beginning of an abstract painterly aesthetic, which, according to Edward Lockspeiser and others writing about music and painting in the later

twentieth century, can be seen as stemming from the aspiration to a musical state.[9] Mendelssohn's piece has tended to be categorised and valued as 'music for music's sake', as absolute and not programmatic music. Lockspeiser, however, has seen in the work the beginnings of musical 'impressionism', referring to contemporary critical responses that spoke of the music's veiled and blurred quality.[10] Interestingly, in more recent times, a newspaper review of a performance of the Scottish composer Thea Musgrave's 2005 *Turbulent Landscapes*, the second movement of which, 'Shipwreck', is a conscious homage to Turner's Staffa, questioned the relevance of paintings for an appreciation of music, challenging the need for music to have any kind of associative 'prop'.[11]

Fig.1
J.M.W. Turner Staffa
Fingal's Cave exhibited 1832
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, many artists and creative writers across Europe sought to depict sound and to capture the essence of music's perceived mysteries, insights and truths. This tendency to 'improvise' with music's non-imitative qualities and to enter into the 'condition' of music is expressed in the nineteenth-century writer and aesthetician Walter Pater's essay 'The School of Giorgione' in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) which set out to explore the interrelations of the arts. Pater did not seek a merger of all art forms within music's keynote. 'It is a mistake,' he wrote, 'to regard ... all the various products of art as but translations into different languages of one and the same fixed quantity of imaginative thought'. And he went on to propose that 'the sensuous material of each art brings with it a special phase or quality of beauty, untranslatable into the forms of any other. Each art ... having its own peculiar and incommunicable sensuous charm, has its own special mode of reaching the imagination'.[12] For Pater, music was more than a form; it was an artistic principle, one that sustained an ideal marriage of form and matter in the suspense of a perfect moment in which the subject and its expression 'inhere in and completely saturate each other'.[13] In such moments, he said, 'life itself is conceived as a sort of listening'.[14]

In the second half of the nineteenth century music remained a Romantic art in an age dominated by positivism and realism. According to the academic Carl Dahlhaus who, writing in the 1970s, characterised the music of this time as 'neo-romantic', it was music's 'very dissociation from the prevailing spirit of the age' that 'enabled it to fulfil a spiritual, cultural and ideological function of a magnitude which can hardly be exaggerated.'[15] For the nineteenth-century philosopher Schopenhauer, music remained above the positivism that connected art to the external through historical or environmental influences. Only music, he felt, was able to reveal absolute reality and 'could in a sense, still exist even if the world did not, which could not be said of the other arts', because 'it is quite independent of the world of appearances'.[16]

In his 1870 essay on Beethoven the composer Richard Wagner, following the philosopher Schopenhauer, asserted that the category of the sublime was crucial for understanding music, declaring:

> Surveying the historical advance which the art of Music made through Beethoven, we may define it as the winning of a faculty withheld from her before: in virtue of that acquisition she mounted far beyond the region of the aesthetically Beautiful, into the sphere of the absolutely Sublime; and here she is freed from all the hampering of traditional or conventional forms, through her filling their every nook and cranny with the life of her ownest spirit. And to the heart of every human being this gain reveals itself at once through the character conferred by Beethoven ... on Melody, which has now rewon the utmost natural simplicity ... Melody has been emancipated ... and raised to an eternal purely-human type. Beethoven's music will be understood throughout all time.[17]

Wagner's essay revealed how for him music excited the highest of ecstasies such that by means of music it was possible to go beyond the self, into a state of boundlessness. The inner world, then, was the realm of the ear, which listened for the sublime; music became a form of revelation – a philosophy of deeply inward experience. For Wagner, music itself thus had a sublime calling.

The reputation of Beethoven remained colossal into the end of the nineteenth century, and it is significant that it was Beethoven's music which gave rise to Wagner's expression of characteristics of the sublime. The *Ninth Symphony*, particularly, was claimed by Wagner as a precursor of his own vision for the arts. Wagner's work, like the music of Beethoven, was also simultaneously historicised and admired as modern by fin-de-siècle commentators.[18] Premiered in 1865, his opera *Tristan und Isolde* had a massive impact, and, more than any of his other works, was responsible for turning him into a cult figure.[19] Wagner was not only a composer but also a philosopher whose writings (translated into English in several volumes that appeared from 1892) set out notions of the 'art work of the future', and *Gesamtkunst* (the total work of art) that dominated new trends across the arts in the second part of the century. In 'The Art Work of the Future' (1849) and 'Music of the Future' (1860) he declared that the all the arts had a natural alliance, and that this alliance would serve to free both art and the artist to 'the glad consciousness of his oneness with nature'.[20]

In Britain the cult of Wagnerism became particularly fervent in the 1890s, and 'Tristanism' took a strong hold. *Tristan and Isolde*set itself apart from Wagner's other operas because it seemed to demand a private and personal response.[21] The long drawn-out chromatic harmony served to slow time down, as if there was some kind of eternal hiatus springing from the love-making of the characters *Tristan and Isolde*. The music created a sensation of endless bliss surrounding the dying lovers. The opera was notorious for its overwhelming effects, and critical reception in words and other creative responses, such as illustration, fiction and poetry, emphasised the work's striking modernity. The American critic James Huneker, whose books were published in Britain as well as in North America, declared *Tristan and Isolde* to contain 'the seeds of the morbid, the hysterical, and the sublimely erotic – hallmarks of most great modern works of art'.[22]

Aubrey Beardsley's depiction of women in an audience listening to Wagner's music, *Wagnerites* 1894, suggests the interior gaze talked about by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (fig.2). Music is internalised within the listener as exciting a purely private and silent experience, an intense physicalised response, with the music being worshipped as revelatory of ultimate truth. In her recent study of 1890s Wagnerism Emma Sutton asked of Beardsley's image whether it was a representation or a critique of the erotic tension in a Wagnerian audience, or perhaps both, since Wagner's work 'was frequently – controversially – productive of introspective, solipsistic aestheticism'.[23] This 'erotic sublime' was connected to a pre-Freudian idea of art as de-sublimating, as evidenced in the sexologist Havelock Ellis's discussion in his 1898 essay, 'Casanova'. For Ellis, *Tristan and Isolde* was an example of how modern art had taken over a role from Saturnalian orgies of earlier eras:

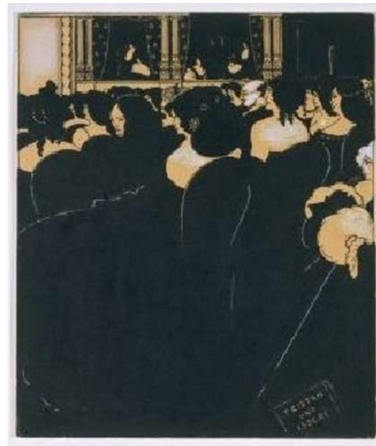

Fig.2
Aubrey Beardsley
Wagnerites 1894
Victoria and Albert Museum
Photo © The Board of the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum

> We have lost the orgy, but in its place we have art. Our respectable matrons no longer send out their daughters with torches at midnight into the woods and among the hills, where dancing and wine and blood may lash into their flesh the knowledge of the mysteries of life, but they take them to Tristan, and are fortunately unable to see into those carefully brought-up young souls on such occasions.[24]

Music was particularly important to the visions of the painter George Frederick Watts. In a recent re-assessment of the painter, the art historian Hilary Underwood has contextualised Watts's musicalised art with the work of other aesthetic and symbolist painters to whom 'music was the supreme art: non paraphrasable, non realistic, it conveyed profound emotion through its form.'[25] From the late 1850s into the 1870s Watts was associated with a group of artists and writers around Rossetti and Whistler characterised by a desire to produce 'art for art's sake'. They aimed to

communicate visually through what came later to be thought of as the 'abstract' means of line, form and colour, even when the human figure remained the basis. Pater's 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* which speaks of the balance between the 'desire of beauty and the love of death', can be seen reflected in Watts's *Love and Death* 1885–7 (fig.3), a work that became a key symbolist image after its first appearance in Paris.

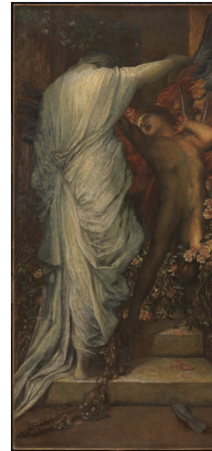

Fig.3
George Frederic Watts
Love and Death c.1885–7
Tate N01645

English symbolist painters were drawn to the writings of the nineteenth-century French poet Baudelaire, also a Wagnerite, in this period. Baudelaire's poetry and other writings became known in England by various routes, notably the admiration of the English poet Swinburne. Not only had Baudelaire developed a notion of synaesthesia in sympathy with Wagnerian ideals, which he called 'correspondence', but also he invoked a sense of the sublime in his reflections on the experience of listening to the music of Wagner:

> When I heard it for the first time, with my eyes closed, feeling as though transported from the earth ... I felt freed ... and recaptured the memory of the rare joy that dwells in high places ... Then, involuntarily, I evoked the delectable state of a man possessed by a profound reverie in total solitude, but a solitude with vast horizons and bathed in a diffuse light ... Soon I became aware of a heightened brightness, of a light growing in intensity so quickly that the shades of meaning provided by a dictionary would not suffice to express this constant increase of burning whiteness. Then I achieved a full apprehension of a soul floating in light, of an ecstasy compounded of joy and insight, hovering above and far removed from the natural world ... No musician excels as Wagner does in depicting space and depth, material and spiritual ...He has the art of rendering ... all that is excessive, immense, ambitious in both spiritual and natural man. Sometimes the sound of that ardent despotic music seeks to recapture for the listener, against the background of a shadow torn asunder ... the vertiginous imaginings of the opium smoker ... I had undergone a spiritual ... revelation. My rapture had been so strong, so awe-inspiring, that I could not resist the desire to return[26]

Delaware Art Museum, Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935
In seeking alternatives to narrative descriptive painting several British artists from the 1860s onwards used music to suggest new subjects and compositions, and, in particular to explore femininity. Whilst not overtly addressing the sublime, the art historian Suzanne Fagence Cooper has reflected upon the 'trance-like state often associated with musical images', considering, for example, the 'rêverie produced by listening to music' as a key aspect of sensuality in Rossetti's *Veronica Veronese* 1872 (fig.4).[27] Here a female musician is seen not as a passive listener but as an artist within a creative process, in a state of absorption: Rossetti himself called this a 'musical painting'. His observations about listening in pictures and poems reveal his involvement with music as lived experience, in a way which extended the Romantic tradition.[28] In her study of Rossetti and song, the writer, Elisabeth Helzinger has recently suggested that Rossetti explored listening visually and poetically because of his intellectual fascination with the effects of the listening, paintings and poems being the means 'in which aesthetic cognition and creation itself could be studied.'[29]

Fig.4
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Veronica Veronese 1872
Delaware Art Museum, Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935

Images of women with musical instruments were a feature of Rossetti's later works. In *La Ghirlandata* 1873, for instance, female allure is associated with music, specifically a harp. Echoing this connection, in 'Two Fine Flowers of Celticism: Encores' (1897), Israfel, the aesthetic writer Gertrude Hudson, used a painter as protagonist in the story to explore musical experience as a form of ecstasy. Losing 'consciousness with the thought of music', the fictional painter goes to *Tristan and Isolde* for inspiration. 'As he heard the divine first orchestral sighs of "Tristan", he shivered – they held a spirit. As the music rose, passion of love, passion of death, he saw the face, the mouth of music. His soul dilated'.[30] His resulting work was a portrait of music, a 'languishing Orpheus' represented as a woman, because 'music is feminine' and because 'music became his only picture.'[31] Was Watts's *Hope* (fig.5), with its despairing central female figure and one-stringed lyre, being evoked here?[32] Or was it Simeon Solomon's painting and Swinburne's commentary on his musical works which were being called to mind for turn-of-the-century readers?

Fig.5
George Frederic Watts
Hope 1886
Tate N01640

The painter Whistler's aspirations to musicality were articulated in the musical designations, such as symphony and nocturne, which he experimented with in the titling of his works. In the 1850s Whistler was a member of the painter Gustav Courbet's circle in Paris, a group that included Baudelaire and Gautier who encouraged him to explore art in musical terms. Baudelaire's remark that the 'right way to know if a picture is melodious is to look at it from far enough away to make it impossible to understand it subject or to distinguish its lines' is indicative of this.[33] As a result of hostile criticism of Whistler's painting (that involving the critic John Ruskin in particular), the association of the term 'musical' with 'painterly', as opposed to 'literary', was consolidated. Whistler's titles signified that, for him, colour relationships had become abstract rather than mimetic, and that the qualities of tone, line and shape were tools for communication of subjective states.[34] What Whistler wanted his viewers to do was not to read narrative into the paintings, but to feel the beauty and harmony of the colours and tones. Art could not deliver emotions or ideologies, according to Whistler. Art should appeal only to the artistic sense, not to emotions like love or patriotism; paintings were to be evocative like music.

Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Cremorne Lights 1872 is Whistler's most empty of the night-time London paintings (fig.6). The composition's subtle harmonies are intended to convey a state of mind. From 1872 Whistler started to re-title past works in order to emphasise their tonal qualities and de-emphasise the narrative content. At this time audiences for art were becoming attuned to these comparisons, led by their reading of critics who were contributing more than merely aping fashionable musical terminology. The theme of musicalised art became a dialogue between artists and critics.[35] Were Whistler's paintings 'modern' in the way they sought to suspend meaning? If aesthetic pleasure, rather than emotion, was Whistler's understanding of the sublime, do his works defer resolution, like atonal music or even abstract painting? The disguising, even masking, associated with Whistler's works is enhanced by the element of mystery provided by his musical titles. The critic Arthur Symons writing in *Studies in Seven Arts* (1906) suggested that Whistler's works opened up the potential of art to the perceiver in a new way, because the paintings seemed to approach the viewer, rather than the viewer approaching the painting. Symons's opinion appears

Fig.6
James Abbott McNeill Whistler
Nocturne: Blue and Silver - Cremorne Lights 1872
Tate N03420

inspired by Walter Pater yet embodies almost a postmodern sense of spectatorship: 'Look around a picture gallery, and you will recognise a Whistler at once, and for this reason first, that it does not come to meet you. Most of the other pictures seem to cry across the floor: "Come and look at us, see how like something we are!" Each out-bids his neighbour, promising you more than your money's worth. The Whistlers smile secretly in their corner, and say nothing. They are not really indifferent; they watch and wait, and when you come near them they seem to efface themselves, as if they would not have you even see them too closely. That is all part of the subtle malice with which they win you. They choose you, you do not choose them.'[36]

In *The Lute of Apollo* (1896) the reciter and writer Clifford Harrison suggested 'there is a more interesting line of thought in the acknowledged association of colour and music than the development of a possible new art. It lies in the idea that – in some mysterious way ... music and colour are in reality one and the same thing; that they are capable of transposition and interchange; and possibly possess, to some unknown but conceivable percipience, a unity – in sound that is seen and colour that is heard.'[37] There are many examples of early twentieth-century composers who explored colour, both literally and metaphorically. Just before the outbreak of World War One, Scriabin's *Prometheus: Poem of Fire* (1911) was played in successive years in London.[38] This massive orchestral work featured an unusual use of choir, a four-part ensemble who vocalised on specific vowels with occasional 'aspirate', and attempted to express philosophical and theosophist ideas in music. It was seen as a natural progression of Wagner's idea of a *Gesamtkunst*, and musically it developed late Wagnerian chromaticism and experiments with atonality. In *Prometheus* a 'mystic chord' made up of fourths permeates virtually the whole piece, and is treated like a tonal centre, that is, not as a discord seeking resolution, but the fundamental tone of the piece. The Promethean focus here links back to Beethoven's *The Creatures of Prometheus* about the creation of mankind, and to the Romantic enthusiasm for the Titans' rebellion against the gods. Scriabin said: 'I am inclined to ascribe the enthusiasm for my *Prometheus* in England not so much to its music as to its mysticism'.[39] An interesting example of the impact of Scriabin on British art, Duncan Grant's *Abstract Kinetic Collage Painting with Sound* 1914 (fig.7) was inspired by the colour-music dynamics and the media interest in the ideas behind the composer's work.[40]

In his essay on 'The Art Work of the Future' Wagner used the sea as an extended metaphor for music, speaking of a sea of harmony and referring to the attraction of the depths: 'Man dives into this sea ... His heart feels widened wondrously, when he peers down into this depth ... whose seeming bottomlessness thus fills him with the sense of marvel and the presage of Infinity'.[41] There are resonances of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with its sailing voyage and tragic plot, in Delius's *Sea Drift*, composed in 1903–4, which confronts sublime tropes of mortality, loss and death through a musical seascape bounded by a profound sense of solitude. Furthermore, there is a connection to British visual artists' fascination with seascapes and Turner's immersion in the waters of the nautical sublime. Delius's work is far from being merely representational of nature; an emotional response to the sea lies at its core. Its pantheistic pessimism reveals the influence of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Towards the end of *Sea Drift*, the bonding of a boy and a sea-bird almost becomes apocalyptic, expressing a moment of sublimity when the gull-cries become the boy's cries as he sings 'High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves'. And in Delius's 1899 'Song of the High Hills', the opening descending strings awakened the despair of the lowland, whereas the higher plane was conveyed by use of a wordless chorus in the section 'The Wide Far Distance – The Great Solitude' to suggest transcendent and non-human powers. The musicologist Christopher Palmer has striven to capture what for him lay at the heart of Delius's aesthetic, describing this as the sensation of being suddenly gripped in a nocturnal setting by distant and unseen voices sounding from across the landscape – poignant and distant sounds expressing undefined longing and *Weltschmerz*.[42] In another 'religious' and pantheistic work from the same year, the *Mass of Life*, the rarity of high places where the ego dissolves and is sublimated in the natural is expressed by Delius in a chromatic harmony derived from *Tristan and Isolde* and through the Dionsyian celebrations of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, the dancing superman. There are also parallels between

Delius's vision and the early twentieth-century experiments of Scriabin, with his proposed multi-dimensional total work of art 'Mystery'.

In the same period in which he observed anaesthetised Wagnerite matrons, Beardsley also illustrated Oscar Wilde's play *Salome*. Wilde's symbolist reading of the biblical story of the femme fatale dancer was transplanted to the field of music with Richard Strauss's 1905 opera, first performed in London in 1910. Wilde had written his play when Egerton had been writing *Keynotes*. Her story from that collection, 'A Cross Line', concerns the apparent liberation of an unnamed woman with a fetishistic need for attention indulging in a fantasy dance with snakes. Similarly, for the character Salome, a dominant figure across the turn-of-the-century arts – unlike the more anonymous and communal Wagnerite audience – participation in the ecstatic sublime was a public exhibition of out-of-control delirium resulting in murder. There seems here to be a relationship worth exploring between what happens to the feminine as it encounters the sublime and the ways that by the early twentieth-century musical language was characterised. Was atonal, colouristic and highly-textured 'painterly' music veering into the abyss of abstraction, chaotic and disorderly like the female; was it merely strange and exotic in its decadence; or was it rather a new 'modern' sense of art which was slowly liberating itself from romantic shackles?

The comparative cultural historian Brad Bucknell has recently commented that 'the move towards music seems part of a tension within modernism itself which seeks both to abolish and preserve its romantic past at one and the same time'.[43] And the art historian Karin von Maur has explored examples of twentieth-century painting which employ music as image, technique and metaphor, as a means of challenging existing artistic practices.[44] For the writer and arts critic Christopher Butler, what defines a work as modernist 'is not just the loyalty of its maker to the aesthetic of an evolutionary or disruptive tradition ... but its participation in the migration of innovatory techniques and their associated ideas'.[45] The sublime in music, the sublime and music, are within that 'changing framework of ideas' or 'conversation' among artists and critics which formulated subjective concepts to articulate and inspire stylistic change in modernist work in all the arts, work which in turn both conspired with and provoked audiences.[46] Understanding the contemporary taste for particular sorts of music, how that taste was defined and notions of what music itself signified, and to whom, are meaningful to any discussion of thinking about the sublime in the later nineteenth century. The topos and techniques of music, explored in and through painting, delineated the sublime itself as a concept in the control of the receiver as much as the creator of art.

Today, the term 'sublime' has been and continues to be applied widely and enthusiastically to musical works of diverse character and genre.[47] In common usage, it is applied where the experience of a work has any kind of overwhelming impact upon an individual.[48] Postmodern theory has defined this impact as dealing with what lies somehow 'beyond', using concepts which embody absence – the unknown, the unspeakable, the unthinkable. This terminology is not so far removed from earlier conceptualisations, although it appears more tinged with negativity than the ecstatic language of previous centuries. In the catalogue for the end-of-the-twentieth-century Arts Council touring exhibition *Sublime: The Darkness and the Light* (1999) Jon Thompson stated that: 'While traces of "sublime" experience are to be found in the art and literature of almost every period, the aesthetic category of "the sublime" as we know it today, was essentially an invention of the late eighteenth century'.[49] There are, he comments, typical sublime subjects, but it is not works themselves which can be named 'sublime', rather, that the experience of the sublime can be re-presented in art works and consequently the receiver can gain access to sublime experience. Recently, for example, the contemporary philosopher Aaron Ridley, has expressed his conviction that empathetic response to music remains valuable, saying, 'A state of soul ... can be expressed in music – the state of a persona constructed in the musical experience of a responsive listener'.[50]

The eighteenth-century emphasis on individual aesthetic response as autonomous experience, thus, connects to the recent postmodern re-articulation of the subjective. The postmodern sublime carries a similar desire for the human to overpower the natural as had been expressed by the eighteenth-century philosopher Kant, and demonstrates a belief that an individual might, through

such an experience be able to merge with the universal. This is how Judy Lochead conceives of it in a 2008 debate with James Currie concerned with 'Theorizing Gender, Culture, and Music'. Lochead points out the consequences of the continuing polarisation of the beautiful and the sublime, because of the association of the beautiful with the feminine and the gendering of the nature of knowledge which continues to privilege the dominance of 'concepts that are contrary to the philosophical and political goals of feminism'.[51] This is a concern in relation to nineteenth-century music history because of the way that the philosophical expression of the notions of the beautiful and the sublime became gendered in the reception of music.[52] The various re-inscribings of meaning by successive generations of listeners went largely unchallenged until late twentieth-century re-readings. Lochead and Currie have both showed concern that the concept of the sublime continues to be used in ways which retain what it sought to overcome, and that its use continues to avoid the construction of 'a critical perspective on subjective aesthetic experience'.[53]

Recently Tate Liverpool's website promoting its 2008 *Gustav Klimt* exhibition referred to the 1902 exhibition of the Secession as 'a sublime realisation of the Gesamtkunstwerk in which the different arts ... were united under a common theme.'[54] In the late nineteenth century, although there were connections between the English Arts and Crafts movement and the Viennese secession, Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze*, which was made for the 1902 Secession exhibition, would barely have been known about in Britain. Built into the 'gilded cabbage' exhibition hall in Vienna, it could not travel. For Tate Liverpool's major retrospective it was considered sufficiently important a work to be reconstructed. Today in Britain, Klimt's work, which was inspired by Wagner's response to Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, provides perhaps the supreme example of how musical art linked the nineteenth-century idealisations of the sublime to the avant-gardism of the Austrian Jugendstil magazine *Ver Sacrum*(Sacred Spring).

Klimt is now one of western art's best known and most commercially valued artists. His *Beethoven Frieze* consists of a series of panels that together create an impression of a temple to art. The perceiver is compelled to participate interactively with the work by moving around it, and to view it in conjunction with other related exhibits honouring Beethoven. The staged narrative of the painting depicts the Arts fulfilling a yearning for happiness, symbolised by five women who lead the perceiver or listener into an ideal state. Poetry is a woman playing a lyre; and the final image is erotic – an angel choir and a couple welded and wedded in a kiss. The 'aspiration' to musicality spoken of by Walter Pater, so influential in the late nineteenth century, can now be accessed very explicitly by means of the accumulated knowledge and reputation of Klimt's work. Thus, the state of being in music and the imbuing of the self with the spirit of music found in Klimt's images enable re-reading of the history of the sublime in and around nineteenth-century music to continue.

Notes

1. Michael P. Steinberg, *Listening to Reason: Culture, Subjectivity, and Nineteenth-century Music*, Princeton and Oxford 2004, pp.7–8.
2. In 1985 Peter Franklin wrote about the way that 'the first apologists of modernism' pressed 'the nineteenth century's post-Darwinian notion of evolutionary progress' into service and constructed a narrative of the disintegration of musical language as inevitable. Franklin's analysis had a provocative effect on the refiguring of perspectives about modern music, on the acknowledgement of the key role for criticism in the construction of history and on the development of critical musicological thinking about the significance of music as idea as much as form, technique, work or style. *The Idea of Music; Schoenberg and Others*, Basingstoke 1985.
3. Charles Rosen, *Critical Entertainments: Music Old and New*, Cambridge MA 2001, p.295.
4. Thomas S. Grey, 'Tableaux vivants: Landscape, History Painting, and the Visual Imagination in Mendelssohn's Orchestral Music', *19th-Century Music*, vol.21, no.1, Summer 1997, p.41. See also Thomas S. Grey 'Fingal's Cave ad Ossian's Dream: Music, Image, and Phantasmagoric Audition', in Marsha L. Morton and Peter L. Schmunk (eds.), *The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York and London 2000, and Leon Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation:

Reconstructing the Career of Felix Mendelssohn', in *Mendelssohn and His World*, ed. by R. Larry Todd, Princeton 1991, pp.26–30.

5. Steinberg, *Listening to Reason*, p.98.
6. In 1850 Wagner praised the work as a masterpiece of a landscape painter of the first order, but in so doing aligned it with the programmatic and restricted it to mimesis. He also expressed this as evidence of the limitation of Jewish composers.
7. Mark Evans Bond, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven*, Princeton and Oxford 2006, p.45.
8. Edward Lockspeiser, *Music and Painting*, London 1973, p.11.
9. Ibid, p.51.
10. Lockspeiser, p.11.
11. See the *London Evening Standard* review, 21 July 2005 of the work's Proms premiere, and other reviews, accessed 26 October 2010.
12. Graham Hough and Eric Warner (eds.), *Strangeness and Beauty: An Anthology of Aesthetic Criticism 1840-1910, Volume 2: Pater to Arthur Symons*, Cambridge 1983, pp.24–5.
13. Ibid, p.28.
14. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, London 1873, p.151.
15. Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trans. by Mary Whittall, London and California 1980, p.5.
16. Raymond Furness, *Wagner and Literature*, Manchester 1982, p.4.
17. Richard Wagner, Beethoven, trans. by William Ashton-Ellis, London 1870, pp.103–4.
18. See Emma Sutton's reading of Symons's 1906 essay, for example, in *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s*, Oxford 2002.
19. See: David C. Large (ed.), *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, Ithaca and London 1984.
20. Richard Wagner, *Prose Works*, vol.1, trans. by William Ashton-Ellis, London 1892, p.71.
21. Elliot Zuckerman, *The First Hundred Years of Wagner's Tristan*, New York and London 1964, p.30.
22. James Huneker, *Overtones: A Book of Temperaments*, London 1904, pp.330–1.
23. Ibid., p.89.
24. Havelock Ellis, Affirmations, London 1898, p.115.
25. Hilary Underwood, 'Watts and Symbolist Art in the Nineteenth Century', in Veronica Franklin Gould (ed.), *The Vision of G.F. Watts*, Salisbury 2004, p.30.
26. Hough and Warner (eds.), Strangeness and Beauty, vol.1 Ruskin to Swinburne, pp.206–7. See also chapter 2 of Simon Shaw-Miller, Visible Deeds and Music, New Haven and London 2002.
27. Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Aspiring to the Condition of Music: Painting in Britain 1860–1900, in Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, vol.2, Aldershot 2002, p.259.
28. Elizabeth Helsinger, 'Listening: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Persistence of Song', *Victorian Studies*, vol.51, no.3, Spring 2009, p.420.
29. Ibid., p.412.
30. Israfel Mondego, *Impossibilities: Fantasias*, London 1897, p.166.
31. Ibid., p.161. I discuss this further in C. Purkis, '"You might have called it beauty or poetry or passion just as well as music": Gertrude Hudson's Fictional Fantasias', Sophie Fuller and Nicola Loessef (eds.), *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, Aldershot 2004, pp.197–223.
32. Nicholas Tromans, *G.F. Watts' Hope: The Life and Times of a Victorian Icon*, Watts Gallery, Compton 2011 (forthcoming).
33. J. Mayne (ed.), *Art in Paris, 1845–1862: Salons and other Exhibitions*, Oxford 1965, p.50.
34. Morton, 'From the Other Side', p.12.
35. Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'The Liquefaction of Desire: Music, Water and Femininity in Victorian Aestheticism', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 2009, vol.20 no.2, p.187.
36. Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts*, London 1907, pp.146–7.
37. Clifford Harrison, *The Lute of Apollo*, London 1896, p.95.
38. Performances in London in 1913 and 1914.

39. Fabion Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography of the Russian Composer 1871–1915*, Mineola 1996, p.266.
40. This work is more fully discussed in Richard Shone *The Art of Bloomsbury*, London 1999, pp.154–5.
41. Section 4 'The Art of Tone' in 'The Art Work of the Future', in William Ashton Ellis, *Wagner's Prose Works*, vol.I, London 1892, p.36.
42. See Christopher Palmer, *Impressionism in Music*, London 1973 and *Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan*, London 1976.
43. Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce, and Stein*, Cambridge 2001.
44. Karin von Maur, *The Sound of Painting: Music in Modern Art*, Munich, London, New York 1999. See also Peter Vergo *The Music of Painting: Music, Modernism and the Visual Arts from the Romantics to John Cage*, London and New York 2010.
45. Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe, 1900–1916*, Oxford 1994, p.16.
46. Ibid., pp.16, 24.
47. See, for example, T. Armstrong, 'Response: Music, Image and the Sublime', *Textual Practice*, vol.22: no.1, 2008, pp.71–83, who discusses qualities in twentieth-century cinema music which give rise to the sublime, relating Enlightenment philosophy to modern day film examples.
48. A. Ridley, *The Philosophy of Music: Theme and Variations*, Edinburgh 2004, p.162: 'I listen to Tapiola [Sibelius] and am simply ravished by its "purely" musical beauty (indeed its sublimity).'
49. *Sublime: The Darkness and The Light* (National Touring Exhibition from the Hayward Gallery London), London 1999, p.21.
50. A. Ridley, *Music, Value and The Passions*, Ithaca and London 1995, p.186.
51. J. Lochead, 'The Sublime, the Ineffable, and Other Dangerous Aesthetics', in: *Women and Music*, vol.12, 2008, p.63.
52. See, for example, Derek B. Scott's discussion in *From the Erotic to The Demonic: On Critical Musicology*, New York and Oxford, p.43: 'the ideology of the sublime and the beautiful...fenced off the category of greatness in music as a male domain.'
53. J. Lochead, 'Experience, Borders "How therefore must we live?" A response to James Currie', *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture*, vol.12, 2008, p.94.
54. See Tate Liverpool 2008 exhibition *Gustav Klimt*.

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